

PART ONE

THE GLORY OF GOD

“This Day is the Day of God, and God alone is speaking in it;
and none should be mentioned save Him.”

BAHÁ'Í SCRIPTURES

CHAPTER ONE

INTERPRETATION OF THE HOLY BOOKS

I

In the Name of Our Lord, the Exalted, the Supreme!

- 1 Sanctify yourselves, O people of the earth, that perchance ye may attain to the station which God hath ordained for you and enter the tabernacle which God hath elevated in the Heaven of the Bayán.

The quintessence of this chapter is that travelers in the path of faith and seekers for the cup of assurance must sanctify and purify themselves from all material things; that is, the ear from hearing statements, the heart from doubts which pertain to the veils of glory,¹ the soul from dependence upon worldly belongings, the eye from contemplating mere transitory words. They should thus proceed, trusting in God and relying upon Him, so that they may become fitted for the splendors of the effulgences of the Suns (Manifestations) of divine knowledge and wisdom; recipients of the invisible and infinite bounties. For should a servant desire to make the words, deeds and actions of other servants, learned or ignorant, the standard for knowing God and His chosen ones, he shall never enter the Ridván of the knowledge of the Lord of Might nor attain to the fountains of the knowledge and wisdom of the King of Oneness; neither shall he reach the bourne of immortality nor partake of the cup of nearness and good pleasure.

1 Veils intervening between man and the Truth of god, which must be rent before the real light of that Truth is seen. One of these veils is literal interpretation of the Divine Texts, preventing true understanding of Revelation, such as the statement of the ascent of Christ into Heaven, His descent, the station of Muḥammad as the "Seal of the Prophets," etc.

- 2 Consider the former days; how people both high and low were awaiting the Manifestations of Oneness in the holy temples, so that they were at all times and

moments in anticipation and expectancy, praying and supplicating that perchance the breeze of the divine mercy might blow and the beauty of the Promised One step from the pavilion of the invisible into the court of appearance. But when the clouds of generosity lifted and the doors of favor opened and the Sun of the Invisible appeared from the horizon of power, they denied Him and avoided his meeting which was identical with the meeting of God. These details are recorded in the Heavenly Books.

- 3 Now reflect a moment as to the cause of this rejection by the people, after their seeking and anxiety. They even denied and opposed in such manner that tongue and pen fail and are unable to explain. Not one of these Manifestations of Holiness and Dawning-places of Singleness hath appeared without being subjected to the contradictions, denials and antagonism of the people. As it is said, “O misery of men! No Messenger cometh unto them but they laugh him to scorn.” (K.S. 36) It is said in another place: “Each nation hatched ill designs against their Messenger that they might get him into their power; and they disputed with vain reasoning, that they might thereby invalidate the truth.” (K.S. 40)

Likewise the revealed Words which have descended from the clouds of the eternal power and from the realm of divine might are beyond the limit of the knowledge and comprehension of the servants. This is allotted to abstracted souls from the holy eternal Table sent sown (from Heaven). Should ye become aware of the affliction of the Prophets and the motive and reason of the contradiction of those Divine Suns by the servants, ye will be cognizant of many things. The more ye consider the contradictions of the Day-springs of the suns of the attributes of Oneness by the people, the more firm and strong ye will become in your religion and in the Cause of God. Accordingly some of the stories of the Prophets are briefly recorded in these Tablets, to demonstrate and make evident that in all times and ages, they inflicted upon the Appearances of Power and Dawning-places of Might that which the pen is ashamed to relate. Perchance these statements may enable some of the people to avoid the perplexity arising from contradiction and denial by the learned and ignorant of the age, and thus increase their assurance and faith.

- 4 The beauty of the “Friend” (Abraham) was unveiled and the standard of Guidance was hoisted. He invited the people of the earth unto the light of righteousness. Although He diligently admonished them, no fruit but jealousy and heedlessness resulted. But those who were entirely devoted to God soared with the wings of assurance unto the station which God hath exalted beyond all comprehension. It is well known from the history of His Holiness (Abraham) how He was surrounded by enemies, until the fire of jealousy and contradiction was kindled. After the story of the “fire” they expelled that Divine Lamp from the city, as is recorded in all the books and epistles.
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- 5 Then His time passed and the turn of Moses came. His Holiness appeared with the rod of command and with the white hand of knowledge from the Parán of divine love. He came with the serpent of power and eternal majesty out of the Sinai of light into the court of

manifestation, summoning all in the world to the kingdom of life and to the fruits of the tree of faithfulness. The oppositions made by Pharaoh and his people exerted themselves to extinguish that fire of the divine tree with the water of denial and opposition; heedless that the fire of the divine wisdom is never quenched by material water nor the lamp of supreme power extinguished by contrary winds. Nay rather, in such a case water produces conflagration and the wind insures preservation, were ye to perceive with discerning sight and walk in the good pleasure of God.

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- 6 Now reflect upon these things, and as to the cause of such differences; that when a true Manifestation appeared in the world from the horizon of the placeless, such corruption, confusion, oppression and revolution would arise in all parts of the world. All the Prophets during their appearance, announced to the people the coming of another Prophet and recorded a sign for the subsequent Manifestation, as stated in the Books. Why, then, notwithstanding the search and expectation of the people for the Holy Manifestation and the mention of signs in the Books, should such things occur in the world as oppressing, antagonizing and persecuting the Prophets and chosen ones during every age and cycle? As it is written, “Whenever a Messenger cometh unto you with that which your souls desire not, ye proudly reject him; accusing some of imposture and slaying others.” (K.S. 2)

Now consider what was the reason of these deeds and why they acted in this manner toward the Aspects of the beauty of the Glorious One. The same thing which led to the contradiction and heedlessness of the servants in those days causes the negligence of these servants now. If we say that the divine proofs were not perfect and complete and therefore cause contradictions, this is pure anathema, because it is far from the bounty of the Bounteous and remote from the abundant Mercy to choose one soul from among all the servants, for the guidance of His creatures, without bestowing upon Him sufficient and perfect proofs: at the same time punishing people for not believing in Him. Nay, the generosity of the King of Existence hath embraced all the contingent beings through the appearance of the Manifestations of Himself. His abundance never ceases for a moment and the showers of His mercy from the clouds of Providence are never restrained. Consequently these things proceed only from limited souls who move in the valley of pride and haughtiness and wander in the deserts of remoteness; who follow their own suppositions and whatever they hear from their religious doctors. Therefore they accomplish nothing but opposition and seek no result but rejection.

It is evident to every one endowed with perception, that had those servants during the appearance of each manifestation of the Sun of Truth, sanctified and purified their eyes and hearts from whatever they had seen, heard and conceived, they undoubtedly would not have been deprived of the divine beauty and withheld from the sanctuary of nearness and union with the Dawning-places of Holiness. As, in every age, they compared the proof with knowledge acquired from their religious doctors and found it to be at variance with their limited understandings, these unseemly actions proceeded from them in the world of appearance. The religious doctors of every age have been the cause of preventing the people from the shore of the Sea of Oneness, for the reins of the people were in their control. Some among them have hindered the people by love of leadership

and some by lack of wisdom and knowledge. Thus every Prophet hath quaffed the cup of martyrdom and soared to the loftiest horizon of might, through the sentence and sanction of the divines of the age. What oppressions have been inflicted by the leaders of the time and divines of the age upon the Kings of Existence and the Essences of Desire! Satisfied with these limited and transient days, they were debarred from the everlasting realm, their eyes deprived from witnessing the lights of the beauty of the Beloved and their ears from hearing the wonderful melodies of the Nightingale of Desire. Therefore the condition of the divines of every age is recorded in all the Heavenly Books; as it is said: "O ye people of the Book, why do ye reject the Signs of God, while ye are the witnesses of them?" (K.S. 3) Also, "O ye people of the Book, why do ye clothe truth with vanity, and knowingly hide the truth?" (K.S. 3) Also, in another place, "Say, O people of the Book, why do ye bar the path of God?" (K.S. 3)

It is evident that the "people of the Book" who barred mankind from the right path were the divines of that age, whose names and records are contained in all the writings and understood from most of the verses and traditions, were ye to see with the eye of God.

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- 7 So gaze with divine insight into the horizons of the supreme knowledge and into the souls of the perfect words of eternity, that all the mysteries of the spiritual wisdom may appear without "veils of glory" and become manifest from behind the covering of favor and bounty. The contradictions of people and their controversies have resulted wholly from their lack of knowledge and understanding. For example, they could not comprehend and attain to the truth of the explanations given by the beautiful Countenances of the True One concerning the signs of the subsequent Manifestation. Notwithstanding this they have sought interpretation of the Book from the people of veils and did not acquire knowledge from its fountainhead. For instance, when the day of Moses had passed and the lights of Jesus pervaded the world from the dawn of spirit, the Jews objected that the one who is promised in the Pentateuch must promote and fulfil the laws of the Pentateuch, whereas this youth of Nazareth who calls himself the Messiah of God hath abolished the laws of divorce and of the Sabbath, which are the greatest laws of Moses; and moreover the signs of the Manifestations have not yet appeared. Thus the Jews are still expecting the appearance recorded in the Pentateuch. How many of the holy Manifestations of Unity and Dawning-places of the Light of Eternity have appeared since Moses in the world of creation, while the Jews have been and are still veiled by their satanic, egotistical veils and their selfish erroneous opinions! They still await the time when this fictitious temple will appear according to their understanding of the given signs. Consequently God hath punished them for their sin, stripped them of the spirit of faith and caused them to suffer the fire in the depths of hell on account of their ignorance of the texts recorded in the Pentateuch concerning the signs of the subsequent Manifestation. Since they did not understand the reality of these signs and as such things did not outwardly appear, they were therefore deprived of the beauty of Jesus, did not attain to the meeting of God and were of those who await. Thus, the nations by their adherence to similar inventions arising from improper notions, have deprived themselves of the pure, clear and flowing fountains.

8 It hath been evident and clear to the possessors of knowledge that when the fire of the love of Jesus burned the veils of Jewish limitations, and the authority of His Holiness, even in the outward sense, was partially recognized, that Beauty of the Invisible spoke of separation to some of His spiritual companions and enkindled the fire of yearning, saying: "I go and I come again." And in another place he said: "I go and another will come who will tell you all that I have not told you and will finish all that I have said." These two statements are in reality one, were ye to witness the Manifestations of Oneness with the eye of God.

9 To one who views with ideal perception, the Book of Jesus as well as His Cause were in fact confirmed at the time of the "Seal of the Prophets" (Muḥammad). In name, Muḥammad said, "I am Jesus," even ratifying the signs, records and Book of Jesus as being from the presence of God. In this sense, there is neither any difference in them nor in their Books, inasmuch as both have arisen by the command of God, speaking the praise of God. The Books of both declared the ordinances of God. For this reason Jesus said, "I will go and come again." Even as the sun: If the sun to-day says, "I am the sun of yesterday," it is true; and yet if according to daily sequence, it says: "I am other than the sun of yesterday," this is also true. Likewise consider the days: If it be said that all the days are the same, it is correct and true; and if it be said that according to name and designation they differ from each other, this also is true as thou seest. For though they are the same, yet in each one there is a name, quality and designation which is different from the other. By the same method and explanation, understand the stations of separation, difference and oneness of the Holy Manifestations, so that thou mayest comprehend the interpretations of the words of the Creator of the names and attributes, concerning separation and union. Thus wilt thou fully discover the answer to thy question why that Eternal Beauty hath, in various instances, called Himself by a different name and title.

10 Afterward, the companions and disciples of His Holiness (Jesus) asked Him concerning the sign of the Return and the Manifestation, and at what time this sign shall appear. The same question was asked that peerless Countenance upon several occasions, and His Holiness in each instance mentioned a certain sign, as recorded in the four Gospels.

This oppressed one now speaks of one of these instances, thus conferring the hidden benefits of the tree of reward for the sake of God, upon His servants; so that the mortal temples may not be deprived of the immortal fruits and may perchance attain to a sprinkling of the never-failing rivers of the Lord of Glory. This is a food whereby brilliant souls and minds find eternal life and this is that table of which it is spoken: "O our Lord, cause to descend upon us food from Heaven." (K.S. 5) This food is never withheld from those who deserve it and is never exhausted. It grows continually from the tree of grace and descends from the heavens of justice and mercy.

Alas that man should withhold himself from this excellent gift and deprive himself of this eternal bounty and perpetual life! Therefore let him appreciate the value of this ideal

food; perchance the dead bodies may receive new life through the wonderful favors of that Sun of Truth and faded souls may develop into the incomparable Spirit. O my brother, effort is needful while yet the days remain, in order to taste the cups of eternity. The breeze of life from the city of the Beloved will not blow continually; the river of explanation will not forever flow, and the doors of the Ridván will not always remain open. The time will come when the Nightingales of Paradise will fly from the holy garden to divine nests; then thou wilt neither see the beauty of the rose nor hear the melody of the Nightingale! Therefore while the Dove of Eternity is singing and rejoicing, and the divine springtime is in splendor and adornment, avail thyself of the opportunity and deprive not the ear of the heart, of its melody. This is the advice of this servant to the beloved of God. Whosoever wisheth, let him advance, and whosoever wisheth, let him deny; verily God is independent of him and of that which he may see and witness.

These are the melodies sung by Jesus, the son of Mary with glorious notes in the Ridván of the Gospel, as to the signs of the subsequent Manifestation. When they asked concerning these signs, He answered them, according to the first book ascribed to Matthew (xxiv, 29-31):

“Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the earth shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the son of Man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet.” The same statements are recorded in the other three Gospels ascribed to Mark, Luke and John. As the doctors of the Gospel did not understand the meanings of these statements and the purport deposited in these words, but adhered to their literal sense, they were therefore withheld from the river of the Muḥammadic Bounty and the cloud of Ahmadic Grace. The ignorant ones of that community, relying upon their learned men, were likewise prevented from beholding the beauty of the King of Glory. For these mentioned signs did not become manifest at the appearance of the Ahmadic Sun. Finally that Essence of Life returned to the eternal place of His dominion. Centuries passed and times rolled by. Another blow of spiritual breath was breathed into the Divine Trumpet and dead souls came forth out of the tombs of heedlessness and error into the land of guidance and the place of favor. Still that community is expecting the time when these signs shall appear and the promised Temple (Christ) shall arise, that they may assist Him, expend possessions in His way and sacrifice lives in His path. By similar suppositions, other communities are kept afar from the Kawthar of the significances of the infinite mercy of God and are occupied with their own imagination. Besides this passage, there is another statement in the Gospel: “Heaven and earth shall pass away but My words shall not pass away.” For this reason the people of the Gospel say the decree of the Gospel shall never be abolished and that whenever the promised Face appears with all the signs, He must confirm and establish the law enacted in the Gospel, so that no other religion may remain in the world. To them, this is one of the confirmed and indisputable facts. They believe that even should one appear with all the promised signs and declare against the literal law of the Gospel, they must not obey or accept him, nay rather, they must scoff at him and charge him with infidelity. This was witnessed when the Muḥammadic Sun appeared. Had they asked with all meekness from the Appearances of Oneness in every Manifestation, the meanings of these words revealed in the Books, -

through the non-attainment unto which all people are veiled from the furthestmost destination and the Sadratu'l-Muntahá, - they would have been surely directed to the lights of the Sun of Guidance and acquainted with the mysteries of knowledge and wisdom.

Now this servant explains a sprinkling of the meanings of these statements, so that the possessors of perception and intuition may thereby comprehend all the symbols of the divine words and the allegorical explanations of the Holy Manifestations; and thus be not debarred on account of the (impressive) majesty of the words, from the Sea of the Names and Attributes and veiled from the Lamp of Unity which is the place of the manifestation of the Essence.

As to the words - "Immediately after the tribulation of those days" - this signifies the time when the people become afflicted with hardship and distress. This is when the traces of the Sun of Truth and the fruits of the tree of knowledge and wisdom disappear from among mankind and the reins of the people fall into the hands of the ignorant; when the doors of unity and knowledge - the essential purpose of the creation of man - are closed; when knowledge is changed into superstition and guidance into adversity, just as it is witnessed in this day that the reins of every party are in the hands of an ignorant one who leads them in whatever way he desires. Among them nothing remains of the Adored One but a name and of the Desired One but the letter. To such an extent have the winds of desire and self prevailed, that they have extinguished the lights of reason and conscience within the hearts. Although the doors of the divine knowledge are opened by the keys of the Supreme Power, and the essences of the being of things are enlightened and illumined through the knowledge, light and holy bounties, to such an extent that within everything a door of knowledge is opened and within every atom traces of the sun are visible, yet notwithstanding that these manifestations of knowledge have pervaded the world, they have considered the door of knowledge closed, and the rains of mercy withheld. Holding fast to supposition, they are kept afar from the firm strong handle of knowledge. They seem to have intrinsically no desire for knowledge and its door, nor think of its appearance. For in supposition and imagination they have found doors to bread, and in the appearance of the Manifestor of knowledge they see nothing except the sacrifice of life. So they naturally flee from this and hold fast to the other. Although they know the divine command is one, yet from every direction a decree emanates and from every place an order is brought forth. No two are found who agree upon the same command, for they seek no God but desire and follow no path but error. They deem leadership the ultimate accomplishment of their aim and account pride and haughtiness as final attainment to the Beloved. They consider selfish deceptions preferable to the divine decrees. They have turned aside from submission and resignation and are occupied with plots and hypocrisies; preserving these attitudes with all power and strength, lest a blemish find access to their dignity or a flaw appear in their honor. Should an eye be illumined by the collyrium of divine enlightenments, it would behold a number of wild beasts preying upon the dead bodies of the servants. What tribulations and distress could be greater than these mentioned conditions? For if one wishes to seek a truth or knowledge, he knows not to whom to refer, nor from whom to enquire, because opinions are different and paths are many. This tribulation and distress is one of the signs of every Manifestation, and unless it happens, the Sun of Truth does not become manifest, because the morn of the appearance of guidance dawns after the night of error. Therefore the

traditions and records contain all these statements, that infidelity will cover the world, darkness prevail and similar things as mentioned. For the sake of brevity this servant does not undertake to mention the texts of these traditions, as they are well-known.

As to the words - "The suns shall be darkened and the moon shall cease to give her light and the stars shall fall from heaven": - The purport of "sun" and "moon" as mentioned in the words of the Prophets is not confined to the phenomenal sun and moon which are seen; nay rather, they have intended for "sun" and "moon" manifold meanings. In every instance they intend a certain meaning applicable thereto. For example, one meaning of the "sun" is the "Suns of Truth" which dawn from the Day-spring of Pre-existence and transmit bounty to all the contingent beings. These Suns of Truth are the Universal Manifestations of the Divinity in the world of His attributes and names. As by the command of the real Adored One, the development of material things such as fruits, trees, colors, minerals and whatever exists in the phenomenal world is through the assistance of the phenomenal sun, so the trees of unity, the fruits of oneness, the leaves of abstraction, the flowers of knowledge and assurance and the myrtles of wisdom and utterance appear through the training of the Ideal Suns. Therefore when these Suns arise, the world is renewed, the rivers of life flow, the seas of beneficence move, the clouds of grace gather and the breezes of bounty blow upon the temples of beings. Through the heat of these Divine Suns and Ideal Fires, the heat of the love of God is produced in the pillars of the world; and through the favor of these abstracted Spirits, the immortal spirit of life is conferred upon the bodies of the mortal dead.

The phenomenal sun is in reality a single sign of the splendor of that Ideal Sun which hath neither comparison, likeness, equal nor peer. All things are supported through Its existence, are manifest through Its bounty and will return to It. All things have appeared from It and are restored to the treasures of Its command. All contingent beings originated from It and revert to the depositories of Its order. If in explanation and mentioning, these (Suns) are only designated by some of the names and attributes, as you have heard and hear, this is intended for the understanding of weak and imperfect minds. Otherwise they have been eternally sanctified from every name and will be purified from every attribute. The essences of names have no access to the court of their holiness and subtleties of attributes have no approach to the kingdom of their might. God is too glorified for His chosen ones to be known except by their own selves, or that His friends should be described by any other than their own beings. He is exalted far above what the servants mention in description of them and lofty above their comprehension of them!

Therefore it is shown that in the primary sense "sun", "moon" and "stars" signify the Prophets, the saints and their companions, through the light of whose knowledge the worlds of the visible and invisible are enlightened and illumined. In another sense, by "sun," "moon" and "stars" is intended the divines of the former Dispensation, at the time of the subsequent Manifestation and in whose hands are the reins of the religion of the people. If they are illumined by the light of the subsequent Sun in His Manifestation, they will be acceptable, radiant and shining; otherwise they will be declared as darkened, even though they are apparently guides. For all these states, including belief and unbelief, guidance and error, happiness and misery, light and darkness are dependent upon the approval of that Ideal Sun of Divinity. If, in the Day of Judgment (Day of a new Manifestation), any one of these divines is declared faithful by the Source of Wisdom, he can truly be regarded as possessing knowledge, light and faith, and as having attained the

good pleasure of God. Otherwise, ignorance, rejection, infidelity and injustice will be applied to him.

In another sense, the words, “sun,” “moon” and “stars” are applied to the ordinances and instructions enacted in every religion. As in every subsequent Manifestation the established, shining, clear and fixed ceremonies, customs and instructions of the preceding Manifestation are abolished, they symbolically mentioned them by the names “sun” and “moon.”

Briefly; this is the purpose of the symbolism in the words of the divine Manifestations. Consequently the application of these meanings to “sun” and “moon” in the mentioned instances is confirmed and demonstrated through revealed verses and recorded traditions. Therefore by the “darkness of the sun and moon” and the “falling of the stars” is intended the aberration of the divines and the abolition of the ordinances established in a religion, of which the Manifestation of a Dispensation speaks through these symbols. Only the righteous have a portion of this cup and only the just partake thereof.

It is certain that during every subsequent Manifestation, the “sun” of the teachings, ordinances, commands and prohibitions established in the preceding Manifestation, - the “sun” and “moon” of teachings and command under which the people of that age are enlightened and guided, - become darkened, that is, their influence and efficiency vanish. Now consider, had the people of the Gospel understood the purpose of “sun” and “moon” or inquired concerning it from the Manifestor of divine knowledge, without contradiction or obstinacy, the meanings thereof would have necessarily become clear and they would not have been confined in the darkness of egotism and desire. Yea, since they did not acquire the knowledge from its mine and source, they perished in the fatal valley of unbelief and error, and are not yet aware that all the signs appeared and the promised Sun dawned from the horizon of Manifestation, while the sun and moon of former knowledge, ordinances and teachings were darkened and disappeared.

O my brother, take the step of the soul, that thou mayest in a moment traverse the distant valleys of separation and remoteness, enter the Ridván of union and nearness and in a breath attain to the divine Souls. These stages can never be traveled nor the destination reached by the step of the body. Peace be upon these who follow the truth in truth and stand in the path of command upon the shore of knowledge in the name of God.

In like manner through these clear, firm, well-founded and direct explanations understand the “cleaving of heaven” which is one of the signs of the hour of Resurrection: As it is said: “When the heaven shall be cloven asunder.” (K.S. 82) By this is meant the heaven of religions elevated during every Dispensation and cloven asunder in every subsequent Manifestation, that is, abolished and annulled. I swear by God that to one who carefully considers, the cleaving asunder of this heaven is greater than the cleaving of the phenomenal heaven. Reflect a little; a long-established religion, under which all have grown and developed; by the shining ordinances of which they have been trained for long periods; hearing nothing from their fathers and ancestors except its mention, so that the eyes see only the effectiveness of its commands and ears hear only its ordinances; then afterward one appearing, severing and separating all these through divine power and strength, nay rather, abolishing them. Consider whether this is of greater importance than that which these worthless creatures have imagined concerning the cleaving of

heaven. Moreover, consider the difficulties and afflictions of these Countenances in executing the laws of God in face of all in the earth, without a worldly helper or assister. Notwithstanding the persecutions inflicted upon these pure, high and blessed Beings, they endure with the utmost power and suffer with infinite strength.

In like manner understand the meaning of the “changing of the earth.” Upon whatever hearts the clouds of mercy of that heaven poured down the shower of beneficence, the earth of those hearts was changed into the earth of knowledge and wisdom. What myrtles of unity have grown in the gardens of these hearts and what anemones of realities of knowledge and wisdom bloom from these shining breasts! If the earth of these hearts is not changed, how is it that men not instructed in one letter, without seeing a teacher or entering a school, speak words and knowledge which no one can apprehend? They seem to have been moulded from the clay of eternal knowledge and kneaded with the water of intuitive wisdom. Therefore it is said, “Knowledge is a light which God sheds in whatsoever heart He willeth.” It is this kind of knowledge which is praiseworthy; not the limited learnings produced by veiled and obscured imaginations, which men often steal from each other, then glory over their fellow-creatures.

O that the breasts of the servants might be purified and sanctified from the traces of these limitations and dark words, that they may perchance attain to the splendor of the lights of the Sun of Knowledge and Significances and to the essences of the mysteries of intuitive wisdom.

Consider, if these barren soils of being had not been transformed, how should the mysteries of unity and the essences of divinity have appeared and become visible in them? Therefore it is said in the Qur’án: “In that day, the earth shall be changed into another earth.” (K.S. 14)

Even the material earth is also changed through the breezes of the generosity of that King of Existence, were ye to reflect upon the mysteries of Manifestation!

These are the mysteries of the words which are clearly unfolded and unveiled that thou mayest comprehend the morn of significances and extinguish the lamp of superstition, fancy, doubt and suspicion through the power of reliance and severance, and light the new lamp of knowledge and assurance in the recess of mind and heart.

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- 11 The purpose of these allegorical words and enigmatic references which emanate from the Sources of Command is to test the servants as mentioned, so that the soil of excellent and shining hearts may be distinguished from barren and mortal soils. This has always been the Divine Law among the servants, as revealed in the Books.

Were ye to reflect a little, ye would find doors of significances and explanations opened in this subject and statement, and behold all the knowledge and the mysteries thereof without veils. These things are only for the purpose of training and delivering the souls from the cage of self and desire, for that Ideal King in Himself hath forever been independent of the knowing of the beings, and in His identity will ever be exalted above the adoration of contingent things. A single breeze of His affluence honors all the world with the robes of wealth, and a mere drop of the sea of His generosity favors all the existence with eternal life. But as the purpose is to distinguish between truth and

falsehood, sun and shadow, therefore at every instant tests sent from the presence of the Lord of Might pour down like copious rain. Were people to ponder a little over the former Prophets and their manifestation, the matter will become so easy to them that they will not be veiled by reason of deeds and words which are contrary to their egotism and desire. They will burn every veil with the fire of the Sadrat of knowledge and rest upon the throne of quiescence and composure. For example, Moses the son of Imrán, one of the great Prophets and the possessor of a Book, one day, in the earlier part of His Dispensation, before His Mission, was passing through the market. Two men were striving with each other, one of whom begged help from Moses. His Holiness, assisting him, killed his opponent, as recorded in the Book. This report was published throughout the city, and fear fell upon His Holiness, according to the text of the Book. Finally, He received the message: "O Moses, verily, the magistrates are deliberating concerning thee, to put thee to death." (K.S. 28) Whereupon He left the city and remained in the service of Shoeb (Jethro) in Midian. Upon His return, He arrived at the "Blessed Valley" - the wilderness of Sinai - where He witnessed the manifested light of the King of Unity from the tree "Which is neither of the East nor of the West." He heard the soul-cheering spiritual voice from the enkindled fire of divinity and was appointed to guide the Pharaohic souls; to deliver the people from the valley of egotism and desire and lead them to the heart-rejoicing plains of spirit and guidance; to conduct all in the creation from the perplexity of remoteness to the abode of the peace of nearness, through the Salsabil of severance. When He entered the house of Pharaoh and delivered that for which He was appointed, Pharaoh loosed his tongue in abuse, saying: "Art thou not he who committed murder and became an infidel?" This was spoken by the Lord of Glory as having been said by Pharaoh to Moses: "Yet hast thou done thy deed which thou hast done and thou art a faithless person." He said: "I did it indeed and I was one of those who erred: wherefore I fled from you because I feared you; but my Lord hath bestowed command upon me and hath appointed me one of His Messengers." (K.S. 26)

Reflect upon the tests of God and upon the wonders of His trials; how He chose from among His servants and appointed to the greatest guidance a man known to be a murderer and who himself confessed his injustice, as recorded in the verse; a man evidently brought up for thirty years or less in the house of Pharaoh and supported by his food and nourishment! This notwithstanding that mighty king (God) had the power to prevent Moses from committing murder, so that he should not be known by this name among the servants, causing dismay in hearts and avoidance by people.

Likewise the case of Mary - how that excellent countenance longed for death in her perplexity, because of the importance of the matter. For it is shown in the blessed verse that after the birth of Jesus, Mary lamented with these words upon her lips: "Would that I had died before this and had become a thing forgotten and lost in oblivion." I swear by God that hearts are melted and souls quiver when hearing these words. This agitation and grief was caused by the reproach of enemies and the censure of the people of unbelief and insolence. Now reflect; what answer could Mary give to the people? How could it be explained to them that a child whose father was unknown, was of the Holy Ghost? So this chaste one of eternity took her Child and returned to her house. When the eye of the multitude fell upon her, they said: "O sister of Aaron, your father was not a bad man and your mother was not unchaste." (K.S. 19)

Consider this mighty test and most great trial. Notwithstanding all this, God conferred

Prophethood upon that Essence of Spirit (Jesus) who was known among the people as fatherless, and appointed Him His proof to all in the heavens and earth.

Behold how the King of Creation causes the affairs of the Manifestations to appear contrary to the wish and desire of the servants. When thou art acquainted with these essences of mysteries thou wilt be informed of the purpose of that Beloved One and discover the words and deeds of that powerful King to be alike; so that whatever is seen in His words shows forth in His deeds. Consequently these deeds and words are outwardly a punishment for the evil-doers, while inwardly a mercy for the just. To one who perceives with the eye of the heart, the words revealed from the Heaven of Will are as one with the actions proceeding from the Kingdom of Power; and are understood to be the same. This hath already been mentioned.

12 Now, O my brother, if such things should happen or such events take place in this age, consider what the people would do! I swear by the Educator of Existence and the Revealer of Words that they would at once declare (those concerned) infidels and condemn to death. Should a hundred thousand cries be raised, it would not enter a single ear that a fatherless one had been appointed to Prophethood or a murderer had given utterance to "Verily, I am God," from the Tree of Fire. Where would they listen to one who announced that a Jesus had appeared through the breath of the Holy Spirit or that a Moses had been appointed by the irresistible Command?

If the eye of justice be opened, it will be seen from all these explanations that similar happenings and their consequences are evident in this day. Although such conditions have not appeared during this Manifestation, yet people clinging to the imaginations of rejected souls have made charges and inflicted calamities the like of which hath never appeared in the world of creation.

God is great! When explanation reached this point, spiritual fragrance wafted from the dawn of sublimity and the breeze of morning blew from the city of the Sheba of eternity. Its breath conferred fresh glad tidings upon the soul and an immeasurable expansion upon the spirit! It spread a new carpet and brought precious and innumerable gifts from that traceless Beloved for whose lovely stature the robe of mention is short and for whose shining figure the mantle of explanation is inadequate. It unfolds the allegory of meanings without word and reveals the mysteries of explanation without tongue. It teaches lamentation and mourning to the nightingales of the foliage of separation and absence; instructs them in the rule and ceremony of love and loving, and in the mystery of heart-surrender. It imparts the mode of ravishment and charm to the wonderful flowers of the Ridván of nearness and union, confers the mysteries of truths upon the anemones of the garden of love and deposits its minute allegories and their subtleties in the breasts of the lovers. It hath shown such favor at this hour that the Holy Spirit envies greatly. It hath given to a drop the waves of a sea and endowed a mote with the splendor of a sun. Bounties have reached such a measure that the beetle seeks to attain the musk-sac and the bat hath chosen residence in the face of sunshine. It hath raised the dead from the graves of the body through the breath of life; seated the ignorant in the high station of knowledge and established the unjust upon the summit of justice.

The world of existence is impregnated with all these favors, awaiting the time when the trace of this invisible Providence shall appear in the earth, lead the exhausted athirst to the clear Kawthar of the Beloved and enable wanderers in the wilderness of remoteness and death to reach the tent of nearness and life of the Beloved. Who will sow these seeds of holiness in the fround of the heart? And in the garden of whose soul will the anemones of invisible realities bloom? In a word; the Sadrat of love in the Sinai of love is too intensely enkindled to be quenched and exhausted by waters of explanation. Seas fail to allay the thirst of this fish, and this bird of fire can only abide in the fire of the face of the Beloved. Therefore, O brother, light the lamp of spirit with the oil of wisdom in the recess of the heart and protect it by the glass of knowledge, that the breath of polytheistic souls may not extinguish it nor prevent its shining.

Thus have we illumined the horizon of the heaven of utterance with the lights of the suns of knowledge and wisdom, so thy heart may thereby be tranquilized and thou mayest become of those who soar upon the wings of assurance in the sky of the love of their Lord, the merciful!

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- 13 As to the words - "Then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven" - He says that after the eclipse of the Sun of divine Knowledge and the falling of the stars of the established ordinances, - after the darkening of the Moon of Knowledge - which is the educator of the servants - and disappearance of the landmarks of guidance and prosperity, - after the morn of faithfulness and peace is obscured, then shall the sign of the son of Man appear in heaven. By "heaven" is meant the phenomenal heaven. For preceding the appearance of that firmament of the heavens of justice and the floating of the Ark of Guidance upon the sea of grandeur, a star becomes visible in the sky, which announces the manifestation of "Most Great Orb" to the people of the heavens. Likewise a star appears in the heaven of significance, which announces that "Most upright and precious dawn" to the people of the earth. These two signs have appeared in both the outward heaven and inward heaven preceding the Manifestation of every Prophet, as hath been heard. One was the "Friend of the Merciful" (Abraham). Before the appearance of His Holiness, Nimrod had a dream and summoned the soothsayers. They warned him of the rise of a star in the sky. Likewise a man appeared in the earth who announced the Manifestation of His Holiness, Abraham the Prophet.

After Him, was the story of the "Interlocutor of God" (Moses). The soothsayers of that period warned Pharaoh that a star had risen in the sky, indicating the birth of a child in whose hand was his destiny and that of his people. Also a wise man appeared, who in the evenings consoled and assured the children of Israel, announcing good tidings to them, as recorded in the books.

When the Manifestation of Jesus drew high, some of the Magi who were aware of the appearance of the star of Jesus in heaven, followed the trace thereof until they entered the city which was the imperial residence of Herod, - for in those days the rule of those countries was under his control, - saying: "Where is he who was born King of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the east and are come to worship him." After making inquiries, they learned that the child was born in Bethlehem of Judea. This was the sign in the outward heaven.

As to the sign in the inward heaven, - that is, in the heaven of knowledge and significances; who announced the Manifestation of His Holiness (Jesus) to the people; as it is said: "Verily, God announceth to thee, John, who shall acknowledge the Word which cometh from God; and honorable person and one of the righteous." (K.S. 3) By the "Word" is meant His Holiness Jesus, the announcer of whose Manifestation was John. It is also recorded in heavenly tablets: "Johanna was preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying 'repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.'"

Likewise, before the appearance of the beauty of Muḥammad, the sign in the outward heaven became manifest and the inward signs were four men who successively announced to the people the Manifestation of that Divine Sun upon earth. Rúz-bih surnamed Salmán, was favored with the honor of serving them. When the time of death came to one, he sent Rúz-bih to the other, until the turn of the fourth arrived. He, at the time of death, said: "O Rúz-bih, after enshrouding and burying me, go thou to Hijáz where the Muḥammadic Sun will rise. To thee be glad tidings of the meeting of His Holiness!"

As to this wonderful and impregnable Cause, most of the astronomers announced the appearance of the star in the phenomenal heaven. Likewise the two brilliant lights - Ahmad and Kázim (may God sanctify their dust) - appeared in the earth.

Consequently, it is shown by these expressions that before the coming of each one of the Mirrors of Unity, the signs of that Manifestation appear in the outward heaven as well as in the inward heaven, which is the station of the sun of knowledge, the moon of wisdom and the stars of significances and utterance. It is the appearance of a perfect man before every manifestation to train and prepare the servants for the meeting of that Sun of Divinity and Moon of Unity.

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- 14 As to His words: "And then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." The purport of this saying is that at that time the people will lament because of the absence of the Sun of Divine Beauty, the Moon of Knowledge and the Stars of Intuitive Wisdom; then it will be witnessed that the face of the Promised One and the beauty of the Adored One will descend from heaven riding upon a cloud; that is, that Divine Beauty will appear from the heavens of the Supreme Will, in the human temple. The purpose of "heaven" is none other than to demote the exaltation and loftiness which is the station of the appearance of those Daysprings of Holiness and Dawning-places of Pre-existence. Although these ancient Beings outwardly appear from the wombs of mothers, yet in reality, they descend from the heavens of command; and although they dwell upon the earth, yet they recline upon the couch of significances; and while walking among the servants, they soar in the skies of nearness. They journey in the land of spirit without the motion of foot and fly upward to the summit of oneness without wing. In every breath they traverse the world of creation east and west, and in every moment pass through the kingdom of the seen and unseen. They are sent forth from the loftiness of the power of the King of Pre-existence and from the exaltation of the Will of the most great Ruler. Therefore, He says He shall "descend from heaven."

The word "heaven" is used in many senses in the utterances of the Suns of Significances; such as the "heaven of command," the "heaven of will," the "heaven of

desire,” the “heaven of knowledge,” the “heaven of assurance,” the “heaven of explanation,” the “heaven of Epiphany,” the “heaven of concealment,” etc. In every instance, He intends for the word “heaven” a meaning which can only be comprehended by those who have knowledge of the mysteries of oneness and have quaffed from the chalices of eternity. For example, it is said, “Your sustenance is in the heaven, and also that which ye are promised.” (K.S. 52), although sustenance grows up from the earth. Likewise, “the names come down from heaven,” although they proceed from the tongue of the servants. Shouldst thou make the mirror of the heart pure and clear from the dust of prejudice, thou wilt comprehend all the symbols in the sayings of the perfect Word of Divinity in every Manifestation and be informed of the mysteries of knowledge. But unless thou destroyest with the fire of severance the veils of learning which are conventional among the servants, thou wilt not attain to the brilliant morn of the ideal knowledge.

Knowledge is divided into two kinds: divine knowledge and satanic knowledge. One appears from the inspiration of the Ideal King; the other emanates from the imaginations of darkened souls. The teacher of one is the Exalted God and the teacher of the other is sensual suggestion. The explanation of one is “fear God and God will teach you,” and the definition of the other is “knowledge is the greatest veil.” The fruits of one tree are patience, longing, wisdom and love, and the fruits of the other are pride, vainglory and conceit.

Consequently, the breast must be purified from all that hath been heard and the heart sanctified from all attachments, so that it may become a recipient of the invisible inspiration and a treasury of the mysteries of supreme knowledge. Therefore it is said: “The traveler in the White Path and in the Red Support shall never reach his homestead unless he is empty-handed from all that is possessed by the people.” This is the condition of the traveler; duly reflect and meditate, that thou mayest be informed of the purpose of the Book, without veil.

The meaning of “heaven” in the revealed verse is known and understood through these clear, sound and evident explanations. As to the sayings that He will descend in a cloud: By “cloud” is meant things contrary to the egotism and desire of men, as mentioned in the formerly quoted verse - “Ye, therefore, whenever a Messenger cometh unto you with that which your souls desire not, proudly reject him and accuse some of imposture and slay others.” (K.S. 2) Such (clouds), for instance, are the changing of ordinances, substitution of laws, removal of customary rules and ceremonies, and pre-eminence of those who become believers among the common people over the learned who deny. Likewise is the appearance of that Eternal Beauty according to human limitations, such as eating, drinking, poverty, riches, glory, abasement, sleeping, waking and similar things which cause people to doubt and which hinder them. All such veils are interpreted as “clouds.”

These are the clouds whereby the heavens of the knowledge and wisdom of all in the earth are rent and cloven, as it is said: “On that Day the heaven shall be cloven asunder by the clouds.” (K.S. 25)

As clouds prevent the eyes of men from viewing the phenomenal sun, so the above conditions hinder the people from apprehending that Ideal Sun. It is mentioned in the Book and attributed to the tongue of the unbelievers thus - “And they say what kind of a

Messenger is this? He eateth food and walketh in the streets (as we do); unless an angel be sent down to him and become a (fellow-) preacher with him.” (K.S. 25) As those Temples of Holiness were subject to outward indigence and adversity and also to natural and bodily necessities, such as hunger, diseases and incidental happenings, the people would become bewildered in saharas of doubt and suspicion and in deserts of imagination and perplexity, (wondering) how could one come from God, claim predominance over all in the earth and ascribe to Himself the motive of the creation of beings - as He hath said, - “Were it not for thee, I would not have created the firmaments,” - and yet be afflicted by such trifling matters. For it is heard how every Prophet and His companions suffered adversities such as indigence, diseases and contempt; how the heads of their followers were sent as presents in the cities; how they were prevented from that whereunto they were commanded, and each of them suffered by the hand of the enemies of religion, to such an extent that the latter inflicted upon them whatever they desired.

It is evident that the changes and alterations effected during every Manifestation are the dark cloud which prevents the eye of the servants' knowledge from knowing that Divine Sun which shines forth from the Day-spring of Deity. When the servants who have continued for years to imitate the religion of their ancestors and who have been brought up in its established ceremonies and customs, suddenly find one who hath been among them, their equal in all the human limitations, abolishing those religious ordinances in which they have been trained for successive centuries and the contradictor and denier of which they consider as infidel, impious and profligate - such circumstances naturally constitute a veil and cloud for those whose hearts have not tasted the Salsabíl of severance nor drunk from the Kawthar of knowledge. As soon as they hear these things, they become so veiled from the comprehension of that Sun, that they declare Him an infidel and condemn Him to death, without appeal. This hath been witnessed since the earliest centuries and is also seen in this time. Therefore an effort should be made that through the invisible assistance we may not be prevented by similar dark veils and the clouds of divine tests from beholding that shining Beauty; that we may know Him in Himself, and if we seek any proof, we may attain to the fountain of the infinite bounty before which all bounties are accounted as nothing; and not to oppose Him every day by an imagination nor by clinging to a fancy.

As to His saying: “And will send His angels, etc.”: These “angels” are souls who through spiritual power have burned human qualities by the fire of divine love and become characterized with the attributes of the exalted ones and cherubim.

As the people of Jesus did not attain to these meanings and these signs did not outwardly come to pass as they and their divines understood, they have not believed in the holy Manifestations from that day until the present; therefore they have been deprived of all the sacred bounties and veiled from the wonderful Words of eternity. This is the condition of these servants in this Day of Resurrection. They have not even understood that if in any age the signs of a Manifestation were to appear in the phenomenal world in conformity with that which is recorded in the traditions, no one would dare deny or oppose them not could the pious and the unjust, the sinner and the righteous, be distinguished. Be just; for instance, if these statements recorded in the Gospel be literally fulfilled, and angels descend with Jesus, the son of Mary from the phenomenal heaven in a cloud, who would dare to deny and who would be able to reject or dispute? Nay rather, such agitation would suddenly seize upon the people of earth that

they would be unable to speak a word, much less to deny or accept.

It was owing to the non-comprehension of these meanings that a number of the Christian clergy disputed with His Holiness (Muḥammad). saying, "If thou art that promised Prophet, why are not those angels with thee which are recorded in our Book and which were to come with the promised Beauty, to assist Him in His Cause and threaten the servants?" (K.S. 25)

Such contradictions and oppositions have been among the people in every age and cycle. They have ever been occupiers with vain sayings, that a certain sign hath not appeared and another hath not come to pass. Such diseases affected them only because of adherence to the divines of the age in their approval or denial of these pure Essences and divine Temples. The divines being submerged in selfish conditions and engaged in paltry and evanescent affairs, found these immortal Suns contrary to their learning and understanding and opposed to their judgment and decision.

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- 15 Please God, thou shouldst purify the eye of the heart from the beckonings of water and clay, that thou mayest comprehend the infinite degrees of knowledge and realize that God is too manifest for thee to cling to any evidence or need any proof to demonstrate His Being.

O questioning lover! If thou dost soar in the holy atmosphere of spirit, thou wilt see the True One so manifest above all things that thou wilt find naught else save Him. "There was God and nothing with Him." This condition is sanctified above demonstration by any proof or showing by any argument. If thou dost traverse the sacred space of truth, (thou wilt behold) all things renowned through His distinction, while He hath been and will be known in Himself. If thou art abiding in the ground of argument, then be satisfied with that which is said by Himself: "Is it not sufficient for them that We have sent down unto thee the Book?" (K.S. 29) This is the evidence which He hath Himself established; greater proof than this there is none nor ever will be. "His verses are His proof and His Being is His argument."

At this time, we beseech the people of the Bayán, its wise men, sages, learned and witnesses, not to forget the Commandments of God as mentioned in the Book and to look always toward the origin of the matter, lest in the time of the Manifestation of that Essences of Essences, Truth of Truths and Light of Lights, they may cling to some of the verses of the Book and inflict upon Him that which was inflicted in the cycle of the Qur'án. For that King of Divinity hath power to take life from the whole Bayán and its people, by a single letter of His own wonderful Words; or bestow upon them all a wonderful pre-existent life by a single letter, and resuscitate and send them forth from the graves of egotism and desire. Be attentive and watchful, for all must end in belief in Him and in attaining His Days and Meeting. "Righteousness is not turning your faces toward the east and the west; but righteous is he who believes in God and in the Last Day." (K.S. 2)

II

- 16 The substance and essence of this chapter is to demonstrate and explain to the possessors of pure souls and to sanctified mirrors that in whatever age and cycle the Suns of Truth and Mirrors of Oneness appear to the visible world from divine tents of the invisible, they manifest themselves with mighty power and triumphant dominion for the development of the contingent beings and for the outpouring of bounty upon existent things. For these preserved Jewels and hidden and unseen Treasuries are the sources for the appearance of “God doeth whatever He willeth and God ordereth whatever He desireth.”
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- 17 It is evident to the possessors of knowledge and illumined minds that the unseen Divinity and Essence of Oneness hath been holy beyond emanation and appearance, ascent and descent, ingress and egress; is exalted above the praise of every praiser and the comprehension of every comprehender. He hath been and is everlastingly hidden in His own essence and will be eternally concealed from eyes and sights in His own identity. “The sight comprehendeth Him not, but He comprehendeth the sight; He is the gracious, the wise.” (K.S. 6)

No relation, connection, separation, union, nearness, remoteness, position or reference is possible between Him and the contingent things, inasmuch as all in the heavens and earth have become existent by the word of His command and have stepped forth from utter and absolute non-existence and nothingness into the court of the existent and visible, through His desire, which is the Will itself.

- 18 Glory be to God! Nay, even there hath not been nor will be any connection or relation between the contingent things and His word. “God warneth you to beware of Himself” (K.S. 3) is a clear proof of this fact, and “there was God and nothing whatever was with Him” is obvious evidence thereof. Therefore all the Prophets, successors, divines, sages and wise men confess their lack of attainment to the knowledge of that Essence of Essences and admit their inability to know and reach that Truth of Truths. As the doors of knowing the Essence of Eternity were closed before the face of all the contingent things, therefore He causes brilliant Essences of Sanctity to appear from the holy worlds of the spirit in mighty human temples, among the creatures, in accordance with the abundant mercy of “His mercy hath encompassed all thing,” and “My mercy hath extended to all things”; in order that they may express that Eternal Essence and Pre-Existent Entity. These Mirrors of Sanctity and Dawning-places of Divinity fully express that Sun of Existence and Essence of Desire. For instance, their knowledge expresses His knowledge, their power His power, their dominion His dominion, their beauty His beauty, and their Manifestation His Manifestation. They are the treasuries of supreme knowledge, stores of eternal wisdom, revealers of infinite bounty, dawning-places of that Sun of Eternity. Therefore it is said: “There is no difference between Thee and them except that they are Thy servants and Thy creatures.” This is the station of “I am He and He is me,” recorded in the tradition.
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- 19 All that is in the heavens and earth show forth the divine names and attributes until the traces of the splendor of that Sun of Truth are manifest and evident in every atom; so that without the appearance of this splendor, nothing can be honored with the robe of life nor attain to existence in the phenomenal world. What suns of knowledge are concealed in an atom! What oceans of wisdom are hidden in a drop! Among the beings, man is especially assigned to these robes and chosen for this dignity; for all the divine names and attributes are manifest and evident in human appearances, in the most perfect and excellent manner. All of these names and attributes have reference to man. Therefore He hath said: "Man is My mystery and I am his mystery." Successive verses proving and indicating this fine and subtle point are recorded and mentioned in all the Heavenly Books and divine writings; as it is said: "We will surely show them Our signs in the regions (of the earth) and within themselves." (K.S. 41) Likewise it is said: "And also in your own selves, will you not therefore consider." (K.S. 59) In another place it is said: "And be not as those who have forgotten God and whom He hath caused to forget their own selves." Likewise the King of Eternity (may the life of all in the tent of the invisible be a sacrifice to Him!) hath said: "Whosoever hath known himself hath surely known his Lord."

O thou my friend; I swear by God that if thou dost ponder over these statements thou wilt find doors of divine wisdom and portals of infinite knowledge opened before thy face.

To resume: It hath become evident through these explanations that all things express the divine names and attributes. Each in proportion to its capacity, indicates and points to the divine knowledge, until the appearances of (His) attributes and names have encompassed all the seen and the unseen. Thus it is said: "Is there any appearance in aught else save Thee, which is not of Thee, —that it could have brought Thee forth? Blind is the eye which doth not behold Thee!" It is also said by the King of Eternity: "I have seen nothing except I beheld God in it, before it or after it." Man, the most noble and perfect of the creatures, is a mightier evidence and greater expression than the other visible things. The most perfect, superior and excellent of men are the Manifestations of the Sun of Truth; nay, rather, all else save them exist only through their desire and move by their generosity. Nay, all are mere nothingness and absolute non-existence before their court of holiness; their mention is purified from mention of others, and their description is sanctified above description of all else. These Holy Temples are the eternal primal mirrors which express the Invisible of the Invisibles and all His names and attributes, such as knowledge, power, dominion, grandeur, mercy, wisdom, glory, generosity and beneficence. All these attributes become manifest and evident through the appearance of these Essences of Oneness and these qualities are not peculiar to some to the exclusion of the others. Nay, all the favored Prophets and holy chosen ones are qualified with these attributes and named by these names, but in certain stations, some appear mightier in manifestation and greater in light; as it is said: "These are the Prophets; We have preferred some of them before others." (K.S. 2) Therefore it is shown and confirmed that the Prophets and chosen ones of God are daysprings of the manifestation and emanation of all these exalted attributes and infinite names, although some of these attributes may or may not outwardly appear in those luminous Temples. Even if a certain quality is not outwardly manifested from those abstracted Spirits, it cannot be denied that those repositories of divine attributes and mines of supreme names possess that quality. Therefore all these brilliant Beings and wonderful Countenances are declared to be

endowed with all the attributes of God, such as dominion, grandeur and the like, though they may not apparently appear with outward dominion and other similar (powers). This point is evident and certain to every possessor of perception and in no need of argument.

- 20 All the former Prophets who have announced to the people a subsequent Manifestation have also spoken of the dominion of that Manifestation, as is recorded in the former Books. Dominion and all the names and attributes are certain and evident concerning all those preceding and subsequent Manifestations, for they are the appearances of the invisible attributes and dawning-places of divine mysteries, as already mentioned.

Furthermore, by sovereignty is meant the prevalence and power of His Holiness over all the contingent things, whether it appears in the material world with an outward predominance or not. This depends upon His own will and desire. But it is evident that the purpose of sovereignty, wealth, life, death, revival and resurrection as recorded in the former Books, is not that which these people conceive and apprehend in this day; nay rather, by dominion is intended the dominion which appears during the days of the manifestation of each one of the Suns of Truth by Himself in Himself. It is that inward authority by which they prevail over all in the heavens and earth, and which afterward appears in the phenomenal world according to the capacity of the world, time and creatures.

- 21 How far from the paths of truth were these people! Although the “resurrection” was realized in the rise of His Holiness, and the lights and tokens thereof had pervaded the whole earth, yet they derided and held to views based upon the false and vain imaginations of the divines of the ages, heedless of the sun of supreme providence and the showers of divine mercy. Yea; the beetle is deprived of the holy fragrances of eternity and the bat flees from the splendor of the world-illuminating sun. The same fact is witnessed in every age during the appearance of the Manifestations of the True One; as Jesus said: “Ye must be born again.” In another place He hath said: “Except a man be born of water and spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God; that which is born of flesh is flesh, and that which is born of spirit is spirit.”

The essence of the meaning is that those servants who are born of and quickened by the spirit and breath of the appearances of holiness in every Manifestation, to them can be attributed life, resurrection, and entrance into the Paradise of divine love; while to others is ascribed death, heedlessness, and entrance into the fire of unbelief and divine wrath. In all the Books, Tablets and Scriptures, death, fire, lack of sight, hearing, and understanding is attributed to those who have not drunk of the pure cups of knowledge and whose hearts have not attained to the bounty of the Holy Spirit of the time; as it hath been previously mentioned: “They have hearts by which they understand not,” etc.

- 22 In another place in the Gospel it is said: One day the father of one of the disciples of Jesus died. He spoke of it to His Holiness, begging permission to go perform burial and return.

That Essence of Severance said: "Let the dead bury their dead." Similarly, two people of Kúfih went to His Holiness the Commander—('Alí). One owned a house and wished to sell it; the other was the purchaser. They had decided that this transaction should take place and its agreement be written under the advice of His Holiness. That exponent of the divine command ordered the scribe to write: "A dead man hath bought from a dead man a house bounded by four limits; one extending toward the grave, one toward the tomb, one toward the Sirát, and one either toward paradise or toward hell."

If these two souls had been quickened by 'Alí's trumpet of life and raised from the grave of heedlessness through love of His Holiness, "death" would certainly not have been applied to them. In no age and cycle hath the purpose of the Prophets and Holy Ones been other than the real life, real resurrection and real revival. By reflection upon this statement of His Holiness, what hath been intended by "grave," "tomb," "Sirát," "paradise," and "hell" will be disclosed, but alas, all the people are veiled within the tomb of self and buried in the grave of passion. To resume; were ye to taste a little of the clear water of divine knowledge, ye would know that the real life is the life of heart and not the life of body. For both animals and men share in the life of the body. But this life is assigned to possessors of brilliant souls who drink from the ocean of faith and partake of the fruit of assurance. This life is not followed by death nor this immortality by mortality; as it is said: "A true believer is alive both in this world and in the world to come." If by "Life" be meant the outward life of body, it is evident that death overtakes it. There are likewise other statements recorded in all the books, which indicate this exalted fact and lofty word.

23 In like manner thou seest in the present day that notwithstanding the Sun of Significances, all the people both high and low are clinging to the dark beetles and satanic appearances, continually asking them intricate questions, while they, from lack of knowledge, answer in a way that will not impair their outward possessions. It is evident a beetle itself hath acquired no portion from the breeze of the muck of eternity nor stepped into the Ridván of ideal myrtles, therefore how can it convey the odor of perfume to the nostrils? This hath been and will forever be the condition of these servants. Only those who advance toward God and turn away from the appearances of the Satan will attain to the traces of God. Thus God hath ordained the decree of the Day by the Pen of Grandeur upon a tablet concealed behind the veil of might. Shouldst thou heed these explanations and reflect upon their outward and inward (meanings), thou wilt comprehend all the intricate questions which in this day have become a bar between the servants and the knowledge of the Day of Judgment. Then thou wilt not need to question. We hope, if it please God, thou wilt not return from the shore of the divine ocean deprived and thirsty, and from the sanctuary of eternal desire destitute. Now what will your effort and exertion accomplish?

24 To resume: The purpose of these clear explanations is to prove the dominion of that King of Kings. Now be just as to which is mightier and greater; this dominion which through one word hath so much power, prevalence and grandeur, or the dominion of kings who,

after protecting their subjects and the poor, are for a number of days outwardly obeyed by the people who in heart reject and oppose?

If the purpose of dominion be outward rule and temporal sway and power whereby the people are subdued and to which they outwardly bow and submit—so that the friends are tranquilized and honored and the enemies debased and degraded—how can such form of dominion be true concerning the Lord of Might, in whose name is unquestionably the sovereignty and whose majesty and grandeur are acknowledged by all? For thou dost witness how most of the earth is in possession of His enemies and all are working against His good-pleasure, disbelieving, rejecting, and turning away from that which He hath commanded and inclining toward and practicing that which He hath forbidden; while His friends are always suffering in the hands of enemies. All this is clearer than the sunlight. Then know, O thou questioning seeker, that outward dominion hath never been nor will be esteemed of importance by God and His Holy Ones.

- 25 These Essences of Being are ready to expend all; that is, they sacrifice life, property, souls and self in the path of the Friend, and to them no station is more beloved than this. The lovers have no wish except the good-pleasure of the Beloved, and seek no aim except the meeting of the Desired One.

Should we wish to explain a sprinkling of the mysteries of martyrdom and the fruits thereof, these Tablets undoubtedly would not suffice nor could they bring it to an end. We hope, if it please God, a breeze of mercy may blow and the tree of existence be clothed with a new robe through the divine spring, that we may apprehend the mysteries of the divine wisdom and through His providence become independent of the knowledge of all things. No one hath yet appeared who hath attained to this station except a few who are not renowned. The future will be what the divine judgment demands and what appears from within the tent of decree. Thus we explain unto thee the wonders of the Cause of God and reveal unto thee the melodies of Paradise that thou mayest peradventure attain to the sources of knowledge and partake of the fruits of wisdom. Consequently it should be known to a certainty that although these Suns of Grandeur dwell upon the earth, yet they abide upon the most great throne; although they may not possess a single coin, yet they soar upon the summit of wealth; and while afflicted in the hands of the enemy, they are seated upon the right hand of power and dominion. They are established and rest upon the throne of eternal might, although outwardly in the utmost humiliation; and occupy the seat of sovereignty and authority while apparently in the extremity of weakness.

Thus one day Jesus, the son of Mary, seated Himself upon a chair and made explanations through the melodies of the Holy Spirit the import of which is this: “O people! My food is from the herbs of the earth, by which I satisfy my hunger; my bed is the bare ground; during the night my lamp is the light of the moon and I have no steed but my feet. Who upon earth is richer than I?” I swear by God that a hundred thousand wealths revolve around this poverty and a hundred thousand kingdoms of glory seek after this lowliness.

The poverty and wealth, lowliness and honor, dominion, power, and such like things considered as important by these worthless creatures, have no mention in that court; as it is said: “O men, ye have need of God, but God is self-sufficient.” (K.S. 35) Consequently by

“wealth” is intended independence of all else save God and by “poverty” the need of God.

Another day, Jesus the son of Mary, was surrounded by the Jews. They wished His Holiness to acknowledge having made the claim to Messiahship and Prophethood in order that they might declare Him infidel and sentence Him to death. Finally, they led that Sun of the heaven of significances into the presence of Pilate the Caiaphas, the greatest of the doctors of that age. All the divines were present at that meeting and a large multitude assembled for the purpose of beholding, deriding and annoying Him. No matter how much they inquired that perchance they might hear Him acknowledge, His Holiness held His peace nor did He choose to answer. At length a wretch arose and came opposite His Holiness, saying: “I adjure thee, didst thou not say, ‘I am the Messiah of God, I am the King of Kings, I am the possessor of a Book and I am the destroyer of the Sabbath day?’” His Holiness, lifting up His blessed head, said: “Dost thou not see that verily the Son of Man is seated upon the right hand of power and might?” This He said, although no accessories of power were outwardly found with Him, but an inward power which pervaded all in the heavens and earth. No need to relate what they inflicted upon Him and how they dealt with Him after this saying.

It is also recorded in the Gospel of Luke that another day His Holiness passed by one of the Jews who was afflicted with palsy and laid upon a couch. When he saw His Holiness, he recognized Him by His appearance and began to entreat. His Holiness said, “Arise from thy bed; verily thy sins are forgiven.” Several Jews who were present at that place began to murmur, saying, “Who can forgive sins but God alone?” Then Christ perceived their thoughts and said: “Whether it is easier to say, arise, take up thy bed, or to say thy sins be forgiven thee? But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power upon earth to forgive sin,” etc. This is the real sovereignty and power of the Holy Ones of God. By all these statements repeatedly cited from different places and instances it is intended that ye may be informed of the interpretations of the words of the Chosen Ones of God that perchance the foot may not slip and the heart may not be troubled by certain statements.

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- 26 The utmost divine bounty ordained for the servants is the “Meeting of God” and His knowledge, which are promised to all. This is the extreme bounty of the Pre-existent Bountiful One for His servants, and the fullness of absolute grace for His creatures.

They have denied all these verses indicating the “Meeting” which is the strongest decree found in the Heavenly Books, and have deprived themselves of this lofty and exalted position and this excellent and glorious rank. Some say that by this is meant the meeting of the splendor of God in the Day of Resurrection. If they assert that the “Universal Splendor” is intended, this exists in all things, for we have formerly demonstrated that all things show forth the splendor of that Ideal King, and that the traces of the effulgence of the sun of the Manifestor exist and are visible in the mirrors of beings. Nay, if the spiritual and divine eye of man be opened, he will see that nothing exists without the appearance of the splendor of that Ideal King. For thou dost perceive that all contingent and created things express the manifestation and emanation of that Ideal Light, and dost behold the doors of the divine Ridván opened in all things for seekers to enter the cities of intelligence and wisdom, and attained ones to pass into the

gardens of knowledge and power. In every garden the bride of significances is seen seated in the chambers of words, with full adornment and grace. Most of the verses of the Qur'án indicate and show forth this spiritual fact. The saying, "Neither is there anything which doth not celebrate His praise" is eloquent testimony thereto; and "everything have we computed and written down" is a faithful witness thereof. If by "Meeting of God" is meant the meeting of these splendors, then all the people have attained to the meeting of the eternal countenance of that Peerless King. Why, then, is it assigned to the Day of Resurrection?

But if they say the purpose is the "Special Splendor," the state interpreted by some of the Súfís as the "Most Holy Outpouring"; if it is in the Essence Itself, it hath been eternally in the divine knowledge. Supposing this hypothesis to be admitted; in this sense "Meeting" cannot become true of any one, because this state is realized in the innermost of the Essence, unto which none can ever attain! "The way is barred, and seeking after it is forbidden." The minds of the near ones cannot soar to this station, how much less can the intellects of the limited and veiled ones! If they say it is the "Secondary Splendor," which is interpreted as the "Holy Outpouring," this is unquestionably in the world of creation, that is, in the world of primal manifestation and original emanation. This station is assigned only to His Prophets and Holy Ones, because none greater and mightier than they have appeared in the realm of existence; and all confess and acknowledge this fact. These are the sources and manifestors of all the eternal attributes and divine names, and these are the mirrors which fully express. All that refers to them is in reality referred to His Highness, the "Manifest and Invisible One." Knowledge of the origin and attainment thereto can only be achieved by knowing and attaining to these Beings who shine forth from the Sun of Truth. Consequently, by meeting these Holy Lights, the "Meeting of God" is attained; through their knowledge the knowledge of God, and by their faces the face of God. From the fact that these abstracted Essences are the first, the last, the manifest, and the hidden, it is proved of that Sun of Truth, that He is verily, "the First and the Last, the Manifest and the Hidden," and likewise the other exalted names and lofty attributes. Therefore, whosoever is favored by these shining and glorious Lights and hath attained to these luminous and radiant Suns during every Manifestation hath attained the "Meeting of God," and entered the city of eternal and immortal life. This "Meeting" can not be realized by any except in the Resurrection Day, which is the rise of the Self of God in His Universal Manifestation.

This is the meaning of that "resurrection" recorded and stated in all Books, and which Day hath been announced to all. Consider, is there any day to be imagined greater, mightier and more excellent than this Day, that man should turn away from it and deprive himself of its bounties, which are pouring like the spring cloud from the presence of the Merciful? After it hath been proved with complete evidence that no day is greater than this Day, and no matter is mightier than this matter; and after all these sound and solid proofs which no one who is wise and sagacious can deny or avoid, how can man deprive himself of such great bounty through words of the doubting visionary?

O my brother, understand then the meaning of resurrection and purify thine ears from the saying of these rejected people. Shouldst thou step a little way into the worlds of severance, thou wilt testify that no day greater than this Day and no resurrection mightier than this Resurrection can be imagined, and that one deed in this Day is equivalent to deeds performed during a hundred thousand years—nay, I ask pardon of

God for this limitation, because deeds done in this Day are sanctified beyond any limited reward. As these worthless creatures have not understood the meaning of “Resurrection” and the “Meeting of God,” they are therefore completely veiled from the bounty thereof. Although the purpose of learning and its anxieties is the attainment and knowledge of this station, yet they are all occupied with outward learnings and desist not from them even for a moment; closing their eyes to the essence of knowledge and the knowable. It seems as if they had not drunk one drop from the ocean of divine knowledge nor attained a sprinkling of the cloud of the merciful bounty.

Consider, if one does not partake of the bounty of Meeting or the knowledge of the Manifestations of God, how can he be truly called learned, although he may have studied a thousand years, and possess all the limited and outward sciences. It is plainly evident that he cannot be said to possess knowledge. But if one hath not seen a single letter of learning, and hath attained to this mighty honor, he is undoubtedly accounted one of the divine men of learning, for he hath reached the furthestmost point of knowledge and its highest degree.

This condition is also one of the signs of the Manifestation; as it is said: “He will make your highest to be the lowest, and your lowest to be the highest.” Likewise it is said, “And we were minded to be gracious unto those who were weakened in the land, and to make them models of religion; and to make them the heirs (of the wealth of Pharaoh and his people).” (K.S. 28) It is witnessed in the present day how many of the divines, by reason of their denial, abide in the lowest planes of ignorance, their names erased from the book of the exalted and the learned; and how many of the ignorant, on account of their belief, have ascended to the highest horizon of knowledge, and their names are registered in the Tablets of Knowledge by the Pen of Power. Therefore, it is said, “Seeking after proof when the fact is attained is blamable, and occupying one’s self with learning after reaching the object of knowledge, is to be censured.” Say, O people of the earth, this is a fiery Youth who runneth in the wilderness of spirit, heralding unto you the lamp of God, and reminding you of a matter which is visible in concealment under the veils of light, from the horizon of Holiness in the region of ‘Iráq.

27 O my friend, if thou soarest a little in the heavens of the significance of the Qur’án, and walkest upon the earth of divine knowledge unfolded therein, many doors of knowledge will be opened before thy face and thou wilt be assured that the very things which in this day prevent these servants from arriving at the shore of the eternal ocean, hindered the people during the Manifestation of the Point of the Qur’án from acknowledging and submitting to that Sun. Likewise thou wilt become informed of the mysteries of the “return” and “revival” and dwell in the loftiest chambers of security and assurance.

One day a number of the opponents of that peerless Beauty (Muḥammad), who were deprived of the Ka’aba of the Eternal, said to Him by way of derision, “Surely God hath covenanted with us that we should not believe in (any) Messenger until (one) should come unto us with a sacrifice which should be consumed by fire.” (K.S. 3) The import of this is that the Creator had covenanted with them that they should not believe in a Messenger unless he perform the miracle of Abel and Cain, that is, offer a sacrifice, and a fire come from heaven to consume it; as they had heard in the story of Abel, and which is

recorded in the books. His Holiness said, in answer, “Messengers have already come unto you before me, with plain proofs and with the (miracle) which ye mention; why, therefore, have ye slain them, if ye speak truth?” (K.S. 3) Now, be just; how could those servants who were in the age and cycle of His Holiness, be actually those in the age of Adam or other Prophets, when the interval between Adam and that time was several thousand years? Why did that Essence of Truthfulness attribute to the servants of His age the murder of Abel or other Prophets? Thou hast no other alternative except to ascribe falsehood and vain saying to His Holiness (which God forbid), or to say that those wicked ones were the same who contradicted the Prophets and Messengers in every age, and finally martyred them all.

Ponder carefully over this explanation, that the refreshing breeze of knowledge may blow from the city of the merciful and cause the soul to reach the garden of wisdom through the beautiful utterance of the Beloved One. As the heedless people did not understand the meanings of these perfect and eloquent explanations, and, according to their idea, did not find the answer consistent with the question, therefore they attributed lack of knowledge and hallucination to these essences of knowledge and reason.

Likewise in another verse, it is said in condemnation of the people of the age, “Although they had before prayed for assistance against those who believe not, yet when he came unto them whom they had known (to be from God), they would not believe in him; therefore, the curse of God shall be on the infidels.” (K.S. 2) That is, this multitude who waged war and fought against the infidels for the sake of God, and who sought victory in order to assist His Cause, when the one whom they had known came unto them, denied him; therefore, the curse of God shall be upon the infidels! Consider how it is understood from this verse that the people of the time of His Holiness were the same people who in the days of each former Prophet strove and fought to promulgate the Law and spread the Cause of God, although the people of the time of Jesus and Moses were not actually the people of the age of His Holiness. Moreover those whom they had known formerly were Moses the possessor of the Pentateuch, and Jesus the possessor of the Gospel. Notwithstanding this, why did His Holiness say “when came unto them the one whom they had known”—that is, Jesus or Moses—they “denied Him?” As His Holiness was outwardly called by another name, that is, Muḥammad,—had appeared from another city and come in another language and law—how then can the verse be proven and understood?

Comprehend thou the subject of “return”; how clearly it is revealed in the Qur’án; yet no one hath understood until the present day. What wilt thou say? If thou sayest that His Holiness was the return of the former Prophets, as is indicated by the verse, His companions must likewise be the return of the bygone companions, for the return of the former servants is also clearly shown in the mentioned verses. If they deny this, they have contradicted the text of the Book, which is the mightiest proof. Therefore in the same manner understand the fact concerning “return,” “resurrection” and “revival” in the days of the appearance of the Divine Manifestations, so that thou mayest behold with the outward eye, the return of the Holy Souls in pure and brilliant bodies; and sanctify and purify the dusts of ignorance and darkened self by the water of mercy from the knowledge of the merciful, that peradventure thou mayest distinguish and determine the highway of the morn of truth from the night of error, through the shining lamp, divine power and eternal guidance.

Furthermore, it is evident that the custodians of the Trust of the Unity appear in the temporal worlds with a new Command and a new Cause. As these Birds of the eternal throne descend from the heaven of the Divine Will, and all of them arise in the supreme, irresistible Command, therefore they are declared as one person and one essence. For they all drink from the chalice of the divine love and partake of the fruits of the tree of Oneness. These Manifestations of the True One have two stations. One is the station of pure abstraction and the essence of singleness. In this station, if thou dost name and designate all of them by one name and office, it is not amiss. As it is said, "We make no distinction at all between His Messengers." (K.S. 2) For all of them summon the people to the divine unity and announce the Kawthar of infinite bounty and grace. All are dignified with the robe of Prophethood and honored by the mantle of glory. Therefore it is said by the "Point of the Qur'án," "I am all the prophets." Likewise He says "I am the first Adam, Noah, Moses and Jesus." The same statement hath been made by the 'Ali'ite Countenance. Similar sayings indicating the unity of these Points of Oneness have appeared from the sources of the eternal utterances and treasuries of the pearls of knowledge; as recorded in the Books.

These Countenances are the points of the Command and the dawning-places of the Decree. The Command is sanctified from the veils of plurality and contingency of number. Thus it is said: "We have but one Command." Therefore as the Command is one, the Manifestations of the Command are also necessarily one.

To resume: It is evident and certain that all the Prophets are the Temples of the Command of God, who have appeared in different garments, and if thou lookest with an attentive eye thou wilt find all of them dwelling in one Ridván, soaring in one sky, seated upon one carpet, speaking one speech and enjoining one Command.

This is the unity of those Essences of Existence and illimitable and inseparable Suns. Consequently if one of these Holy Manifestations says, "I am the return of all the Prophets," it is true. Likewise in every subsequent Manifestation, the return of the former Manifestation is realized. As the return of Prophets is proven consistent and in conformity with verses and traditions, the return of the holy ones is also certain and accomplished. This return is too clear for need of proof and argument. For instance, consider that among the Prophets was Noah. When He was appointed to Prophethood and arose in the Cause with divine mission, those who believed in Him and acknowledged His command were indeed honored with new life, and a new spirit and life became true of them. For previous to believing in God and submitting to the Manifestation of Himself, they had the greatest attachment to temporal effects and properties, such as wife, children, food, drink and the like, to such an extent that they spent night and day in seeking vanities and means of enjoyment, and from these things, before arriving at the sea of faith, they were so firm and rooted in the limitations of their fathers and forefathers, and in following their ceremonies and laws, that if sentenced to death, they would rather submit than allow the change of a single letter of the habitual customs which prevailed among the multitude.

The same people, notwithstanding these limited veils and above-mentioned customs, as soon as they drank the choice wine of faith from the chalice of assurance in the hands of the Manifestations of the praised One, were so transformed that they would abandon wives, children, property, encumbrances, life and belief, yea, all else save God. They were

so overcome by excess of longing for God, and by ecstasies of eternal joy, that they would not value the world and all therein as a wisp of straw. Can they not be declared as of “new creation” and “return”? Likewise it was witnessed that these souls, before attaining to the wonderful and new favor of God, would protect their lives with a hundred thousand plans and schemes from threatenings of destruction, until for instance, they would flee from a fox and avoid a thorn. But after being honored with the mighty security and great providence, they would voluntarily expend a hundred thousand lives; nay rather, their blessed souls despised the cage of the body, and a single one of these hosts would fight against a multitude. If these souls were the same former souls, how could such things contrary to human tendencies and opposed to bodily desire proceed from them?

To resume: The fact is clear that it is impossible for such deeds and actions which have no similitude to former deeds and actions, to appear and be witnessed in the realm of existence, without a divine change and transformation; for their agitation was changed to composure, their doubt turned to assurance, and their fear transformed into courage. This is the virtue of the divine Elixir which transforms the servants in an instant.

For instance, consider the substance copper, which if it is protected in its own mine from super-abundance of dryness, will in seventy years² attain to the state of gold—although some consider copper itself to be gold, which through super-abundance of dryness, hath become disordered and hath not reached its own state.

To be brief: a perfect elixir, however, will cause the substance copper to attain the state of gold in an instant, and to traverse the seventy-year stages in a moment. Could it be said that this gold is copper or that it hath not attained the condition of gold, while the test is at hand to differentiate and distinguish the qualities of gold from those of copper?

Likewise, these would have traversed the earth-world in an instant through the divine Elixir, entered the worlds of sanctity, and in one step reached the divine placeless from the limited world of place. An effort is needed that thou mayest attain this Elixir which in an instant causes the west of ignorance to reach the east of knowledge, makes the gloominess of the dark night attain to the brilliant morning, guides the remote one in the wilderness of doubts to the fountain of nearness and assurance, and directs the mortal temples to the Ridván of immortality. Now if it be true to declare this gold copper, it will also be true and justifiable to declare these servants to be the same as before they had attained to the Faith.

O brother, through these clear, perfect and complete explanations, the mysteries of “new creation,” “revival,” and “resurrection” are manifest and evident without veil and covering. If it please God, thou wilt cast off the old garment from body and soul through the unseen confirmations, and be honored with the new and immortal robe.

Therefore, in every succeeding Manifestation, those souls who preceded all in the earth in faith, drank the clear water of knowledge from the Beauty of Oneness, and ascended to the loftiest summits of faith, assurance and severance, can be declared to be the return of the former persons who in name, office, deed, word and condition had attained to these states in the preceding Manifestation. For that which appeared from the former servants, appeared and became manifest in the subsequent ones. If, for example, a garden of roses be in the east of the earth, and that kind of rose also cometh forth from another branch in the west, the name “rose” is applied to it. In this case it is not in respect

to the limitations of the branch and its form, but on account of the fragrance and odor which are manifest in both. Consequently, sanctify and purify thy gaze from outward limitations, that thou mayest behold them all in one name, one office, one essence, and one truth, and that thou mayest perceive the mysteries of the “return” of the Words in the revealed Words. Reflect a little upon the companions at the time of the Point of the Qur’án; how they cut themselves from the whole world, were purified, sanctified and severed from all human tendencies and selfish desires through the pure fragrances of His Holiness, and preceded all the people of the earth in attaining the honor of Meeting, which was identical with the Meeting of God. For ye have heard how they sacrificed life before that Manifestation of the Glorious One.

Behold the return of the same firmness, steadfastness and severance in the companions of the Point of the Bayán, for ye have witnessed how these companions have hoisted the banner of severance upon the summit of inaccessibility, through the wonders of the generosity of the Lord of Lords.

To be brief: These lights have appeared from one lamp and these fruits have grown from one tree. In reality no difference is perceived and no change is visible. “All this is from the bounty of God; He bestoweth it upon whomsoever of His creatures He wisheth.” God willing, we will avoid the land of negation and reach the sea of affirmation, so that we may perceive the worlds of union, division, oneness, separation, limitation and divine abstraction with an eye sanctified from elements and opposites, and soar upward to the highest horizon of the nearness and sanctity of the significances.

Though all the Prophets, chosen ones, and holy ones, have commanded on the part of God that the people should see and hear with their own eyes and ears, yet, disregarding the exhortations of the Prophets, they have followed and will follow their divines. Should a needy and poor one destitute of the clothing of men of learning say—“O people: Follow the Messengers of God” (K.S. 36)—they will wonder exceedingly at such a statement and answer—“When all these learned and cultured men with outward leadership and rich and magnificent apparel have not understood and have failed to distinguish truth from falsehood, how couldst thou and those like thee understand?” If number and the garb of learning be a proof and indication of knowledge and truth, the former peoples³ should prove more worthy and superior, for they are greater and more numerous.

The point is also clear and evident that the divines of the age have prevented people from the path of truth at the time of the appearance of the holy Manifestations. This is recorded and stated in all the Heavenly Books and Epistles. No Prophet was sent forth who did not become the object of hatred, denial, rejection and execration by the divines. May God denounce them for what they have done formerly and are now doing! What veils of glory are greater than these temples of error? By God, removing these veils of glory is the greatest affair, and rending them asunder is the mightiest action! May God strengthen us and you, O concourse of Spirit, that ye may succeed in this in the time of “Mustagháth” and be not veiled from the Meeting of God in His Day.

Consider how many mysteries are hidden in the tents of the knowledge of God, and what jewels of His wisdom are concealed in the treasuries of preservation, so that thou mayest be convinced that there hath been and will be neither beginning nor end to His creation. The space of His destiny is too vast to be limited by explanation or traversed by the bird of minds and His ordained decrees are beyond attainment by any

comprehension. His creation hath been from the “Beginning before which there is no beginning,” and no “End” hath overtaken it. The Manifestations of His beauty will be until the interminable End; and no Beginning hath beheld Him.

Briefly: O my beloved, the melody of the divine world is sanctified above limitation by earthly hearing and minds. How can the ant of existence step into the court of the Adored One? Yet weak souls deny these abstruse explanations and reject similar traditions, through lack of understanding. Yea, only the spiritually minded can understand this. Say—this is an end to which there is no end in the creation, and a beginning for which there is no beginning in the world of origin. So, O concourse of the earth, ye may behold the splendor of the end in the Manifestations of the beginning.

2 Seventy years is equivalent to “three score years and ten,” the life of man. This reference to copper and gold is symbolic, copper being human reason, while gold is spiritual illumination.

3 Adherents of former religions, who deny a Manifestation in His Day.

28 We have formerly explained two stations for the Suns rising from the Day-springs of Divinity. One is that station of unity and condition of oneness, as previously mentioned. “We make no distinction between any of them.” (K.S. 2) The other station is that of distinction, creation, and human limitations. In this station, for each one a temple is designated, a mission is indicated, a manifestation is decreed, and certain limitations are assigned. Each one is named by a certain name, characterized by a quality, and appointed to a new Cause and Law; as it is said: “These are the Messengers; We have preferred some of them before others; Some of them hath God spoken unto, and hath exalted the degree of others of them. And we gave unto Jesus, the son of Mary, manifest signs and strengthened Him with the Holy Spirit.” (K.S. 2)

It is due to the variance of these stations and conditions that different words and explanations appear from those Fountains of Divine Knowledge, but in reality all the intricate divine subjects are regarded as one utterance by the knowing. As most of the people are not acquainted with the mentioned conditions, they are troubled and confounded by the different words of those Temples of Unity.

To be brief: It is evident that all these differences of words are due to the differences of stations. Therefore, in the station of oneness and rank of singleness, pure sublimity, divinity, unity and absolute deity have been and are applied to those Essences of Existence, because they are all seated upon the throne of the “Manifestation of God,” that is, the appearance of God is made manifest by their appearance and the beauty of God is revealed by their beauty. Thus it is that melodies of divinity have proceeded from these Temples of Unity.

But in the second station, which is that of distinction, separation, limitation, and temporal conditions and indications, they show forth absolute servitude, real need and utter lowliness; as it is said, “Verily, I am the servant of God,” and, “Verily, I am only a man like you.” (K.S. 41)

If it be heard from the perfect Manifestations “Verily, I am God,” it is true and without doubt; for it hath been repeatedly demonstrated that through their manifestation, attributes, and names, the manifestation of God, the attribute of God, and the name of

God, appear upon earth. Thus it is said, "Verily, they who swear fealty unto thee, swear fealty unto God, etc." In this station, all are sent forth from the presence of that Ideal King and Eternal Essence. If all of them raise the call, "I am the Seal of the Prophets," it is also true and beyond reach and access of uncertainty, because all are accounted as one soul, one essence, one spirit, one body, one command, and are the Manifestors of the states of the "Beginning" the "End," the "First," the "Last," the "Manifest," the "Hidden" of that ideal Spirit of Spirits and eternal Essence of Essences. Likewise if they say, "We are the servants of God," this is also confirmed and evident, for outwardly they have appeared with the utmost degree of servitude. No one hath the courage to appear in the world with that manner of servitude. Thus those Essences of Existence, when submerged in the seas of eternal holiness and when ascending to the summits of the significances of the Ideal King, uttered declarations of unity and deity. Were one to consider attentively, he will find that even in this state they witnessed in themselves the utmost humility and lowliness in presence of the Absolute Existence and Real Life, as though accounting themselves utter non-existence and deeming their own mention in that court as polytheism. For in this station, any mention would be an indication of being and existence, and this is considered a great error by the attained ones. How much greater (error) to mention aught else, or that the heart, tongue, mind, and soul be occupied in any other mention than the Beloved One; that the eye should look upon other than His beauty, the ear hear other than His melody, or the feet walk in other than His path.

At this time, the breeze of God is wafted and the spirit of God hath surrounded. The pen is withheld from motion and the tongue hath ceased utterance. Briefly: In this station the declaration of divinity and the like have appeared from them, while in the station of messengership they have declared prophethood. Likewise in every station they have made a declaration expedient thereto and have attributed all these to themselves; (declarations) concerning the world of command, the world of creation, the worlds of divinity, and the worlds of phenomena. Therefore whatever they may say and claim, including divinity, deity, prophethood, messengership, successorship, imámate or servitude is true and without doubt. Consequently these proven statements should be reflected upon, that no one may be overtaken in the sayings of the Manifestations of the Invisible and Dawning-places of Holiness.

Briefly: One must ponder over the Words of the Sun of Truth, and if they are not understood, they should be submitted to those who are custodians of the depositories of knowledge, in order that they may explain and remove the difficulty. One should not interpret the Holy Words according to his own inclination and desire, proceed to reject and deny—as do the doctors and theologians of the age who are seated upon the platform of knowledge and learning, and who call ignorance knowledge and oppression justice. Should they ask the Ideal Sun concerning their imaginary notions and find the answer at variance with what they have conceived or understood from the book of one similar to themselves, they unquestionably would ascribe ignorance to that mine and source of knowledge. This hath happened in every age.

For instance, when they asked that Lord of the Existence (Muḥammad) concerning the phases of the moon, He answered by the command of God: "They are times appointed unto men." (K.S. 2) Hearing this, they attributed ignorance to His Holiness.

Nay, rather, knowledge is that which proceeds from those mines of divine wisdom

and those depositories of eternal knowledge. "Knowledge is one point, but the ignorant have multiplied it," is a proof of this; and "Knowledge is a light which God sheds into the heart of whomsoever He wisheth" confirms this statement.

In this day, divers in the sea of eternal knowledge and dwellers in the ark of divine wisdom forbid people from studying vain sciences. Their shining breasts, praise be to God, are purified from these allusions and sanctified from these veils. We have consumed the greatest veil, in the saying, "Learning is the greatest veil," with the fire of the love of the Friend, and have raised another tent. And we glory in this, that we have burned the "veils of glory," praise be to God, with the fire of the beauty of the Beloved, and have placed none other than the desired One in the mind and heart. Neither do we adhere to any knowledge but His knowledge, nor cling to anything knowable save the splendor of His lights.

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- 29 As it hath been shown that no one can enjoy the melodies of the divine nightingale save those who are custodians thereof, it is necessary and obligatory for every one to submit the difficulties of the divine questions and intricacies in the references of the Dawning-places of Holiness, to the possessors of brilliant hearts and the bearers of the mysteries of unity; so that the questions may be solved through the supreme confirmation and divine bounties, and not by the assistance of acquired sciences.

But, O my brother, when a seeker intends to turn the step of search and journeying into the path of the knowledge of the King of Pre-existence, he must first cleanse and purify his heart,—which is the place of the appearance and emanation of the splendor of the hidden mysteries of divinity—and he must cleanse and refine his breast—which is the throne for the accession and establishment of the love of the Eternal Beloved—from all the gloomy dusts of acquired learnings and from the allusions of satanic appearances. He must likewise sanctify his heart from attachment to water and clay—that is, from all phantasmal forms and spectral images—in such manner that no trace of love or hatred may remain in the heart, lest that love may cause him to incline toward a direction without guide, or that hatred prevent him from another direction; just as in this day, most are bereft of the immortal Face and of the threshold of meanings, because of these two tendencies, and are grazing shepherdless in the deserts of error and oblivion. He should at all times trust in God, and turn away from the creatures; be severed and detached from the world of dust and united with the Lord of Lords; not preferring his own self before any one, but cleansing the tablet of the heart from pride and vainglory; attaching the heart to patience and self-restraint; observing silence and avoiding useless speech; for the tongue is a smoldering fire and loquacity is a deadly poison. Material fire devours bodies, but the fire of the tongue consumes souls and minds. The effect of the former vanishes in an hour, but the latter continues for a century.

He should consider backbiting as error, and never step into that court, for backbiting extinguishes the brilliant light of the heart and numbs the life of the soul. He should be content with little and free from avarice; profiting by the companionship of the severed ones and regarding seclusion from haughty and worldly people as a benefit. At dawn he should be engaged in commemorations, seeking for that Beloved One with the utmost earnestness and power; consuming heedlessness with the fire of love and praise; passing

over all else save God with the swiftness of lightning; bestowing a portion upon the destitute, and not refusing benevolence and favor to the unfortunate. He should show kindness to the animals; how much more to mankind, (especially) to the people of the Bayán; refusing not his life for the Beloved and turning not away from the True One when reproached by the creatures. He should not wish for others what he doth not wish for himself, nor say that which he will not fulfil; keeping aloof from evil doers with all determination, and asking the forgiveness of God in their behalf; condoning the sinners and despising them not, for the end is not known. Many a sinner who is favored with the essence of faith at the time of death, drinks the wine of immortality and hastens to the Supreme Concourse; while many a believing and obedient one is estranged at the time of the soul's departure, and dwells in the lowest abyss of fire. Briefly: by all these sound explanations and valid references, it is meant that the traveler and seeker should consider all else save God mortal and account all but the Adored One as nothing.

When the lamp of search, effort, longing, fervor, love, rapture, attraction and devotion is enkindled in the heart, and the breeze of love blows forth from the direction of unity, the darkness of error, doubt and uncertainty will be dispelled and the lights of knowledge and assurance will encompass all the pillars of existence. Then the ideal Herald will dawn as the true morn from the Divine City, with spiritual glad tidings, and awaken the heart, soul and spirit from the sleep of negligence with the trumpet of knowledge. Then the favors and confirmations of the eternal Holy Spirit will impart such a new life that one will find himself the possessor of a new eye, a new ear, a new heart, and a new mind, and will direct his attention to the clear, universal signs and to the hidden individual secrets. With the new eye of God he will see a door open in every atom for attainment to the stations of positive knowledge, certain truth and evident light, and will perceive in all things the mysteries of the splendor of Oneness and the traces of the Manifestation of Eternity.

I swear by God, should the traveler in the path of salvation and the seeker for the summits of righteousness attain to this supreme and lofty state, he will inhale the fragrance of the True One from remote distances and discern the brilliant morn of guidance from the Day-springs of all things. Every atom and object will direct him to the Beloved and the Desired One. He will become so discerning that he will distinguish truth from falsehood as the sun from shadow. For example; if the breeze of truth should blow forth from the east of creation, he will surely inhale it in the west of emanation. Likewise, he will distinguish all the signs of the True One—such as wonderful words, incomparable deeds, and brilliant actions—from the deeds, actions and traces of all else, just as the jeweler distinguishes the gem from the stone, and man the spring from autumn and heat from cold. When the head of the soul is purified from the ailment (lit. cold) of the contingent and existent, it will unfailingly discover the fragrance of the Beloved from distant stations, arrive at the city of the assurance of His Highness the Beneficent, through the effect of this fragrance, and behold the wonders of the wisdom of His Highness the Most Holy, in that spiritual city. It will detect the hidden knowledges from the forms of the leaves of the tree of that city, hear the glorification and praise of the Lord of Lords from its soil, with the outward and inward ears, and perceive the mysteries of “advent” and “return” with the outward eye. What shall we mention of the signs, tokens, appearances and splendors ordained in that city, by the command of the King of Names and Attributes! It quenqueth thirst without water, and increaseth the heat of the love of

God without fire. The ideal consummate wisdom is hidden in every plant, and a thousand nightingales of speech are in ecstasy and rapture upon every rose branch. The mystery of the fire of Moses is revealed in its wonderful tulips, and the breath of the Holy Spirit of Jesus emanates from its fragrances of holiness. It bestows wealth without gold and grants immortality without death. A paradise is concealed in every leaf, and a hundred thousand wisdoms are treasured in every one of its chambers. Those who earnestly endeavor in the way of God, after severance from all else, will become so attached to that city that they will not abandon it for an instant. They will hear conclusive proofs from the hyacinth of that assembly and will receive clear arguments from the beauty of the rose and the melody of the nightingale. This city is renewed and adorned every one thousand years, more or less. Therefore, O my friends, we must make an efforts to attain to that city and remove the veils of glory, through divine favors and lordly compassion, so that we may sacrifice the withered soul in the path of the New Beloved, and show forth a hundred thousand supplications and humiliations in order to be favored with that attainment. This city is none other than the "Divine Book" in every age. For instance, in the age of Moses it was the Pentateuch; in the time of Jesus, the Gospel; in the day of Muḥammad the Messenger of God, the Qur'án; in this age, the Bayán;⁴ and in the Day of "Him whom God shall send forth," His Book, which is the return of all the Books and the guardian. In these cities, sustenance is provided and eternal blessings are appointed. They bestow spiritual food and provide preexistent benefit. They confer the wealth of unity upon the people of abstraction, bestow a portion upon the portionless, and favor the wanderers in the desert of ignorance with the cup of knowledge. In these cities are treasured and deposited the guidance, favor, knowledge, understanding, faith and assurance of all in the heavens and earth.

4 In this Tablet, Bahá'u'lláh wrote as a follower of the Báb, interpreting the religious books of the past with relation to their fulfillment in the Báb as the "Herald," or "First Point."

30 To resume: We must not depart from the irrefutable command of God and the fixed decree of the Most High but must acknowledge the wonderful Books. And it is evident that whosoever hath not acknowledged the Qur'án hath not in reality accepted the Books which preceded it. Should we mention the concealed meanings and explain the hidden mysteries thereof, time undoubtedly would not bring them to a conclusion and the world could not bear them. God testifieth to what we say!

Consider how great is the value and how paramount the importance of the verses in which God hath completed His perfect argument, consummate proof, dominant power and penetrating will. In the declaration of His proof, that King of Unity hath not conjoined anything with them, for among proofs and evidence, verses are like unto the sun, while all others are as stars. To the people they are everlasting proof, fixed argument, and shining light from the presence of that Ideal King. No excellence equals them and nothing precedes them. They are the treasury of divine pearls and the depository of the mysteries of unity. They are the strong thread, the firm rope, the most secure handle and the inextinguishable light. Through them flows the river of the divine knowledge, and bursts the fire of the consummate Wisdom of the Eternal. This is a fire from which two effects proceed at the same time: It creates the heat of love within the people of faith, and

produces the cold of heedlessness within the people of hatred. O friend, we must not depart from the command of God, but acquiesce and submit to that which He hath appointed to be His proof.

As the Jews in the time of Moses exchanged the heavenly Table for such foul things as garlic and onions, likewise these people sought to exchange the revealed verses for impure and unclean imaginations. Similarly it is seen in this day that although the ideal Table is descending from the heaven of divine mercy and from the clouds of celestial bounty, and although the seas of life are flowing and moving in the Ridván of Paradise by the command of the Creator of all things, yet they are gathered like dogs around dead bodies, and are contented with a briny lake which is but bitter salt. Praise be to God! One is greatly astonished at such servants, who seek for proof after the banners of the proven are hoisted; who cling to the allusions of learning after the sun of knowledge hath appeared. It is like asking the sun for proof of its light, or the vernal shower for argument to demonstrate its bounty. The proof of the sun is its light which shines forth and encompasses the world; and the argument of the shower is its bounty which renews the world with a fresh mantle. Yea! The blind realize no effect in the sun but heat, and a barren soil knoweth no bounty from the vernal mercy.

Lend not thine ear to the vain statement of the servants who say that “the Book and verses cannot be proof to the common people because they neither understand nor comprehend them.” The Qur’án is a proof to the East and the West. How could it be a proof, if the power of understanding it were not possessed by the people? According to their statement, none would be required to know God, nor would it be necessary; for the knowledge of Him is greater than the knowledge of His Book; and the common people would not possess the capacity to comprehend it.

To be brief: This statement is extremely vain and inadmissible, and emanated from pride and arrogance for the purpose of keeping the people afar from the Ridván of the good pleasure of God, and grasping their reins tightly. Before God these common people are accepted and approved above the learned who have turned away from the True One. Understanding the divine Words and comprehension of the utterances of the Ideal Doves have no connection with outward learning, but depend upon purity of heart, chastity of soul, and freedom of spirit. For at the present time there are some servants who have not seen a single letter of the forms of learning, yet they are seated upon the summit of knowledge, the gardens of their hearts adorned with roses of wisdom and tulips of insight, through the cloud of the divine bounty. Blessed are the sincere ones through the lights of the Great Day!

31 Consequently, understand and be convinced that in every age, the people clinging to a verse of the Book, have made vain statements that no other Prophet should appear in the world. For instance, the divines of the Gospel sought to prove through a formerly mentioned verse (Matt. xxiv, 35), that the decree of the Gospel shall never be abolished and that no independent Prophet shall arise except to confirm the Law of the Gospel. Most of the nations are afflicted with the same soul-sickness. Ye behold how the people of the Qur’án, like former nations, are veiled by the statement: “The Seal of the Prophets.” Although they themselves confess the saying: “Only God knoweth the interpretation

thereof, and those who are well-grounded in knowledge” (K.S. 3), yet when He who is well-grounded in knowledge and who is their source, self, essence and identity explains it, finding it somewhat contrary to their desire, they say and do that which ye have heard. This proceeds only from the religious leaders, that is, from those who hold to no other God than desire, and find no creed except gold; who are veiled by the veils of learning and wander by reason of its error.

Hearken ye unto the divine voice of Holiness and the sweet melody of Eternity; how He hath by intimation warned those who falsely accuse the verses, and how He hath rejected those who deny the holy Words. Consider also the remoteness of these people from the Kawthar of nearness, and the arrogance and denial of those bereft ones concerning that Beauty of Holiness. Although that Essence of Grace and Beneficence directed those temples of nonentity to the court of pre-existence and guided those really destitute ones to the sacred road of wealth, yet some said, “This man is no other than one who blasphemously accuses the Lord of the creatures”; others said, “This man withholds people from the path of religion and faith”; and still others accused Him of madness and the like. Similarly, in this day, ye witness what vain statements they have made against that Essence of Eternity, (the Báb) and what accusations and evils they have attributed to that source and mine of infallibility. Although in the Divine Book and Supreme Holy Tablet, God hath threatened those who falsely deny and reject the revealed verses, and hath announced good tidings to those who accept them, yet how the verses revealed from the new Heavens of Holiness have been contradicted, notwithstanding the eye of the universe hath not seen such bounty, nor the ear of the beings heard such favor as the flow and descent of verses like spring showers from the clouds of the mercy of the Merciful. Each one of the Prophets “endowed with constancy” whose greatness of rank and loftiness of station are as clear and manifest as the sun was favored with but one Book which is still extant and its verses known. But so much hath descended (in this Day) from the clouds of mercy of the Merciful that no one hath yet estimated it. Twenty volumes thereof are now available; what a quantity hath not yet come to hand! How much hath been plundered and is fallen into hands of the infidels, and it is not known what they have done with it!

O brother! We must open the eye, reflect, and appeal to the Divine Manifestations, that perchance we may be advised by the clear exhortations of the Book and warned by the admonitions recorded in the Tablets; not contradicting the Revealer of the verses, but willingly obeying His command and accepting and submitting to His decree with all heart and soul, that we may enter the court of mercy and dwell upon the shore of bounty. “Verily, He is merciful and forgiving toward His servants.” (K.S. 5)

32 Among the proofs demonstrating this Cause is that in every time and age, when the invisible Divinity appeared in a human temple, some people who were of no repute, and who had no attachment for the world or any other object, sought illumination from the Sun of Prophethood, were directed to the lights of the Moon of Guidance and attained to the Meeting of God. For this reason, the divines of the age and the wealthy of the time derided; as is related of those erring ones:—“Among His people the concourse of those who believe not said: ‘We see thee (to be) no other than a man like unto us; and we do not

see that any follow thee, except those who are the most abject among us, and are of a rash judgment, neither do we perceive any excellence in thee above us; but we deem you to be liars.” (K.S. 11)

They objected to those Holy Manifestations, saying that no one followed them except the abject who were not worthy of credence. They meant that the learned, wealthy and distinguished among the people did not believe in them. By this proof and the like they sought to demonstrate the falsity of the possessor of the Truth. But in this most obvious Manifestation and most mighty Dominion, many of the rightly guided theologians were favored with the cup of nearness and meeting, and attained to the most great favor, abandoning the world for the sake of the Beloved One.

All these confessed, obeyed and were guided to that Sun of Manifestation (Báb), to such an extent that most of them abandoned property and family, and joined themselves to the good pleasure of the Professor of Glory. They sacrificed their lives for the sake of the Beloved One and expended all they possessed. Their breasts became targets for the arrows of the adversaries and their heads adorned the lances of the infidels. No land remained which did not drink the blood of these abstracted souls and no sword that did not touch their necks. Their deeds are a sufficient proof of the truth of their words. Is not the testimony of these holy souls who in this manner gave life in the way of the Friend, and at the sacrifice of whose heart and soul the whole world was astonished, sufficient for these servants? Is it not witness against the denial of other servants who gave religion for gold, exchanged immortality for mortality, bartered the Kawthar of nearness for salt fountains, and who have no aim except seizing the property of people? For it is seen that all of them are occupied with the vanities of the world and have kept afar from the Supreme Lord. Now be just; whether is the testimony of those acceptable and credible whose deeds are consistent with their words, and whose outward is in accord with their inward, so that minds are bewildered at their deeds, and souls are astonished at their self-restraint, and at that which their bodies have endured? Or is the testimony of these opposers who do not breathe except in selfish desire, and are not delivered from the cage of false imaginations?—who lift not the head from the bed by day except to strive as the dark bat in search of the mortal world, and do not rest by night save to labor in planning for worthless things?—who are occupied with selfish designs and are heedless of the divine decree?—who by day exert themselves diligently for livelihood, and by night seek to adorn the means of the bed? Is it justified by any law or creed that people should cling to the contradiction of these limited souls and ignore the faith and acknowledgement of souls who have sacrificed life, property, name, office, reputation and honor in the good pleasure of the True One?

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- 33 Furthermore, the sign of truthfulness and that of falsehood is designated and appointed in the Book. The claims and pretensions of all the servants should be tested by this divine touchstone, in order that it may distinguish the truthful from the false. This touchstone is “Wish for death, if ye say truth.” (K.S. 2) Consider these sincere martyrs, the truth of whose words is testified by the texts of the Book, and all of whom as ye have seen, expended life, property, wife, children, and all they possessed, and ascended to the highest chambers of the Ridván. Yet the testimony of these lofty beings and severed souls

in acknowledging this high and exalted Cause is not accepted; while the testimony of those people who have forsaken religion for gold and avoided the First Emanation (Báb) in order to occupy the high seat, is acceptable and allowable against this shining Light; even though all the people have known them, and have comprehended that they do not relinquish the least amount of outward temporal honor for the sake of the Divine Religion; how much less, life, property and the like!

Consider how, according to the text of the Book, the divine touchstone hath differentiated and distinguished between the pure and impure; still these people are not mindful, and in the sleep of heedlessness, are occupied in gaining the mortal world and outward leadership.

“O Son of man, days have already passed thee during which thou hast been occupied with the imaginations and superstitions prompted by thine egotism. How long wilt thou be asleep upon thy couch? Lift thy head from slumber, for verily the sun hath already reached mid-day; that it may shine upon thee with the lights of Beauty.”

But let it be known that not one of these learned men and doctors already mentioned had any outward leadership. It is impossible for well-known and influential divines of the age, seated upon the high seat of command and established upon the throne of authority to follow the True One; “except whomsoever thy Lord wishes.” Save a few, no such thing hath appeared in the world, “for few of My servants are thankful.” (K.S. 34) In this day not one of the noted divines, in the grasp of whose authority are the reins of the people, hath believed; nay rather, they have exerted themselves in suppression, with such hatred and denial that no ear hath heard and no eye hath seen (the like).

The Supreme Lord (Báb) (may the life of all else save Him be a sacrifice to Him!) hath especially revealed an Epistle to the learned divines of each city, wherein He hath mentioned in detail the grades of their opposition and arrogance. “Wherefore, take example (from them), O ye who have sight.” By mentioning this, he intended that during the Manifestation of “Mustagháth” in the next Resurrection, the people of the Bayán should not dispute (upon the ground) that “in the Manifestation of the Bayán, many of the learned divines did believe, therefore, why does not this happen in this Manifestation”; and that they, God forbid, should cling to such trivial notions and be deprived of the Divine Beauty. Yea, most of the mentioned divines were not renowned, but by the grace of God, they all were sanctified and purified from outward leadership and temporal vanities. “This is through the Bounty of God; He will give the same unto whom He pleaseth.”

34 Another proof and argument which shines like a sun among proofs is the steadfastness of that Eternal Beauty (Báb) in the Divine Cause. Although He was in the age of youth, yet without fear, and regardless of any one, He declared a matter contrary to the people of the earth, including the high and low, rich and poor, powerful and humble, king and subject. This has been heard by all. Could this be any other than the Divine Command and the confirmed Will of God? I swear by God, that should another entertain or think of such a matter, he would immediately be destroyed; and should he place the heart of all the world in his heart, he still would not venture this important measure unless by divine permission, or except his heart be united with the bounties of the Merciful and his soul

confide in the supreme favors. To what do the people ascribe this? Do they attribute it to madness, just as they did with bygone Prophets, or say that He hath undertaken these things for outward leadership, and to possess the tinsel of the mortal world?

Praise be to God! In His first Book which He hath entitled “Qayyúmu'l-Asmá” (the Self-Subsistent of the Names)—the first, greatest and most mighty of all Books—He prophesied His own martyrdom. In a certain place He hath mentioned this verse: “O Thou remnant of God, I have wholly sacrificed myself unto thee; I have been pleased with curses in Thy path, and have wished nothing except death in Thy love; whereunto only God the Exalted, the Defender, the Pre-existent, is a sufficient witness!”

Likewise, He craved martyrdom in “Tafsír-i-Há” (“Interpretation of the letter H”), thus; “It is as if I heard a crier proclaiming in mine innermost heart—‘Sacrifice thou in the path of God the thing which is most beloved by thee, even as Husayn (Peace be upon Him!) sacrificed Himself in My way’; and were I not regardful of this real mystery, by Him in whose hand is my soul, even if all the kings of the earth were assembled, they could not take from me a single letter, how much less can such servants who are of no importance in this and are of those who are rejected? That all may know the degree of my patience, resignation and sacrifice in the path of God.”

Could it be asserted that the Author of these words walks in any other than the path of God, or hath desired aught else save His good pleasure? In this verse, such a breeze of severance is hidden, that were it to blow, all the temples of existence would sacrifice life and relinquish soul. Consider the ignorance and extreme ingratitude of the people who have closed their eyes to all this and run after dead bodies from whose bellies proceed the lamentations of the property of the faithful. Yet what unwarranted accusations they bring against the Dawning-places of Holiness! Thus do we mention unto thee that which is wrought by the hands of those who disbelieve, and who turn away from the Meeting of God in the Day of Resurrection.

Consider how, in His tender youth, this Sadrát of the Divine Ridván delivered the Cause of God, and what steadfastness appeared from that Beauty of Oneness. Though all upon the earth combined to suppress Him, it produced no result. The more harm they inflicted upon that Sadrát of Blessedness, the more His fervor increased, and the fire of His love was enkindled. All these things are clear and no one denies them. Finally He surrendered His soul and hastened to the Supreme Friend.

Among the proofs of the Manifestation (Báb) were the power, domination and authority which proceeded from the person of that Manifestor of Existence and that Appearance of the Adored One throughout all regions of the earth. Although that Eternal Beauty appeared in Shíráz and removed the veil in the year “Sixty”, yet, in a short time the signs of the power, domination, sovereignty and authority of that essence of essences and ocean of oceans became so manifest throughout all countries, that from every city the traces, indications, evidences and tokens of that heavenly Sun became visible. Many a pure and chaste heart became expressive of that Eternal Sun, and many a sprinkling of enlightenment from that Sea of Intuitional Knowledge encompassed the contingent beings. Though the divines and grandees in every city and town arose to reject and suppress them, girded up loins of envy, hatred and injustice to eradicate them, killed many a holy one who was the essence of justice, by the accusation of injustice, and destroyed with severest torment many a temple of spirit which showed forth pure

knowledge and deeds; yet each one of these beings was occupied in the commemoration of God until the verge of death, and soared in the sky of submission and resignation. He so influenced and transformed these beings that they had no purpose except His wish, and sought nothing but His command. They yielded to His good pleasure and attached their hearts to His thought.

Reflect a little; hath such a power and influence appeared from any other in the world? All these purified hearts and sanctified souls hastened with perfect resignation to the call of destiny. During occasions of complaint, nothing proceeded from them except thanksgiving, and in time of affliction, only submission was visible. It is an evident fact how much hatred, animosity and enmity the people of the earth entertained toward these companions, for they considered tormenting and oppressing these holy ideal countenances conducive to prosperity, salvation and everlasting success and gain. Hath such commotion appeared in the lands at any period from the age of Adam down to the present time, or such tumult been witnessed among the servants? Notwithstanding all their sufferings and injuries, they became the objects of the curses of the people and the subject of censure by all the servants. It seemed as if patience originated in the world of existence from their self-restraint, and faithfulness appeared in the regions of the earth from their actions.

Briefly: reflect upon all these events which have happened and things which have come to pass, in order that thou mayest be aware of the greatness and importance of the Cause. Then the spirit of tranquillity will be breathed in thy being through the favor of the Merciful, and thou wilt rest and abide upon the throne of assurance. The One God testifies that were ye to reflect a little, ye would find that aside from all these established facts and mentioned proofs, the very cursing, execration and rejection by the people of the earth are the greatest proof and weightiest evidence of the truth of these heroes of the field of severance and resignation. When thou dost reflect upon the contradictions of the people, including divines, men of learning, and the ignorant, thou wilt become more firm and steadfast in this Cause; for whatever hath happened was previously prophesied by the Mines of Institutional Knowledge and Sources of Eternal Command.

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- 35 The signs and tokens of the True One are as apparent as the sun in mid-heaven, yet people are bewildered in the desert of blindness and ignorance. Notwithstanding that many of the Qur'anic verses and confirmed traditions indicate a new Law and Command, and a new Cause, they still await the promised Countenance to decree according to the law of the Qur'an; just as the Jews and Christians hold to the same saying. Among the texts pointing to a new Law and a new Dispensation are the statements in the prayer of Nudbih: "Where is the One who is preserved to renew the precepts and regulations? Where is the One who is chosen to reform the religion and law?" It is also said in the Zíyarát (visiting tablet written by 'Alí): "Peace be upon the new True One." 'Abú-'Abdí'lláh (sixth Imám) was asked concerning the character of the Mihdí: "What will be His character?" He (Muḥammad) and He will destroy whatever hath been before Him, just as the Prophet of God abolished the matter of Jáhiliyyih."

Consider, notwithstanding similar traditions, how they have sought to prove the permanency of the ordinances, although the purpose of every Manifestation is the

manifestation of change and transformation in the regions of the world, publicly and privately, outwardly and inwardly. For if the affairs of the earth change not, the appearance of Universal Manifestations would be futile. It is said in “Aválim” which is one of the authoritative books, “A youth shall appear from Baní-Háshim (family of Muḥammad) who will possess a new Book and new Laws”; then follows, “Most of his enemies will be the divines.” In another place it is related that Sádiq-ibn-Muḥammad said: “A youth shall appear from Baní-Háshim, and will command people to swear allegiance to Him; He shall possess a new Book; He will summon people to acknowledge a new Book which is onerous to the Arab. When you hear about Him, hasten to Him.” How well have they carried out the testament of the Imáms of Religion and Lights of Certainty! Although it is said: “If you hear of a youth of Baní-Háshim appearing, summoning people to a new Divine Book and new Supreme Laws, hasten unto Him,” yet they gave verdict of infidelity and apostasy against that Lord of Existence and did not go unto that Hashimite Light and Divine Appearance except with drawn swords and hearts full of hatred. Moreover consider how plainly the enmity of the divines is mentioned in the Book. Notwithstanding all these clear and indicative traditions and evident and confirmed references, the people have turned away from the clear Essence of knowledge and utterance, and have advanced toward the appearances of error and sedition; and despite these revealed words and recorded traditions, they say whatever is prompted by self. Should the Essence of Truth give an explanation which proves contrary to their egotism and desire, they will straightway charge Him with infidelity, saying, “this is contrary to the words of the Imáms of the religion and of the manifest lights, and no such command or order hath been laid down in the irrefutable Law”; just as in the present day similar vain sayings proceed from these mortal temples.

No understanding can comprehend the character of His Manifestation and no knowledge grasp the measure of His mission. All sayings are dependent upon His approval, and all things are in need of His authority. All else save Him is created by His command and exists by His direction. He is the manifestor of the divine mysteries and the elucidator of the hidden wisdoms of eternity. This is it related in “Biháru'l-Anvár,” “Aválim” and “Yanbú” (three authoritative books of tradition) that Sádiq-ibn-Muḥammad said: “Knowledge is twenty-seven letters. All that was brought of it by the Prophets were two letters, and until the present day, people only know these two letters; but when Qá'im shall arise, the twenty-five letters will appear.”

Consider: He hath designated that knowledge consists of twenty-seven letters, and all the prophets from Adam down to the “Seal” explained but two letters thereof, and were sent forth in these two. He also says Qá'im shall bring forth the remaining twenty-five letters. From this explanation, realize the rank and station of His Holiness (Báb); that His rank is greater than all the Prophets and His mission loftier and higher than the knowledge and comprehension of all the holy ones. These worthless creatures measure with their limited minds, learnings and understanding, a matter of which the Prophets, holy ones and chosen ones have either not been informed, or which they have not declared because of an irrefutable command of God, and finding it not in accord therewith, reject it. “Dost thou imagine that the greater part of them hear or understand? They are no other than like the brute cattle; yea, they stray more widely from the true path.” To what do they apply the mentioned tradition which clearly indicates the hidden facts and wonderful new event in the Day of His Holiness? These new events will cause

the people to disagree to such an extent that the divines and religious doctors will sentence His Holiness and His companions to death, and all the people of the earth will arise in contradiction. Thus it is said in “Káfi,” in the tradition by Jábir in the “Tablet of Fátimih,” concerning the Qá’im: “The perfection of Moses, the splendor of Jesus, and the patience of Job (shall be) in Him, and His friends shall be abased during His time, and their heads shall be, just as the heads of the Turks and Daylamites were, exchanged as presents; they shall be slain and burnt, terrified with fear, and appalled; the earth shall be dyed with their blood, and lamentation and wailing shall prevail amongst their women; these are indeed my friends.”

We beg the doctors and divines of the Bayán not to act in like manner; not to inflict upon the Essence of Divinity, the Supreme Light, the Absolute Eternity, and the Origin and End of the Manifestations of the Invisible, at the time of Mustagháth,⁵ that which hath been inflicted in this day; not to depend upon intellect, comprehension and learning, nor show hostility toward that Manifestor of supreme infinite knowledges. Yet, notwithstanding all these admonitions, it is seen that a misleading person, who is a chief of the people, will arise with the utmost opposition. Likewise in every city, (people) will arise to suppress that Beauty of Holiness. The companions of that King of Existence and Essence of the Desired One will flee to mountains and deserts and conceal themselves from the hand of the oppressors, while some will resign themselves and yield life with entire severance. As already witnessed, one known and reputed for great piety and virtue, whom the people deem it their duty to obey, and to whose command they consider it necessary to submit, will war against that Root of the Divine Tree and arise to oppose with the utmost strife and exertion. This is the quality of people!

To resume: We hope that the people of the Bayán may be trained; that they may soar in the atmosphere of spirit and abide in its court; that they may distinguish the True One from all others, and penetrate a false vestment with the eye of insight. But in these days such odor of jealousy is diffused, I swear by the Educator of Existence, including the seen and the unseen, that from the beginning of the foundation of the world—though it hath no beginning—to the present time, no such envy, animosity and hatred have appeared or ever will appear. For a number who have not inhaled the odor of justice, have hoisted banners of discord, and have agreed to oppose this servant. From every direction a spear is visible, and from every side an arrow flies. This, although we have not gloried in any matter, nor have we sought superiority over any. To every one we have been a most affectionate companion and a most forbearing and indulgent friend; with the poor we have been as the poor, and before the learned and lofty, perfectly submissive and resigned. Yet by God, than Whom there is no other God, the hardships, calamities and sufferings inflicted by the enemies and possessors of the Book are as nothing compared to what hath been inflicted by the believers (Bábís).

The possessors of intelligence who have drunk from the choice wine of love and have taken no step to gratify self, witness the proofs, evidence and argument which indicate this wonderful Cause and impregnable Divine Manifestation clearer than the sun in the Fourth Heaven. Now consider the turning away of the people from the Divine Beauty and their advancement toward egotistical desire. Notwithstanding all these sound verses and substantial references as recorded in the “Greatest Weight” (Qur’án), which is the Divine Trust among the servants; and notwithstanding these clear traditions which are more explicit than explanation and elucidation, yet the people have ignored and rejected them

all, clinging to the outward sense of some traditions which they have not found consistent with their own understanding, and the meaning of which they have not comprehended. Thus are they bereft of the wine of the Glorious One and the ever-flowing fountain of the Beauty of the Eternal One.

The Birds of Divinity and Doves of Eternity have two utterances. One they reveal according to the outward, without allegory, covering or veil, that it may be a guiding lamp and beckoning light by which wayfarers may reach the summits of holiness, and seekers be led to the court of union. Such are the clear records and evident verses already mentioned. The other utterance they reveal in veil and covering to expose that which the malicious have concealed in their hearts and disclose their innermost beings. Therefore, it is said by Sádiq-‘Ibn-Muḥammad, “God will purge them and sift them.” This is the divine balance and the eternal touchstone wherewith He tests His servants. No one comprehendeth the meanings of these utterances except tranquil hearts, approved souls and abstracted minds. In similar utterances, the literal meaning understood by people is not intended.

Thus it is said: “Every knowledge hath seventy senses, of which one only is known among the people; but when the Qá‘im shall arise, He will spread the remaining senses among men.” Likewise it is said: “We speak one word and by it we intend one and seventy meanings; each one of these we can explain.”

To resume: these things are mentioned that the people may not be troubled by certain traditions and utterances, the signs of which have not appeared in the world of dominion, but that they may attribute their perplexity to their own lack of comprehension and not to the non-fulfillment of the meanings of the traditions; for the intent of the Imams of religion is not known to these servants, as evidence by the traditions themselves. Consequently the people should not deprive themselves of the bounties through such texts, but should question the custodians thereof, so that the hidden mysteries may appear and become manifest free from veils.

But no one is found among the people of the earth who is a seeker of the Truth, and who turns to the Manifestation of Oneness, concerning intricate questions. All are dwelling in the land of oblivion and follow the people of hostility and rebellion. But God will do unto them just as they are acting, and will forget them even as they ignored His meeting in His Days. Thus, those who have denied are judged, and He shall judge those who reject His signs.

Revealed from the “B” and the “H” (Bahá).

Peace be upon those who hear the melody of the Dove in the Sadratu‘l-Muntahá!

Glory be to our Lord, the Supreme!

5 Bahá‘u‘lláh.