



Light of the World by 'Abdu'l-Bahá

STUDY GUIDE

EHSAN BAYAT

# Light of the World

## Selected Tablets of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

### Preface

On 29 May 1892, after four decades of bountiful radiance, from the first intimation of its rising glory in the Síyáh-Chál and Baghdad to its midday splendour in Adrianople and ‘Akká, the Sun of Bahá—as ‘Abdu’l-Bahá memorably relayed in His telegram informing Sulṭán ‘Abdu’l-Ḥamíd of the ascension of Bahá’u’lláh—had set. Yet the setting of that Sun was not followed by the dark of night but by the reflection of its glory in the Moon of the Covenant, lighting the path ahead, towards the attainment of Bahá’u’lláh’s ultimate purpose: the unification of humanity.

As the radiant Centre of that Covenant, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Bahá’u’lláh’s eldest son and appointed Successor, would, for the next three decades, lead the Cause and be “the steward of its glory and the diffuser of its light”. His mission would be “to enrich and extend the bounds of the incorruptible patrimony entrusted to His hands by shedding the illumination of His Father’s Faith upon the West, by expounding the fundamental precepts of that Faith and its cardinal principles, by consolidating the activities which had already been initiated for the promotion of its interests, and, finally, by ushering in, through the provisions of His own Will, the Formative Age in its evolution”.<sup>1</sup>

Over the course of that unique stewardship, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá wrote thousands of Tablets to individuals and communities in the East and the West, comprising an unceasing outpouring of guidance, encouragement, sustenance, edification, and boundless love. The present volume consists of seventy-six newly translated selections chosen from Tablets originally published in Persian in volumes 3 and 4 of *Muntakhabátí az Makátíb-i-Ḥaḍrat-i-‘Abdu’l-Bahá*. Though the Tablets presented here cover the entire period of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s ministry, many were written soon after the “Supreme Affliction” of the passing of Bahá’u’lláh. At that moment, the orphaned community of the Greatest Name, grief-stricken and despondent, turned to

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, recognizing Him to be, “in its hour of desperate need, its Solace, its Guide, its Mainstay and Champion”.<sup>2</sup>

Whether writing to the friends at that time of bereavement, or in later years when they found themselves suffering persecution and hardship, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá called them to reflect on the life of the Blessed Beauty, Whose “one and only purpose in accepting such trials and tribulations for His blessed Self was to instruct the lovers in the ways of love and to teach the longing souls the art of servitude”. The loved ones of God, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá wrote, must “not be grieved or distressed at these countless afflictions, for in bearing such trials, they share in the sufferings of the Abhá Beauty”.

The Tablets in this volume provide a selection, in English translation, chosen from among many written by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá that recount aspects of the life of Bahá’u’lláh and the tribulations He endured, events in His homeland, the purpose and greatness of His Cause, the unparalleled nature and significance of His Covenant—as well as the attempts of its enemies to subvert and destroy it—and some of the Biblical and Quranic allusions and prophecies about the Blessed Beauty. Reflected in many of the Tablets are parallels between Bahá’u’lláh’s sufferings at the hands of His adversaries and the afflictions ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was similarly made to endure.

These Tablets are thus doubly precious: Who better to tell us about Bahá’u’lláh, and to impart to us His “lessons of the spirit in the school of insight”, than His most cherished Son, Who shared, as His closest associate, His life of exile, imprisonment, and persecution, and Who, titled by His Father the “Mystery of God”, stood in a unique relationship to the Author of the Revelation as “the image of His perfections”, “the Interpreter of His mind”, “the Focal Point of His unerring guidance”, “the stainless mirror reflecting His light”?<sup>3</sup>

The lapse of a century since the passing of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá only testifies to His words of assurance that the Sun of Bahá’u’lláh’s Revelation “shall never set, nor shall that Day-Star of the Realm of Glory ever wane.... It remaineth ever shining in its meridian splendour, ever glowing and luminous, at the sublime apex of bounty.”

\* \* \*

## **Summary:**

The passage highlights the pivotal role of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, the appointed successor of Bahá’u’lláh, in guiding the Bahá’í Faith after the passing of Bahá’u’lláh. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s mission was to carry forward Bahá’u’lláh’s teachings, expand the reach of the faith, and usher in the Formative Age. Despite facing persecution and hardship, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá provided guidance, encouragement, and love to the Bahá’í community through his numerous Tablets. These Tablets offer insights into the life of Bahá’u’lláh, the tribulations he endured, the purpose of his Cause, and the significance of his Covenant. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá drew parallels between Bahá’u’lláh’s sufferings and his own, emphasizing the importance of endurance and servitude in the face of adversity.

## **Key Points:**

### 1. Introduction:

- Setting the context: Passing of Bahá’u’lláh and the emergence of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as his successor.

### 2. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Mission:

- Role as the steward of Bahá’u’lláh’s glory and light.
- Objectives: Expanding the faith, promoting its principles, and ushering in the Formative Age.

### 3. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Guidance:

- Writing thousands of Tablets to offer guidance, encouragement, and love.
- Providing solace and support to the Bahá’í community during times of hardship.

### 4. Themes in the Tablets:

- Reflections on the life of Bahá’u’lláh and his tribulations.
- Emphasis on endurance, love, and servitude.
- Significance of Bahá’u’lláh’s Covenant and attempts to subvert it.

### 5. Legacy of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá:

- Assurance of Bahá’u’lláh’s enduring Revelation through ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s words.

## **Questions and Answers:**

### 1. Why was ‘Abdu’l-Bahá described as the "radiant Centre of the Covenant"?

- ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was appointed as Bahá’u’lláh’s successor and played a central role in guiding the Bahá’í Faith after Bahá’u’lláh’s passing, hence the title.

### 2. What was ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s mission after the passing of Bahá’u’lláh?

- ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s mission was to enrich and extend the Bahá’í Faith by promoting its principles, expanding its reach, and ushering in the Formative Age.

3. How did ‘Abdu’l-Bahá support the Bahá’í community during times of hardship?

- ‘Abdu’l-Bahá provided guidance, encouragement, and love through thousands of Tablets, offering solace and support to the community.

4. What themes are reflected in the Tablets written by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá?

- The Tablets cover various themes, including reflections on Bahá’u’lláh’s life, endurance in the face of adversity, the significance of his Covenant, and the importance of love and servitude.

5. What assurance did ‘Abdu’l-Bahá provide regarding Bahá’u’lláh’s Revelation?

- ‘Abdu’l-Bahá assured that Bahá’u’lláh’s Revelation would endure, remaining shining and luminous, despite his own passing.

1

*He is the All-Glorious.*

1 O friends! How blessed, how favoured, how fortunate are ye to have been born in such a cycle and dispensation and to live in such an age and century, to have come upon such a wellspring and bowed down before such a threshold, to have taken shelter beneath the shade of such a tree and partaken of such a fruit. The cycle is the Cycle of the Ancient Beauty, and the century that of the Greatest Name. The wellspring is the stream of the Law of God, and the threshold that of the Abhá Beauty. The tree is the Tree of Life, and the fruit that of the Divine Lote-Tree. Blessed are they that attain thereunto! Fortunate are they that enter therein! Gladdened are they that draw nigh unto it! And happy are they that abide under its shade! All praise be to God, the Lord of the worlds. Convey my warmest Abhá greetings to all the friends....

**Summary:**

‘Abdu’l-Bahá expresses profound gratitude and exultation for the believers, emphasizing the extraordinary privilege of being born in the Bahá’í cycle. He compares this era to a divine dispensation, highlighting the significance of its spiritual manifestations. The believers are likened to fortunate individuals who have found shelter, sustenance, and guidance in the teachings of the Bahá’í Faith, symbolized by various metaphors such as wellsprings,

thresholds, trees, and fruits. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá concludes with a call to convey his warmest greetings to all the believers.

### **Key Points:**

#### 1. Introduction:

- Expression of gratitude and exultation for the believers.

#### 2. Significance of the Bahá’í Cycle:

- Describing the era as blessed and favored.
- Comparison to the Cycle of the Ancient Beauty and the century of the Greatest Name.

#### 3. Metaphors of Spiritual Manifestations:

- Wellspring of the Law of God.
- Threshold of the Abhá Beauty.
- Tree of Life and Divine Lote-Tree.

#### 4. Blessings for the Believers:

- Fortunate attainment, gladness, and happiness for those who embrace the Bahá’í teachings.

#### 5. Conclusion:

- Invocation of praise to God and a call to convey warm greetings to all believers.

### **Questions and Answers:**

#### 1. How does ‘Abdu’l-Bahá characterize the era in which believers are living?

- ‘Abdu’l-Bahá describes the era as blessed, favored, and fortunate, likening it to the Cycle of the Ancient Beauty and the century of the Greatest Name.

#### 2. What metaphors does ‘Abdu’l-Bahá use to symbolize the teachings of the Bahá’í Faith?

- ‘Abdu’l-Bahá employs metaphors such as wellsprings, thresholds, trees, and fruits to symbolize the spiritual manifestations and guidance offered by the Bahá’í teachings.

#### 3. What blessings are attributed to those who embrace the Bahá’í Faith?

- Those who embrace the Bahá’í Faith are considered fortunate, glad, and happy, as they find shelter, sustenance, and guidance under its teachings.

#### 4. How does ‘Abdu’l-Bahá conclude his message?

- ‘Abdu’l-Bahá concludes with an invocation of praise to God and a call to convey warm greetings to all believers.

#### 5. What overarching sentiment does ‘Abdu’l-Bahá convey in this passage?

- ‘Abdu’l-Bahá conveys a sense of profound gratitude and exultation for the believers' privilege of living in such a spiritually significant era and embracing the teachings of the Bahá'í Faith.

2

*He is God.*

1 O thou seeker after truth! Behold the power and greatness of Bahá'u'lláh! Within a short span of time, He hath stirred up the East and the West, and raised aloft, in the midmost heart of the world, the banner of love and harmony, of unity and peace, of fellowship and conciliation, of truthfulness and rectitude. He hath freed from enmity and strife a great multitude of souls belonging to divers and opposing nations, to disparate and contending religions, and hath brought them under the sheltering canopy of fellowship, love, and unity.

2 What power this is, and what strength! What greater proof couldst thou desire? He hath brought East and West into close embrace. Singly and alone, He hath withstood the world and uplifted His mighty Cause in the Most Great Prison. Though subjected to utter abasement, He hath crowned His loved ones with the diadem of everlasting glory. Were one to gaze with the eye of justice, this would be sufficient proof.

3 Thou hast written concerning the cost of postage. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá hath offered up his life for thee, how much more his earthly possessions! Upon thee be greetings and praise.

**Summary:**

‘Abdu’l-Bahá extols the power and greatness of Bahá'u'lláh, highlighting His transformative influence in uniting diverse peoples and religions under the banner of love, harmony, and unity. Despite facing adversity, Bahá'u'lláh's teachings have spread rapidly, bridging the gap between East and West and fostering fellowship and conciliation. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá emphasizes the remarkable proof of Bahá'u'lláh's divine mission through His ability to overcome opposition and uplift His followers. The passage concludes with a response to a mundane inquiry about postage, contrasting the spiritual sacrifices made by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá with the triviality of material concerns.

**Key Points:**

1. Introduction:

- Acknowledgment of Bahá'u'lláh's power and greatness.

## 2. Bahá'u'lláh's Influence:

- Spreading love, harmony, unity, and peace globally.
- Uniting diverse peoples and religions under His teachings.

## 3. Overcoming Adversity:

- Bahá'u'lláh's ability to withstand opposition and adversity.
- Upholding His Cause despite being imprisoned.

## 4. Proof of Bahá'u'lláh's Mission:

- Rapid spread of His teachings and transformative impact.
- Bridging the gap between East and West.

## 5. Mundane Concerns vs. Spiritual Sacrifices:

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá's response to an inquiry about postage costs.
- Contrast between material concerns and spiritual sacrifices.

## **Questions and Answers:**

### 1. What are some of the qualities attributed to Bahá'u'lláh in this passage?

- Bahá'u'lláh is praised for His ability to spread love, harmony, unity, and peace globally, as well as for uniting diverse peoples and religions under His teachings.

### 2. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá illustrate Bahá'u'lláh's ability to overcome adversity?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá highlights Bahá'u'lláh's steadfastness in the face of opposition and imprisonment, emphasizing His ability to uplift His followers despite challenges.

### 3. What is considered as proof of Bahá'u'lláh's divine mission in this passage?

- The rapid spread of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings, the bridging of the gap between East and West, and the transformative impact of His message are considered as proof of His divine mission.

### 4. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá contrast spiritual sacrifices with material concerns?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá responds to a mundane inquiry about postage costs by contrasting it with the spiritual sacrifices made by himself and others for the faith.

### 5. What overarching message does 'Abdu'l-Bahá convey through this passage?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá conveys admiration for Bahá'u'lláh's transformative impact, emphasizes the spiritual significance of His mission, and contrasts spiritual sacrifices with mundane concerns.



*God is the All-Glorious.*

1 O ye true friends and loved ones of God! The Candle shineth resplendent, and the century of the Abhá Beauty is even as a flowering rose-garden. The dawn of the Abhá Kingdom hath broken, and the stars of the celestial Concourse glow with light. Gentle breezes blow from the meads of the Lord, and sweet savours waft from the gardens of holiness. Heavenly strains from the Kingdom of glory are raised on every side, and the summons of the Company on high reacheth the ears of every lowly one. The Day-Star of divine bounty hath risen in all its splendour, and the Orb of God's grace sheddeth its radiance upon all regions. The manifold bounties of the Most Great Name—may my life be offered up for His loved ones—are all-embracing, and the banquet table of the Lord is spread throughout the earth. These blessings indeed compass you on every side.

2 Behold, then, what a diadem of bounty adorneth your heads and what a kingly mantle attireth your beings. Consider what eyes of bounty watch over you and what glances of mercy are cast upon you. Wherefore, be not saddened by the cruelty of the peoples of the world or grieved by relentless trials. For all these befall you in the path of the Ancient Beauty; all these ye suffer for the sake of the Most Great Name. These tribulations are bountiful gifts, and these afflictions naught but manifold bestowals. This captivity is kingship, and this prison a lofty palace. This blame and condemnation is praise and commendation, and this chain a necklace of world-embracing sovereignty. These stocks and fetters are the adornment of the feet of every fortunate one, these bonds and shackles are the highest hope of the people of glory, and these blades and swords the ultimate desire of the lovers of the resplendent Beauty.

3 Consider how the sacred breast of the Exalted One—may my life be a sacrifice unto Him—was made a target for a hundred thousand bullets, and how the holy body of Quddús—may my life be offered up for him—was torn to pieces. Consider the galling of the chains and fetters that weighed upon the blessed neck of the Most Great Name—may my soul be offered up for His loved ones—and how He was taken, in that condition, bare-headed and bare-footed, all the way from Níyávarán to Tíhrán. Many a trial befell that Sacred Beauty for well-nigh fifty years, such that the pen trembleth at their mention. The first was the exile from Persia; the second, the banishment from Iraq to the Ottoman capital; the third, the exile from that city to European Turkey and Bulgaria;<sup>4</sup> and the fourth, the banishment of the Beauty of

the All-Merciful to the depths of the Most Great Prison. Throughout this period, a myriad other tribulations also befell Him from within and without.

4 Likewise, call thou to mind the Bábu'l-Báb<sup>5</sup>—may the souls of the well-favoured of the Lord be offered up for him—and consider what trials and tribulations that luminous candle and radiant orb suffered, and what woes he endured in the path of God. Consider how, in the fort of adversity, he finally quaffed the brimful cup of martyrdom, and what injuries were inflicted upon his kin.

5 Recall, too, those other blessed souls who were even as shining lamps unto this world, as brilliant stars among the children of men, as resplendent rays and luminous orbs. They sacrificed themselves, one and all, and shone brightly in the path of the Blessed Beauty. They suffered captivity and endured fierce persecution, were pillaged and plundered, were cast into prisons and dungeons, until, in utter meekness, they drank at last the draught of martyrdom.

6 It is therefore clear and evident that the trials endured in the path of the Friend are the ardent desire of such as are nigh unto Him, that woes suffered for the sake of the Lord are the sole yearning of the denizens of the realms above. Though to outward seeming they are poison, in reality they are pure honey. And though bitter on the lips of those who waver, they are sweet as sugar to those who stand firm. Therefore, in gratitude for such a bounty, in appreciation for the afflictions and trials ye have endured in the path of the incomparable Beloved, it behoveth you to arise with such zeal and fervour as to dazzle the minds of all who dwell on earth. The glory of God rest upon each and every one of you, O ye beloved of the Lord.

### **Summary:**

In this passage, 'Abdu'l-Bahá addresses the true friends and loved ones of God, offering them encouragement and guidance in the face of trials and tribulations. He begins by exulting in the spiritual abundance and blessings of the age of the Abhá Beauty, likening it to a resplendent rose-garden and the dawn of a new era. Despite the challenges and cruelties of the world, 'Abdu'l-Bahá reassures the believers that these tribulations are bestowed upon them as bountiful gifts in the path of the Ancient Beauty.

'Abdu'l-Bahá draws parallels between the sufferings endured by Bahá'u'lláh and other luminous figures of the faith, such as the Báb and other martyrs, emphasizing their transformative power and the spiritual significance of trials. He interprets these trials as tests

of faith and expressions of divine love, likening them to pure honey that is bitter to the wavering but sweet to the steadfast.

In response to the afflictions endured, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá calls upon the believers to arise with zeal and fervor, expressing gratitude for the spiritual bounty bestowed upon them. He invokes the glory of God upon them as the beloved of the Lord, encouraging them to shine brightly in the path of the Blessed Beauty.

### **Key Points:**

#### 1. Introduction:

- Invocation to the true friends and loved ones of God.
- Description of the spiritual abundance and blessings in the age of the Abhá Beauty.

#### 2. Encouragement in Adversity:

- Reassurance that trials and tribulations are bestowed as bountiful gifts in the path of the Ancient Beauty.
- Encouragement not to be disheartened by worldly cruelties and trials.

#### 3. Parallel with Bahá’u’lláh's Sufferings:

- Description of the sufferings endured by Bahá’u’lláh, the Báb, and other martyrs.
- Emphasis on the transformative power of trials and tribulations in the spiritual journey.

#### 4. Interpretation of Trials:

- Metaphorical interpretation of trials as pure honey, bitter to the wavering but sweet to the steadfast.
- Affirmation that trials are tests of faith and expressions of divine love.

#### 5. Call to Action:

- Encouragement to arise with zeal and fervor in response to the afflictions endured.
- Invocation of the glory of God upon the beloved of the Lord, urging them to shine brightly in the path of the Blessed Beauty.

### **Questions and Answers:**

#### 1. How does ‘Abdu’l-Bahá describe the spiritual abundance of the age of the Abhá Beauty?

- ‘Abdu’l-Bahá describes this era as a resplendent rose-garden, where heavenly strains and divine bounties abound, and the dawn of the Abhá Kingdom brings forth a profusion of blessings.

2. What reassurance does ‘Abdu’l-Bahá offer to the believers in the face of worldly cruelties and trials?

- ‘Abdu’l-Bahá reassures the believers that trials and tribulations are bestowed upon them as bountiful gifts in the path of the Ancient Beauty, urging them not to be disheartened by worldly cruelties.

3. How does ‘Abdu’l-Bahá draw parallels between the sufferings endured by Bahá’u’lláh and other luminous figures of the faith?

- ‘Abdu’l-Bahá describes the sufferings endured by Bahá’u’lláh, the Báb, and other martyrs, emphasizing their transformative power and the spiritual significance of trials.

4. How does ‘Abdu’l-Bahá interpret trials in the spiritual journey of the believers?

- ‘Abdu’l-Bahá interprets trials as tests of faith and expressions of divine love, metaphorically likening them to pure honey that is bitter to the wavering but sweet to the steadfast.

5. What action does ‘Abdu’l-Bahá call the believers to take in response to the afflictions endured?

- ‘Abdu’l-Bahá encourages the believers to arise with zeal and fervor, expressing gratitude for the spiritual bounty bestowed upon them, and invoking the glory of God upon them as the beloved of the Lord.

4

*He is the All-Glorious.*

1 O ye beloved of the Merciful! The Abhá Beauty hath shone forth with His manifold names and attributes from the Dawning-Point of all desires. He hath caused this glorious century to become the revealer of His wondrous grace through the effulgence of this new light, and hath set aglow the candle of unity in the world of being. In sweet accents of oneness and in celestial melodies proclaiming Divine Unity, He hath warbled upon the branches of the garden of inner meanings so as to gather the scattered peoples of the world under the shadow of the Word of God and bring the hostile and contentious tribes of the earth together in unity and harmony beneath the canopy of the love of God. For this exalted aim, this sanctified and manifest purpose, He hath offered His breast to a myriad darts of woe, and welcomed countless wounds with utter joy and resignation, even as a healing balm.

2 Not for an instant did He rest; not for a moment did His sacred heart find tranquillity. How many a night did He pass under the weight of chains, enduring until dawn a hundred

thousand hardships, even as a captive seized within a hostile land. He met the darts of injustice with the target of faithfulness, and quaffed the poison of affliction as if it were the honeyed draught of immortality. He kissed the sharpened blade as though it were a brimming cup, and fervently yearned for the harrowing prison as if it were a loving embrace. He was exiled from His land and became a wanderer in the wilderness of adversity. He was banished to Iraq and Adrianople, and was finally incarcerated in the most desolate of cities. At last, despite all these afflictive calamities and toilsome tribulations, He planted the Tree of Oneness in the paradise of this new Cycle and raised the tabernacle of unity, peace, and reconciliation above the highest of all standards.

3        Then did the morn of hope dawn and the Sun of Truth begin to shine. Its light was shed upon all regions, and the morning breeze wafted forth. The joyful tidings of the Revelation were announced, and the blazing flame and glowing fire of the Burning Bush shone resplendent. The billows of the ocean of unity, even as the hosts of guidance, beat upon the shores of discord and cast the precious pearls of unity and concord far and wide. The divine springtime encircled the earth, heavenly flowers bloomed, vernal showers rained down, and life-bestowing winds blew on every side, till at last all were filled with hope that the beauty of Oneness would be unveiled in the assemblage of the world, and that the brightness of its countenance would shine resplendent throughout all regions.

4        Wherefore, O ye beloved of the Lord and friends of God, arise, and with the whole enthusiasm of your hearts, with all the eagerness of your souls, strive to unfurl the standards of unity in the midmost heart of the world and cause, with valiant might, the ocean of oneness to surge. Thus may the body of humankind be freed from the constraint of these variegated robes and patched garments, and be adorned instead with the sanctified raiment of unity.

5        This is the principal aim and true purpose of the revelation of the Prophets, the advent of the chosen Ones, and the rising of the Sun of Reality in this most great Dispensation of the King of Glory. Unless this sublime aim be achieved, unless this purpose of the All-Glorious Lord be fulfilled and made manifest in the assemblage of the world, this great Cycle will prove idle, and this mighty Dispensation will yield no fruit. God grant that all endeavours may be dedicated to establishing the ties of unity and concord.

6        The glory of God rest upon all who are steadfast in the Covenant and have clung to that holy Testament, through which God shieldeth against all discord.

**Summary:**

In this passage, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá addresses the beloved of the Merciful, extolling the manifestations of the Abhá Beauty and the grace of the present century. He describes how the Abhá Beauty has illuminated this age with His names and attributes, uniting the peoples of the world under the canopy of God's love and proclaiming Divine Unity. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá reflects on the sacrifices made by the Abhá Beauty, enduring countless hardships and tribulations to establish unity, peace, and reconciliation in the world. He narrates the journey of the Abhá Beauty from captivity and exile to the planting of the Tree of Oneness and the establishment of unity and concord.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá urges the beloved of the Lord to arise with enthusiasm and eagerness to unfurl the standards of unity and cause the ocean of oneness to surge in the world. He emphasizes that the principal aim of the Prophets and the purpose of the current Dispensation is to establish unity among humankind. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá concludes by invoking the glory of God upon those who remain steadfast in the Covenant and dedicated to establishing unity and concord.

### **Key Points:**

#### 1. Introduction:

- Invocation to the beloved of the Merciful.
- Reflection on the manifestations of the Abhá Beauty and the grace of the present century.

#### 2. Sacrifices of the Abhá Beauty:

- Endurance of countless hardships and tribulations to establish unity, peace, and reconciliation.
- Acceptance of wounds and afflictions with joy and resignation.

#### 3. Journey to Establish Unity:

- Narrative of the Abhá Beauty's journey from captivity and exile to the planting of the Tree of Oneness.
- Establishment of unity and concord in the world.

#### 4. Call to Action:

- Urging the beloved of the Lord to arise with enthusiasm and eagerness to unfurl the standards of unity.
- Emphasis on causing the ocean of oneness to surge in the world.

#### 5. Purpose of the Dispensation:

- Affirmation that the principal aim of the Prophets and the purpose of the current Dispensation is to establish unity among humankind.

#### 6. Conclusion:

- Invocation of the glory of God upon those who remain steadfast in the Covenant and dedicated to establishing unity and concord.

### Questions and Answers:

1. How does ‘Abdu’l-Bahá describe the manifestations of the Abhá Beauty in this passage?

- ‘Abdu’l-Bahá describes the Abhá Beauty as shining forth with His manifold names and attributes, illuminating this age with the grace of Divine Unity.

2. What sacrifices did the Abhá Beauty endure to establish unity, peace, and reconciliation in the world?

- The Abhá Beauty endured countless hardships and tribulations, accepting wounds and afflictions with joy and resignation, to establish unity, peace, and reconciliation in the world.

3. What journey did the Abhá Beauty undertake to establish unity?

- The Abhá Beauty journeyed from captivity and exile to the planting of the Tree of Oneness, establishing unity and concord in the world.

4. What action does ‘Abdu’l-Bahá urge the beloved of the Lord to take in response to the establishment of unity?

- ‘Abdu’l-Bahá urges the beloved of the Lord to arise with enthusiasm and eagerness to unfurl the standards of unity and cause the ocean of oneness to surge in the world.

5. What is emphasized as the principal aim of the Prophets and the purpose of the current Dispensation?

- The principal aim of the Prophets and the purpose of the current Dispensation is to establish unity among humankind.

### 5

1 O servant of the one true God! When the Morn of divine guidance dawned above the Most Exalted Horizon, its rays brought tidings of great joy and heralded the advent of the Abhá Beauty, as is openly and unequivocally stated in the Qayyúmu’l-Asmá’.

2 In the whole of the Bayán, all things find their consummation in these wondrous and sublime words: “The Day of Resurrection is from the time of the dawning of the Sun of Bahá until its setting.”<sup>6</sup> “Beware, beware, lest the Váhid of the Bayán shut thee out as by a veil from Him. And beware, beware, that what hath been sent down in the Bayán shut thee not out as by a veil from Him.”<sup>7</sup> The Báb Himself is among the Váhid of the Bayán: There are the eighteen Letters of the Living, and He Himself is the nineteenth. One of the Letters of the

Living is Quddús, of whom He hath said that Mirrors to the number of thirteen Váhids abide beneath his shadow.<sup>8</sup>

3 Therefore, say unto them that are veiled: “The Exalted One hath warned you to beware, beware, lest by turning unto Him or unto that which hath been revealed in the Bayán ye be shut out as by a veil from the Beauty of the Lord. Yet ye foolish ones are raising a clamour on every side. One saith, ‘Where is the advent of Him Whom God shall make manifest?’ while another exclaimeth, ‘Where are His palaces?’ One asketh, ‘Where is the primary school of Him Whom God shall make manifest?’<sup>9</sup> and yet another demandeth, ‘Where is the cradle of His resurrection?’”

4 The Báb Himself saith: “Beware lest the Váhid of the Bayán and that which hath been revealed in the Bayán shut thee out as by a veil from Him.” And yet, notwithstanding this, these foolish ones have seized upon the outer meaning of the verses as a pretext to cavil against that peerless Beauty in Whose praise the whole of the Bayán hath been revealed. “What aileth these people that they come not close to understanding what is said unto them?”<sup>10</sup> He hath also said: “Were He to appear at this very moment, I would be the first to adore Him.” And again: “In the year nine ye shall attain unto all good.” And so on.

5 First, consider the basis on which they pronounced the death sentence against the Most Exalted One, the Báb—may my life be a sacrifice unto Him! Mullá Muḥammad-i-Mamaqání cried out, “O people! In the Qur’án God saith: ‘No doubt is there about this Book: It is a guidance unto the God-fearing’;<sup>11</sup> that is, it guideth aright all humanity. It is also clearly stated: ‘But He is the Apostle of God and the Seal of the Prophets.’<sup>12</sup> How can we regard such an explicit statement as the source of error, while it is guidance itself? This person who claimeth to be a descendant of the Prophet hath indeed destroyed the foundation laid down by Him!” He then mentioned, one by one, some of the laws revealed in the Bayán—laws that were later abrogated in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. Thereupon, he ordered the emblem of the Báb’s noble lineage to be removed from His head,<sup>13</sup> and issued, without hesitation and with the utmost malice, the sentence of His death.

6 Say: Unto what did the Jewish people cleave except the outer meanings of the verses of the Torah when they adorned the cross with the body of the Beloved, thus depriving themselves of the grace of the Messiah? They clung unto the literal text of the Torah while remaining veiled from Him Who was its Revealer. The Pharisees, who ranked among the most learned of that age and cycle, called Christ not Messiah [Masíḥ] but a monster



[Masíkh]. They regarded His comely and beauteous Countenance as vile and unsightly. Such are the ways of the people at the hour of the dawning of the Day-Star of the world.

7 Likewise, when the breezes of the Revelation of Muḥammad perfumed the regions of Mecca and Medina, and the reviving breaths of the divine Teachings made the Arabian Peninsula the scene of the celestial springtide, the Christian divines also clung unto the literal interpretation of God's perspicuous Book, and remained deprived of the splendours of the Day-Star of the realms above. For according to the outward meaning of the text of the Holy Gospel, there will be no other advent after Christ. The priests and clerics held fast unto these words and remained veiled from the light of certitude that shone forth from the luminous Horizon.

8 In brief, on the day of the Revelation of the divine Light, the peoples of the world invariably cleaved unto the outward meanings of the verses of the Book, and thus deprived themselves of the grace of the Almighty. Worse still, most of the divines used their interpretation of the Holy Books to decree the death of these sovereign Lords of all existence, these Luminaries of the visible and invisible realms. Yet, there is little cause for wonder that those peoples were veiled from the Lord of creation, for their Holy Books and Scriptures did not contain such clear and explicit counsels and such conclusive admonitions as are found in the Bayán.

9 But the Báb—may my life be offered up for Him—left no soul any room for hesitation. He removed the veils completely. Throughout the Bayán, He openly and unambiguously declared that the object of all the Scriptures and sacred Books was none other than the Most Great Light. He warned the people to beware lest they be veiled from the Day-Star of the world by the text of the Book or by their own interpretations of the verses and utterances. Were counsels and admonitions such as these ever revealed in the Torah, the Gospel, or the Holy Qur'án? Nay, by the righteousness of God! This is unique to this Most Great Dispensation, in which the Morn of divine guidance, the Most Exalted Beauty—may my life be offered up for Him—hath rent asunder the concealing veils and made the path of guidance plain and clear.

10 Moreover, following the martyrdom of that Mystery of existence, that glorious Being, where were these perverse people to be found? Each had crept into the corner of everlasting abasement, turned away from friend and stranger alike, and, seized with fear and trepidation, remained hidden from everyone until such time as the Ancient Beauty, the Most Great Name—may my life be offered up for His loved ones—exalted the Cause of God. Then it was that these creeping things crawled out of their hiding places and flaunted themselves. In

no time at all, they stirred up mischief, raised the banner of hatred, and thus cast themselves into the abyss of woeful torment. No mention dost thou hear from them now, nor the faintest murmur.<sup>14</sup>

11 Consider more recent events. When these exiles were under the threat of the sword, the King of Martyrs and the Beloved of Martyrs—may my life be offered up for them both—as well as other martyrs, attained the station of supreme sacrifice. The martyrs in Yazd were ripped to pieces, and those in Khurásán were burnt to death, their dust and ashes scattered to the winds. So too it was in Shíráz and other parts of the country. At that same time, the leader of these wayward people expressly repudiated the Báb from the pulpits of Işfahán and Tīhrán.<sup>15</sup> Can this also be denied, though it had become the talk of both towns?

12 Now that he is witnessing how the praises of the Cause of God have set the East and the West in motion, how the fame of the Most Great Name hath encompassed the North and the South, how the potency of the Word of God hath shaken the powers of the world, and how the divine Call, bearing the joyful tidings of the Spirit, hath quickened and revitalized the world of humanity—he hath once again emerged from his pit of obscurity. He hath raised an uproar and asserted his existence, declaring: “We are the people of the Bayán, and the cornerstone of this edifice.”

13 Far, far be it from the truth! Where were these people a few years ago? Who amongst them hath ever quaffed from the cup of tribulation or exerted the least effort in the pathway of the Exalted One? Naught have they ever manifested but denial and repudiation; nothing have they ever shown save indecency and vice. By God, besides Whom there is none other! Should there now be any test or trial, ye would immediately witness them ascending the pulpit and raising the cry of “We are wholly quit of them!”<sup>16</sup> Nay, they would curse and revile the Cause of God....

14 Consider how the burning meteor of the Covenant hath pierced the heart of the world. Witness the rays that stream forth from the unseen Kingdom upon the lands of the Slavs and the Turks.

Shed splendours on the Orient,  
And perfumes scatter in the West,  
Carry light unto the Slav,  
And the Turk with life invest.

And yet these deniers, even as the bats of darkness, have crawled into their caves of apathy and deny the existence of the sun. How well hath it been said:

Granted that this morn be called a darksome night,  
Are seeing eyes also blinded by the light?<sup>17</sup>

15 Nay, by the righteousness of the Lord! Erelong thou shalt hear the sound of this Bugle and the blasts of this Trumpet coming from the Concourse on high. Glory be to my Lord, the All-Glorious! Upon thee be greetings and praise.

### **Summary:**

In this discourse, 'Abdu'l-Bahá addresses the servant of the one true God, reflecting on the dawn of divine guidance and the advent of the Abhá Beauty, as prophesied in the Qayyúmu'l-Asmá'. He emphasizes the warnings in the Bayán against being veiled from the Beauty of the Lord and clinging solely to literal interpretations of sacred texts. Drawing parallels with previous manifestations, 'Abdu'l-Bahá highlights the consequences of adhering to outward meanings and the rejection faced by the Báb. He contrasts the approach of the Báb, who openly declared the true object of all scriptures and removed veils, with the veiled interpretations of previous dispensations. 'Abdu'l-Bahá concludes by affirming the transformative power of the Covenant and the inevitable manifestation of divine truth.

### **Key Points:**

#### 1. Introduction:

- Reflection on the dawn of divine guidance and the advent of the Abhá Beauty.
- Importance of the warnings in the Bayán.

#### 2. Warning Against Veils:

- Caution against being veiled from the Beauty of the Lord.
- Consequences of clinging to literal interpretations.

#### 3. Parallels with Previous Manifestations:

- Comparison with the rejection faced by the Báb.
- Emphasis on consequences of adhering to outward meanings.

#### 4. Uniqueness of the Báb's Teachings:

- Revelation of the true object of scriptures.
- Removal of veils and clarity in guidance.

## 5. Transformative Power of the Covenant:

- Impact of the Covenant on believers.
- Affirmation of the forthcoming manifestation of divine truth.

## 6. Conclusion:

- Reiteration of the transformative power of the Covenant.
- Affirmation of the forthcoming manifestation of divine truth.

## **Questions and Answers:**

### 1. What does 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasize regarding the warnings in the Bayán?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá underscores the importance of heeding the warnings in the Bayán against being veiled from the Beauty of the Lord and the consequences of clinging solely to literal interpretations of sacred texts.

### 2. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá draw parallels between the rejection faced by the Báb and previous manifestations?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá compares the rejection faced by the Báb with that experienced by previous manifestations, highlighting how adherence to outward meanings of scriptures led to veiling from divine truth and subsequent rejection.

### 3. What is unique about the teachings of the Báb according to 'Abdu'l-Bahá?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasizes the uniqueness of the Báb's teachings in revealing the true object of all scriptures and in tearing asunder the veils of interpretation, thus providing clarity in guidance.

### 4. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá characterize the transformative power of the Covenant?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá highlights the impact of the Covenant on believers, illustrating its ability to bring about transformation and the inevitable manifestation of divine truth.

### 5. What message does 'Abdu'l-Bahá convey regarding the forthcoming manifestation of divine truth?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá affirms the inevitability of divine truth manifesting, expressing confidence in the forthcoming manifestation and the fulfillment of divine prophecies.

1 O Lord, my God, my Best-Beloved, my Aim, my heart's Desire! This, verily, is the first of the days of Riḍván. It is come with joy and delight, exultation and rapture. The winds are wafting, the clouds are raining down, and the sun is shining forth through Thy bountiful grace. The morning breeze bloweth over hill and dale in this wondrous Springtime, as a token of Thine inestimable favour, transforming these lands into a fine brocade of incomparable hues and a silken carpet begemmed with flowers and adorned with a vesture of verdant leaves that dazzle the eyes with their gleaming splendour. The breezes blow gently, the fresh streams flow softly, and the meads are adorned with bloom; the groves are lush, the clouds are rich with rain, and the stars are aglow through Thy gracious providence. This dust-heap of a mortal world hath been made green and lustrous by Thy bounty, and the earth hath become an eternal paradise through Thy mercy, O my God, inasmuch as Thy day of Riḍván hath arrived, girded with majesty and invested with sovereignty, flooding creation with beams of light like unto a star, and accompanied by a procession of fervour and joy. Riḍván hath pitched its tent with dazzling splendour in the midmost heart of the world, and led its hosts and sent forth its troops far and wide to the uttermost corners of Paradise.

2 Thus have the hearts of Thy loved ones overflowed with joy and rapture and been carried away in happiness and bliss by Thy sweet savours. They have arisen with yearning and longing to praise Thee, "and drink of a pure beverage shall their Lord give them".<sup>18</sup> Praise be to Thee, O my God, for all that Thou hast graciously granted us. Thanks be to Thee, O my Hope, for the bounties Thou hast conferred upon us. Blessings be upon Thee, O my Best-Beloved, for the favours Thou hast chosen to bestow upon us.

3 O God, my God! O Thou Who art the Goal of my desire! Unlock before the faces of Thy loved ones the portals of Thy favours on this perspicuous day. Hoist the sails of guidance above their heads in the Crimson Ark. Cause them to be gathered beneath the standard of Thy bounty and generosity, and send down upon them the sign of Thy grace in the midmost heart of creation. O Lord my God! Make them radiant stars, resplendent lamps, brilliant orbs, and blazing meteors, so that they may arise to serve Thee amongst Thy creatures, kindle the fire of Thy love in the hearts of Thy people, scatter abroad Thy signs throughout Thy realms, and edify the souls of all that dwell on earth. Then shall Thy heavenly repast be outspread throughout the world, this contingent plane become the Abhá Paradise by the power of Thy might, and this nether dust be made the envy of the high heavens through the outpourings of Thy wisdom.

4 O Lord! Make of Thy loved ones celestial angels who inhabit Thine earth, and enable Thy chosen ones to become heavenly people who reside in Thy realm. This, indeed, is the highest aspiration of Thy servant who hath humbled himself before Thy sovereignty, bowed down in adoration before Thy door, prostrated himself before Thy glory, and fallen upon the dust before the power of Thy sovereign might. Thou art the Bestower, the Compassionate, the Almighty, the All-Bountiful.

5 O ye spiritual friends of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá! At this moment, when the Star of the Riḍván Festival gleameth bright above the horizon of creation and the whole world is wrapt in an ecstasy of joy and fervour, it is the time for rapture and bliss, for exultation and delight, and for the revelation of this celebrated Day. It is the season to rejoice and be happy in heart and soul, the time for music and song, for the melody of harp and lute. The signs of gladness are manifest from every side, and the light of rapture shineth in all directions. The loved ones of the Lord are in perfect joy, and His chosen ones beam with delight, for this is the Day whereon the Most Great Name set out from the City of God in Iraq and entered the luminous Garden. On that resplendent Day, the Beloved evinced such ineffable bliss that the radiance of His joy suffused the kingdom of existence. On that glorious Day, the Word of God was exalted amidst all creation.

6 Wherefore, O ye loved ones of God, it behoveth you all to be filled with such ecstasy and joy on this blessed Festival as to stir the kingdom of existence into motion. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá rejoiceth in these supreme glad-tidings, and supplicateth with the utmost lowliness and fervour at the Threshold of the Abhá Beauty that He may bring gladness to each one of the friends and bestow delight and happiness upon them.

7 It is our hope that, in the year to come, the friends of the All-Merciful who live in free lands will, in a spirit of joy and radiance, lay the foundations of the Mashriqu’l-Adhkár and arise to clearly and openly praise and glorify the Beauty of the Unconstrained and recite the obligatory prayer; for in the realm of worship, fasting and obligatory prayer constitute the two mightiest pillars of God’s holy Law. Neglecting them is in no wise permitted, and falling short in their performance is certainly unseemly. In the Tablet of Visitation He saith: “I beseech God, by Thee and by them whose faces have been illumined with the splendours of the light of Thy countenance, and who, for love of Thee, have observed all whereunto they were bidden.” He declareth that observance of the commandments of God emanateth from love for the beauty of the Best-Beloved. The seeker, when immersed in the ocean of the love of God, will be moved by intense longing and will arise to carry out the laws of God. Thus, it is impossible for a heart to contain the fragrance of God’s love and yet fail to worship the

True One, except under conditions when such an action would agitate the enemies and stir up dissension and mischief. Otherwise, a lover of the Abhá Beauty will no doubt continually demonstrate perseverance in the worship of the Lord.

8 O ye loved ones of God! ‘Abdu’l-Bahá is in grave danger by reason of the mischief of the enemies and the discord fomented by the Centre of Sedition.<sup>19</sup> Whatever events should come to pass, whether great or small, accuse ye not a single soul. All such events are due to the revolt and dissension of the Centre of Sedition. I implore God to enable him to repent and to return to the Covenant and the Testament, for otherwise he will, ere long, find himself in manifest loss. At present, he is considering how to secure a means of escape, and to flee from the Holy Land, so that he may engage in further mischief and that, by his escape, he may cause greater afflictions and troubles for this servant and for the loved ones of God. He stopped at nothing and, with all that lay in his power, stirred up malice, created dissension, spread falsehoods, and disseminated slander and calumny. All that remaineth for him is to flee, which, to his disgrace, he is now intent on doing, thus causing grievous shame and dire turmoil. Should he find an opportunity, he would not delay his escape even for a single moment, but it is difficult for him to accomplish this plan. However, should this come to pass, the loved ones of God must be ever watchful and aware, and must everywhere remain vigilant lest he create a breach in the Cause of God and spread abroad the foul odours of enmity. From the Ascension of the Blessed Beauty until the present day, he hath committed every act that could harm the Cause of God. Now he is planning this abhorrent and reprehensible act as well.

9 In those days, a few influential notables were planning to procure ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s release from confinement. They were fully capable of doing so. But in reply, this servant said, “This citadel is the Prison of the Abhá Beauty. He spent well-nigh four and twenty years here; I have therefore no wish to be released from this prison, nor do I seek deliverance. Nay, rather, I seek renewed confinement and earnestly desire an even more severe incarceration.” Those souls were bewildered by my words. But my intent was that they should understand that, in the path of the Lord, prison for us is even as a royal palace, and the depths of the pit as the apex of heaven. This indeed is an unquestionable reality. This verily is the truth, and all else naught but manifest error.

10 The Centre of Sedition cherisheth the hope that once he hath caused the blood of this prisoner to be spilt, he may at last find an arena in which to spur on his charger. Woe unto such idle fancies, such vain imaginings! For lo, some imaginings are a grievous sin. Those who are inebriated with the wine of the Covenant are weary of the stirrers of sedition, and

those who seek guidance from the light of Revelation eschew the movers of mischief. Even should the nightingale of faithfulness wing its flight to the garden of eternity, a mindful soul would never give ear unto the croaking of the raven or the cawing of the crow; and even should the comely countenance be concealed behind a veil, no wise person would cast a glance upon an unsightly face. None would ever do so except him who seeketh to stir up sedition or is bereft of reason and discernment. May the Lord shield and protect you from the malice of the ungodly and the mischief of such as have violated His Covenant.

11 O ye beloved of the Lord! Be united, stand ye together, and cleave tenaciously to the Sure Handle of the Covenant. Bend your energies towards exalting the Word of God, so that the light of Truth may envelop the whole of creation and the darkness of hatred and error may be utterly dispelled.

12 Were the harm inflicted by the Centre of Sedition directed merely at this servant, and his hatred confined to this wronged prisoner, I swear, by Him besides Whom there is none other God, that I would not have uttered a single word about his scrolls of doubt and his calumnies. But what choice is there? For he hath falsified the words of God, hath sought the ruin of the religion of God, and hath broken the Covenant of God. Had I not tried to awaken the friends by dissipating the doubts through a few words, the Faith of God would have been entirely effaced. I swear by Him besides Whom there is none other God! No choice is left to me but to write these brief words; otherwise, this servant would never have consented to utter a single word of disparagement, even against the fiercest of his foes.

13 Notwithstanding all that hath passed, I still fervently pray and implore God that he may, perchance, leave aside these childish games, turn away from iniquity and rebellion, and repent and enter beneath the shadow of the Covenant. I swear by Him besides Whom there is none other God! I would then show him the utmost love and kindness, would utter not a word about bygone days, and would lay no obligation on him save that he rectify that which he hath falsified in the Sacred Text.

14 Indeed, the very foundation of the Law of God is that His loved ones should consort with all the peoples and kindreds of the earth with the utmost kindness, fellowship, and unity, and with truthfulness, sincerity, and faithfulness. On no account should they behave towards anyone in a manner contrary to this inviolable principle, save for one who is the embodiment of enmity and is intent upon destroying the Law of God. For such souls, there is no remedy whatsoever. No space should be given them to parade and advance. For otherwise they would bring to naught the glorious martyrdom of the Báb, the shedding of the pure blood of all the



martyrs, and the trials, afflictions, and imprisonments suffered by the Luminous Beauty for well-nigh fifty years. They would utterly subvert the mighty foundation of the Cause of God.

15 Therefore, the company of these people should be shunned and none should associate with them, unless they repent unto God. My Lord is verily the Compassionate, the Forgiving. Such repentance, however, must be sincere and not merely in words. The repentance of the Centre of Sedition would consist in his rectifying all that he hath interpolated in the Text, confessing to that which he hath done, and imploring God's pardon and forgiveness. For, one day, he came to see 'Abdu'l-Bahá through the intercession of 'Alí-Akbar. He shut the door, confessed his transgressions, and asked forgiveness for his trespasses. This servant did indeed forgive him, but after a few days it became clear and evident that this too had been but one of his deceitful designs. His true intention had been to meet certain persons in private and sow the seeds of doubt in their hearts, for the friends had been shunning his company. The point is that true repentance must be distinguished from false. Only then can it be accepted. Upon you be greetings and praise.

**Summary:**

In this address, 'Abdu'l-Bahá expresses gratitude and joy for the arrival of the first day of Riḍván, a period of great significance and celebration. He describes the atmosphere of this day as filled with delight and bliss, with nature adorned in vibrant colors and fragrances. 'Abdu'l-Bahá invokes blessings upon God for the bounties bestowed upon humanity.

He prays for God's favor to be bestowed upon the believers, asking for guidance and protection for them. 'Abdu'l-Bahá urges the believers to become radiant stars and heavenly beings, serving humanity and spreading the message of love and unity.

Additionally, 'Abdu'l-Bahá addresses the challenges faced by the community due to the actions of those who oppose the Covenant. He warns against the harm caused by dissent and calls for unity and steadfastness among the believers. 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasizes the importance of remaining faithful to the Covenant and avoiding association with those who seek to undermine the faith.

Despite the challenges posed by adversaries, 'Abdu'l-Bahá expresses hope for their repentance and return to the Covenant. He recounts an instance where one of the adversaries

sought forgiveness but later reverted to deceitful actions, highlighting the need for sincere repentance.

### **Key Points:**

#### 1. Introduction:

- Expression of gratitude and joy for the arrival of the first day of Riḍván.
- Description of the atmosphere filled with delight and bliss.

#### 2. Prayer for Believers:

- Invocation of blessings upon the believers.
- Request for guidance and protection for the believers.

#### 3. Call for Service:

- Urging believers to become radiant stars and heavenly beings.
- Emphasis on serving humanity and spreading the message of love and unity.

#### 4. Addressing Challenges:

- Warning against the harm caused by dissent and opposition to the Covenant.
- Call for unity and steadfastness among believers.

#### 5. Importance of Covenant:

- Emphasizing the significance of remaining faithful to the Covenant.
- Caution against association with those who undermine the faith.

#### 6. Hope for Repentance:

- Expression of hope for the repentance of adversaries.
- Example of insincere repentance and the need for sincerity.

#### 7. Conclusion:

- Reiteration of blessings and greetings to the believers.

### **Questions and Answers:**

#### 1. What is the significance of the first day of Riḍván according to 'Abdu'l-Bahá?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá describes the first day of Riḍván as a period of great joy and celebration, marking the arrival of divine blessings and the beginning of a significant period in the Bahá'í calendar.

#### 2. What does 'Abdu'l-Bahá pray for regarding the believers?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá prays for God's favor to be bestowed upon the believers, asking for guidance, protection, and the ability to serve humanity with love and unity.

#### 3. What challenges does 'Abdu'l-Bahá address in the address?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá addresses the challenges posed by dissent and opposition to the Covenant within the community, emphasizing the importance of unity and steadfastness among believers.

4. What does 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasize regarding the Covenant?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasizes the significance of remaining faithful to the Covenant and warns against association with those who seek to undermine the faith.

5. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá express hope for adversaries?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá expresses hope for the repentance of adversaries, recounting an instance where one sought forgiveness but later reverted to deceitful actions, highlighting the importance of sincere repentance.

7

*He is God.*

1 O servant of Bahá! Thy detailed letters have been successively received, and despite the lack of a single free moment, they have all been read with the utmost attention. Consider with how many thousands of souls such correspondence must be maintained, and how difficult is the task; there is no time at all. Therefore, a brief reply is being written, which thou wilt surely excuse. I write thee by reason of my love for thee; otherwise, the writing of even a single word would be impossible.

2 Teaching the Cause in this day is the head cornerstone of the foundation itself. Whosoever ariseth to teach shall be graciously aided by the hosts of the celestial Concourse. Naught else will lead to any success whatsoever. Today is the day for laying the foundation, not the time for organization, repair, or restoration. One must first lay the foundation, and only then organize and arrange.

3 Laying the foundation consisteth solely in the propagation of the Faith of God, in the diffusion of the divine fragrances, and in detachment from all else but Him. Consider how a skilled builder first procureth the necessary materials for the edifice. He then prepareth the groundwork, layeth the foundation, and raiseth the pillars. Only afterwards doth he attend to its organization, arrangement, and adornment. Were we to concentrate on organization and arrangement at this time, the teaching of the Cause of God and the diffusion of the divine fragrances would be delayed.

4           Therefore, be thou occupied with naught but the promotion of the Cause in the environs of Shíráz. If the people of a city, of their own accord, choose to hold a consultative gathering—that is, to form a Spiritual Assembly according to the electoral process—well and good. However, we should not be actively pursuing this matter at present, for then some would be pleased, while others would be saddened, and still others distressed. Such decisions are to be left to the believers in each city. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, and all who join him and have a share in his servitude at the Sacred Threshold, should centre their thoughts on spreading the sweet savours of God. Had ‘Abdu’l-Bahá occupied himself with those other matters, how could he have illumined the East and the West with the light of guidance?

5           Thy questions will be briefly answered. The Ancient Beauty<sup>20</sup>—may my life be offered up for His loved ones—did not to outward seeming meet His Holiness, the Exalted One<sup>21</sup>—may my life be a sacrifice unto Him.

6           The Faithful Spirit, Gabriel, the Holy Spirit, and the One mighty in power are all designations of the same Reality.

7           The elected members of Spiritual Assemblies must needs be pure and sanctified. Whenever a Spiritual Assembly is formed in a city, it behoveth the teachers of the Cause to consult with it and to act according to whatsoever it deemeth advisable. The teacher should not lay hands on worldly things, whether pertaining to contributions or the like. Should the people in a locality elect a teacher as a member of the Spiritual Assembly, this is permissible....

8           To conclude, O Jináb-i-Shukúhí, be thou severed from all save God and enraptured by the fragrances of the Divine. Forsaking home and comfort, become a wanderer, roaming the wilderness of the love of God and engaged in the diffusion of His sweet savours. If thou seekest divine assistance, this is the way; if thou yearnest for confirmations, this is the path. By the Ancient Beauty! All else save this will eventually result in manifest loss. This, verily, is the truth, and all else naught but error.

### **Summary:**

In this message, 'Abdu'l-Bahá responds to a correspondent, expressing gratitude for their letters and emphasizing the importance of teaching the Bahá'í Faith. He advises against focusing on organizational matters at the expense of propagation and stresses the need to lay the foundation by spreading the divine message. 'Abdu'l-Bahá encourages the correspondent to

concentrate on promoting the Cause in Shíráz and not to pursue the formation of Spiritual Assemblies actively. He answers specific questions about the meeting between Bahá'u'lláh and the Exalted One, clarifies the significance of various spiritual designations, and provides guidance on the composition and function of Spiritual Assemblies. He concludes by urging the correspondent to detach from worldly concerns and immerse themselves in the love of God, emphasizing the importance of wandering in the wilderness of divine love for spiritual growth and assistance.

### **Key Points:**

#### 1. Introduction:

- Expression of gratitude for the correspondent's letters.
- Explanation of the limitations on time for detailed responses.

#### 2. Importance of Teaching:

- Teaching the Bahá'í Faith is the primary focus and foundation.
- Assistance from celestial forces is granted to those engaged in teaching.

#### 3. Laying the Foundation:

- Focus on spreading the divine message and detachment from worldly concerns.
- Analogy of a skilled builder preparing the groundwork before organizing.

#### 4. Promotion of the Cause in Shíráz:

- Advises against actively pursuing the formation of Spiritual Assemblies.
- Encouragement to concentrate on spreading the message.

#### 5. Answers to Specific Questions:

- Clarifies the meeting between Bahá'u'lláh and the Exalted One.
- Explains the significance of various spiritual designations.
- Provides guidance on the composition and function of Spiritual Assemblies.

#### 6. Conclusion:

- Encouragement to detach from worldly concerns and immerse in divine love.
- Emphasis on wandering in the wilderness of divine love for spiritual growth.

### **Questions and Answers:**

#### 1. What does 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasize as the primary focus and foundation of the Bahá'í Faith?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasizes that teaching the Bahá'í Faith is the head cornerstone of its foundation, and success in other endeavors depends on it.

#### 2. Why does 'Abdu'l-Bahá advise against focusing on organizational matters at present?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá advises against focusing on organizational matters because the priority is laying the foundation by spreading the divine message.
3. What guidance does 'Abdu'l-Bahá provide regarding the formation and composition of Spiritual Assemblies?
    - 'Abdu'l-Bahá advises that Spiritual Assemblies must be composed of pure and sanctified individuals and that teachers should consult with them and act according to their guidance.
  4. What analogy does 'Abdu'l-Bahá use to illustrate the importance of focusing on teaching?
    - 'Abdu'l-Bahá uses the analogy of a skilled builder who first prepares the groundwork before organizing, highlighting the importance of laying the foundation by spreading the divine message.
  5. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá encourage the correspondent to engage in spiritual growth and assistance?
    - 'Abdu'l-Bahá encourages the correspondent to detach from worldly concerns and immerse themselves in the love of God, emphasizing the importance of wandering in the wilderness of divine love for spiritual growth and assistance.

8

*He is the Most Glorious.*

- 1 O thou distinguished branch of the blessed and sacred Lote-Tree! When the Ancient Beauty, the Most Great Name—may my life be offered up for His loved ones—would visit Haifa, He would time and again praise a certain spot on Mount Carmel, saying what a pleasant and agreeable place it was and what a splendid view it offered. He instructed that it be purchased by whatever means possible. He was most intent on acquiring that site.
- 2 Four years ago, with great effort, that land was purchased, and following some minor preparations, it was made ready. Special instructions were then conveyed to Rangoon, numerous epistles written, and a design prepared and sent, for a sarcophagus to be made of the marble of that region. The carving made from a single piece of stone was completed with great difficulty, and the sarcophagus was transported here by various means. Thou hast surely heard of what transpired along the way, when it entered certain cities. In short, it arrived not long ago, together with a casket made of the finest Indian wood.
- 3 A year ago, we dispatched Áqá Mírzá Asadu'lláh from here on a specific mission. So it was that he and a few of the friends transported, upon a palanquin and with the utmost

reverence, lowliness, humility, and respect, that holy Temple and mighty Throne, the sacred remains of the Báb—may my life be sacrificed for His dust—from Persia to the Holy Land.

3 We are now engaged in raising this sacred edifice on Mount Carmel. God willing, we will also summon thee to join us and take part in carrying the stones and mortar of this hallowed and blessed Shrine, that thou mayest partake of the limitless effusions of His grace and attain this most mighty honour. These are tidings of joy with which the sovereignty of heaven and earth cannot compare. In truth, my heart is filled with such great joy and gladness as cannot be described. For that sacred Temple had suffered great indignity at the hands of the transgressors, but now, praise be to God, through the unfailing help and grace vouchsafed by the Ancient Beauty, all the means have been procured and arranged so perfectly as shall cause everyone to marvel. The glory of God rest upon thee and upon the Afnán of the sacred Tree in that land.

### **Summary:**

In this message, 'Abdu'l-Bahá addresses a distinguished follower and shares significant developments regarding the construction of a sacred Shrine on Mount Carmel. He recounts Bahá'u'lláh's admiration for a specific spot on Mount Carmel and His instruction to acquire it. After years of effort, the land was purchased, and preparations were made for the construction of the Shrine. 'Abdu'l-Bahá describes the acquisition of a marble sarcophagus from Rangoon and its transportation to the Holy Land, accompanied by a casket made of Indian wood. He also mentions the dispatch of Áqá Mírzá Asadu'lláh to transport the sacred remains of the Báb from Persia to the Holy Land. Currently, efforts are underway to raise the sacred edifice on Mount Carmel, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá expresses joy and gratitude for the progress made with the assistance of the Ancient Beauty.

### **Key Points:**

#### 1. Acquisition of the Sacred Site:

- Bahá'u'lláh's admiration for a specific spot on Mount Carmel.
- Instruction to acquire the land by any means possible.

#### 2. Procurement of Materials:

- Efforts to purchase the land and prepare it for construction.
- Acquisition of a marble sarcophagus from Rangoon and its transportation.

#### 3. Transportation of Sacred Remains:

- Dispatch of Áqá Mírzá Asadu'lláh to transport the sacred remains of the Báb from Persia to the Holy Land.

#### 4. Construction of the Shrine:

- Current engagement in raising the sacred edifice on Mount Carmel.
- Invitation to participate in carrying stones and mortar for the Shrine.

#### 5. Expression of Joy and Gratitude:

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá's joy and gratitude for the progress made with the assistance of the Ancient Beauty.

### Questions and Answers:

#### 1. What specific instructions did Bahá'u'lláh give regarding a spot on Mount Carmel?

- Bahá'u'lláh instructed that a certain spot on Mount Carmel be acquired by any means possible due to its pleasantness and agreeable view.

#### 2. What significant materials were procured for the construction of the Shrine?

- A marble sarcophagus from Rangoon and a casket made of the finest Indian wood were acquired for the construction of the Shrine.

#### 3. Who was dispatched on a specific mission regarding the transportation of sacred remains?

- Áqá Mírzá Asadu'lláh was dispatched from the Holy Land on a specific mission to transport the sacred remains of the Báb from Persia to the Holy Land.

#### 4. What invitation does 'Abdu'l-Bahá extend regarding the construction of the Shrine?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá invites the recipient to join in carrying stones and mortar for the construction of the Shrine on Mount Carmel.

#### 5. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá express his feelings about the progress made in the construction efforts?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá expresses great joy and gratitude for the progress made in the construction efforts, attributing it to the unfailing help and grace vouchsafed by the Ancient Beauty.

1 O thou seeker of truth! Thy letter was received. Thou hast asked me for a written history as well as a record of the prophecies concerning the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh. These have both been previously written. Search for them and thou wilt find them.

2 Regarding the Blessed Beauty, He was not born of the line of Ishmael but was, rather, a descendant of one of the other brothers who had migrated to Persia and the Afghan territories. For, apart from Isaac and Ishmael, Abraham had six sons who all moved to Persia and to the Afghan regions.



3 O thou sincere seeker! Strive thou with all thy might to summon the people to the heavenly Kingdom, so that through divine guidance thou mayest enable the human souls to become even as the angels of Paradise, mayest promote universal peace in this distinguished Age and serve the oneness of the world of humanity, and mayest attain unto everlasting life, follow the example of Christ, and become a companion of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in this path. Upon thee be greetings and praise.

**Summary:**

In this message, 'Abdu'l-Bahá responds to a seeker's request for a written history and record of prophecies concerning the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh. He directs the seeker to previously written sources where such information can be found. Additionally, 'Abdu'l-Bahá clarifies the lineage of Bahá'u'lláh, stating that He was not born of the line of Ishmael but rather descended from one of the other brothers of Abraham who migrated to Persia and the Afghan territories. Finally, 'Abdu'l-Bahá encourages the seeker to strive diligently in summoning people to the heavenly Kingdom, promoting universal peace, and following the example of Christ.

**Key Points:**

1. Response to Request for Written History and Prophecies:

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá acknowledges the seeker's request for a written history and record of prophecies concerning the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh.
- He directs the seeker to previously written sources where such information can be found.

2. Clarification of Bahá'u'lláh's Lineage:

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá clarifies that Bahá'u'lláh was not born of the line of Ishmael but was descended from one of the other brothers of Abraham who migrated to Persia and the Afghan territories.

3. Encouragement to Strive for Spiritual Goals:

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá encourages the seeker to strive diligently in summoning people to the heavenly Kingdom.
- He emphasizes the promotion of universal peace in the current Age and serving the oneness of humanity.
- 'Abdu'l-Bahá urges the seeker to follow the example of Christ and become a companion of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in this spiritual path.

## Questions and Answers:

1. What request does the seeker make in the letter to 'Abdu'l-Bahá?

- The seeker requests a written history and record of prophecies concerning the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh.

2. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá respond to the seeker's request?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá acknowledges the request and directs the seeker to previously written sources where such information can be found.

3. What clarification does 'Abdu'l-Bahá provide regarding Bahá'u'lláh's lineage?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá clarifies that Bahá'u'lláh was not born of the line of Ishmael but descended from one of the other brothers of Abraham who migrated to Persia and the Afghan territories.

4. What spiritual goals does 'Abdu'l-Bahá encourage the seeker to strive for?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá encourages the seeker to strive for summoning people to the heavenly Kingdom, promoting universal peace, and following the example of Christ.

5. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá conclude his message to the seeker?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá concludes by offering greetings and praise to the seeker.

10

1 O thou noble branch of the divine Tree! Countless occupations and endless vicissitudes have delayed my reply to thy letter. This thou wilt surely forgive, inasmuch as my obligations are such as cannot be described or expressed. Notwithstanding this, praise be to God, communications between 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the honourable Twigs of the Sacred Tree are continuous.<sup>22</sup> This is because of the deep love I cherish in my heart for the Exalted Beauty—may my life be offered up for Him.

2 God be praised, the construction of the lower level of the Holy Shrine, in utmost strength, grace, and elegance, hath been completed. There was a large plot of land located on the slope above the Holy Shrine. Had it remained in the hands of strangers, they might have constructed buildings there in the future, leading to great difficulties. Time and again, that ground was blessed by the footsteps of Bahá'u'lláh. There were a few cypress trees therein, and the Blessed Beauty—may my life be offered up for His loved ones—frequently sat under their shade while the believers attained His presence. That land also had to be purchased

recently for the sum of two thousand túmáns, and was conjoined with the precincts of the Holy Shrine.

3 As to the cistern,<sup>23</sup> since this servant was imprisoned before its construction, the European and Ottoman engineers proved unequal to the task of ensuring the required soundness and solidity of the structure, and their work was left incomplete. Consequently the cistern wall facing the sea collapsed, and the efforts were somewhat wasted. However, no harm was done, for it is now being reconstructed most solidly, under the supervision of this servant, and will soon be completed. Although due to my incarceration I have been unable to go to the Holy Shrine in person, I have been supervising the construction work from a distance. It will soon be complete and will be most firm and solid. Indeed, it is not a cistern, but a sea!

4 And now concerning the visit of the holy leaf of the Blessed Tree: God willing, circumstances will soon make this advisable, and permission will then be granted. Upon thee be greetings and praise.

### **Summary:**

In this message, 'Abdu'l-Bahá addresses a noble branch of the divine Tree, apologizing for the delay in responding to a letter due to numerous obligations and vicissitudes. Despite the delays, he expresses gratitude for the continuous communication with the honorable Twigs of the Sacred Tree, fueled by his deep love for the Exalted Beauty, Bahá'u'lláh. 'Abdu'l-Bahá then provides updates on the construction progress of the Holy Shrine, mentioning the completion of the lower level and the acquisition of land on the slope above the Shrine. He explains the challenges faced with the construction of a cistern, noting the collapse of a wall and subsequent reconstruction efforts under his supervision. Finally, he anticipates the visit of a holy leaf of the Blessed Tree, expressing hope for favorable circumstances and granting permission for the visit.

### **Key Points:**

#### 1. Apology for Delayed Response:

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá apologizes for the delay in responding to the letter due to numerous obligations and vicissitudes.

#### 2. Gratitude for Continuous Communication:

- Despite the delays, 'Abdu'l-Bahá expresses gratitude for the continuous communication with the honorable Twigs of the Sacred Tree, driven by his deep love for Bahá'u'lláh.

### 3. Update on Construction of the Holy Shrine:

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá informs about the completion of the lower level of the Holy Shrine, emphasizing its strength, grace, and elegance.
- He mentions the acquisition of land on the slope above the Shrine to prevent future construction by strangers.

### 4. Challenges with Cistern Construction:

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá explains challenges faced with the construction of a cistern, mentioning the collapse of a wall due to incomplete work by European and Ottoman engineers.
- He assures that reconstruction efforts under his supervision will soon complete the cistern to be most firm and solid.

### 5. Anticipation of a Visit:

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá anticipates the visit of a holy leaf of the Blessed Tree, expressing hope for favorable circumstances and granting permission for the visit.

## **Questions and Answers:**

### 1. Why does 'Abdu'l-Bahá apologize in the message?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá apologizes for the delay in responding to the letter due to numerous obligations and vicissitudes.

### 2. What does 'Abdu'l-Bahá express gratitude for in the message?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá expresses gratitude for the continuous communication with the honorable Twigs of the Sacred Tree, fueled by his deep love for Bahá'u'lláh.

### 3. What updates does 'Abdu'l-Bahá provide on the construction of the Holy Shrine?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá informs about the completion of the lower level of the Holy Shrine and the acquisition of land on the slope above to prevent future construction by strangers.

### 4. What challenges does 'Abdu'l-Bahá mention regarding the construction of a cistern?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá explains challenges faced with the construction of a cistern, mentioning the collapse of a wall due to incomplete work by European and Ottoman engineers.

### 5. What does 'Abdu'l-Bahá anticipate towards the end of the message?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá anticipates the visit of a holy leaf of the Blessed Tree, expressing hope for favorable circumstances and granting permission for the visit.

11

*He is God.*

1 O thou my fellow countryman! Although 'Abdu'l-Bahá was born in Ṭihrán and for successive years wandered homeless in Iraq, and although he was for a time an exile in Rumelia and for forty years a prisoner in 'Akká, yet his homeland is Mázindarán—that is to say, the district of Míyánrúd in the region of Núr. Therefore, I address thee as my countryman.

2 Thy splendid letter aroused spiritual affections in my heart. I read it with admiration, for it was a melody of Divine Unity and an ensign proclaiming His oneness. I, too, am most eager to meet thee. If the means become available for thee to travel in peace and tranquillity, thou mayest come next winter.

3 Praised be God! Whenever I read the name of someone from Mázindarán at the end of any letter, it bringeth me gladness and delight, inasmuch as it is the ancestral home of the family of the Blessed Beauty. My heart longeth for that land to become even as Paradise itself, and for its people to recognize and embrace the Great Announcement. The Glory of Glories rest upon thee.

**Summary:**

In this message, 'Abdu'l-Bahá addresses a fellow countryman from Mázindarán, expressing his deep connection to the region despite being born in Ṭihrán and spending many years in exile and imprisonment elsewhere. He acknowledges receiving a splendid letter from the recipient, filled with spiritual sentiments and unity. 'Abdu'l-Bahá expresses eagerness to meet the recipient if circumstances permit, suggesting a potential visit during the upcoming winter. He also shares his joy whenever he encounters the name of someone from Mázindarán, as it reminds him of the ancestral home of Bahá'u'lláh's family. 'Abdu'l-Bahá expresses his longing for Mázindarán to become like Paradise and for its people to embrace the Great Announcement.

**Key Points:**

1. Acknowledgment of Fellow Countryman:

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá acknowledges the recipient as his fellow countryman from Mázindarán, despite his own birth in Tīhrán and various periods of exile and imprisonment.

2. Appreciation of the Letter:

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá expresses admiration for the recipient's splendid letter, describing it as a melody of Divine Unity and an ensign proclaiming His oneness.

3. Invitation for a Meeting:

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá expresses eagerness to meet the recipient if circumstances permit, suggesting a potential visit during the upcoming winter.

4. Joy at Mention of Mázindarán:

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá shares his joy whenever he encounters the name of someone from Mázindarán, as it reminds him of the ancestral home of Bahá'u'lláh's family.

5. Longing for Mázindarán:

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá expresses his longing for Mázindarán to become like Paradise and for its people to recognize and embrace the Great Announcement.

**Questions and Answers:**

1. Where was 'Abdu'l-Bahá born, and where did he spend much of his life?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá was born in Tīhrán but spent many years in exile in various places and imprisoned in 'Akká.

2. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá describe the recipient's letter?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá describes the recipient's letter as a melody of Divine Unity and an ensign proclaiming His oneness, which he reads with admiration.

3. When does 'Abdu'l-Bahá suggest the recipient visit?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá suggests the recipient visit during the upcoming winter if the means for peaceful travel are available.

4. What brings 'Abdu'l-Bahá joy when he encounters it in a letter?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá experiences joy when he encounters the name of someone from Mázindarán in a letter.

5. What is 'Abdu'l-Bahá's hope for Mázindarán?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá hopes for Mázindarán to become like Paradise and for its people to recognize and embrace the Great Announcement.

12

*He is God.*

1 O sorely tried friends of 'Abdu'l-Bahá! It hath become apparent that a wicked person in those regions hath assailed and attacked both rich and poor, hath harmed and harassed friend and foe alike. He hath pillaged and plundered many, robbed and levied taxes on all. Not a soul did he spare; not a single penny did he let remain. This indeed was a dire calamity, a most great affliction, for it wreaked woeful loss and inflicted boundless hardship upon friend and stranger alike.

2 Had he not acted so, he might not have become afflicted with the retribution which such behaviour entaileth. The day will soon come when he shall fall into distress and be brought to naught. Neither name nor fame shall remain of him. All this mischief, however, may be blamed on the sinister schemes and transgressions of outdated Signs; this thunderbolt was cast as a result of the decrees pronounced by defective Proofs.<sup>24</sup> And yet, a band of witless ones still follow after such men, still kiss their hands and the hem of their garments, and are scorched by the flames of mischief and sedition.

3 In brief, let not the loved ones of God be grieved or distressed at these countless afflictions, for in bearing such trials they share in the sufferings of the Abhá Beauty. Although that radiant Luminary was merciful, loving, and forgiving to all, the ignorant kindled such fires that they burned away all sense of decency and shame. As a result, that focal Centre of beauty was subjected to chains and fetters; He endured the bastinado and was afflicted, day and night, with all manner of torture. He was made homeless and a wanderer in mountains and plains; He was banished, exiled, and imprisoned. He spent twenty-five long years in confinement and was insulted and tormented. Let the friends render thanks unto God, therefore, that they too have suffered pillage and plunder, that they too have been targeted by the darts of cruelty and malice.

4 The village of the Blessed Beauty in Mázindarán was attacked by a host of twelve thousand brutal men. They plundered and pillaged so relentlessly that no sign of any possession or goods remained; they even left no crop for the inhabitants of the village. They

set fire to the straw, burned the oil, and massacred a number of the innocent. They then herded the peasants together in chains, sent them to Ṭīhrán, and cast them into prison. They cut the chin as well as the beard of that spirit of spirits, Mullá ‘Abdu’l-Fattáh, and they marched him to Ṭīhrán, barefoot and in chains. Despite his old age and his frailty, the guards showed him no mercy. But even whilst bound by chains and on foot, with blood pouring from his wounded face, that spirit of detachment raised up his voice in prayer, to his very last breath, rendering thanks unto the Lord of Signs for having been made the victim of plunder and pillage, for having been bound in shackles and fetters in the path of the Beloved. With his beard tinged with his own blood, he walked all the way and, upon arrival at the prison in Ṭīhrán, surrendered his soul into the hands of his Beloved and sacrificed himself for the Loving Friend. Beaming with joy, he laid down his life in the path of that great Luminary. How truly hath the poet said:

That beam of bliss and ecstasy  
Did stay with him forevermore,  
Even as Aḥmad, the Praised,  
Who is always with the Peerless Lord.

5 In short, let the loved ones of God render thanks unto the All-Merciful Lord for their share of these afflictions and for their astounding patience and forbearance. Through His unflinching grace, a radiant morn shall surely follow this dreary night, and a bright horizon will succeed this foul cloud. This deadly poison shall give way to purest honey, and this sore wound will at last receive a healing balm. The Glory of Glories rest upon you!

**Summary:**

In this message, 'Abdu'l-Bahá addresses the sorely tried friends who have been afflicted by a wicked person in their region. This person has harmed both rich and poor, friend and foe alike, by pillaging, plundering, robbing, and levying taxes on everyone without discrimination. 'Abdu'l-Bahá assures the believers that despite these afflictions, they should not be distressed, as they are sharing in the sufferings of the Abhá Beauty. He recounts the attack on the village of the Blessed Beauty in Mázindarán by a brutal host of twelve thousand men, resulting in the massacre of innocent people, the destruction of possessions, and the imprisonment of villagers. Despite the hardships endured, 'Abdu'l-Bahá encourages the



believers to render thanks unto God for their share of afflictions and for their remarkable patience and forbearance.

### **Key Points:**

#### 1. Affliction by a Wicked Person:

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá describes the afflictions suffered by the believers at the hands of a wicked person who indiscriminately pillaged, plundered, and harassed everyone in the region, causing boundless hardship.

#### 2. Retribution for Wrongdoing:

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá suggests that the wicked person will face retribution for his actions and will eventually fall into distress, losing both name and fame, as a consequence of his sinister schemes and transgressions.

#### 3. Sharing in the Sufferings of the Abhá Beauty:

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá reassures the believers that in bearing such trials, they are sharing in the sufferings endured by the Abhá Beauty, who faced persecution, imprisonment, and torture despite His merciful and forgiving nature.

#### 4. Attack on the Village of the Blessed Beauty:

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá recounts the brutal attack on the village of the Blessed Beauty in Mázindarán by a host of twelve thousand men, resulting in the massacre of innocent villagers, the destruction of possessions, and the imprisonment of survivors.

#### 5. Encouragement to Render Thanks:

- Despite the hardships endured, 'Abdu'l-Bahá encourages the believers to render thanks unto God for their share of afflictions and for their remarkable patience and forbearance, assuring them that a radiant morn will follow this dreary night.

### **Questions and Answers:**

#### 1. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá describe the afflictions suffered by the believers in the region?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá describes the afflictions as dire calamities and great afflictions, involving pillaging, plundering, robbing, and levying taxes on both rich and poor, friend and foe alike.

2. What does 'Abdu'l-Bahá suggest will happen to the wicked person responsible for the afflictions?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá suggests that the wicked person will face retribution for his actions, falling into distress and losing both name and fame as a consequence of his sinister schemes and transgressions.

3. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá reassure the believers regarding their sufferings?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá reassures the believers that in bearing such trials, they are sharing in the sufferings of the Abhá Beauty, who faced persecution, imprisonment, and torture despite His merciful and forgiving nature.

4. What event does 'Abdu'l-Bahá recount regarding the village of the Blessed Beauty in Mázindarán?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá recounts the brutal attack on the village by a host of twelve thousand men, resulting in the massacre of innocent villagers, the destruction of possessions, and the imprisonment of survivors.

5. Despite the hardships endured, what does 'Abdu'l-Bahá encourage the believers to do?

- Despite the hardships endured, 'Abdu'l-Bahá encourages the believers to render thanks unto God for their share of afflictions and for their remarkable patience and forbearance, assuring them of a bright horizon and a healing balm for their wounds.

*He is God.*

1 O servant of the Abhá Beauty! Thy letter was received. Thou hast written of being deprived of communications for some time, whereas I have sent forth numerous letters. I also penned one to the handmaiden of Bahá regarding the Shrine of the Báb, and about how on the day of Naw-Rúz the sacred Remains were deposited, with the utmost joy and radiance, within the marble casket and placed, with due grace and ceremony, in the exalted Shrine. The receipt of that letter was also not confirmed. But thy letter giving the joyful tidings of the holding of a gathering was received on the first day of Ridván and rejoiced my heart.

2           Thou hast enquired regarding a certain passage from the Epistle addressed to the Wolf. “The Land of Mím” referreth to Mázindarán. The Blessed Beauty was confined to prison in the town of Ámul, and, as the ‘ulamá gathered together in the mosque, He was delivered into their hands. Those iniquitous divines then rose up against Him with injustice and tyranny. They afflicted Him with a myriad torments and made Him the victim of their relentless cruelty. For instance, they subjected the Blessed Beauty to the bastinado in such wise that His feet were sore wounded for some time. Convey my loving greetings to the maidservant of Bahá, as well as to the rest of the friends.

**Summary:**

In this message, 'Abdu'l-Bahá responds to a servant of the Abhá Beauty, expressing joy upon receiving their letter despite previous communication issues. He mentions sending a letter to the handmaiden of Bahá concerning the Shrine of the Báb and the deposition of the sacred remains within it during Naw-Rúz. 'Abdu'l-Bahá also acknowledges the receipt of a letter from the servant, which brought joyful tidings of a gathering held on the first day of Riḍván.

Regarding a query about a passage from the Epistle addressed to the Wolf, 'Abdu'l-Bahá explains that "The Land of Mím" refers to Mázindarán, where the Blessed Beauty was imprisoned in Ámul. He describes how the 'ulamá gathered in the mosque and delivered the Blessed Beauty into their hands, subjecting Him to myriad torments and relentless cruelty, including the bastinado, which wounded His feet.

**Key Points:**

1. Acknowledgment of Received Letter:

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá acknowledges receiving the servant's letter, despite previous communication issues, expressing joy at its arrival and mentioning sending letters regarding the Shrine of the Báb.

2. Deposition of Sacred Remains:

- He informs about the deposition of the sacred remains within the marble casket in the Shrine of the Báb during Naw-Rúz, highlighting the joy and radiance accompanying the ceremony.

3. Confirmation of Gathering:

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá acknowledges receiving a letter from the servant, which brought joyful tidings of a gathering held on the first day of Riḍván, expressing happiness upon hearing the news.

#### 4. Explanation of Epistle Passage:

- Responding to a query about a passage from the Epistle addressed to the Wolf, 'Abdu'l-Bahá explains that "The Land of Mím" refers to Mázindarán, detailing the imprisonment of the Blessed Beauty in Ámul and the cruelty inflicted upon Him by the 'ulamá.

#### 5. Conveying Greetings:

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá instructs the servant to convey his loving greetings to the handmaiden of Bahá and the rest of the friends, expressing his affection and connection to them.

### **Questions and Answers:**

1. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá respond to the servant's letter despite previous communication issues?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá expresses joy upon receiving the servant's letter, despite previous communication issues, and mentions sending letters regarding the Shrine of the Báb.

2. What event does 'Abdu'l-Bahá mention regarding the Shrine of the Báb?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá mentions the deposition of the sacred remains within the marble casket in the Shrine of the Báb during Naw-Rúz, highlighting the joy and radiance accompanying the ceremony.

3. What joyful tidings does 'Abdu'l-Bahá acknowledge receiving from the servant?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá acknowledges receiving a letter from the servant, which brought joyful tidings of a gathering held on the first day of Riḍván, expressing happiness upon hearing the news.

4. What explanation does 'Abdu'l-Bahá provide regarding a passage from the Epistle addressed to the Wolf?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá explains that "The Land of Mím" refers to Mázindarán, detailing the imprisonment of the Blessed Beauty in Ámul and the cruelty inflicted upon Him by the 'ulamá.

5. Whom does 'Abdu'l-Bahá instruct the servant to convey his greetings to?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá instructs the servant to convey his loving greetings to the handmaiden of Bahá and the rest of the friends, expressing his affection and connection to them.

14

*He is God.*

1 O thou remnant of those two distinguished departed souls! Thy letter was received and brought infinite joy and gladness; for, the Lord be praised, news hath come at last from the land of Núr, and a letter hath arrived from a soul who is a descendant of veteran friends and dearly loved countrymen.

2 Glorified be God! The East is illumined with the splendours of His light, and the West is perfumed with the sweet savours of the love of the Lord. The Turks and the Persians, the Africans and the Americans, the Europeans and the Asians have all been set aflame and made vibrant through the pervading influence of the Cause of God. Yet the homeland of the Blessed Beauty, though bearing the name of Núr,<sup>25</sup> hath remained darksome and deprived. Strangers have become friends, whilst those who were friends are estranged. Balál the Ethiopian, Şuhayb the Byzantine, ‘Addás the Assyrian, and Salmán the Persian were all made intimates of the mysteries. And yet the Siyyid of Quraysh, Abú-Lahab, as well as the kinsmen and relatives of the Beauteous Muḥammad, remained bereft of the splendour of His Light.

3 In the Gospel it is said that all the prophets have been without honour in their own country and homeland. Indeed, such is the case. Christ hath likewise said that many shall come from the East and from the West and enter the kingdom of heaven, whilst the children of the kingdom shall forsake it. And now, the fame of the Cause of God and the tidings of the advent of Bahá’u’lláh have stirred up and set in motion all the regions of the earth. Yet the people of the district of Núr remain deprived. Take then good heed, O ye people of insight!

4 While returning from Mázindarán to Tīhrán, the Blessed Beauty passed through Núr, filling Tákur and Dárkulá with enthusiasm and ecstasy. A great multitude became His faithful followers, and their numbers increased from day to day.... In brief, a vast number were attracted to the holy fragrances of God.

5 A year later, Yaḥyá the unchaste proceeded to Núr.<sup>26</sup> In hardly any time at all, he provoked agitation and great confusion there, and when at last he found himself in trouble, and saw the likelihood of being in danger in that region, he abandoned the faithful friends and

left. In the guise of a dervish, he escaped to Gílán, Mázindarán, and Kirmánsháh, leaving all those helpless souls to be massacred. He bolted, fled, and vanished in retreat. He ensnared the friends, most of whom were martyred. The situation he created in that village, the way he behaved, caused the fire of the love of God to be utterly extinguished therein. He even prompted a few to attack the late Mírzá Khudávirídí. I remember, as a child in Núr, seeing Mírzá Khudávirídí sobbing aloud and saying, “For fifty years I have served this family; was it justified that Mírzá Yaḥyá should incite Gul-Bábá to beat me publicly, to insult me, and to turn me away?” Briefly, as a result of his evil deeds, the light of Núr was obscured and Míyánrúd fell into a state of torpor.

6 One day, in an assemblage in Dárkulá, the Blessed Beauty spoke in such an eloquent manner and presented such powerful proofs and testimonies that, when He arose to depart, four of the mujtahids rushed forth to bring Him His shoes. Two of those were Mullá ‘Abbás and Mullá Abu’l-Qásim, sons-in-law of Mírzá Muḥammad-Taqíy-i-Mujtahid. That was the condition aforetime, and this is what hath befallen since.

### **Summary:**

In this message, 'Abdu'l-Bahá addresses a descendant of veteran friends and dearly loved countrymen, expressing joy upon receiving their letter from the land of Núr.

He reflects on the spiritual illumination spreading across the East and West through the influence of the Cause of God. Despite this, the homeland of the Blessed Beauty, Núr, remains deprived, with strangers becoming friends while those who were friends are estranged.

'Abdu'l-Bahá references the Gospel and Christ's words about prophets being without honor in their own country. He highlights the contrast between the widespread acceptance of the Cause of God and the continued deprivation in the district of Núr.

He recounts the enthusiastic response of the people of Tákur and Dárkulá when the Blessed Beauty passed through Núr, attracting a vast number of faithful followers.

'Abdu'l-Bahá then narrates the disruptive actions of Yaḥyá the unchaste in Núr, which led to agitation, confusion, and eventual martyrdom of many faithful friends. This caused the light of Núr to be obscured and Míyánrúd to fall into a state of torpor.

Finally, 'Abdu'l-Bahá reminisces about an assemblage in Dárkulá where the Blessed Beauty's eloquent speech and powerful proofs moved mujtahids to rush forth to bring Him His shoes.

### **Key Points:**

#### 1. Joyful Reception of Letter:

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá expresses joy upon receiving the letter from the descendant of veteran friends and dearly loved countrymen from the land of Núr.

#### 2. Spiritual Illumination Across East and West:

- Reflecting on the spread of the Cause of God, 'Abdu'l-Bahá observes spiritual illumination across the East and West while lamenting the continued deprivation in the homeland of the Blessed Beauty, Núr.

#### 3. Gospel Reference and Christ's Words:

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá references the Gospel and Christ's words about prophets being without honor in their own country, drawing parallels to the situation in Núr.

#### 4. Enthusiastic Response in Núr:

- He recounts the enthusiastic response of the people of Tákur and Dárkulá when the Blessed Beauty passed through Núr, attracting a vast number of faithful followers.

#### 5. Disruptive Actions of Yaḥyá the Unchaste:

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá narrates the disruptive actions of Yaḥyá the unchaste in Núr, leading to agitation, confusion, and martyrdom of many faithful friends, causing the light of Núr to be obscured.

#### 6. Reminiscence of an Assemblage in Dárkulá:

- Reflecting on a past assemblage in Dárkulá, 'Abdu'l-Bahá reminisces about the Blessed Beauty's eloquent speech and powerful proofs that moved mujtahids to rush forth to bring Him His shoes.

### **Questions and Answers:**

1. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá feel upon receiving the letter from the descendant of veteran friends and countrymen from the land of Núr?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá expresses infinite joy and gladness upon receiving the letter, as it brings news from the land of Núr and connects him with the descendant of beloved friends.

2. What contrast does 'Abdu'l-Bahá draw regarding the spread of the Cause of God?

- He contrasts the widespread acceptance of the Cause of God across the East and West with the continued deprivation and estrangement in the homeland of the Blessed Beauty, Núr.

3. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá explain the situation in Núr using references from the Gospel?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá references the Gospel and Christ's words about prophets being without honor in their own country, drawing parallels to the situation in Núr where acceptance of the Cause remains limited.

4. What disruptive actions does 'Abdu'l-Bahá describe in Núr, and what are their consequences?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá narrates the disruptive actions of Yaḥyá the unchaste in Núr, leading to agitation, confusion, and martyrdom of many faithful friends, causing the light of Núr to be obscured.

5. Can you recount an incident from 'Abdu'l-Bahá's reminiscence about an assemblage in Dárkulá?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá recalls an assemblage in Dárkulá where the Blessed Beauty's eloquent speech and powerful proofs moved mujtahids to rush forth to bring Him His shoes, reflecting the impact of His words on those present.

15

*He is God.*

1 O servant of God! Ṭihrán is the homeland of the compassionate Beloved and the abode of that Light of the realms of the Placeless. Thou too hast been planted by the hand of celestial power in that same garden and been nurtured by the gentle breezes and pleasing waters of that luminous land. Wherefore, even as outwardly thou art from the homeland of that resplendent Light, it is my hope that also inwardly thou mayest become a denizen of the heavenly Kingdom of that shining Orb.

2 If thou art debarred from the public baths, praised be God, for thou art immersed instead in that wellspring of cool water that is “to wash with and to drink”,<sup>27</sup> and art indeed a sorely tried and true believer in the path of the Blessed Beauty. Upon thee be greetings and praise.

48



**Summary:**

In this message, 'Abdu'l-Bahá addresses a servant of God, acknowledging their connection to Ṭīhrán, the homeland of the compassionate Beloved and the abode of the Light of the realms of the Placeless. He emphasizes the spiritual significance of being nurtured by the gentle breezes and pleasing waters of that luminous land, indicating a deeper connection beyond the physical realm.

'Abdu'l-Bahá expresses hope that the recipient, while outwardly from the homeland of the resplendent Light, will also inwardly become a denizen of the heavenly Kingdom of that shining Orb, implying a spiritual transformation and alignment with divine attributes.

He offers praise to the recipient for enduring hardship, symbolized by being debarred from public baths, and highlights their immersion in a metaphorical wellspring of cool water that serves both to cleanse and nourish spiritually. This endurance signifies the recipient's steadfastness and faithfulness in the path of the Blessed Beauty.

The message concludes with greetings and praise upon the recipient.

**Key Points:****1. Acknowledgment of Connection to Ṭīhrán:**

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá acknowledges the recipient's connection to Ṭīhrán, the homeland of the compassionate Beloved and the abode of the Light of the realms of the Placeless.

**2. Spiritual Significance of Being Nurtured:**

- He emphasizes the spiritual significance of being nurtured by the gentle breezes and pleasing waters of Ṭīhrán, indicating a deeper connection beyond the physical realm.

**3. Hope for Spiritual Transformation:**

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá expresses hope that the recipient, while outwardly from Ṭīhrán, will also inwardly become a denizen of the heavenly Kingdom, signifying a spiritual transformation and alignment with divine attributes.

**4. Endurance in the Path of the Blessed Beauty:**

- He praises the recipient for enduring hardship, symbolized by being debarred from public baths, and highlights their immersion in a metaphorical wellspring of cool water, signifying spiritual cleansing and nourishment.

#### 5. Conclusion:

- The message concludes with greetings and praise upon the recipient for their steadfastness and faithfulness in the path of the Blessed Beauty.

#### Questions and Answers:

1. What is the significance of Ṭīhrán in the message?

- Ṭīhrán is portrayed as the homeland of the compassionate Beloved and the abode of the Light of the realms of the Placeless, indicating its spiritual significance.

2. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá suggest a deeper connection beyond the physical realm?

- He emphasizes the spiritual significance of being nurtured by the gentle breezes and pleasing waters of Ṭīhrán, implying a deeper connection beyond the physical realm.

3. What hope does 'Abdu'l-Bahá express for the recipient?

- He expresses hope that the recipient will inwardly become a denizen of the heavenly Kingdom, signifying a spiritual transformation and alignment with divine attributes.

4. What does being debarred from public baths symbolize in the message?

- Being debarred from public baths symbolizes enduring hardship in the path of the Blessed Beauty, reflecting the recipient's steadfastness and faithfulness.

5. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá characterize the recipient's spiritual state?

- He characterizes the recipient as a sorely tried and true believer in the path of the Blessed Beauty, praising their endurance and steadfastness amidst challenges.

1 O Bashír-i-Iláhí! Thy letter was like unto a treasury of poems in glorification and praise of the Blessed Beauty. It hath imparted the utmost joy and gladness. Each word of thy letter is a

sign of joyous music: One word is the lyre and the lute; another, the psalms of the House of David. One word is the timbrel and the harp; another, pure poetry and song. It is a perfect symphony, causing the listeners to leap with rapture and joy. From afar thou playest the melody, and here His lovers rejoice with ecstasy.

2 Praise be to God, for thy letter was redolent with the fragrance of musk and thy words were as sweet as honey. It bore testimony to the unity and harmony among the friends, who are one and all engaged, with zeal and attraction, unity and concord, in exalting the Word of God, diffusing His fragrances, and teaching His Cause, none burdened by sorrow.

3 The four pages in the blessed handwriting of the Báb—may my life be a sacrifice unto Him—that thou didst present to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as a gift were received. Thereupon, the very walls resounded with the anthem of “O blessed, blessed are we!” whilst ‘Abdu’l-Bahá hearkened from a corner unto these sweet melodies. Well done! Well done! for having cheered our hearts with such a cherished gift.

4 As to thy stay in the Murgh-Mahallih of Shimírán for a change of air, this is truly a divine favour.<sup>28</sup> That place is not the abode of mere birds, but the nest of the Phoenix of the East and the dwelling of the mystic Bird of the sacred Mount. For there, in that pure and hallowed field, the Blessed Beauty—may my life be offered up for His loved ones—took up residence for an entire summer. There He resided in the garden of Hájí-Báqir, which consisted of three terraces overlooking a lake. This was in the earliest days of the Cause, when that district became the throne of the Lord of the Kingdom. A large stone platform was raised in the heart of the lake, with a tent in the centre and gardens all around. About one hundred and fifty friends would gather, and at night hymns of praise would rise up to the Concourse on high. Those were wonderful times indeed. The Blessed Beauty would frequently make mention of that place.

5 And now, render thou thanks unto God for having bestowed such a dwelling upon thee, where thou hast engaged, in the company of the friends, in praise and remembrance of the incomparable Lord, singing to thy heart’s content and bringing bliss and joy to His loved ones. The Glory of Glories rest upon thee.

### **Summary:**

In this message, 'Abdu'l-Bahá responds to a letter from Bashír-i-Iláhí, expressing joy and gratitude for the sentiments expressed. He praises the eloquence and beauty of the letter, comparing it to a treasury of poems in glorification and praise of the Blessed Beauty.

'Abdu'l-Bahá acknowledges the unity and harmony among the friends, noting their zeal and attraction in exalting the Word of God and teaching His Cause. He commends Bashír-i-Iláhí for presenting four pages in the blessed handwriting of the Báb as a gift, which brought great joy to all who heard of it.

Regarding Bashír-i-Iláhí's stay in Murgh-Maḥallih of Shimírán for a change of air, 'Abdu'l-Bahá describes it as a divine favor, highlighting the spiritual significance of the location. He reminisces about the time when the Blessed Beauty resided in the garden of Ḥájí-Báqir in that area, emphasizing the spiritual atmosphere and the gatherings of friends to praise God.

'Abdu'l-Bahá concludes by urging Bashír-i-Iláhí to render thanks to God for the dwelling bestowed upon him, where he can engage in praise and remembrance of the Lord alongside fellow believers.

### **Key Points:**

#### 1. Appreciation for Bashír-i-Iláhí's Letter:

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá expresses joy and gratitude for the sentiments expressed in Bashír-i-Iláhí's letter, praising its eloquence and beauty.

#### 2. Praise for Unity Among the Friends:

- He acknowledges the unity and harmony among the friends, commending their zeal and attraction in exalting the Word of God and teaching His Cause.

#### 3. Gratitude for Gift of the Báb's Handwriting:

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá commends Bashír-i-Iláhí for presenting four pages in the blessed handwriting of the Báb as a gift, which brought great joy to all who heard of it.

#### 4. Spiritual Significance of Stay in Murgh-Maḥallih:

- He describes Bashír-i-Iláhí's stay in Murgh-Maḥallih of Shimírán for a change of air as a divine favor, recalling the time when the Blessed Beauty resided in the garden of Ḥájí-Báqir in that area.

#### 5. Encouragement to Render Thanks:

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá urges Bashír-i-Iláhí to render thanks to God for the dwelling bestowed upon him, where he can engage in praise and remembrance of the Lord alongside fellow believers.

### **Questions and Answers:**

1. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá describe the letter from Bashír-i-Iláhí?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá describes it as a treasury of poems in glorification and praise of the Blessed Beauty, imparting joy and gladness.

2. What does 'Abdu'l-Bahá commend the friends for?

- He commends the unity and harmony among the friends, noting their zeal and attraction in exalting the Word of God and teaching His Cause.

3. What gift did Bashír-i-Iláhí present, and how was it received?

- Bashír-i-Iláhí presented four pages in the blessed handwriting of the Báb as a gift, which brought great joy to all who heard of it.

4. What spiritual significance does 'Abdu'l-Bahá attribute to Bashír-i-Iláhí's stay in Murgh-Maḥallih?

- He describes it as a divine favor, recalling the time when the Blessed Beauty resided in the area and emphasizing the spiritual atmosphere and gatherings of friends to praise God.

5. What does 'Abdu'l-Bahá urge Bashír-i-Iláhí to do?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá urges him to render thanks to God for the dwelling bestowed upon him, where he can engage in praise and remembrance of the Lord alongside fellow believers.

17

*He is God.*

1 O handmaid of Bahá! Thy letter was received, and from its contents the earnestness with which thou art serving the Abhá Kingdom became evident. Thou art indeed striving with heart and soul, and I am well pleased with thee.

2 I had the book thou hast written about Qurratu'l-'Ayn rendered into Arabic.<sup>29</sup> The translation is exceedingly eloquent; I have read through it carefully. If necessary, I can forward a copy of the Arabic to thee.

53

3 With regard to the episode of Badasht, though the account is accurate, it is not exhaustive. A fuller description would be that Qurratu'l-'Ayn was in one garden and Quddús in another, whilst the Blessed Beauty resided in a tent. His tent was raised between the two gardens, beside a stream. The Blessed Beauty had previously said unto Quddús and Qurratu'l-'Ayn that the Cause was to be fully proclaimed. The next day, He fell ill. Quddús entered and sat in the presence of the Blessed Beauty, with all the believers gathered round the tent. Suddenly, Qurratu'l-'Ayn emerged from her garden and, roaring and crying out, she entered the tent and seated herself. "Read the Súrih of the Event", the Blessed Beauty proclaimed, and it was read in His presence. The greatest commotion then came to pass: Some fled, others wept and cried aloud, and yet others were sorely perturbed. Mullá Ismá'íl cut his own throat, and the gathering at Badasht was dispersed.

4 In short, thou hast indeed been most assiduous in writing this book. I beseech God that as day followeth day, thy spirit of endeavour, service, and sacrifice, and thy constancy and steadfastness in the Cause, may wax stronger so that thou mayest become a luminous star shining from the horizon of eternity.

5 Dispatch some copies of this book by post to Persia for the friends, but do so one volume at a time, for should ye send several copies at once, the government will confiscate them....

### **Summary:**

In this message, 'Abdu'l-Bahá responds to a letter from a handmaid of Bahá, expressing appreciation for her earnest service to the Abhá Kingdom. He acknowledges her efforts and expresses satisfaction with her dedication.

'Abdu'l-Bahá informs the recipient that he had her book about Qurratu'l-'Ayn translated into Arabic, praising the eloquence of the translation. He offers to forward a copy of the Arabic translation to her if needed.

Regarding the episode of Badasht, 'Abdu'l-Bahá provides additional details, stating that although the account is accurate, it is not exhaustive. He describes the presence of Qurratu'l-'Ayn and Quddús in separate gardens, with the Blessed Beauty residing in a tent between them beside a stream. He recounts the proclamation of the Cause by the Blessed Beauty, followed by a tumultuous reaction among the believers.

'Abdu'l-Bahá commends the recipient for her diligence in writing the book, praying for her continued spiritual growth, endeavor, service, and sacrifice in the Cause.

He instructs the recipient to dispatch copies of the book to Persia for the friends, advising to send them one volume at a time to avoid confiscation by the government.

### **Key Points:**

#### 1. Appreciation for Service to the Abhá Kingdom:

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá expresses appreciation for the earnest service of the handmaid of Bahá and acknowledges her dedication.

#### 2. Translation of the Book:

- He informs the recipient that her book about Qurratu'l-'Ayn was translated into Arabic, praising the eloquence of the translation, and offering to provide a copy of the Arabic version if needed.

#### 3. Additional Details about Badasht:

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá provides further details about the episode of Badasht, describing the presence of Qurratu'l-'Ayn, Quddús, and the Blessed Beauty, and recounting the proclamation of the Cause and the believers' reaction.

#### 4. Commendation for Diligence:

- He commends the recipient for her diligence in writing the book and prays for her spiritual growth, service, and sacrifice in the Cause.

#### 5. Instructions for Dispatching Copies of the Book:

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá instructs the recipient to send copies of the book to Persia for the friends, advising to send them one volume at a time to avoid confiscation by the government.

### **Questions and Answers:**

#### 1. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá express appreciation for the handmaid of Bahá's service?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá acknowledges her earnest service to the Abhá Kingdom and expresses satisfaction with her dedication.

2. What does 'Abdu'l-Bahá say about the translation of the book?

- He informs the recipient that her book about Qurratu'l-'Ayn was translated into Arabic and praises the eloquence of the translation.

3. What additional details does 'Abdu'l-Bahá provide about the episode of Badasht?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá describes the presence of Qurratu'l-'Ayn, Quddús, and the Blessed Beauty at Badasht, recounting the proclamation of the Cause and the believers' reaction.

4. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá commend the recipient?

- He commends her diligence in writing the book and prays for her spiritual growth, service, and sacrifice in the Cause.

5. What instructions does 'Abdu'l-Bahá give regarding dispatching copies of the book to Persia?

- He advises to send them one volume at a time to avoid confiscation by the government.

18

*He is God.*

1 O 'Abdu'l-Vahháb! During His first journey to Iraq, the Blessed Beauty met a young man by the name of Mírzá 'Abdu'l-Vahháb. No sooner had this youth attained His presence and hearkened unto His words than, lo, he became so magnetized, so suffused with joy, that he guided his family to the truth and imparted the gladsome tidings to a great many.

2 Following the return of Him Who is the Most Great Name to Tíhrán, Mírzá 'Abdu'l-Vahháb hastened to that sacred land, dancing with delight and leaping with joy, only to be consigned, upon arrival, to the depths of the dungeon. A few days later, his turn came to be martyred. When the executioner stepped into the dungeon and shouted out his name, that young man, still in the prime of his years, leapt to his feet, danced for joy in that prison, and surrendered himself to the executioner. Thus did he attain supreme martyrdom. The Blessed Beauty frequently spoke of him. I fervently hope that the joy and radiance of that 'Abdu'l-Vahháb may also be manifested in this one. The Glory of Glories rest upon thee.

**Summary:**



In this message, 'Abdu'l-Bahá addresses 'Abdu'l-Vahháb, recounting the story of a young man named Mírzá 'Abdu'l-Vahháb. During Bahá'u'lláh's first journey to Iraq, He met Mírzá 'Abdu'l-Vahháb, who became deeply moved and joyous upon hearing His words. Mírzá 'Abdu'l-Vahháb embraced the faith, guided his family to the truth, and shared the message with many others.

After Bahá'u'lláh's return to Tīhrán, Mírzá 'Abdu'l-Vahháb eagerly traveled there, only to be imprisoned upon arrival. A few days later, he was called to martyrdom. When the executioner arrived and called his name, Mírzá 'Abdu'l-Vahháb joyfully danced in his prison cell and willingly surrendered himself to be martyred, displaying an extraordinary level of spiritual fervor and detachment. Bahá'u'lláh spoke of him fondly, expressing hope that 'Abdu'l-Vahháb would manifest similar joy and radiance.

### **Key Points:**

#### 1. Encounter with Bahá'u'lláh:

- Bahá'u'lláh met a young man named Mírzá 'Abdu'l-Vahháb during His first journey to Iraq.
- Mírzá 'Abdu'l-Vahháb was deeply moved and joyous upon hearing Bahá'u'lláh's words, leading him to embrace the faith.

#### 2. Martyrdom:

- After Bahá'u'lláh returned to Tīhrán, Mírzá 'Abdu'l-Vahháb eagerly traveled there.
- Upon arrival, he was imprisoned and, a few days later, called to martyrdom.
- When the executioner arrived, Mírzá 'Abdu'l-Vahháb joyfully danced in his prison cell and willingly surrendered himself to be martyred.

#### 3. Bahá'u'lláh's Reflection:

- Bahá'u'lláh frequently spoke of Mírzá 'Abdu'l-Vahháb, expressing fondness for his joyful surrender to martyrdom.
- 'Abdu'l-Bahá expresses hope that 'Abdu'l-Vahháb will manifest similar joy and radiance.

### **Questions and Answers:**

1. How did Mírzá 'Abdu'l-Vahháb react upon hearing Bahá'u'lláh's words during His journey to Iraq?

- Mírzá ‘Abdu’l-Vahháb became deeply moved and joyous, embracing the faith and sharing the message with his family and many others.

2. What happened to Mírzá ‘Abdu’l-Vahháb upon his arrival in Tīhrán?

- Upon arrival, Mírzá ‘Abdu’l-Vahháb was imprisoned and later called to martyrdom.

3. How did Mírzá ‘Abdu’l-Vahháb respond to the call for martyrdom?

- Mírzá ‘Abdu’l-Vahháb joyfully danced in his prison cell and willingly surrendered himself to be martyred when the executioner arrived.

4. How did Bahá'u'lláh reflect on Mírzá ‘Abdu’l-Vahháb's martyrdom?

- Bahá'u'lláh frequently spoke of Mírzá ‘Abdu’l-Vahháb, expressing fondness for his joyful surrender to martyrdom.

5. What does 'Abdu'l-Bahá express hope for regarding 'Abdu’l-Vahháb?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá expresses hope that 'Abdu’l-Vahháb will manifest similar joy and radiance.

19

*He is God.*

1 O thou who art steadfast in the Covenant! Thou hast asked concerning the travels of Bahá’u’lláh. The Blessed Beauty—may my life be offered up for His loved ones—travelled directly from Tīhrán to Hamadán, from that city to Kirmánsháh, and thence straight on to Baghdad.

2 As regardeth the association which hath been formed in Shanghai, China, with the aim of promoting harmony and reconciliation amongst the religions, do thou send to that English lady literature about the Cause and material from the press, and advise her by all means to go to that association and speak about this blessed Cause—a universal religion which bringeth all faiths and creeds together beneath the effulgence of the Sun of Truth, entirely reconciling them and welding them into a single people. This is an important matter to which thou shouldst attend most heedfully. Correspond regularly with them and, if it be possible, send teachers to those parts, who may likewise go to the association and spread the divine teachings. Only such souls should be sent, however, as are detached from the world, attracted by the fragrances of holiness, and distinguished by the utmost purity and sanctity.

58

## **Summary:**

In this message, 'Abdu'l-Bahá provides insights into the travels of Bahá'u'lláh and offers guidance regarding the promotion of harmony and reconciliation among religions in Shanghai, China. He begins by addressing inquiries about Bahá'u'lláh's travels, stating that Bahá'u'lláh journeyed directly from Tīhrán to Hamadán, then proceeded to Kirmánsháh, and finally arrived in Baghdad. Transitioning to the topic of the association formed in Shanghai to foster harmony among religions, 'Abdu'l-Bahá advises the recipient to send literature about the Bahá'í Faith to an English lady associated with the group. He encourages her to speak about the Bahá'í teachings, describing the Faith as a universal religion that unifies all faiths and creeds under the Sun of Truth. 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasizes the importance of this endeavor and urges regular correspondence with the association. Additionally, he suggests the possibility of sending Bahá'í teachers to Shanghai, but only individuals who are detached from worldly concerns, drawn to holiness, and characterized by purity and sanctity.

## **Key Points:**

### 1. Travels of Bahá'u'lláh:

- Bahá'u'lláh's journey from Tīhrán to Hamadán, then to Kirmánsháh, and finally to Baghdad.

### 2. Promotion of Harmony in Shanghai:

- Existence of an association in Shanghai aiming to promote harmony among religions.
- Advice to provide literature about the Bahá'í Faith to an English lady associated with the group.
- Encouragement for her to speak about the Bahá'í teachings to the association.
- Description of the Bahá'í Faith as a universal religion unifying all faiths and creeds.
- Recommendation for regular correspondence with the association.
- Suggestion of the possibility of sending Bahá'í teachers to Shanghai.
- Qualities expected of Bahá'í teachers: detachment from the world, attraction to holiness, and purity.

## **Questions and Answers:**

### 1. Where did Bahá'u'lláh travel directly from Tīhrán?

- Bahá'u'lláh traveled directly from Tīhrán to Hamadán.

2. What advice did 'Abdu'l-Bahá give regarding an association in Shanghai, China?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá advised sending literature about the Bahá'í Faith to an English lady associated with the group and encouraged her to speak about the Bahá'í teachings.

3. How did 'Abdu'l-Bahá describe the Bahá'í Faith in relation to promoting harmony among religions?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá described the Bahá'í Faith as a universal religion that brings all faiths and creeds together beneath the Sun of Truth.

4. What did 'Abdu'l-Bahá recommend regarding correspondence with the association in Shanghai?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá recommended regular correspondence with the association in Shanghai.

5. What qualities were expected of Bahá'í teachers who might be sent to Shanghai?

- Bahá'í teachers sent to Shanghai were expected to be detached from the world, attracted by holiness, and distinguished by purity.

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*He is the All-Glorious.*

1 O thou servant of the Sacred Threshold! Thy letter dated 23 May 1921 was received and its contents were noted. The complaints of the two parties are continuous, and their tale-telling also incessant. This causeth grief to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, who had painstakingly arranged for thy return to the sacred House, thereby delivering the friends from deep anguish and despair, and cheering their hearts with joy! Now, differences have arisen and will no doubt lead to the House being lost to us once again.

2 In short, O servant of the Sacred Threshold! 'Abdu'l-Bahá hath set upon thy head a gem-studded crown, which is the custodianship of the sacred House. Its full significance is not as yet evident, but ere long it will acquire great importance. This crown shall suffice thee and a hundred generations after thee. Entangle not thyself, then, in other affairs.

3 Seek, with the utmost tranquillity and composure, to dedicate thyself to service at the sacred House, and treat the pilgrims with the utmost kindness and love, so that they may be happy and pleased with thee. There is nothing greater than such servitude to the sacred

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House; thou couldst not wish for more. In short, strive with heart and soul to please and satisfy all the friends.

4           Thou hast seen the conduct and behaviour of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Follow this example. Act in accordance with the admonitions of the Blessed Beauty—may my life be offered up for His loved ones. That Wronged One of the world consorted with all people with the utmost meekness and humility. Throughout the long period when He resided in Baghdad, not a single heart was saddened by Him. All the inhabitants of that city were thankful and obliged to Him.

5           Thus we, who are the servants of His threshold, must follow in His blessed footsteps. This, indeed, is the means of success. This, indeed, is the cause of prosperity. Convey my wholehearted greetings to thy brothers and thy relatives. The Glory of Glories rest upon thee.

### **Summary:**

In this message, 'Abdu'l-Bahá addresses a servant of the Sacred Threshold, expressing concern over ongoing disputes and complaints between parties, which may jeopardize the custodianship of the sacred House. He emphasizes the importance of maintaining peace and harmony to preserve the sanctity of the House and urges the servant to focus solely on their duties without entangling themselves in other affairs. 'Abdu'l-Bahá reassures the servant that the custodianship bestowed upon them is significant and will endure for generations, urging them to dedicate themselves wholeheartedly to serving pilgrims at the sacred House with kindness and love. He emphasizes the need to follow the example of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the admonitions of Bahá'u'lláh, emphasizing humility, meekness, and a spirit of service. 'Abdu'l-Bahá underscores that following these principles is the key to success and prosperity, conveying greetings to the servant's brothers and relatives.

### **Key Points:**

1. Concern over Disputes:

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá expresses concern over ongoing complaints and disputes between parties.

2. Importance of Custodianship:

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá highlights the significance of the custodianship bestowed upon the servant.

3. Focus on Service:

- Emphasis on dedicating oneself to serving pilgrims at the sacred House with kindness and love.

- Advises against entangling oneself in other affairs and stresses the importance of tranquility and composure.

#### 4. Following the Example of 'Abdu'l-Bahá:

- Encouragement to emulate the conduct and behavior of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, characterized by meekness and humility.
- Highlighting Bahá'u'lláh's admonitions to guide one's actions.

#### 5. Path to Success:

- Emphasizes that following the example of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and adhering to Bahá'u'lláh's teachings are essential for success and prosperity.
- Conveys greetings to the servant's brothers and relatives.

### **Questions and Answers:**

#### 1. What concerns does 'Abdu'l-Bahá express in the message?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá expresses concern over ongoing disputes and complaints between parties, which may jeopardize the custodianship of the sacred House.

#### 2. What advice does 'Abdu'l-Bahá give regarding the custodianship of the sacred House?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasizes the importance of focusing solely on one's duties as the custodian of the sacred House without entangling oneself in other affairs.

#### 3. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá describe the significance of serving pilgrims at the sacred House?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá describes serving pilgrims at the sacred House as the highest form of service and urges the servant to treat pilgrims with kindness and love.

#### 4. What example does 'Abdu'l-Bahá encourage the servant to follow?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá encourages the servant to follow the example of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, who interacted with people with meekness and humility, ensuring that no heart was saddened by Him.

#### 5. According to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, what is the path to success?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasizes that following the example of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and adhering to Bahá'u'lláh's teachings are essential for success and prosperity.

*He is God.*

- 1 O thou who art steadfast in the Covenant! The letter thou hadst written to Mashhadí Ismá‘íl hath been received. The traces of the pen of that loving friend have brought joy to my heart and mind, for their inner meanings are spiritual impressions and heartfelt sentiments derived from the reality of the soul; they are sufficient testimony to firmness and constancy, and to servitude to the all-sufficing Lord.
- 2 From the earliest dawn of the Morn of divine guidance, *Ádhirbáyján* raised aloft the banner of faith and certitude, and the Cause of God thereby spread far and wide. But following the martyrdom of the Exalted One, the journey of the Blessed Beauty from Iraq to Kurdistan, and the seclusion of Yaḥyá in a corner of oblivion, the Cause of God sank deep into apathy everywhere, even in *Ádhirbáyján*. Only a few souls remained steadfast and calm until the Day-Star of the world returned to Iraq and the splendours of His light shone upon all regions in the plenitude of their glory. Once again, a Great Resurrection was witnessed and the sweet savours of holiness were shed upon the whole world. The friends in *Ádhirbáyján* were stirred up in blissful rapture, and their enthusiasm, joy, and fervour waxed greater day by day.
- 3 Now, too, receptivity in that land is great, but a mighty effort is needed if the friends are to impart these joyful tidings with gladness and delight, and to perfume the senses of the seekers with the fragrance of the robe of the divine Joseph. Praise be to God that thou hast arisen to serve Him and art earnestly striving to exalt the Word of God. My hope is that, through the sincerity of souls, the hearts and minds of the people of *Ádhirbáyján* may be stirred in these days, and sanctified beings may arise to guide the people aright. The forces of the Kingdom stand ready and expectant. As soon as a soul urgeth the steed of high endeavour into the field of sacrifice, these heavenly forces will rush forth to his aid and will render him assistance and support.
- 4 Thou hadst requested permission for a visit. At this time, thy presence in those regions is much needed. Thou art occupied with service, manifesting complete servitude and devoted to the promotion of the Word of God. Such service is the same as attaining to the Sacred Threshold of the Lord. The Glory of Glories rest upon thee.

**Summary:**

In this message, 'Abdu'l-Bahá addresses a steadfast follower of the Covenant, expressing joy upon receiving a letter written to Mashhadí Ismá‘íl, praising its spiritual depth and heartfelt sentiments as a testament to firmness in the Covenant and servitude to God. 'Abdu'l-Bahá reflects on the early spread of the Faith in Ádhirbáyján, its subsequent decline following the martyrdom of the Báb, and the resurgence of enthusiasm and fervor with the return of Bahá'u'lláh to Iraq. He acknowledges the receptivity in Ádhirbáyján and emphasizes the need for a mighty effort to share the joyful tidings of the Faith with the people, likening it to perfuming the senses of seekers with the fragrance of divine revelation. 'Abdu'l-Bahá encourages the recipient to continue their devoted service, expressing hope that through sincerity, hearts and minds in Ádhirbáyján may be stirred, leading to the emergence of sanctified beings to guide the people. Finally, 'Abdu'l-Bahá grants permission for a visit, recognizing the recipient's dedication to promoting the Word of God and equating their service to attaining the Sacred Threshold of the Lord.

### **Key Points:**

#### 1. Joy upon Receiving the Letter:

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá expresses joy upon receiving a letter written to Mashhadí Ismá‘íl, praising its spiritual depth and heartfelt sentiments.

#### 2. Reflection on the Spread of the Faith:

- Reflects on the early spread of the Faith in Ádhirbáyján and its subsequent decline following the martyrdom of the Báb.

#### 3. Resurgence of Enthusiasm:

- Describes the resurgence of enthusiasm and fervor among the friends in Ádhirbáyján with the return of Bahá'u'lláh to Iraq.

#### 4. Need for Effort and Service:

- Emphasizes the need for a mighty effort to share the joyful tidings of the Faith in Ádhirbáyján, likening it to perfuming the senses of seekers with divine revelation.

#### 5. Encouragement and Permission for Visit:

- Encourages the recipient to continue devoted service and grants permission for a visit, recognizing their dedication to promoting the Word of God.



## Questions and Answers:

1. What is 'Abdu'l-Bahá's reaction to the letter written to Mashhadí Ismá'íl?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá expresses joy upon receiving the letter, praising its spiritual depth and heartfelt sentiments as a testament to firmness in the Covenant and servitude to God.

2. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá describe the early spread of the Faith in Ádhirbáyján?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá reflects on the early spread of the Faith in Ádhirbáyján, its subsequent decline following the martyrdom of the Báb, and the resurgence of enthusiasm and fervor with the return of Bahá'u'lláh to Iraq.

3. What is emphasized regarding the receptivity in Ádhirbáyján?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá acknowledges the receptivity in Ádhirbáyján and emphasizes the need for a mighty effort to share the joyful tidings of the Faith with the people.

4. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá characterize the recipient's service?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá characterizes the recipient's service as devoted and equates it to attaining the Sacred Threshold of the Lord.

5. What permission does 'Abdu'l-Bahá grant in the message?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá grants permission for a visit, recognizing the recipient's dedication to promoting the Word of God.

1 O Lord, my God! Thou seest how the son of Maḥmúd hath been seized with trembling and dismay, at the hand of hostile enemies.<sup>30</sup> The vast immensity of the world was for him straitened, inasmuch as multiple calamities befell him and adversities waxed increasingly severe. He was so overtaken by the darkness of tyranny and injustice, of cruelty and iniquity that, unable to endure the onslaught of those trials and tribulations, he finally forsook hearth and home and migrated to the Holy Land.

2 O God! Persia hath become the arena for the hosts of woe and tyranny. Animosity amongst contending groups hath fanned the flames of injustice and rebellion throughout that land. None can be found there whose breast is not pierced by arrows, whose heart is not

wounded by spears. None is there whose body hath not fallen upon the dust-heap of infamy and degradation, owing to the growing intensity of contention and strife and by reason of what the hands of the evil plotters have wrought. Some lean to the right, others turn back on their heels; still others bring upon themselves abasement and retribution. The people have become divided and the congregation of those who were wrapt in veils dispersed, inasmuch as they have failed to hearken to His decisive decree and, deaf to counsel, have cast themselves into the depths of the sea of doubt.

3 O Lord! Tribulations have encompassed all the peoples. There is none to dispel them besides Thee, and none to forgive our sins except Thyself. I beseech Thee to shield Thy loved ones and protect Thy chosen ones from the swirling dust that hath encompassed that land. I implore Thee, in particular, to shield this devoted servant of Thine, Ja‘far, who hath been praying fervently to Thee and supplicating in tears before Thy Face. He is destitute and hath placed his complete trust and confidence in Thee. O Lord! Relieve him of his ills, and let him not drown in the deepest abyss of tribulations or in the fathomless ocean of afflictions. Bestow upon him Thy manifold bounties, unravel before him Thy hidden mysteries, and preserve him from every affliction and sorrow, within the stronghold of Thine unfailing protection. O God! Open Thou the gates of joy and happiness for him in this marvellous age, so that the verities of Thy Cause may flow from him in torrents to every ardent and grateful soul. O Lord! Grant that his sole aim, his only goal, may be to diffuse Thy sweet savours amidst humankind and to spread Thy light throughout the world. O Thou my compassionate Lord! Thou art, in truth, the God of bounty, the Almighty, the All-Glorious, the Ever-Forgiving.

4 O thou dear friend! Thy letter, filled with sighs of grief, was read with the utmost sorrow. Thou hast indeed fallen into grave difficulties and hast endured extreme hardships. But this year of great calamity hath encompassed all of Persia—nay, it hath enveloped the whole world. As attested by the poet, “No thorn is there that is not crimsoned by the martyrs’ blood.”<sup>31</sup>

5 ‘Abdu’l-Bahá hath also been thy partner and associate in this regard. In Paris, while, on the one hand, each noble soul brought joy to our hearts, on the other, great difficulties arose as a result of attacks by small-minded individuals. In London some of the clergy hurled such assaults upon us as are impossible to describe. Wert thou to read the *Churchman*, thou wouldst know what things have come to pass.<sup>32</sup> But ‘Abdu’l-Bahá payeth no heed whatsoever to any ordeal, difficulty, or adversity. Nay, rather, he regardeth adversity to be, at times, the same as bounty itself. For forty years the prison-city of ‘Akká was for him a heavenly

paradise, and he saw the early days of that imprisonment, which were its most severe, as a garden of roses.

- 6        Thou too must be my companion, and abandon not the arena in the face of afflictions and calamities. Thou must not merely refrain from complaining, but must rather be thankful. One day in Baghdad, the Blessed Beauty—may my soul be offered up for His servants—addressing us, uttered this verse:

Either speak no more of love, or content thyself  
with what hath been ordained;  
Thus hath it been decreed by My command, and  
such is My law and My way.<sup>33</sup>

At that instant, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá understood what was expected of him.

- 7        And now, through His infinite favours, I hope that days as sweet as honey may once again return. Grieve not, neither sorrow nor repine. “Forsake all complaint and tend to the flock.”<sup>34</sup> My wish for thee is that, by the favour of the Blessed Beauty, thou mayest find ease of heart and soul. The Glory of Glories rest upon thee.

### **Summary:**

In this message, 'Abdu'l-Bahá addresses the son of Maḥmúd, expressing sympathy for the hardships and adversities he has faced at the hands of hostile enemies, leading to his migration to the Holy Land. 'Abdu'l-Bahá laments the state of Persia, describing it as an arena for woe and tyranny, with animosity among contending groups leading to injustice, rebellion, and widespread suffering. He beseeches God to shield His loved ones from tribulations, particularly mentioning Ja‘far, who fervently prays for relief from his destitution and protection from afflictions. 'Abdu'l-Bahá reassures Ja‘far, affirming that difficulties have encompassed all of Persia and the world, recalling his own endurance of hardships during attacks in Paris and London. He urges Ja‘far not to complain but to be thankful, citing a verse from Bahá’u’lláh about accepting ordained destiny with contentment. 'Abdu'l-Bahá encourages Ja‘far to persevere in the face of afflictions, expressing hope for sweeter days ahead and bestowing his wishes for ease of heart and soul.

### **Key Points:**

1. Sympathy for Hardships:

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá expresses sympathy for the son of Maḥmúd, acknowledging the tremors of fear and dismay he has faced from hostile enemies, leading to his migration to the Holy Land.

## 2. Lament for Persia:

- Describes Persia as an arena for woe and tyranny, with animosity among contending groups resulting in injustice, rebellion, and widespread suffering.

## 3. Prayer for Protection:

- Beseeches God to shield His loved ones from tribulations, especially mentioning Ja‘far, who prays fervently for relief from destitution and protection from afflictions.

## 4. Reassurance Amidst Hardships:

- Reassures Ja‘far of shared hardships, recalling attacks faced in Paris and London and urging him not to complain but to be thankful.

## 5. Encouragement to Persevere:

- Urges Ja‘far to persevere in the face of afflictions, citing Bahá’u’lláh's teaching to accept ordained destiny with contentment.

## 6. Hope for Better Days:

- Expresses hope for sweeter days ahead and bestows wishes for ease of heart and soul.

## **Questions and Answers:**

### 1. What hardships has the son of Maḥmúd faced, according to 'Abdu'l-Bahá?

- The son of Maḥmúd has faced trembling and dismay at the hands of hostile enemies, leading to multiple calamities, severe adversities, and ultimately, his migration to the Holy Land.

### 2. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá describe the state of Persia?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá describes Persia as an arena for woe and tyranny, with animosity among contending groups resulting in widespread injustice, rebellion, and suffering.

### 3. Whose protection does 'Abdu'l-Bahá specifically pray for?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá specifically prays for God's protection for Ja'far, who fervently seeks relief from destitution and shelter from afflictions.

4. What encouragement does 'Abdu'l-Bahá offer amidst hardships?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá urges Ja'far not to complain but to be thankful, citing shared endurance of hardships and recalling Bahá'u'lláh's teaching to accept ordained destiny with contentment.

5. What hope does 'Abdu'l-Bahá express for the future?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá expresses hope for sweeter days ahead, advising Ja'far not to grieve but to persevere in the face of afflictions.

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*He is the All-Glorious.*

1 O thou who hast tasted of the sweetness of every affliction in the path of God, who hast arisen with thy spirit, thy being, and thine inmost essence to serve His Cause and to exalt His Word! Upon thee rest the glory of God, the All-Glorious.

2 A few days ago, Áqá Siyyid Muḥammad-Riḍá, a resident of Mázindarán, together with Mullá Ramaḍán—upon them be the glory of God, the All-Glorious—and another person arrived and visited the blessed Shrine. Since then, we have been meeting day and night.

3 One day, during the time in Iraq, the Ancient Beauty—may my spirit, my being, and mine essence be offered up for the earth ennobled by the footsteps of His loved ones—said: “Since Fárs is the homeland of the Exalted One—the Primal Point—and is associated with that Holy Being, I deeply yearn for it to be set ablaze with the fire of the love of God.” Shortly thereafter, the Báb’s maternal uncle, the honourable Afnán, arrived, attained His presence, and submitted some questions. The Epistle to the Uncle, titled the “Kitáb-i-Íqán”, was thus revealed. The province of Fárs was then set aflame with the love of God, and the light of knowledge dawned forth and shone resplendent from that horizon. Many souls entered beneath the shadow of the Word of God, and some, filled with the holy ecstasy of His bounty, hastened to the field of sacrifice and flung away their lives and hearts.

4 Now, it is clear and evident from these words of Bahá'u'lláh what must be His irresistible will and desire for the province of Mázindarán. I swear by His holy Being! The Concourse on high and the denizens of the Abhá Kingdom are expectantly awaiting the time when in that blessed region which is associated with the Ancient Beauty—may my life be

offered up for His loved ones—the ocean of God’s love will surge and swell forthwith; the flame of the fire kindled in the Burning Bush will ignite every tree, whether green or sere; souls will be raised up who, even as resplendent stars, will illuminate the celestial firmament; and realities will appear who, like unto manifest signs and upraised banners, will exalt the Word of God.

5 Therefore it behoveth thee to ponder so inestimable a benefit and to seize every means within thy power, that perchance thou mayest manifest God’s irrevocable purpose, exert thyself anew, and render a wondrous service to His Cause. The glory of God rest upon thee.

### **Summary:**

In this message, 'Abdu'l-Bahá addresses an individual who has endured various afflictions in the path of God and commends their dedication to serving His Cause and exalting His Word. He praises their spirit and essence, attributing glory to God, the All-Glorious, upon them. 'Abdu'l-Bahá recounts a recent visit from Áqá Siyyid Muḥammad-Riḍá and Mullá Ramaḍán, emphasizing the importance of their gathering and discussions. He recalls a past event where Bahá’u’lláh expressed a deep yearning for the province of Fárs to be ignited with the fire of God's love, leading to the revelation of the "Kitáb-i-Íqán" in response to questions posed by the Báb’s maternal uncle. 'Abdu'l-Bahá then relates Bahá’u’lláh's similar desire for Mázindarán, highlighting the expectation of the Concourse on high for the region to become ablaze with God’s love, illumined by souls akin to resplendent stars. He urges the recipient to reflect on this profound opportunity and to exert every effort in service to the Cause.

### **Key Points:**

#### 1. Commendation for Dedication:

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá praises the recipient's endurance of afflictions in the path of God and their commitment to serving His Cause and exalting His Word.

#### 2. Recent Visit:

- Mentions the recent visit from Áqá Siyyid Muḥammad-Riḍá and Mullá Ramaḍán, underscoring the significance of their gathering and discussions.

#### 3. Significance of Fárs:

- Recalls Bahá'u'lláh's deep yearning for the province of Fárs to be ignited with the fire of God's love, leading to the revelation of the "Kitáb-i-Íqán" in response to questions posed by the Báb's maternal uncle.

#### 4. Desire for Mázindarán:

- Relates Bahá'u'lláh's similar desire for Mázindarán to be ablaze with God's love, anticipating the emergence of souls akin to resplendent stars to illumine the region.

#### 5. Exhortation to Action:

- Urges the recipient to reflect on the profound opportunity presented and to exert every effort in service to the Cause.

### **Questions and Answers:**

#### 1. What does 'Abdu'l-Bahá commend the recipient for?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá commends the recipient for enduring various afflictions in the path of God and their dedication to serving His Cause and exalting His Word.

#### 2. Who recently visited, according to 'Abdu'l-Bahá?

- Áqá Siyyid Muḥammad-Riḍá and Mullá Ramaḍán recently visited, prompting significant gatherings and discussions.

#### 3. What did Bahá'u'lláh express a deep yearning for regarding Fárs?

- Bahá'u'lláh expressed a deep yearning for the province of Fárs to be ignited with the fire of God's love, leading to the revelation of the "Kitáb-i-Íqán" in response to questions posed by the Báb's maternal uncle.

#### 4. What similar desire did Bahá'u'lláh have for Mázindarán?

- Bahá'u'lláh desired for Mázindarán to be ablaze with God's love, anticipating the emergence of souls akin to resplendent stars to illumine the region.

#### 5. What does 'Abdu'l-Bahá urge the recipient to do?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá urges the recipient to reflect on the profound opportunity presented and to exert every effort in service to the Cause.

*He is God.*

1 O ye who yearn for the beauty of the compassionate Beloved! No sooner had He Who is the Beloved of the worlds, the Desire of the spiritually minded, the Object of the adoration of the heavenly souls, and the Promised One of the people of the Bayán been made manifest in Iraq than He stirred and quickened the earth, and shed His radiant light upon human conduct and character. The universe was set in motion, and the whole creation was filled with joy. The reality of each created thing acquired its heavenly significance, and every atom in existence attained unto the Divine Beloved. The East became the Dawning-Place of splendours, and the West was made the horizon of effulgent glory. The earth became heavenly, and darksome dust was made radiant. The glory of the Kingdom was revealed in the world of creation, and this nether realm was awakened to the Realm on high. This world became another world, and the realm of being acquired a new life.

2 With every passing day, these signs will be revealed and made more manifest, these lights will shine more resplendent; and with every passing moment, this musk-laden breeze will shed its perfume upon the world. But alas! The people of Persia remain wrapt in heedless slumber and, like the blind and the deaf, neither see the Light nor hear the Call. They are neither awakened nor mindful.

3 Strive then and exert a mighty effort, for Persia is the homeland of the compassionate Beloved, and Fárs the dawning-place of the resplendent Morn. Perchance, through the high endeavours of the friends, the inhabitants of that land may perceive the rays of that luminous Orb, and may receive their portion of manifold grace from the Lord of tokens and signs. The Glory of Glories rest upon you.

**Summary:**

In this message, 'Abdu'l-Bahá addresses those who yearn for the beauty of the compassionate Beloved, referring to Bahá'u'lláh. He describes how Bahá'u'lláh's manifestation in Iraq stirred and quickened the earth, filling the universe with joy and granting heavenly significance to every created thing. The East and West were both illuminated by His glory, and the entire realm of existence was awakened to the Realm on high. 'Abdu'l-Bahá laments the continued heedlessness of the people of Persia, who fail to perceive the light and hear the call of Bahá'u'lláh, remaining in a state of slumber. He urges the believers to strive and exert mighty



efforts, emphasizing the significance of Persia as the homeland of the compassionate Beloved and Fárs as the dawning-place of the resplendent Morn. Through the high endeavors of the friends, 'Abdu'l-Bahá hopes that the inhabitants of Persia will perceive the rays of Bahá'u'lláh's light and receive grace from the Lord of tokens and signs.

### **Key Points:**

#### 1. Bahá'u'lláh's Manifestation in Iraq:

- Bahá'u'lláh's appearance in Iraq stirred and quickened the earth, filling the universe with joy and granting heavenly significance to every created thing.

#### 2. Heedlessness of the People of Persia:

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá laments the continued heedlessness of the people of Persia, who fail to perceive the light and hear the call of Bahá'u'lláh, remaining in a state of slumber.

#### 3. Urging for Striving and Efforts:

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá urges the believers to strive and exert mighty efforts, emphasizing the significance of Persia as the homeland of the compassionate Beloved and Fárs as the dawning-place of the resplendent Morn.

### **Questions and Answers:**

#### 1. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá describe the impact of Bahá'u'lláh's manifestation in Iraq?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá describes how Bahá'u'lláh's appearance in Iraq stirred and quickened the earth, filling the universe with joy and granting heavenly significance to every created thing.

#### 2. What lament does 'Abdu'l-Bahá express regarding the people of Persia?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá laments the continued heedlessness of the people of Persia, who fail to perceive the light and hear the call of Bahá'u'lláh, remaining in a state of slumber.

#### 3. What does 'Abdu'l-Bahá urge the believers to do in response to the situation in Persia?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá urges the believers to strive and exert mighty efforts, emphasizing the significance of Persia as the homeland of the compassionate Beloved and Fárs as the dawning-place of the resplendent Morn.

4. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá characterize the East and West in relation to Bahá'u'lláh's manifestation?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá characterizes how both the East and West were illuminated by Bahá'u'lláh's glory, with the entire realm of existence awakened to the Realm on high.

5. What is the ultimate hope expressed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in this message?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá hopes that through the high endeavors of the friends, the inhabitants of Persia will perceive the rays of Bahá'u'lláh's light and receive grace from the Lord of tokens and signs.

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*He is God.*

1 O ye who stand fast and firm in the Covenant! No sooner had the Most Great Luminary of the world risen above the horizon of Iraq and shed its radiance upon all regions from the Source of divine glory, than all the bats of darkness, with their pomp and pride, assailed it from every side, that they might conceal that manifest Light from the eyes of His favoured ones and soar to prominence under cover of darkness in the gloom of night. Since their arguments proved powerless against Him, they devised schemes for the departure of the Blessed Beauty. They resorted to innumerable machinations, so that the Day-Star of the world might sink below the horizon of Iraq and the Light of sanctity might be prevented from shining forth from the heights of Divine Unity. And so it came to pass that they conducted the Blessed Beauty from the East to the West.

2 But this exile and isolation became the means for the exaltation of the Word of God and led to the diffusion of the divine fragrances. The Eagle of His Cause soared unto the summits of grandeur, and the Day-Star of His Word shone forth from the horizon of might and power. This abasement became a source of confirmation, this remoteness a means of reunion. The vitality of God's Faith was strengthened, and its fame was noised abroad. The Faith was already renowned in Persia, but this exile caused the whole earth to resound with its praise and its reputation to spread throughout the world.

3 Though this should have served as a lesson, it led to more heedlessness among the ignorant. Soon afterwards, they once again hoisted the banners of hatred, sowed the seeds of malice in the hearts, and incited certain foes to oppose Him. They found a means and an instrument in the person of Mírzá Yaḥyá, the nominee of the Báb. His Excellency the

Ambassador used this undiscerning individual as his chief instrument for stirring up mischief.<sup>35</sup> Mírzá Yahyá had fondly imagined that if the Lamp of the Realm of Glory could be removed from its niche in the West, this new Cause and its flood of abounding grace would be reduced to naught. He therefore joined forces with the Ambassador and began, both overtly and covertly, to stir up a myriad storms of mischief and sedition. He imagined that this harm would befall the Ancient Beauty, and that such malice would injure His blessed Person, while he himself would remain safe and secure. How far, how very far otherwise it proved to be! When the fire of dissension blazed high, that ignorant one was exiled even before the departure of the Beauty of the All-Merciful, and he remaineth to this very day lamenting in the abyss of disappointment and loss.

4           However, when that resplendent Sun rose above the horizon of His prison, the light of His sanctity was shed over the Holy Land, God's burning Fire burst into mighty flames, and the heat of His love blazed fiercely in the midmost heart of the world. The all-embracing reality of the Word of God rose from the nadir to the most exalted zenith, and the mystery of these words was made manifest: "Fain would they put out God's light with their mouths: But God hath willed to perfect His light, albeit the infidels abhor it."<sup>36</sup> How well hath the poet said: "Even a foe can become the source of good, were this to be the Lord's desire."

5           Behold the greatness of God's inscrutable wisdom. Some three thousand years ago, He imparted through the tongue of the Prophets glad-tidings unto the Holy Land in words such as these: Rejoice, O Holy Land, for thou shalt be made the footstool of the All-Merciful! The Tabernacle of the Lord shall be raised, the sweet savours of holiness shall be diffused, and the Day-Star of holiness shall shine forth. Rejoice with exceeding gladness, O Holy Land, rejoice! That bright Moon shall beam forth in thy heaven, and that glorious Sun shall shine resplendent from thine Orient.<sup>37</sup>

6           He Who is the Desire of the World wished, through His consummate wisdom, to fulfil the promises of the Prophets uttered some two or three thousand years ago. He roused up His enemies and made them the instruments of His all-swaying power, so that they might uproot their foundations with their own hands and banish this resplendent Light from the niche of its native land, that thereby its radiance might shine upon the Holy Land and the promises of the Prophets be fulfilled, this sacred vale might be made the gathering place of the friends of God and these hallowed precincts become the focal centre of the celestial arena, and the light of Divine Unity might shine forth and the darkness of ignorance be dispelled. This, verily, proceedeth from the consummate wisdom and manifold bounties of your Lord and the all-encompassing mercy of the Beloved of your heart.

## **\*\*Summary:\*\***

In this message, 'Abdu'l-Bahá addresses those who stand fast and firm in the Covenant, recounting the challenges faced by Bahá'u'lláh upon His manifestation in Iraq. Despite opposition from the forces of darkness, Bahá'u'lláh's exile from the East to the West served as a means for the exaltation of the Word of God and the diffusion of divine fragrances. His abasement led to confirmation, strengthening the vitality of the Faith and spreading its fame worldwide. However, this lesson was not heeded, and further heedlessness among the ignorant ensued. The nominee of the Báb, Mírzá Yaḥyá, became an instrument for mischief at the hands of the Ambassador, imagining harm to Bahá'u'lláh but ultimately facing exile himself. Nevertheless, when Bahá'u'lláh's light shone from His prison, the sanctity of His Word was magnified, and the mystery of God's inscrutable wisdom was made manifest. Bahá'u'lláh's enemies unwittingly became instruments of His power, fulfilling the promises of the Prophets and bringing about the realization of the Holy Land's destiny as the gathering place of the friends of God and the focal center of Divine Unity.

## **\*\*Outline:\*\***

### 1. Opposition to Bahá'u'lláh's Manifestation:

- The forces of darkness assailed Bahá'u'lláh upon His manifestation in Iraq, seeking to conceal His light and prevent the spread of His Word.

### 2. Exaltation through Exile:

- Bahá'u'lláh's exile from the East to the West served as a means for the exaltation of the Word of God and the diffusion of divine fragrances.

### 3. Heedlessness and Mischief:

- Despite the lesson provided by Bahá'u'lláh's exile, further heedlessness among the ignorant ensued, leading to mischief orchestrated by Mírzá Yaḥyá and the Ambassador.

### 4. Manifestation of God's Wisdom:

- When Bahá'u'lláh's light shone from His prison, the sanctity of His Word was magnified, and the mystery of God's inscrutable wisdom was made manifest.

#### 5. Fulfillment of Promises:

- Bahá'u'lláh's enemies unwittingly became instruments of His power, fulfilling the promises of the Prophets and bringing about the realization of the Holy Land's destiny.

#### Questions and Answers:

1. How did the forces of darkness oppose Bahá'u'lláh upon His manifestation in Iraq?

- The forces of darkness assailed Bahá'u'lláh, seeking to conceal His light and prevent the spread of His Word.

2. What was the outcome of Bahá'u'lláh's exile from the East to the West?

- Bahá'u'lláh's exile served as a means for the exaltation of the Word of God and the diffusion of divine fragrances.

3. Who became instruments for mischief against Bahá'u'lláh, and what was their ultimate fate?

- Mírzá Yahyá, the nominee of the Báb, became an instrument for mischief at the hands of the Ambassador but ultimately faced exile himself.

4. How did Bahá'u'lláh's enemies unwittingly contribute to the manifestation of God's wisdom?

- Bahá'u'lláh's enemies unwittingly became instruments of His power, fulfilling the promises of the Prophets and bringing about the realization of the Holy Land's destiny.

5. What was the significance of Bahá'u'lláh's light shining from His prison?

- The sanctity of Bahá'u'lláh's Word was magnified, and the mystery of God's inscrutable wisdom was made manifest through His light shining from His prison.

*He is God.*

- 1 O thou beloved scion of him that hath been immersed in the ocean of divine forgiveness! A long time hath passed since I last wrote. This hath been due to the numerous occupations that deny me a single free moment and that are, moreover, compounded by woes and trials. Among other things, in these days 'Abdu'l-Bahá hath once again been confined to prison in

‘Akká by reason of the great mischief stirred up by the people of malice and the lengthy letters teeming with disruptive charges against him that they have dispatched to Constantinople, as well as other devices to which they have resorted and which it is not advisable to mention here. Those who are prey to pride and vainglory had hoped that this calamity would only afflict ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, oblivious that by their actions they shall cast themselves into the pit of everlasting disappointment and misery, and that they too shall suffer imprisonment.

2 This episode is similar in every respect to that of Yaḥyá. He too imagined that his sedition would cause harm and injury to the Blessed Beauty. It was for this reason that he sent Siyyid Muḥammad to Constantinople and resorted to innumerable ploys and devices, until at last he exposed Bahá’u’lláh to great danger. But as soon as the fire of rebellion blazed, it immediately consumed Yaḥyá’s own home. He was exiled from Adrianople, even before the Blessed Beauty. “They lost both this world and the world to come; and this, verily, is but evident loss.”<sup>38</sup>

3 ‘Abdu’l-Bahá exulteth with boundless joy at these trials and tribulations, inasmuch as after the Ascension of the Abhá Beauty the loved ones of God find their happiness in tumult and trouble, and their felicity in ceaseless afflictions. That is, the depths of the pit are for them the apex of heaven, and the straw mat of hardship is a kingly throne. Confinement in bonds and fetters is their highest aspiration, and captivity in stocks and chains their true freedom and a source of incomparable joy and delight.

4 It is evident that the joy of these homeless wanderers is not found in music or song or play, but rather consisteth in long-suffering in the face of hardships, patience in the midst of calamities, detachment from all created things, exaltation of the Word of God, and diffusion of the holy fragrances. Verily, this is grace abounding, and verily, this is manifest bounty. Upon thee be greetings and praise. Dispatch thou copies of this letter to far and near.

### **Summary:**

In this message, 'Abdu'l-Bahá addresses a beloved individual who has been immersed in the ocean of divine forgiveness, expressing that it has been a long time since their last correspondence due to numerous occupations and trials. He reveals that he has been once again confined to prison in ‘Akká due to mischief stirred up by people of malice, disruptive charges sent to Constantinople, and other devices aimed at causing harm. 'Abdu'l-Bahá reflects on the similarity of this episode to that of Yaḥyá, who also attempted to cause harm to Bahá’u’lláh but ultimately suffered exile himself. Despite these trials, 'Abdu'l-Bahá exults with boundless joy, stating that after the Ascension of Bahá’u’lláh, the loved ones of God find happiness in tumult and trouble, and their felicity in ceaseless afflictions. He emphasizes

that their true joy comes from long-suffering in the face of hardships, patience amidst calamities, detachment from all created things, exaltation of the Word of God, and diffusion of holy fragrances.

### **Key Points:**

#### 1. Confined to Prison:

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá reveals that he has once again been confined to prison in 'Akká due to mischief stirred up by people of malice and disruptive charges sent to Constantinople.

#### 2. Similarity to Yaḥyá's Episode:

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá reflects on the similarity of this episode to that of Yaḥyá, who also attempted to cause harm to Bahá'u'lláh but ultimately suffered exile himself.

#### 3. Exultation in Trials:

- Despite the trials, 'Abdu'l-Bahá exults with boundless joy, stating that after Bahá'u'lláh's Ascension, the loved ones of God find happiness in tumult and trouble, and their felicity in ceaseless afflictions.

#### 4. True Joy:

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasizes that true joy comes from long-suffering in the face of hardships, patience amidst calamities, detachment from all created things, exaltation of the Word of God, and diffusion of holy fragrances.

### **Questions and Answers:**

#### 1. Why has 'Abdu'l-Bahá been confined to prison again in 'Akká?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá has been confined to prison again due to mischief stirred up by people of malice, disruptive charges sent to Constantinople, and other harmful devices.

#### 2. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá compare the current episode to that of Yaḥyá?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá reflects on the similarity between the current episode and that of Yaḥyá, who attempted to cause harm to Bahá'u'lláh but ultimately suffered exile himself.

#### 3. Despite the trials, what does 'Abdu'l-Bahá express?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá expresses boundless joy, stating that after Bahá'u'lláh's Ascension, the loved ones of God find happiness in tumult and trouble, and their felicity in ceaseless afflictions.

4. What does 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasize as the source of true joy?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasizes that true joy comes from long-suffering in the face of hardships, patience amidst calamities, detachment from all created things, exaltation of the Word of God, and diffusion of holy fragrances.

5. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá suggest sharing this message?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá suggests dispatching copies of this letter to far and near, spreading its message of joy and praise.

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*He is the All-Glorious.*

1 O ye loving friends of 'Abdu'l-Bahá! It is early morning and I have returned to Haifa from the Shrine of the Báb—may my soul be offered up for His dust. I spent last night within the precincts of His exalted Sanctuary, and through the blessings of that sacred Shrine, I was filled with boundless fervour and joy throughout the night. The sweet savours of holiness wafting from His resplendent Sepulchre so perfumed my soul and caused my heart to quiver that my thoughts turned towards you spiritual friends, and I began to write this letter. Despite countless concerns and manifold vicissitudes, I have set all aside and called to mind the countenance and character of the beloved of my heart and soul. Consider how great is my affection for you!

2 Your city was honoured for a long time by the footsteps of the Blessed Beauty.<sup>39</sup> Tablets were revealed continually therein, and those who attained His presence hearkened to His blessed Words. Among them was a well-known Persian who associated with Him. This person was secretly an intimate and close companion of the Ambassador, who sought his counsel on various matters. The Blessed Beauty was forbearing towards this man and turned a blind eye to his behaviour. And he, imagining Bahá'u'lláh to be unaware of his hidden motives, professed devotion to Him.

3 Finally, one day the Blessed Beauty addressed him thus: "I have a message for his Excellency the Ambassador. Convey it to him, saying, 'Thou hast done thine utmost to shed Our blood and hast imagined thyself capable of uprooting this sacred Tree. But how far, how



very far is this from the truth! This blessed Tree is immovable and its roots are firmly fixed; no axe can sever them, even should all the kings of the earth arise with all their might to do so. Though I stand alone and forsaken, yet I single-handedly withstand the world and all the peoples and governments thereof. Erelong, these dark clouds shall be dispelled and the Sun of Truth shall shine resplendent in the plenitude of its glory. Yea, indeed ye can take My life, and that would be the greatest gift of God, for it is through blood that this blessed Tree doth grow and flourish. Ye had imagined that if the Exalted One—may the souls of all on earth be offered up for Him—were martyred, this Divine Edifice would be subverted. Therefore did ye make His sacred breast the target of a thousand bullets. But ye then saw the Cause of God become more manifest and its light stream out even brighter, such that it hath now reached Constantinople!

4 “Do ye then imagine that if ye were to cut the throat of Bahá and spill the blood of this people, the flame of the Lord’s burning Fire would be extinguished? God forbid! Nay, rather, the Word of God would be further exalted, and the Sun of Truth would be revealed in still greater splendour. Soon the day shall come when ye shall all be doomed to disappointment and loss. Carry out whatsoever is in your power. O Áqá Mírzá! All this injustice, this hostility, animosity, and cruel tyranny is, in Our estimation, nothing more than the buzzing of a gnat. We attach no importance, therefore, to thy rancour or cruelty. “And they who act unjustly shall soon know what lot awaiteth them.”<sup>40</sup> We paid no attention whatsoever to thee or to the Ottoman government when We arrived in Constantinople. This fact alone should awaken thee to the truth that Our trust is placed in the power of God and His dominion, and in naught else. All kings are but His subjects, and all such as thee are immersed in a sea of loss and perdition. In time ye shall behold it. Persia shall fall into ruin, and her government and people shall be afflicted with dire hardship. We, however, have shed illumination upon that land, and have desired eternal glory for her people. Though at this time Persia standeth obscure amongst the nations, the day shall come when this mighty Cause will have made her people most honoured and esteemed by the whole world.” In brief, the Blessed Beauty continued to speak in such severe terms. That person left and never returned.

5 Now, praise be to God, a fragrant breeze hath wafted over Constantinople which shall perfume that land with musk. The friends must conduct themselves with the utmost constancy, steadfastness, and wisdom, and remain perfectly assured. My fervent hope is that each one of them may become even as a brilliant light, and that the Divine Teachings, which are the source of illumination for humanity and the cause of the peace and tranquillity of the world, may be diffused with the utmost wisdom. This sea is turbulent and its tides are

mounting high. I implore Him tearfully at eventide and at dawn, supplicating His unfailing aid and assistance for the beloved of the Lord. The Glory of Glories rest upon you.

### **Summary:**

In this letter, 'Abdu'l-Bahá addresses the loving friends and expresses his affection for them, stating that he was filled with boundless fervor and joy after spending the night at the Shrine of the Báb. Despite numerous concerns and trials, he set them aside to write this letter, reflecting on the footsteps of the Blessed Beauty in their city and recalling a well-known Persian who associated with Bahá'u'lláh but secretly conspired against Him. Bahá'u'lláh addressed this man, expressing that the attempts to harm Him and His Cause would ultimately fail and that even His martyrdom would only further exalt the Word of God. The letter emphasizes the immovability of the Cause and the futility of opposition. 'Abdu'l-Bahá urges the friends to remain steadfast, wise, and assured, conducting themselves with constancy and wisdom, and diffusing the Divine Teachings with utmost wisdom despite the turbulent times.

### **Outline:**

#### **1. Affection for the Friends:**

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá expresses his affection for the friends, sharing that he was filled with boundless fervor and joy after spending the night at the Shrine of the Báb.

#### **2. Reflections on the Blessed Beauty's Footsteps:**

- He reflects on the footsteps of the Blessed Beauty in their city and recalls a well-known Persian who associated with Bahá'u'lláh but secretly conspired against Him.

#### **3. Bahá'u'lláh's Address to the Conspirator:**

- Bahá'u'lláh addressed the conspirator, expressing that attempts to harm Him and His Cause would ultimately fail and that even His martyrdom would only further exalt the Word of God.

#### **4. Immovability of the Cause:**

- The letter emphasizes the immovability of the Cause and the futility of opposition, highlighting that all injustice and hostility are insignificant in the eyes of God.

#### **5. Urging Steadfastness and Wisdom:**

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá urges the friends to remain steadfast, wise, and assured, conducting themselves with constancy and wisdom, and diffusing the Divine Teachings with utmost wisdom despite the turbulent times.

### **Questions and Answers:**

1. What prompted 'Abdu'l-Bahá to write this letter to the friends?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá was filled with boundless fervor and joy after spending the night at the Shrine of the Báb, prompting him to write the letter to the friends.

2. Who was the well-known Persian mentioned in the letter, and what was his relationship with Bahá'u'lláh?

- The well-known Persian associated with Bahá'u'lláh but secretly conspired against Him.

3. How did Bahá'u'lláh address the conspirator?

- Bahá'u'lláh addressed the conspirator, expressing that attempts to harm Him and His Cause would ultimately fail and that even His martyrdom would only further exalt the Word of God.

4. What does the letter emphasize about the Cause of God?

- The letter emphasizes the immovability of the Cause and the futility of opposition, highlighting that all injustice and hostility are insignificant in the eyes of God.

5. What does 'Abdu'l-Bahá urge the friends to do amidst the turbulent times?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá urges the friends to remain steadfast, wise, and assured, conducting themselves with constancy and wisdom, and diffusing the Divine Teachings with utmost wisdom despite the turbulent times.

### *He is God.*

- 1 O ye dear friends of 'Abdu'l-Bahá! After his visit to the Sacred Threshold, and the Centre round which circle in adoration the Concourse on high, Jináb-i-Fárúqí came to stay with 'Abdu'l-Bahá and was for a few days his companion. He was in a state of supplication to the Abhá Kingdom, and of ardent devotion to the Concourse on high. He recalled the friends of

God one by one, and with an aching heart and tearful eyes begged that a special letter be written to each of them.

2 But ‘Abdu’l-Bahá hath not a moment’s calm nor an instant’s rest; he hath no free time whatsoever. Were he to divide his time into the minutest of fractions and dedicate each of them to communicating and corresponding with a different group, he would still be unequal to the task. Praised be God! The believers throughout the East and the West are surging like the waves of the sea, requiring at least ten contingents of secretaries to reply to their letters in an adequate manner. It is, therefore, not possible, alas, to fully satisfy the request of each and every pilgrim. As a result, I am abashed and filled with shame and embarrassment, wondering in what tongue to voice my excuse to Jináb-i-Fárúqí. I have found no recourse but to write one detailed letter collectively to all the friends, so that several copies may be made thereof and presented to each of the believers. No remedy is there now but to make do.<sup>41</sup> There is a well-known saying: “The part testifieth to the whole, and the drop telleth of the pool.”

3 And now, in these days when the Lord’s burning Fire hath set the world ablaze, when the light of His effulgent glory hath illumined the East and the West, when the pervasive influence of His Word hath dazzled every mind and the Cause of God hath gained such ascendancy as to leave no peril or reason to fear, the claimants have seized the chance to enter the arena.<sup>42</sup> Those who until now had remained silent in their corner of oblivion, those frightened bats that had, from the pulpit-tops of Işfahán and Tīhrán, recanted their faith in the Báb—may my life be offered up for Him—have now rushed forward to lay claim to primacy. They have stealthily convinced a few heedless ones of their claims and scattered the seeds of doubt. They are now hounding this and that person in the utmost secrecy, either to deflect him from the straight path or to harm him in some other way.

4 Friends and strangers alike know that, during the days of peril, the leader of these people roamed throughout the land in the guise of a dervish and went about, bowl in hand, asking for “alms for the sake of God”. After the episode of Şádiq and Náşiri’-d-Dín Sháh,<sup>43</sup> he abandoned the believers in the district of Núr to the threat of the sword and chains, and fled at once into hiding in Mázindarán and Gílán. He tied a cord round his head, put on the cloak of a dervish, and, adopting the name “Darvish-‘Alí”, roamed the plains and mountains until such time as the Blessed Beauty was banished to Iraq. He then followed Bahá’u’lláh to Baghdad, taking shelter under His protection but still in hiding and in abject fear of everyone.

5 Subsequently, the Blessed Beauty left for Kurdistan. The early believers of Iraq and Persia are all well aware that, during the absence of the Most Great Name, Mírzá Yahyá

travelled in disguise in the regions of Súqu' sh-Shuyúkh and Basra, under the name of Ḥájí 'Alí. He carried some Arab slippers and thus became known as Ḥájí 'Alí the shoe-seller. Later he proceeded to Najaf, bought some silk, and was referred to as the silk merchant. He even dressed in Arab garb and abandoned his Persian name. During the two-year absence of the Blessed Beauty, the Cause of God was left with neither name nor fame.

6 In the aftermath of the martyrdom of the Báb, and during the absence of the Desired One, that unchaste one engaged in such a disgraceful act as would have been repulsive even to the notorious Ghayúr of Baghdad.<sup>44</sup> That is, after the martyrdom of the Báb, he wedded the wife of the Exalted One, the Mother of the Faithful, marriage to whom had, according to His explicit statement, been forbidden to all.<sup>45</sup> And as if that dishonour were not enough, when he found her not to his liking, he presented that honourable lady—the sister of Mullá Rajab-'Alí and the wife of the Báb—to Siyyid Muḥammad-i-Iṣfahání. This was the extent of his exertions, his claim to might, power, and fame: to busy himself, by day and by night, in multiplying the number of his wives. He even summoned his own wife's sister, Ruqíyyih Khánum, from Mázindarán, and married her too, thus being “married to two sisters at the same time”.<sup>46</sup> He also wed the sister of Mírzá Naṣru'lláh-i-Tafrishí. The mother of Mírzá Aḥmad, too, was one of his lawful wives, and he further entered into matrimony with the daughter of an Arab, thus transgressing the limits set by the clear text of the Bayán. These are his numerous marriages in Baghdad alone and do not include the ones in Ṭihrán and Mázindarán. Should ye investigate the matter, the truth of this verse would be made clear and evident: “He was calamity itself, that huntsman who passed through our grove.”<sup>47</sup> We shall not expatiate further on this matter. The point is simply that that “paragon of chastity”<sup>48</sup> carried out such acts as are contrary to the explicit Text revealed by the Merciful Lord, and spent his days and nights in these vain pursuits.

7 Dear God! In what way did he assist the Faith during this time? How did he serve the Cause of the Most Exalted One? Is there anyone who could claim to have been taught the Faith by him? Was he able, during his forty years in Cyprus, to guide a single soul? Nay, he was incapable of educating even his own children. Could greater incapacity be conceived than this? “They call upon that beside God which can neither hurt them nor profit them. Surely, bad the lord, and, surely, bad the vassal!”<sup>49</sup>

8 When the Blessed Beauty returned from Kurdistan, only a small band of believers had remained in Persia, and those in Iraq had grown dispirited and had sunk into apathy. Not a murmur was heard anywhere, nor a single sound. Any believers who were still present were in the depths of apprehension, fear, and despair. Upon His arrival in Baghdad, however, the

Most Great Name flung open the doors and issued a universal summons. The call of God was raised and the fame of His Cause noised abroad. Day and night, the leaders and the learned from amongst all peoples attained His holy presence. The flow of questions and answers was constant, and one and all testified to the sufficiency of His replies.

9 As a result, fear and dread caused Násiri'd-Dín Sháh to grow impatient and agitated. He resorted to every measure, and wrote a letter in his own hand to Sultán 'Abdu'l-'Azíz requesting the banishment of the Blessed Beauty beyond Baghdad. He claimed that Persia was in danger, that the government was greatly alarmed, and that harm would ultimately befall both governments. Thereupon, 'Abdu'l-'Azíz issued his decree for the departure of the Blessed Beauty. Yet, although subject to banishment and exile, Bahá'u'lláh nevertheless moved with the utmost dominion to the garden of Najíb Páshá, where for twelve days the Cause of God was exalted to such an extent that the Governor, Námiq Páshá; all the high-ranking officers of the army and the province; the country's religious dignitaries; and the nation's notables came by day and by night to attain His presence. All this, notwithstanding the fact that He was, to outward seeming, an exile! Yet the pervading influence of the Cause of God, the sublimity of His Word, and the diffusion of the divine fragrances were such that those few days were passed in intense joy and delight, and the Ridván Festival was inaugurated. Bahá'u'lláh then departed with the utmost sovereignty, and to this all the people of Iraq bear witness and testify.

10 But that "paragon of chastity", dressed in the garb of a dervish and accompanied by a certain Arab named Záhír, at one time contemplated journeying to India, and at another considered travelling to the regions of Egypt. He finally sent word, saying, "I am afraid to stay here after your departure, so I will hasten to Mosul and await your arrival there." At that time, it was rumoured that the Blessed Beauty and the company of His followers were to be delivered up to the Persian authorities in Karkúk, a city between Mosul and Baghdad, near the Persian border. For this reason, he said that he would join us in Mosul, because he assumed that whatever was to transpire would take place before our arrival in that city.

11 When we reached Mosul, a tent was pitched on the bank of the Tigris, where the notables of the city, officials, and others flocked in groups to His blessed presence. One night the above-mentioned Arab, Záhír, arrived, saying that the individual in question was lodged at an inn outside the city and wished to meet with someone. My uncle Mírzá Músá went in the middle of the night to meet him. Mírzá Yaḥyá enquired about his own family and was told that they were among the companions and had their own tent, and that he could join them, should he so wish. He said, "I do not at all consider it advisable for me to do so, but

there is a caravan which will be leaving at the same time as yours, and I will be among that group.” Thus did he reach Díyár-Bakr, with a black cord round his head and an alms-bowl in his hand, consorting only with the Arabs and Turks in the caravan. At Díyár-Bakr he sent word, saying, “I will spend the nights with my family and will return to my caravan in the morning.” This too was carried out. Since Hájí Siyyid Muḥammad knew him from before, he recognized him on sight and visited him, saying that he was a Persian dervish and an acquaintance of his. But as the other friends had not seen Mírzá Yaḥyá before, they did not at first recognize him.

12 So it was, until a disagreement arose between him and Siyyid Muḥammad. At that juncture, the “paragon of chastity” came into the presence of the believers who are still with us, and complained about Siyyid Muḥammad. When Siyyid Muḥammad entered Bahá’u’lláh’s presence, he said, “I disagree with him on a particular question. He saith that a Mirror always sheddeth light, and I say that it is possible for a Mirror to become veiled; it shineth as long as it is turned towards the Sun, but the moment it turneth away it becometh dark.”<sup>50</sup> The Blessed Beauty rebuked the Siyyid, saying, “Why dost thou dispute and argue and cause strife in the company of the friends?”

13 Subsequently Bahá’u’lláh’s convoy arrived, in the utmost dominion, at the Seat of the Royal Throne,<sup>51</sup> and He comported Himself with all-sufficing glory. The Most Great Name did not meet with any of the ministers or representatives, nor did He pay them the least attention.

### **Summary:**

In this letter, 'Abdu'l-Bahá addresses the dear friends and recounts the visit of Jináb-i-Fárúqí, who stayed with him for a few days in a state of supplication and devotion. 'Abdu'l-Bahá expresses regret at his inability to fulfill the request for individual letters to each believer due to overwhelming responsibilities and the surge of believers across the East and West. He describes the challenges faced by the Faith from claimants seeking to sow doubt and discord, contrasting their actions with the steadfastness of the believers. 'Abdu'l-Bahá then narrates the deceitful actions of Mírzá Yaḥyá, who engaged in disgraceful acts and failed to contribute positively to the Faith. Despite Yaḥyá's actions, 'Abdu'l-Bahá highlights the sufficiency of Bahá’u’lláh's replies and the exaltation of the Cause of God. 'Abdu'l-Bahá concludes by narrating Yaḥyá's failed attempt to join Bahá’u’lláh's convoy and a disagreement between him and Siyyid Muḥammad.

**Key Points:**

## 1. Visit of Jináb-i-Fáruqí:

- Jináb-i-Fáruqí stays with 'Abdu'l-Bahá for a few days in a state of supplication and devotion.

## 2. Inability to Fulfill Request:

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá expresses regret at his inability to fulfill the request for individual letters due to overwhelming responsibilities.

## 3. Challenges to the Faith:

- Describes challenges faced by the Faith from claimants seeking to sow doubt and discord.

## 4. History of Mírzá Yaḥyá:

- Details deceitful actions of Mírzá Yaḥyá and his failure to contribute positively to the Faith.

## 5. Sufficiency of Bahá'u'lláh's Replies:

- Highlights the sufficiency of Bahá'u'lláh's replies and the exaltation of the Cause of God.

## 6. Yaḥyá's Failed Attempt:

- Narrates Yaḥyá's failed attempt to join Bahá'u'lláh's convoy and a disagreement between him and Siyyid Muḥammad.

**Questions and Answers:**

## 1. Why does 'Abdu'l-Bahá express regret in the letter?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá expresses regret at his inability to fulfill the request for individual letters to each believer due to overwhelming responsibilities.

## 2. What challenges does 'Abdu'l-Bahá mention facing the Faith?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá mentions challenges from claimants seeking to sow doubt and discord despite the Faith's ascendancy.

## 3. What history does 'Abdu'l-Bahá recount regarding Mírzá Yaḥyá?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá details deceitful actions of Mírzá Yaḥyá and his failure to contribute positively to the Faith.



4. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá highlight Bahá'u'lláh's replies?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá highlights the sufficiency of Bahá'u'lláh's replies and the exaltation of the Cause of God despite challenges faced.

5. What incident involving Yaḥyá does 'Abdu'l-Bahá narrate towards the end of the letter?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá narrates Yaḥyá's failed attempt to join Bahá'u'lláh's convoy and a disagreement between him and Siyyid Muḥammad.

29

*He is God.*

1 O thou who art steadfast in the Covenant! Thy letter of 12 Dhi'l-Qa'dih 1337<sup>52</sup> was received, but the earlier one hath not arrived. Thou hast written that, as a result of the attacks of the enemies, thou and thy father were forced to leave your home.

2 It hath ever been thus: Abraham departed from His native land, but His departure became the cause of joy. Moses was sent far from His homeland, but that exile led Him to behold the Fire upon Sinai. Joseph was made a homeless wanderer in Egypt, but He rose from the depths of the pit to reach the apex of heaven. Jesus was forced to leave the Holy Land for Egypt, but this separation became the cause of blessings. Muḥammad fled from Mecca to Medina, but His flight resulted in victory. The Báb was likewise banished from Shiráz to the banks of the river Araxes, but auspicious indeed were the results of His banishment! The Blessed Beauty—may my soul be offered up for His loved ones—was exiled from Persia to Iraq, thence to Constantinople, and later to the Land of Mystery,<sup>53</sup> before being transferred to the Most Great Prison. All these successive banishments became the cause of the illumination of the East and the West. Now ye too have suffered your share of banishment and exile; rest assured that great results shall ensue. Praise be to God that Munír, like the resplendent morn, hath become radiant and illumined with the splendours of teaching the Cause!

3 As to thy question: Know thou that in all created things sweetness and bitterness are accidental attributes. That which, through its elemental composition, appealeth to the sense of taste is conceived as sweet by the palate, and that which runneth counter to it tasteth bitter. These are both accidental attributes; they are not due to any difference in essence.

4 Man, however, hath a twofold station: one luminous, the other dark; one pertaining to the realm of the Divine, the other to the world of nature; one inclined towards heavenly virtues, the other towards satanic qualities. For man standeth on the demarcation line between light and darkness. In the circle of existence, he is situated at the lowest point, which marketh at once the end of the arc of descent and the beginning of the arc of ascent. For this reason, he is free to move in either direction: towards light or darkness, towards ignorance or guidance—depending on the one that prevaieth. Should the rational faculty prevail, man would shine radiantly and occupy a lofty station in the realms on high. And should the self and the lower nature prevail, the result would be darkness and he would fall into the nethermost fire. For in man the powers of the heavenly Kingdom and the forces of his animal nature are at war until one or the other doth triumph. The Glory of Glories rest upon thee.

### **Summary:**

In this letter, 'Abdu'l-Bahá responds to a believer who has faced persecution and exile due to attacks from enemies. He draws parallels between the believer's experience and the trials endured by other Manifestations and believers throughout history, emphasizing the transformative nature of exile and banishment. 'Abdu'l-Bahá reassures the believer that despite the challenges, great results will ensue, likening their situation to the radiant dawn after the darkness of night. He then addresses a question about the nature of sweetness and bitterness, explaining that these are accidental attributes perceived through the senses, not inherent qualities of things. 'Abdu'l-Bahá delves deeper into the duality of human nature, describing man's twofold station—one inclined towards heavenly virtues and the other towards satanic qualities. He emphasizes the pivotal role of man in choosing between light and darkness, guiding either towards radiance and loftiness or descent into darkness and ignorance, depending on which aspect prevails within him.

### **Key Points:**

#### 1. Response to Believer's Letter:

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá responds to a believer's letter detailing their forced exile due to attacks from enemies.

#### 2. Parallel with Historical Experiences:

- Draws parallels between believer's experience and trials endured by Manifestations and believers throughout history.

- Gives examples of Abraham, Moses, Joseph, Jesus, Muḥammad, the Báb, and Bahá'u'lláh facing exile or banishment, with positive outcomes.

### 3. Reassurance and Encouragement:

- Reassures the believer that great results will ensue from their exile, likening it to the radiant dawn after darkness.

### 4. Explanation of Sweetness and Bitterness:

- Answers a question about the nature of sweetness and bitterness, explaining them as accidental attributes perceived through the senses.

### 5. Description of Human Nature:

- Explores the duality of human nature, describing man's twofold station inclined towards heavenly virtues or satanic qualities.

- Emphasizes the pivotal role of man in choosing between light and darkness, guiding either towards radiance or descent into darkness.

## **Questions and Answers:**

1. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá console the believer who faced persecution and exile?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá reassures the believer that great results will ensue from their exile, likening it to the radiant dawn after darkness.

2. What examples does 'Abdu'l-Bahá provide to illustrate the transformative nature of exile and banishment?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá cites examples of Abraham, Moses, Joseph, Jesus, Muḥammad, the Báb, and Bahá'u'lláh facing exile or banishment, with positive outcomes.

3. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá explain the nature of sweetness and bitterness?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá explains sweetness and bitterness as accidental attributes perceived through the senses, not inherent qualities of things.

4. What does 'Abdu'l-Bahá describe as man's twofold station?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá describes man's twofold station as one inclined towards heavenly virtues and the other towards satanic qualities.

5. What role does 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasize for man in choosing between light and darkness?  
- 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasizes the pivotal role of man in choosing between light and darkness, guiding either towards radiance or descent into darkness depending on which aspect prevails within him.

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*He is the All-Glorious.*

- 1 O tender twig of the blessed Tree! Thy numerous letters have been received, and their spiritual meanings were honey-sweet upon the palate of the soul. All praise be unto the All-Glorious Lord, Who, through the fragrant breezes wafting from His Abhá Kingdom, hath revived and refreshed that verdant branch, that tender twig, and hath graciously aided thee to strive in the path of His good-pleasure.
- 2 O thou who art attracted to the divine fragrances! The resplendent Beauty of the Almighty, the radiant Sun of the Realm of Glory, hath arisen above the horizon of the world, shedding the lights of sanctity upon both East and West. Though possessed of immortal glory and holiness, that hallowed Being endured manifold trials and tribulations and accepted every affliction and calamity. He tasted deadly poison from every cup and drank bitter venom from every chalice. He was bound in chains and fetters and held in iron shackles. In the dungeon, His companions were criminals, and His associates transgressors and evildoers. He was subjected to vengeance and torment; He was banished from His native land and exiled to Iraq, and thence to Adrianople. He was beset by denial and disdain and suffered at the hand of every oppressor. He was made a target for the darts of hatred and malice and was assaulted by the shafts of hostility and injustice. He was consigned to the Most Great Prison and condemned to its oppressive confines. At all times, He was under the threat of sword and spear, a captive and a prisoner.
- 3 His one and only purpose in accepting such trials and tribulations for His blessed Self was to instruct the lovers in the ways of love and teach the longing souls the art of servitude, to guide the yearning ones to the right path and summon the friends with words such as these: "If ye lay claim to faith and certitude, if ye are enthralled by the Beauty of the Merciful and have surrendered your hearts to His delightful splendour, if ye are enraptured by His Countenance and ensnared by His flowing locks, drink deep of the cup of woe as if it were

the chalice of immortality, and welcome the sting of death as the elixir of life. Abandon all rest and comfort, and turn away from the defilement of this world. Consider the desert thorn as the softest silk, and regard the scorching fire as a flowering rose-garden. Drink the brine of bitter torment as if it were a fresh and thirst-quenching draught, regard the point of the arrow as a wellspring of life-giving waters, and yearn for the sword and shaft as ye would the nectar of peace and security. Be ye exhilarated with the wine of tribulation, and take pleasure and delight in the sweetness of affliction.”

4           Given these trials and tribulations of the Blessed Beauty—may my life be a ransom for the earth ennobled by the footsteps of His loved ones—can we yearn for any greater gift than affliction in His path? Can we seek any balm other than a wound suffered for His sake, or any remedy except pain itself? Can we wish for any refuge save moments of fear, or any haven other than occasions of abasement? Can we hasten to any field but the arena of sacrifice, or desire any solace for our souls save the blade of tyranny? Nay, by Him Whose might extendeth over all things!

5           O my Lord! Graciously assist me to remain faithful and steadfast in Thy Cause amidst all peoples. Aid me to drain the cup of woe, to be immersed beneath an ocean of trials and tribulations, to drink deep from the chalice of affliction, and to be invigorated by the gentle breaths of faithfulness in Thy path, O Thou in Whose grasp are the kingdoms of earth and heaven! Thou, verily, art the All-Bountiful, the Most Exalted.

6           Read thou this letter in the gatherings of the friends.

### **Summary:**

In this letter, 'Abdu'l-Bahá addresses a believer, expressing gratitude for their numerous letters and praising their efforts in striving for the good-pleasure of God. He describes the trials endured by the Manifestation of God, emphasizing how despite His immortal glory and holiness, He faced manifold tribulations, including imprisonment, exile, and persecution. 'Abdu'l-Bahá explains that the purpose of these trials was to instruct lovers in the ways of love, teach longing souls the art of servitude, and guide them to the right path. He encourages the believers to embrace affliction in the path of God, likening it to the elixir of life and the nectar of peace. 'Abdu'l-Bahá questions whether any greater gift can be sought than affliction in the path of God and asserts that moments of fear and occasions of abasement are the true refuge and haven for the faithful. He concludes the letter with a prayer for assistance in remaining faithful and steadfast amidst trials and tribulations, acknowledging God's sovereignty over all things.

**Key Points:**

## 1. Expression of Gratitude:

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá expresses gratitude for the believer's letters and praises their efforts in striving for God's good-pleasure.

## 2. Description of Manifestation's Trials:

- Describes the trials endured by the Manifestation of God, including imprisonment, exile, and persecution.

## 3. Purpose of Trials:

- Explains that the purpose of these trials was to instruct lovers in the ways of love, teach longing souls the art of servitude, and guide them to the right path.

## 4. Embracing Affliction:

- Encourages believers to embrace affliction in the path of God, likening it to the elixir of life and the nectar of peace.

## 5. Questioning and Assertion:

- Questions whether any greater gift can be sought than affliction in the path of God, asserting that moments of fear and occasions of abasement are the true refuge for the faithful.

## 6. Prayer for Assistance:

- Concludes with a prayer for assistance in remaining faithful and steadfast amidst trials and tribulations, acknowledging God's sovereignty.

**Questions and Answers:**

## 1. Why does 'Abdu'l-Bahá express gratitude to the believer?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá expresses gratitude for the believer's letters and praises their efforts in striving for God's good-pleasure.

## 2. What trials did the Manifestation of God endure?

- The Manifestation of God endured trials including imprisonment, exile, and persecution.

3. What was the purpose of these trials according to 'Abdu'l-Bahá?

- The purpose of these trials was to instruct lovers in the ways of love, teach longing souls the art of servitude, and guide them to the right path.

4. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá encourage believers to view affliction?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá encourages believers to embrace affliction in the path of God, likening it to the elixir of life and the nectar of peace.

5. What does 'Abdu'l-Bahá assert about moments of fear and occasions of abasement?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá asserts that moments of fear and occasions of abasement are the true refuge and haven for the faithful.

31

*He is God.*

1 O ye two handmaidens of Bahá! The Ancient Beauty, the Most Great Name—may my life, my soul, and mine inmost being be offered up for His sacred dust—was burdened with anguish at every breath. At one time, He was a captive to unyielding cruelty, and at another, a target to the darts of woe. At one time, He was a wanderer on the plain of Badašht, and at another He suffered the tribulations of Níyálá. At one point, He was bound with chains and shackles, and afflicted by grievous torment in Ámul; at another He had for associates His most despicable and cruel enemies. By day He was assailed by sorrow and grief in Karbilá; by night He lay within the embrace of afflictions in the camp of adversity. One day, He was conducted in chains, with bared head and bare feet, all the way from Shimírán to Ṭíhrán. There He remained in confinement for four months, weighed down with fetters and irons and threatened at every breath by blades and arrows. At another time, He was exiled to Iraq, and at yet another He roamed the wilderness of Kurdistan, where the birds of the air and the beasts of the field were His only companions. For many a long year, He was beset from all sides by the onslaught of His foes in Baghdad, and was encompassed by the fiercest woes and troubles. Every day brought a fresh adversity, and every night season an arduous calamity. Not for a moment did He rest; not for a second did He find repose. He was then exiled to the Great City<sup>54</sup> and was pierced by the arrows of gross calumny. Men of high rank and stature arose, one and all, to denigrate Him, whilst the leaders of nations were intent upon His

demise. Thereupon they banished Him to the Land of Mystery, where they submerged Him in dire adversities and woeful tribulations.

2 At this time, the one whom He had, with loving-kindness, nurtured in His own bosom ever since his earliest years, the one upon whom He had showered at every moment His tender care, rose up against Him with passionate hatred and assailed Him like a horde of calamities. Mírzá Yaḥyá even attempted to shed the sacred blood of the Ancient Beauty, and like a venomous viper he pierced the blessed body of Bahá'u'lláh. Mírzá Yaḥyá then began to moan and lament, and raised the cry of the oppressed, claiming to be an innocent victim and alleging that he had been most grievously wronged. He wailed and groaned, sighed and moaned. And like the envious brothers, he cast the Joseph of the Egypt of Existence into the depths of a darksome pit. He then raised a plaintive cry, sobbed and wept, and made manifest the verse "And they came at nightfall to their father weeping."<sup>55</sup> And then he began to keep company with the estranged, and became a confidant of the enemies. He accused the Peerless Beauty of having committed mischief and sedition, and he circulated leaflets of falsified Text amongst the malicious. All this, in order to extinguish the candle of the Company on high, consign the celestial Teachings to oblivion, turn the Morn of divine Oneness into night, and cause the Day-Star of Truth to set, the verses of guidance to be annulled, and the banquet table of the Eternal Covenant to be brought to naught.

3 Thus, confinement in the Most Great Prison came to pass, and inexorable adversity ensued. The Wronged One of the worlds fell prey to the people of iniquity, and suffered fresh trials and new afflictions at every hour. Every door was shut and every way was barred. The darts of tyranny descended upon Him in ceaseless showers from every land, and the swords of iniquity were drawn against His luminous and ethereal Being by the hosts of the earth. In brief, at each breath He was beset by the cruelty of a capricious foe, and at every moment He was afflicted and oppressed by a fresh sorrow, until at last His Countenance was veiled from the horizon of the world and shone forth from the firmament of the Placeless. And now, from the horizon of that Kingdom, He beholdeth how the hosts of this nether world have launched their assault upon His lonely servant, and how the rising tide of tribulation hath engulfed His forsaken bonds slave. I swear by His exalted Essence that the eyes of the Concourse on high weep with a great weeping, and the lamentations of the dwellers of the Abhá Kingdom have stirred the realities of earth and heaven. For the trials that have afflicted this servant are innumerable, even as thou knowest and dost witness.

4 Let not your hearts be saddened by this calamity, nor grieved over this affliction that hath come to pass. Set your hearts upon the mercy and the loving-kindness of the Abhá



Beauty—may my life, my soul, and mine inmost being be offered up for His loved ones. Rejoice in His glad-tidings, and take delight in His manifold favours. The ocean of His favours is limitless, and the sweet savours of His bounty spread far and wide. The eye of His tender mercy watcheth over all, and His overflowing grace is vouchsafed unto all, especially unto you who are the remnants of the King of Martyrs and the victims of oppression in the path of the Almighty! The gaze of His particular loving-kindness is directed towards you, and the radiance of His special bounty is cast upon you. Wherefore, render ye thanks unto the Beloved for having been favoured with such bestowals and made the recipients of such mercy. The glory of God rest upon you, O kindred of the King of Martyrs.

### **Summary:**

In this excerpt, 'Abdu'l-Bahá reflects on the suffering and tribulations endured by Bahá'u'lláh, the founder of the Bahá'í Faith. He recounts the various hardships and persecutions Bahá'u'lláh faced throughout His life, including imprisonment, exile, betrayal, and attempts on His life. Despite these immense trials, Bahá'u'lláh remained steadfast in His mission to spread divine teachings and bring about unity and peace in the world. 'Abdu'l-Bahá encourages the believers not to be disheartened by these challenges but to instead focus on the boundless mercy and loving-kindness of Bahá'u'lláh. He assures them that they are recipients of divine favor and should rejoice in the manifold blessings bestowed upon them.

### **Key Points:**

1. Bahá'u'lláh's suffering and tribulations
  - Imprisonment, exile, and persecution
  - Betrayal and attempts on His life
2. Mírzá Yahyá's betrayal and opposition
  - Rise against Bahá'u'lláh with passionate hatred
  - Attempts to harm Bahá'u'lláh physically
  - Spreading falsehoods to undermine Bahá'u'lláh's teachings
3. Bahá'u'lláh's endurance and resilience
  - Continued to spread divine teachings despite adversity
  - Maintained unwavering faith and commitment
4. Encouragement and gratitude
  - 'Abdu'l-Bahá urges believers not to be saddened by Bahá'u'lláh's trials
  - Emphasizes the boundless mercy and loving-kindness of Bahá'u'lláh

- Calls for gratitude and rejoicing in divine blessings

### Questions and Answers:

1. What were some of the hardships and trials Bahá'u'lláh faced throughout His life?

- Bahá'u'lláh endured imprisonment, exile, persecution, betrayal, and attempts on His life.

2. How did Mírzá Yahyá, whom Bahá'u'lláh had nurtured with loving-kindness, betray Him?

- Mírzá Yahyá rose against Bahá'u'lláh with passionate hatred, attempted to harm Him physically, and spread falsehoods to undermine His teachings.

3. Despite facing immense adversity, how did Bahá'u'lláh continue His mission?

- Bahá'u'lláh remained steadfast in spreading divine teachings and promoting unity and peace.

4. What message of encouragement does 'Abdu'l-Bahá give to the believers?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá urges believers not to be disheartened by Bahá'u'lláh's trials but to focus on His boundless mercy and loving-kindness.

5. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá express gratitude towards the believers?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá acknowledges the believers as recipients of divine favor and calls for gratitude and rejoicing in divine blessings.

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1 O beloved friends of 'Abdu'l-Bahá! No sooner had the Hand of divine power raised the tabernacle of everlasting glory—the tabernacle of the oneness of humanity—in the midmost heart of the world, than He opened wide the portals of supreme mercy before us all, addressed us in hallowed accents in the Hidden Words, honoured us with the title of “O My servants”, associated us with His own Self, and freed us from distress and fear. He spread wide the banquet table of bounty and issued a universal invitation. He prepared for us all manner of heavenly food and bestowed upon us divine favours and heavenly gifts. He delivered us from every heavy load and relieved us from every grievous burden. He enjoined upon us only laws, ordinances, and teachings that bestow life to the soul and cause it to draw nigh unto the Best-Beloved.

2 His laws all grant liberation rather than restriction; they confer freedom rather than limitation; they impart joy and radiance rather than constraint. The laws and ordinances of all former religions included the waging of holy war, resorting to bows and arrows, swords and spears, chains and shackles, and the threatening and beheading of every hostile oppressor.

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But in this wondrous Dispensation, the Blessed Beauty hath delivered the friends from this heavy burden. He abrogated contention and conflict, and even rejected undue insistence. He exhorted us instead to “consort with the followers of all religions in a spirit of friendliness and fellowship”. He ordained that we be loving friends and well-wishers of all peoples and religions, and enjoined upon us to demonstrate the highest virtues in our dealings with the kindreds of the earth. He even regarded enemies as friends, and considered strangers as comrades and intimate companions. What a heavy burden was all that enmity and rancour, all that recourse to sword and spear! Conversely, what joy, what gladness is imparted by loving-kindness!

3        Now, in gratitude for these infinite bestowals, it behoveth us to arise to carry out the counsels and admonitions of the Blessed Beauty, and to act in accordance with His teachings and ordinances. We must strive with heart and soul to drink a brimful cup of this heavenly wine, that our words, our deeds, and our conduct may be those of the righteous. We must show forth love and kindness, and demonstrate, through our faith and sincerity, that we are all servants of His Threshold, and true and steadfast keepers at His door. We must prove ourselves Bahá’ís in reality, and not merely in words.

4        ‘Abdu’l-Bahá yearneth to join the friends in servitude to the Threshold of Bahá, but he is abashed and doth sigh, lament, and repeat this verse by day and by night:

Before the Friend how can I ever lift my face,  
Abashed that I did naught to befit His grace?<sup>56</sup>

The Glory of Glories rest upon you.

### **Summary:**

In this discourse by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, he expresses gratitude for the divine bestowals and teachings bestowed upon humanity by Bahá'u'lláh, the founder of the Bahá'í Faith. He highlights the liberating nature of Bahá'u'lláh's laws, which promote freedom, joy, and radiance, unlike the restrictive and conflict-laden laws of previous religions. 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasizes the importance of carrying out Bahá'u'lláh's counsels and teachings with sincerity and faith, demonstrating love, kindness, and righteousness in all aspects of life. He urges the believers to embody the principles of the Bahá'í Faith in their words and deeds, serving as true servants of Bahá'u'lláh's Threshold. 'Abdu'l-Bahá humbly expresses his desire to join the believers in serving Bahá'u'lláh but acknowledges his shortcomings and seeks forgiveness.

**Key Points:**

1. Gratitude for divine bestowals
  - Bahá'u'lláh raised the tabernacle of the oneness of humanity
  - Opened wide the portals of supreme mercy
  - Freed humanity from distress and fear
2. Liberating nature of Bahá'u'lláh's laws
  - Laws grant liberation and freedom
  - Reject contention and conflict
  - Encourage friendship and fellowship with all peoples and religions
3. Call to action
  - Arise to carry out Bahá'u'lláh's counsels and teachings
  - Demonstrate love, kindness, and righteousness
  - Prove oneself as a true Bahá'í in reality, not just in words
4. Humble expression of desire to serve
  - 'Abdu'l-Bahá yearns to join the believers in serving Bahá'u'lláh
  - Acknowledges his shortcomings and seeks forgiveness

**Questions and Answers:**

1. What are some of the divine bestowals and teachings bestowed upon humanity by Bahá'u'lláh, according to 'Abdu'l-Bahá?
  - Bahá'u'lláh opened wide the portals of supreme mercy, freed humanity from distress and fear, and issued a universal invitation to partake in heavenly food and divine favors.
2. How do Bahá'u'lláh's laws differ from those of previous religions, as described by 'Abdu'l-Bahá?
  - Bahá'u'lláh's laws grant liberation, freedom, and joy, rejecting contention and conflict. They encourage friendship and fellowship with all peoples and religions.
3. What does 'Abdu'l-Bahá urge the believers to do in response to Bahá'u'lláh's teachings?
  - 'Abdu'l-Bahá urges the believers to carry out Bahá'u'lláh's counsels and teachings with sincerity and faith, demonstrating love, kindness, and righteousness in all aspects of life.
4. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá describe his desire to serve Bahá'u'lláh?
  - 'Abdu'l-Bahá humbly expresses his yearning to join the believers in serving Bahá'u'lláh but acknowledges his shortcomings and seeks forgiveness.
5. What does 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasize as the true demonstration of being a Bahá'í?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasizes that being a true Bahá'í means proving oneself through actions and deeds, not merely in words.

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*He is God.*

1 O thou scion of a cherished friend! Thy letter was received in Alexandria. It was long since there had been any news, and so it brought gladness and joy.

2 For forty-three years, 'Abdu'l-Bahá was a prisoner in the city of 'Akká, during which time he conducted affairs in such manner that even strangers acknowledged them to be, under all circumstances, in accord with the good-pleasure of the peerless Lord. His love, affection, care, and consideration for every soul were such that all the peoples and kindreds marvelled at it; each and all showed the utmost respect and reverence.

3 At first, the decree of the iniquitous sovereign was most harsh, placing Bahá'u'lláh in such strict captivity that even I would be denied access to His holy Presence. Nay more, the Ancient Beauty was to be confined alone and forsaken, and to remain under vigilant watch day and night. However, the conduct of 'Abdu'l-Bahá was such that the pavilion of the Blessed Beauty was finally pitched with utmost dominion and majesty upon Mount Carmel, and His blessed Being came to reside outside the citadel of 'Akká, living with the utmost might and honour in the only mansion of that region, utterly detached from all others.

4 Indeed, the Governor of 'Akká pursued me unrelentingly for five years, begging permission to attain His holy Presence, but the Blessed Beauty would not grant him leave to do so. One day, this servant set out to attain the presence of Bahá'u'lláh, and started walking from 'Akká towards the Mansion. All the officials and even the Governor himself accompanied me on foot. The Governor, Abázih Páshá, happened to be a stout and corpulent man. Sweat began to pour off him as he walked, and it was in such a state that we arrived at the Mansion. The Blessed Beauty—may my life be offered up for His loved ones—did not even deign to enquire after them.

5 There was a time when another governor arose against us in hostility, and took sides with the government commission. This governor induced someone to send secretly a document containing strange allegations against us to the royal court, which then returned the document and called for an inquiry. The Governor and the delegation subsequently wrote a harshly worded report, evincing great enmity and hatred towards us. However, this servant

dismissed the Governor and the delegation. Such was the degree of our influence, as is known to friend and stranger alike.

6 Now our so-called friends have brought matters to such a pass that we must be forbearing even with a low-ranking officer. They have carried their flattery to such extremes that it hath become necessary to waste all our time, spending our days and nights countering their slanders. These friends are continuously seeking every means in their power to hurl grievous calumnies at ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, that perchance he may be banished from the city of ‘Akká and they may find a vast arena in which to spur on their chargers.

7 I have, however, of mine own accord undertaken a journey to this land<sup>57</sup> and have left the arena to them, so that it may become evident that, even in my absence, they are not and never shall be capable of making a move, however inconsiderable, except to flatter this or that person. Even should the nightingale forsake the rose-garden, the raven and the crow would still not acquire any charm.

8 In brief, we are at present engaged in serving the Sacred Threshold in this country, and we fain would hope that this journey may yield fruit, and that we may advance and exert ourselves in the field of servitude. Pray ye fervently, and with tears supplicate His Kingdom of sanctity, that in thralldom to the Threshold of Bahá this servant may be, however slightly, delivered from shame. Perchance, God willing, he may be graciously aided to attain a dewdrop of the ocean of servitude, for thus far he hath achieved naught but regret. If it please God, perchance aid and confirmation from the Abhá Kingdom may be vouchsafed unto him in the days to come, and this cherished hope may be fulfilled, if only to a small degree.

9 Praise be to God that thou, the son of one who is well favoured at the Threshold of the Lord, art attracted to the Kingdom of Abhá. Should thy business bring thee on a journey to these regions, perhaps we may meet undisturbed in this vast land.

10 Thou didst write regarding the gatherings of the friends held every Sunday for the purpose of reading the holy verses and reciting prayers. This brought immense gladness and joy to my heart.

11 Convey my Abhá greetings to the humble and well-favoured handmaid of God, thy mother, and to thy brothers. Convey also my heartfelt greetings to Jináb-i-‘Abdu’l-Mihdí—upon him rest the glory of God, the All-Glorious. Give him my warmest love, and tell him on my behalf: “The clamour and tumult raised by that furtive man is of less significance than the buzzing of a fly. Thou art well aware of the root cause of the shame and abasement that he hath chosen for himself. Those who went before him in bygone centuries serve as a lesson for him.<sup>58</sup> Yet, alas, alas! How the veils of tyranny have covered their eyes! Erelong will they

find themselves condemned to utter loss. Verily this is the truth, and naught is there beside the truth but grievous error.”

- 12 This person saw how the pre-eminent leaders of the past fell into ruin as a result of their deviation, and to what a state of utter loss they were reduced. Despite this, he was not chastened; he continueth to attempt these futile deeds. After the advent of the Spirit,<sup>59</sup> there appeared individuals such as Arius who had a million followers. These people later disappeared without a trace, and no sign of them remaineth. The glory of God rest upon thee.

### **Summary**

In this letter, 'Abdu'l-Bahá addresses a cherished friend, expressing joy upon receiving their letter and updates. He reflects on his own experiences, particularly his forty-three years of imprisonment in 'Akká, during which he conducted himself with dignity and consideration for all, earning admiration even from strangers. Despite initial harsh decrees, Bahá'u'lláh's conduct led to his residence being established outside the citadel, demonstrating His authority and honor. 'Abdu'l-Bahá recounts incidents where officials sought access to Bahá'u'lláh but were denied, showcasing Bahá'u'lláh's refusal to compromise His dignity. He also shares encounters with hostile governors and government commissions, dismissing their accusations with confidence. 'Abdu'l-Bahá reveals challenges posed by supposed friends seeking to undermine him, yet he remains undeterred in his service to Bahá'u'lláh. He expresses hope for divine aid in his journey of servitude and extends greetings to the recipient's family, offering guidance and encouragement.

### **Key Points:**

1. Joy upon receiving the friend's letter
  - Gladness and joy at receiving news after a long time
2. Reflections on 'Abdu'l-Bahá's experiences in 'Akká
  - Forty-three years of imprisonment with dignity and consideration for all
  - Bahá'u'lláh's conduct leading to His residence being established outside the citadel
3. Encounters with officials seeking access to Bahá'u'lláh
  - Officials denied access despite their persistence
  - Bahá'u'lláh's refusal to compromise His dignity
4. Dismissal of accusations by hostile governors and commissions
  - Confident dismissal of accusations with evidence
5. Challenges posed by supposed friends seeking to undermine 'Abdu'l-Bahá

- Undeterred in service to Bahá'u'lláh despite challenges
- 6. Hope for divine aid in the journey of servitude
  - Prayer for aid and confirmation from the Abhá Kingdom
- 7. Greetings to the recipient's family and guidance for Jináb-i-'Abdu'l-Mihdí
  - Expressing love and guidance to Jináb-i-'Abdu'l-Mihdí
- 8. Reflection on the fate of past leaders who deviated from the truth
  - Warning against deviation and its consequences

### Questions and Answers:

1. How did 'Abdu'l-Bahá conduct himself during his forty-three years of imprisonment in 'Akká?
  - 'Abdu'l-Bahá conducted himself with love, affection, care, and consideration for all, earning admiration even from strangers.
2. What was Bahá'u'lláh's response to officials seeking access to Him in 'Akká?
  - Bahá'u'lláh refused to grant access to officials, maintaining His dignity and authority.
3. How did 'Abdu'l-Bahá dismiss accusations made by hostile governors and commissions?
  - 'Abdu'l-Bahá confidently dismissed accusations with evidence, demonstrating his innocence.
4. What challenges did 'Abdu'l-Bahá face from supposed friends?
  - 'Abdu'l-Bahá faced challenges from supposed friends seeking to undermine him and spread slanderous accusations.
5. What is 'Abdu'l-Bahá's hope for divine aid in his journey of servitude?
  - 'Abdu'l-Bahá prays for aid and confirmation from the Abhá Kingdom in his journey of servitude.

34

### *He is God.*

- 1 O ye twin shining stars! Praise be to God, for your faces are resplendent with the light of guidance, and your dispositions are pleasing and favoured at the Divine Threshold.
- 2 Ye have asked for permission to come on a visit. The Holy Land is indeed the niche from which the Light shineth, the lamp in which the Sinaic Flame is burning. In this sacred land the Blessed Beauty unveiled His countenance, and from it He addressed Tablets and proclamations unto all the kings and rulers of the earth. To attain the honour of pilgrimage is



the cherished desire of His lovers, and to circle round His Shrine the highest hope of those who yearn after Him. Yet, service to His Threshold rendered in your land is also among the supreme aspirations of those who are nigh unto Him. Nevertheless, the choice is yours. The Glory of Glories rest upon you.

### **Summary:**

In this letter, 'Abdu'l-Bahá addresses two individuals, praising them for their shining faces adorned with the light of guidance and their pleasing dispositions favored at the Divine Threshold. They had expressed a desire to visit the Holy Land, a cherished place where Bahá'u'lláh unveiled His countenance and addressed Tablets to the rulers of the earth. 'Abdu'l-Bahá acknowledges the honor of pilgrimage to the Holy Land, where the highest hope of His lovers is to circle around His Shrine. However, he also emphasizes that service to Bahá'u'lláh's Threshold in their own land is among the supreme aspirations of those close to Him. 'Abdu'l-Bahá leaves the choice to them, expressing his blessings upon them.

### **Key Points:**

1. Praise for the recipients' shining faces and pleasing dispositions
  - Their faces are resplendent with the light of guidance
  - Their dispositions are favored at the Divine Threshold
2. Acknowledgment of the desire to visit the Holy Land
  - The Holy Land is where Bahá'u'lláh unveiled His countenance
  - Tablets and proclamations were addressed to rulers from this sacred land
3. Importance and honor of pilgrimage to the Holy Land
  - Pilgrimage is a cherished desire of Bahá'u'lláh's lovers
  - Circling around His Shrine is the highest hope for those yearning after Him
4. Recognition of service to Bahá'u'lláh's Threshold in their own land
  - Service in their own land is among the supreme aspirations of those close to Bahá'u'lláh
5. Leave the choice to them
  - 'Abdu'l-Bahá leaves the choice of pilgrimage or service in their land to the recipients
6. Blessings and well-wishes
  - The Glory of Glories rest upon them

### **Questions and Answers:**

1. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá describe the recipients' faces in the letter?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá praises the recipients for their faces being resplendent with the light of guidance.

2. What is the significance of the Holy Land mentioned in the letter?

- The Holy Land is where Bahá'u'lláh unveiled His countenance and addressed Tablets and proclamations to rulers.

3. What is considered the highest hope for those yearning after Bahá'u'lláh?

- Circling around His Shrine in the Holy Land is considered the highest hope for those yearning after Bahá'u'lláh.

4. Besides pilgrimage to the Holy Land, what else is considered a supreme aspiration for those close to Bahá'u'lláh?

- Service to Bahá'u'lláh's Threshold in their own land is considered a supreme aspiration for those close to Him.

5. What choice does 'Abdu'l-Bahá leave to the recipients?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá leaves the choice of pilgrimage to the Holy Land or service in their own land to the recipients.

35

*He is the All-Glorious.*

1 O ye true friends! The letters ye wrote, the pages ye penned, and the names ye mentioned were all received in the Holy Land; they have all been attentively perused, and their most pleasing contents have been noted.

2 Praise be to God that through the grace and favour of the Ancient Beauty—may my life be offered up for His loved ones—such servants have been gathered beneath the standard of the Covenant as have perfumed the world through the gentle breezes wafting from the gardens of their hearts, and flooded the realm of splendours with the light shining from their faces. They are the manifestations of the manifold bounties of the ever-living Lord and the exponents of the signs and tokens of the Great Announcement. They are the dawning-places of the stars of guidance and the daysprings of the mysteries of loving-kindness, the sweet savours of the rose-gardens of Divine Unity and the fragrances of the meads of Oneness, the immovable mountains of the Covenant and Testament and the wellsprings of the soft-flowing waters of joy and certitude, the fruitful trees of the paradise of faith and the birds of holiness soaring above the meadows of understanding, the shining lamps in the assemblage of divine mysteries and the embodiments of purity in the gathering of the righteous. They are

graciously aided by the hosts of the Abhá Kingdom and favoured with the assistance of the angels of the celestial Concourse.

3 O ye loved ones of the Abhá Beauty! O ye friends of the Almighty Lord! Unloose your tongues in thanksgiving for this supreme bestowal, and render praise unto the peerless Lord that ye were singled out for this grace and favour, and numbered amongst those who have attained the heights of servitude. Gird up the loins of endeavour, and step into the circle of the angels of the paradise of Oneness. Thus may ye, on the shores of the Most Great Ocean, net the fish that thirst for the seas of divine knowledge and, in the fields of unity, catch the gazelles that seek the meads of reality, so that through the unfailing aid and bounty of the Lord, ye may gather together all nations beneath the shade of the Word of Oneness. Thus may the fragrances of God spread through the East and the West, and the magnetic forces of the All-Merciful stir the world of being into motion. Thus may the mysteries of this holy Cycle be made manifest, the signs of the Dispensation of the Most Great Name be revealed, the garden of the world be rendered fertile, and the orchard of creation bear luscious fruits. Thus may the candle of Divine Unity be kindled, contingent limitations be consumed away by a single flame of the Lord's burning Fire, the lights of guidance shine, and the darkness of ignorance and blindness be utterly obliterated.

4 When Christ winged His flight unto the limitless realms, He left behind eleven disciples. As they arose, with a seeing eye and a hearing ear, with an eloquent tongue and an unshakeable resolve, to magnify the Word of God, they so flourished that each became like unto the tree whose "root is firmly fixed, and whose branches reach unto heaven, yielding its fruit in all seasons".<sup>60</sup> Simon Cephas,<sup>61</sup> who was the shining moon amongst those stars of guidance, was to outward seeming no more than a fisherman on the Sea of Galilee. And yet, because he arose with fixed resolve and the utmost vigour to spread the signs of God and gather together the righteous, the light of his servitude shone with such brilliance above the horizon of existence that the very sun and moon were left bewildered, and circled, moth-like, around that resplendent candle.

5 Now, upon His ascension, the Ancient Beauty—may my life be offered up for His Most Great Name—left behind some fifty thousand believers upon this swiftly passing world. He educated them, one and all, through the sweet scents of holiness, opened the doors of manifold grace before their faces, nurtured them in the bosom of His loving-kindness, and taught them the lessons of the spirit in the school of insight. Would it not be regrettable if we were to sit dispirited or remain lost and bewildered, if we were to prefer the path of comfort

and repose, seeking freedom from all cares? This is not faithfulness! This is not sincerity!  
This is not the path of guidance!

6 Erelong our days shall draw to a close, and the birds of the meadows shall carol the anthem of departure. Erelong the lamp of health shall be quenched, the darkness of death shall prevail, and the resplendent morn of the life to come shall dawn. Let us then strive with earnest endeavour to arrive at the heavenly Kingdom with radiant faces and, in the Realm of Glory, be admitted into the circle of those who have remained fast and firm. Consider what a fire of guidance eleven souls kindled on the summits of the world when they endured all manner of woes and trials and arose with all their hearts! Now, were we to arise as we ought, armed with the assured confirmations of the Abhá Kingdom, what splendours would be made manifest and what results would ensue! I swear by the Beauty of the All-Praised, by His upraised standard, and by His sheltering shade, that such a conflagration would blaze up in the heart of the world as would melt the very rocks and clods of earth.

7 O friends, make ye a mighty effort! O loved ones, arise and bestir yourselves! Occupy yourselves not with the tales and accounts of those who waver in the Covenant, for these are but confused dreams and idle and childish talk. Speak of them that are steadfast, and tread the path of them that stand unwaveringly firm!

The duty of long years of love obey,  
And tell the tale of blissful days gone by.<sup>62</sup>

### **Summary:**

In this discourse attributed to 'Abdu'l-Bahá acknowledges the letters and messages received from devoted followers, expressing gratitude for their contents. 'Abdu'l-Bahá extols the virtues of those who have embraced the Covenant and praises their commitment to spreading the message of unity and divine knowledge. Drawing parallels to the disciples of Christ, particularly highlighting Simon Cephas, 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasizes the transformative power of unwavering resolve and service. Reflecting on the vast number of believers left behind by the Ancient Beauty (referring to Bahá'u'lláh), 'Abdu'l-Bahá urges against complacency and emphasizes the transient nature of earthly life. There is a call to action, urging listeners to emulate the steadfastness of past believers and to strive for spiritual attainment. The discourse concludes with a rallying cry for collective effort and perseverance in upholding the Covenant.

**Key Points:**

1. Gratitude for received letters and messages.
2. Praise for the devoted followers and their impact.
3. Comparison to the disciples of Christ, emphasizing the power of service.
4. Reflection on the vast community left behind by Bahá'u'lláh.
5. Urgent call to action and avoidance of complacency.
6. Emphasis on the transient nature of life and the importance of spiritual striving.
7. Rallying cry for collective effort and unwavering commitment.

**Questions and Answers:**

1. What is 'Abdu'l-Bahá's attitude towards the letters and messages received from followers?  
- 'Abdu'l-Bahá expresses gratitude for the received correspondence, acknowledging their pleasing contents.
  
2. What qualities do the followers praised by 'Abdu'l-Bahá possess?  
- The followers are described as manifestations of divine bounties, exemplifying loving-kindness, unity, and steadfastness.
  
3. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá draw parallels between past believers and contemporary listeners?  
- 'Abdu'l-Bahá compares contemporary believers to the disciples of Christ, particularly highlighting Simon Cephas, to emphasize the transformative power of service and resolve.
  
4. What is 'Abdu'l-Bahá's message regarding complacency and worldly distractions?  
- 'Abdu'l-Bahá warns against complacency and urges listeners to avoid being lost or dispirited, emphasizing the transient nature of earthly life and the importance of spiritual striving.
  
5. What call to action does 'Abdu'l-Bahá issue towards the end of the discourse?  
- 'Abdu'l-Bahá calls for a mighty effort and collective action, urging listeners to focus on steadfast believers and to uphold the Covenant with unwavering commitment.

1 O thou verdant, fresh, and radiant leaf! Were we to weep and moan for a hundred thousand years at this Supreme Affliction,<sup>63</sup> to sigh and lament, to rend our garments in sorrow, to shed tears and heap dust upon our heads, and to pine away with grief, this pain would never be stilled, this wound never healed, this fire never quenched. It behoveth us, therefore, to see ourselves, at every breath, as standing ready to depart to the next world, and to arise to carry out that which is conducive to eternal life and would cause us to ascend unto the Kingdom and to attain the court of His Presence. The glory of God rest upon thee.

### **Summary:**

In this discourse 'Abdu'l-Bahá addresses a verdant and radiant leaf with poetic language, expressing the profound and enduring grief over a Supreme Affliction. Despite the hypothetical scenario of mourning for a hundred thousand years, 'Abdu'l-Bahá suggests that the pain would remain unquenched and the wound unhealed. Instead, 'Abdu'l-Bahá advocates for a mindset of readiness for departure to the next world, emphasizing the importance of engaging in actions that lead to eternal life and enable one to attain the Divine Presence. The discourse concludes with an invocation of the glory of God upon the recipient, offering a blessing and expression of reverence.

### **Key Points:**

1. Address to a verdant and radiant leaf, using poetic language.
2. Expression of enduring grief over a Supreme Affliction.
3. Hypothetical scenario of prolonged mourning and its futility.
4. Advocacy for a mindset of readiness for departure to the next world.
5. Emphasis on engaging in actions conducive to eternal life and attainment of the Divine Presence.
6. Conclusion with an invocation of the glory of God upon the recipient.

### **Questions and Answers:**

1. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá describe the recipient of the discourse?  
- 'Abdu'l-Bahá addresses the recipient as a verdant, fresh, and radiant leaf, using metaphorical language to convey vitality and beauty.
2. What is the subject of the profound grief expressed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá refers to a Supreme Affliction, which is the cause of deep sorrow and lamentation.

3. What actions does 'Abdu'l-Bahá suggest would not alleviate the pain of the Supreme Affliction?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá suggests that weeping, moaning, lamentation, rending garments, shedding tears, and other expressions of grief would not quench the pain or heal the wound caused by the Supreme Affliction.

4. What mindset does 'Abdu'l-Bahá encourage instead of perpetual mourning?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá encourages a mindset of readiness for departure to the next world, implying a focus on spiritual preparedness and transcendence.

5. What invocation does 'Abdu'l-Bahá make towards the end of the discourse?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá invokes the glory of God upon the recipient, offering a blessing and expression of reverence.

37

*He is God.*

1 O thou who hast fixed thy gaze upon the Kingdom of Glory! The splendour of the Beauty of the world illumined the whole earth, conferring heavenly grace upon all created things. The Beloved of the world shone forth, captivating His lovers with His charm. And now, though that Sun hath set, He still shineth resplendent from the unseen Kingdom, continuing to bestow eternal grace upon all regions. Those that are possessed of insight perceive the world to be illumined with the splendours of the Sun of Truth. But those whose inner eye is dimmed are deprived of beholding the light: They pronounce day to be night and proclaim morn to be eve.

4 Say: O hapless one! That Sun shall never set, nor shall that Day-Star of the Realm of Glory ever wane. The setting of the sun is only in relation to the dwellers of the earth, for how can there be any daybreak or nightfall in the sun itself? It remaineth ever shining in its meridian splendour, ever glowing and luminous, at the sublime apex of bounty. The Glory of Glories rest upon thee.

**Summary:**

In this discourse to Abdu'l-Bahá addresses someone who has fixed their gaze upon the Kingdom of Glory, referring to the illumination brought by the Beauty of the world, which captivated lovers with its charm. Although the physical presence of the Beloved has departed, 'Abdu'l-Bahá asserts that His spiritual radiance continues to shine from the unseen Kingdom, bestowing eternal grace upon all regions. The discourse highlights the contrast between those who perceive the world illumined by the Sun of Truth and those whose inner eye is dimmed and unable to behold the light, likening them to those who mistake day for night. 'Abdu'l-Bahá reassures that the Sun of Truth shall never set, nor shall its glory ever wane, emphasizing its perpetual radiance and splendor.

**Key Points:**

1. Address to someone who has fixed their gaze upon the Kingdom of Glory.
2. Description of the illumination brought by the Beauty of the world and its continuing influence.
3. Assertion of the perpetual radiance of the Sun of Truth from the unseen Kingdom.
4. Contrast between those who perceive the world illumined by truth and those whose inner eye is dimmed.
5. Reassurance of the eternal nature of the Sun of Truth's glory and splendor.

**Questions and Answers:**

1. What is the subject of the discourse addressed by the speaker?  
- The discourse addresses the perpetual radiance and splendor of the Sun of Truth and its continuing influence on the world.
2. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá describe the illumination brought by the Beauty of the world?  
- 'Abdu'l-Bahá describes it as conferring heavenly grace upon all created things and captivating lovers with its charm.
3. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá characterize those who are unable to perceive the light of truth?  
- 'Abdu'l-Bahá characterizes them as having a dimmed inner eye, unable to behold the light of truth and mistaking day for night.
4. What reassurance does the speaker offer regarding the Sun of Truth?



- 'Abdu'l-Bahá reassures that the Sun of Truth shall never set, emphasizing its perpetual radiance and splendor.

5. What analogy does 'Abdu'l-Bahá use to illustrate the eternal nature of the Sun of Truth's radiance?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá compares the Sun of Truth to the physical sun, emphasizing that its setting is only relative to the dwellers of the earth, and reassures that it remains ever shining in its meridian splendor.

38

*He is the All-Glorious.*

1 Those loved ones of God who have turned from the Mosaic gulf towards the ocean of the Almighty Lord and the billowing waters of His Ancient Beauty have at all times been remembered in the court of His manifold bounties and in the presence of the Lord of Hosts. Now that the Day-Star of the heaven of holiness hath ascended unto the Most Exalted Kingdom and dawned above the horizon of the all-glorious Concourse, every firm and constant believer is mentioned in that Realm of sanctity in the august presence of the Beloved.

2 Despair not over this grievous calamity, this dire affliction. For although the Ancient Beauty is now hidden from the horizon of the world, His light shineth forth from the heaven of eternity, in the Most Great Kingdom. Was the eternal radiance that shone forth from the horizon of Moses in bygone days extinguished after He ascended to the realms above? Nay, by the righteousness of the Lord! It rose and shone even more intensely, and the bright flame of the remembrance of God blazed even higher. Now once again, ye shall behold how the resplendent lights of Divine Unity will erelong envelop the kingdom of existence, and the ensigns of His words will be raised upon the loftiest heights of the realities of all beings.

3 Esther was a woman; when she was favoured with pure intent and turned her gaze unto the Lord, what services she was enabled to render! Now behold the tomb of this woman of noble birth, and consider the myriads of mighty kings who ruled over Persia, Transoxania, and other countries in the world. Neither name nor fame nor trace doth remain of any of those kings; all have faded into utter nothingness and have been utterly abased. Yet, as this woman who was the pride of all men drew a breath in the path of the All-Merciful, the influence of

her actions still endureth, and her name is, to this day, mentioned amongst the loved ones of God. Take ye good heed, O people of insight!

### **Summary:**

In this discourse 'Abdu'l-Bahá addresses believers who have turned from the Mosaic gulf towards the ocean of the Almighty Lord and His Ancient Beauty, assuring them that they are remembered in the presence of the Lord of Hosts. 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasizes that despite the passing of the Day-Star of holiness from the world's horizon, believers are mentioned in the Realm of sanctity in the presence of the Beloved. Encouragement is given not to despair over this grievous calamity, as the light of the Ancient Beauty continues to shine from the heaven of eternity. Drawing parallels to the eternal radiance that shone forth from the horizon of Moses, the speaker asserts that Divine Unity will envelop the kingdom of existence once again. An example is given of Esther, a woman who rendered significant services through pure intent, contrasting her enduring influence with the fading legacy of mighty kings. The discourse concludes with a call for people of insight to take heed.

### **Key Points:**

1. Address to believers who have turned towards the Almighty Lord and His Ancient Beauty.
2. Assurance of remembrance in the presence of the Lord of Hosts despite the passing of the Day-Star of holiness.
3. Encouragement not to despair, as the light of the Ancient Beauty continues to shine from the heaven of eternity.
4. Assertion of the enduring influence of Divine Unity and the raising of the ensigns of His words upon the loftiest heights of reality.
5. Example of Esther's significant services rendered through pure intent, contrasting with the fading legacy of mighty kings.
6. Call for people of insight to take heed of the example of Esther and the enduring influence of pure actions.

### **Questions and Answers:**

1. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá reassure believers in the discourse?  
- 'Abdu'l-Bahá reassures believers that despite the passing of the Day-Star of holiness, they are remembered in the presence of the Lord of Hosts and mentioned in the Realm of sanctity.

2. What encouragement does 'Abdu'l-Bahá offer regarding the light of the Ancient Beauty?  
- 'Abdu'l-Bahá encourages believers not to despair, as the light of the Ancient Beauty continues to shine from the heaven of eternity, just as the eternal radiance that shone forth from the horizon of Moses persisted and intensified.

3. What example does 'Abdu'l-Bahá use to illustrate the enduring influence of pure actions?  
- 'Abdu'l-Bahá uses the example of Esther, highlighting her significant services rendered through pure intent, which endure despite the fading legacy of mighty kings.

4. What assertion does 'Abdu'l-Bahá make regarding Divine Unity?  
- 'Abdu'l-Bahá asserts that Divine Unity will once again envelop the kingdom of existence, and the ensigns of His words will be raised upon the loftiest heights of reality.

5. What call to action does 'Abdu'l-Bahá issue towards the end of the discourse?  
- 'Abdu'l-Bahá calls for people of insight to take heed of the example of Esther and the enduring influence of pure actions, emphasizing the importance of such insights.

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*He is God.*

1 O Thou Whose exalted Threshold is my haven and my refuge, Whose hallowed Sanctuary is my shelter and my abode! I entreat Thee, with a heart aglow with the fire of Thy love, and with eyes streaming with tears in my longing to attain Thy presence, in my yearning to gain admittance into the Kingdom of Thy glory, and in my desire to taste the sweetness of faithfulness to Thee, to graciously aid this servant through the breaths of Thy holiness and the delight of communion with Thee. Render victorious, O my God, by the hosts of Thine all-glorious Kingdom and the waves of the seas of Thine all-encompassing bounty, this servant of Thine, who is enraptured by the company of Thine angels on high and enkindled with the fire of Thy love amidst Thy servants. He is engaged in serving Thy Cause amongst the peoples of the world, and in magnifying Thy name before the ministers and rulers. He is occupied in diffusing Thy sweet savours in gatherings held in remembrance of Thee, and hath hoisted Thy banner amidst the masses. He hath turned his face towards the Court of Thy grandeur, and is illumined with the light of unwavering constancy in Thy Covenant and Testament. He is striving to enable all to remain steadfast in that which Thou hast enjoined

upon the entire company of Thy chosen ones, which Thou hast foreordained for them that are dear to Thee, and with which Thou hast sealed Thine ultimate decree.

2 O Lord! Assist him through Thine invisible hosts, and strengthen him with the might of Thy holy angels. Make him a brilliant star, a radiant orb, a manifest light, a breeze from the meadows of Thy glory, a fragrance from the flowers of the plain of Thy mercy, a ray of light from Thy divine Kingdom, a bright beam from the sun of the heaven of Thy Oneness, and a standard rippling on the summits of Thy great majesty and singleness. O Lord! Strengthen his loins by Thy triumphant might, and sustain him amidst the people through Thy glorious sovereignty. Grant that all hearts may be attracted to him, all minds astounded in his presence, and all ears made attentive to his utterance; that, moreover, all eyes may turn their gaze towards his cheerful countenance and all hearts marvel at the brightness of his face. Thou art, verily, the Most Powerful, the Most Exalted, the All-Glorious, the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Compassionate, the All-Loving.

3 In these days, although this lowly one hath no time or respite whatsoever for correspondence, yet the sweet savours of the love of the beloved of God have so enraptured my heart that, when writing, the reins of volition slip from my grasp and the words flow unrestrained. In particular, whenever my thoughts turn towards thee, whose heart is attracted to God, the act of writing bringeth me joy and happiness, and setting pen to paper is conducive to delight. Hardship turneth into gladness of the heart, and toil is transmuted into blessing for the soul.

4 This is the day when we all should gather beneath the shade of the Word of Oneness. Let us burn even as bright candles in every gathering; let us be aflame with the fire of love. Now that the Beauty of the All-Praised hath ascended, and the Day-Star of the Kingdom hath set, whither can we direct our affections, and what comfort can we expect? How are we to find repose, and in what hope can our hearts rejoice? O the pity! A myriad times the pity, if for a single moment we should look for ease or comfort. Alas! A thousand times alas, if we should seek any peace and tranquillity except in trials, tribulations, and suffering sustained in His path.

5 That sanctified Being spent His days in chains and fetters, and lived to the end of His life under the threat of the sword. Not a moment's rest did He find; not a tranquil breath did He draw. Not for a single night did He repose on a bed of comfort, nor lay His head upon a pillow of ease. Every bird hath a nest, and every creature dwelleth in its abode, while the Blessed Beauty was consumed by the fire of cruelty lit by His enemies. The people of the world are asleep upon the couch of ease, while the Most Great Name found not a moment's

rest, nor drew a single breath in peace. By what standard of fairness or fidelity can we seek repose or pursue comfort and rest?

6 Praise be to God that thou art engaged day and night in serving the Cause of God, and art earnestly striving to diffuse His fragrances and to propagate the splendours of the light of His knowledge. By thy very life! This is a bounty from amongst the bestowals of the Lord, one that no other bounty in the world of being can ever rival. Erelong its splendours shall shine forth and its musk-scented breaths be shed abroad; the gentle breezes of its meadows shall waft and the soft-flowing waters of its fountains flow. Thereupon, thou shalt see those who taunt and mock yielding thanks, and those who sigh and complain rendering praise. Thou shalt behold the envious becoming remorseful, and the slandering women cutting their hands, exclaiming, "Great God! No mortal is this! This is no other than a noble angel."<sup>64</sup> "Verily, there is a prosperous issue to the God-fearing."<sup>65</sup>

7 In brief, after His ascension, He Who is the Self-Subsisting was faithful to His promises. He vouchsafed a remedy to heal the hearts, and caused the gentle breezes of joy to waft. He aided His loved ones with the hosts of the unseen, and confirmed them with the power of the Kingdom. He assisted the friends throughout the earth, and succoured His loved ones in every land. The radiance of His glory spread throughout the East, and His influence was made manifest in the West. His enemies were brought low in all regions, and His foes were everywhere left friendless and forlorn. Each mighty one was rendered weak, and every haughty stirrer of mischief was abased, with none to help them.

8 Consider how, through the operation of invisible means, the foolish ones of the earth arose to foment discord and strife, made the government of Persia exasperated, engaged in rebellion, and raised a tumult. It became thereby clear that they were the root of all mischief and the source of all malice. Thus were the promoters of peace distinguished from the seditious, and the ensuing events exposed their hidden secrets. Thus was it made plain that they were wolves in the guise of shepherds and thieves garbed as watchmen, an oppressive darkness in the world and a formidable obstacle to the well-being and prosperity of all.<sup>66</sup>

9 In like manner, a group of foes gathered in the Great City and sought through every ruse, plot, and stratagem to bring ruin to the Cause of God, to disperse the gathering of His loved ones, and to cause a breach amongst His people.<sup>67</sup> I swear by the Ancient Beauty! When that company of foes joined hands with the shameless Jamálu'd-Dín,<sup>68</sup> they kindled such a fire of sedition in the Great City that it was feared its flames might reach the lofty abode of Him round Whom circle all that dwell on earth, and that the resulting damage might threaten the very foundations of the Cause of God. Then did the Hand of Omnipotence emerge from His

unseen Kingdom and disperse that company in such wise that it was reduced to a handful of scattered dust and condemned to eternal perdition.

10 Therefore, in thanksgiving for His divine confirmations, let us strive by day and by night to exalt His Word, to be consumed by the fire of His love, and to raise our voices in His remembrance and praise. Given such tender mercies, such bestowals, such aid and assistance, how can we remain still? How can we sit silent? O how pitiful it would be, were we to tarry, to hesitate, or to fail to offer up our souls! How pitiful, were we to set our hearts on ephemeral attachments rather than quaff of this mystic wine! Woe unto us should we remain occupied with our selfish desires, busy ourselves with our own earthly concerns, and follow the promptings of such passions as deprive us of these bounties and deny us a portion of these bright effulgences. By my life! This, verily, would be naught but manifest loss.

### **Summary:**

In this discourse 'Abdu'l-Bahá offers heartfelt prayers and supplications to God, seeking assistance, strength, and guidance in serving His Cause. 'Abdu'l-Bahá expresses a deep longing to attain the presence of God, taste the sweetness of faithfulness, and experience communion with Him. Encouragement is given for believers to remain steadfast in their service, despite trials and tribulations, and to seek solace and comfort only in the path of God. Drawing parallels to the sacrifices made by the Manifestation of God, 'Abdu'l-Bahá urges believers to emulate His example and not seek repose or comfort except in suffering endured in His path. The discourse also highlights the consequences faced by those who opposed the Cause of God, as well as the divine confirmations and assistance granted to the believers. A call to action is issued for believers to exalt God's Word, be consumed by His love, and offer gratitude for His blessings and assistance.

### **Key Points:**

1. Prayerful entreaty to God for assistance, strength, and guidance in serving His Cause.
2. Expression of longing to attain God's presence and taste the sweetness of faithfulness.
3. Encouragement for believers to remain steadfast in service despite trials and tribulations.
4. Emulation of the sacrifices made by the Manifestation of God and seeking solace only in His path.
5. Consequences faced by those who opposed the Cause of God and divine confirmations granted to the believers.
6. Call to action for believers to exalt God's Word, be consumed by His love, and offer gratitude for His blessings.

## Questions and Answers:

1. What does 'Abdu'l-Bahá seek from God in the discourse?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá seeks assistance, strength, and guidance in serving God's Cause, expressing a deep longing to attain His presence and taste the sweetness of faithfulness.

2. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá encourage believers to respond to trials and tribulations?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá encourages believers to remain steadfast in their service despite trials and tribulations, urging them to seek solace and comfort only in the path of God.

3. What example does 'Abdu'l-Bahá use to illustrate the sacrifices made in the path of God?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá uses the example of the sacrifices made by the Manifestation of God, who endured hardship and suffering without finding repose or comfort.

4. What consequences are highlighted for those who opposed the Cause of God?

- The discourse highlights the consequences faced by those who opposed the Cause of God, emphasizing their eventual downfall and condemnation.

5. What action does 'Abdu'l-Bahá call believers to take in response to God's blessings and assistance?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá calls believers to exalt God's Word, be consumed by His love, and offer gratitude for His blessings and assistance, urging them not to remain silent or hesitant in their devotion.

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*He is the All-Glorious.*

1 O God, my God! Thou hearest my sighs and bitter wailing, my cry and the voice of my lamentation in the depths of these darksome nights. Thou seest my abasement and lowliness, my patience and resignation, my poverty and urgent need, my anguish, my distress, my grief, and my sorrows throughout my days.

2 I render Thee thanks, O Lord, for this tribulation, which I deem amongst the greatest of Thy bounties and gifts, for it is endured in the path of Thy love—a love whose flames blaze within my very heart and soul. This is my wish and my hope, O my God. This is a soothing

balm for my anguish, O my Best-Beloved; a cooling draught to these parched lips, O my Healer; the remover of my sorrows, O Thou Who art my Friend.

3 I raise my suppliant hands in prayer to Thee, beseeching Thee at every morn and eventide, seeking shelter at Thy sublime and most exalted Threshold, pleading for the intercession of the Primal Point, Him Who is the Word of Thy oneness, Him Whose breast was riddled in Thy path by the myriad bullets fired by the enemies; and I adjure Thee by that hallowed Beauty Whom Thou didst make a companion of Thy divine countenance when the Dayspring of Thy resplendent Sun shone forth upon the Supreme Horizon, to ordain for this servant of Thine the chalice of selflessness from the hands of bounty, to lift the veil so he may ascend towards Thy sublime Threshold within Thine all-glorious Kingdom. Deliver me, then, from the onslaught of the people of malice, from the darts of slander and rancour raining down upon me, from the successive assaults of the arrows of animosity, and from the spears of calumny hurled in continuous succession by the leaders of men. Thou art the God of bounty, the Compassionate, the All-Merciful.

4 O thou friend of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá! Although the Sun of Truth hath set on the horizon of this nether world, yet grace and bounty are His, for He shineth forth with extraordinary brilliance from the hidden realm of souls, above the horizon of the unseen Kingdom.

5 After His ascension, all the governments and peoples of the world expected that His luminous Orb would set and His sheltering shade would be withdrawn. They waited for His upraised standard to be hauled down and the light shining from His brow to fade away and be no more. All grace and bounty are His; for instead, the lamp of His Cause glowed luminous, and the morning light of His loving providence shone resplendent. The Sinai of His oneness was exalted, and the Summit of His singleness was raised to even loftier heights. The standards of His sovereignty were unfurled, and the signs of His might were made clear and evident to every discerning soul. The drumbeat of His Divinity reverberated, moreover, throughout the world, and the bell of His Lordship pealed out the triumphal summons of “Yá Bahá’u’l-Abhá!” from East and West. At one time, it kindled its flame in America; at another it shed its radiance upon Africa, and upon the Turk and the Tajik. At one time, it raised its call among the Slav; at another it set Cumania ablaze. Its fame hath now been noised abroad throughout the world, and all the peoples and kindreds of the earth are in search of it.

6 And yet, some thoughtless individuals loudly clamour that the darkest of nights hath arrived and the deepest gloom hath enveloped all, that the Cause of God hath been abolished and His Law annulled, that another hath laid claim to a new revelation, raised the cry of “Verily, I am God”, and exalted himself above the Ancient Beauty.<sup>69</sup> Their purpose is to use



these false and foolish statements to conceal their own violation and to shroud the tabernacle of the Covenant of the ever-living Lord under the frail webs they have woven. Though immersed in the depths of idle fancies, yet with their lips they profess the one true faith of God. Though violating the Covenant, yet they utter the name of the Day-Star of the world. Though they linger in the darksome night of doubt, yet they cry out: “Where is the light that shineth on every side from the unseen realm of the All-Glorious?”

7 Certain pure souls, such as Mírzá Abu’l-Faḍl—upon him rest the glory of God, the All-Glorious—are engaged day and night in demonstrating the truth of this blessed Cause through conclusive proofs and clear testimonies, recounting the facts and removing the veils, propagating the Faith of God and diffusing the divine fragrances. Meanwhile, other individuals, like unto birds of night, strive to sow the seeds of doubt and are detested and estranged. Behold how great is the difference in their ways! Our purpose is to fill the whole world with the fragrance of musk, while others seek to torment the senses of all peoples and nations with the foul odour of dissension.

8 At times, they even accuse this servant of claiming Divinity and assert this allegation to be the basis of their hostility, whereas ‘Abdu’l-Bahá would never barter servitude at the Sacred Threshold for the sovereignty of both worlds; indeed, the dust of that Sacred Threshold is his refulgent diadem. But the Slanderer, in a document that is still extant, written in his own hand and bearing his own seal, hath proclaimed himself to be the Sun of Truth and laid claim to a revelation greater than that of the Blessed Beauty. The following are his very words: “By the righteousness of the Lord! The Greater Day-Star of God hath appeared, before whom every other sun is punier than the puniest of things.” And he goeth further still to say, “These verses were revealed to me while I was still a child.” The Blessed Beauty rejected this claim of his, and it was at that time that He revealed a Tablet stating: “Should he for a moment pass out from under the shadow of the Cause ...”, and so forth.<sup>70</sup>

9 Indeed, in my own writings there doth exist a passage stating that the Sun of Truth rose from the zodiac sign of Aries and is now shining resplendent in the sign of Leo. This servant is still present! As thou hast said, they must address their questions to me rather than give interpretations according to their own vain imaginings and personal motives. In making such a statement, I had in mind no one else except the Báb and Bahá’u’lláh, the character of whose Revelations it had been my purpose to elucidate. The Revelation of the Báb may be likened to the sun, its station corresponding to the first sign of the Zodiac—the sign Aries—which the sun entereth at the Vernal Equinox. The station of Bahá’u’lláh’s Revelation, on the other hand, is represented by the sign Leo, the sun’s mid-summer and highest station. By this is

meant that this holy Dispensation is illumined with the light of the Sun of Truth shining from its most exalted station, and in the plenitude of its resplendency, its heat and glory.

10 As to the words “may all eyes be illumined”, these are from the revered martyr Varqá—may my life be offered up for him. What thou hast written is correct.

11 And furthermore, regarding the statement “He who summoneth mankind in My Name, he verily is of Me”, these are the blessed words of the Abhá Beauty—may my life be offered up for His loved ones; the statement is not mine. How grievously hath he erred who reported such a thing, who spread it abroad, and who repeated it. “Feeble indeed are the seeker and the sought!”<sup>71</sup>

12 God grant that through the celestial might of the Kingdom and the power of the Covenant, and through heavenly inspiration, thou mayest withstand the insinuations of the sowers of doubt, for their whisperings utterly quench the flame of the Lord’s burning Fire in the hearts. Kindle thou a flame, and set ablaze the fire of the love of God! The glory of God rest upon thee.

### **Summary:**

In this discourse 'Abdu'l-Bahá offers fervent prayers and supplications to God, expressing gratitude for the tribulations endured in the path of His love. 'Abdu'l-Bahá seeks refuge at God's sublime threshold, pleading for deliverance from the assaults of slander, animosity, and calumny. Despite the challenges faced, 'Abdu'l-Bahá acknowledges the enduring grace and bounty bestowed by God, exemplified by the radiant glow of the Cause of God even after the ascension of the Manifestation. The discourse addresses the false claims and accusations made by certain individuals against the Covenant and the truth of the Bahá'í Faith, contrasting their actions with the steadfast dedication of believers like Mírzá Abu'l-Faḍl. 'Abdu'l-Bahá refutes allegations of divinity attributed to Himself, emphasizing His unwavering servitude to the Sacred Threshold. Finally, the discourse encourages believers to kindle the flame of love for God and withstand the insinuations of doubt sown by detractors.

### **Key Points:**

1. Prayerful entreaty to God expressing gratitude for tribulations endured in His path.
2. Seeking refuge at God's sublime threshold and pleading for deliverance from slander and animosity.
3. Acknowledgment of enduring grace and bounty bestowed by God despite challenges faced.
4. Refutation of false claims and accusations made against the Covenant and the Bahá'í Faith.

5. Contrast between the steadfast dedication of believers and the actions of detractors.
6. Emphasis on 'Abdu'l-Bahá's unwavering servitude to the Sacred Threshold and refutation of claims of divinity.
7. Encouragement for believers to kindle the flame of love for God and withstand doubts sown by detractors.

**Questions and Answers:**

1. What does 'Abdu'l-Bahá express gratitude for in the discourse?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá expresses gratitude for the tribulations endured in the path of God's love, deeming them among the greatest of His bounties and gifts.

2. What does 'Abdu'l-Bahá seek refuge from in his prayers?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá seeks refuge at God's sublime threshold, pleading for deliverance from slander, animosity, and calumny directed towards him.

3. How does the discourse address false claims made against the Bahá'í Faith?

- The discourse refutes false claims and accusations made against the Covenant and the Bahá'í Faith, emphasizing the enduring grace and bounty bestowed by God despite challenges faced.

4. What contrast is drawn between believers and detractors in the discourse?

- The discourse contrasts the steadfast dedication of believers, exemplified by individuals like Mírzá Abu'l-Faḍl, with the actions of detractors who sow seeds of doubt and engage in slander.

5. What encouragement does the discourse offer to believers?

- The discourse encourages believers to kindle the flame of love for God and withstand doubts sown by detractors, emphasizing the importance of steadfastness and unwavering faith.

1     Glorified art Thou, O God! The least of the signs of Thy Kingdom is, under all conditions, sanctified above all description and praise, and every single reality in Thy dominion is exalted beyond the highest tributes of the people of the world; for the very essence of remembrance is wholly removed from the One remembered, and the inner reality of all praise remaineth veiled from the One praised. The signs of Thy dominion, in their very essence, are immeasurably exalted above the reckoning of the exponents of praise, and are sanctified beyond the grasp of them that are endued with understanding. The most eminent of sages have acknowledged their failure in this regard, confessing that their minds can fathom only that which is within the measure of human capacity and commensurate with the power of the birds of mortal thought when soaring in the heights of knowledge.

2     O my God! Given such clear and evident powerlessness, such plain and manifest poverty in recognizing the least of the signs of Thy dominion in the world of creation, how then can I unloose my tongue to make mention of Thine attributes and to proclaim Thy virtues? How can I speak forth Thy praise and celebrate Thy glory in Thy presence? How can I extol the evidences of being and the realities of existence that are found in the world of allusions and the realm of creation?

3     I have no recourse but to proclaim: “Hallowed and sanctified art Thou! Immeasurably high, exalted, and glorified art Thou!” and to implore pardon for this sin and transgression of mine, which hath filled me with shame before Thy loved ones. For to proclaim Thy sanctity and holiness is naught but to venture to describe Thee and, as such, is an evident sin, a shameful and palpable error.

4     O Lord! I beseech Thee by the Hands of Thy Cause, the Daysprings of Thy remembrance and the Dawning-Places of Thy command, and by the coursing of the stars and the burning meteors that rain down upon them that deny Thy manifest Cause and stray from Thy straight Path, to assist Thy loved ones who are firm in Thy Covenant and Testament and steadfast in Thy love and remembrance. Help them attain unto every good Thou hast ordained in Thine all-glorious Kingdom. Thou art, in truth, the Powerful, the Mighty.

5     That which Jináb-i-Ismu’lláh had written was perused. He hath asked for provisions for the journey to the divine Kingdom, and spiritual sustenance for the world to come. As thou well knowest, in this day, such provisions consist in assisting weak souls to become firm and steadfast in the Covenant, diffusing the divine fragrances, protecting the stronghold of the Cause of God, and preserving the distinctive features of His religion. For in the Abhá Kingdom there is no greater gift than this, and among the Concourse on high there is no offering more wondrous. It is therefore incumbent upon thee to strive to the utmost, by day

and by night, to carry out this important task, so that no breach may be made in the unity of the Word of God, and no divisions may arise in this mighty Covenant and binding Testament. Alas for all whose feet slip and whose hearts waver!

6 This servant's highest wish and greatest desire hath ever been that we may all gather together beneath the sheltering shadow of the Word of Oneness, wholly forgetful of every vain imagining; that we may search for none other than His Countenance, seek naught but His abode, and commune only with Him. May we, in truth, offer up our lives wholly for His sake, surrender ourselves in His path, and strive to diffuse the sweet savours of the Beloved far and wide.

7 For many years, Bahá'u'lláh nurtured these servants in the bosom of His loving-kindness, and trained and educated us through His compassion and unfailing bounty. Even as a tender and loving Teacher, He taught us—His children--the requisites of courtesy. In the school of God He instructed us, so that after the ascension of His radiant Beauty we might arise to follow the example of the faithful, and strive to serve the Cause of God and glorify His Word. He promised us His confirmations and assured us of His assistance, saying, "Verily, We behold you from Our realm of glory, and shall aid whosoever will arise for the triumph of Our Cause with the hosts of the Concourse on high and a company of Our favoured angels."<sup>72</sup>

8 Praise and thanksgiving be unto the incomparable Lord, Who hath fulfilled His promises and provided all that He had foretold. He hath levelled every rough and rutted road and made smooth every stony path. He hath opened the portals of victory and graced us with the sweet savours of the Holy Spirit. The hosts of His all-glorious Kingdom have rushed forth, and the countless legions of His Company on high have descended with their swords unsheathed. He hath scattered the armies of His foes and defeated the legions of His enemies. Moreover, He hath manifested the signs of His power in all parts of the world and revealed His mighty Cause in every land. The melodies of His holiness have resounded in Europe, and the signs and tokens of His Revelation have been made visible to the Bulgar and the Slav. In America, His lamp hath shed its light upon the darksome night and guided souls from near and far. The fame of His majesty hath been noised abroad throughout Persia, and His servants in Tīhrán have come to be truly revered to a degree that is without compare in former times.

9 In the Great City, He hath, in these days, thwarted the proponents of the Evil One and exposed their mischief for all to see. He hath completely extinguished that fire and caused their tale to be erased from memory. Indeed, the gathering of the worst mischief-makers and fiercest calumniators of the Blessed Beauty in such a significant location, their incessant

efforts by every means to bring ruin to the Cause of God, and their resorting to all manner of whisperings and machinations posed a grave danger to the Cause and provoked grievous malice against the loved ones of God. They had firmly pledged, one and all, to throw this land into turmoil. Through the intermediary of Jamálu'd-Dín-i-Afghání, they had penetrated all the ministerial circles. By the aid of that person, they had even gained access to the private royal quarters. Yaḥyá's son-in-law became the personal secretary of Jamálu'd-Dín, and Shaykh Aḥmad was among the permanent members of his circle.<sup>73</sup> They uttered every possible calumny and seized upon every possible measure to subvert the Divine Edifice and harm these exiles.

10 Placing our whole trust in God, we held fast to the cord of resignation, and with sanctified hearts we cleaved tenaciously to patience. At last, a hand emerged from the invisible Realm and tore asunder the veils of hypocrisy and deception of that slanderous band. Their mischief became apparent, their sedition clearly manifest. Their malicious scrolls were revealed, and they were afflicted with the retribution which such behaviour entaileth. They fell into the grip of justice and were sent to Persia. Take heed lest this matter be misunderstood by the common people.

11 The point is this, that after His ascension, the Ancient Beauty graciously aided His blessed Cause a hundredfold and vouchsafed divine confirmations unto these helpless ones. All praise and glory, all reverence and honour belong unto such a Lord!

12 In brief, the greatest yearning of this servant is to fulfil this sublime aspiration, which is to serve the Cause of God. At no time have I ever cherished any desire of mine own, nor do I regard myself as having any existence before the signs of His Oneness. But I strive to safeguard the impregnable stronghold of His resplendent Cause. I am apprehensive of any corruption of the Text, of any false interpretation, of all discord and division, lest a thousand years from now such matters arise once more and cause a breach in the one true Faith of God. For such a condition would destroy the very foundation and utterly subvert the cornerstone of the Divine Edifice. We would, one and all, be left hopeless and deprived, outcast and condemned. The dispersion of the gathering of the friends and the scattering of the company of the believers would be so great that each one of them would be lost and forgotten in the wilderness of perdition. Naught would remain of the Temple of the Cause of God but an insignificant name in common histories. We must therefore bend all our energies towards keeping the stronghold of the Cause impregnable and its foundation inviolate.

13 Thou hast written concerning the holding of gatherings on the occasion of the Day of the Covenant. Nothing greater, more potent, or more momentous can be conceived than the

Covenant of God and His Testament! No such thing hath ever occurred in the Dispensations of the past, that an explicit text should be so clearly revealed in such unmistakable language as in the Most Holy Book, a quarter of a century prior to the ascension of its Author; that the Ancient Beauty should nurture and educate all His loved ones through this divine grace; that He should then enter, with His Sublime Pen, into this firmly established and mighty Covenant with them; and that He should mention this Covenant in all His Books and Tablets, encouraging and praising those who hold fast unto it and renouncing those who break it. By what means can the one who hath failed to cling to this firm cord and mighty bond be secured? All the chains and ties of the world would be incapable of binding him fast.

14        Should it be thy wish to provide the means of ensuring a firmer adherence to the Covenant, compile thou the words and verses that have been revealed in all the divine Tablets on the subject of the Covenant and the Testament, and, after reading the Book of the Covenant in that gathering, recite those verses, so that the station of the steadfast and the station of those who waver may be made clear. This matter is greater than all others.

### **Summary:**

In this discourse 'Abdu'l-Bahá offers profound prayers and supplications to God, acknowledging His incomparable greatness and the limitations of human understanding in comprehending His attributes and dominion. Despite this, 'Abdu'l-Bahá expresses deep reverence and seeks forgiveness for attempting to describe God's sanctity and holiness. The discourse emphasizes the importance of steadfastness in the Covenant and Testament of Bahá'u'lláh, urging believers to strive to preserve its unity and integrity. It highlights the significance of serving the Cause of God, recounting the divine confirmations bestowed upon believers and the defeat of adversaries who sought to undermine the Faith. 'Abdu'l-Bahá's greatest aspiration is revealed to be the safeguarding of the Cause of God from corruption and division, emphasizing the importance of keeping its foundation inviolate.

### **Key Points:**

1. Acknowledgment of God's incomparable greatness and the limitations of human understanding.
2. Expression of deep reverence and seeking forgiveness for attempting to describe God's sanctity and holiness.
3. Emphasis on the importance of steadfastness in the Covenant and Testament of Bahá'u'lláh.
4. Urging believers to preserve the unity and integrity of the Covenant.

5. Highlighting the significance of serving the Cause of God and recounting divine confirmations bestowed upon believers.
6. Defeat of adversaries who sought to undermine the Faith.
7. 'Abdu'l-Bahá's greatest aspiration: safeguarding the Cause of God from corruption and division.
8. Importance of keeping the foundation of the Cause inviolate.

### **Questions and Answers:**

1. What does 'Abdu'l-Bahá acknowledge regarding human understanding of God's attributes and dominion?
  - 'Abdu'l-Bahá acknowledges the limitations of human understanding in comprehending the greatness of God's attributes and dominion, emphasizing that even the most eminent of sages have acknowledged their failure in this regard.
  
2. What does the discourse emphasize regarding the Covenant and Testament of Bahá'u'lláh?
  - The discourse emphasizes the importance of steadfastness in the Covenant and Testament of Bahá'u'lláh, urging believers to preserve its unity and integrity.
  
3. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá describe the adversaries of the Faith and their actions?
  - 'Abdu'l-Bahá describes the defeat of adversaries who sought to undermine the Faith, recounting their malicious schemes and the divine retribution that befell them.
  
4. What is revealed to be 'Abdu'l-Bahá's greatest aspiration?
  - 'Abdu'l-Bahá's greatest aspiration is revealed to be the safeguarding of the Cause of God from corruption and division, emphasizing the importance of keeping its foundation inviolate.
  
5. What suggestion does the discourse offer to ensure adherence to the Covenant?
  - The discourse suggests compiling the words and verses revealed in all the divine Tablets on the subject of the Covenant and Testament, and reciting them after reading the Book of the Covenant, to clarify the distinction between the steadfast and those who waver in their adherence to the Covenant.



*He is the All-Glorious.*

1 O thou who art aflame with the fire of the love of God! We hear that thou hast within thy being a blazing fire, and that thy soul, even as the winged moth, is consumed by its flame. Within the lamp of thy heart is cradled a bright candle, and within the sanctuary of thy soul reigneth the Best-Beloved of every gathering. Gracious God! What a concealed mystery is this and what a wondrous reality: The once-cloistered Friend hath become renowned throughout the world, and the once-hidden Beloved hath been unveiled in every land!

2 That everlasting Beauty hath now ascended to the eternal Kingdom. That Day-Star of the realm of Divine Unity is now shrouded behind the clouds of the invisible world. Despite this, the spreading rays of His holiness shine resplendent from the wellspring of the hearts of those who embody His praise. And while the mighty Ocean is concealed in the dense clouds of the world, yet its majestic billows surge from the wellsprings of the realm of being and are visible upon the shores of existence. Thus, while hidden, He is manifest, and though wrapt in concealment, He standeth revealed above every horizon in the easts and the wests of the earth.

**Summary:**

In this discourse 'Abdu'l-Bahá addresses someone who is described as being consumed by the fire of the love of God. The metaphor of the winged moth drawn to the flame illustrates the intensity of the individual's spiritual fervor. Despite the ascension of the eternal Beauty and the veiling of the Day-Star of Divine Unity, 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasizes that the radiant influence of His holiness continues to shine brightly from the hearts of those who praise Him. The imagery of the mighty Ocean concealed behind clouds but its billows visible upon the shores portrays the paradox of His hidden yet manifest presence in the world. Ultimately, though unseen, His influence permeates every corner of existence.

**Key Points:**

1. Addressing someone consumed by the fire of the love of God.
2. Metaphor of the winged moth drawn to the flame to illustrate spiritual fervor.
3. Acknowledgment of the ascension of the eternal Beauty and veiling of the Day-Star of Divine Unity.
4. Emphasis on the continuing radiant influence of His holiness from the hearts of His followers.

5. Illustration of the paradox of His hidden yet manifest presence using the imagery of the mighty Ocean concealed behind clouds but its billows visible upon the shores.
6. Conclusion highlighting the pervasive influence of His presence despite His concealment.

**Questions and Answers:**

1. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá describe the individual addressed in the discourse?
  - 'Abdu'l-Bahá describes the individual as being consumed by the fire of the love of God, akin to a winged moth drawn to the flame.
  
2. What metaphor does 'Abdu'l-Bahá use to illustrate the intensity of the individual's spiritual fervor?
  - 'Abdu'l-Bahá uses the metaphor of the winged moth drawn to the flame to illustrate the intensity of the individual's spiritual fervor.
  
3. Despite the ascension of the eternal Beauty, what does the speaker emphasize about His influence?
  - 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasizes that despite the ascension of the eternal Beauty, the radiant influence of His holiness continues to shine brightly from the hearts of those who praise Him.
  
4. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá portray the paradox of His hidden yet manifest presence?
  - 'Abdu'l-Bahá portrays the paradox using the imagery of the mighty Ocean concealed behind clouds but its billows visible upon the shores, illustrating His hidden yet manifest presence in the world.
  
5. What is the overarching message conveyed in the discourse?
  - The overarching message is that despite His ascension and veiling, the pervasive influence of His presence continues to permeate every corner of existence.

*He is the All-Glorious.*

- 1 Although the Sun of Truth may outwardly be veiled by the clouds of concealment, were one to look with a perceiving eye, listen with a hearing ear, and ponder with an awakened heart, it would become evident that the splendours of the Most Great Light have grown stronger and

the rays of the lamp of God waxed brighter, that the waves of His most mighty Ocean have surged higher and the outpourings of the heaven of His bounty have become more abundant and manifest. For, until now, the veil of the human temple hath been an impediment to beholding the Sun of Truth. But now, wholly sanctified from all earthly things, that resplendent Orb and Day-Star of the highest heaven shineth forth above the Supreme Horizon and beameth bright from the all-glorious Realm. This is His explicit text: “Verily, We behold you from Our realm of glory, and shall aid whosoever will arise for the triumph of Our Cause with the hosts of the Concourse on high and a company of Our favoured angels.”<sup>74</sup>

2 Even as was clearly seen in the advent of past Manifestations, only after Their ascension did the greatness of the Cause of God and the sovereignty of His Word become clear and evident. Consider, for instance, how during the Dispensation of the Spirit,<sup>75</sup> only a handful of seemingly humble souls were believers at the time of His ascension, and yet, when those feeble ones arose with supreme steadfastness, they were so assisted by divine confirmations and by the effusions of the Holy Spirit that they shone forth above the horizon of the world in such wise that the splendours of their imperishable light continue to illuminate both this nether realm and the realm beyond.

5 Hasten, then, O ye loved ones of God and His trustees; hasten unto this most great favour! Rush forth, O ye blessed and chosen ones among His creation, rush forth unto this most exalted and august station!

### **Summary:**

In the discourse 'Abdu'l-Bahá reflects on the veiling of the Sun of Truth by the clouds of concealment. He invites listeners to perceive beyond the apparent obstruction and recognize the growing brilliance of divine illumination. Despite the veils of human limitations, the light of God's revelation shines brighter, the bounty of His grace flows more abundantly, and the waves of His ocean surge higher. 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasizes that although the human temple has historically hindered the full revelation of divine light, now, unencumbered by earthly constraints, the radiant Orb of God's revelation shines forth in all its glory. He quotes an explicit text affirming divine support for those who arise to champion the cause of truth. He draws parallels with past Manifestations, illustrating how their true greatness and the sovereignty of their message became apparent only after their ascension. Despite initial humble beginnings, the believers of past Dispensations, through unwavering steadfastness, were aided by divine confirmations and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, ultimately shining as beacons of eternal light.

**Key Points:**

1. Introduction to the veiling of the Sun of Truth by the clouds of concealment.
2. Invitation to perceive beyond apparent obstacles and recognize the growing brilliance of divine illumination.
3. Emphasis on the increasing radiance of God's revelation despite historical limitations.
4. Quotation affirming divine support for champions of truth.
5. Comparison with past Manifestations to illustrate the gradual unveiling of divine greatness.
6. Illustration of believers' transformation from humble beginnings to shining beacons of eternal light.

**Questions and Answers:**

1. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá describe the veiling of the Sun of Truth?

Answer: 'Abdu'l-Bahá describes it as being outwardly veiled by the clouds of concealment.

2. What invitation does 'Abdu'l-Bahá extend to the listeners?

Answer: He invites them to perceive beyond apparent obstacles and recognize the growing brilliance of divine illumination.

3. What historical parallels does 'Abdu'l-Bahá draw to illustrate his point?

Answer: He draws parallels with past Manifestations, highlighting how their true greatness became apparent only after their ascension.

4. What assurance does 'Abdu'l-Bahá provide regarding divine support for those championing truth?

Answer: He quotes an explicit text affirming divine support with the hosts of the Concourse on high and a company of favored angels.

5. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá characterize the believers of past Dispensations?

Answer: He characterizes them as initially humble but ultimately shining forth as beacons of eternal light through unwavering steadfastness and divine assistance.

*He is the All-Glorious.*

- 1 O thou who hast truly believed in the Ancient Beauty! The King of eternal glory, the sovereign Lord, hath been established upon the throne of grandeur and hath shed abroad the splendour of all His names and attributes. He, verily, hath seated Himself upon the Seat of

Divinity and sent forth His universal summons. By “Seat” here is meant the Cause of God and His religion, this glorious Dispensation and wondrous Age. And by “seated” is meant His manifestation and appearance, His effulgence and presence.

2 The brows of some were adorned with the brightness of this effulgent light, whilst others regarded this daybreak as powerful sorcery.<sup>76</sup> Gracious God! The dawn is the same, the rising of the Sun is the same, and the Source of all splendour is the same. Yet its effect is of two kinds: “And we send down of the Qur’án that which is a healing and a mercy to the faithful: But it shall only add to the ruin of the wicked.”<sup>77</sup> The glory of God rest upon thee.

### **Summary:**

In this discourse 'Abdu'l-Bahá, addressed to a believer in the Ancient Beauty, he extols the establishment of the King of eternal glory upon the throne of grandeur, radiating the splendor of all His divine attributes. 'Abdu'l-Bahá elucidates that the "Seat of Divinity" signifies the Cause of God and His religion, referring to the current glorious Dispensation and Age. He emphasizes the manifestation and appearance of God, His effulgence, and presence in this epoch. 'Abdu'l-Bahá contrasts the reactions of people to this divine illumination, with some adorning their brows with its brightness while others perceive it as sorcery. He reflects on the uniformity of the dawn and the rising sun, yet acknowledges the divergent effects it produces based on individuals' receptivity. Quoting from the Qur’an, he highlights the dual nature of divine revelation, serving as a healing and mercy to the faithful while contributing to the ruin of the wicked.

### **Key Points:**

1. Introduction to the establishment of the King of eternal glory upon the throne of grandeur.
2. Explanation of the "Seat of Divinity" as the Cause of God and His religion in the current Dispensation.
3. Emphasis on the manifestation and presence of God in the present Age.
4. Contrast between believers adorning themselves with divine light and others perceiving it as sorcery.
5. Reflection on the uniformity of divine illumination and its divergent effects on individuals.
6. Quotation from the Qur’an illustrating the dual nature of divine revelation as healing for the faithful and ruin for the wicked.

### **Questions and Answers:**

1. What does 'Abdu'l-Bahá describe as the "Seat of Divinity"?

Answer: He describes it as the Cause of God and His religion, referring to the current Dispensation and Age.

2. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá characterize the manifestation and appearance of God in this epoch?

Answer: He characterizes it as His effulgence and presence.

3. What contrasting reactions do people have to divine illumination according to 'Abdu'l-Bahá?

Answer: Some adorn themselves with its brightness, while others perceive it as sorcery.

4. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá illustrate the uniformity of divine revelation?

Answer: He uses the analogy of the dawn and rising sun.

5. What dual nature of divine revelation does 'Abdu'l-Bahá highlight?

Answer: He highlights its role as a healing and mercy for the faithful, while contributing to the ruin of the wicked.

45

- 1     Glorified art Thou, O Lord my God, my Master, and my Ruler! Thou seest me a victim of every tribulation, a target for every shaft, and exposed to every spear. Not a day passeth but that swords are drawn against me and afflictive darts are hurled successively at the breast of this servant of Thine who standeth poor and desolate amongst Thy creation. And yet, Thou seest how my heart is filled with joy through the breaths of Thy holiness, how my soul is enraptured by the signs of Thy oneness, how my eyes are solaced by beholding Thy lights, and how my spirit is exhilarated by the gentle breezes wafting from the meads of Thy loving-kindness! I pay no heed to these shafts and spears, nor am I perturbed by any other matter. Nay, rather, I cling to the hem of patience, wear the armour of fervent supplication, and quench the devouring flame ignited by the hands of the wicked doers, with the tears I shed by night and by day.
- 2     Assist me, by Thy strengthening grace, O my God, to serve Thee amongst the righteous. Graciously aid me to render service unto the pious, and grant that I may offer up my soul for the faithful among Thy servants. Permit me, by Thy manifold favours, O my Lord, to enjoy intimate communion with Thee, and have mercy upon me by Thy bountiful grace. Keep me safe within the stronghold of Thy care and Thy protection, and guard me from the onslaught of the enemies, whether it be openly or privily inflicted. Cause me to speak forth Thy praise

amidst Thy loved ones, and enable me to be a sign of mercy amongst the people. Help me, O Lord, to serve Thy loved ones throughout all regions. Thou art in truth the All-Bountiful, the Almighty, and verily Thou art the Compassionate, the All-Merciful!

3 O ye faithful friends of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá! In this new springtime, the luminous Orb shone forth from the vernal point at the equator, shedding its splendour upon the world and bestowing, through its light and heat, a new grace and a potent spirit upon every region. Through that heat and light, energy and vitality were generated in the veins and sinews of the world, a new creation was called into being, and a fresh spirit was breathed into it. The weary frame of the world was endued with new life, and the dead body of existence was quickened and endowed with measureless blessings. A wondrous Dispensation dawned, a new creation was called into being, and the verse “I breathed of My spirit into him” was fulfilled.<sup>78</sup> The realm of being was adorned, and the universe was illumined by the dawning of that manifest Light. Signs of life and growth appeared in all created things, and great advances became visible in all beings.

4 Those who judge with fairness acknowledge that the nineteenth century was the era of light and the pride of all ages. The signs of progress became visible in every aspect of existence, in such wise that it became equal to a hundred others. Indeed, the achievements of this one century were greater than those of the fifty that came before. That is to say, were ye to gather the works, the inventions, and the wonders of the previous five thousand years, they would by no means compare with those in this heavenly era and divine century. The enterprises and discoveries of those fifty centuries, their sciences and inventions, their achievements and wonders, cannot rival those of this one century.

5 Behold, therefore, how the signs of the revelation of the Sun of Truth are present and manifest in all created things! And yet, the ignorant and unheeding are sunk in endless slumber. They remain utterly unaware of the cause of this growth and development, and the source of this boundless progress. They know not the Orb whose dawning hath ushered in this divine springtime, nor the clouds whose outpourings have brought forth these boundless favours. They see the motion, but reflect not upon its motive force. They acknowledge the fresh beauty of the vernal season, but are utterly heedless of the limitless effusions of grace in the divine springtime. They see the rising dust, but cannot perceive the swift-riding horseman. They gaze at the towering sails, but cannot apprehend the onrushing winds that propel the ship. They hearken unto the celestial Song, but remain oblivious to the Mystic Nightingale. They witness the surging waves, but are blind to the boundless ocean. They feast on fresh and luscious fruits, but remain ignorant of the Tree of mysteries. They see the lustre

of the lamp, but are unaware of the dazzling light within it. In any case, it is our hope that the people may wake from their slumber, become inebriated by this choice wine, and, through its power, grow mindful.

6 O ye friends of God! Ye are truly intoxicated by the wine of fidelity; ye are indeed the victorious hosts of the Concourse on high. Ye have scattered far and wide and are assisted by the all-pervasive power of the Word of God. Ye are the means for the quickening of the peoples of the world and are leaders among the ranks of His true lovers. Ye are guides to the path of salvation, and your hearts are wedded to His clear tokens and signs.

7 O friends! Praise be to God that the banner of Divine Unity hath been hoisted in every land, and the melody of the Abhá Kingdom hath been raised on every side. The holy Seraph of the Concourse on high is raising the cry of “Yá Bahá’u’l-Abhá!” in the midmost heart of the world, and the power of the Word of God is breathing true life into the body of existence.

8 Wherefore, O ye faithful friends, it behoveth you all to join ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in self-sacrifice and in service to the Cause of God and thralldom to His divine Threshold. If ye be aided to attain unto such a supreme bounty, the whole world shall ere long be made the recipient of the effulgent splendours of God, and the longed-for oneness of humanity shall be revealed in the utmost beauty and charm in the midmost heart of the world. This is the dearest wish of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá! This is the greatest yearning of them that are faithful! The Glory of Glories rest upon you.

### **Summary:**

In this heartfelt prayer by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, he addresses God as his Lord, Master, and Ruler, expressing his endurance of tribulations and attacks while finding solace in divine grace and unity. Despite facing adversity and being targeted by adversaries, he remains steadfast, finding joy in the manifestations of God's holiness and signs of His oneness. 'Abdu'l-Bahá seeks divine assistance to serve amongst the righteous, offering his soul for the faithful and praying for intimate communion with God. He implores God's protection from enemies and endeavors to praise Him amidst the believers, aspiring to be a sign of mercy to all. 'Abdu'l-Bahá reflects on the dawn of a new era, describing it as a springtime of spiritual awakening, where the world is rejuvenated and endowed with blessings. He extols the achievements and progress of the nineteenth century, surpassing all previous ages, attributing it to the revelation of the Sun of Truth. Despite the signs of divine revelation being evident in creation, 'Abdu'l-Bahá laments the ignorance and heedlessness of many towards its source and purpose, hoping for their awakening. Addressing the believers as the victorious hosts of the Concourse on



high, he encourages them to self-sacrifice and service to the Cause of God, envisioning the realization of humanity's oneness in the world.

**Key Points:**

1. 'Abdu'l-Bahá's expression of endurance amidst tribulations and attacks, finding solace in divine grace.
2. Prayer for divine assistance to serve amongst the righteous and offer his soul for the faithful.
3. Imploremment for protection from enemies and desire for intimate communion with God.
4. Reflection on the dawn of a new spiritual era, described as a springtime of rejuvenation and blessings.
5. Praise for the achievements and progress of the nineteenth century, attributed to the revelation of the Sun of Truth.
6. Lamentation over the ignorance and heedlessness towards the signs of divine revelation.
7. Encouragement to the believers as the victorious hosts of the Concourse on high, urging self-sacrifice and service to the Cause of God.
8. Vision for the realization of humanity's oneness in the world.

**Questions and Answers:**

1. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá describe his state amidst tribulations and attacks?

Answer: He describes himself as a victim of every tribulation, a target for every shaft, yet finds joy in divine grace and unity.

2. What does 'Abdu'l-Bahá implore God for in his prayer?

Answer: He implores God for assistance to serve amongst the righteous, protection from enemies, and intimate communion with Him.

3. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá characterize the era of the nineteenth century?

Answer: He characterizes it as the era of light, progress, and the pride of all ages, surpassing all previous centuries.

4. What does 'Abdu'l-Bahá lament regarding the reaction of many towards divine revelation?

Answer: He laments their ignorance and heedlessness towards its source and purpose despite its evident signs.

5. What does 'Abdu'l-Bahá envision for the believers and humanity as a whole?

Answer: He envisions the believers as the victorious hosts of the Concourse on high, urging them to self-sacrifice and service to the Cause of God, and he hopes for the realization of humanity's oneness in the world.

46

*He is God.*

1 O ye beloved of the Lord and handmaids of the All-Merciful! No sooner had the Sun of Truth shone forth from the heaven of sanctity than it shed upon the horizons of the world the light of unity of thought, unity of opinion, unity of belief, and unity of truth. And this, so that humankind might come together at one single point with respect to thoughts and beliefs; that quarrels, disputes, and conflicts might wholly disappear from amongst humankind; and that the same Light radiating from the Sun of Truth might illumine every heart. For the sake of this complete unity, this perfect harmony, His blessed Being endured every woe and all manner of trial and tribulation in such wise that eyes weep and hearts are for evermore consumed.

2 Praised be God that the beloved of the Lord in other countries in the East are one in belief, one in thought, and one in word, and are holding fast unto the same truth. But apparently, in some parts of America, differences of opinion have arisen amongst the believers. Such differences destroy the foundation of the Divine Edifice. For this reason, the Centre of the Covenant will now address this question in clear and explicit words, so that no differences whatsoever may remain, that the friends may be joined together and united, and that, by reason of this unity, the light of truth may illumine the world of humanity.

3 The following is my explanation: The Exalted One, the Báb—may my life be offered up for Him—is the Promised One of the Qur’án, that is, the Mihdí, the promised Qá’im, Who was to appear after the Prophet Muḥammad. He is the bright Morn dawning from the horizon of guidance, and the Harbinger of the Abhá Beauty. The Blessed Beauty—may my life be offered up for His loved ones—is He Whom God shall make manifest, the One promised in all the Books and Tablets of the Báb. And ‘Abdu’l-Bahá is the Centre of the Covenant of God, but the Branch is only an offshoot of the Tree. The Tree is the essence, the Tree is the foundation, and the Tree is the universal Reality.

4 All the Scriptures have foretold the advent of two Manifestations, even as the Gospel doth refer to the coming of Elijah and the Messiah, by which is meant the Báb and Bahá’u’lláh. There is no third Manifestation.

5           Whosoever may appear ere the lapse of one thousand years, even if he be endowed with utmost perfection, shall nevertheless be under the shadow of the Blessed Beauty and a servant unto Him. He will be the disciple of the Ancient Beauty, seek illumination from His light, and receive a share from the outpourings of His grace. Such a one may be likened unto a star or the moon, whereas the Blessed Beauty is even as the Sun itself. The moon acquireth its light from the sun. This is the sincere and heartfelt conviction of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. It is incumbent upon everyone to bear allegiance and cleave fast unto that which hath issued from the pen of the Covenant. This is the foundation of the Cause of God! This is the light of truth! This is the belief of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá!

6           It is ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s highest aspiration, therefore, to be a true and faithful servant at the Threshold of the Blessed Beauty. Whosoever truly loveth me, whosoever is firm in the Covenant, must regard me as the servant of the Threshold of the Blessed Perfection. Nevertheless, it is unto the Centre of the Covenant that everyone must turn, for he is the Interpreter of the Book, and all the people of Bahá are under his shadow. Should anyone undertake, of his own accord, to interpret the Book of God in a manner contrary to the explicit text of the pen of the Covenant, it is to be rejected, for it would lead to disunity amongst the loved ones of God.

7           My purpose is to show that the Blessed Beauty hath neither peer nor likeness. He is unique in His essence, and holy and sanctified in His attributes. I am under His shadow and the servant of His Threshold.

8           My hope is that following this explicit text which hath proceeded from the pen of the Covenant, no differences whatsoever may remain, and that the American believers, even as the friends in Persia, may all become united in belief, thus rejoicing the heart of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and leading to the exaltation of the Cause of God in America. Publish this letter and circulate it throughout America. The Glory of Glories rest upon you.

9           Should a Persian come to those regions from the East—even, supposing the impossible, my son, or a daughter of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá—without having a letter of permission in my handwriting and bearing my signature, it is forbidden to meet such a person or converse with him. For whosoever cometh without permission hath no aim save sedition and the violation of the Covenant.

### **Summary:**

In this discourse by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, he addresses the beloved of the Lord and handmaids of the All-Merciful, emphasizing the importance of unity of thought, belief, and truth as illuminated

by the Sun of Truth. He expresses sorrow over differences of opinion among believers, stressing the need for unity to dispel conflicts and promote the light of truth. 'Abdu'l-Bahá elucidates the roles of the Exalted One, the Báb, and the Blessed Beauty, emphasizing their significance in fulfilling divine promises. He affirms the Covenant of God, clarifying the roles of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the Branch, and asserts that no Manifestation will appear after Bahá'u'lláh for at least one thousand years. 'Abdu'l-Bahá underscores his humility and servitude to the Blessed Beauty, emphasizing the importance of adhering to the Covenant and rejecting interpretations contrary to it. He exalts the unique station of the Blessed Beauty and expresses hope for unity among believers, urging the circulation of his letter to foster understanding and adherence to the Covenant.

### **Key Points:**

1. Emphasis on the importance of unity of thought, belief, and truth as illuminated by the Sun of Truth.
2. Sorrow over differences of opinion among believers and the necessity of unity to promote the light of truth.
3. Clarification of the roles of the Exalted One, the Báb, and the Blessed Beauty in fulfilling divine promises.
4. Affirmation of the Covenant of God and clarification of the roles of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the Branch.
5. Assertion that no Manifestation will appear after Bahá'u'lláh for at least one thousand years.
6. Humility and servitude of 'Abdu'l-Bahá to the Blessed Beauty and emphasis on adhering to the Covenant.
7. Exaltation of the unique station of the Blessed Beauty and hope for unity among believers.
8. Urgency for the circulation of the letter to foster understanding and adherence to the Covenant.

### **Questions and Answers:**

1. What does 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasize as the purpose of the Sun of Truth's illumination?  
Answer: He emphasizes it to be the unity of thought, belief, and truth among humankind.
2. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá address differences of opinion among believers?  
Answer: He expresses sorrow over such differences and stresses the necessity of unity to promote the light of truth.

3. What roles does 'Abdu'l-Bahá clarify regarding the Exalted One, the Báb, and the Blessed Beauty?

Answer: He clarifies their significance in fulfilling divine promises and their roles in the Covenant of God.

4. What assertion does 'Abdu'l-Bahá make regarding future Manifestations?

Answer: He asserts that no Manifestation will appear after Bahá'u'lláh for at least one thousand years.

5. What urgency does 'Abdu'l-Bahá express regarding his letter?

Answer: He urges for its circulation to foster understanding and adherence to the Covenant, promoting unity among believers.

47

*He is God.*

1 O thou twig of the Sacred Lote-Tree! The Dispensations of the past manifested either the splendour of the divine Beauty or the radiance of the divine Glory; either the dawning rays of “Verily Thou art of a noble nature” or the bright light of “God, verily, is wholly quit of the unbelievers”;<sup>79</sup> either the effulgence of the manifest Sun or the gleam of the unsheathed sword. But in this great Cycle and blessed Age, despite the lack of an all-subduing power or earthly dominion, despite the absence of unsheathed swords or flashing spears, Glory and Beauty have joined together and shone forth in a single luminous Countenance.

2 Though the Ancient Beauty—may my life be offered up for His loved ones—was held alone and forsaken in the clutches of His enemies, though He was kept in chains and threatened by the sword, though He was banished to lands in Asia and Europe and finally exiled to the Most Great Prison, He ultimately rose in the utmost glory and beauty above the horizon of ancient might, manifest and radiant, resplendent and luminous, shedding light upon the world. All necks were laid low before Him, and all heads bowed down to Him; all faces turned humbly towards Him, and all voices were hushed in His presence.

**Summary:**

In this discourse by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, he addresses a believer as a twig of the Sacred Lote-Tree, reflecting on the nature of past Dispensations and contrasting them with the current Cycle and blessed Age. He elucidates how previous epochs manifested either the splendor of divine Beauty or the radiance of divine Glory, often accompanied by unsheathed swords or flashing

spears. However, in this great Cycle and blessed Age, Glory and Beauty have united in a single luminous Countenance, despite the absence of earthly dominion or unsheathed swords. 'Abdu'l-Bahá reflects on the trials faced by the Ancient Beauty, Bahá'u'lláh, who endured imprisonment, exile, and persecution but ultimately rose in glory and beauty above the horizon of ancient might, commanding reverence and submission from all.

### **Key Points:**

1. Reflection on past Dispensations manifesting divine Beauty or Glory, often accompanied by unsheathed swords.
2. Contrast with the current Cycle and blessed Age, where Glory and Beauty have united in a single luminous Countenance.
3. Description of the trials faced by Bahá'u'lláh, the Ancient Beauty, including imprisonment, exile, and persecution.
4. Bahá'u'lláh's ultimate rise in glory and beauty above the horizon of ancient might, commanding reverence and submission from all.

### **Questions and Answers:**

1. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá contrast past Dispensations with the current Cycle and blessed Age?

Answer: He reflects on how past epochs manifested either divine Beauty or Glory, often accompanied by unsheathed swords, whereas in the current Age, Glory and Beauty have united in a single luminous Countenance.

2. What trials did Bahá'u'lláh, the Ancient Beauty, endure according to 'Abdu'l-Bahá?

Answer: He endured imprisonment, exile, and persecution at the hands of His enemies.

3. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá describe Bahá'u'lláh's ultimate rise in glory and beauty?

Answer: He rose above the horizon of ancient might, manifest and radiant, commanding reverence and submission from all.

4. What significance does 'Abdu'l-Bahá attribute to Bahá'u'lláh's enduring trials?

Answer: He emphasizes Bahá'u'lláh's triumph despite adversity, highlighting His manifestation of glory and beauty.

5. What does 'Abdu'l-Bahá imply about the power of Bahá'u'lláh's message despite the absence of earthly dominion?

Answer: He implies that Bahá'u'lláh's message transcends earthly dominion and swords, as His glory and beauty command reverence and submission from all.

*He is God.*

1 O ye homeless ones of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá! Ye are homeless and afflicted; ye are displaced and dispossessed of all, for your homes have been pillaged and your dwelling-places plundered. Ye have endured grievous trials, suffered dire iniquities, and been subjected, in truth, to the relentless cruelty of the rebellious.

2 ‘Abdu’l-Bahá is also a captive in this Most Great Prison. But I have found this prison to be a palace, and regard this bondage as true freedom. This cage is to me a heavenly rose garden, and this captivity an everlasting throne, for it hath befallen me in the path of God and for the sake of the love of the Abhá Beauty—may my life be offered up for His loved ones. How delightsome and pleasing it is! How sweet and precious! The trials and afflictions suffered by those friends have indeed been most grievous; yet, in truth, they are a flood of grace and a morn of hope to the hearts of those that are nigh to the Threshold of Singleness.

3 Consider what a blessing are calamities when endured in the path of God. The Prince of Martyrs<sup>80</sup>—may my life be offered up for Him—was plunged into the very depths of the ocean of tribulations, while the hostile Yazíd and the wicked Valíd seemingly prospered in the material world and relished its pleasures.<sup>81</sup> Later it became clear to all that those tribulations had been true blessings, while that prosperity was only divine chastisement and that pleasure naught but God’s wrath and fury. The same holdeth true now. Although to outward seeming the divines and the unjust and foolish rulers are raising an uproar and flaunting themselves, erelong ye shall witness how, like the owls of the night, these people will creep into a desolate ruin, hasten to the tomb of eternal loss, and fall into the abyss of everlasting perdition. Even now, they wander distracted in the wilderness of disappointment, while the friends of God gleam brightly from the horizon of everlasting glory.

4 Were ye to consider carefully, ye would surely perceive that adversity in the path of the one true God is a bounty, inasmuch as the Most Great Name, the Ancient Beauty—may my life be a sacrifice for His loved ones—did Himself endure a myriad afflictions. Now He hath granted that we, His lowly servants, may become His partners and associates in these trials and tribulations, each according to our capacity. Were one to judge with fairness, this suffering is worthy of gratitude, and these afflictions are naught but manifold bestowals. Upon you be greetings and praise.

## **Summary:**

In this discourse by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, addressed to the homeless believers, he acknowledges their afflictions and displacement, their homes pillaged and dwellings plundered by the rebellious. 'Abdu'l-Bahá identifies himself as a captive in the Most Great Prison but perceives it as a palace, finding true freedom and heavenly delights in his bondage for the love of the Abhá Beauty. He sees the trials endured by the believers as a flood of grace and a source of hope for those near the Threshold of Singleness. 'Abdu'l-Bahá reflects on the blessings of calamities endured in the path of God, citing the example of the Prince of Martyrs, whose tribulations were later recognized as true blessings while the prosperity of his oppressors was divine chastisement. He predicts the eventual downfall of the divines and unjust rulers who currently flaunt themselves, contrasting them with the bright gleam of the friends of God from the horizon of everlasting glory. 'Abdu'l-Bahá asserts that adversity in the path of God is a bounty, as the Ancient Beauty Himself endured myriad afflictions, allowing His followers to become partners in these trials and tribulations.

## **Key Points:**

1. Acknowledgment of the believers' afflictions and displacement by the rebellious.
2. Identification of 'Abdu'l-Bahá as a captive in the Most Great Prison but perceiving it as a palace and true freedom for the love of the Abhá Beauty.
3. Reflection on the trials endured by the believers as a flood of grace and a source of hope.
4. Examination of the blessings of calamities endured in the path of God, citing the example of the Prince of Martyrs.
5. Prediction of the eventual downfall of the divines and unjust rulers, contrasting them with the bright gleam of the friends of God.
6. Assertion that adversity in the path of God is a bounty, as the Ancient Beauty Himself endured myriad afflictions.

## **Questions and Answers:**

1. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá perceive his captivity in the Most Great Prison?

Answer: He perceives it as a palace and true freedom, finding heavenly delights in his bondage for the love of the Abhá Beauty.

2. What does 'Abdu'l-Bahá consider the trials endured by the believers to be?

Answer: He considers them a flood of grace and a source of hope for those near the Threshold of Singleness.



3. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá characterize the eventual downfall of the divines and unjust rulers?

Answer: He predicts that they will wander distracted in the wilderness of disappointment and fall into the abyss of everlasting perdition.

4. Why does 'Abdu'l-Bahá assert that adversity in the path of God is a bounty?

Answer: He cites the example of the Prince of Martyrs, whose tribulations were later recognized as true blessings, and asserts that adversity allows believers to become partners in trials and tribulations.

5. What message does 'Abdu'l-Bahá convey to the believers regarding their afflictions?

Answer: He encourages them to perceive their suffering with gratitude, recognizing it as manifold bestowals from the Most Great Name, the Ancient Beauty.

49

*He is the All-Glorious.*

1 O thou whom the Lord hath aided to magnify His Word and to diffuse the sweet savours of the rose-garden of His holiness. Thou hast, for some time, been a companion of these enraptured souls and hast associated with these yearning ones in this Most Great Prison. Praise be to God, for thy brow hath been illumined and thy sight brightened by the dust of the sacred Shrine. Time and again, thou hast attained the honour of visiting the Exalted Threshold—that Spot round which circle the celestial Concourse, that Sanctuary of the denizens of the Abhá Kingdom—and hast detected the sweet scents of holiness.

2 Now, aided by heavenly power, divine strength, celestial attraction, and spiritual vigour; endowed with inner joy, a radiant countenance, an eloquent tongue, an outstanding utterance, and words of perfect praise; and confirmed by the outpouring flood of His Grace, return thou to the land of Ṭá', and thence to the land of Khá'.<sup>82</sup> Gather then together the believers in that land round the all-embracing Word, the luminous bounty, the manifest sign, and the glorious banner of the Book of God and His Faith, so that they may be revived and refreshed through the breaths of this supreme bestowal, and may be so set ablaze with the immortal flame kindled in the sacred Tree that each may become a kindled torch, a shining orb, and a brilliant star. The glory of God rest upon thee.

3 Convey my warmest loving greetings to the beloved of the Merciful, and tell them on behalf of this servant: “O ye who have quaffed from the Heavenly Cup, O ye who are attracted to the beauty of the All-Merciful! The Abhá Beloved and desire of the celestial Concourse—may I offer up my soul, my spirit, my life, my essence, and mine inmost being

for His loved ones—throughout these long years endured all manner of trials and tribulations, woes and hardships, chains and fetters, and even this afflictive prison. All the while, He trained you beneath the shadow of the divine Teachings that ye might, on a day such as this, arise to proclaim the Faith of God and magnify His Word. Now is the time for you to forget all else but Him, even as did the disciples of Christ. Now is the time for you to surge forth like a mighty ocean, that the sweet savours of God may perfume the East and the West.”

### **Summary:**

In this discourse by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, he addresses a believer who has been a companion of the enraptured souls and yearning ones in the Most Great Prison, praising the illumination of their brow and the brightening of their sight by the dust of the sacred Shrine. Encouraged by heavenly power, divine strength, and spiritual vigour, 'Abdu'l-Bahá instructs the believer to return to the land of Ṭá' and then to the land of Khá', gathering the believers around the Word of God and His Faith. He urges them to be revived and refreshed through this supreme bestowal, becoming kindled torches, shining orbs, and brilliant stars. 'Abdu'l-Bahá sends warm loving greetings to the beloved of the Merciful, urging them to forget all else but God, to proclaim His Faith, and to surge forth like a mighty ocean to perfume the East and the West with the sweet savours of God.

### **Key Points:**

1. Acknowledgment of the believer's companionship with enraptured souls in the Most Great Prison and praise for their illumination and brightened sight.
2. Instruction for the believer to return to the lands of Ṭá' and Khá', gathering the believers around the Word of God and His Faith.
3. Encouragement for the believers to be revived and refreshed through this supreme bestowal, becoming kindled torches, shining orbs, and brilliant stars.
4. Warm loving greetings sent to the beloved of the Merciful, urging them to forget all else but God and to proclaim His Faith with zeal.
5. Exhortation for the believers to surge forth like a mighty ocean, perfuming the East and the West with the sweet savours of God.

### **Questions and Answers:**

1. What encouragement does 'Abdu'l-Bahá offer to the believer regarding their companionship in the Most Great Prison?

Answer: He praises the believer's illumination and brightened sight and encourages them to return to the lands of Ṭá' and Khá'.

2. What instruction does 'Abdu'l-Bahá give to the believer regarding their return to the lands of Ṭá' and Khá'?

Answer: He instructs them to gather the believers around the Word of God and His Faith, reviving and refreshing them through this supreme bestowal.

3. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá describe the believers' potential after being revived and refreshed?

Answer: He describes them as kindled torches, shining orbs, and brilliant stars, empowered by heavenly power and spiritual vigour.

4. What message does 'Abdu'l-Bahá send to the beloved of the Merciful?

Answer: He sends warm loving greetings, urging them to forget all else but God and to proclaim His Faith with zeal.

5. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá metaphorically describe the believers' role in perfuming the East and the West with the sweet savours of God?

Answer: He exhorts them to surge forth like a mighty ocean, spreading the fragrance of God's teachings far and wide.

50

*He is God.*

1 O thou who rejoicest in the glad-tidings of God! In every age and century, the Dayspring of the world is made manifest, shining with a particular splendour and revealed through a mighty sign. In the time of the Friend of God,<sup>83</sup> the horizon of existence was illumined with the lights of friendship. During the era of Him Who conversed with God,<sup>84</sup> the dawning-place of creation was brightened by the Light that glowed upon Sinai. In the days of the Spirit of God,<sup>85</sup> the realm of being was perfumed by the sweet savours of holiness. With the dawning of the Day-Star of Medina,<sup>86</sup> the horizon of the world was flooded with the light of love and grandeur. When the veil of concealment was rent asunder from the beauty of the Primal Point, the Morn of divine guidance was adorned with the resplendent rays of the most joyful tidings. And with this Most Great Revelation and the dawning of the Day-Star of the Ancient Beauty, the horizons of the world have been encompassed, blessed, and made evident and complete by all the divine bounties, effulgences, names, and attributes combined. For the Most Great Ocean possesseth and embraceth all the perfections that are to be found in every sea, gulf, river, spring, and stream.

2           This was written with a broken-nibbed pen. The pen hath been changed and the theme is  
now elaborated.

3           Consider the Writings of the Blessed Beauty on every matter, and the truth will become  
clear and evident. Examine the works of the Most Exalted Pen and compare them with all  
other Scriptures. Reflect upon the manifestation of His overpowering majesty, and ponder  
how in the Most Great Prison, singly and alone, with none to help or succour Him, He  
withstood all the peoples and governments of the world in the utmost sovereignty and glory.

4           For example, see how during the days of the Apostle of God—may the life of the worlds  
be offered up for Him—those who repudiated Him would say, as is clearly stated in the  
Qur’án: “And when they see Thee, they do but take Thee in mockery. ‘What! Is this he whom  
God hath sent as an Apostle?’”<sup>87</sup> In this most mighty Revelation, however, the faithful as  
well as the froward, the rebellious, and the deniers all speak of the greatness of this Cause  
and the majesty of the Blessed Beauty—that is, even those that have not accepted and  
followed the fundamentals of His Faith. As thou hast witnessed, all the widely circulated  
publications of the world have testified to this. The humility and submissiveness shown by  
His enemies at all times, even within this afflictive prison, are the greatest proof thereof, as  
are the signs of the influence of His dawning and transcendent Revelation, whose rays have  
been shed upon the whole world. Indeed, all historians have regarded this wondrous age, this  
new century, as the king of all ages and the sovereign of all centuries, and have regarded its  
achievements as transcending those of all previous ages. That is, shouldst thou compare the  
achievements of one hundred centuries to those of this single one, they could in no wise  
compare with it.

5           In brief, this Revelation is distinguished and exceptional in all respects. In gratitude for  
these bounties and bestowals, then, it behoveth us to forget all things in our yearning for the  
love of the Blessed Beauty and, with all our power and strength, centre our thoughts and  
words on teaching the Cause of God and diffusing the divine fragrances. In this day, this  
endeavour, that is, teaching the Cause of God, receiveth confirmation and is assured of  
victory by the aid of the hosts of the Abhá Kingdom.

6           I swear by the Ancient Beauty—may my life be offered up for the dust ennobled by the  
footsteps of His loved ones! Were the weakest of all creatures to arise in this Day to fulfil this  
momentous task, that is, to diffuse the divine fragrances, it would become the mightiest of all  
created things. The drop would become like unto a sea, and the atom would attain the power  
of the sun. Although the hoopoe was a frail and feeble bird, yet the hosts of Solomon were its  
support. So it was that the Queen of Sheba, with all her legions, could not resist its powers

and found no recourse but to surrender. Now, should any soul arise to diffuse the sweet savours of God, the hosts of the Abhá Kingdom will be his helpers and succourers, and the Almighty Lord his refuge and shelter.

### **Summary:**

Abdu'l-Bahá proclaims the manifestation of the Dayspring of God's revelation throughout history, each era distinguished by a particular divine illumination. He cites the epochs of the Friend of God, Moses, Jesus, Muhammad, and the Bab, highlighting the unique attributes of each dispensation. The Most Great Revelation, heralded by Baha'u'llah, is depicted as encompassing all divine perfections and blessings. Abdu'l-Bahá underscores the potency of Baha'u'llah's teachings by reflecting on His resilience and sovereignty amidst adversity, particularly during His imprisonment. He contrasts Baha'u'llah's exalted station with the skepticism and mockery faced by past prophets, emphasizing the universal acknowledgment of His greatness, even by those who haven't embraced His Faith. Abdu'l-Bahá extols the unparalleled significance of Baha'u'llah's Revelation, asserting its superiority over all previous dispensations. He calls upon believers to dedicate themselves to spreading the divine message, confident in the support of the Abhá Kingdom. Abdu'l-Bahá employs analogies, likening the impact of even the weakest believer's efforts to the mightiest forces in creation, citing the example of the hoopoe supported by Solomon's hosts. He assures that anyone who arises to disseminate God's teachings will be fortified by heavenly assistance.

### **Key Points:**

1. Introduction to the succession of divine revelations throughout history.
2. Comparison of the Most Great Revelation with past dispensations.
3. Reflections on the challenges faced by Baha'u'llah and the resilience of His Cause.
4. Universal acknowledgment of Baha'u'llah's greatness.
5. The unparalleled significance of Baha'u'llah's Revelation.
6. Call to action: Dedication to teaching the Cause of God.
7. Assurance of divine support for believers' efforts.

### **Questions and Answers:**

1. How does Abdu'l-Bahá characterize the succession of divine revelations throughout history?

- Abdu'l-Bahá describes each era as illuminated by a particular divine manifestation, each distinguished by its unique splendor.

2. What contrast does Abdu'l-Bahá draw between Baha'u'llah and past prophets?

- Abdu'l-Bahá contrasts the widespread acknowledgment of Baha'u'llah's greatness, even by skeptics, with the mockery faced by past prophets.

3. How does Abdu'l-Bahá assert the superiority of Baha'u'llah's Revelation?

- Abdu'l-Bahá asserts that Baha'u'llah's Revelation encompasses all divine perfections and blessings, surpassing all previous dispensations.

4. What is Abdu'l-Bahá's call to action for believers?

- Abdu'l-Bahá calls upon believers to dedicate themselves to spreading the divine message and diffusing the divine fragrances of Baha'u'llah's teachings.

5. How does Abdu'l-Bahá reassure believers of divine assistance in their efforts?

- Abdu'l-Bahá assures believers that anyone who arises to disseminate God's teachings will be fortified by heavenly assistance, likening their impact to the mightiest forces in creation.

51

*He is the All-Glorious.*

1 O thou spiritual physician! The body of humankind was afflicted with severe ills and chronic diseases, contagious maladies and prolonged fevers. Whereupon the ocean of divine favour surged, and the clouds of truth and bounty rained down upon the world of creation. The Sun of the firmament of Oneness shone forth, and vivifying breezes wafted from the meads of Singleness. The breath of the divine Messiah was diffused, the All-Knowing Physician appeared from behind the veil, and the skilled and true Healer emerged unconcealed. He prepared wholesome medicines from hidden substances, and created healing balms from concealed and treasured elements. He bestowed the panacea of unfailing efficacy, and conferred the sovereign remedy for every ill. He blended together spiritual elixirs, and created refreshing draughts made with heavenly pearls and rubies. And from the essence of Divine Unity and the quintessence of singleness, He taught and made known to us remedies that purify and tranquillize and soothe. And all this, so that the feeble frame of the world might be freed from the burning thirst of error and ignorance, and this afflicted body might be delivered from the sore distress of heedlessness and impotence and attain unto a state of divine health and a well-being spiritual, complete, and absolute.

2 Yet ignorant and neglectful physicians devoid of learning have intervened and are preventing the divine and timely remedy from being administered. They prescribe instead that which causeth the aggravation of the disease and the worsening of the condition. Thou who hast discovered the storehouse of celestial remedies and the infallible divine medicines must strive, then, that haply the light of perfect health and unfailing tranquillity may shine forth even as the light of guidance from the Dayspring of healing, and that the obscuring gloom of ills may be dispelled and the deadly affliction of maladies eliminated.

### **Summary:**

Abdu'l-Bahá employs the metaphor of a spiritual physician addressing the ailments afflicting humankind, which he describes as severe and chronic diseases. He depicts the manifestation of divine favor as a healing rain upon the world, ushered in by the Sun of Oneness and the breezes of Singleness. Abdu'l-Bahá extols the appearance of the divine Messiah, the All-Knowing Physician, who offers potent remedies and healing balms crafted from hidden substances. He emphasizes the efficacy of these divine medicines in curing every ill and restoring spiritual health and well-being. However, Abdu'l-Bahá laments the interference of ignorant and neglectful physicians who obstruct the administration of these celestial remedies, prescribing treatments that worsen the condition. He calls upon those who have discovered the storehouse of divine remedies to strive for the dissemination of these infallible medicines, ensuring that the light of perfect health and tranquility shines forth from the Dayspring of healing, dispelling the gloom of afflictions and eliminating deadly maladies.

### **Key Points:**

1. Introduction: Humankind afflicted with severe and chronic diseases.
2. Manifestation of divine favor as healing rain upon the world.
3. Appearance of the divine Messiah as the All-Knowing Physician.
4. Efficacy of divine remedies in restoring spiritual health and well-being.
5. Interference of ignorant physicians obstructing the administration of celestial remedies.
6. Call to action for those who have discovered divine remedies to strive for their dissemination.
7. Goal: Ensure the light of perfect health and tranquility shines forth from the Dayspring of healing.

### **Questions and Answers:**

1. How does Abdu'l-Bahá characterize the ailments afflicting humankind?

- Abdu'l-Bahá describes them as severe and chronic diseases, contagious maladies, and prolonged fevers.
2. What metaphor does Abdu'l-Bahá use to depict the manifestation of divine favor?
    - He uses the metaphor of healing rain upon the world, brought by the Sun of Oneness and the breezes of Singleness.
  3. Who does Abdu'l-Bahá identify as the divine Messiah?
    - Abdu'l-Bahá identifies the divine Messiah as the All-Knowing Physician who offers potent remedies and healing balms.
  4. What lamentation does Abdu'l-Bahá express regarding the administration of divine remedies?
    - He laments the interference of ignorant and neglectful physicians who obstruct the administration of celestial remedies, prescribing treatments that worsen the condition.
  5. What is Abdu'l-Bahá's call to action for those who have discovered divine remedies?
    - Abdu'l-Bahá calls upon them to strive for the dissemination of these infallible medicines, ensuring that the light of perfect health and tranquility shines forth from the Dayspring of healing.

52

*He is God.*

- 1 O thou servant of the Abhá Beauty! When the celestial Lion rushed forth from the forest of the All-Merciful, He let out such a mighty roar that the sly foxes of ignorance and the cunning jackals, stained with the dye of deceit, fled the field.<sup>88</sup> They then began to plot and conspire, raised the dust of cruelty and malice, and abased themselves to the depths of degradation, and now bewail and lament in the remoteness of obscurity and extinction. Leave them, therefore, in their corner of oblivion. They are “those who forget God, and whom He hath therefore caused to forget their own selves”.<sup>89</sup> Surely they are a people, evil, in grievous loss!<sup>90</sup> Upon thee be greetings and praise.

**Summary:**

In this passage, Abdu'l-Bahá addresses a servant of the Abhá Beauty, invoking powerful imagery to describe the impact of divine revelation. He likens the advent of the divine message to a celestial Lion roaring forth from the forest of the All-Merciful, causing the forces of ignorance and deceit to flee in fear. Abdu'l-Bahá portrays those who oppose the divine message as sly foxes and cunning jackals, driven to plot and conspire in their



desperation. He condemns their actions, describing them as abased and lamenting in obscurity and extinction, ultimately forgetting their own selves due to their neglect of God. Abdu'l-Bahá advises the servant to leave them in their corner of oblivion, as they are deemed as evil and in grievous loss. The passage concludes with greetings and praise bestowed upon the servant.

### **Key Points:**

1. Invocation of a servant of the Abhá Beauty.
2. Description of the impact of divine revelation as a mighty roar of a celestial Lion.
3. Portrayal of opposition to the divine message as fleeing forces of ignorance and deceit.
4. Condemnation of plotting and conspiracy by opponents of the divine message.
5. Depiction of opponents as abased and lamenting in obscurity and extinction.
6. Exhortation to leave opponents in their corner of oblivion.
7. Description of opponents as evil and in grievous loss.
8. Conclusion with greetings and praise.

### **Questions and Answers:**

1. How does Abdu'l-Bahá metaphorically describe the impact of divine revelation?
  - Abdu'l-Bahá likens it to a celestial Lion roaring forth from the forest of the All-Merciful, causing fear in the forces of ignorance and deceit.
2. How does Abdu'l-Bahá characterize those who oppose the divine message?
  - He portrays them as sly foxes and cunning jackals, driven to plot and conspire in their desperation.
3. What fate does Abdu'l-Bahá predict for the opponents of the divine message?
  - Abdu'l-Bahá suggests that they will be abased and lamenting in obscurity and extinction, ultimately forgetting their own selves.
4. What advice does Abdu'l-Bahá give regarding the opponents of the divine message?
  - He advises the servant to leave them in their corner of oblivion.
5. How does Abdu'l-Bahá conclude the passage?
  - He concludes with greetings and praise bestowed upon the servant.

*He is God!*

1 O servant of the one true God! The Morn of divine guidance hath shed its radiance upon the East and lit up the Orient. It hath cast its beams upon the West and brightened the Occident. God be praised, for the renown and glory of the Abhá Beauty hath conquered the world, and the fame of the advent of the Most Great Name hath stirred up the whole earth. His call is now raised in every land, and His life-giving breezes blow from every region. Yet, regrettably, the unfaithful are striving to the utmost to extinguish His radiant Light, to still the wafting of His perfumed breeze, and to hinder the diffusion of His sweet fragrance. Alas, alas! Even if the dark clouds obscure the light of the sun for a while, they shall, in the end, be dispersed, and its effulgent rays shall shine forth once again. Upon thee be greetings and praise.

**Summary:**

In this passage, Abdu'l-Bahá addresses a servant of the one true God, celebrating the dawn of divine guidance that has illuminated both the East and the West. He praises the renown and glory of the Abhá Beauty, affirming that His advent has stirred the entire earth. Despite the widespread proclamation of His message and the diffusion of His sweet fragrance, Abdu'l-Bahá laments the efforts of the unfaithful who seek to extinguish His radiant Light and hinder the spread of His teachings. He acknowledges the temporary obscurity caused by dark clouds but expresses confidence that the effulgent rays of the sun will shine forth once again.

Abdu'l-Bahá concludes with greetings and praise upon the servant.

**Key Points:**

1. Invocation of a servant of the one true God.
2. Celebration of the dawn of divine guidance illuminating the East and the West.
3. Praise for the renown and glory of the Abhá Beauty.
4. Acknowledgment of the global impact of the advent of the Most Great Name.
5. Lamentation over the efforts of the unfaithful to obstruct the spread of divine teachings.
6. Confidence in the eventual dispersion of dark clouds and the resumption of the radiant Light.

7. Conclusion with greetings and praise upon the servant.

**Questions and Answers:**

1. How does Abdu'l-Bahá describe the impact of divine guidance?

- Abdu'l-Bahá describes it as shedding radiance upon both the East and the West, lighting up the Orient and brightening the Occident.

2. What does Abdu'l-Bahá praise regarding the Abhá Beauty?

- He praises the renown and glory of the Abhá Beauty, affirming that His advent has stirred the entire earth.

3. What lament does Abdu'l-Bahá express in the passage?

- Abdu'l-Bahá laments the efforts of the unfaithful who seek to extinguish the radiant Light of divine guidance and hinder the spread of His teachings.

4. Despite the challenges, what does Abdu'l-Bahá express confidence in?

- Abdu'l-Bahá expresses confidence in the eventual dispersion of dark clouds and the resumption of the effulgent rays of divine guidance.

5. How does Abdu'l-Bahá conclude the passage?

- He concludes with greetings and praise upon the servant.

54

*He is God.*

1 O true believer in the verses of God! It is said that the greatest power in the world is the power of an all-compelling sovereignty and the might of an all-subduing government. However, the utmost that such might and power can achieve is to besiege men and conquer fortified strongholds. Such power and might is only made manifest by the aid of massed troops and conquering armies.

2 Yet, reflect thou on the power and ascendancy of the Greatest Name, on its might and dominion. Ponder how, though alone and forsaken, with none to help or succour Him, He, through the might and power of God and the sovereignty of the Kingdom, subdued the realm of being and conquered the citadels of the hearts of men. He prevailed over the whole world and established His authority over all existence. Single-handedly, He scattered the battalions of the earth; unaided, He defeated the unyielding hosts of darkness. In this day, the evidences of these victories exist in the invisible realm, but in the future they will appear in the visible

plane as well. Then shall all witness the truth of the verse “Behold the confusion that hath befallen the tribes of the defeated!”<sup>91</sup>

3 Travel and explore the deserts—places such as the cities of Šálih and Thamúd, the sand dunes of the tribe of Húd, the cities of Lot and of Sheba, and the settlements of the people of Rass and Midian,<sup>92</sup> and other lands. Behold how they have been, even as a defeated army, dispersed and scattered across these barren wastes.

4 My meaning is that although the Prophets of God and His chosen ones were, in every age and dispensation, alone and forsaken and subjected to relentless attacks by all the peoples and kindreds of the earth, yet their light shone bright and their stars gleamed resplendent, whereas the lamps of worldly power were extinguished, one and all.

5 He is God. O thou sanctified bough of the Tree of Holiness! Though that illustrious offshoot was severed from the garden of the contingent world, he hath been joined to the sacred Lote-Tree and hath grown fresh and verdant in the garden of the Placeless. He hath been nurtured from the wellspring of living waters and stirred by the breezes wafting from the bowers of the Abhá Kingdom. He hath entered the paradise of the Divine Presence, attained the court of the Almighty, and found his habitation in the bountiful realm of the All-Glorious.

6 And now, from the Concourse on high and the realm of effulgent glory, he beholdeth those that are left behind, and raiseth an inner summons for the heart and soul to hear, saying, “O my kindred, water ye all that I have sown, with the hands of faith and certitude. Nurture ye all that I have planted. Ye are the boughs and fruits of this bountiful tree; ye must reveal its true savour and fragrance and bring forth gem-like fruits. Be not dismayed by the winds of tests, nor shaken by the tempests of trials. Let your roots grow deep in the soil of the Covenant and be nourished by the stream of the Testament of the Day-Star of the world. Hold ye fast unto the firm Cord, and seize the hem of the Covenant of the Lord of all worlds, that ye may become as fresh and graceful boughs that yield sweet fruits. This is my counsel and my admonishment unto you.” The glory of God rest upon you.

### **Summary:**

In this impassioned discourse, Abdu'l-Bahá addresses a true believer in the verses of God, extolling the power and ascendancy of the Greatest Name. He contrasts conventional notions of power, which rely on physical force and massed troops, with the divine sovereignty demonstrated by the Greatest Name. Despite being alone and forsaken, the Greatest Name, through the might and power of God, subdued the realm of being and conquered the hearts of

men. Abdu'l-Bahá calls upon the believer to reflect on the evidence of these victories, which are currently unseen but will manifest in the visible world in the future. He urges exploration of desolate lands, where the remnants of defeated civilizations serve as testament to the power of God's chosen ones throughout history. Despite facing relentless attacks, the light of the Prophets and chosen ones always prevailed, while the lamps of worldly power were extinguished. Abdu'l-Bahá then shifts to a tender address to a sanctified bough of the Tree of Holiness, symbolizing a departed soul joined to the sacred Lote-Tree in the realm of the Divine Presence. From this exalted station, the departed soul implores those left behind to nurture the seeds of truth with faith and certitude, to withstand tests and trials, and to hold fast to the Covenant of the Lord of all worlds. Abdu'l-Bahá concludes with blessings upon the listeners.

### **Key Points:**

1. Invocation to a true believer in the verses of God.
2. Contrast between conventional power and the sovereignty of the Greatest Name.
3. Reflection on the victories achieved through divine power.
4. Exhortation to explore desolate lands as evidence of divine triumphs.
5. Assertion of the enduring light of the Prophets and chosen ones despite opposition.
6. Address to a departed soul joined to the sacred Lote-Tree in the realm of the Divine Presence.
7. Imparting counsel and admonishment to those left behind to nurture the seeds of truth.
8. Conclusion with blessings upon the listeners.

### **Questions and Answers:**

1. How does Abdu'l-Bahá contrast conventional power with the sovereignty of the Greatest Name?
  - Abdu'l-Bahá highlights the reliance of conventional power on physical force and massed troops, whereas the sovereignty of the Greatest Name is demonstrated through divine intervention and conquest of hearts.
2. What evidence does Abdu'l-Bahá cite to illustrate the power of God's chosen ones?
  - Abdu'l-Bahá urges reflection on the victories achieved by God's chosen ones, currently unseen but destined to manifest in the visible world in the future.
3. What does Abdu'l-Bahá suggest exploring to witness evidence of divine triumphs?

- Abdu'l-Bahá suggests exploring desolate lands, where the remnants of defeated civilizations serve as testament to the power of God's chosen ones throughout history.

4. How does Abdu'l-Bahá characterize the enduring light of the Prophets and chosen ones despite opposition?

- Abdu'l-Bahá asserts that despite facing relentless attacks, the light of the Prophets and chosen ones always prevailed, while the lamps of worldly power were extinguished.

5. What counsel and admonishment does Abdu'l-Bahá impart to those left behind?

- Abdu'l-Bahá advises them to nurture the seeds of truth with faith and certitude, withstand tests and trials, and hold fast to the Covenant of the Lord of all worlds.

55

*He is the All-Glorious.*

1 O thou who art inebriated by the heavenly cup! In the wilderness of Sinai in the Holy Land, in the hallowed precincts of the vale of Towa, upon the Mystic Mount from which the Light shone upon Moses, the Divine Lote-Tree was raised high, the Burning Bush was unveiled, and the Voice of the one true God was lifted up, raising a tumult in every land and resounding throughout the East and the West. Upon hearing this soul-stirring Voice, every attentive ear responded, “Here am I!” and cried out, from its inmost self, saying, “O our Lord! We have indeed heeded the Voice of Him that called us to the Faith of God—‘Believe ye in your Lord’—and we have believed.”<sup>93</sup> And every soul that was the embodiment of the verse “They are deaf, they are dumb, they are blind and shall return no more” responded, “Lo! This is naught but tales of the Ancients.”<sup>94</sup>

2 Gracious God! Those who claimed to have heard the Voice of God calling from every least bush, rock, and clod of earth—even every blade of grass in the wilderness—rejected that Voice when its most wondrous accents rose from the Tree of Man with utmost eloquence and grace. This is a cause of astonishment, a source of pity. Thus shall the light of “He guideth whomsoever He pleaseth” be kindled and shine forth in the lamp of “He singleth out for His mercy whomsoever He willeth.”<sup>95</sup> This, verily, is the truth.

3 Aid Thou Thy servant, O my Lord, who hath sought the light of Thy oneness from the Lamp of Thy guidance and hearkened to Thy most sweet Voice which hath been raised from Thy most glorious Kingdom. Assist him by the power of Thy triumphant might, and enlighten his heart by Thy Most Great Sign. Gladden his bosom through the sublime

outpourings of Thy grace from Thine exalted Kingdom. Thou art, in truth, the Lord of this world and of the next.

### **Summary:**

In this fervent address, Abdu'l-Bahá speaks to a soul intoxicated by the heavenly cup, evoking imagery of the wilderness of Sinai and the mystical events that unfolded in the Holy Land. He recounts the raising of the Divine Lote-Tree, the unveiling of the Burning Bush, and the resounding Voice of the one true God, echoing throughout the East and the West. Abdu'l-Bahá describes the varied responses to this soul-stirring Voice, with some eagerly heeding the call to faith while others dismiss it as mere tales of the Ancients. He expresses astonishment and pity at the rejection of God's Voice when it emanates from the Tree of Man with eloquence and grace. Abdu'l-Bahá invokes divine assistance for the servant who seeks the light of God's oneness and listens to His sweet Voice from the glorious Kingdom. He entreats God to empower and enlighten the servant's heart, bringing joy through the sublime outpourings of divine grace. Abdu'l-Bahá concludes by affirming God's sovereignty over both this world and the next.

### **Key Points:**

1. Invocation to a soul intoxicated by the heavenly cup.
2. Description of the mystical events in the Holy Land, including the raising of the Divine Lote-Tree and the unveiling of the Burning Bush.
3. Response of souls to the soul-stirring Voice, with some heeding the call to faith and others dismissing it.
4. Expression of astonishment and pity at the rejection of God's Voice from the Tree of Man.
5. Invocation of divine assistance for the servant who seeks the light of God's oneness and listens to His sweet Voice.
6. Entreaty for God's empowerment and enlightenment of the servant's heart.
7. Affirmation of God's sovereignty over both this world and the next.

### **Questions and Answers:**

1. What imagery does Abdu'l-Bahá evoke to describe the mystical events in the Holy Land?  
- Abdu'l-Bahá evokes imagery of the wilderness of Sinai, the hallowed precincts of the vale of Towa, and the Mystic Mount where the Divine Lote-Tree was raised and the Burning Bush unveiled.

2. How does Abdu'l-Bahá characterize the response to God's Voice?

- Abdu'l-Bahá describes a varied response, with some eagerly heeding the call to faith while others dismiss it as mere tales of the Ancients.

3. What does Abdu'l-Bahá express astonishment and pity about?

- Abdu'l-Bahá expresses astonishment and pity at the rejection of God's Voice when it emanates from the Tree of Man with eloquence and grace.

4. For whom does Abdu'l-Bahá invoke divine assistance?

- Abdu'l-Bahá invokes divine assistance for the servant who seeks the light of God's oneness and listens to His sweet Voice.

5. What affirmation does Abdu'l-Bahá make regarding God's sovereignty?

- Abdu'l-Bahá affirms God's sovereignty over both this world and the next.

56

*He is God.*

1 O ye beloved of God! O ye spiritual friends! The Lord of the worlds hath said in the Qur'án: "A noble pattern have ye in God's Apostle."<sup>96</sup> By this is meant that the Prophet of God is the noble example to follow, and that allegiance to that true Exemplar is conducive to salvation in both worlds.

2 The people of Muḥammad were enjoined to follow His precepts in all matters and under all circumstances. Those who saw this straight Path as the true Way followed it and became even as kings in the realm of the righteous and the land of the chosen. And those who sought their own ease and comfort deprived themselves of His manifold bestowals and perished in the uttermost depths of despair. Their days drew to a close, and their joys and pleasures passed away. Their brilliant morn was turned into darkness, and their clear chalice grew clouded and was mixed with woe. Their radiant star paled and faded, and their orb dimmed and set. But those holy souls who walked in His ways beamed like guiding stars upon the Supreme Horizon. They shone with incomparable light from the dawning-place of all aspirations. They ascended the throne of everlasting dominion and were established upon the seat of heavenly delight. Their influence is still manifest and their effulgence still resplendent. Their stars shine bright, and their companions are the angelic hosts of the eternal realm. Lofty is their mansion, and unshakeable their foundation; their light illumineth the world, and their heat setteth the earth ablaze.

3 Now consider: If those souls who walked in the ways of that manifest Light attained such blessings and high rank, imagine what would happen were we to follow in the footsteps



of the Abhá Beauty and the Báb—may my soul be offered up for them that have laid down their lives in Their path!

4 From the early dawn of the revelation of His beauty until the time of His most glorious martyrdom, the Exalted One passed every day and night in the most afflictive tribulations in the path of God. In the end, He made His breast the target of a thousand darts of woe and, with His breast torn to shreds, hastened to the Abhá Kingdom.

5 The Ancient Beauty, the Most Great Name, tasted the poison of every tribulation and quaffed from the brimming cup of every bitter affliction. He made His breast the target of every dart and readied His neck to every sword. He was cast into prison and bound by pitiless chains. He was beset by ferocious foes and attacked with stones hurled by the wicked. He was subjected to chains and fetters and confined to shackles and stocks. He was exiled from His homeland, banished to the lands of the Bulgars and the Serbs, and finally sore tried by grave affliction in the Most Great Prison. In this darksome pit, this prison of tyranny, His blessed days came to an end and He winged His flight to His Kingdom.

6 And now, O faithful friends, O loved ones of that luminous Beauty! Would it be meet and seemly for us to rest even for a moment? Would it be fitting for us to tarry or delay, to seek our own ease or comfort, thereby falling prey to idleness and tests, becoming preoccupied with our own fancies, and setting our affections on friend and stranger alike? Nay, by God! It behoveth us not to rest for a moment, whether by day or by night, nor to defile our pure hearts with the corruption of this world. We must spread a banquet of renunciation; hold a festival of love; lift up our voices and sing the blissful anthems of the Abhá Kingdom to the melody of the harp, the tambour, and the flute; and, hastening with joy and rapture to the field of martyrdom, surrender our lives and our all in His path.

7 O friends, show forth your fidelity! O my loved ones, manifest your steadfastness and your constancy! O ye who invoke His Name, turn ye and hold fast unto Him! O ye who lift up your hearts and implore His aid, cling to Him and walk in His ways! It is incumbent upon every one of us to encourage each other, to exert our utmost endeavour to diffuse His divine fragrances and engage in exalting His Word. We must, at all times, be stirred by the breeze that bloweth from the rose-garden of His loving-kindness, and be perfumed with the fragrances of the mystic flowers of His grace. We must impart zeal and rapture to the hearts of the righteous and bring joy and ecstasy to the souls of the faithful.

8 Praise be to God that the hosts of His all-glorious Kingdom are rushing forth, the stars of His Most Sublime Horizon are shining bright, the banner of guidance is waving aloft, the showers of the clouds of bounty are raining down upon all, the Day-Star of the heaven of

divine knowledge is shining resplendent, the joyful festival of the Kingdom is being held in the utmost delight, and the Morn of divine grace is casting abroad the rays of guidance. The anthem of the Abhá Kingdom can be heard from the celestial Concourse:

O lifeless one, bereft of heart and soul,  
Come to life, come thou to life!

O slumbering one, wrapt in mire and clay,  
Awake, do thou awake!

O drunken one, so dazed and gone astray,  
Clear thy mind, clear thou thy mind!

The world is filled with sweetest musk; the eyes are brightened with His light;  
the heavens now are set ablaze.  
From life and self be freed, be wholly freed!

Now is the time for sacrifice; here waft the breaths of Paradise;  
secrets Divine are all made known.  
Lead thou the lovers nigh, lead them nigh!

The sweetly singing mystic bird, upon a verdant cypress bough,  
imparteth knowledge to the soul;  
Commit His secrets to thy heart! Commit His secrets to thy heart!

### **Summary:**

In this impassioned discourse, Abdu'l-Bahá addresses the beloved of God and spiritual friends, urging them to follow the noble example set by the Prophet of God as outlined in the Qur'án. He highlights the blessings and high rank attained by those who followed His precepts, contrasting them with the fate of those who sought their own ease and comfort. Abdu'l-Bahá emphasizes the afflictions endured by the Exalted One and the Most Great Name in the path of God, from imprisonment and exile to martyrdom. He calls upon the faithful to emulate their steadfastness and constancy, to spread the divine fragrances, and to engage in exalting His Word. Abdu'l-Bahá encourages a life of sacrifice and devotion, urging

the believers to surrender their all in His path and to awaken from spiritual slumber. He concludes with praise for the glorious manifestations of God's Kingdom and an anthem calling the lifeless to awaken, the slumbering to arise, and the drunken to clear their minds and be freed from worldly attachments.

**Key Points:**

1. Invocation to the beloved of God and spiritual friends.
2. Exhortation to follow the noble example set by the Prophet of God.
3. Description of the blessings attained by those who follow His precepts.
4. Contrast between the fate of the faithful and those who seek ease and comfort.
5. Description of the afflictions endured by the Exalted One and the Most Great Name.
6. Call to emulate their steadfastness and constancy, spreading divine fragrances, and exalting His Word.
7. Encouragement to a life of sacrifice and devotion, surrendering all in His path and awakening from spiritual slumber.
8. Conclusion with praise for the manifestations of God's Kingdom and an anthem calling the lifeless to awaken, the slumbering to arise, and the drunken to clear their minds and be freed from worldly attachments.

**Questions and Answers:**

1. What example does Abdu'l-Bahá urge believers to follow, as outlined in the Qur'án?  
- Abdu'l-Bahá urges believers to follow the noble example set by the Prophet of God, as outlined in the Qur'án.
2. How does Abdu'l-Bahá describe the fate of those who followed the Prophet's precepts versus those who sought their own ease and comfort?  
- Abdu'l-Bahá describes those who followed the Prophet's precepts as attaining blessings and high rank, while those who sought their own ease and comfort deprived themselves of divine bestowals and perished in despair.
3. What afflictions does Abdu'l-Bahá highlight endured by the Exalted One and the Most Great Name?  
- Abdu'l-Bahá highlights afflictions such as imprisonment, exile, and martyrdom endured by the Exalted One and the Most Great Name in the path of God.
4. What actions does Abdu'l-Bahá encourage believers to engage in?

- Abdu'l-Bahá encourages believers to spread divine fragrances, exalt His Word, and live lives of sacrifice and devotion, surrendering all in His path and awakening from spiritual slumber.

5. How does Abdu'l-Bahá conclude the discourse?

- Abdu'l-Bahá concludes with praise for the manifestations of God's Kingdom and an anthem calling the lifeless to awaken, the slumbering to arise, and the drunken to clear their minds and be freed from worldly attachments.

57

*He is God.*

1 O thou maidservant of God! Thy letter was received. Thou didst complain that your Assembly is sore perturbed. For every illness there is a remedy, and for every affliction a relief. The swift remedy for this ill that hath befallen the Assembly is to remember and reflect upon the Covenant and Testament: Hath the Blessed Beauty instituted this Covenant and Testament in order to exact obedience from all, or to bring about disobedience? If the latter is intended, then we have nothing to say; but if obedience and compliance are the goal, then wavering will lead to utter loss, and disobedience and waywardness are grievous error.

2 Christ—may my soul be a sacrifice to Him—addressed but one statement to Peter, which He did not even write down in His own hand, and it was this: “Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church.”<sup>97</sup> Although this is one statement—not of such note—and although it was orally reported and not recorded by the Pen of Christ, yet all His Apostles submitted to it humbly and faithfully.

3 Now the Blessed Beauty hath—in His own hand, inscribed by the Pen of the Most High, and in explicit terms—emphatically enjoined allegiance and obedience upon all. So, one can either claim—God forbid—that the Blessed Beauty was ignorant, and that He erred in commanding all to obey the Centre of the Covenant and in explicitly appointing him as the sole Interpreter of the Book, or one must show forth obedience and allegiance. How strange! What answer will they give to the Blessed Beauty in the divine Kingdom? Such a reflection alone should suffice, were one to gaze with the eye of justice. But if there be no justice and words be guided by iniquity, then that is a different matter entirely.

4 In brief, these Covenant-breakers and their opposition are all even as the foam on the sea; it shall not endure, but shall pass away and vanish, while the sea itself, which is the cause of life, shall eternally endure. Consider the time after Christ. Regard how many souls arose to

sow the seeds of mischief and sedition in His Cause but were eventually doomed to loss and disappointment, while the banner of Truth was raised aloft. So it is with this violation of the Covenant. It is like a mirage and shall soon vanish into utter nothingness. Upon thee be greetings and praise.

6 Distribute numerous copies of this letter far and wide.

### **Summary:**

In this heartfelt response, 'Abdu'l-Bahá addresses a maidservant of God who has expressed concern about the perturbation within her Assembly. He offers reassurance and guidance, stating that for every affliction there is a remedy, and the swift remedy for their distress lies in remembering and reflecting upon the Covenant and Testament. He emphasizes the importance of obedience and compliance to the Covenant, highlighting its explicit terms and the unequivocal command for allegiance and obedience from the Blessed Beauty Himself. 'Abdu'l-Bahá draws a comparison to Christ's address to Peter, illustrating how even a single statement, though orally transmitted, was humbly accepted by all His Apostles. He challenges any notion of disobedience or wavering in the face of the Covenant, reminding the believers of the consequences of such actions in the divine Kingdom. 'Abdu'l-Bahá likens the opposition of Covenant-breakers to foam on the sea, transient and destined to vanish, while the Covenant itself is enduring like the sea, the source of life. He encourages the distribution of his letter far and wide to spread its message of steadfastness and fidelity to the Covenant.

### **Key Points:**

1. Reassurance and guidance for the perturbed Assembly, emphasizing the importance of remembering and reflecting upon the Covenant and Testament.
2. Comparison to Christ's address to Peter, highlighting the acceptance and obedience of His Apostles to even a single statement.
3. Emphasis on the explicit terms of the Covenant and the command for allegiance and obedience from the Blessed Beauty Himself.
4. Rejection of disobedience or wavering in the face of the Covenant, with a reminder of the consequences in the divine Kingdom.
5. Likening the opposition of Covenant-breakers to transient foam on the sea, while the Covenant itself is enduring like the sea, the source of life.
6. Encouragement to distribute the letter far and wide to spread its message of steadfastness and fidelity to the Covenant.

## Questions and Answers:

1. What remedy does 'Abdu'l-Bahá offer for the distress within the Assembly?
  - 'Abdu'l-Bahá offers the remedy of remembering and reflecting upon the Covenant and Testament.
2. What comparison does 'Abdu'l-Bahá draw to illustrate the importance of obedience to the Covenant?
  - 'Abdu'l-Bahá draws a comparison to Christ's address to Peter, highlighting the acceptance and obedience of His Apostles to even a single statement.
3. What challenge does 'Abdu'l-Bahá pose regarding the Covenant?
  - 'Abdu'l-Bahá challenges any notion of disobedience or wavering in the face of the Covenant, reminding believers of the consequences in the divine Kingdom.
4. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá characterize the opposition of Covenant-breakers?
  - 'Abdu'l-Bahá likens the opposition of Covenant-breakers to transient foam on the sea, while emphasizing the enduring nature of the Covenant itself.
5. What action does 'Abdu'l-Bahá encourage the recipients of the letter to take?
  - 'Abdu'l-Bahá encourages the distribution of the letter far and wide to spread its message of steadfastness and fidelity to the Covenant.

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### *He is God.*

- 1 O thou maidservant of God! Thy letter was received, and its contents testified to thy firmness in the Covenant. Therefore, it is my hope that thou mayest be assisted under all conditions. In this day the most important of all things is to be firm and steadfast in the Covenant and the Testament, for Bahá'í unity can in no wise be preserved except through the Covenant. If it could be preserved by any other means, the Blessed Beauty would undoubtedly have decreed it.
- 2 In the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, unto which everyone must turn, and in the Kitáb-i-'Ahd, which is the last Tablet revealed by the Blessed Beauty and recorded by the Supreme Pen, He addresseth everyone in clear and explicit terms, bidding first the Aghṣán, then the Afnán and His kindred, and finally all other believers, to turn unto the Centre of the Covenant. There is a verse revealed in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas exhorting all to turn, after His Ascension, to "Him Who hath branched from this Ancient Root". In the Kitáb-i-'Ahd, He testifieth in

unmistakable terms that the object of this verse is none other than the Centre of the Covenant. And in a specific Tablet, the authenticity of which is admitted by everyone, He, in unequivocal language, identifyeth the Centre of Sedition by name, declaring that should he pass out from under the shadow of the Cause in the slightest degree, he would be cut off from the Holy Tree.<sup>98</sup> How could anything be more explicit than this? Now one must either say that the Blessed Beauty erred and led the people astray, for He directed them to obey someone who ought not to have been obeyed, or else say that the least deviation from the Covenant and the Testament entaileth deprivation from the bounties of Him Who is the Luminary of the world. Of these two alternatives, one must be true; there is no third.

3 In sum, Bahá'í unity cannot be preserved save through the Covenant of God. In this day, the dynamic power in the body of the world is the Covenant; if the Covenant be neglected, what other power can move it? The statement reportedly uttered by Christ to Peter, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church", preserved Christian unity for a thousand years. After the lapse of ten centuries, because of political reasons, dissension arose. Now, if these words of Christ preserved the unity of Christendom for a thousand years, it is clear what the effect will be of the Kitáb-i-'Ahd, which was revealed by the Supreme Pen! But certain restive souls—who were at first firm in the Covenant and even wrote epistles, which are still extant, attesting to their firmness and their separation from the violators, and referring to the latter as outcasts from the Threshold of the Almighty—have now, because of personal interests, deviated from the Covenant and followed the people of malice. So it was with Judas Iscariot, who took part in shedding the blood of Christ for the sake of a few pieces of silver. Take heed, then, O ye who are endued with understanding!

4 If thou art firm and steadfast in the Covenant, let thy ties with the Convention be strong and unassailable.<sup>99</sup> Turn away from, and stay clear of, any soul from whom thou dost detect the odour of deviation, that thou mayest be shielded and protected within the shelter of the Covenant, and mayest burn bright as a candle with the light of constancy.

5 I treat all people with kindness and oppose no one. I pray for all, that the glance of the eye of divine favour may be cast upon them. Verily it is the Blessed Beauty Who hath entered into this Covenant and Testament with all, not I. Let them answer to Him, for I raise no objections. My duty is to be kind to every soul; retribution is His and not mine. I show kindness unto all, and the purpose of every word that I write is to set forth the truth and to safeguard the Faith of God, so that Bahá'í unity may be preserved. Should some people attempt to undermine Bahá'í unity, the decision is theirs. Yet, what would they answer should the Blessed Beauty address them in the Abhá Realm in words such as these: "O Friends!

Have I, through My Supreme Pen, and in explicit verses of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, commanded you to show forth obedience or opposition? Have I not enjoined upon the Centre of Sedition himself to submit and to obey? How is it that ye have rejected My explicitly appointed Centre? I have commanded you to turn towards Him; wherefore have ye turned away and undermined Bahá'í unity?"

6 The friends must carefully examine all matters, and do as they deem fit. I have no obligation in this regard. Whatever voice is raised in America, there are always some ambitious and foolish souls who will gather around it for a while. Even in Green Acre, it was witnessed that a person from Malta invited people to starve themselves and received payment in return. Despite this, a number of people gathered around him. They were famished with hunger and lifeless as corpses, yet they rewarded him with money nevertheless!

7 Regarding thy dear brother who hath ascended from this mortal world to the eternal realm, grieve not and be not saddened. That drop hath hastened to the limitless Ocean; that homeless bird hath winged its flight unto the sheltering nest of the Concourse on high. Thou shalt find him in the assemblage of splendours in the Kingdom of mysteries.

7 As to thy dream in which thy brother appeared to thee finely dressed: Know that one's attire is one's adorning, which is the bestowal of the All-Merciful. As to the parcel he had in his hand, this signifieth his benevolent deeds. The purpose of his intent gaze was to make thee understand his message, which is: "Behold the bounty with which I have been favoured! Praise be to God, for I am safe and well; I am attired in the garment of piety and carry the parcel of my deeds in my hand. I am alive, not dead—take heed! I am immortal, not ephemeral—take heed!" The Glory of Glories rest upon thee.

### **Summary:**

In this profound letter, 'Abdu'l-Bahá responds to a maidservant of God who has expressed concern about the firmness and steadfastness of the Covenant within her Assembly. He reaffirms the paramount importance of being firm and unwavering in the Covenant and Testament, emphasizing that Bahá'í unity can only be preserved through the Covenant. 'Abdu'l-Bahá directs attention to the clear and explicit directives found in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas and the Kitáb-i-'Ahd, wherein the believers are commanded to turn to the Centre of the Covenant. He highlights the unequivocal identification of the Centre of Sedition and the consequences of deviating from the Covenant. 'Abdu'l-Bahá urges the believers to maintain strong ties with the Covenant and to shun any deviation, emphasizing the importance of constancy and steadfastness. He asserts his role in treating all with kindness and opposing



none, while reminding the believers of their responsibility to uphold Bahá'í unity. 'Abdu'l-Bahá provides reassurance regarding the ascension of a dear brother and offers interpretation for a dream, conveying the message of the brother's safety and immortal life.

### **Key Points:**

1. Reaffirmation of the importance of firmness and steadfastness in the Covenant.
2. Emphasis on Bahá'í unity preserved through the Covenant, with reference to explicit directives in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas and the Kitáb-i-'Ahd.
3. Warning against deviation from the Covenant and the consequences thereof.
4. Encouragement to maintain strong ties with the Covenant and to shun any deviation.
5. Assertion of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's role in treating all with kindness and opposing none, while reminding believers of their responsibility to uphold Bahá'í unity.
6. Reassurance regarding the ascension of a dear brother and interpretation of a dream symbolizing the brother's safety and immortal life.

### **Questions and Answers:**

1. What is 'Abdu'l-Bahá's response to the maidservant's concern about the firmness of the Covenant within her Assembly?
  - 'Abdu'l-Bahá reaffirms the paramount importance of being firm and steadfast in the Covenant and Testament.
2. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasize the significance of the Covenant in preserving Bahá'í unity?
  - 'Abdu'l-Bahá highlights that Bahá'í unity can only be preserved through the Covenant, as explicitly commanded in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas and the Kitáb-i-'Ahd.
3. What warning does 'Abdu'l-Bahá give regarding deviation from the Covenant?
  - 'Abdu'l-Bahá warns of the consequences of deviating from the Covenant and identifies the Centre of Sedition, stressing the importance of obedience to the Covenant.
4. What encouragement does 'Abdu'l-Bahá offer to the believers?
  - 'Abdu'l-Bahá encourages the believers to maintain strong ties with the Covenant and to shun any deviation, emphasizing the importance of constancy and steadfastness.
5. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá characterize his approach to dealing with others?
  - 'Abdu'l-Bahá asserts his role in treating all with kindness and opposing none, while reminding believers of their responsibility to uphold Bahá'í unity.

6. What reassurance and interpretation does 'Abdu'l-Bahá provide regarding the ascension of a dear brother?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá reassures the recipient not to grieve and interprets a dream symbolizing the safety and immortal life of the ascended brother.

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*He is God.*

- 1 O thou seeker after Truth! The statement of the Blessed Beauty which thou hast quoted doth supplement the verse “It is incumbent upon the Aghṣán, the Afnán and My kindred to turn, one and all, their faces towards the Most Mighty Branch. Consider that which We have revealed in Our Most Holy Book: ‘When the ocean of My presence hath ebbed and the Book of My Revelation is ended, turn your faces towards Him Whom God hath purposed, Who hath branched from this Ancient Root.’ The object of this sacred verse is none other than the Most Mighty Branch [‘Abdu’l-Bahá]. Thus have We graciously revealed unto you Our potent Will, and I am verily the Gracious, the All-Bountiful.”
- 2 Should one, without mentioning the first part of this verse, transcribe only the second, an uninformed person would fall prey to doubt and misgiving. Being regarded as a Branch, according to the explicit statement of the Blessed Beauty, is conditional upon turning towards and obeying the Centre of the Covenant and the Point of the Testament. Should, however, a Branch turn away, he shall grievously fall. As clearly stated with reference to Mírzá Muḥammad-‘Alí, should he for a moment pass out from under the shadow of the Cause, he shall become a fallen creature. This explicit text, mentioning him by name and title, is from the Ancient Beauty, and Mírzá Muḥammad-‘Alí himself doth accept and acknowledge its veracity. What deviation can be more severe than breaking the Covenant! Yea, to be regarded as a Branch is a divine bestowal, but one that is conditioned upon steadfastness in the Covenant. Violation of the Covenant would cause the Branch to fall.
- 3 For this reason, it hath been said in the fifteenth chapter of the Gospel of John: “I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.” And further it is stated: “I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.”

4 Likewise, in the eighth chapter of the Gospel of John, it is recorded: “They answered him, We be Abraham’s seed, and were never in bondage to any man.” It is then stated in the thirty-ninth verse of that same chapter: “They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham’s children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me.”

5 In brief, according to the explicit Holy Writ, any soul, even if of the highest rank and numbered among the Aghsán, shall be brought to naught as soon as he violateth the Covenant. This is explicit in the text where, in clear reference to Mírzá Muḥammad-‘Alí, even mentioning him by name and title, it is stated that should he for a moment pass out from under the shadow of the Cause, he shall be a fallen creature. And ponder how explicitly the same is stated in the Gospel.

6 This man hath not only broken the Covenant; he hath also threatened the ruin of the Cause of God throughout all regions and brought humiliation upon the Faith of God. He was even intent upon shedding the blood of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, the documented proof of which is at hand. Furthermore, he falsified the Words of the Blessed Beauty. Obtain a copy of the declaration written by Áqá Mírzá Badí‘u’lláh, and read it to see how he hath falsified the Book of God. The evidence of this, too, is at hand. As for thy second letter, thou shalt receive its reply in the world of dreams, and it is lengthy. Upon thee be greetings and praise.

### **Summary:**

In this letter, 'Abdu'l-Bahá addresses a seeker after Truth and provides clarification on the significance of adherence to the Covenant. He begins by quoting a statement from the Blessed Beauty emphasizing the importance of turning towards the Most Mighty Branch, which refers to 'Abdu'l-Bahá. 'Abdu'l-Bahá underscores the conditionality of being regarded as a Branch upon steadfastness in the Covenant and obedience to the Centre of the Covenant. He warns of the severe consequences of deviating from the Covenant, citing the explicit text regarding Mírzá Muḥammad-‘Alí and his acceptance of the Covenant's veracity. Drawing parallels from the Gospel of John, 'Abdu'l-Bahá illustrates the consequences of not abiding in the Covenant through the analogy of the vine and its branches. He emphasizes that violating the Covenant leads to spiritual downfall, regardless of one's rank or lineage. 'Abdu'l-Bahá condemns Mírzá Muḥammad-‘Alí's actions, including his threats against 'Abdu'l-Bahá and his falsification of the Words of the Blessed Beauty. The letter concludes with 'Abdu'l-Bahá promising a lengthy reply to the seeker's second letter in the realm of dreams.

## **Key Points:**

1. Introduction: 'Abdu'l-Bahá addresses a seeker after Truth and quotes a statement from the Blessed Beauty regarding the importance of the Covenant.
2. Conditionality of being regarded as a Branch: 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasizes the necessity of steadfastness in the Covenant and obedience to the Centre of the Covenant.
3. Consequences of deviating from the Covenant: 'Abdu'l-Bahá warns of the severe spiritual consequences, citing the explicit text regarding Mírzá Muḥammad-‘Alí.
4. Illustration from the Gospel of John: 'Abdu'l-Bahá draws parallels to the vine and its branches, emphasizing the importance of abiding in the Covenant.
5. Severe consequences of violating the Covenant: 'Abdu'l-Bahá highlights the spiritual downfall that results from deviating from the Covenant, regardless of one's rank.
6. Condemnation of Mírzá Muḥammad-‘Alí's actions: 'Abdu'l-Bahá denounces Mírzá Muḥammad-‘Alí's threats against 'Abdu'l-Bahá and his falsification of the Words of the Blessed Beauty.
7. Conclusion: 'Abdu'l-Bahá promises a lengthy reply to the seeker's second letter in the realm of dreams.

## **Questions and Answers:**

1. What clarification does 'Abdu'l-Bahá provide regarding the significance of adherence to the Covenant?
  - 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasizes the conditionality of being regarded as a Branch upon steadfastness in the Covenant and obedience to the Centre of the Covenant.
2. What warning does 'Abdu'l-Bahá give regarding deviating from the Covenant?
  - 'Abdu'l-Bahá warns of the severe spiritual consequences of deviating from the Covenant, citing the explicit text regarding Mírzá Muḥammad-‘Alí as an example.
3. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá illustrate the consequences of not abiding in the Covenant?
  - 'Abdu'l-Bahá draws parallels from the Gospel of John, using the analogy of the vine and its branches to emphasize the importance of abiding in the Covenant.
4. What condemnation does 'Abdu'l-Bahá express towards Mírzá Muḥammad-‘Alí's actions?
  - 'Abdu'l-Bahá denounces Mírzá Muḥammad-‘Alí's threats against 'Abdu'l-Bahá and his falsification of the Words of the Blessed Beauty.
5. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá conclude the letter?
  - 'Abdu'l-Bahá promises a lengthy reply to the seeker's second letter in the realm of dreams.

*He is God.*

- 1 O thou servant of Bahá! What shall my pen recount? What shall I think? From the earliest days of the Cause, the Ancient Beauty, the Most Great Name—may my life be offered up for His loved ones—laid the foundation of the Covenant and the Testament upon a firm, fixed, and impregnable base, and made this lofty edifice of the Covenant the palace of the All-Merciful.
- 2 Whoso judgeth with but a little fairness will recognize that ever since the dawn of the world, until this heavenly Dispensation, no such Covenant and Testament hath ever before been established in the heights of the realms above or in the midmost heart of the Abhá Kingdom. From the earliest appearance of the resplendent Fire upon Sinai, until the setting of the luminous Day-Star of the Praised Beauty, no Sacred Text was revealed but that, whether explicitly or implicitly, it made mention of this Eternal Covenant and Ancient Testament, praised and commended those who hold fast unto it, and censured and admonished those who waver and violate it.
- 3 Then Bahá'u'lláh, with His own Pen, and tracing in His own hand glorious words across the snow-white pages, made a Covenant with all created things, visible and invisible, and called it “The Book of My Covenant”, and set down in it these words: “The Will of the divine Testator is this ...”<sup>100</sup> One must be fair in judgement! Consider how carefully the Blessed Beauty proceeded. Even in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, which hath abrogated all other sacred Books, He hath stated this theme in lucid and explicit language and not through allusion or symbolic terms, and hath expounded it, in numerous instances, with the utmost authority and power. Wherefore, shame be upon the foolish people because of whom we have been made the target of idle fancies and vain imaginings, nay, even been pierced by their spears and arrows of doubts.
- 4 But know this: The lamp of God shall be lit, and His brilliant star shall shine upon the assemblage of humanity. His ocean shall surge, and the leviathan of the heavenly sea shall roar. The songbird of the rose-garden of Bahá shall warble with blissful rapture, and the nightingale of the bower of the Lord shall chant its eternal song. Thereupon shall the hearing ear, attuned to the song of the nightingale, hearken to the divine call, proclaiming: “Sanctified be the Lord! This is the songster of My paradise! This is the nightingale of My rose-garden! This is the candle of My worlds!” The glory of God rest upon thee.

## **Summary**

In this letter, 'Abdu'l-Bahá reflects on the establishment of the Covenant and Testament by Bahá'u'lláh, emphasizing its unique and unparalleled nature in the history of religion. He begins by acknowledging the profound significance of the Covenant, which Bahá'u'lláh laid upon a firm and impregnable base, making it the palace of the All-Merciful. 'Abdu'l-Bahá asserts that no such Covenant and Testament existed before in the realms above or in the Abhá Kingdom. He highlights the continuity of the Covenant throughout religious history, from the appearance of the resplendent Fire upon Sinai to the setting of the Day-Star of the Praised Beauty. Bahá'u'lláh, with His own Pen, established the Covenant and Testament with all created things, visible and invisible, referred to as "The Book of My Covenant." 'Abdu'l-Bahá calls for fairness in judgment, pointing out the explicit language used by Bahá'u'lláh in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas to emphasize the Covenant's importance. He expresses dismay at those who cast doubts and spread idle fancies about the Covenant. 'Abdu'l-Bahá concludes with a vision of the future, describing the eventual manifestation of the divine call and the glory of God shining upon humanity.

## **Key Points:**

1. Introduction: 'Abdu'l-Bahá reflects on the establishment of the Covenant and Testament by Bahá'u'lláh, emphasizing its significance.
2. Uniqueness of the Covenant: 'Abdu'l-Bahá asserts that no such Covenant existed before and highlights its continuity throughout religious history.
3. Establishment of the Covenant: 'Abdu'l-Bahá describes how Bahá'u'lláh established the Covenant with all created things, visible and invisible.
4. Call for fairness in judgment: 'Abdu'l-Bahá urges fairness in judgment and highlights the explicit language used by Bahá'u'lláh to emphasize the Covenant's importance.
5. Dismay at doubt and idle fancies: 'Abdu'l-Bahá expresses dismay at those who cast doubts and spread idle fancies about the Covenant.
6. Vision of the future: 'Abdu'l-Bahá describes a vision of the future, where the glory of God shines upon humanity.

## **Questions and Answers:**

1. What does 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasize regarding the establishment of the Covenant and Testament by Bahá'u'lláh?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasizes its significance, uniqueness, and continuity throughout religious history.

2. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá describe the language used by Bahá'u'lláh to emphasize the Covenant's importance?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá points out that Bahá'u'lláh used explicit language in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas to emphasize the Covenant's importance.

3. What does 'Abdu'l-Bahá express dismay about in relation to the Covenant?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá expresses dismay at those who cast doubts and spread idle fancies about the Covenant.

4. What vision of the future does 'Abdu'l-Bahá describe?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá describes a future where the glory of God shines upon humanity, and the divine call is heard.

5. What is the overarching message conveyed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in this letter?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá underscores the significance and continuity of the Covenant established by Bahá'u'lláh and calls for fairness in judgment and steadfastness in its adherence.

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*He is God.*

1 O thou who art steadfast in the Covenant! Thy letter was received and its contents noted. Speak in accordance with the instructions written herein, and utter not even one word more: Abraham, on Him be peace, made a covenant concerning Moses and gave the glad-tidings of His coming. Moses made a covenant concerning the promised Christ, and announced the good news of His advent to the world. Christ made a covenant concerning the Paraclete and gave the tidings of His coming. The Prophet Muḥammad made a covenant concerning the Báb, and the Báb was the One promised by Muḥammad, for Muḥammad gave the tidings of His coming. The Báb made a covenant concerning the Blessed Beauty, Bahá'u'lláh, and gave the glad-tidings of His coming for the Blessed Beauty was the One promised by the Báb. Bahá'u'lláh made a covenant concerning a Promised One Who will become manifest after one thousand or thousands of years. That Manifestation is Bahá'u'lláh's Promised One, and will appear after a thousand or thousands of years. He, moreover, with His Supreme Pen, entered into a great Covenant and Testament with all the Bahá'is whereby they were all commanded to follow the Centre of the Covenant after His ascension, and depart not, even to a hair's breadth, from obeying Him.

2 In the Most Holy Book, there are two instances in which He hath explicitly issued a binding command and appointed, in clear and unequivocal language, the Interpreter of His Word. In all His heavenly Tablets—especially in the Tablet of the Branch, the entire substance of which referreth to the servitude of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, that is, the Servant of Bahá—the Supreme Pen hath revealed all that is needed. And since ‘Abdu’l-Bahá is the Interpreter of His Word, he sayeth that this Tablet of the Branch, that is, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, referreth to the servitude of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, and naught else.

3 In brief, among the characteristics of this Dispensation which were not present in previous Dispensations, one is this: Bahá’u’lláh hath left no room for discord. For in His own blessed Day and by His Supreme Pen, He established a Covenant and Testament, appointed the Centre towards whom all must turn, explicitly specified the Interpreter of His Word, and closed the doors to false interpretations.

4 It behoveth everyone to render thanks unto God for having granted such assurance in this blessed Dispensation, and for having left no cause for wavering. Therefore, all must show forth obedience and submissiveness towards that Centre and turn their entire attention unto him. As to thy speech, it must be confined to this and in no wise exceed it, so that it may foster harmony and ward off discord. The Glory of Glories rest upon thee.

In this letter, 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasizes the importance of steadfastness in the Covenant and obedience to its provisions. He begins by outlining the chain of divine covenants established throughout religious history, from Abraham to Bahá’u’lláh. Each prophet made a covenant concerning the next divine manifestation, thereby paving the way for the progressive revelation of God's will. Bahá’u’lláh, in turn, made a covenant concerning a Promised One to appear in the distant future. Moreover, Bahá’u’lláh entered into a covenant with all Bahá’ís, commanding them to follow the Centre of the Covenant, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, after His ascension. 'Abdu'l-Bahá asserts that Bahá’u’lláh's writings explicitly appoint him as the Interpreter of His Word, particularly emphasizing the Tablet of the Branch, which refers to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's servitude. He highlights the unique characteristic of Bahá’u’lláh's Dispensation, which leaves no room for discord, as it establishes clear provisions and closes the doors to false interpretations through the Covenant and Testament. 'Abdu'l-Bahá concludes by urging obedience and submissiveness to the Centre of the Covenant, emphasizing the importance of fostering harmony and warding off discord.

Outline:



1. Introduction: 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasizes the importance of steadfastness in the Covenant and obedience to its provisions.
2. Chain of Divine Covenants: 'Abdu'l-Bahá outlines the succession of covenants established throughout religious history, from Abraham to Bahá'u'lláh.
3. Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant: 'Abdu'l-Bahá explains Bahá'u'lláh's covenant with all Bahá'ís, commanding them to follow the Centre of the Covenant, 'Abdu'l-Bahá.
4. Appointment of 'Abdu'l-Bahá: 'Abdu'l-Bahá asserts that Bahá'u'lláh's writings explicitly appoint him as the Interpreter of His Word, particularly emphasizing the Tablet of the Branch.
5. Unique Characteristic of Bahá'u'lláh's Dispensation: 'Abdu'l-Bahá highlights the absence of discord in Bahá'u'lláh's Dispensation due to the clarity and specificity of its provisions.
6. Call to Obedience: 'Abdu'l-Bahá urges obedience and submissiveness to the Centre of the Covenant, emphasizing the importance of fostering harmony and warding off discord.

#### Questions and Answers:

1. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá describe the chain of divine covenants established throughout religious history?
  - 'Abdu'l-Bahá describes how each prophet made a covenant concerning the next divine manifestation, thereby paving the way for the progressive revelation of God's will.
2. What commandment did Bahá'u'lláh issue concerning obedience to the Centre of the Covenant?
  - Bahá'u'lláh commanded all Bahá'ís to follow the Centre of the Covenant, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, after His ascension.
3. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá assert his appointment as the Interpreter of Bahá'u'lláh's Word?
  - 'Abdu'l-Bahá points to Bahá'u'lláh's writings, particularly the Tablet of the Branch, which explicitly appoint him as the Interpreter of His Word.
4. What unique characteristic of Bahá'u'lláh's Dispensation does 'Abdu'l-Bahá highlight?
  - 'Abdu'l-Bahá highlights the absence of discord in Bahá'u'lláh's Dispensation due to the clarity and specificity of its provisions.
5. What is the overarching message conveyed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in this letter?
  - 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasizes the importance of obedience to the Covenant and the Centre of the Covenant, urging Bahá'ís to foster harmony and unity while warding off discord.

*He is the All-Glorious.*

1 O thou who art enraptured by the sweet savours of God! Make haste, make haste towards the forgiveness and mercy of thy Lord! Press on, press on unto the wellspring of grace and compassion! Rush forth, rush forth to the fountainhead of bounty and favour! That is, arise to exalt the Word of God, to diffuse the sweet savours of God, to strive to spread the light of God, to kindle the fire of the love of God, to hold fast unto the Covenant and Testament of God, and to stand firm, by His gracious aid, in the Cause of God. It behoveth one such as thee to be even as a banner raised above all other banners, which waveth in the breezes of holiness wafting from the meads of the loving-kindness of thine Ancient Lord, and is set astir by the sweet-smelling fragrances that are shed abroad from the Abhá Kingdom. Glorified be my Lord, the Most High!

2 Thy letter, which testified to the firmness and constancy of the friends of God in the Covenant and the Testament, was perused and read out.

3 It is clear and evident that in every cycle and dispensation an implicit statement was made in order to safeguard the Word of Oneness, to preserve the Cause of God from harm, and to ensure the unity of all that are gathered beneath the shadow of the Divine Tree, so that the impregnable stronghold of His Faith might remain safe and secure under the shadow of a single Word. While statements such as “Whosoever hath Me as his Master ...”<sup>101</sup> were indeed allusions and not explicit, in this Most Great Dispensation a Divine Covenant hath been established, and the Book of the Covenant hath been revealed by the Most Exalted Pen. Mention hath been made of this ancient Covenant and mighty Testament in all the sacred Tablets and Scriptures, so that the Word of Oneness might be revealed and made manifest in all degrees and stations in the form of singleness, the light of Divine Unity might illumine the East and the West of the world of being, and all the peoples of the earth might gather round the same wellspring and be unified upon the same Path.

4 And since thou art well informed of the mysteries enshrined in the Cause of God, thou must be vigilant at all times, lest the tempests of trials overtake feeble souls from any side, or the debilitating influence of vain interpretations and doubts cause the believers to waver. The glory of God rest upon thee.

**Summary**

In this letter, 'Abdu'l-Bahá exhorts the recipient to hasten towards the forgiveness and mercy of God and to press on towards the wellspring of grace and compassion by exalting the Word of God and standing firm in His Cause. He praises the recipient for their firmness and constancy in the Covenant and Testament of God. 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasizes the importance of the Covenant in preserving the unity of the Faith and safeguarding it from harm. He contrasts the implicit statements made in previous dispensations with the explicit establishment of the Covenant in the Most Great Dispensation, symbolized by the revelation of the Book of the Covenant by Bahá'u'lláh. 'Abdu'l-Bahá underscores the necessity for vigilance to protect the believers from the trials and doubts that may arise, urging them to remain steadfast in the face of challenges.

### **Key Points:**

1. Introduction: 'Abdu'l-Bahá urges the recipient to hasten towards God's forgiveness and mercy and to exalt His Word.
2. Commendation: 'Abdu'l-Bahá praises the recipient for their firmness and constancy in the Covenant and Testament of God.
3. Importance of the Covenant: 'Abdu'l-Bahá explains the significance of the Covenant in preserving the unity of the Faith and safeguarding it from harm.
4. Contrast with Previous Dispensations: 'Abdu'l-Bahá contrasts the implicit statements made in previous dispensations with the explicit establishment of the Covenant in the Most Great Dispensation.
5. Call to Vigilance: 'Abdu'l-Bahá urges the recipient to remain vigilant and steadfast in the face of trials and doubts that may arise.

### **Questions and Answers:**

1. What does 'Abdu'l-Bahá urge the recipient to do in the letter?
  - 'Abdu'l-Bahá urges the recipient to hasten towards the forgiveness and mercy of God and to exalt His Word by spreading the light of His teachings and standing firm in His Cause.
2. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá praise the recipient?
  - 'Abdu'l-Bahá commends the recipient for their firmness and constancy in the Covenant and Testament of God.
3. What is the significance of the Covenant according to 'Abdu'l-Bahá?
  - 'Abdu'l-Bahá explains that the Covenant is crucial for preserving the unity of the Faith and safeguarding it from harm.

4. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá contrast the Most Great Dispensation with previous dispensations?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá contrasts the explicit establishment of the Covenant in the Most Great Dispensation with the implicit statements made in previous dispensations.

5. What does 'Abdu'l-Bahá advise the recipient to do regarding trials and doubts?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá advises the recipient to remain vigilant and steadfast in the face of trials and doubts, ensuring that the believers are not swayed or weakened.

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*He is God.*

1 O my God! Verily, Thou hast created the universe and fashioned the human soul. Thou hast brought forth the entire creation and hast raised up all beings by the influence of Thine all-penetrating might. The Sun of the world of existence rose, with manifest splendour, above the horizon of the All-Praised. Ages passed and cycles rolled away, until the heaven of knowledge was again raised up and the earth of certitude was outstretched unto all, the ocean of bounty surged and the Luminary of the world shone resplendent, the stars of the world of creation gleamed brightly, the breeze of the All-Merciful wafted, and the full and brimming clouds of Thy grace and generosity rained down.

2 Holy realities—recipients of grace and light from the Day-Star of Truth—were raised up. They cast away their tattered garments, and through Thy bounty, O my All-Glorious Lord, they donned the robe of renewal instead. For Thou didst single them out to shed the splendours of Thy light, to set forth Thy commandments, to unveil Thy mysteries, to spread abroad Thy signs, to exalt Thy Word, to partake of Thine ocean, and to draw light from the fire of Thy oneness. These holy realities became the treasuries of Thy knowledge, the manifestations of Thy grace, the repositories of Thy mystery, the daysprings of Thine inspiration, and the sources of Thy bounteousness. Thereupon did the tyranny of every envious one, the wrath of every contumacious one, and the bitter spite of every ungrateful one wax ever more severe against them. They all rose against Thy loved ones, whose only crime was detachment from all else except Thee, whose only misdeed was submission unto Thy Cause, and whose only fault was steadfastness in Thy Covenant. And this, verily, is what doth gladden the hearts of the faithful and devour the souls of the wicked. Verily, that which is light for the sincere ones is a raging fire for the adversaries of God.

3 Thou hast, O my Lord, fashioned immutable realities in the world of existence and created beings of diverse natures. Thou hast desired naught for that noble species—the reality

of the human soul—save that it should attain unto the most exalted station, perceive the signs, discover the testimonies, hoist the ensigns of Thy remembrance before all creation, lift up its voice and proclaim Thy name in the world of being, and diffuse the sweet savours of Thy holiness in this nether world—all this, so that its innermost being might mirror forth and reflect the image of the Concourse on high. Yet alas, souls remained heedless, and deprived themselves of the greatest bounty which Thou didst ordain in Thy realm. They bartered away the Joseph of Thy remembrance for the most paltry of prices, and stained his garment with the blood of vain imaginings. They repudiated Thy Covenant, cavilled at Thy Beauty, violated Thine honour, debased Thy Word, denied Thy wisdom, and hurled their calumnies upon Thy Countenance, all the while thinking themselves to be of them that are guided aright.

4 I implore Thee, O Lord my God, by Thy mercy, which is the source of all created things and the fountainhead of the entire universe, to lift the veils and bestow Thine abundant favours. Root out every trace of disloyalty, graciously aid all to be faithful, and grant that they may taste the sweetness of love and devotion, so that none may remain save those who bow down in adoration before Thee, and that darkness may vanish and pass away in every land. Thou art, verily, the Helper, the Almighty, the All-Glorious, the All-Bountiful.

5 O loved ones of God! The lamp of the Covenant is the light of the world, and its reality the gift of splendour; the star of the Testament is a shining moon, and the words traced by the Pen of the Most High a limitless ocean. The Lord, the All-Glorified, hath, beneath the shade of the Tree of Anísá (Tree of Life), made a new Covenant and established a great Testament. He hath summoned everyone to the loving embrace of His Beauty and announced unto all the revelation of His manifest verses. He hath subverted the foundations of discord and raised the edifice of divine favour. He hath kindled the light of guidance and, through the grace of the Abhá Kingdom, turned the world into a garden of delights. He hath made manifest the Eternal Covenant and hath appeared, cup in hand, at the banquet of Revelation. He hath raised a mighty call and enabled every mindful soul to hear the celestial strains of the Covenant, so that the malicious might not breach the impregnable stronghold of the Cause or the ignorant taint its soft-flowing waters with the mire of idle fancies. He hath raised His summons in the midmost heart of the world and lifted the shrill voice of the Most Sublime Pen. In the East and the West, all ears have hearkened to the sweet accents of the Holy Spirit and discovered the purport of the Covenant and Testament.

6 Notwithstanding such clear, comprehensive, and explicit statements, certain individuals have begun to utter their own interpretations and have misconstrued the meanings after their

own selfish passions and desires. They have defiled those perspicuous truths with vain and feeble imaginings and made His explicit command subject to unseemly conditions. What ignorance is this and what folly! What waywardness and what foolishness! They shut their eyes to the manifest Light and cling to the creeping things of the earth. They seek not the morn of guidance but abide in the darkness of faithlessness. They read not the clear and conclusive verses but spread feeble and vain interpretations. “Leave them to entertain themselves with their cavillings.”<sup>102</sup> And abandon them to wander distraught in their drunken stupor.<sup>103</sup> They tell lies and falsehoods, tread the path of error, and see not that they are indeed drowning in the ocean of vain imaginings. And they shall soon know what lot awaiteth them!

7 O ye loved ones of God! Consider: Hath such a Covenant been established in any previous Dispensation, age, period, or century? Hath such a Testament, set down by the Pen of the Most High, ever been witnessed? No, by God! How will these people answer the Almighty Lord in the unseen realm? How would they reply if the Abhá Beloved should say: “O deprived ones! Did ye not hear the Call of the Testament? Did ye not see the clear words of the Book of the Covenant? Did ye not understand its explicit text? How then could ye deviate and cavil? Was the designated Interpreter not explicitly appointed in the Book? Was the Centre of the Covenant not plainly visible? Even if ye could not keep faith, why such treachery? Even if ye could not acknowledge him, why such haughtiness? Even if ye could not bear him allegiance, why such injury? Ye stabbed him with swords and daggers and aided every wicked doer. Ye hurled darts and arrows, and aimed spears and lances at him. No harm remained that ye did not inflict upon him, no slander that ye did not direct towards him, and no false tale that ye did not make the pivot of your complaints. Ye claimed light to be darkness and regarded guidance as error. Ye made a plaything of the Ancient Covenant, and considered the clear text of the Testament to be delirious ravings. The robe of the Joseph of the all-glorious and unseen Kingdom is dyed with blood, the raiment of the Ancient Beauty stained crimson.”

8 O beloved of the Lord! Plaintive cries are raised in the Concourse on high, and ceaseless moans and lamentations are the companions of the denizens of the Abhá Kingdom. All the peoples of the world are launching their assaults; all its nations and kindreds are hostile and contending. And in the midst of this field of tribulations standeth ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, the target of every dart of tyranny. What is become of fairness and justice? Whither is gone the sense of decency and shame? Instead of being a healing salve for the wounds inflicted by the darts of the enemies, ye have aimed your knives at my throat. Instead of shielding me from the shafts

of tyranny hurled by the nations of the world, ye have at every moment stabbed me and dealt a heavy blow upon my feeble body. Wretched is that which your hands have wrought! Woe betide you for having forsaken unity, chosen discord, broken the Covenant, and caused adversities to wax ever more severe. Verily will ye be driven to your Lord!<sup>104</sup>

9 Briefly then, O ye that stand fast in the Covenant! Render praise and thanksgiving to the Lord that ye abide beneath the canopy of the Covenant and are sheltered within the stronghold of the care and protection of the Day-Star of the world. The day is approaching when ye shall witness the violators of the Covenant retreating to the holes of disbelief and doubt, and creeping, worm-like, for shelter in the uttermost depths of the earth. On that day will the faithful rejoice.

10 Furthermore, as His Majesty the righteous King is just and generous, and a helper of all kindreds and tribes, and as the Prime Minister promoteth the progress of the nation and is a sincere and trustworthy well-wisher of the throne, it is therefore our bounden duty to arise, with sincerity and goodwill, to fulfil that which is required, to show gratitude for such a gift. Perchance that noble country may be illumined, and that land may become the focal centre of the bestowals of the merciful Lord.

### **Summary:**

In this letter, 'Abdu'l-Bahá begins by praising and glorifying God for His creation and the manifestation of His bounty and grace upon the world. He reflects on the emergence of holy realities, chosen by God to spread His light and commandments, and describes the opposition and persecution they faced from the adversaries of the Faith. 'Abdu'l-Bahá laments the heedlessness of souls who turned away from God's Covenant and chose to follow their own desires, thereby missing out on the greatest bounty ordained for them. He implores God to root out disloyalty and grant love and devotion to all believers, so that darkness may be dispelled from every land. 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasizes the significance of the Covenant and Testament established by Bahá'u'lláh, contrasting the clarity of these divine texts with the misconceptions and falsehoods spread by those who seek to undermine them. He warns of the consequences awaiting those who violate the Covenant and reject the appointed Interpreter. Despite the trials and tribulations faced by the faithful, 'Abdu'l-Bahá reassures them of the eventual triumph of the Covenant and the downfall of its violators. He calls upon the believers to uphold justice, unity, and gratitude, recognizing the potential for divine blessings to be bestowed upon their nation.

**Key Points:**

1. Introduction: 'Abdu'l-Bahá praises God for His creation and the manifestation of His grace upon the world.
2. Emergence of Holy Realities: Reflecting on the persecution faced by the chosen ones of God and their steadfastness in the face of adversity.
3. Lamentation for Heedless Souls: 'Abdu'l-Bahá laments the rejection of God's Covenant by those who traded away its bounty for vain imaginings.
4. Imploring Divine Assistance: 'Abdu'l-Bahá implores God to root out disloyalty and grant love and devotion to the believers.
5. Significance of the Covenant: 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasizes the clarity and importance of the Covenant and Testament established by Bahá'u'lláh.
6. Warning against Violation: 'Abdu'l-Bahá warns of the consequences awaiting those who violate the Covenant and reject its appointed Interpreter.
7. Reassurance of Triumph: Despite trials, 'Abdu'l-Bahá reassures the faithful of the eventual triumph of the Covenant and the downfall of its violators.
8. Call to Uphold Justice and Unity: 'Abdu'l-Bahá calls upon the believers to uphold justice, unity, and gratitude in the face of adversity.
9. Vision for the Future: 'Abdu'l-Bahá envisions the potential for divine blessings to be bestowed upon their nation if justice and goodwill prevail.

**Questions and Answers:**

1. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá praise God in the letter?
  - 'Abdu'l-Bahá praises God for His creation and the manifestation of His grace upon the world.
2. What lamentation does 'Abdu'l-Bahá express in the letter?
  - 'Abdu'l-Bahá laments the rejection of God's Covenant by those who traded away its bounty for vain imaginings.
3. What warning does 'Abdu'l-Bahá issue regarding the Covenant?
  - 'Abdu'l-Bahá warns of the consequences awaiting those who violate the Covenant and reject its appointed Interpreter.
4. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá reassure the faithful?
  - Despite trials, 'Abdu'l-Bahá reassures the faithful of the eventual triumph of the Covenant and the downfall of its violators.
5. What vision does 'Abdu'l-Bahá present for the future?



- 'Abdu'l-Bahá envisions the potential for divine blessings to be bestowed upon their nation if justice and goodwill prevail.

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*He is God.*

1 O friend! It is a long time since any news hath been received from thee. Although, earlier, a letter arrived in which thou hadst asked a question, 'Abdu'l-Bahá hath been so deeply immersed in a sea of correspondence from every side that even if five scribes were at hand, the work could not be managed. All communication hath been severed for the past four or five years, and there hath thus been a slight wavering among some of the friends, some lapse in the diffusion of the divine fragrances, and certain idle thoughts in the minds of some. Therefore, continual communication must now be maintained with every region for some time, to make amends for the past interruption. And since thy question required a lengthy answer, the reply hath been delayed. Rest thou assured that, as soon as there is an opportunity, it will be written at once. Yet since I am drowned in an ocean of letters these days, and it is imperative that I reply to the essential ones first, thou must wait until an opportunity doth arise. Thou art very dear to me, and I wish to respond to thy request....

2 Thou must be exceedingly alert, and shield the souls from veiled suggestions and secret whisperings. Enable them to be steadfast in the Covenant according to the explicit divine Text, which is a conclusive evidence of the Truth, so that Bahá'í unity may be preserved. Otherwise, a new sect would emerge each day, utter division would result, and the Cause of God would be destroyed—nay, exterminated. Were there any other power that could safeguard Bahá'í unity, I would have summoned everyone unto it. But ponder and reflect: Is it possible for the unity of the Faith to be protected by any other power than that of the Covenant? This is why I admonish everyone to cleave unto the Covenant—purely to safeguard Bahá'í unity.

3 Were one to consider the events of the previous cycles, the attempts to break the Covenant in this Dispensation are of no importance whatsoever. Sometime after Christ, Arius, the Patriarch of Alexandria, founded a new sect. He was an orator, articulate of speech and a very audacious and powerful person who succeeded in bringing one and a half million people under his influence. He even secured the allegiance of the Emperor Constantine. But since he deviated from the Covenant of Christ, at the end he faded away and perished. This Covenant was based on the words addressed to Peter, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I

will build my church.”<sup>105</sup> And though these words attributed to Christ are based only on the report of some of His disciples, nevertheless Christian unity was preserved for eight hundred years through this implicit Covenant.

4        Now there existeth an explicit Covenant. It is not a mere verbal report. It hath been revealed by the Supreme Pen, Who openly addresseth the Covenant-breakers at its outset. He hath called it “The Book of the Covenant”, a title written by His own Pen at the head of the Tablet. Then of what significance are the behaviour and conduct, the insinuations and whisperings, the interpretation and corruption of the Text by those who sow the seeds of doubt? At most it is this: They have only deprived themselves, and will continue to do so, and will fall into the darksome pit of “losing both this world and the world to come”.<sup>106</sup> Every billowing ocean must needs produce foam, and all gold that is purified in fire leaveth behind some dross. Hast thou ever seen a surging ocean without froth, or pure gold that leaveth no dross behind in the consuming flame of fire?

5        The Qur’án hath explicitly stated this. He saith, and verily He speaketh the truth: “We have sent down the rain from Heaven; then flow the torrents in their due measure, and the flood beareth along a swelling foam ... And from the metals (that is to say, pure gold) that is molten in the fire, a like froth ariseth.... As to the foam, it is quickly gone: and as to what is useful to man, it remaineth on the earth.”<sup>107</sup> Consider how explicitly this hath been stated. The ocean of the Covenant shall eternally endure, and this is that which profiteth mankind. With but a single wave of it, this foam shall pass away like dross, leaving no trace behind. “Leave them to entertain themselves with their cavillings.”<sup>108</sup>

6        The Lord be praised that thou art my cherished beloved, my uniquely true and loyal friend. Thou must shield the Covenant and protect the souls lest they slip or waver. The Glory of Glories rest upon thee....

7        Examine carefully the commentary on the verse “In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful”.<sup>109</sup> Some of the meanings that thou seekest are implicitly contained therein, and it was praised by the Supreme Pen during His blessed days. Let then the masters of knowledge produce its like!

### **Summary:**

In this letter, 'Abdu'l-Bahá addresses a friend, expressing regret for the delay in responding to their question due to the overwhelming volume of correspondence received. He emphasizes the importance of maintaining communication with believers worldwide to counteract any wavering in faith that may have occurred during a period of interruption. 'Abdu'l-Bahá urges

vigilance in shielding souls from divisive influences and emphasizes the necessity of steadfast adherence to the Covenant to preserve Bahá'í unity. He contrasts the attempts to break the Covenant in the present Dispensation with similar challenges faced in previous cycles, citing the example of Arius in Christianity. 'Abdu'l-Bahá highlights the explicit nature of the Covenant in the Bahá'í Faith and dismisses attempts to sow doubt or corruption in its interpretation. He draws analogies from nature and scripture to illustrate the enduring nature of the Covenant and the transitory nature of challenges to it. Finally, 'Abdu'l-Bahá praises the recipient for their loyalty and calls upon them to continue protecting the Covenant.

### **Key Points:**

1. Introduction: 'Abdu'l-Bahá addresses a friend, acknowledging the delay in responding to their question due to the volume of correspondence.
2. Importance of Communication: Emphasizing the need to maintain communication with believers to counteract any wavering in faith.
3. Vigilance in Safeguarding the Covenant: Urging vigilance in shielding souls from divisive influences and emphasizing the importance of steadfast adherence to the Covenant.
4. Historical Perspective: Contrasting attempts to break the Covenant in the present Dispensation with challenges faced in previous cycles, using the example of Arius in Christianity.
5. Enduring Nature of the Covenant: Highlighting the explicit nature of the Covenant in the Bahá'í Faith and dismissing attempts to sow doubt or corruption in its interpretation.
6. Analogies and Illustrations: Drawing analogies from nature and scripture to illustrate the enduring nature of the Covenant and the transitory nature of challenges to it.
7. Praise and Encouragement: Praising the recipient for their loyalty and calling upon them to continue protecting the Covenant.
8. Invitation to Study: Encouraging the recipient to examine the commentary on a specific verse for further insights.

### **Questions and Answers:**

1. Why was there a delay in responding to the friend's question?
  - 'Abdu'l-Bahá mentions the overwhelming volume of correspondence received as the reason for the delay.
2. What does 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasize as crucial for preserving Bahá'í unity?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasizes the necessity of steadfast adherence to the Covenant to preserve Bahá'í unity.

3. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá compare attempts to break the Covenant in the Bahá'í Faith with challenges in previous religious dispensations?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá contrasts the attempts to break the Covenant in the present Dispensation with similar challenges faced in previous cycles, using the example of Arius in Christianity.

4. What analogy does 'Abdu'l-Bahá use to illustrate the enduring nature of the Covenant?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá draws analogies from nature and scripture, such as the ocean producing foam and gold being purified in fire, to illustrate the enduring nature of the Covenant.

5. What encouragement does 'Abdu'l-Bahá offer to the recipient?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá praises the recipient for their loyalty and encourages them to continue protecting the Covenant.

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*He is God.*

1 O ye beloved of God! How great is this Dispensation! How bright the effulgence of this Age, the Age of the All-Glorious Lord! All creation hath been set in motion, and the universe vibrateth with tidings of joy and ecstasy. The realities of all things are filled with blissful rapture, and every atom in existence is ecstatic with delight. Souls are attaining unto prosperity and advancement, and the friends are achieving success and progress. The light of Revelation is shining bright, and its signs are shedding light on all regions. The whole earth resoundeth with the praises of the greatness of the Ancient Beauty, and the Day-Star of His majesty shineth resplendent.

2 Every assemblage in the world is adorned with the mention of the Most Great Name, and every gathering of the kindreds and peoples of the earth is cognizant of the tidings of the advent of the Most Wondrous Luminary. The East is illumined by His light, and the West perfumed with His sweet savours. This dusty earth hath become a rose-garden through the outpourings of His bounteous favour, and the vast and lofty heavens are filled with delight through the splendours of His sun. The realities of all things have been quickened and revived, and the essences of all beings enraptured and enthralled. Goodly trees are growing and flourishing on every side, yielding sweet and luscious fruits. The banner of the Covenant is hoisted in every region, and the ocean of the Testament is surging with such endless billows and raging tempests as to cause every limb to quake.

3 In this Most Great Dispensation, the Ancient Beauty—may my soul be offered up for His loved ones—hath vouchsafed unto all the believers a sure testimony, a surpassing mercy and abundant favour, an infallible proof and clear evidence. In the Most Holy Book, which abrogateth all the Books and Scriptures of the past and standeth amongst them all transcendent and supreme, He hath, in clear, explicit, and unequivocal terms, revealed the path and marked out the road to salvation. For five and twenty years did He nurture everyone and fed them from the breast of holiness. In all His Tablets, Books, Epistles, and Scriptures, He made mention of the Covenant and Testament, praising the steadfast and extolling those who cleave tenaciously unto it, while condemning and rebuking those who waver, and even forewarning them of divine punishment and the threat of everlasting chastisement.

4 And then the Tablet of the Year of Stress, which is the year of Bahá'u'lláh's ascension, was revealed and distributed in all regions.<sup>110</sup> In it He clearly and unequivocally stated the severity of the tests and the profusion of the trials. Some time thereafter, the Book of the Covenant and Preserved Tablet of the Testament was revealed by the Supreme Pen, wherein all were bidden, by His clear and explicit behest, to turn unto it and to observe, obey, and follow it, so that when the ocean of the tests and trials of the Year of Stress came to surge, no soul would be perplexed, dismayed, or confused; so that the straight path, the undeviating way, and the manifest light would become evident and clearly known; so that no room would be left for evil whisperings, no differences would arise, and the unity of the Word of God would be safeguarded.

5 Now a few capricious souls have appeared and begun to engage in secret whisperings, and as soon as they feel sure of their target, they even openly voice their intentions. One of them saith: "The Blessed Beauty hath made us independent of aught else, and hath left no need unmet." The secret intent of such a statement is that there is no need for an appointed Centre. Another exclaimeth: "Infallibility belonged to the Blessed Beauty alone; no other person is infallible." His inner motive is to assert that the "the one whom God hath purposed" is liable to error. Furthermore, they say that one who was regarded with favour, who was a believer or the recipient of a Tablet during the days of the Blessed Beauty, cannot possibly be cast out. Their true objective is to hint that were such a person to arise in opposition, or be so bold as to show enmity, no harm would result. They spread talk of this sort both openly and privily. The whole purpose of these words is to violate the Covenant and Testament. This is that same clamour which the Beloved of the worlds hath foretold in all His Tablets.

6 O loved ones of God! Be wakeful, be ever wakeful! Be mindful, be ever mindful! For tests and trials are most severe, and the waverers are exceedingly subtle and destructive in

their schemes. Outwardly they proclaim that they are the first to adhere to the Covenant, while secretly they strike an axe at the very root of the Tree of the Covenant and Testament.

### **Summary:**

In this letter, 'Abdu'l-Bahá exalts the greatness of the Bahá'í Dispensation, describing it as a time of joy, prosperity, and spiritual advancement. He emphasizes the widespread acknowledgment of Bahá'u'lláh's advent and the universal impact of His teachings. 'Abdu'l-Bahá highlights the clarity and explicitness of Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant and Testament, stressing the importance of adhering to it steadfastly. He recounts the revelation of specific Tablets and Books that further elucidated the Covenant and warned against deviation from it. 'Abdu'l-Bahá then addresses the emergence of dissenting voices seeking to undermine the Covenant through subtle means, such as questioning the need for an appointed Centre or casting doubt on the infallibility of Bahá'í leaders. He warns the believers to be vigilant against such whisperings and urges them to remain steadfast in their allegiance to the Covenant.

### **Key Points:**

1. Introduction: 'Abdu'l-Bahá praises the greatness of the Bahá'í Dispensation and the impact of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings.
2. Global Recognition: Describing the universal acknowledgment of Bahá'u'lláh's advent and the widespread influence of His teachings.
3. Clarity of the Covenant: Emphasizing the clarity and explicitness of Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant and Testament.
4. Revelation of Specific Tablets: Recounting the revelation of Tablets and Books that further elucidated the Covenant and warned against deviation from it.
5. Subtle Opposition: Addressing the emergence of dissenting voices seeking to undermine the Covenant through subtle means.
6. Call to Vigilance: Urging believers to remain vigilant against whisperings that aim to undermine the Covenant and Testament.

### **Questions and Answers:**

1. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá describe the state of the Bahá'í Dispensation?
  - 'Abdu'l-Bahá describes it as a time of joy, prosperity, and spiritual advancement.
2. What does 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasize about Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant and Testament?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasizes their clarity, explicitness, and importance for the believers to adhere to steadfastly.

3. What specific Tablets and Books does 'Abdu'l-Bahá mention in relation to the Covenant?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá mentions the Tablet of the Year of Stress and the Book of the Covenant and Preserved Tablet of the Testament.

4. What subtle forms of opposition does 'Abdu'l-Bahá warn against?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá warns against dissenting voices that seek to undermine the Covenant through questioning the need for an appointed Centre or casting doubt on the infallibility of Bahá'í leaders.

5. What is 'Abdu'l-Bahá's advice to the believers in response to subtle opposition?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá advises the believers to remain vigilant against whisperings that aim to undermine the Covenant and to steadfastly adhere to it.

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*He is the All-Glorious.*

1 O thou dove of the rose-garden of faithfulness! O nightingale of the groves of praise to the Abhá Beauty! May the glory of God, His mercy, His bounty, and His praise rest upon thee.

2 That which thou hadst written with the pen of grief upon the page of woes was read and perused with the utmost attention. From its contents, brimming with bitter lamentation, the savour of profound sorrow and anguish was perceived. On the one hand, I was saddened; on the other, surprised and amazed. My sorrow was due to the intensity of thy sighs, whilst my surprise stemmed from the fact that this servant hath already written a number of letters to thee, dear friend, in all of which I expressed the utmost measure of love and affection. They were written in such wise that I imagined that such bliss and ecstasy would fill thy soul upon their perusal as to cause thee to rend asunder the raiment of the material world.

3 How is it that through a single word thou hast become so dispirited and dejected, so heartbroken and despondent? And yet, in this day, neither is praise the measure of honour, nor censure the sign of abasement and disgrace. Acceptance or denial, approval or rejection, all depend upon him whom God hath raised to serve His Cause and to exalt His Word amidst humankind. Know thou that all matters pertaining to the Cause revert to this servant. To none is given the right to reject or accept before hearing what this humble servant hath pronounced.

4            Forget then all these matters and, with the utmost resolve, firmness, and steadfastness in the Covenant of God, and with faithful adherence unto His Testament, strive to exalt His Word. Neither give ear to commendation and praise, nor be saddened or heartbroken by censure and humiliation. Arise amidst the peoples of the world and, wholly detached and sanctified from all save God and stirred by His Covenant and Testament, strive to awaken the heedless; for, in this day, most people are unaware and oblivious of the power of God's Covenant and Testament.

5            Although no explicit Covenant was established in any previous age or Dispensation, yet the followers of the Qur'án say that the Apostle of God—may the life of the worlds be offered up for His sake—stated at Ghadír-i-Khumm: “Whoever hath Me as his Master, hath ‘Alí as his Master.”<sup>111</sup> Likewise, the Christians say that the One Who is the Spirit—may the soul of all existence be sacrificed for Him—addressed Simon, known as Peter, with these words: “Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church.”<sup>112</sup> Now, in this Most Great Dispensation, the Covenant hath been conclusively established in clear terms and unmistakable language, leaving room for no interpretation whatever, in the Most Holy Book—a Book that abrogateth all the Sacred Scriptures of the past, and whose laws have annulled whatever laws in other Tablets that are not in conformity with it. Furthermore, in the book of the divine Covenant and Testament, revealed by the Pen of Glory and named “The Book of the Covenant”, Bahá'u'lláh entered into a Covenant with all created things. In all His Tablets and prayers, He hath made firm adherence to the divine Covenant and Testament to be the surest means of receiving heavenly bestowals, that all may apprehend the majesty and grandeur of that Covenant and Testament.

6            Now, some are conscious of the power of this Covenant, and are firm and steadfast in the straight path, whilst others are not yet as aware of its significance as they should be. The sincere friends of the Blessed Beauty must strive to awaken the people. As this mighty, this impregnable stronghold shall remain inviolate and safe, let not thy heart grieve. All other matters are secondary and can be easily resolved with a word or two. Rest thou assured and hopeful, and remain firm and steadfast. The glory of God rest upon thee, and upon the beloved of the Lord.

7            Thou hast asked for permission to write of certain matters. “Let thy sorrowful heart recount all that it desireth”,<sup>113</sup> for my ears are attuned to thee.

### **Summary:**



In this letter, 'Abdu'l-Bahá addresses a friend who has expressed deep sorrow and distress. He acknowledges the friend's pain and emphasizes the significance of the Covenant and Testament in the Bahá'í Faith. 'Abdu'l-Bahá reassures the friend of His love and guidance, urging steadfastness and detachment from praise or criticism. He contrasts the explicit Covenant established in the Bahá'í Dispensation with implicit ones in previous religions, highlighting its clarity and irrefutability. 'Abdu'l-Bahá encourages the friend to awaken others to the power and significance of the Covenant and Testament, stressing its role in receiving heavenly blessings. He concludes by granting the friend permission to express their sorrows and concerns freely.

### **Key Points:**

1. Introduction: 'Abdu'l-Bahá greets the friend and acknowledges their distress.
2. Response to Sorrow: 'Abdu'l-Bahá expresses sadness at the friend's sorrow but also surprise, given His previous letters expressing love and affection.
3. Authority of the Covenant: 'Abdu'l-Bahá asserts His authority in matters concerning the Bahá'í Cause and emphasizes the significance of the Covenant and Testament.
4. Steadfastness: He advises the friend to remain firm and steadfast in the Covenant, unaffected by praise or criticism.
5. Clarity of the Covenant: 'Abdu'l-Bahá contrasts the explicit Covenant of the Bahá'í Dispensation with implicit ones in previous religions, emphasizing its clarity and importance.
6. Awakening Others: He urges the friend to awaken others to the significance of the Covenant and Testament in receiving heavenly blessings.
7. Permission Granted: 'Abdu'l-Bahá grants the friend permission to express their sorrows and concerns freely.

### **Questions and Answers:**

1. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá respond to the friend's expression of sorrow?  
- 'Abdu'l-Bahá expresses sadness at the friend's distress but also surprise, given His previous letters expressing love and affection.
2. What authority does 'Abdu'l-Bahá assert regarding matters concerning the Bahá'í Cause?  
- 'Abdu'l-Bahá asserts His authority, stating that all matters concerning the Cause revert to Him, and no one has the right to reject or accept without His pronouncement.
3. What advice does 'Abdu'l-Bahá give regarding steadfastness in the Covenant?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá advises the friend to remain firm and steadfast in the Covenant, unaffected by praise or criticism.

4. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá characterize the Covenant of the Bahá'í Dispensation?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá contrasts it with implicit ones in previous religions, emphasizing its clarity and importance.

5. What does 'Abdu'l-Bahá urge the friend to do regarding the Covenant and Testament?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá urges the friend to awaken others to their significance in receiving heavenly blessings.

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*He is God.*

1 O thou seeker after Truth! Thy letter was received and thy purpose became known. Thou hast asked: If this divine Revelation is that same heavenly Kingdom which Christ said was nigh, then by what proof and testimony can this be demonstrated, and by what tidings can it be announced? There is no time for a detailed reply, so a brief account is provided.

2 Know thou that the proofs of the truth of this new Kingdom are the same as those of the Kingdom of Christ. The proof of the subsequent Kingdom is the same as that of the previous one—nay, it is the mightiest proof!

3 Proofs are of two kinds: those for the common people and those for the learned. The latter will not be convinced by the proofs for the former, who, likewise, will not be assured by the proofs for the latter. The common people seek miracles and marvels, while the learned regard these not as proof; these neither satisfy their search nor quench their thirst. Rather, they seek conclusive rational proofs. Thus, as thou art endowed with a keen vision and a sound mind, we will set forth conclusive and rational proofs that leave none the possibility for denial.

4 We say that the purpose underlying the advent of the Kingdom is the edification of the souls of men, the progress of the world of humanity, the manifestation of the love of God, the establishment of fellowship and unity amongst all peoples, the appearance of divine perfections, and the realization of the glory of the human race. This is the purpose of the advent of the Kingdom, and this is its result. Observe, then, how the edifying power of Bahá'u'lláh hath enlightened the darksome East, transformed voracious beasts into heavenly angels, endowed the ignorant with knowledge, and caused ravening wolves to become as gazelles in the meads of oneness. Those who, because of custom or belief, rose in enmity

against all peoples now associate with all in a spirit of perfect unity. Those who used to burn the Holy Bible out of exceeding ignorance now set forth the truths and mysteries of the Old and New Testaments. In a brief span of time, He so educated His followers that, even in chains and stocks, and under the threat of swords and blades, they would raise the cry of “Yá Bahá’u’l-Abhá!” and would offer sugar candy to their executioners that they might strike the final blow with sweetened mouths. Thou dost surely recall the story of Peter the disciple, and the crowing of the cock!<sup>114</sup>

5 Another proof is that all the Persian divines and prominent leaders in Tīhrán know, beyond any doubt, that Bahá’u’lláh never attended any school, nor received any formal education, and from early childhood conducted Himself differently. Nevertheless, the divines and the learned of the East have testified to His extraordinary knowledge, wisdom, understanding, and perfections. Despite their denial and bitter enmity, they still acknowledge that Bahá’u’lláh was a unique and peerless Figure of the age, although they do not recognize His sublime station as do the chosen ones and the sincere.

6 A further proof lieth in the very teachings of Bahá’u’lláh, which banish every trace of dissension and discord from the world of humanity, and establish everlasting unity and harmony. Refer to the Tablets of Tajallíyyát (Effulgences), ‘Ishráqát (Splendours), Kalimát (Words of Paradise), Bishárát (Glad-Tidings) and Tarázát (Ornaments), and thou wilt clearly see what teachings have been vouchsafed by this new Kingdom—teachings that bestow upon the feeble body of the world a swift remedy and a practicable, lasting cure. The like of such teachings hath never before been witnessed.

7 Yet another proof is that it was from within this afflictive prison that Bahá’u’lláh revealed and advanced such a sublime Revelation—a Revelation whose renown hath spread throughout the world, which hath been firmly established in the East, and the light of whose radiant morn is diffused even as the rays of the sun. And all this despite the fact that the governments and peoples of the East arose in resistance and opposition, launching their attacks with every power at their disposal. Reflect: Hath such might and power ever been manifested before? What greater proof is there than this, that from within the prison walls He directed His mighty proclamations to the kings and rulers of the earth and foreshadowed, in unmistakable terms, what the future would hold. He warned the great Emperor, then at the height of his power, of a sudden revolution, and predicted the downfall of his throne and the defeat and extinction of his empire.<sup>115</sup> And all this did indeed come to pass, as did the events foretold in Tablets and addresses directed to other rulers of the earth from within the prison confines. Behold with what power and majesty He manifested Himself from within a prison

for robbers and murderers! What proof is there greater than this? To conclude, the proofs and evidences are many, but I have no time to write further.

8 And now, concerning the proofs sought by the uninformed masses: these consist of miracles and marvels. To state the matter briefly, there are many accounts of such marvellous feats associated with Bahá'u'lláh that are current amongst the people and could fill numerous volumes, were one to compile them. But since these do not constitute a conclusive proof for the contending denier, we will not relate miracles associated with Bahá'u'lláh. For the contenders may also relate such accounts from the idols of their fancy and base them on their own books and chronicles. We therefore present rational proofs, so that there shall remain no room for denial for any soul. The Glory of Glories rest upon thee.

### **Summary:**

In this letter, 'Abdu'l-Bahá responds to a seeker after truth who questions the proof and testimony of the Bahá'í Revelation as the promised Kingdom foretold by Christ. He distinguishes between proofs for the common people and the learned, providing rational arguments to satisfy both. 'Abdu'l-Bahá outlines several proofs for the truth of the Bahá'í Faith, including the transformative power of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings, His extraordinary knowledge despite lack of formal education, and the spread of His Revelation despite opposition. He emphasizes the edifying purpose of the Bahá'í Kingdom, its teachings of unity and harmony, and the majesty of Bahá'u'lláh's proclamations from within a prison. 'Abdu'l-Bahá concludes by explaining that while there are accounts of miracles associated with Bahá'u'lláh, he chooses to present rational proofs to leave no room for denial.

### **Key Points:**

1. Introduction: 'Abdu'l-Bahá acknowledges the seeker's question and promises a brief response due to time constraints.
2. Similarity to Previous Revelations: He asserts that the proofs for the Bahá'í Revelation are similar to those for previous religions but even mightier.
3. Types of Proofs: 'Abdu'l-Bahá distinguishes between proofs for the common people (miracles) and the learned (rational arguments).
4. Purpose and Results of the Kingdom: He explains the purpose of the Bahá'í Kingdom and its transformative effects on individuals and society.
5. Bahá'u'lláh's Extraordinary Knowledge: 'Abdu'l-Bahá highlights Bahá'u'lláh's lack of formal education yet extraordinary wisdom, recognized even by His adversaries.

6. Teachings of Unity and Harmony: He emphasizes the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh that promote unity and harmony among humanity, unparalleled in history.
7. Revelation from Prison: 'Abdu'l-Bahá marvels at the fact that Bahá'u'lláh revealed His Revelation from within a prison despite opposition.
8. Rational Proofs: He chooses to present rational proofs over miracles to leave no room for denial among skeptics.

### **Questions and Answers:**

1. What types of proofs does 'Abdu'l-Bahá present for the truth of the Bahá'í Faith?
  - 'Abdu'l-Bahá presents both rational arguments and accounts of miracles associated with Bahá'u'lláh.
2. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá distinguish between proofs for the common people and the learned?
  - He explains that while the common people seek miracles, the learned require rational arguments for conviction.
3. What is the purpose and result of the Bahá'í Kingdom according to 'Abdu'l-Bahá?
  - 'Abdu'l-Bahá asserts that the purpose is the edification of souls and the progress of humanity, resulting in unity, love, and the realization of human potential.
4. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasize Bahá'u'lláh's extraordinary knowledge despite lack of formal education?
  - He points out that despite Bahá'u'lláh's lack of formal education, His wisdom and understanding were acknowledged even by His adversaries.
5. Why does 'Abdu'l-Bahá choose to present rational proofs over accounts of miracles?
  - 'Abdu'l-Bahá believes that rational proofs leave no room for denial among skeptics, whereas accounts of miracles can be dismissed or explained away.

- 1 O thou who art steadfast in the Covenant! That which was written by thy musk-laden pen brought great joy to our hearts. It imparted the glad-tidings of the cheer and exultation of the believers and the joyful news of the spirit of fellowship among the friends. God be praised that each one hath become even as a fruitful tree in the divine orchard, and doth stand as a swaying cypress upon the riverbanks of love and knowledge.

2       None had imagined that, despite the intensity of tests, those souls would remain happy and beaming with joy! This can be attributed to naught but the great bounty of God in these days— that in the depths of sacrifice, His loved ones stand firm and immovable and are constant and steadfast in the Covenant and Testament.

3       O God, my God! Assist Thou Thy servants who have found “at the fire a guide”,<sup>116</sup> and have caught the light of the immortal flame kindled in the Tree of Sinai. Make them, O Lord, the signs of Thy Divine Unity amidst all people, and the emblems of Thy Oneness in Thy most exalted Realm. Give them to quaff from the wellspring of Thy mercy and from the clear waters flowing from Thy blissful paradise, that they may become inebriated with the wine of Thy love in the verdant meadows and vast gardens of Thy holiness. Assist them, O Lord, with the cohorts of the Supreme Horizon and the hosts of the Concourse on high. Thou, verily, art the Generous, the Compassionate, the Lord of grace and bounty unto Thy feeble servants! Thou, verily, art the Clement, the Merciful....

4       Thou hast sought permission for a visit. In these days, the Holy Land is in turmoil by reason of the calumnies spread by the slandering liars. For certain strangers from amongst the non-believers have published some books, filled them with countless calumnies, and distributed them in these regions. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá is therefore in dire peril due to attacks from within and from without. Such are the enemies of the Faith on the outside, and such the violators of the Covenant on the inside. It is thus evident what commotion hath arisen. Yet, praise be to God, through the unfailing grace of the Blessed Beauty, I have remained firm in my position, have bared my breast to the darts of malice hurled by every oppressor, and am awaiting the onslaught of tribulations from every side, that, wholly detached, I may hasten to the shelter of His transcendent mercy.

5       Thou hast asked about the blessed Quranic verse “We have given thee the twice-repeated seven.”<sup>117</sup> The Muslim divines have interpreted the term “twice-repeated seven” to refer either to the seven chapters of the Qur’án that begin with the disconnected letters Ḥá’ and Mím or to the opening chapter of the Qur’án. They say it is “twice repeated” because the opening chapter, consisting of seven verses, was revealed twice—once in Mecca and again in Medina—and, as such, it is twice repeated. Furthermore, they say that as this opening chapter is recited twice in the daily prayer, it is thus described as the “twice-repeated seven”.

6       But the true meaning is the mystery of Divine Unity and the outpourings of heavenly grace, and that is the glad-tidings of the advent of the subsequent Revelation, in which the Bearer of the seven letters hath appeared twice. The first seven letters correspond to “‘Alí-Muḥammad”, and the second seven to “Ḥusayn-‘Alí”.<sup>118</sup> This is the meaning of the “twice-

repeated seven". Yet another meaning is that Muḥammad, the universal Manifestation of the Quranic Dispensation, together with thirteen distinguished souls, make fourteen, which is seven twice repeated.<sup>119</sup> There is no time for further elaboration. This is a brief but beneficial explanation.

### **Summary:**

In this letter, 'Abdu'l-Bahá expresses joy and gratitude for the steadfastness of believers in the Covenant amidst tests and turmoil. He prays for their spiritual elevation and protection, despite the challenges posed by adversaries within and outside the Bahá'í community. Additionally, 'Abdu'l-Bahá briefly explains the interpretation of the Quranic verse "We have given thee the twice-repeated seven" in response to a question from the recipient.

### **Key Points:**

1. Introduction: 'Abdu'l-Bahá expresses joy and gratitude for the steadfastness of believers in the Covenant.
2. Steadfastness in the Covenant: He marvels at the unwavering joy and steadfastness of believers amidst tests and turmoil.
3. Prayer for Protection and Elevation: 'Abdu'l-Bahá offers a prayer for the believers' spiritual elevation and protection.
4. Challenges Faced: He discusses the challenges posed by adversaries within and outside the Bahá'í community, including attacks and calumnies.
5. Explanation of Quranic Verse: 'Abdu'l-Bahá provides a brief explanation of the Quranic verse "We have given thee the twice-repeated seven" in response to a question from the recipient..

### **Questions and Answers:**

1. What does 'Abdu'l-Bahá express gratitude for in the letter?
  - 'Abdu'l-Bahá expresses gratitude for the steadfastness of believers in the Covenant amidst tests and turmoil.
2. What prayer does 'Abdu'l-Bahá offer for the believers?
  - 'Abdu'l-Bahá offers a prayer for the believers' spiritual elevation and protection.
3. What challenges does 'Abdu'l-Bahá mention in the letter?
  - 'Abdu'l-Bahá discusses challenges posed by adversaries within and outside the Bahá'í community, including attacks and calumnies.

4. What interpretation does 'Abdu'l-Bahá provide for the Quranic verse "We have given thee the twice-repeated seven"?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá briefly explains that the verse refers to the mystery of Divine Unity and the advent of subsequent Revelations, with reference to 'Alí-Muḥammad and Ḥusayn-‘Alí.

5. Why does 'Abdu'l-Bahá mention that there is no time for further elaboration on the Quranic verse?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá indicates that due to time constraints, he can only provide a brief explanation, leaving further elaboration for another occasion.

69

*He is God.*

1 O Lord! O Thou Who graciously aidest whomsoever Thou willest, with whatsoever Thou willest, unto whatsoever Thou willest. Verily, that treasury of resignation, that wellspring of fidelity and fountainhead of purity—the honoured Riḍá<sup>120</sup>—fell prey to the cruel tyranny of the people of hatred and malice. He was, O Lord, sore-tried by the gravest hardships and the fiercest oppression of the perverse. He was held fast, time and again, in the claws of ravening wolves and ferocious lions, until he fell into the clutches of a savage hound who tormented him with countless afflictions and weighed him down with galling chains. All the while, he raised his voice amongst the people, openly proclaiming Thy Name. Undaunted and undismayed, he never wavered in teaching Thy Cause. He feared not the scourge of the oppressors, nor was he frightened by the tribulations meted out by the vicious, the ignoble, the wicked, and the vengeful. He spoke with the utmost eloquence and presented the most wondrous proofs with manifest authority.

2 The hearts of those present were astonished by this dignified man. They exclaimed, “He is indeed sincere and trustworthy, and speaketh the truth. He testifieth with absolute honesty and harboureth no secrets, for his account is but manifest truth without the least trace of dissimulation, false interpretation, or unsound commentary; it is indeed clear discourse concerning this great Cause.”

3 The oppressors were assured that there was no mischief, no wrongdoing or rebellion, and no secrets hidden and veiled from others, and yet they kept him confined to prison. Upon his release, he travelled to Qum, wherein rule the divines, they that are in grievous loss. There, once again, he was thrown into a fortified prison, in whose depths he languished for a long time, until at last God delivered him through the just intervention of a noble-minded man.



4 He never faltered or slackened in chanting the verses of Him Who is Thy Remembrance and the Source of wisdom. Nay, rather, he hastened to the gathering of the evil-minded divines and set forth clear and manifest proofs. Hence the clamour of the clergy rose high, and they assailed him with grievous injustice. They cast him again into prison, subjected him to chains and fetters, and afflicted him with fresh torment. His weak and feeble frame, unable to sustain such dire hardships, yielded its life in this Path, and he reached Thy presence detached from all else but Thee, a guest at Thy Holy Threshold.

5 O Lord! Glorify the abode of this newly arrived guest. Grant him an exalted station within the precincts of Thy transcendent mercy in the presence of the glorious Companion; confer upon him a dwelling in that immeasurable and boundless immensity, the vast kingdom of Thy pardon and forgiveness, which none can comprehend save those whom the Omnipotent Lord hath inspired.

6 Verily, Thou dost bounteously favour whomsoever Thou willest, dost forgive whomsoever Thou willest, and dost pardon whomsoever Thou willest. There is no God but Thee, the Subtile, the Tender, the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Compassionate.

7 O honourable Majdhúb! That leader of the righteous is most dear to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Whenever I find a moment, my thoughts turn again towards thee and I engage in prayer and remembrance on thy behalf. Supplications were likewise offered at the Divine Threshold, that God may bestow His unfailing grace upon His loved ones.

8 The Blessed Beauty is established upon the Throne of Lordship, and we are all novices in the ranks of servitude and are linked together in thralldom to His Holy Threshold. Nothing greater can be imagined for the friends than to join ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in servitude to the Sacred Threshold. Since in His commentary on the Súrih of Joseph, the Báb—may my life be offered up for His sake—hath identified Joseph as the Manifest Beauty, the true Joseph, and hath referred to Him as “our great and omnipotent Master”, then whenever thou readest it, thou wilt but weep and grieve for the wrongs suffered by the Blessed Beauty. This commentary is not currently at hand for me to send to thee.

### **Summary:**

In this letter, 'Abdu'l-Bahá mourns the persecution and imprisonment of an esteemed believer, Riḍá, who endured severe hardships and oppression for steadfastly proclaiming the Bahá'í Cause. Despite the trials, Riḍá remained resolute, eloquently articulating the truths of the Faith and presenting compelling proofs. The hearts of those who witnessed his steadfastness were moved, acknowledging his sincerity and integrity. Riḍá faced

imprisonment multiple times, yet he continued to boldly teach the Cause and confront the clergy with clear proofs, enduring further injustice and torment. Eventually, his frail body succumbed to the hardships, and he passed away, attaining a station in the presence of God. 'Abdu'l-Bahá prays for Riḍá's elevation and glorification in the realms of divine mercy, expressing deep affection and admiration for his unwavering faith. He emphasizes the importance of servitude to the Blessed Beauty and expresses regret for not being able to provide a specific commentary on the Súrih of Joseph at the moment.

### **Key Points:**

1. Introduction: 'Abdu'l-Bahá mourns the persecution and imprisonment of Riḍá, an esteemed believer.
2. Riḍá's steadfastness: Despite severe hardships, Riḍá remains resolute in proclaiming the Bahá'í Cause.
3. Acknowledgment by witnesses: Those who observe Riḍá's steadfastness are moved by his sincerity and integrity.
4. Multiple imprisonments: Riḍá faces imprisonment multiple times and confronts the clergy with clear proofs.
5. Endurance and passing: Despite further injustice and torment, Riḍá's frail body succumbs to the hardships, and he passes away.
6. Prayer for Riḍá: 'Abdu'l-Bahá prays for Riḍá's elevation and glorification in the realms of divine mercy.
7. Affection and admiration: 'Abdu'l-Bahá expresses deep affection and admiration for Riḍá's unwavering faith.
8. Regret: 'Abdu'l-Bahá expresses regret for not being able to provide a specific commentary on the Súrih of Joseph at the moment.

### **Questions and Answers:**

1. Who is Riḍá, and what fate befell him according to the letter?
  - Riḍá is an esteemed believer who endured persecution and imprisonment for steadfastly proclaiming the Bahá'í Cause.
2. How did witnesses respond to Riḍá's steadfastness?
  - Witnesses were moved by Riḍá's sincerity and integrity, acknowledging his unwavering commitment to the Cause.
3. How did Riḍá confront the clergy, and what was the outcome?

- Riḍá confronted the clergy with clear proofs, enduring further injustice and torment as a result.

4. What fate befell Riḍá in the end?

- Riḍá's frail body succumbed to the hardships, and he passed away, attaining a station in the presence of God.

5. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá express his feelings towards Riḍá in the letter?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá expresses deep affection and admiration for Riḍá's unwavering faith, praying for his elevation and glorification in the realms of divine mercy.

70

*He is the All-Glorious.*

1 O thou servant of the Ancient Beauty! When Joseph—peace be upon him—unveiled his bright countenance in the Egypt of beauty, he set ablaze the souls of a myriad buyers. Now the Joseph of the celestial Canaan, the ruler of the Egypt of the spirit, with a face radiant as the sun and a beauty far above the praise and description of such as are endued with understanding, hath rent asunder the veils and emerged resplendent in the midmost heart of the world. But alas, all the buyers have busied themselves with the world of water and clay, have pursued their selfish desires, and have hence been deprived of beholding His Countenance and attaining His presence. Render thou thanks unto God that thou hast been among the buyers who seek that Divine Beauty, and among those who are enamoured by the Mystic Beloved. The glory of God rest upon thee and upon all those who have been enraptured by His Beauty.

**Summary:**

In this passage, 'Abdu'l-Bahá draws a metaphorical comparison between the story of Joseph from the Bible and the appearance of the divine Manifestation in the present age. He likens Joseph's radiant presence in Egypt to the appearance of the Manifestation, referring to Bahá'u'lláh, whose beauty surpasses earthly descriptions and whose spiritual sovereignty shines forth in the world. However, despite this luminous presence, 'Abdu'l-Bahá laments that many people are preoccupied with material pursuits and selfish desires, thus failing to recognize and embrace the spiritual reality. He expresses gratitude that the recipient of the letter is among those who seek the Divine Beauty and are enamored by the Mystic Beloved, implying a recognition of the spiritual significance of Bahá'u'lláh's revelation.

**Key Points:**

1. Introduction: 'Abdu'l-Bahá uses the story of Joseph as a metaphor for the appearance of the Manifestation in the present age.
2. Joseph's bright countenance: Joseph's radiant presence in Egypt symbolizes the appearance of the Manifestation in the world.
3. Spiritual sovereignty: The Manifestation's beauty surpasses earthly descriptions and shines forth as the ruler of the spiritual realm.
4. Preoccupation with worldly pursuits: Despite the luminous presence of the Manifestation, many people are absorbed in material pursuits and selfish desires.
5. Failure to recognize the spiritual reality: The majority of people fail to recognize and embrace the spiritual significance of the Manifestation's revelation.
6. Gratitude for spiritual seeking: 'Abdu'l-Bahá expresses gratitude for those who seek the Divine Beauty and are enamored by the Mystic Beloved.
7. Conclusion: 'Abdu'l-Bahá invokes blessings upon the recipient and all those who are enraptured by the Beauty of the Manifestation.

**Questions and Answers:**

1. What metaphor does 'Abdu'l-Bahá use in the passage, and what does it symbolize?
  - 'Abdu'l-Bahá uses the story of Joseph as a metaphor for the appearance of the Manifestation in the present age, symbolizing the radiant presence of Bahá'u'lláh in the world.
2. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá describe the beauty of the Manifestation?
  - 'Abdu'l-Bahá describes the beauty of the Manifestation as surpassing earthly descriptions and shining forth as the ruler of the spiritual realm.
3. What does 'Abdu'l-Bahá lament about the majority of people?
  - 'Abdu'l-Bahá laments that the majority of people are preoccupied with material pursuits and selfish desires, failing to recognize and embrace the spiritual reality.
4. What does 'Abdu'l-Bahá express gratitude for?
  - 'Abdu'l-Bahá expresses gratitude for those who seek the Divine Beauty and are enamored by the Mystic Beloved, acknowledging their spiritual seeking.
5. What blessing does 'Abdu'l-Bahá invoke upon the recipient and others?
  - 'Abdu'l-Bahá invokes blessings upon the recipient and all those who are enraptured by the Beauty of the Manifestation, expressing a wish for their spiritual well-being.

*He is God.*

1 O thou binder of books! Shouldst thou refer to the heavenly Books and Sacred Scriptures, and ponder the meanings enshrined therein, thou wouldst see that all their tidings and signs herald the advent of the Light of Truth and the Centre of Divinity. Forget not the tradition that saith: “Whatsoever is in the Torah, the Gospel, and other Scriptures is in the Qur’án, and whatsoever is in the Qur’án is in its Exordium, and whatsoever is in its Exordium is in the Basmalah, and whatsoever is in the Basmalah is in the Bá’.”<sup>121</sup> But alas, for the eyes of the people are blind, and their ears are deaf. How well hath it been said:

To speak of the subtleties of Saná’í before the foolish and the weak of mind  
Is like plucking the lute for the deaf or holding a mirror to the blind.

2 Gracious God! How strange, how very strange! The people of the Book have withdrawn behind the veils, whilst the common people comprehend the mysteries of the Word. This is but a token of the bounteous favour of my Lord, the Almighty, the All-Bountiful. Upon thee be greetings and praise.

**Summary:**

In this passage, 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasizes the interconnectedness of the heavenly Books and Sacred Scriptures, highlighting their common message heralding the advent of the Light of Truth and the Centre of Divinity. He refers to a tradition emphasizing the unity and continuity of divine revelation across different religious traditions, suggesting that the essence of truth is present in all scriptures. However, 'Abdu'l-Bahá laments that despite the richness of these teachings, many people remain blind to their subtleties and mysteries. He contrasts the withdrawal of the "people of the Book" behind veils with the ability of common people to comprehend the Word's mysteries, seeing it as a sign of divine favor and bounty.

**Key Points:**

1. Introduction: 'Abdu'l-Bahá discusses the interconnectedness of heavenly Books and Sacred Scriptures.
2. Unity of divine revelation: 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasizes that all scriptures herald the advent of the Light of Truth and the Centre of Divinity.
3. Tradition of unity: He refers to a tradition that underscores the unity and continuity of divine revelation across different religious traditions.
4. Lamentation over spiritual blindness: Despite the richness of the teachings, many people remain blind to their subtleties and mysteries.

5. Contrast in understanding: 'Abdu'l-Bahá contrasts the withdrawal of the "people of the Book" behind veils with the ability of common people to comprehend the Word's mysteries.
6. Sign of divine favor: He sees the comprehension of common people as a sign of divine favor and bounty.
7. Conclusion: 'Abdu'l-Bahá concludes with greetings and praise upon the reader.

**Questions and Answers:**

1. What does 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasize regarding the heavenly Books and Sacred Scriptures?
  - 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasizes their interconnectedness and the common message they convey regarding the advent of the Light of Truth and the Centre of Divinity.
2. What tradition does 'Abdu'l-Bahá refer to, and what does it signify?
  - 'Abdu'l-Bahá refers to a tradition highlighting the unity and continuity of divine revelation across different religious traditions, signifying the essence of truth present in all scriptures.
3. What does 'Abdu'l-Bahá lament in the passage?
  - 'Abdu'l-Bahá laments that despite the richness of the teachings, many people remain blind to their subtleties and mysteries.
4. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá contrast the understanding of different groups?
  - 'Abdu'l-Bahá contrasts the withdrawal of the "people of the Book" behind veils with the ability of common people to comprehend the Word's mysteries.
5. What does 'Abdu'l-Bahá see as a sign of divine favor?
  - 'Abdu'l-Bahá sees the comprehension of common people as a sign of divine favor and bounty.

72

*He is God.*

- 1 Thou art He, O my God, Whose most beautiful names and most sublime likenesses are sanctified above the comprehension of such as pride themselves on their knowledge of the realities of things, inasmuch as the spiders of idle fancy can never weave the frail webs of their understanding upon the loftiest summits to which even the birds of human thought are powerless to ascend. How, then, can such as are endued with insight discern the mysteries of Thy Reality that is concealed from the world of being? O Lord! Indeed, the inmost reality of all created things can never hope to fathom the secrets even of the world of existence. How, then, O my God, can it apprehend the hidden Secret, the well-guarded Mystery, which is inscrutable to even the most luminous of realities in the realm of being within the invisible world?
- 2 O God, my God! The wings of human thought can never hope to ascend unto the Kingdom of Mysteries, and the minds of the righteous are sore perplexed in attempting to attain unto the gems that lie wrapt within the veils of concealment.
- 3 O Lord! The innermost reality of understanding in this contingent realm is, in its essence, utterly powerless to grasp even a single one of the mysteries of the All-Merciful,

inasmuch as all understanding encompasseth that reality in the realm of existence that is comprehensible. How, then, could that which is contingent comprehend the Ancient Mystery unless the Ancient be encompassed by the contingent world? And how could this be possible, given that the encompassing one is greater than that which is encompassed, and the knower thoroughly comprehendeth that which is the object of knowledge? This being the case, how then can there be a path to Thee; how can there be a way to the Kingdom of Thy sanctity? Naught are we but mere helplessness and poverty in the face of the mysteries of creation, let alone before the sublime Reality, which is inaccessible to the realm of idle fancies and thoughts!

4        Thou hast, nevertheless, through Thine inestimable grace and Thy resplendent bounty, and by virtue of Thy mercy that hath surpassed the whole of creation, fashioned a luminous Reality, a heavenly Being, a divine Essence—Whom Thou hast ordained to be a mirror, stainless and gleaming, that speaketh of the unseen world, that deriveth grace from that realm, and that shineth resplendently and copiously with the outpourings of those favours upon the entire creation. And this Thou hast done so as to deliver Thy sincere servants from the worship of idle fancies engraved even on the hearts of the mystic knowers. For verily, all Thy servants, O my Lord, except such as Thou hast chosen as Thine own, whilst communing with Thee, or bowing down in worship before Thee, conceive a fictitious reality comprehensible to their thoughts and minds. And thus do they worship it whilst immersed in the seas of idle fancies and vain imaginings. For, verily, Thine invisible and inaccessible Self can never be known; Thine unalloyed Essence can never be described. “The way is barred, and all seeking rejected.”<sup>122</sup>

5        To whatever heights the most brilliant mind may soar, it can grasp no more than a mere token of the mystery of creation, a token which Thou hast deposited within the reality of all things. This, indeed, is the highest summit of comprehension to which those who inhabit the visible realm may hope to ascend, and even the manifold aspects of that token far transcend all comprehension in the realm of ascent.

6        All praise be to Thee, therefore, for having guided us to the Focal Centre of glory, the Manifestation of beauty, the Source of all light, the Dawning-Place of signs, and the Repository of Thy Revelation amongst the righteous. All praise be to Thee for having delivered us from idle fancies and vain imaginings, and for having rescued us from the worship of idols conceived by human minds. Thanks be unto Thee for having unlocked the gates of understanding to them who are well assured, and for having sent down from the heaven of Thy gifts that pure water which causeth the vales of the heart to overflow with the

outpourings of the grace of God and the torrents gushing forth from the Focal Centre of mysteries.

7 O God, my God! Thou hast verily revealed the path, established the proof, and guided all to Thy glorious kingdom. Thy signs and mysteries have verily been diffused far and wide, the realm of realities hath been made to tremble and the limbs to quake, the sun and stars have been darkened, and the planets have been dispersed and fallen from heaven. For Thy testimony hath been manifested, and the Sun of knowledge hath risen. Every obscure mystery in the realm of creation hath been laid bare, and now, in this Day of Revelation, Thy Beauty doth shed its radiance with all-subduing potency upon the whole earth, shining with its all-encompassing power over king and subject alike. Every hearing ear hath hearkened to Thy call, and all holy souls have been quickened by Thy sweet savours. The influence of Thy Word hath verily encompassed the righteous and the pious, and all tongues have testified to the majesty of Thy Revelation in this luminous age.

8 And yet, O my Lord, the company of deniers are veiled from this manifest Light, and they that are estranged from Thee have turned away from Thy radiant countenance. They, indeed, are those that have failed to believe in Thy most exalted Beauty, the Manifestation of Thine own Self, the Embodiment of Thine incalculable and imperishable grace. How numerous the verses that have been sent down, the words that have been perfected, and the Scriptures that have been recorded; and yet the heedless have remained unconvinced of this mighty sovereignty, and the foolish are not satisfied by this ancient power. These clear and manifest tokens profited them not, nor did any of these Scriptures and scrolls of all-encompassing words avail them.

9 Thus it followed that Thou didst manifest Thine all-subduing power over all created things, whereupon the Dayspring of Thine effulgent light withstood the onslaught of all the peoples and nations of the earth from within this Great Prison, and raised high His Word from under the weight of chains and shackles in this inaccessible fortress. The signs of His dominion have been diffused throughout the world, and the fame of Thy Cause hath been noised abroad and reached the most far-flung regions of the earth. And this verily is a shining proof, a conclusive testimony to those endued with sight as well as insight.

10 O God, my God! I beseech Thee by Thy manifold bounties, through which Thou hast chosen the sincere amongst Thy creatures and favoured them over all that dwell on earth and heaven, to lift the veils from the eyes of men, to confer Thy bounty upon the righteous, to lead the heedless to the wellspring of guidance, and to cause them to tread this straight Path.



Thou art in truth the All-Bountiful, the Almighty, and Thou art verily the Merciful, the Compassionate.

11 O thou who art firm in the Covenant! In all the Sacred Scriptures and Tablets revealed by the Primal Point—may my life be offered up for His sake—the supreme proof is the revelation of divine verses. Throughout all chapters of the Bayán, the Báb hath heralded the advent of Him Whom God shall make manifest. He hath not laid down any conditions for the appearance of that Most Great Luminary, but hath concluded every matter by encouraging and urging all to recognize the Beauty of the All-Merciful. Peruse thou the Bayán: Every one of its chapters endeth by cautioning souls not to remain veiled in the Day of His Revelation or, God forbid, to denounce and reject Him on the basis of the Bayán itself. For example, He saith, “Beware, beware lest the Váhid of the Bayán or that which hath been sent down in that Book shut thee out as by a veil from Him, inasmuch as it is but a creature in His sight.” By “the Váhid of the Bayán” is meant His blessed Being together with the eighteen Letters of the Living.<sup>123</sup> As to “that which hath been sent down in the Bayán”, consider in what explicit and emphatic terms He hath warned against being veiled by the Váhid of the Bayán or by what hath been revealed in that Book.

12 It is obvious that the Primal Point—may my life be offered up for His blessed Dust—was well aware of the Day of the Revelation and the identity of the Promised Beauty, that hidden Mystery and well-guarded Secret. This explicit warning was for the sake of emphasis, lest any soul should protest that the rejection of this Most Great Revelation by a certain person is reason for doubt and misgivings.

13 And yet, behold to what vain imaginings the people of the Bayán are clinging.<sup>124</sup> They cry out: “Where is the primary school of Him Whom God shall make manifest?<sup>125</sup> Where are the kings of the Bayán? Where are its places of worship and its Witnesses?” However, by the same token, the followers of the Qur’án could also cry out and exclaim: “Where is the Great Catastrophe? Where is the Most Great Resurrection? Where are the darkening of the sun, the cleaving of the moon, the scattering of the stars, the heaving of the earth, and the rending of the heavens? Where are the levelling of the mountains, the gathering together of the beasts, and the boiling of the seas? Where are the Resurrection and the Judgement, the Bridge and the Balance? Where are the chastising angels, and where is the day that is reckoned as fifty thousand years in the sight of God? Where are Heaven and Hell? Where are the kindled fire, the paradise brought nigh, the river of life, the heavenly streams, the fountain of mercy, and the crystal waters? Where are the chastising angels and the guards of Hell? And where, and where, and where?”

- 14 The Exalted One—may my life be offered up for Him—hath said that on the day of His Revelation all these events came to pass swifter than the twinkling of an eye, and that “fifty thousand years” were traversed in a single hour.<sup>126</sup> If all these momentous events took place in a single moment, would not the school of Him Whom God shall make manifest reach its culmination within fifty years? Behold to what extent they remain captive to idle fancies!
- 15 The statement “or that which hath been revealed in the Bayán” is indeed meant to caution the people of the Bayán not to say, “Where are the kings of the Bayán, and where is the school of Him Whom God shall make manifest?” Great God! These people condition that Most Great Revelation upon His being admitted, like a child, into a primary school and regard this as the proof of the validity of His Cause. “But what aileth these people that they come not close to understanding what is said unto them?”<sup>127</sup>
- 16 Gracious God! After the martyrdom of the Báb—may my soul be offered up for the dust ennobled by His footsteps—in what way did that individual arise, and what actions did he undertake?<sup>128</sup> What eloquence did he evince and what wonders did he utter? All the loved ones of the Lord bear witness that, after the martyrdom of the Báb, this person vanished and went into hiding. He fled to the region of Núr, whence he scurried away—in the coarse guise of a dervish—to the regions of Mázindarán and Gílán until he finally reached Kirmánsháh.
- 17 When the Blessed Beauty was being exiled from Iran, despite the power of the king and the hatred and animosity of all its inhabitants, He arrived in Kirmánsháh in the utmost dignity. That individual did not have the courage to meet Him at that time. And when the Blessed Beauty reached Iraq, that person entered Baghdad secretly and in disguise, and took up residence in the Arab quarter, never daring to meet anyone. His sole accomplishment, his greatest feat, was to seek out a number of girls from here and there and marry them....
- 18 From the earliest dawn of the Cause until the day of His ascension, the Blessed Beauty, openly and visibly, without any veil or concealment, withstood all the peoples, nations, and rulers of the world and exalted the Word of God. The Tablets to the kings were revealed, and the mystery of adoration was made manifest. In clear and unmistakable language, subject to no interpretation whatsoever, He directed His stern and explicit summons to most of the sovereigns. All the things that flowed from His Most Exalted Pen were fulfilled, one after the other. All that He foretold came to pass, His predictions were confirmed, and His warnings were proven true.
- 19 “Shall the darkness and the light be held equal?”<sup>129</sup> Nay, by thy Lord, the Ever-Forgiving! But the people “entertain themselves with their vain cavillings”.<sup>130</sup> They see not, they hear not, neither do they understand.<sup>131</sup> “They call upon that beside God which can

neither hurt them nor profit them. This same is the far-gone error! He calleth on him who would sooner hurt than profit him. Surely, bad the lord, and, surely, bad the vassal!”<sup>132</sup> The Glory of Glories rest upon thee.

### **Summary:**

In this passage, 'Abdu'l-Bahá reflects on the limitations of human understanding when it comes to comprehending the mysteries of God's reality. He acknowledges that the loftiest summits of understanding are beyond the reach of human thought and that even the most luminous realities are incapable of grasping the hidden secrets of the divine realm. 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasizes the inscrutability of God's essence and the inadequacy of contingent beings to comprehend the Ancient Mystery. However, he acknowledges that God, out of His grace and mercy, has revealed a divine Essence—a mirror reflecting the unseen world—to guide sincere servants away from worshiping idle fancies. 'Abdu'l-Bahá praises God for delivering humanity from vain imaginings and unlocking the gates of understanding for those who are well-assured. He concludes with gratitude for the revelation of divine verses and the diffusion of God's signs and mysteries throughout the world.

### **Key Points:**

1. Introduction: 'Abdu'l-Bahá reflects on the limitations of human understanding regarding the mysteries of God's reality.
2. Inscrutability of God's essence: He acknowledges that even the most luminous realities are incapable of grasping the hidden secrets of the divine realm.
3. Divine revelation: 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasizes God's grace in revealing a divine Essence—a mirror reflecting the unseen world—to guide sincere servants away from worshiping idle fancies.
4. Gratitude for guidance: He praises God for delivering humanity from vain imaginings and unlocking the gates of understanding for those who are well-assured.
5. Conclusion: 'Abdu'l-Bahá expresses gratitude for the revelation of divine verses and the diffusion of God's signs and mysteries throughout the world.

### **Questions and Answers:**

1. What does 'Abdu'l-Bahá acknowledge regarding the limitations of human understanding?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá acknowledges that the loftiest summits of understanding are beyond the reach of human thought and that even the most luminous realities are incapable of grasping the hidden secrets of the divine realm.

2. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá describe God's essence and the inadequacy of contingent beings?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá describes God's essence as inscrutable and emphasizes the inadequacy of contingent beings to comprehend the Ancient Mystery.

3. What does 'Abdu'l-Bahá attribute to God's grace?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá attributes to God's grace the revelation of a divine Essence—a mirror reflecting the unseen world—to guide sincere servants away from worshiping idle fancies.

4. What does 'Abdu'l-Bahá praise God for?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá praises God for delivering humanity from vain imaginings and unlocking the gates of understanding for those who are well-assured.

5. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá conclude his reflection?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá concludes with gratitude for the revelation of divine verses and the diffusion of God's signs and mysteries throughout the world.

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*He is God.*

1 O servant of the one true God! In cycles gone by, although the signs of God's power and the truth of His Cause were clear and manifest, yet to outward seeming the divine tests were severe, and the ignorant found grounds for hesitation; for the Sun of Truth shone from behind subtle clouds, inasmuch as the advent of the Promised One was, according to the explicit and decisive terms of the Holy Text, subject to certain conditions. And as the common people, interpreting those Texts according to their literal meanings, found them contrary to their own understanding, they remained veiled and deprived.

2 For example, the advent of the Promised Qá'im was conditioned upon the appearance of the Dajjál,<sup>133</sup> of Sufyání,<sup>134</sup> of the invincible standard and the unsheathed sword, and of manifest sovereignty; upon the preceding of the Seven Goats and the flight of the dignitaries and leaders of religion from all corners of the world to the Kaaba;<sup>135</sup> upon the appearance of astonishing signs, the victory over the East and the West, the submission of all peoples, the slaughter of the divines, and the turning of the seven mills by the flowing blood of those ignorant ones.

3 In the Gospel, too, the conditions for the advent of the Promised One are explicitly stated. They include the darkening of the sun, the eclipse of the moon, the falling of the stars, the quaking of the earth, the heaving of the mountains, the wailing and lamentation of the tribes of the earth, the coming down of the Promised One upon thick clouds, the descent of the hosts of angels, the blast of the trumpet, the call of the bugle, and the like. Thus, to outward seeming, they who failed to recognize Him had an excuse.

4 Likewise, the advent of the Great Resurrection was conditioned upon the quaking of the earth, the rising from the grave, the coming forth of the dead out of their sepulchres, the darkening of the sun, the cleaving of the moon, the scattering of the stars, the reduction of the mountains to dust, the assembling of the beasts, the rending of the heavens, the stretching forth of the Straight Path, the setting up of the Balance, the ingathering of bodies, the blazing of the nethermost fire, the adornment of Paradise, and the appearance of the maids and youths of heaven, the choice fruits, and the Maids of Heaven “whom no man nor spirit hath touched before”.<sup>136</sup>

5 By all this is meant that the Resurrection was conditioned upon the appearance of all these signs. The Báb—may my life be offered up for Him—hath said that all these momentous events, and the Great Resurrection itself, came to pass in less than the twinkling of an eye and took place in the span of a single breath. And yet not one soul perceived them or grasped their significance. But, praise be to God, in this Most Great Revelation no conditions have been set, no prerequisites have been laid down, no veils exist, nor is there any excuse to remain deprived.

6 It should first be noted that the Báb Himself—may my life be a sacrifice for Him—addressing the greatest pillar of the Bayán, hath said: “Beware, beware, lest the Váḥid of the Bayán or that which hath been sent down in the Bayán shut thee out as by a veil from Him.”<sup>137</sup> In other words, take heed during the advent of Him Whom God shall make manifest lest thou become veiled from recognizing Him by the Váḥid of the Bayán itself, “inasmuch as this Váḥid is but a creature in His sight”. That is to say, the Váḥid of the Bayán hath been created by Him Whom God shall make manifest, and this Váḥid consisteth of the eighteen Letters of the Living and the Báb Himself—may my soul be offered up for Him—Who is the nineteenth. He hath furthermore cautioned him to beware lest he be veiled from Him by the very words revealed in the Bayán. That is, he should take care not to say that such-and-such a statement in the Bayán indicateth that He Whom God shall make manifest would appear two thousand years hence. Could an absence of conditions and prerequisites be stated in more

unmistakable terms than this? Thus it is evident that in this Most Great Dispensation there is no cause whatsoever for anyone to be veiled.

7       The Báb—may my life be offered up for Him—hath confirmed that the events of the Great Resurrection, which were to take place on the day that is reckoned as “fifty thousand years”, occurred in less than the twinkling of an eye. And yet the people of the Bayán still protest, saying, “Why did the school of Him Whom God shall make manifest not endure? Why did He not gather together with the children, or study the alphabet, or become trained in the abjad?”<sup>138</sup> Consider how heedless they are and how foolish, how dull-witted and veiled.

8       Consider, moreover, how God’s limitless power hath appeared and been made manifest in this divine Dispensation. In the past, those who were shut out as by a veil would impute folly and impotence to the divine Manifestations. One would say: “Ye follow none other but a man enchanted”,<sup>139</sup> another would cry: “He deviseth a lie about God, or there is a jinn in him”,<sup>140</sup> and yet others would speak the words “And when they see thee, they do but take thee as the subject of their railleries. ‘What! Is this he whom God hath sent as an Apostle?’”<sup>141</sup>

9       During the days of Christ, the people would protest, saying, “O Mary! Thy father was not a man of wickedness, nor unchaste thy mother.”<sup>142</sup> Likewise, in the Mosaic Dispensation, the Pharaoh would say, “He, in sooth, is your Master who hath taught you magic.”<sup>143</sup> And the chiefs among the people would scorn and scoff at the Prophets, saying, “We see not any who have followed thee except our meanest ones of hasty judgement.”<sup>144</sup>

10       In this divinely appointed Day, however, in this heavenly age and spiritual century, none hath breathed such words as these. All the peoples and kindreds of the earth—whether Turks or Tajiks, Europeans, Africans, or Americans—have testified to the majesty and glory of the Manifestation of God. At most, they have denied the truth of His Cause and His station as a Manifestation; that is all. Today, in all the newspapers and publications of the world, civilized peoples bear witness to the greatness of the Blessed Beauty. Behold, then, how the might and power of the Word of God hath penetrated the very arteries and nerves of the body of the world.

11       Even the people of the Bayán have gained some credence in the eyes of others, through the pervading influence of the Cause of Bahá’u’lláh, the spreading rays of the Abhá Kingdom, and the irresistible power of the Word of God. For the people regard us all as members of the same community. For instance, when Mullá Hádíy-i-Dawlat-Ábádí was in the presence of the Wolf of Najaf in Işfahán,<sup>145</sup> he ascended the pulpit, and in order to save his own abject soul—I implore pardon from God!—he wholly recanted his faith in the Báb

and cursed and reviled Him. His life was thus spared, and when he came to Tīhrán he became the embodiment of the words “They are deaf, they are dumb, they are blind and shall return no more.”<sup>146</sup> Once the pervading power of the Cause of Bahá’u’lláh had penetrated the whole world, perfuming the East and illuminating the West; once the government had lost hope of exterminating it, and most people were secretly eager to become acquainted with the truth of the matter--then this individual and his kindred and relatives began to assert themselves before the notables and dignitaries in Tīhrán and engaged in spreading their idle fancies. Since most people regarded us all as belonging to the same community, some from among the seekers accepted the claims of these individuals. The latter should have been grateful for this, but instead, they arose in denial and brought a myriad calumnies against the people of God, defaming them before friends and strangers. Soon shall they find themselves in manifest loss!

12        Moreover, it is known to friend and stranger alike, and even to the people of the Bayán themselves, that after the martyrdom of the Báb, Mírzá Yaḥyá donned the headdress of a dervish and, with an alms-bowl in hand and a wayfarer’s sheepskin cloak upon his shoulders, fled from Mázindarán, leaving all the friends in grave danger, while he himself roamed incognito and in the utmost secrecy in the regions of Mázindarán and Rasht. When Bahá’u’lláh finally reached Baghdad in the plenitude of majesty and glory, Mírzá Yaḥyá also arrived, but in secret and in disguise. And when the Blessed Beauty left for Sulaymáníyyih, he worked and was known as a shoe merchant in Súqu’sh-Shuyúkh, Baghdad, Samáviḥ, and Basra. Then, upon his return to Baghdad through Najaf, he assumed the name of Ḥájí-‘Alíy-i-Lás-Furúsh, that is, the silk merchant.

13        No mention whatsoever of the Faith was heard any longer. But when the Blessed Beauty returned and proclaimed the Word of God, when His journey to Constantinople took place, the call and the fame of the True One were noised abroad, and there was no longer occasion for fear or peril—then everyone emerged from behind the veils, found a new arena, and flaunted himself. No one said: O valiant horseman of the arena of Cyprus, who hast sought British protection! Where hast thou been till now? Into what hole hadst thou crept during those eleven years in Baghdad? After the martyrdom of the Báb—may my soul be offered up for Him—what assistance didst thou render, what constancy didst thou manifest, and what steadfastness didst thou evince before the enemies? What action didst thou take, save to address so-called epistles to the Seven Witnesses, such as Mullá Ja’far in Káshán, Siyyid Muḥammad-i-Malíḥ in Tīhrán, and others, at the end of each of which was written: “Send us a young maiden”? None of them, God be praised, ever sent any. In one letter was written:

“God doth desire to behold thee amongst two thousand heavenly maidens”, and so the number of his wives grew as much as possible. There was Umm-i-Aḥmad from Shíráz, Badrī from Tafrīsh, Ruqíyyih from Mázindarán, and several more from Baghdad. And yet, not content with these, he also wed the honoured wife of the Báb, the sister of Mullá Rajab-‘Alí, known as the Mother of the Faithful, marriage to whom, according to the explicit statement of the Báb, was forbidden. A few days later, he passed her on to Hájí Siyyid Muḥammad.

14 No more mention was heard—no call, no remembrance or praise. The Cause of the Most Exalted One, the Báb—may my soul be offered up for Him—was effaced and obliterated. Had it not been for the return of the Blessed Beauty—may my soul be offered up for His loved ones—from Kurdistan, I swear by God, besides Whom there is none other, that no trace or name would have remained of this Cause. Friend and stranger alike testify to this.

15 And now that individual is, God be praised, living in Cyprus under British protection, in comfort and happiness, while his hapless disciples in Ṭíhrán have been induced, through empty promises and vain methods of divination, to stir up mischief and sedition against the government. He hath promised them that this and that will happen, and that through those foolish disciples, sceptre and crown will be granted. Thus have they all been entangled in the mesh of their own devices. Those hapless ones have been condemned to endless misery and eternal loss, whilst he liveth his days in the utmost comfort and tranquillity, with no fear or trepidation, no dread of peril or danger.

16 In short, the point is that these disciples, who raised such a clamour in Ṭíhrán and were so confident in his promises, should have asked him to deign to go to Ṭíhrán himself, to act as a true leader and commander, and to issue such incitements and provocations from there. The Manifestations of God and His Chosen Ones have always been the first to carry out that which they enjoin upon others. Yet this individual, while dwelling in peace and safety in his retreat in Cyprus, hath sent his hapless disciples to the cannons and the gallows. Were anyone to gaze with the eye of fairness, this fact alone would suffice. The Glory of Glories rest upon thee.

### **Summary:**

In this passage, 'Abdu'l-Bahá discusses the conditions and prerequisites outlined in religious texts for the advent of the Promised One and the Great Resurrection. He explains that in previous dispensations, such conditions were explicitly stated, leading many to hesitate or misinterpret the signs. For instance, the Qur'an and the Gospel mention specific events like the darkening of the sun and the falling of stars as prerequisites for the advent of the



Promised One. Similarly, the Great Resurrection was conditioned upon various cosmic phenomena and signs. However, 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasizes that in the Bahá'í Faith, no such conditions or prerequisites exist for recognizing the Manifestation of God. He highlights the clarity and immediacy of Bahá'u'lláh's revelation, contrasting it with the misunderstandings and hesitations of previous dispensations. 'Abdu'l-Bahá also addresses the actions of certain individuals, like Mírzá Yahyá, who opposed the Bahá'í Faith despite their previous affiliation with the Báb. He criticizes their lack of steadfastness and contrasts their actions with the courage and commitment of the Manifestations of God.

### **Key Points:**

1. Introduction: 'Abdu'l-Bahá introduces the topic of conditions and prerequisites for the advent of the Promised One and the Great Resurrection.
2. Conditions in previous dispensations: He explains the specific signs and events mentioned in religious texts as prerequisites for the advent of the Promised One and the Great Resurrection.
3. Absence of conditions in the Bahá'í Faith: 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasizes that no such conditions or prerequisites exist in the Bahá'í Faith for recognizing the Manifestation of God.
4. Clarity of Bahá'u'lláh's revelation: He contrasts the clarity and immediacy of Bahá'u'lláh's revelation with the misunderstandings and hesitations of previous dispensations.
5. Critique of certain individuals: 'Abdu'l-Bahá criticizes the lack of steadfastness and commitment of individuals like Mírzá Yahyá, who opposed the Bahá'í Faith despite their previous affiliation with the Báb.
6. Conclusion: 'Abdu'l-Bahá concludes by highlighting the contrast between the actions of certain individuals and the courage and commitment of the Manifestations of God.

### **Questions and Answers:**

1. What conditions and prerequisites are mentioned in religious texts for the advent of the Promised One and the Great Resurrection?
  - Conditions such as the darkening of the sun, the falling of stars, and cosmic phenomena are mentioned as prerequisites for the advent of the Promised One and the Great Resurrection.
2. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá describe the absence of conditions in the Bahá'í Faith for recognizing the Manifestation of God?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasizes that no specific conditions or prerequisites exist in the Bahá'í Faith for recognizing the Manifestation of God, contrasting it with previous dispensations.

3. What contrast does 'Abdu'l-Bahá draw between the clarity of Bahá'u'lláh's revelation and previous dispensations?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá contrasts the clarity and immediacy of Bahá'u'lláh's revelation with the misunderstandings and hesitations prevalent in previous dispensations due to specific conditions and prerequisites.

4. Whom does 'Abdu'l-Bahá criticize for their lack of steadfastness and commitment?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá criticizes individuals like Mírzá Yahyá, who opposed the Bahá'í Faith despite their previous affiliation with the Báb, for their lack of steadfastness and commitment.

5. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá characterize the actions of certain individuals in contrast to the courage and commitment of the Manifestations of God?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá characterizes the actions of certain individuals, like Mírzá Yahyá, as lacking steadfastness and commitment, contrasting them with the courage and commitment demonstrated by the Manifestations of God.

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*He is the All-Glorious.*

1 O ye who are staunch! O ye who stand firm! When the light of Divine Essence dawned above the horizon of Singleness, the splendour of His Oneness shone forth and the daysprings of existence were illumined with manifest grace. So radiant was the light of that Sun of Truth, and so abundant the outpourings of the clouds of His bounty, that the soil of all beings, even as a fertile field, became the bearer of the mysteries of all that hath been and shall be. Those mysteries lie latent and preserved in the innermost reality of the soil of existence and are manifested according to the capacity of the world, bringing forth jasmine and lilies, verdant grass and sweet herbs.

2 Those whose icy breath and whispers are as cold as midwinter have now spread in all directions, carrying leaflets of doubt, hoping to wither the soil of the hearts with the biting chill of Covenant-breaking, so that the seeds of divine wisdom that God hath deposited therein may decay and perish. But how far, how very far from the truth! For the glowing fire of the Covenant hath so set the world ablaze that no frost or ice can withstand it for a moment. This, verily, is the truth.

3           Wherefore, O friends of God, gird up the loins of endeavour, and be so enkindled by the Lord's burning Fire as to light up the East and the West in such wise that every Covenant-breaker would be put to flight and every wavering soul would take heed. Such a great bounty dependeth on unity, harmony, and concord among the beloved of the Lord. The friends in that region must grow so intoxicated by the wine of unity that they become even as a single sea. Though its waves be many, the sea is one; diversity is not an obstacle to unity.

4           Praise be to God, for ye are all illumined by the same Sun and are all brightened by the same Light. Ye are inebriated by the same cup and seek holy ecstasy in the same tavern. Ye are, one and all, enamoured by the countenance of the same Beloved and are captivated by the charm of the same Beauty. Ye quaff from the same wellspring and taste the sweetness of the same draught.

5 I          t behoveth every one of you, however, to show the utmost consideration unto the revered Hands who are foremost in service, for they are the dawning-places of the manifold bounties, loving-kindness, and favours of the Blessed Beauty.<sup>147</sup>

### **Summary:**

In this passage, 'Abdu'l-Bahá addresses the steadfast believers, urging them to remain firm in their faith and to be steadfast in the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh. He metaphorically describes the dawn of Divine Essence and the illumination of existence with the splendor of God's Oneness, likening it to a fertile field bearing the mysteries of creation. However, he warns against the spread of doubt and Covenant-breaking, symbolized by the icy breath of winter, which seeks to wither the soil of hearts and extinguish the seeds of divine wisdom. 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasizes the power of the Covenant, likening it to a glowing fire that cannot be extinguished by frost or ice. He calls upon the friends of God to be enkindled by the Lord's burning Fire and to spread its light to every corner of the world, driving away Covenant-breakers and guiding wavering souls. Unity, harmony, and concord among the believers are essential for this task, as diversity should not be seen as an obstacle to unity. 'Abdu'l-Bahá assures the believers that they are all illumined by the same Sun, inebriated by the same cup, and enamored by the same Beloved. He emphasizes the importance of showing utmost consideration to the Hands of the Cause, who are channels of divine bounties and favors.

### **Key Points:**

1. Introduction: 'Abdu'l-Bahá addresses the steadfast believers and praises their firmness in the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh.

2. Dawn of Divine Essence: He metaphorically describes the dawn of Divine Essence and the illumination of existence with the splendor of God's Oneness, likening it to a fertile field.
3. Warning against doubt and Covenant-breaking: 'Abdu'l-Bahá warns against the spread of doubt and Covenant-breaking, symbolized by the icy breath of winter, which seeks to wither the soil of hearts.
4. Power of the Covenant: He emphasizes the power of the Covenant, likening it to a glowing fire that cannot be extinguished by frost or ice.
5. Call to action: 'Abdu'l-Bahá calls upon the believers to be enkindled by the Lord's burning Fire and to spread its light to every corner of the world, driving away Covenant-breakers and guiding wavering souls.
6. Importance of unity: He emphasizes the importance of unity, harmony, and concord among the believers, stressing that diversity should not be seen as an obstacle to unity.
7. Unity in diversity: 'Abdu'l-Bahá assures the believers that they are all united by their faith and love for Bahá'u'lláh, despite their diverse backgrounds.
8. Consideration for the Hands of the Cause: He urges the believers to show utmost consideration to the Hands of the Cause, who are channels of divine bounties and favors.

### **Questions and Answers:**

1. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá metaphorically describe the dawn of Divine Essence?
  - 'Abdu'l-Bahá metaphorically describes the dawn of Divine Essence as illuminating existence with the splendor of God's Oneness, likening it to a fertile field bearing the mysteries of creation.
2. What warning does 'Abdu'l-Bahá give regarding doubt and Covenant-breaking?
  - 'Abdu'l-Bahá warns against the spread of doubt and Covenant-breaking, symbolized by the icy breath of winter, which seeks to wither the soil of hearts and extinguish the seeds of divine wisdom.
3. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá characterize the power of the Covenant?
  - 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasizes the power of the Covenant, likening it to a glowing fire that cannot be extinguished by frost or ice.
4. What call to action does 'Abdu'l-Bahá give to the believers?
  - 'Abdu'l-Bahá calls upon the believers to be enkindled by the Lord's burning Fire and to spread its light to every corner of the world, driving away Covenant-breakers and guiding wavering souls.
5. Why does 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasize the importance of unity among the believers?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasizes the importance of unity among the believers, stressing that diversity should not be seen as an obstacle to unity, as it is essential for spreading the light of the Covenant and guiding souls.

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*He is God.*

- 1 O beloved servants and handmaidens of God! In its weakness and frailty, the world of humanity is even as a heap of darksome dust. Yet when the clouds of mercy of the All-Knowing Lord rain down upon it, this dark earth shall bring forth crimson flowers and shall become the resplendent rose-garden of the Concourse on high. Although we are weak and feeble, yet the bounties of the Blessed Beauty are boundless and inexhaustible. In offering gratitude, we have no recourse but to confess our own shortcomings, no remedy but to hold our peace, for we are powerless and wanting, feeble and faltering. Wherefore, praise be to the Lord of creation, through Whose bounty these helpless ants show forth the strength of Solomon, and these needy and feeble gnats become royal falcons of the heights of mystery, causing the bestowals of the Almighty to be manifested.
- 2 Now, concerning the recorded tradition that in former times only two letters were revealed but in the days of the Qá'im all the remaining ones shall be made manifest, the following is meant. All the works and sciences, laws and ordinances, inventions and wonders, and the perfections of the human world that had been manifested in bygone times, were even as two letters. But in this wondrous Dispensation, and with the appearance of the glorious Treasure, the perfections and attainments of the world of humanity and its limitless sciences and arts shall advance to such a degree that they may be likened unto all the remaining letters.
- 3 That is, this wondrous Dispensation is so different and distinguished from the previous ones that, even as ye witness, though it is still the first century, so many mysteries of creation have, within so short a period, stepped forth out of the realm of the invisible into the visible world. How many well-guarded secrets once enshrined within the realm of the unseen have been revealed! How many discoveries have been made of the hidden realities of things, and how many inventions and wonders have appeared! Infer then from this what the future shall hold.

Await the break of His sovereign morn,  
These are but effects of its early dawn!<sup>148</sup>

The Glory of Glories rest upon you.

**Summary:**

In this passage, 'Abdu'l-Bahá addresses the beloved servants and handmaidens of God, likening the world of humanity to a heap of darksome dust, yet destined to become a resplendent rose-garden through the outpouring of God's mercy. He acknowledges human weakness and frailty but emphasizes the boundless bounties of the Blessed Beauty, which empower even the feeblest beings to manifest strength and greatness. 'Abdu'l-Bahá expresses gratitude for these bounties while acknowledging human shortcomings and powerlessness. He then elucidates a recorded tradition regarding the revelation of letters, explaining that in former times, only two letters of divine knowledge were revealed, symbolizing the limited scope of human achievements and perfections. However, in the days of the Qá'im (the Promised One), all remaining letters, representing the vast potential of human advancement, will be made manifest. He describes the wondrous Dispensation of the Qá'im as distinguished from previous ones by the rapid advancement of human knowledge and achievements, leading to the revelation of well-guarded secrets, discoveries of hidden realities, and the emergence of inventions and wonders. 'Abdu'l-Bahá urges anticipation of the future's even greater manifestations.

**Key Points:**

1. Introduction: 'Abdu'l-Bahá addresses the beloved servants and handmaidens of God, expressing gratitude for God's boundless bounties.
2. Human frailty and divine mercy: He compares the world of humanity to a heap of darksome dust, destined to become a resplendent rose-garden through the outpouring of God's mercy.
3. Human weakness and divine empowerment: 'Abdu'l-Bahá acknowledges human weakness and frailty but emphasizes the boundless bounties of the Blessed Beauty, which empower even the feeblest beings to manifest strength and greatness.
4. Revelation of letters: He elucidates a recorded tradition regarding the revelation of letters, symbolizing the limited scope of human achievements and perfections in former times.
5. Dispensation of the Qá'im: 'Abdu'l-Bahá explains the wondrous Dispensation of the Qá'im as distinguished from previous ones by the rapid advancement of human knowledge and

achievements, leading to the revelation of well-guarded secrets, discoveries of hidden realities, and the emergence of inventions and wonders.

6. Anticipation of the future: He urges anticipation of even greater manifestations in the future.

7. Conclusion: 'Abdu'l-Bahá concludes with a prayerful invocation for the Glory of Glories to rest upon the believers.

### **Questions and Answers:**

1. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá describe the world of humanity in its current state?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá describes the world of humanity as akin to a heap of darksome dust, yet destined to become a resplendent rose-garden through the outpouring of God's mercy.

2. What does 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasize regarding human weakness and divine empowerment?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasizes the boundless bounties of the Blessed Beauty, which empower even the feeblest beings to manifest strength and greatness, despite human weakness and frailty.

3. What tradition does 'Abdu'l-Bahá elucidate regarding the revelation of letters?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá elucidates a tradition regarding the revelation of letters, symbolizing the limited scope of human achievements and perfections in former times, contrasted with the potential for advancement in the days of the Qá'im.

4. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá characterize the Dispensation of the Qá'im?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá characterizes the Dispensation of the Qá'im as distinguished from previous ones by the rapid advancement of human knowledge and achievements, leading to the revelation of hidden realities and the emergence of inventions and wonders.

5. What does 'Abdu'l-Bahá urge the believers to anticipate?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá urges the believers to anticipate even greater manifestations in the future, beyond the advancements witnessed in the current era.

*He is the All-Glorious, the Most Effulgent.*

1 O thou who art firm in the Covenant! The opening of thy letter bore the words “O ‘Abdu’l-Bahá!” What a call this was, for it caused my heart to leap with joy and my soul to tremble with delight. Glad-tidings encircled me on every side, my eyes were cheered, and my whole

being breathed in the sweet savours of a garden of roses. This call, even as the melody of the Concourse on high, filled the soul of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá with joy and rapture.

2 By Him Who hath illumined my face with the light of absolute servitude to His Holy Threshold! No melody can fill this yearning soul with such joy and rapture as the call of “O ‘Abdu’l-Bahá!” And no sweet accents warbled by the birds of the orchards can thrill my heart with such delight as the dulcet tune of “O ‘Abdu’l-Bahá!” This melody causeth my heart to leap with joy, and these wondrous words fill me with blissful rapture, but only on condition that this name be accompanied by no other epithets of praise, and paired with no other titles. The designation should be “‘Abdu’l-Bahá” alone for it to bestow boundless joy upon my heart and soul. This is my qualification and my station, this is my title and my glory, and this indeed is my highest aspiration throughout eternity.

3 Thou hast commended the beloved of the Lord, saying that they are fully occupied with worship and praise, are seizing the Cup of the Covenant, and, elated with joy at the banquet of the Lord, are unloosing their tongues in gratitude to the All-Merciful. This, indeed, is as it should be, for in this day there is no other path for the friends, and no other testimony for the pure in heart.

4 I beseech and entreat the all-pervasive grace of the Most Bountiful Lord to grant that the hearts of His loved ones may become the repositories of divine inspiration and the daysprings of the effusions of His limitless bounty, so that, with the utmost harmony and fellowship, they may all be freed from the estrangement of the realm of vainglory and may associate with one another with perfect humility and lowliness. May no trace of self be detected from their conduct and manners, from their words and deeds. Man’s greatness lieth in humility, and his abiding glory is found in lowliness, self-effacement, and servitude to the servants of the Lord. This, verily, is the greatest attainment in this resplendent Day.

5 Thou hast asked concerning the blessed verse “From the heaven to the earth He ordereth all things, and hereafter shall they come up to Him on a day whose length shall be a thousand of such years as ye reckon.”<sup>149</sup> By this “day” is meant the Day of the Great Resurrection, the Day of Judgement, for on that Day there shall appear such signs and events, such splendours and occurrences, marvels and wonders, truths and mysteries, precepts and writings, that the revelation of those splendours and signs cannot be contained even in fifty thousand years. Moreover, the precepts and laws, and the writings, teachings, and manifold bounties associated with that Day, which is none other than the “appointed time of a known day”,<sup>150</sup> shall remain valid and binding for a full thousand years, nay for five hundred thousand years. Such a span of time is merely an approximation that alludeth to ages and centuries. And on



that appointed Day, the outpourings of divine grace shall visibly descend from the kingdom of mercy and the heaven of oneness. And as such outpourings of grace cannot endure forever in this nether world, that glorious light must needs return to the luminous Star from whence it came, and those merciful showers that emanate from the liberal effusions of the sea of oneness must return, once again, to the Most Great Ocean.

6 Even as thou hast witnessed, in the day of the appearance of the Point of the Qur'án—may my soul be offered up for Him—the splendours of God's manifold grace shone forth, clear and manifest, through that luminous Day-Star upon the whole of creation, and for a thousand years that heavenly grace was vouchsafed unto all lands and regions and unto the realities of all created things. And when that Dispensation drew to a close, those signs and splendours returned to the unseen realm.

7 And then, a new Day dawned and a wondrous light shone forth. The Morn of Oneness rose, and the Day-Star of the world gleamed bright. The Most Great Ocean surged, and its billowing waves mounted to the Concourse on high. The clouds of bounty gathered above, and the showers of mercy rained down. The light of truth appeared, and the way of guidance was made manifest. The glorious testimony was disclosed and the path of the All-Merciful Lord became plain and evident. Through the limitless grace of the Divine Springtime, the Abhá Paradise was made to adorn the Most Exalted Kingdom. The bounties, the splendours, the mysteries, the signs, the verses, and the proofs of this wondrous Light that hath hoisted its banners on this joyous Day shall remain in effect for five hundred thousand years.

8 By thy dear life, I have no time to write more; otherwise, I would have written a wondrous commentary, a mighty book, on this blessed verse. The glory of God rest upon thee.

### **Summary:**

In this passage, 'Abdu'l-Bahá addresses the firm believers of the Covenant, expressing joy and delight upon receiving a letter addressed to him. He equates the call of "O 'Abdu'l-Bahá!" to a melody that fills his soul with joy and rapture, emphasizing that this title alone bestows boundless joy upon him. 'Abdu'l-Bahá commends the believers for their worship, praise, and adherence to the Covenant, stressing the importance of humility and servitude in this Day. He prays for the hearts of the believers to become repositories of divine inspiration and the daysprings of God's bounty, emphasizing the greatness found in humility and servitude to others. 'Abdu'l-Bahá then elucidates the meaning of the verse regarding the Day of Resurrection, explaining its significance and the enduring validity of its precepts and laws for a thousand years. He draws parallels with previous Dispensations and the manifestation of

divine grace, highlighting the ongoing cycle of revelation and return to the unseen realm.

'Abdu'l-Bahá concludes with a note on the limitations of time preventing further elaboration on the topic.

### **Key Points:**

1. Introduction: 'Abdu'l-Bahá expresses joy and delight upon receiving a letter addressed to him.
2. The significance of the call "O 'Abdu'l-Bahá!": He equates this call to a melody that fills his soul with joy and rapture, emphasizing its importance.
3. Commendation of the believers: 'Abdu'l-Bahá praises the believers for their worship, praise, and adherence to the Covenant, highlighting the importance of humility and servitude.
4. Prayer for divine inspiration: He prays for the hearts of the believers to become repositories of divine inspiration and the daysprings of God's bounty, emphasizing the greatness found in humility and servitude.
5. Elucidation of the verse regarding the Day of Resurrection: 'Abdu'l-Bahá explains the significance of this verse and the enduring validity of its precepts and laws for a thousand years.
6. Parallels with previous Dispensations: He draws parallels with previous Dispensations and the manifestation of divine grace, highlighting the ongoing cycle of revelation and return to the unseen realm.
7. Conclusion: 'Abdu'l-Bahá concludes with a note on the limitations of time preventing further elaboration on the topic.

### **Questions and Answers:**

1. What brings joy and delight to 'Abdu'l-Bahá upon receiving a letter?
  - 'Abdu'l-Bahá expresses joy and delight upon receiving a letter addressed to him, especially upon hearing the call of "O 'Abdu'l-Bahá!"
2. Why does 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasize the importance of the title "'Abdu'l-Bahá"?'
  - 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasizes that the title "'Abdu'l-Bahá" alone bestows boundless joy upon him, without the need for additional epithets or titles.
3. What qualities does 'Abdu'l-Bahá commend in the believers?
  - 'Abdu'l-Bahá commends the believers for their worship, praise, and adherence to the Covenant, highlighting the importance of humility and servitude.
4. What does 'Abdu'l-Bahá pray for regarding the believers' hearts?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá prays for the hearts of the believers to become repositories of divine inspiration and the daysprings of God's bounty, emphasizing the greatness found in humility and servitude.

5. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá explain the significance of the verse regarding the Day of Resurrection?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá elucidates the significance of the verse and the enduring validity of its precepts and laws for a thousand years, drawing parallels with previous Dispensations and the manifestation of divine grace.

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<sup>1</sup> Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By* (Wilmette, IL: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1974, 2018 printing), p. 398.

<sup>2</sup> Shoghi Effendi, p. 387.

<sup>3</sup> Shoghi Effendi, pp. 387, 381.

<sup>4</sup> A reference to Adrianople.

<sup>5</sup> Mullá Husayn-i-Bushrú'í.

<sup>6</sup> The Arabic Bayán 1:7.

<sup>7</sup> The Báb's Tablet to Mullá Báqir-i-Tabrízí.

<sup>8</sup> "Mirror" was a title bestowed by the Báb on several of His followers.

<sup>9</sup> See Kitáb-i-Aqdas, ¶175 and note 185.

<sup>10</sup> Qur'án 4:78.

<sup>11</sup> Qur'án 2:2.

<sup>12</sup> Qur'án 33:40.

<sup>13</sup> His turban.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Qur'án 20:108.

<sup>15</sup> A reference to Mírzá Hádíy-i-Dawlat-Ábádí.

<sup>16</sup> Qur'án 10:41.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. poem by Abu't-Tayyib al-Mutanabbí.

<sup>18</sup> Qur'án 76:21.

<sup>19</sup> Mírzá Muḥammad-'Alí, 'Abdu'l-Bahá's half-brother.

<sup>20</sup> Bahá'u'lláh.

<sup>21</sup> The Báb.

<sup>22</sup> A reference to the Afnán, the relatives of the Báb.

<sup>23</sup> The cistern adjacent to the Shrine.

<sup>24</sup> "Signs" and "Proofs" are references to the Muslim clerics.

<sup>25</sup> Light.

<sup>26</sup> Mírzá Yahyá. An allusion and contrast to "Yahyá the chaste", the Islamic title of John the Baptist (see Qur'án 3:39).

<sup>27</sup> Qur'án 38:42.

<sup>28</sup> *Murgh-Mahallih* means "Abode of the Birds".

<sup>29</sup> A reference to *God's Heroes*, a play written by Laura Dreyfus Barney and published in 1910.

<sup>30</sup> Mírzá Ja'far, the son of Maḥmúd-i-Sharí'atmadár-i-Láhíjí.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. poem by Nazírí Nishápúrí.

<sup>32</sup> *English Churchman*, a Protestant newspaper, had published articles opposing the Faith, including one by Rev. Peter Z. Easton on 20 September 1911.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Qaṣídiy-i-Varqá'íyyih, an ode revealed by Bahá'u'lláh in Kurdistan.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Rúmí.

<sup>35</sup> A reference to Mírzá Husayn Khán, the Iranian Minister in Constantinople.

<sup>36</sup> Qur'án 9:33.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Psalms 132 and 48.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Qur'án 22:11.

<sup>39</sup> A reference to Constantinople.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Qur'án 26:227.

<sup>41</sup> An allusion to a verse by Rúmí.

<sup>42</sup> The Azalís.

<sup>43</sup> The attempt on the life of the Shah by Şádiq-i-Tabrízí.

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- <sup>44</sup> A character, infamous for his moral laxity and indifference to honour and fidelity, mentioned in Ottoman Turkish sources.
- <sup>45</sup> A reference to Fátimih, the second wife of the Báb.
- <sup>46</sup> A reference to the prohibition in Qur’án 4:23 against marriage to two sisters at the same time.
- <sup>47</sup> Poem by Nazírí Nishápúrí.
- <sup>48</sup> See note 26.
- <sup>49</sup> Cf. Qur’án 22:12–13.
- <sup>50</sup> Mírzá Yahyá was one of those on whom the Báb had bestowed the title of “Mirror”.
- <sup>51</sup> Constantinople.
- <sup>52</sup> 9 August 1919.
- <sup>53</sup> Adrianople.
- <sup>54</sup> Constantinople.
- <sup>55</sup> Qur’án 12:16.
- <sup>56</sup> Háfiz.
- <sup>57</sup> Egypt.
- <sup>58</sup> An allusion to a poem in Arabic: “We can learn from those who went before us in bygone centuries.”
- <sup>59</sup> Jesus.
- <sup>60</sup> Qur’án 14:24.
- <sup>61</sup> The original name of Peter.
- <sup>62</sup> Rúmí.
- <sup>63</sup> The ascension of Bahá’u’lláh.
- <sup>64</sup> An allusion to the story of Joseph in Qur’án 12:31.
- <sup>65</sup> Qur’án 7:128 and 11:49.
- <sup>66</sup> A reference to the ‘ulamá and their fomenting of political upheaval in Iran.
- <sup>67</sup> A reference to the activities of the Azalís in Constantinople.
- <sup>68</sup> Jamálu’d-Dín-i-Afghání.
- <sup>69</sup> A reference to an allegation advanced by Mírzá Muḥammad-‘Alí against ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.
- <sup>70</sup> The Tablet, addressed to Siyyid Mihdíy-i-Dahají, is quoted in the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. The full text of this statement is “Should he for a moment pass out from under the shadow of the Cause, he surely shall be brought to naught.”
- <sup>71</sup> Qur’án 22:73.
- <sup>72</sup> Kitáb-i-Aqdas, ¶ 53.
- <sup>73</sup> A reference to Mírzá Yahyá’s two sons-in-law Mírzá Áqá Khán-i-Kirmání and Shaykh Aḥmad-i-Rúhí.
- <sup>74</sup> Kitáb-i-Aqdas, ¶53.
- <sup>75</sup> Jesus.
- <sup>76</sup> Cf. Qur’án 54:2.
- <sup>77</sup> Qur’án 17:82.
- <sup>78</sup> Qur’án 15:29.
- <sup>79</sup> Qur’án 68:4 and 9:3.
- <sup>80</sup> Imám Ḥusayn.
- <sup>81</sup> Caliphs of the Umayyad dynasty.
- <sup>82</sup> Tíhrán and Khurásán.
- <sup>83</sup> Abraham.
- <sup>84</sup> Moses.
- <sup>85</sup> Jesus.
- <sup>86</sup> Muḥammad.
- <sup>87</sup> Qur’án 25:41.
- <sup>88</sup> An allusion to Rúmí’s story about a jackal that fell into a barrel of paint and then claimed to be a peacock.
- <sup>89</sup> Qur’án 59:19.
- <sup>90</sup> Cf. Qur’án 21:74.
- <sup>91</sup> Qur’án 38:11.
- <sup>92</sup> Ancient communities mentioned in the Qur’án.
- <sup>93</sup> Qur’án 3:190.
- <sup>94</sup> Qur’án 2:18 and 8:31.
- <sup>95</sup> Qur’án 2:105 and 3:74.
- <sup>96</sup> Qur’án 33:21.
- <sup>97</sup> Matthew 16:18.
- <sup>98</sup> See note 70.
- <sup>99</sup> A reference to the second Bahá’í Teaching Convention of the Central States, held in 1919.

- <sup>100</sup> The full sentence reads: “The Will of the divine Testator is this: It is incumbent upon the Aghṣán, the Afnán and My kindred to turn, one and all, their faces towards the Most Mighty Branch.”
- <sup>101</sup> A reference to the Ḥadīth that the Prophet Muḥammad delivered a sermon at Ghadír-i-Khumm in which He stated: “Whoever hath Me as his Master, hath ‘Alí as his Master.” The Shí‘ihs consider this verbal statement to be authoritative and on its basis believe ‘Alí to be the lawful successor to the Prophet.
- <sup>102</sup> Qur’án 6:91.
- <sup>103</sup> Cf. Qur’án 15:72.
- <sup>104</sup> Cf. Qur’án 75:29–30.
- <sup>105</sup> Matthew 16:18.
- <sup>106</sup> Qur’án 22:11.
- <sup>107</sup> Cf. Qur’án 13:17.
- <sup>108</sup> Qur’án 6:91.
- <sup>109</sup> ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s commentary on “Bismi’lláhi’r-Raḥmání’r-Raḥím”, the opening words of nearly all the chapters of the Qur’án.
- <sup>110</sup> The Lawḥ-i-Saniy-i-Shidád. The numerical value of *Shidád* (“Stress”) is 309, which denotes the year of the passing of Bahá’u’lláh according to the Muslim lunar calendar (A.H. 1309/A.D. 1892).
- <sup>111</sup> See note 101.
- <sup>112</sup> Matthew 16:18.
- <sup>113</sup> Rúmí.
- <sup>114</sup> Matthew 26:34.
- <sup>115</sup> Napoleon III.
- <sup>116</sup> Qur’án 20:10.
- <sup>117</sup> Qur’án 15:87.
- <sup>118</sup> In Persian and Arabic, as vowels are not written, these names each consist of seven letters.
- <sup>119</sup> By “thirteen distinguished souls” is intended Fátimih, the daughter of Muḥammad, and the twelve Imáms.
- <sup>120</sup> Probably Mullá Muḥammad-Riḍá of Muḥammad-Ábád.
- <sup>121</sup> A reference to the opening chapter of the Qur’án, which begins with the letter Bá’.
- <sup>122</sup> From a Ḥadīth.
- <sup>123</sup> A Váhid has a numerical value of nineteen.
- <sup>124</sup> Bábis who rejected Bahá’u’lláh.
- <sup>125</sup> See Kitáb-i-Aqdas, ¶175 and note 185.
- <sup>126</sup> See Qur’án 70:4.
- <sup>127</sup> Qur’án 4:78.
- <sup>128</sup> Mírzá Yaḥyá.
- <sup>129</sup> Qur’án 13:16.
- <sup>130</sup> Qur’án 6:91.
- <sup>131</sup> Cf. Matthew 13:13.
- <sup>132</sup> Cf. Qur’án 22:12–13.
- <sup>133</sup> The Antichrist, who it was believed would appear at the advent of the Promised One, to contend with and be ultimately defeated by Him.
- <sup>134</sup> Another figure who it was believed would raise the banner of rebellion between Mecca and Damascus at the appearance of the Promised One.
- <sup>135</sup> According to Islamic tradition, Seven Goats would, on the Day of Judgement, walk in front of the promised Qá’im, and their deaths would precede the impending martyrdom of their true Shepherd.
- <sup>136</sup> Qur’án 55:56.
- <sup>137</sup> Addressed to Vahíd in the Tablet to Mullá Báqir-i-Tabrízí.
- <sup>138</sup> The ancient Arabic system of allocating a numerical value to letters of the alphabet, so that numbers may be represented by letters and vice versa.
- <sup>139</sup> Qur’án 17:47.
- <sup>140</sup> Qur’án 34:8.
- <sup>141</sup> Qur’án 25:41.
- <sup>142</sup> Qur’án 19:28.
- <sup>143</sup> Qur’án 20:71.
- <sup>144</sup> Qur’án 11:27.
- <sup>145</sup> *Shaykh* Muḥammad-Taḥqíy-i-Najafí, denounced by Bahá’u’lláh as the “son of the Wolf”.
- <sup>146</sup> Qur’án 2:18.
- <sup>147</sup> A reference to the Hands of the Cause appointed by Bahá’u’lláh.
- <sup>148</sup> Anvarí.
- <sup>149</sup> Qur’án 32:5.
- <sup>150</sup> Qur’án 56:50.

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