

In conclusion, Bahá'u'lláh gives the Arabs a moving benediction, and warns them not to draw near to those from whom the “odors of hypocrisy diffuse.”

The Súrah of the Arabs (Súrat al-A`ráb)
revealed by Bahá'u'lláh

trans. Joshua Hall

This is the Súrah of the Arabs which has been revealed by One Who is the Revealer, the Ancient of Days

He is the Sanctified, the Transcendent, the Exalted, the Most Effulgent

These are the verses of God which have been sent down from the heaven of wondrous glory, and which God has made to be a proof and testament from Him unto the worlds. Within it are mentioned the servants of God who recognized God in His own Self, who were not shut out as by a veil on account of the outcry of the idolators, who entered the shelter of His loving providence and reposed in the precincts of His mercy which surpasses all contingent things – this, indeed, is a great bounty.

These are they upon whom the heavenly concourse pronounce their blessings, as well as the angels that have drawn nigh. These are they who fell on their faces in prostration before God, the Exalted, the Sublime, when the Everlasting Sun once again shed Its effulgence upon them from the Most High Horizon.

O Beloved of God from amongst the Arabs! Give ear unto the call of God proceeding from this Tree upraised in truth, all of Whose leaves speak forth in all things: “I am God; none other god is there beside Him, the Sanctified, the Almighty, the Munificent”.

O people, hasten unto the Sidrah[1] of God and take shelter beneath Its shade. By the One True God! Were you to search all the climes of the earth and the expanse of the heavens, never would you find an abode of safety save beneath the shade of this Tree which overshadows the worlds. From amidst Its leaves the sweet-scented breeze of the Lord is wafted, giving life to every moldering bone. Turn unto It and partake of Its fruits, that your hearts may be purified thereby of the suggestions of every wretched deceiver.

Render praise, then, unto God for having preserved you from the wastes of self and passion, for having delivered you from the depths of prejudiced delusion and blindness on a Day when God came with the kingdom of His Cause and made His sovereignty manifest before all in heaven and on earth. Thank Him for having enabled you to recognize Him Who is His Self, for having revealed His beauty to you, for having spoken with you openly, and for His having numbered you among His servants who are endowed with understanding.

Stand firm in the Cause, insofar as Satan has come forth with his armies, and bids you at every moment to deny God, Who created you by a word from Him and Who made you among them who have attained. Praise God for having chosen you for His own Self, such that after the Sun of Eternity had set in Its own country,

It dawned forth from the horizon of `Irâq, your land. This is of His grace unto you, which nothing, whether in the heavens or on earth, can surpass. The Face of God was amongst you with refulgent radiance, unconcealed and divested of every veil. He recited to you the verses of your Lord for months and years. The Ancient Beauty used to walk amidst you with God's majesty and presence, and revealed to you at each moment a fresh effulgence. Thus was the favor of God and His mercy complete unto you, that you might be among those in gratitude.

It is befitting that you pride yourselves over all the peoples of the earth, for none have been graced with such as you have attained, if you be among them possessed of understanding. You are thus to characterize yourselves with the attributes of God, that the perfumes of holiness may be diffused over all creation from your hearts, and that the signs of your Lord, the All-Merciful, the Compassionate, may be revealed from you. Insofar as He has chosen you from amongst His creatures, strive that there be manifest from you such as has not been evinced by those beside you, that your eminence may be apparent in itself amongst the worlds. Be as the stars amidst the concourse of the earth, that you may guide those servants who have veiled themselves from recognizing God and Him Who is the Revealer of His Cause, and who are among the heedless.

Be marked by trustworthiness toward yourselves and all people, then with regard to their wealth and possessions, for such a virtue was beloved of God before the creation of Adam from water and clay. Were you not to be trustworthy and faithful on earth, neither could you be at peace with yourselves nor the people with you. Thus does God counsel you with the tongue of the Revealer of His Cause; indeed, a reminder is this to you and all creation.

Purify your hearts of envy and hatred, and your souls from lusts and corrupt inclinations. Observe, then, such as you are bidden by God. Indeed, that which God commands His servants is better for them than the treasures of the heavens and earth. Beware lest you dispute with anyone regarding such as is created in this world; leave it unto the people thereof, that your souls may be at rest and you be wholly devoted to your Lord, the Exalted, the Sublime. The kingdom of wealth is in the hand of your Lord, the All-Merciful; He enriches whom He wills at His own behest, and He is, in truth, the Omnipotent, the Almighty, the Munificent.

Know, then, that God has entrusted the earth unto the kings, and has made them the manifestations of His might amidst all creation, if they enter under the shadow of the Sidrah of the Cause. Beyond this, authority is in His grasp; He does as He wills and decrees as He pleases. Nothing has He desired for Himself. He has left the world and its vanities to the people thereof, and has sanctified His loved ones from turning unto it; for He desires naught for them save such as shall endure so long as He Himself, the Exalted, the Sublime, shall endure. All that He has desired of the world are the hearts of His beloved ones, to sanctify them from all else beside Him and uplift them to the abode of safety, wherein nothing is beheld save the splendors of His countenance, wherein only praise of Me, the Almighty, the Wondrous, is heard.

Open, O people, the cities of men's hearts with the sword of the tongue in the name of your Lord, the All-Powerful, the Almighty, the Beneficent. Thus has the tongue of the All-Merciful commanded you formerly and presently; observe, then, such as you have been bidden, and do not transgress the precepts of God, your Lord and the Lord of the worlds. Beware lest you dispute regarding the Cause of God with anyone, for We have abrogated the law of the sword and have ordained that service be rendered by wisdom and exposition, as a token of Our grace to all creation.

Be kindled, O people, in the heat of God's love, that the souls of mankind may be set aflame! This is true service to the Cause, if you be among them possessed of understanding. From everlasting has He been sanctified of the world and all that is created within and upon it. If He were to so desire, He could conquer the earth and all who dwell upon it, by virtue of His name, the Omnipotent, the Almighty, the Powerful.

Adorn yourselves, O people, with the color of God; forsake, then, the hue of those who join partners with Him. God directs you unto righteousness and virtue. Be mindful in the religion of God, and do not commit iniquity and acts of profligacy. Be among those from whose faces the light of your Lord, the Unconstrained, is beheld, and from whom the sign of God and His bearing are manifest. Thus has it been ordained for you, the people of Bahá, in these days of travail.

O My Arabs, give hear unto My call and walk in My path. Remember, then, the days of My presence and then My exile, My solitude, and My imprisonment, that you may be remembered by God in His kingdom of sublime glory. Cast aside the cup of annihilation proffered by those who follow self and desire, then take up the chalice that is life everlasting proffered by the fingers of Bahá, in the name of your Lord, the Exalted, the Most High, in this latter day. By this are souls so enriched as to be independent of the worlds.

O Pen of the Ancient of Days! Call to remembrance the Arabs whom God has chosen for His own Self, and whom He has enabled to gaze toward the direction of His mercy, whom He has severed from the idolators, that they may rejoice within themselves and be steadfast in the Cause, whereby the heaven of opposition has been cleft and every lofty summit scattered to dust.

Say: O people! We warned you upon Our departing `Iraq that Sámirí[2] would appear, the Calf cry aloud, and the birds of the night take flight after the setting of the Sun. Beware lest you forget the words of God; abide in peerless sanctity.

By God, My Arabs! If you were to look upon Me, you would not recognize Me, for My hair has whitened by reason of successive tribulations, and the Alif of the Cause has appeared in the form of Dál[3] by virtue of unrelenting trials; moreover, this rosy-red and luminous visage has grown wan and pale.

My Arabs! Be not forgetful of My mention, nor of My hardships, My sorrows, and My suffering. By My life! Mine eye weeps and My heart laments over Myself

amongst these idolators. By God! The Beauty of the divine will has suffered alteration by reason of the oppression of foes, the Temple of the divine behest lies prostrate on the ashes, Destiny has torn asunder the robe of forbearance, and Decree is bereft of realization for such as the armies of the wicked-doers have committed against God, the Exalted, the Most High, in His latter dispensation. Thus has the matter come to pass, if you be among those with a hearing ear.

Is there any soul who shall arise to assist the Beauty of God by the tongue, who shall guard the Temple of His Cause from the swords of the People of the Bayán, and be among them whom the veils of names have not shut out from attaining unto Him Who is the Supreme Emanation, the Remembrance of God and the Wellspring of wisdom? Is there any who might have compassion on this Wronged One, who shall arise to render Him victorious, and be severed from all the worlds?

My Arabs! He who is unable to speak in My presence has endeavored to slay Me,[4] after We had created him, reared him, instructed him, and protected him for months and years. By God! If one of the tales of the Everlasting Joseph of were to be related unto you, and such as had befallen Him from the wolves of hatred, you would be severed from your own souls, look out unto the wilderness and lament until the spirit left your bodies. Yet the Pen forbears to speak, so as to guard your souls, O concourse of the faithful.

O My Arabs! Weep over My loneliness, My solitude, My imprisonment, and the hardship I have sustained; be not among the heedless. Those whom God has made to be a manifest warning on the earth have arisen in opposition, such that the Pen of the worlds cannot describe.

O My Arabs! Listen to My counsel, and do not draw near to those from whom the odors of hypocrisy defuse. Shun their ilk and abide in stainless purity.

Thus has the Beauty of the All-Merciful commanded you at this moment while He is hemmed in with sorrows by reason of the legions of Satan, if you be among them possessed of understanding.

The radiance which has dawned from the everlasting realm rest upon you, O People of Bahá, so long as the Lord, the Omnipotent, the Exalted, the Sublime, shall endure.

Notes

1 Lote-Tree. Among the connotations of this word are the Burning Bush and the Lote-Tree of the seventh heaven beyond which lies God's throne. In the Bahá'í writings, it is a symbol for the Manifestation of God.

2 He who, according to the Qur'anic story of Moses, induced the Israelites into the worship of the Golden Calf.

3 The letter Alif is an erect line, while the letter Dál appears to a bent over Alif.

4 Baha'u'llah's brother Mírzá Yahyá. Alluded references are common in Arabic style.

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