

THE SUN THAT SHALL NEVER SET

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."

[Today's texts are from *Light of the World: Selected Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá* published in 2021 and include Tablet number for ease of reference.]

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! [1]

2. 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.

3. 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. [4]

4. ...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." [Qur'án 9:33] 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. [Cf. Psalms 132 and 48]

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 hearts. [25]

7. 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”. [Qur’án 14:24] ...

Now, upon His ascension, the Ancient Beauty ...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!

8. 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. [35]

9. ...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. [46]

10. ...What shall my pen recount? What shall I think? From the earliest days of the Cause, the Ancient Beauty, the Most Great Name ...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.

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.

11. 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 ..." One must be fair in judgement! Consider how carefully the Blessed Beauty proceeded. ...

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!" [60]

12. ...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.

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. [37]

Your personal prayers

Reflection on the Text

Discussion

Bahá'u'lláh has said: *For the Day of God is none other but His own Self, Who hath appeared with the power of truth. **This is the Day that shall not be followed by night**, nor shall it be bounded by any praise, would that ye might understand!*

- How do you understand this?
- Why is "Day" capitalized?
- How would you explain this in your own words?