

Súrah of Visitation for Mullá Husayn (*Súrat al-ziyárah li-Mullá Husayn*)

Revealed by Bahá'u'lláh

Introduction and provisional translation by Joshua Hall

Bahá'u'lláh revealed His Súrah of Visitation in honor of Mullá Husayn and addressed it to Mullá Husayn's sister, Varaqatu'l-Firdaws (Leaf of Paradise). The tablet consists of a number of different portions, each of which proceeds into the other in a natural transition.

In His exordium, Bahá'u'lláh names the tablet and states that it is “sent down from the realm of grace for the name of God, the First”, that being Mullá Husayn, for the purpose of visitation at his burial site by his sister and the believers. The overall style is similar to that used by the Báb in His tablets of visitation in memory of the Imams, and Bahá'u'lláh employs throughout a rhyming prose termed *saj'* in Arabic, which is very moving in its effect in the original and cannot be fully expressed in translation.

After the short exordium, Bahá'u'lláh tells of His reality in the worlds of God and identifies Himself with the prophets and holy ones of former ages. He relates the hardships that befell them and the oppression to which they were subjected by their respective adversaries. For example, Able is slain at the hands of Cain, Abraham is opposed by Nimrod, Moses challenged by Pharaoh, Christ crucified by the Jews, and Muhammad persecuted by the Meccans. Bahá'u'lláh then weaves the narrative of His own ministry from the intimation of His mission in Tehran to the later unveiling of His station to the Bábis and the world. He speaks of the malice in the hearts of those claiming faith in the Báb, affirms His being assisted by God and confirms His own sovereignty.

After this narrative, Bahá'u'lláh formally addresses Mullá Husayn's sister, the “Leaf of Paradise”, and assures her of her exalted station in having recognized God in His Manifestation and in her relation to Mullá Husayn. With vivid imagery, Bahá'u'lláh illustrates Mullá Husayn's eminence, saying that it was through him that “the ensigns of salvation were manifested, the sun of grace dawned, the moon of bounty rose, and the Ancient Beauty was established on the throne of His name, the Exalted, the Sublime”.

Then begins the visitation portion of the tablet. Bahá'u'lláh instructs the Leaf of Paradise to magnify and glorify God, after which she is to recite the rest of the tablet, which praises Mullá Husayn and serves as an eloquent affirmation of his unique station.

But one quotation should suffice for demonstrating both Bahá'u'lláh's high regard for Mullá Husayn as well as the august language in which this tablet is revealed:

“I testify that you are the first light to dawn from the beauty of God's unity and the first sun to rise from the horizon of divinity. Were it not for you, the beauty of the Essence would have remained concealed and the mysteries of eternity would not have been revealed”.

Bahá'u'lláh closes His Súrah of Visitation with an impassioned supplication, in which the suppliant

beseches God by Mullá Husayn, asking for divine grace, mercy and bestowal, and ending with a request for God's forgiveness and a confirmation of His generosity, munificence and benevolence.

The entire work is marked both by its distinct portions as well as its organic unity, and is a testimony to the sublimity of Bahá'u'lláh's Word and the loftiness of Mullá Husayn's station in the dispensation of the Báb.

Súrah of Visitation for Mullá Husayn (*Súrat al-ziyárah li-Mullá Husayn*)

This is the Súrah of Visitation that has been sent down from the realm of grace for the name of God, the First, that she who is the most pious of women may visit him, as well as those who believe in God and His verses and are of those who have attained.

He is the Almighty, the Omnipotent, the Exalted, the All-Glorious.

This is a letter from a wronged One, who is known in the kingdom of eternity as Bahá, in the dominion of exaltation as the Exalted, the Most High, in the unseen realm as all God's beauteous names, and in the contingent world as Husayn; yet most of the people are under a veil and an immense delusion. No one can reckon what has befallen Him in every dispensation, save God, the Sovereign, the Sublime.

At one time, He was slain at the hands of Cain and, oppressed, ascended unto God, Who witnessed and knew full well what came to pass. At one time, He was cast into the fire at the hands of Nimrod, but God made the flames a light and a mercy. Indeed, He protects such among His servants as have drawn near. At one time, He suffered such tribulations at the hands of Pharaoh that the hearts of the sincere were set aflame. At one time, He was put on the cross, and He was taken up unto God, the August, the Beauteous. At one time, such things befell Him at the hands of Abú Jahl and the hypocrites who, in sedition, arose against Him, as no one can recount or befittingly describe or mention. The All-Merciful Himself knew all that afflicted Him and was a witness to it. At one time, He was wronged in the land of Taf and martyred along with those whom God had caused to be related to his sanctified and luminous self. They cut off His head, imprisoned His family, and drove them throughout the lands. Thus did it come to pass by reason of the satanic legions. At one time, He was suspended in the air and martyred in the path of God, the Help in Peril, the All-Powerful, the Omnipotent.

At one time, I was imprisoned in the Land of Ta' for a span of four months. The pen of the worlds could not recount what befell Us there. Afterwards, I was driven out of prison and My kindred and I were exiled from our homes. We traveled to Iraq and were among those who settled in that country. None can measure what befell Us in that land from those who had been created at My command. It was such that I was, at all times, pierced by the javelin of hypocrisy. In spite of this, I concealed the matter and was a herald among the people, summoning all to God, the Cherished, the Beauteous. Then, with no respite, every community stood up against Me. Alone I rose up to face My adversaries, and I served My Lord insofar as I was able, until the Cause of God was vindicated by His words and the works of the idolaters proved futile.

Consequently, the fire of hatred was ignited in the hearts of those claiming faith in the Point of the Bayán, and in this way did they deceive themselves. Thus did Satan make their deeds appear seemly to them, while they were accounted among the heedless. By God! They heaped on Me such abuse as no one else had ever endured. The eyes of the maidens in their chambers wept over Me, the hearts of the sincere cried out, and beyond them wept the eye of God, the Sovereign, the All-Praised, the

Omnipotent, the Exalted, the All-Wise. Anyone whose ears God has opened would hear the wailing of all things and their lamentation during these days because of what has befallen Me at the hands of those who had recognized God in His former Manifestation but denied Him after He had come in another beauty, with manifest sovereignty. We were among them, and those deniers from past communities, until the sun of tribulation rose from the horizon of destiny and the decree of exile was laid down, as was written in tablets of inviolable holiness.

By the One True God! I rose up to face My adversaries during days when the hearts of the mystics were troubled, the limbs of every soul shook, and all those around Us who affirmed the divine unity trembled in fear, until the hosts of salvation descended from the realm of God, the Help in Peril, the Mighty, the Sublime. In truth, He protected Me and the angels of the heavens and earth championed Me, as did the exalted hosts, which were concealed until then. We left the city with an adornment that awed and bewildered the minds of the learned and the hearts of the mystics. In every city the Ancient Beauty passed, the necks of the haughty were brought low by His appearance, and in every place He stayed, both the faithful and idolaters were abased before Him.

Eventually, We came to this prison and God is well aware of what befell Me here because of those who harbor hatred for the Youth. They are as those who see through the eyes of malice. Not one second has elapsed where I have not been pierced with the dart of hypocrisy by the forces of the malicious. By God, in each moment have I been slain by the swords of hatred. The tongue of God, the Exalted, the Most High, bears witness to this, and yet the people are heedless and in grievous dissension.

If the people were to clear their ears, they would hear what their Lord, the All-Glorious, is calling aloud in the loftiest heaven and would be of those who listen. Yet they shut themselves out from what the Tongue of Eternity proclaims in the realm of the Almighty and are among the heedless. They have proceeded to pronounce the sentence of death against Me without any proof from God or noble book. Time and again have the hosts of salvation descended, and through them has God protected Me. He has enabled Me to proclaim His mention, to reveal Myself in His sovereignty, to be effulgent with the holy light of His majesty, and to celebrate the praise of His own Self, the Exalted, the Sublime. Thus was it ordained for Us, and we have recounted it in truth, that the people might understand.

O Leaf of Paradise! When you receive this luminous, effulgent tablet, rise up from your place and take hold of it with the hand of humility. Inhale from it the fragrance of God, your Lord and the Lord of the worlds. Commemorate My sufferings, which it relates, so that you may be counted among those who have remembered in the tablets of God, the Overshadowing, the Mighty, the Powerful. Teach the Cause of God to those around you and to those who have been guided by the Spirit's counsel and are among the assured.

Blessed are you, O Leaf of Paradise, for you have been carried away by the breezes of the Spirit and taken to the Egypt of the Divine Presence - the place of the recognition of your Lord, the Sublime, the Wondrous. You have drunk from the cups of your Lord's mercy and attained to that which no other in all the worlds has attained. Thank your Lord. Humble yourself and bow before Him. Take hold of the book of God with such strength as is borne of Him, for it is indeed a sublime book.

How blessed you are in that God has related you to His name. Through him, the ensigns of salvation were manifested, the sun of grace dawned, the moon of bounty rose, and the Ancient Beauty was established on the throne of His name, the Exalted, the Sublime. By him, the kingdom of names was exalted, the forms of the divine attributes were adorned, and the Temple of Holiness was revealed in the garment of His name, the Ancient of Days. By him, the supremacy of the Cause encompassed all contingent things and the sun of bounty shone its light on all creation. By him, the two mighty rivers

flowed through the two exalted names. None have drunk from them except those whom God has singled out for His Cause, favoured among His servants and chosen out of His peoples. He has made them manifestations of His most excellent names and embodiments of His most exalted attributes, and enabled them to be among those who have entered His transcendent, sublime and wondrous presence.

O Leaf of Paradise, visit him on My behalf with what is now being revealed from the realm of God, the Sanctified, the Lofty, the Wise, the All-Knowing.

When you wish to begin your visitation with him who is the dawning place and wellspring of God's names, and the orient and treasury of His attributes, arise and set your face toward Paradise, the place where the First Name is buried, which God has made the resting place of his holy, majestic and luminous temple. Stand and magnify God¹ your Lord, nineteen times. As you recite each takbír², God will open one of the doors of Ridván before your face, and the fragrant breeze of the All-Praised will waft over you from the garden. Thus has it been ordained by One Who is almighty and wise. Then glorify God³ nine times with certitude in His Cause, affirming His sovereignty, proclaiming His majesty, recognizing His Manifestation, and turning toward His sanctified, effulgent, manifest, dazzling, scintillating, resplendent and luminous countenance.

Then say: I testify by my soul, my essence, my being, my tongue, my heart and the limbs of my body that there is none other god beside Him, and that the Point of the Bayan is His manifestation, His advent, His majesty, His honor, and His grandeur before those in the celestial concourse, and His sublimity, His power and His might between heaven and earth. He who the One True God has made manifest is His appointed sovereign to all in the heavens and on earth, and His effulgence to each and every one in the kingdom of command and creation.

Say:

The first spirit manifested from the realm of grandeur and the first mercy revealed from the heaven of holiness at the right of the throne, where our Lord, the Exalted, the Most High is seated – may they rest upon you, O secret of the divine decree, temple of the realization, most perfect word in the realm of eternity, and most great name in the kingdom of creation.

I testify by my essence, my soul and my tongue that by you the beauty of the All-Praised was established upon the throne of His name, the All-Merciful, that in you the Primal Will was made manifest to the people of existence, that through you the melody of Paradise was revealed from the heaven of grace on the part of your Lord, the Almighty, the Beneficent, and that because of you the Cause of God, the Omnipresent, the Omnipotent, the Mighty, the Powerful, was made manifest.

I testify that you are the first light to dawn from the beauty of God's unity and the first sun to rise from the horizon of divinity. Were it not for you, the beauty of the Essence would have remained concealed and the mysteries of eternity would not have been revealed.

I testify that, because of you, the birds of the souls of those consumed with longing flew through the expanse of nearness and reunion, and the hearts of those overcome with yearning tasted the sweet savour of beauty and communion, at the dawning of the sun of the countenance of your Lord, the Possessor of majesty and glory. Were it not for you, no one would have recognized the Self of God and His beauty, no one would have reached the shore of His nearness and presence, contingent beings would not have drunk from the waters of His magnanimity and abundance, and created things would not have partaken of the wine of His bounty and munificence.

Because of you the veils of existent things have been torn away. Because of you the kingdom of names and attributes has been manifested. Because of you every soul has been guided to the shore of a sublime sanctity. Because of you the dove warbled upon the branches of eternity and the songbird of the throne sang its melodies upon the boughs of the lote tree of glory. Because of you the Beauty of the Unseen has been manifested in His Name, the Exalted, the Most High. Because of you all good has been sent down from the realm of the unseen unto the kingdom of creation, and every grace has been inscribed by the fingers of God upon the tablets of destiny. And because of you contingent beings have been embraced by the mercy of God, the Omnipotent, the All-Knowing, the Sublime, the Majestic.

Were it not for you, neither would heaven have been raised above, nor would the earth have been spread below, nor would the oceans have been revealed. Were it not for you, neither would the trees have borne fruit, nor would the leaves have appeared in their green verdure, nor would the orb of divine grace have shone from a horizon of effulgent sanctity. Because of you, the breezes of forgiveness have wafted over all in the heavens and on earth, the doors of the garden have been opened to all beings, and the hearts of those who believe in God, the Mighty, the Powerful, the Munificent, have been enraptured.

You are the word through which contingent things are distinguished from each other - the blessed from the wicked, the light from the darkness, and the believer from the unbeliever - on this day until the day on which heaven is cleft and God comes in clouds of the Cause surrounded by a company of the angels. At that time, the clouds are rent asunder and the divine countenance appears from behind the veil, with tens of thousands in great glory. Those who joined partners with God flee, in that moment, from the right and the left and a stupor takes hold of all in the heavens and on earth, save a few letters of the countenance of your Lord, the All-Merciful, the Compassionate.

I testify that you were entrusted with the faith of your Lord, the All-Merciful, and that you recognized the Beauty of the All-Praised before the creation of the universe and attained the presence of God on a day when you alone had recognized Him. By means of this grace, God favoured you, before He created the heavens and the earth. I testify that, through your remembrance, the tongues of created things were inspired with the mention of their Lord, the All-Knowing, the Wise, and through your praising your Creator, all rose in celebration of Him. All existence, both seen and unseen, bears witness to this and, beyond it, God is a witness and fully aware.

I testify that you championed the religion of God, manifested His Cause and struggled in His path insofar as you were able. I moreover testify that, through your victory, the proof of God and His testimony were revealed, and likewise His power and ascendancy, His grandeur and majesty, and His sovereignty over all created things. Blessed be those who struggled with you and waged war against the enemies of God at your command, who circled round you, entered the stronghold of your guardianship and drank from the Kawthar⁴ of your love, who were martyred for turning toward your countenance and who rested in the court of your nearness. They are of those who repose in tranquility. I testify that they are the champions of God on His earth, the bearers of His trust in His lands, the kindred of God among His people, the legions of God in the midst of His creation, and the chosen of God between the heavens and earth.

I testify that you fell victim to the most grievous tribulations and deplorable hardships in the path of your Lord and that adversity encompassed you on all sides. Yet nothing could deter you from the path of your Creator. Alone you fought until you became a martyr in His Cause and gave up your spirit, your soul and your body in your love for your Lord, the Eternal. I testify that all things between heaven and earth wept by reason of your suffering, as did the eyes of the near ones behind

the tabernacle of manifest majesty. The houris in their private rooms uncovered their heads and struck them with wondrous and sanctified fingers. They fell down with their faces in the dust, sat upon the ashes, and lamented at that time in their luminous red chambers. I testify that, due to your suffering, all things were clothed in a black robe of mourning, the faces of the sincere paled, the limbs of such as had affirmed the divine unity trembled, and the eye of majesty and grandeur wept in the realm of exalted holiness.

I testify, O my master, here where I stand, that you did not fail in the Cause of your Lord, nor did you hold back in the love of your God. You took His command to the east of the land and the west of it, until you were sacrificed in His path and became a martyr. God curses the people who oppressed you, rose up against you, fought against you, argued to your face, denied your testimony, left your side, disdained being humble before you, and were among the idolaters.

Therefore, do I beseech God by you and by those around you that He forgive me and pardon my sins, that He cleanse me of earthly defilement and number me among the purified. I ask that He honor me with His presence during these days when all have been heedless of Him and are among those who have veiled themselves. I ask that He aid me in recognizing Him, confessing His Cause, believing in Him with all assurance, affirming His verses, entering into His shelter, standing present in the court of His mercy, bearing witness on His path, and turning wholly unto Him, the Exalted, the Sublime.

We beseech God by you that He not cut us off from the shining lights of His countenance in these days, nor make us deprived of the wonders of His grace or debarred from His mercy, which encompasses the worlds. We ask that He establish us securely in His love and stand us upright in His Cause, so that our feet shall not slip on His path, which has appeared in reality between the heavens and the earth.

Mercy, praise and glory be upon you, O chosen of God among His servants and trusted of God throughout His lands, and upon your bodily forms, your celestial forms, and your spirits, and upon your first, your last, your manifest and your concealed. And mercy, praise and glory be upon those who have dismounted at your precinct, circled around you, come before the gate of your mercy, stood before the manifest lights of your clemency, and entered the threshold of your nearness. These are they who have been brought near to God because of you, who have sought mediation with God through you and who have visited your sanctuary; who were blessed by the dust of your graves, who have sought guidance through your teaching, and who were among those who turned toward your countenances, pure, sanctified, effulgent and luminous.

O Lord, my God! I beseech You by him and by those who have rested in his vicinity, to make us of those who have flown in the expanse of Your mercy, drunk the wine of Your munificence and beneficence, attained the summit of grace through Your bounty and abundance, and tasted the sweetness of Your remembrance. Make us of those who have ascended to the ladders of the remotest region and the seats of the highest realm through Your grace and bestowals, who have cut themselves off from all sides, who have hastened in the direction of Your favors and who have been seized by the glorious breezes of Your compassion and the holy fragrances of Your eternity. Indeed, You are the All-Powerful, the Mighty, the Wise.

Our God and our Beloved! Forgive us, our parents, our relations and those who have believed in You and in Your verses and in him who has been made manifest in Your sovereignty. Grant, moreover, O my God, that we be empowered by Your strength in this world, and that we attain Your presence in the next. Do not decree us forbidden from that which you possess, nor denied of such as is worthy of You. In truth, You are the Possessor of bounty and beneficence, and of grace and benevolence.

Indeed, You are our Lord, the All-Merciful, and our God, Whom we supplicate and in Whom we place our trust. None other god is there beside You, the Forgiving, the Munificent, the Merciful.

Thus have We revealed this Súrah to you, O Leaf of Paradise, that you may follow such as you are bidden and be numbered among the pious in the tablets of luminous sanctity.

Notes:

¹ *Kabbarí Alláh*, meaning to praise God with the phrase Alláhu Akbar, God is most great.

² *Takbír*, verbal noun of the above verb, meaning to say Alláhu Akbar or a similar praise.

³ *Tabahhí*, a seeming neologism. A contextual reading based on the pattern of derivation gives “to glorify, to say Alláhu Abhá”.

⁴ A river of paradise.

This work has benefitted from an earlier translation and introduction of the Súrah of Visitation by Will McCants, which is found at http://irfancolloquia.org/38/mccants_wronged.