



• IOB •



# The Story of Job

A collection of scriptural references.



# The Book Of Job

## Prologue

1 THERE LIVED IN THE LAND OF UZ a man of blameless and upright life named Job, who feared God and set his face against wrongdoing. He had seven sons and three daughters; and he owned seven thousand sheep and three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen and five hundred asses, with a large number of slaves. Thus Job was the greatest man in all the East.

4 Now his sons used to foregather and give, each in turn, a feast in his own house; and they used to send and invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them. Then, when a round of feasts was finished, Job sent for his children and sanctified them, rising early in the morning and sacrificing a whole-offering for each of them; for he thought that they might somehow have sinned against God and committed blasphemy in their hearts. This he always did.

6 The day came when the members of the court of heaven took their places in the presence of the Lord, and Satan was there among them. The Lord asked him where he had been. 'Ranging over the earth', he said, 'from end to end.' Then the Lord asked Satan, 'Have you considered my servant Job? You will find no one like him on earth, a man of blameless and upright life, who fears God and sets his face against wrongdoing.' Satan answered the Lord, 'Has not Job good reason to be God-fearing? Have you not hedged him round on every side with your protection, him and his family and all his possessions? Whatever he does you have blessed, and his herds have increased beyond measure. But stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, and then he will curse you to your face.' Then the Lord said to Satan, 'So be it. All that he has is in your

hands; only Job himself you must not touch.' And Satan left the Lord's presence.

13 When the day came that Job's sons and daughters were eating and drinking in the eldest brother's house, a messenger came running to Job and said, 'The oxen were ploughing and the asses were grazing near them, when the Sabeans swooped down and carried them off, after putting the herdsmen to the sword; and I am the only one to escape and tell the tale.' While he was still speaking, another messenger arrived and said, 'God's fire flashed from heaven. It struck the sheep and the shepherds and burnt them up; and I am the only one to escape and tell the tale.' While he was still speaking, another arrived and said, 'The Chaldaeans, three bands of them, have made a raid on the camels and carried them off, after putting the drivers to the sword; and I am the only one to escape and tell the tale.' While this man was speaking, yet another arrived and said, 'Your sons and daughters were eating and drinking in the eldest brother's house, when suddenly a whirlwind swept across from the desert and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell on the young people and killed them; and I am the only one to escape and tell the tale.' At this Job stood up and rent his cloak; then he shaved his head and fell prostrate on the ground, saying:

21     Naked I came from the womb,  
naked I shall return whence I came.  
The Lord gives and the Lord takes away;  
blessed be the name of the Lord.

22 Throughout all this Job did not sin; he did not charge God with unreason.

## **JOB 2**

1 Once again the day came when the members of the court of

heaven took their places in the presence of the Lord, and Satan was there among them. The Lord asked him where he had been. 'Ranging over the earth', he said, 'from end to end.' Then the Lord asked Satan, 'Have you considered my servant Job? You will find no one like him on earth, a man of blameless and upright life, who fears God and sets his face against wrongdoing. You incited me to ruin him without a cause, but his integrity is still unshaken.' Satan answered the Lord, 'Skin for skin! There is nothing the man will grudge to save himself. But stretch out your hand and touch his bone and his flesh, and see if he will not curse you to your face.'

6 Then the Lord said to Satan, 'So be it. He is in your hands; but spare his life.' And Satan left the Lord's presence, and he smote Job with running sores from head to foot, so that he took a piece of a broken pot to scratch himself as he sat among the ashes. Then his wife said to him, 'Are you still unshaken in your integrity? Curse God and die!' But he answered, 'You talk as any wicked fool of a woman might talk. If we accept good from God, shall we not accept evil?' Throughout all this, Job did not utter one sinful word.

11 When Job's three friends, Eliphaz of Teman, Bildad of Shuah, and Zophar of Naamah, heard of all these calamities which had overtaken him, they left their homes and arranged to come and condole with him and comfort him. But when they first saw him from a distance, they did not recognize him; and they wept aloud, rent their cloaks and tossed dust into the air over their heads. For seven days and seven nights they sat beside him on the ground, and none of them said a word to him; for they saw that his suffering was very great.

## **JOB 3**

*Job's complaint to God*

1 After this Job broke silence and cursed the day of his birth: Perish the day when I was born and the night which said, 'A man is conceived!' May that day turn to darkness; may God above not look for it, nor light of dawn shine on it.

5 May blackness sully it, and murk and gloom, cloud smother that day, swift darkness eclipse its sun. Blind darkness swallow up that night; count it not among the days of the year, reckon it not in the cycle of the months. That night, may it be barren for ever, no cry of joy be heard in it.

8 Cursed be it by those whose magic binds even the monster of the deep, who are ready to tame Leviathan himself with spells. May no star shine out in its twilight; may it wait for a dawn that never comes, nor ever see the eyelids of the morning, because it did not shut the doors of the womb that bore me and keep trouble away from my sight.

11 Why was I not still-born, why did I not die when I came out of the womb? Why was I ever laid on my mother's knees or put to suck at her breasts? Why was I not hidden like an untimely birth, like an infant that has not lived to see the light? For then I should be lying in the quiet grave, asleep in death, at rest, with kings and their ministers who built themselves palaces, with princes rich in gold who filled their houses with silver.

17 There the wicked man chafes no more, there the tired labourer rests; the captive too finds peace there and hears no taskmaster's voice, high and low are there, even the slave, free from his master.

20 Why should the sufferer be born to see the light? Why is life given to men who find it so bitter? They wait for death but it does not come, they seek it more eagerly than hidden treasure. They are glad when they reach the tomb, and when they come to the grave they exult.

23 Why should a man be born to wander blindly, hedged in by God on every side? My sighing is all my food, and groans pour from me in a torrent. Every terror that haunted me has caught up with me, and all that I feared has come upon me. There is no peace of mind nor quiet for me; I chafe in torment and have no rest.

## **JOB 4**

### *First cycle of speeches*

1 Then Eliphaz the Temanite began: If one ventures to speak with you, will you lose patience? For who could hold his tongue any longer? Think how once you encouraged those who faltered, how you braced feeble arms, how a word from you upheld the stumblers and put strength into weak knees. But now that adversity comes upon you, you lose patience; it touches you, and you are unmanned. Is your religion no comfort to you? Does your blameless life give you no hope? For consider, what innocent man has ever perished? Where have you seen the upright destroyed? This I know, that those who plough mischief and sow trouble reap as they have sown; they perish at the blast of God and are shrivelled by the breath of his nostrils.

10 The roar of the lion, the whimpering of his cubs, fall silent; the teeth of the young lions are broken; the lion perishes for lack of prey and the whelps of the lioness are abandoned.

12 A word stole into my ears, and they caught the whisper of it; in the anxious visions of the night, when a man sinks into deepest sleep, terror seized me and shuddering; the trembling of my body frightened me. A wind brushed my face and made the hairs bristle on my flesh; and a figure stood there whose shape I could not discern, an apparition loomed before me, and I heard the sound of a low

voice:

17 'Can mortal man be more righteous than God, or the creature purer than his Maker? If God mistrusts his own servants and finds his messengers at fault, how much more those that dwell in houses whose walls are clay, whose foundations are dust, which can be crushed like a bird's nest or torn down between dawn and dark, how much more shall such men perish outright and unheeded, die, without ever finding wisdom?'

## **JOB 5**

### *First cycle of speeches*

1 Call if you will; is there any to answer you? To which of the holy ones will you turn? The fool is destroyed by his own angry passions, and the end of childish resentment is death. I have seen it for myself: a fool uprooted, his home in sudden ruin about him, his children past help, brow-beaten in court with none to save them.

5 Their rich possessions are snatched from them; what they have harvested others hungrily devour; the stronger man seizes it from the panniers, panting, thirsting for their wealth. Mischief does not grow out of the soil nor trouble spring from the earth; man is born to trouble, as surely as birds fly upwards.

8 For my part, I would make my petition to God and lay my cause before him, who does great and unsearchable things, marvels without number.

10 He gives rain to the earth and sends water on the fields; he raises the lowly to the heights, the mourners are uplifted by victory; he frustrates the plots of the crafty, and they win no success, he traps the cunning in their craftiness, and the schemers' plans are thrown

into confusion. In the daylight they run into darkness, and grope at midday as though it were night.

15 He saves the destitute from their greed, and the needy from the grip of the strong; so the poor hope again, and the unjust are sickened.

17 Happy the man whom God rebukes! therefore do not reject the discipline of the Almighty. For, though he wounds, he will bind up; the hands that smite will heal.

19 You may meet disaster six times, and he will save you; seven times, and no harm shall touch you. In time of famine he will save you from death, in battle from the sword.

21 You will be shielded from the lash of slander, and when violence comes you need not fear.

22 You will laugh at violence and starvation and have no need to fear wild beasts; for you have a covenant with the stones to spare your fields, and the weeds have been constrained to leave you at peace. You will know that all is well with your household, you will look round your home and find nothing amiss; you will know, too, that your descendants will be many and your offspring like grass, thick upon the earth.

26 You will come in sturdy old age to the grave as sheaves come in due season to the threshing-floor.

27 We have inquired into all this, and so it is; this we have heard, and you may know it for the truth.

## **JOB 6**

1 Then Job answered: O that the grounds for my resentment might be weighed, and my misfortunes set with them on the scales! For they would outweigh the sands of the sea: what wonder if my words are wild?

4 The arrows of the Almighty find their mark in me, and their poison soaks into my spirit; God's onslaughts wear me away.

5 Does the wild ass bray when he has grass or the ox low when he has fodder? Can a man eat tasteless food unseasoned with salt, or find any flavour in the juice of mallows? Food that should nourish me sticks in my throat, and my bowels rumble with an echoing sound.

8 O that I might have my request, that God would grant what I hope for: that he would be pleased to crush me, to snatch me away with his hand and cut me off! For that would bring me relief, and in the face of unsparing anguish I would leap for joy. Have I the strength to wait? What end have I to expect, that I should be patient? Is my strength the strength of stone, or is my flesh bronze?

13 Oh how shall I find help within myself? The power to aid myself is put out of my reach.

14 Devotion is due from his friends to one who despairs and loses faith in the Almighty; but my brothers have been treacherous as a mountain stream, like the channels of streams that run dry, which turn dark with ice or are hidden with piled-up snow; or they vanish the moment they are in spate, dwindle in the heat and are gone.

18 Then the caravans, winding hither and thither, go up into the wilderness and perish; the caravans of Tema look for their waters, travelling merchants of Sheba hope for them; but they are disappointed, for all their confidence, they reach them only to be balked. So treacherous have you now been to me: you felt dismay

and were afraid.

22 Did I ever say, 'Give me this or that; open your purses to save my life; rescue me from my enemy; ransom me out of the hands of ruthless men'?

24 Tell me plainly, and I will listen in silence; show me where I have erred. How harsh are the words of the upright man! What do the arguments of wise men prove? Do you mean to argue about words or to sift the utterance of a man past hope? Would you assail an orphan? Would you hurl yourselves on a friend? So now, I beg you, turn and look at me: am I likely to lie to your faces? Think again, let me have no more injustice; think again, for my integrity is in question. Do I ever give voice to injustice? Does my sense not warn me when my words are wild?

## **JOB 7**

1 Has not man hard service on earth, and are not his days like those of a hired labourer, like those of a slave longing for the shade or a servant kept waiting for his wages? So months of futility are my portion, troubled nights are my lot.

4 When I lie down, I think, 'When will it be day that I may rise?' When the evening grows long and I lie down, I do nothing but toss till morning twilight. My body is infested with worms, and scabs cover my skin.

6 My days are swifter than a shuttle and come to an end as the thread runs out. Remember, my life is but a breath of wind; I shall never again see good days. Thou wilt behold me no more with a seeing eye; under thy very eyes I shall disappear. As clouds break up and disperse, so he that goes down to Sheol never comes back;

he never returns home again, and his place will know him no more.

11 But I will not hold my peace; I will speak out in the distress of my mind and complain in the bitterness of my soul. Am I the monster of the deep, am I the sea-serpent, that thou settest a watch over me?

13 When I think that my bed will comfort me, that sleep will relieve my complaining, thou dost terrify me with dreams and affright me with visions. I would rather be choked outright; I would prefer death to all my sufferings. I am in despair, I would not go on living; leave me alone, for my life is but a vapour. What is man that thou makest much of him and turnest thy thoughts towards him, only to punish him morning by morning or to test him every hour of the day? Wilt thou not look away from me for an instant? Wilt thou not let me be while I swallow my spittle? If I have sinned, how do I injure thee, thou watcher of the hearts of men? Why hast thou made me thy butt, and why have I become thy target? Why dost thou not pardon my offence and take away my guilt?

21 But now I shall lie down in the grave; seek me, and I shall not be.

## **JOB 8**

1 Then Bildad the Shuhite began: How long will you say such things, the long-winded ramblings of an old man? Does God pervert judgement? Does the Almighty pervert justice? Your sons sinned against him, so he left them to be victims of their own iniquity. If only you will seek God betimes and plead for the favour of the Almighty, if you are innocent and upright, then indeed will he watch over you and see your just intent fulfilled. Then, though your beginnings were humble, your end will be great.

8 Inquire now of older generations and consider the experience of

their fathers; for we ourselves are of yesterday and are transient; our days on earth are a shadow.

10 Will not they speak to you and teach you and pour out the wisdom of their hearts? Can rushes grow where there is no marsh? Can reeds flourish without water? While they are still in flower and not ready to cut, they wither earlier than any green plant.

13 Such is the fate of all who forget God; the godless man's life-thread breaks off; his confidence is gossamer, and the ground of his trust a spider's web. He leans against his house but it does not stand; he clutches at it but it does not hold firm. His is the lush growth of a plant in the sun, pushing out shoots over the garden; but its roots become entangled in a stony patch and run against a bed of rock.

18 Then someone uproots it from its place, which disowns it and says, 'I have never known you.' That is how its life withers away, and other plants spring up from the earth.

20 Be sure, God will not spurn the blameless man, nor will he grasp the hand of the wrongdoer. He will yet fill your mouth with laughter, and shouts of joy will be on your lips; your enemies shall be wrapped in confusion, and the tents of the wicked shall vanish away.

## **JOB 9**

1 Then Job answered: Indeed this I know for the truth, that no man can win his case against God. If a man chooses to argue with him, God will not answer one question in a thousand. He is wise, he is powerful; what man has stubbornly resisted him and survived?

5 It is God who moves mountains, giving them no rest, turning them over in his wrath; who makes the earth start from its place so that its pillars are convulsed; who commands the sun's orb not to rise and

shuts up the stars under his seal; who by himself spread out the heavens and trod on the sea-monster's back; who made Aldebaran and Orion, the Pleiades and the circle of the southern stars; who does great and unsearchable things, marvels without number.

10 He passes by me, and I do not see him; he moves on his way undiscerned by me; if he hurries on, who can bring him back? Who will ask him what he does? God does not turn back his wrath; the partisans of Rahab lie prostrate at his feet. How much less can I answer him or find words to dispute with him? Though I am right, I get no answer, though I plead with my accuser for mercy. If I summoned him to court and he responded, I do not believe that he would listen to my plea -- for he bears hard upon me for a trifle and rains blows on me without cause; he leaves me no respite to recover my breath but fills me with bitter thoughts. If the appeal is to force, see how strong he is; if to justice, who can compel him to give me a hearing?

15 Though I am right, he condemns me out of my own mouth; though I am blameless, he twists my words. Blameless, I say; of myself I reckon nothing, I hold my life cheap. But it is all one; therefore I say, 'He destroys blameless and wicked alike.' When a sudden flood brings death, he mocks the plight of the innocent. The land is given over to the power of the wicked, and the eyes of its judges are blindfold.

25 My days have been swifter than a runner, they have slipped away and seen no prosperity; they have raced by like reed-built skiffs, swift as vultures swooping on carrion.

27 If I think, 'I will forget my griefs, I will show a cheerful face and smile', I tremble in every nerve; I know that thou wilt not hold me innocent. If I am to be accounted guilty, why do I labour in vain? Though I wash myself with soap or cleanse my hands with lye, thou wilt thrust me into the mud and my clothes will make me loathsome.

32 He is not a man as I am, that I can answer him or that we can confront one another in court. If only there were one to arbitrate between us and impose his authority on us both, so that God might take his rod from my back, and terror of him might not come on me suddenly. I would then speak without fear of him; for I know I am not what I am thought to be.

## **JOB 10**

1 I am sickened of life; I will give free rein to my griefs, I will speak out in bitterness of soul. I will say to God, 'Do not condemn me, but tell me the ground of thy complaint against me. Dost thou find any advantage in oppression, in spurning the fruit of all thy labour and smiling on the: policy of wicked men?

4 Hast thou eyes of flesh or dost thou see as mortal man sees? Are thy days as those of a mortal or thy years as the life of a man, that thou lookest for guilt in me and dost seek in me for sin, though thou knowest that I am guiltless and have none to save me from thee?

8 'Thy hands gave me shape and made me; and dost thou at once turn and destroy me? Remember that thou didst knead me like clay; and wouldst thou turn me back into dust? Didst thou not pour me out like milk and curdle me like' cheese, clothe me with skin and flesh and knit me together with bones and sinews? Thou hast given me life and continuing favour, and thy providence has watched over my spirit.

13 Yet this was the secret purpose of thy heart, and I know that this was thy intent: that, if I sinned, thou wouldst be watching me and wouldst not acquit me of my guilt. If I indeed am wicked, the worse for me!

15 If I am righteous, even so I may lift up my head; if I am proud as a lion, thou dost hunt me down and dost confront me again with marvellous power; thou dost renew thy onslaught upon me, and with mounting anger against me bringest fresh forces to the attack.

18 Why didst thou bring me out of the womb? O that I had ended there and no eye had seen me, that I had been carried from the womb to the grave and were as though I had not been born, Is not my life short and fleeting?

20 Let me be, that I may be happy for a moment, before I depart to a land of gloom, a land of deep darkness, never to return, a land of gathering shadows, of deepening darkness, lit by no ray of light, dark upon dark.'

## **JOB 11**

1 Then Zophar the Naanathite began: Should this spate of words not be answered? Must a man of ready tongue be always right? Is your endless talk to reduce men to silence? Are you to talk nonsense and no one rebuke you? You claim that your opinions are sound; you say to God, 'I am spotless in thy sight.' But if only he would speak and open his lips to talk with you, and expound to you the secrets of wisdom, for wonderful are its effects!

6 [Know then that God exacts from you less than your sin deserves.] Can you fathom the mystery of God, can you fathom the perfection of the Almighty? It is higher than heaven; you can do nothing. It is deeper than Sheol; you can know nothing. Its measure is longer than the earth and broader than the sea.

10 If he passes by, he may keep secret his passing; if he proclaims it, who can turn him back? He surely knows which men are false, and

when he sees iniquity, does he not take note of it ?

12 Can a fool grow wise? can a wild ass's foal be born a man? If only you had directed your heart rightly and spread out your hands to pray to him! If you have wrong-doing in hand, thrust it away; let no iniquity make its home with you. Then you could hold up your head without fault, a man of iron, knowing no fear.

16 Then you will forget your trouble; you will remember it only as flood-waters that have passed; life will be lasting, bright as noonday, and darkness will be turned to morning. You will be confident, because there is hope; sure of protection, you will lie down in confidence; great men will seek your favour.

20 Blindness will fall on the wicked; the ways of escape are closed to them, and their hope is despair.

## **JOB 12**

1 Then Job answered: No doubt you are perfect men and absolute wisdom is yours! But I have sense as well as you; in nothing do I fall short of you; what gifts indeed have you that others have not? Yet I am a laughing-stock to my friend a laughing-stock, though I am innocent and blameless, one that called upon God, and he answered. Prosperity and ease look down on misfortune, on the blow that fells the man who is already reeling, while the marauders' tents are left undisturbed and those who provoke God live safe and sound.

6 Go and ask the cattle, ask the birds of the air to inform you, or tell the creatures that crawl to teach you, and the fishes of the sea to give you instruction. Who cannot learn from all these that the Lord's own hand has done this? (Does not the ear test what is spoken as the

palate savours food? There is wisdom, remember, in age, and long life brings understanding.)

10 In God's hand are the souls of all that live, the spirits of all human kind. Wisdom and might are his, with him are firmness and understanding. If he pulls down, there is no rebuilding; if he imprisons, there is no release. If he holds up the waters, there is drought; if he lets them go, they turn the land upside down. Strength and success belong to him, deceived and deceiver are his to use.

17 He makes counsellors behave like idiots and drives judges mad; he looses the bonds imposed by kings and removes the girdle of office from their waists; he makes priests behave like idiots and overthrows men long in office; those who are trusted he strikes dumb, he takes away the judgement of old men; he heaps scorn on princes and abates the arrogance of nobles. He leads peoples astray and destroys them, he lays them low, and there they lie.

24 He takes away their wisdom from the rulers of the nations and leaves them wandering in a pathless wilderness; they grope in the darkness without light and are left to wander like a drunkard. He uncovers mysteries deep in obscurity and into thick darkness he brings light.

## **JOB 13**

1 All this I have seen with my own eyes, with my own ears I have heard it, and understood it. What you know, I also know; in nothing do I fall short of you.

3 But for my part I would speak with the Almighty and am ready to argue with God, while you like fools are smearing truth with your falsehoods, stitching a patchwork of lies, one and all. Ah, if you would

only be silent and let silence be your wisdom! Now listen to my arguments and attend while I put my case.

7 Is it on God's behalf that you speak so wickedly, or in his defence that you allege what is false? Must you take God's part, or put his case for him? Will all be well when he examines you? Will you quibble with him as you quibble with a man?

10 He will most surely expose you if you take his part by falsely accusing me. Will not God's majesty strike you with dread, and terror of him overwhelm you?

12 Your pompous talk is dust and ashes, your defences will crumble like clay. Be silent, leave me to speak my mind, and let what may come upon me! I will put my neck in the noose and take my life in my hands. If he would slay me, I should not hesitate; I should still argue my cause to his face. This at least assures my success, that no godless man may appear before him. Listen then, listen to my words, and give a hearing to my exposition. Be sure of this: once I have stated my case I know that I shall be acquitted. Who is there that can argue so forcibly with me that he could reduce me straightway to silence and death?

20 Grant me these two conditions only, and then I will not hide myself out of thy sight: take thy heavy hand clean away from me and let not the fear of thee strike me with dread. Then summon me, and I will answer; or I will speak first, and do thou answer me. How many iniquities and sins are laid to my charge? let me know my offences and my sin.

24 Why dost thou hide thy face and treat me as thy enemy? Wilt thou chase a driven leaf, wilt thou pursue dry chaff, prescribing punishment for me and making me heir to the iniquities of my youth, putting my feet in the stocks and setting a slave-mark on the arches

of my feet?

## **JOB 14**

1 Man born of woman is -- short-lived and full of disquiet. He blossoms like a flower and then he withers; he slips away like a shadow and does not stay; he is like a wine-skin that perishes or a garment that moths have eaten. Dost thou fix thine eyes on such a creature, and wilt thou bring him into Court to confront thee?

5 The days of his life are determined, and the number of his months is known to thee; thou hast laid down a limit, which he cannot pass. Look away from him therefore and leave him alone counting the hours day by day like a hired labourer.

7 If a tree is cut down, there is hope that it will sprout again and fresh shoots will not fail. Though its roots grow old in the earth, and its stump is dying in the ground, if it scents water it may break into bud and make new growth like a young plant. But a man dies, and he disappears; a man comes to his end, and where is he? As the waters of a lake dwindle, or as a river shrinks and runs dry, so mortal man lies down, never to rise until the very sky splits open. If a man dies, can he live again? He shall never be roused from his sleep. If only thou wouldst hide me in Sheol and conceal me till thy anger turns aside, if thou wouldst fix a limit for my time there, and then remember me!

14 Then I would not lose hope, however long my service, waiting for my relief to come. Thou wouldst summon me, and I would answer thee; thou wouldst long to see the creature thou hast made. But now thou dost count every step I take, watching all my course.

17 Every offence of mine is stored in thy bag; thou dost keep my

iniquity under seal; Yet as a falling mountain-side is swept away, and a rock is dislodged from its place, as water wears away stones, and a rain-storm scours the soil from the land, so thou hast wiped out the hope of frail man; thou dost overpower him finally, and he is gone; his face is changed, and he is banished from thy sight. His flesh upon him becomes black, and his life-blood dries up within him. His sons rise to honour, and he sees nothing of it; they sink into obscurity, and he knows it not.

## **JOB 15**

### *Second cycle of speeches*

1 Then Eliphaz the Temahite answered: Would a man of sense give vent to such foolish notions and answer with a bellyful of wind? Would he bandy useless words and arguments so unprofitable?

4 Why! you even banish the fear of God from your mind, usurping the sole right to speak in his presence; your iniquity dictates what you say, and deceit is the language of your choice. You are condemned out of your own mouth, not by me; your own lips give evidence against you.

7 Were you born first of mankind? were you brought forth before the hills? Do you listen in God's secret council or usurp all wisdom for yourself alone? What do you know that we do not know? What insight have you that we do not share? We have age and white hairs in our company, men older than your father.

11 Does not the consolation of God suffice you, a word whispered quietly in your ear? What makes you so bold at heart, and why do your eyes flash, that you vent your anger on God and pour out such a torrent of words? What is frail man that he should be innocent, or any

child of woman that he should be justified? If God puts no trust in his holy ones, and the heavens are not innocent in his sight, how much less so is man, who is loathsome and rotten and laps up evil like water!

17 I will tell you, if only you will listen, and I will describe what I have seen [what has been handed down by wise men and was not concealed from them by their fathers; to them alone the land was given, and no foreigner settled among them] the wicked are racked with anxiety all their days, the ruthless man for all the years in store for him. The noise of the hunter's scare rings in his ears, and in time of peace the raider falls on him; he cannot hope to escape from dark death; he is marked down for the sword; he is flung out as food for vultures; such a man knows that his destruction is certain. Suddenly a black day comes upon him, distress and anxiety overwhelm him [like a king ready for battle]; for he has lifted his hand against God and is pitting himself against the Almighty, charging him head down, with the full weight of his bossed shield.

27 Heavy though his jowl is and gross, and though his sides bulge with fat, the city where he lives will lie in ruins, his house will be deserted; it will soon become a heap of rubble.

29 He will no longer be rich, his wealth will not last, and he will strike no root in the earth; a scorching heat will shrivel his shoots, and his blossom will be shaken off by the wind. He deceives himself, trusting in his high raak, for all his dealings will come to nothing. His palm-trees will wither unseasonably, and his branches will not spread; he will be like a vine that sheds its unripe grapes, like an olive-tree that drops its blossom. For the godless, one and all, are barren, and their homes, enriched by bribery, are destroyed by fire; they conceive mischief and give birth to trouble, and the child of their womb is deceit.

# JOB 16

1 Then Job answered: I have heard such things often before, you who make trouble, all of you, with every breath, saying, 'Will this windbag never have done? What makes him so stubborn in argument?.' If you and I were to change places, I could talk like you; how I could harangue you and wag my head at you! But no, I would speak words of encouragement, and then my condolences would flow in streams. If I speak, my pain is not eased; if I am silent, it does not leave me. Meanwhile, my friend wearies me with false sympathy; they tear me to pieces, he and his fellows. He has come forward to give evidence against me; the liar testifies against me to my face, in his wrath he wears me down, his hatred is plain to see; he grinds his teeth at me.

10 My enemies look daggers at me, they bare their teeth to rend me, they slash my cheeks with knives; they are all in league against me. God has left me at the mercy of malefactors and cast me into the clutches of wicked men. I was at ease, but he set upon me and mauled me, seized me by the neck and worried me. He set me up as his target; his arrows rained upon me from every side; pitiless, he cut deep into my vitals, he spilt my gall on the ground. He made breach after breach in my defences; he fell upon me like a fighting man.

15 I stitched sackcloth together to cover my body and I buried my forelock in the dust; my cheeks were flushed with weeping and dark shadows were round my eyes, yet my hands were free from violence and my prayer was sincere.

18 O earth, cover not my blood and let my cry for justice find no rest! For look! my witness is in heaven; there is one on high ready to answer for me. My appeal will come before God, while my eyes turn again and again to him. If only there were one to arbitrate between

man and God, as between a man and his neighbour! For there are but few years to come before I take the road from which I shall not return.

## **JOB 17**

1 My mind is distraught, my days are numbered, and the grave is waiting for me. Wherever I turn, men taunt me, and my day is darkened by their sneers. Be thou my surety with thyself, for who else can pledge himself for me? Thou wilt not let those men triumph, whose minds thou hast sunk in ignorance; if such a man denounces his friends to their ruin, his sons' eyes shall grow dim.

6 I am held up as a byword in every land, a portent for all to see; my eyes are dim with grief, my limbs wasted to a shadow. Honest men are bewildered at this, and the innocent are indignant at my plight.

9 In spite of all, the righteous man maintains his course, and he whose hands are clean grows strong again.

10 But come on, one and all, try again! I shall not find a wise man among you.

11 My days die away like an echo; my heart-strings are snapped. Day is turned into night, and morning light is darkened before me. If I measure Sheol for my house, if I spread my couch in the darkness, if I call the grave my father and the worm my mother or my sister, where, then, will my hope be, and who will take account of my piety? I cannot take them down to Sheol with me, nor can they descend with me into the earth.

## **JOB 18**

1 Then Bildad the Shuhite answered: How soon will you bridle your tongue? Do but think, and then we will talk. What do you mean by treating us as cattle? Are we nothing but brute beasts to you? Is the earth to be deserted to prove you right, or the rocks to be moved from their place?

5 No, it is the wicked whose light is extinguished, from whose fire no flame will rekindle; the light fades in his tent, and his lamp dies down and fails him. In his iniquity his steps totter, and his disobedience trips him up; he rushes headlong into a net and steps through the hurdle that covers a pit; his heel is caught in a snare, the noose grips him tight; a cord lies hidden in the ground for him and a trap in the path.

11 The terrors of death suddenly beset him and make him piss over his feet. For all his vigour he is paralysed with fear; strong as he is, disaster awaits him.

13 Disease eats away his skin, Death's eldest child devours his limbs. He is torn from the safety of his home, and Death's terrors escort him to their king.

15 Magic herbs lie strewn about his tent, and his home is sprinkled with sulphur to protect it. His roots beneath dry up, and above, his branches wither.

17 His memory vanishes from the face of the earth and he leaves no name in the world. He is driven from light into darkness and banished from the land of the living.

19 He leaves no issue or offspring among his people, no survivor in his earthly home; in the west men hear of his doom and are appalled; in the east they shudder with horror.

21 Such is the fate of the dwellings of evildoers, and of the homes of those who care nothing for God.

## **JOB 19**

1 Then Job answered: How long will you exhaust me and pulverize me with words? Time and time again you have insulted me and shamelessly done me wrong. If in fact I had erred, the error would still be mine.

5 But if indeed you lord it over me and try to justify the reproaches levelled at me, I tell you, God himself has put me in the wrong, he has drawn the net round me. If I cry 'Murder!' no one answers; if I appeal for help, I get no justice.

8 He has walled in my path so that I cannot break away, and he has hedged in the road before me. He has stripped me of all honour and has taken the crown from my head. On every side he beats me down and I am gone; he has pulled up my tent-rope like a tree. His anger is hot against me and he counts me his enemy.

12 His raiders gather in force and encamp about my tent. My brothers hold aloof from me, my friends are utterly estranged from me; my kinsmen and intimates fall away, my retainers have forgotten me; my slave-girls treat me as a stranger, I have become an alien in their eyes. I summon my slave, but he does not answer, though I entreat him as a favour. My breath is noisome to my wife, and I stink in the nostrils of my own family. Mere children despise me and, when I rise, turn their backs on me; my intimate companions loathe me, and those whom I love have turned against me. My bones stick out through my skin, and I gnaw my under-lip with my teeth.

21 Pity me, pity me, you that are my friends; for the hand of God has

touched me. Why do you pursue me as God pursues me? Have you not had your teeth in me long enough? O that my words might be inscribed, O that they might be engraved in an inscription, cut with an iron tool and filled with lead to be a witness in hard rock!

25 But in my heart I know that my vindicator lives and that he will rise last to speak in court; and I shall discern my witness standing at my side and see my defending counsel, even God himself, whom I shall see with my own eyes, I myself and no other.

28 My heart failed me when you said, 'What a train of disaster he has brought on himself! The root of the trouble lies in him.' Beware of the sword that points at you, the sword that sweeps away all iniquity; then you will know that there is a judge.

## **JOB 20**

1 Then Zophar the Naamathite answered: My distress of mind forces me to reply, and this is why I hasten to speak: I have heard arguments that are a reproach to me, a spirit beyond my understanding gives me the answers.

4 Surely you know that this has been so since time began, since man was first set on the earth: the triumph of the wicked is short-lived, the glee of the godless lasts but a moment? Though he stands high as heaven, and his head touches the clouds, he will be swept utterly away like his own dung, and all that saw him will say, 'Where is he?' He will fly away like a dream and be lost, driven off like a vision of the night; the eye which glimpsed him shall do so no more and shall never again see him in his place. The youth and strength which filled his bones shall lie with him in the dust.

10 His sons will pay court to the poor, and their hands will give back

his wealth. Though evil tastes sweet in his mouth, and he savours it, rolling it round his tongue, though he lingers over it and will not let it go, and holds it back on his plate, yet his food turns in his stomach, changing to asps' venom within him. He gulps down wealth, then vomits it up, or God makes him discharge it. He sucks the poison of asps, and the tongue of the viper kills him.

17 Not for him to swill down rivers of cream or torrents of honey and curds; he must give back his gains without swallowing them, and spew up his profit undigested; for he has hounded and harassed the poor, he has seized houses which he did not build. Because his appetite gave him no rest, and he cannot escape his own desires, nothing is left for him to eat, and so his well-being does not last, with every need satisfied his troubles begin, and the full force of hardship strikes him.

23 God vents his anger upon him and rains on him cruel blows. He is wounded by weapons of iron and pierced by a bronze-tipped arrow; out at his back the point comes, the gleaming tip from his gall-bladder. Darkness unrelieved awaits him, a fire that needs no fanning will consume him.

27 [Woe betide any survivor in his tent!] The heavens will lay bare his guilt, and earth will rise up to condemn him. A flood will sweep away his house, rushing waters on the day of wrath. Such is God's reward for the wicked man and the lot appointed for the rebel by God.

## **JOB 21**

1 Then Job answered: Listen to me, do but listen, and let that be the comfort you offer me. Bear with me while I have my say; when I have finished, you may mock. May not I too voice my thoughts? Have not I as good cause to be impatient? Look at my plight, and be aghast;

clap your hand to your mouth. When I stop to think, I am filled with horror, and my whole body is convulsed.

7 Why do the wicked enjoy long life, hale in old age, and great and powerful? They live to see their children settled, their kinsfolk and descendants flourishing; their families are secure and safe; the rod of God's justice does not reach them. Their bull mounts and fails not of its purpose; their cow calves and does not miscarry. Their children like lambs run out to play, and their little ones skip and dance; they rejoice with tambourine and harp and make merry to the sound of the flute. Their lives close in prosperity, and they go down to Sheol in peace. To God they say, 'Leave us alone; we do not want to know your ways. What is the Almighty that we should worship him, or what should we gain by seeking his favour?'

16 Is not the prosperity of the wicked in their own hands? Are not their purposes very different from God's? How often is the lamp of the wicked snuffed out, and how often does their ruin come upon them? How often does God in his anger deal out suffering, bringing it in full measure to whom he will?

18 How often is that man like a wisp of straw before the wind, like chaff which the storm-wind whirls away?

19 You say, 'The trouble he has earned, God will keep for his sons'; no, let him be paid for it in full and be punished. Let his own eyes see damnation come upon him, and the wrath of the Almighty be the cup he drinks. What joy shall he have in his children after him, if his very months and days are numbered? Can any man teach God, God who judges even those in heaven above?

23 One man, I tell you, dies crowned with success, lapped in security and comfort, his loins full of vigour and the marrow juicy in his bones; another dies in bitterness of soul and never tastes prosperity; side by

side they are laid in earth, and worms are the shroud of both.

27 I know well what you are thinking and the arguments you are marshalling against me; I know you will ask, 'Where is the great man's home now, what has become of the home of the wicked?'

29 Have you never questioned travellers? Can you not learn from the signs they offer, that the wicked is spared when disaster comes and conveyed to safety before the day of wrath? No one denounces his conduct to his face, no one requites him for what he has done. When he is carried to the grave, all the world escorts him, before and behind; the dust of earth is sweet to him, and thousands keep watch at his tomb. How futile, then, is the comfort you offer me! How false your answers ring!

## **JOB 22**

### *Third cycle of speeches*

1 Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered: Can man be any benefit to God? Can even a wise man benefit him? Is it an asset to the Almighty if you are righteous? Does he gain if your conduct is perfect?

4 Do not think that he reproves you because you are pious, that on this count he brings you to trial. No it is because you are a very wicked man, and your depravity passes all bounds. Without due cause you take a brother in pledge, you strip men of their clothes and leave them naked. When a man is weary, you give him no water to drink and you refuse bread to the hungry.

8 Is the earth, then, the preserve of the strong and a domain for the favoured few? Widows you have sent away empty-handed, orphans you have struck defenceless. No wonder that there are pitfalls in your

path, that scares are set to fill you with sudden fear.

11 The light is turned into darkness, and you cannot see; the flood-waters cover you. Surely God is at the zenith of the heavens and looks down on all the stars, high as they are. But you say, 'What does God know? Can he see through thick darkness to judge? His eyes cannot pierce the curtain of the clouds as he walks to and fro on the vault of heaven.' Consider the course of the wicked man, the path the miscreant treads:

16 see how they are carried off before their time, their very foundation flowing away like a river; these men said to God, 'Leave us alone; what can the mighty do to us?'

17 Yet it was he that filled their houses with good things, although their purposes and his were very different. The righteous see their fate and exult, the innocent make game of them; for their riches are swept away, and the profusion of their wealth is destroyed by fire.

21 Come to terms with God and you will prosper; that is the way to mend your fortune. Take instruction from his mouth and store his words in your heart. If you come back to the Almighty in true sincerity, if you banish wrongdoing from your home, if you treat your precious metal as dust and the god of Ophir as stones from the river-bed, then the Almighty himself will be your precious metal; he will be your silver in double measure. Then, with sure trust in the Almighty, you will raise your face to God; you will pray to him, and he will hear you, and you will have cause to fulfil your vows. In all your designs you will succeed, and light will shine on your path; but God brings down the pride of the haughty and keeps safe the man of modest looks. He will deliver the innocent, and you will be delivered, because your hands are clean.

# **JOB 23**

1 Then Job answered: My thoughts today are resentful, for God's hand is heavy on me in my trouble. If only I knew how to find him, how to enter his Court, I would state my case before him and set out my arguments in full; then I should learn what answer he would give and find out what he had to say. Would he exert his great power to browbeat me?

7 No; God himself would never bring a charge against me. There the upright are vindicated before him; and I shall win from my judge an absolute discharge. If I go forward, he is not there; if backward, I cannot find him; when I turn a left, I do not descry him; I face right, but I see him not.

10 But he knows me in action or at rest; when he tests me, I prove to be gold. My feet have kept to the path he has set me, I have followed his way and not turned from it. I do not ignore the commands that come from his lips, I have stored in my heart what he says. He decides, and who can turn him from his purpose? He does what his own heart desires.

14 What he determines, that he carries out; his mind is full of plans like these. Therefore I am fearful of meeting him; when I think about him, I am afraid; it is God who makes me faint-hearted and the Almighty who fills me with fear, yet I am not reduced to silence by the darkness nor by the mystery which hides him.

# **Job 24**

1 The day of reckoning is no secret to the Almighty, though those who know him have no hint of its date. Wicked men move boundary-stones and carry away flocks and their shepherds. In the field they

reap what is not theirs, and filch the late grapes from the rich man's vineyard.

3 They drive off the orphan's ass and lead away the widow's ox with a rope. They snatch the fatherless infant from the breast and take the poor man's child in pledge. They jostle the poor out of the way; the destitute huddle together, hiding from them. The poor rise early like the wild ass, when it scours the wilderness for food; but though they work till nightfall, their children go hungry.

7 Naked and bare they pass the night; in the cold they have nothing to cover them. They are drenched by rain-storms from the hills and hug the rock, their only shelter. Naked and bare they go about their work, and hungry they carry the sheaves; they press the oil in the shade where two walls meet, they tread the winepress but themselves go thirsty. Far from the city, they groan like dying men, and like wounded men they cry out; but God pays no heed to their prayer. Some there are who rebel against the light of day, who know nothing of its ways and do not linger in the paths of light. The murderer rises before daylight to kill some miserable wretch. The seducer watches eagerly for twilight, thinking, 'No eye will catch sight of me.' The thief prowls by night, his face covered with a mask, and in the darkness breaks into houses which he has marked down in the day. One and all, they are strangers to the daylight, but dark night is morning to them; and in the welter of night they are at home. Such men are scum on the surface of the water; their fields have a bad name throughout the land, and no labourer will go near their vineyards.

19 As drought and heat make away with snow, so the waters of Sheol make away with the sinner. The womb forgets him, the worm sucks him dry; he will not be remembered ever after. He may have wronged the barren childless woman and been no help to the widow; yet God in his strength carries off even the mighty; they may rise, but

they have no firm hope of life.

23 He lulls them into security and confidence; but his eyes are fixed on their ways. For a moment they rise to the heights, but are soon gone; iniquity is snapped like a stick. They are laid low and wilt like a mallow-flower; they droop like an ear of corn on the stalk. If this is not so, who will prove me wrong and make nonsense of my argument?

## **JOB 25**

1 Then Bildad the Shuhite answered: Authority and awe rest with him who has established peace in his realm on high. His squadrons are without number; at whom will they not spring from ambush? How then can a man be justified in God's sight, or one born of woman be innocent? if the circling moon is found wanting, and the stars are not innocent in his eyes, much more so man who is but a maggot, mortal man who is only a worm.

## **JOB 26**

1 Then Job answered: What help you have given to the man without resource, what deliverance you have brought to the powerless! What counsel you offer to a man at his wit's end, what sound advice to the foolish! Who has prompted you to say such things, and whose spirit is expressed in your speech?

5 In the underworld the shades writhe in fear, the waters and all that live in them are struck with terror. Sheol is laid bare, and Abaddon uncovered before him. God spreads the canopy of the sky over chaos and suspends earth in the void. He keeps the waters penned in dense cloud-masses, and the clouds do not burst open under their weight.

9 He covers the face of the full moon, unrolling his clouds across it. He has fixed the horizon on the surface of the waters at the farthest limit of light and darkness. The pillars of heaven quake and are aghast at his rebuke. With his strong arm he cleft the sea-monster, and struck down the Rahab by his skill. At his breath the skies are clear, and his hand breaks the twisting sea-serpent. These are but the fringe of his power; and how faint the whisper that we hear of him! [Who could fathom the thunder of his might?]

## **JOB 27**

1 Then Job resumed his discourse: I swear by God, who has denied me justice, and by the Almighty, who has filled me with bitterness: so long as there is any life left in me and God's breath is in my nostrils, no untrue word shall pass my lips and my tongue shall utter no falsehood.

5 God forbid that I should allow you to be right; till death, I will not abandon my claim to innocence. I will maintain the rightness of my cause, I will never give up; so long as I live, I will not change.

7 May my enemy meet the fate of the wicked, and my antagonist the doom of the wrongdoer! What hope has a godless man, when he is cut off, when God takes away his life?

9 Will God listen to his cry when trouble overtakes him? Will he trust himself to the Almighty and call upon God at all times?

11 I will teach you what is in God's power,  
I will not conceal the purpose of the Almighty.  
If all of you have seen these things,  
why then do you talk such empty nonsense?

13 This is the lot prescribed by God for the wicked, and the ruthless

man's reward from the Almighty. He may have many sons, but they will fall by the sword, and his offspring will go hungry; the survivors will be brought to the grave by pestilence, and no widows will weep for them.

16 He may heap up silver like dirt and get himself piles of clothes; he may get them, but the righteous will wear them, and his silver will be shared among the innocent. The house he builds is flimsy as a bird's nest or a shelter put up by a watchman. He may lie down rich one day, but never again; he opens his eyes and all is gone. Disaster overtakes him like a flood, and a storm snatches him away in the night; the east wind lifts him up and he is gone; it whirls him far from home; it flings itself on him without mercy, and he is battered and buffeted by its force; it snaps its fingers at him and whistles over him wherever he may be.

## JOB 28

### *God's unfathomable wisdom*

1 There are mines for silver and places where men refine gold; where iron is won from the earth and copper smelted from the ore; the end of the seam lies in darkness, and it is followed to its farthest limit. Strangers cut the galleries; they are forgotten as they drive forward far from men. While corn is springing from the earth above, what lies beneath is raked over like a fire, and out of its rocks comes lapis lazuli, dusted with flecks of gold.

7 No bird of prey knows the way there, and the falcon's keen eye cannot descry it; proud beasts do not set foot on it, and no serpent comes that way. Man sets his hand to the granite rock and lays bare the roots of the mountains; he cuts galleries in the rocks, and gems of every kind meet his eye; he dams up the sources of the streams

and brings the hidden riches of the earth to light.

12 But where can wisdom be found? And where is the source of understanding? No man knows the way to it; it is not found in the land of living men.

14 The depths of ocean say, 'It is not in us', and the sea says, 'It is not with me.' Red gold cannot buy it, nor can its price be weighed out in silver; it cannot be set in the scales against gold of Ophir, against precious cornelian or lapis lazuli; gold and crystal are not to be matched with it, no work in fine gold can be bartered for it; black coral and alabaster are not worth mention, and a parcel of wisdom fetches more than red coral; topaz from Ethiopia is not to be matched with it, it cannot be set in the scales against pure gold. Where then does wisdom come from, and where is the source of understanding?

21 No creature on earth can see it, and it is hidden from the birds of the air. Destruction and death say, 'We know of it only by report.' But God understands the way to it, he alone knows its source; for he can see to the ends of the earth and he surveys everything under heaven. When he made a counterpoise for the wind and measured out the waters in proportion, when he laid down a limit for the rain and a path for the thunderstorm, even then he saw wisdom and took stock of it, he considered it and fathomed its very depths. And he said to man: The fear of the Lord is wisdom, and to turn from evil is understanding.

## **JOB 29**

*Job's final survey of his case*

1 Then Job resumed his discourse: If I could only go back to the old

days, to the time when God was watching over me, when his lamp shone above my head, and by its light I walked through the darkness! If I could be as in the days of my prime, when God protected my home, while the Almighty was still there at my side, and my servants stood round me, while my path flowed with milk, and the rocks streamed oil!

7 If I went through the gate out of the town to take my seat in the public square, young men saw me and kept out of sight; old men rose to their feet, men in authority broke off their talk and put their hands to their lips; the voices of the nobles died away, and every man held his tongue. They listened to me expectantly and waited in silence for my opinion. When I had spoken, no one spoke again; my words fell gently on them; they waited for them as for rain and drank them in like showers in spring. When I smiled on them, they took heart; when my face lit up, they lost their gloomy looks. I presided over them, planning their course, like a king encamped with his troops.

11 Whoever heard of me spoke in my favour, and those who saw me bore witness to my merit, how I saved the poor man when he called for help and the orphan who had no protector. The man threatened with ruin blessed me, and I made the widow's heart sing for joy. I put on righteousness as a garment and it clothed me; justice, like a cloak or a turban, wrapped me round. I was eyes to the blind and feet to the lame; I was a father to the needy, and I took up the stranger's cause. I broke the fangs of the miscreant and rescued the prey from his teeth.

18 I thought, 'I shall die with my powers unimpaired and my days uncounted as the grains of sand, with my roots spreading out to the water and the dew lying on my branches, with the bow always new in my grasp and the arrow ever ready to my hand.'

# JOB 30

1 But now I am laughed to scorn by men of a younger generation, men whose fathers I would have disdained to put with the dogs who kept my flock. What use were their strong arms to me, since their sturdy vigour had wasted away?

3 They gnawed roots in the desert, gaunt with want and hunger, they plucked saltwort and wormwood and root of broom for their food. Driven out from the society of men, pursued like thieves with hue and cry, they lived in gullies and ravines, holes in the earth and rocky clefts; they howled like beasts among the bushes, huddled together beneath the scrub, vile base-born wretches, hounded from the haunts of men. Now I have become the target of their taunts, my name is a byword among them. They loathe me, they shrink from me; they dare to spit in my face. They run wild and savage me; at sight of me they throw off all restraint. On my right flank they attack in a mob; they raise their siege-ramps against me, they tear down my crumbling defences to my undoing, and scramble up against me unhindered; they burst in through the gaping breach; at the moment of the crash they come rolling in.

15 Terror upon terror overwhelms me, it sweeps away my resolution like the wind, and my hope of victory vanishes like a cloud. So now my soul is in turmoil within me, and misery has me daily in its grip. By night pain pierces my very bones, and there is ceaseless throbbing in my veins; my garments are all bespattered with my phlegm, which chokes me like the collar of a shirt. God himself has flung me down in the mud, no better than dust or ashes.

20 I call for thy help, but thou dost not answer; I stand up to plead, but thou sittest aloof; thou hast turned cruelly against me and with thy strong hand pursuest me in hatred; thou dost snatch me up and set

me astride the wind, and the tempest tosses me up and down. I know that thou wilt hand me over to death, to the place appointed for all mortal men.

24 Yet no beggar held out his hand but was relieved by me in his distress. Did I not weep for the man whose life was hard? Did not my heart grieve for the poor? Evil has come though I expected good; I looked for light but there came darkness. My bowels are in ferment and know no peace; days of misery stretch out before me.

28 I go about dejected and friendless; I rise in the assembly, only to appeal for help. The wolf is now my brother, the owls of the desert have become my companions. My blackened skin peels off, and my body is scorched by the heat. My harp has been tuned for a dirge, my flute to the voice of those who weep.

## **JOB 31**

1 What is the lot prescribed by God above, the reward from the Almighty on high? Is not ruin prescribed for the miscreant and calamity for the wrongdoer? Yet does not God himself see my ways and count my every step?

5 I swear I have had no dealings with falsehood and have not embarked on a course of deceit. I have come to terms with my eyes, never to take notice of a girl.

6 Let God weigh me in the scales of justice, and he will know that I am innocent! If my steps have wandered from the way, if my heart has followed my eyes, or any dirt stuck to my hands, may another eat what I sow, and may my crops be pulled up by the roots! If my heart has been enticed by a woman or I have lain in wait at my neighbour's door, may my wife be another man's slave, and may other men enjoy

her. [But that is a wicked act, an offence before the law; it would be a consuming and destructive fire, raging among my crops.]

13 If I have ever rejected the plea of my slave or of my slave-girl, when they brought their complaint to me, what shall I do if God appears? What shall I answer if he intervenes? Did not he who made me in the womb make them?

15 Did not the same God create us in the belly? If I have withheld their needs from the poor or let the widow's eye grow dim with tears, if I have eaten my crust alone, and the orphan has not shared it with me – the orphan who from boyhood honoured me like a father, whom I guided from the day of his birth – if I have seen anyone perish for lack of clothing, or a poor man with nothing to cover him, if his body had no cause to bless me, because he was not kept warm with a fleece from my flock, if I have raised my hand against the innocent, knowing that men would side with me in court, then may my shoulder-blade be torn from my shoulder, my arm be wrenched out of its socket! But the terror of God was heavy upon me, and for fear of his majesty I could do none of these things.

24 If I have put my faith in gold and my trust in the gold of Nubia, if I have rejoiced in my great wealth and in the increase of riches; if I ever looked on the sun in splendour or the moon moving in her glory, and was led astray in my secret heart and raised my hand in homage; this would have been an offence before the law, for I should have been unfaithful to God on high. If my land has cried out in reproach at me, and its furrows have joined in weeping, if I have eaten its produce without payment and have disappointed my creditors, may thistles spring up instead of wheat, and weeds instead of barley!

29 Have I rejoiced at the ruin of the man that hated me or been filled with malice when trouble overtook him, even though I did not allow

my tongue to sin by demanding his life with a curse? Have the men of my household never said, 'Let none of us speak ill of him! No stranger has spent the night in the street'? For I have kept open house for the traveller. Have I ever concealed my misdeeds as men do, keeping my guilt to myself, because I feared the gossip of the town or dreaded the scorn of my fellow-citizens?

35 Let me but call a witness in my defence! Let the Almighty state his case against me! If my accuser had written out his indictment, I would not keep silence and remain indoors. No! I would flaunt it on my shoulder and wear it like a crown on my head; I would plead the whole record of my life and present that in court as my defence.

Job's speeches are finished.

## **JOB 32**

### *Speeches of Elihu*

1 So these three men gave up answering Job; for he continued to think himself righteous. Then Elihu son of Barakel the Buzite, of the family of Ram, grew angry; angry because Job had made himself out more righteous than God, and angry with the three friends because they had found no answer to Job and had let God appear wrong. Now Elihu had hung back while they were talking with Job because they were older than he; but, when he saw that the three had no answer, he could no longer contain his anger. So Elihu son of Barakel the Buzite began to speak:

6 I am young in years, and you are old; that is why I held back and shrank from displaying my knowledge in front of you. I said to myself, 'Let age speak, and length of years expound wisdom.' But the spirit of God himself is in man, and the breath of the Almighty gives him

understanding; it is not only the old who are wise or the aged who understand what is right. Therefore I say: Listen to me;

10 I too will display my knowledge. Look, I have been waiting upon your words, listening for the conclusions of your thoughts, while you sought for phrases; I have been giving thought to your conclusions, but not one of you refutes Job or answers his arguments. Take care then not to claim that you have found wisdom; God will rebut him, not man. I will not string words together like you or answer him as you have done.

15 If these men are confounded and no longer answer, if words fail them, am I to wait because they do not speak, because they stand there and no longer answer? I, too, have a furrow to plough; I will express my opinion; for I am bursting with words, a bellyful of wind gripes me. My stomach is distended as if with wine, bulging like a blacksmith's bellows; I must speak to find relief, I must open my mouth and answer; I will show no favour to anyone, I will flatter no one, God or man; for I cannot use flattering titles, or my Maker would soon do away with me.

## **JOB 33**

Come now, Job, listen to my words and attend carefully to everything I say. Look, I am ready to answer; the words are on the tip of my tongue. My heart assures me that I speak with knowledge, and that my lips speak with sincerity. For the spirit of God made me, and the breath of the Almighty gave me life. Answer me if you can, marshal your arguments and confront me. In God's sight I am just what you are; I too am only a handful of clay. Fear of me need not abash you, nor any pressure from me overawe you. You have said your say and I heard you; I have listened to the sound of your words:

9 'I am innocent, you said, and free from offence, blameless and without guilt. Yet God finds occasions to put me in the wrong and counts me his enemy; he puts my feet in the stocks and keeps a close watch on all I do.'

12 Well, this is my answer: You are wrong. God is greater than man; why then plead your case with him? for no one can answer his arguments. Indeed, once God has spoken he does not speak a second time to confirm it.

15 In dreams, in visions of the night, when deepest sleep falls upon men, while they sleep on their beds, God makes them listen, and his correction strikes them with terror. To turn a man from reckless conduct, to check the pride of mortal man, at the edge of the pit he holds him back alive and stops him from crossing the river of death. Or again, man learns his lesson on a bed of pain, tormented by a ceaseless ague in his bones; he turns from his food with loathing and has no relish for the choicest meats; his flesh hangs loose upon him, his bones are loosened and out of joint, his soul draws near to the pit, his life to the ministers of death.

23 Yet if an angel, one of thousands, stands by him, a mediator between him and God, to expound what he has done right and to secure mortal man his due; if he speaks in the man's favour and says, 'Reprieve him, let him not go down to the pit, I have the price of his release'; then that man will grow sturdier than he was in youth, he will return to the days of his prime. If he entreats God to show him favour, to let him see his face and shout for joy; if he declares before all men, 'I have sinned, turned right into wrong and thought nothing of it'; then he saves himself from going down to the pit, he lives and sees the light.

29 All these things God may do to a man, again and yet again, bringing him back from the pit to enjoy the full light of life.

31 Listen, Job, and attend to me; be silent, and I myself will speak. If you have any arguments, answer me; speak, and I would gladly find you proved right; but if you have none, listen to me: keep silence, and I will teach you wisdom.

## **JOB 34**

1 Then Elihu went on to say: Mark my words, you wise men; you men of long experience, listen to me; for the ear tests what is spoken as the palate savours food.

4 Let us then examine for ourselves what is right; let us together establish the true good. Job has said, 'I am innocent, but God has deprived me of justice, he has falsified my case; my state is desperate, yet I have done no wrong.' Was there ever a man like Job with his thirst for irreverent talk, choosing bad company to share his journeys, a fellow-traveller with wicked men? For he says that it brings a man no profit to find favour with God. But listen to me, you men of good sense. Far be it from God to do evil or the Almighty to play false!

11 For he pays a man according to his work and sees that he gets what his conduct deserves. The truth is, God does no wrong, the Almighty does not pervert justice. Who committed the earth to his keeping? Who but he established the whole world? If he were to turn his thoughts inwards and recall his life-giving spirit, all that lives would perish on the instant, and man return again to dust.

16 Now Job, if you have the wit, consider this; listen to the words I speak. Can it be that a hater of justice holds the reins? Do you disparage a sovereign whose rule is so fair, who will say to a prince, 'You scoundrel', and call his magnates blackguards to their faces; who does not show special favour to those in office and thinks no

more of rich than of poor?

19 All alike are God's creatures, who may die in a moment, in the middle of the night; at his touch the rich are no more, and the mighty vanish though no hand is laid on them. His eyes are on the ways of men, and he sees every step they take; there is nowhere so dark, so deep in shadow, that wrongdoers may hide from him. Therefore he repudiates all that they do; he turns on them in the night, and they are crushed. There are no appointed days for men to appear before God for judgement. He holds no inquiry, but breaks the powerful and sets up others in their place.

26 For their crimes he strikes them down and makes them disgorge their bloated wealth, because they have ceased to obey him and pay no heed to his ways. Then the cry of the poor reaches his ears, and he hears the cry of the distressed. [Even if he is silent, who can condemn him? If he looks away, who can find fault? What though he makes a godless man king over a stubborn nation and all its people?]

31 But suppose you were to say to God, 'I have overstepped the mark; I will do no more mischief. Vile wretch that I am, be thou my guide; whatever wrong I have done, I will do wrong no more.' Will he, at these words, condone your rejection of him? It is for you to decide, not me: but what can you answer? Men of good sense will say, any intelligent hearer will tell me, 'Job talks with no knowledge, and there is no sense in what he says.'

'36 If only Job could be put to the test once and for all for answers that are meant to make mischief. He is a sinner and a rebel as well with his endless ranting against God.'

## **JOB 36**

1 Then Elihu went on to say: Do you think that this is a sound plea or maintain that you are in the right against God? -- if you say, 'What would be the advantage to me? how much should I gain from sinning?' I will bring arguments myself against you, you and your three friends:

5 Look up at the sky and then consider, observe the rain-clouds towering above you. How does it touch him if you have sinned? However many your misdeeds, what does it mean to him? If you do right, what good do you bring him, or what does he gain from you? Your wickedness touches only men, such as you are; the right that you do affects none but mortal man.

9 Men will cry out beneath the burdens of oppression and call for help against the power of the great; but none of them asks, 'Where is God my Maker who gives protection by night, who grants us more knowledge than the beasts of the earth and makes us wiser than the birds of the air?' So, when they cry out, he does not answer, because they are self-willed and proud. All to no purpose! God does not listen, the Almighty does not see.

14 The worse for you when you say, 'He does not see me!' Humble yourself in his presence and wait for his word. But now, because God does not grow angry and punish and because he lets folly pass unheeded, Job gives vent to windy nonsense and makes a parade of empty words.

## **JOB 36**

1 Then Elihu went on to say: Be patient a little longer, and let me enlighten you; there is still something more to be said on God's side. I will search far and wide to support my conclusions; as I defend the justice of my Maker. There are no flaws in my reasoning; before you

stands one whose conclusions are sound.

5 God, I say, repudiates the high and mighty and does not let the wicked prosper, but allows the just claims of the poor and suffering; he does not deprive the sufferer of his due.

7 Look at kings on their thrones: when God gives them sovereign power, they grow arrogant. Next you may see them loaded with fetters, held fast in captives' chains: he denounces their conduct to them, showing how insolence and tyranny was their offence; his warnings sound in their ears and summon them to turn back from their evil courses. If they listen to him, they spend their days in prosperity and their years in comfort.

12 But, if they do not listen, they die, their lesson unlearned, and cross the river of death. Proud men rage against him and do not cry to him for help when caught in his toils; so they die in their prime, like male prostitutes, worn out.

15 Those who suffer he rescues through suffering and teaches them by the discipline of affliction.

16 Beware, if you are tempted to exchange hardship for comfort, for unlimited plenty spread before you, and a generous table; if you eat your fill of a rich man's fare when you are occupied with the business of the law, do not be led astray by lavish gifts of wine and do not let bribery warp your judgement. Will that wealth of yours, however great, avail you, or all the resources of your high position?

20 Take care not to turn to mischief; for that is why you are tried by affliction.

21 Have no fear if in the breathless terrors of the night you see nations vanish where they stand. God towers in majesty above us;

who wields such sovereign power as he? Who has prescribed his course for him? Who has said to him, 'Thou hast done wrong'? Remember then to sing the praises of his work, as men have always sung them.

25 All men stand back from him; the race of mortals look on from afar. Consider; God is so great that we cannot know him; the number of his years is beyond reckoning. He draws up drops of water from the sea and distils rain from the mist he has made; the rain-clouds pour down in torrents, they descend in showers on mankind; thus he sustains the nations and gives them food in plenty.

29 Can any man read the secret of the sailing clouds, spread like a carpet under his pavilion? See how he unrolls the mist across the waters, and its streamers cover the sea. He charges the thunderbolts with flame and launches them straight at the mark; in his anger he calls up the tempest, and the thunder is the herald of its coming.

## **JOB 37**

1 This too makes my heart beat wildly and start from its place.

2 Listen, listen to the thunder of God's voice and the rumbling of his utterance. Under the vault of heaven he lets it roll, and his lightning reaches the ends of the earth; there follows a sound of roaring as he thunders with the voice of majesty. God's voice is marvellous in its working; he does great deeds that pass our knowledge. For he says to the snow, 'Fall to earth', and to the rainstorms, 'Be fierce.'

6 And when his voice is heard, the floods of rain pour down unchecked. He shuts every man fast indoors, and all men whom he has made must stand idle; the beasts withdraw into their lairs and take refuge in their dens. The hurricane bursts from its prison, and

the rain-winds bring bitter cold; at the breath of God the ice-sheet is formed, and the wide waters are frozen hard as iron. He gives the dense clouds their load of moisture, and the clouds spread his mist abroad, as they travel round in their courses, steered by his guiding hand to do his bidding all over the habitable world.

14 Listen, Job, to this argument; stand still, and consider God's wonderful works. Do you know how God assigns them their tasks, how he sends light flashing from his clouds? Do you know why; the clouds hang poised overhead, a wonderful work of his consummate skill, sweating there in your stifling clothes, when the earth lies sultry under the south wind? Can you beat out the vault of the skies, as he does, hard as a mirror of east metal?

19 Teach us then what to say to him; for all is dark, and we cannot marshal our thoughts. Can any man dictate to God when he is to speak? or command him to make proclamation? At one moment the light is not seen, it is overcast with clouds and rain; then the wind passes by and clears them away, and a golden glow comes from the north.

23 But the Almighty we cannot find; his power is beyond our ken, and his righteousness not slow to do justice. Therefore mortal men pay him reverence, and all who are wise look to him.

## **JOB 38**

### *God's answer and Job's submission*

1 Then the Lord answered Job out of the tempest: Who is this whose ignorant words cloud my design in darkness? Brace yourself and stand up like a man; I will ask questions, and you shall answer. Where were you when I laid the earth's foundations? Tell me, if you

know and understand. Who settled its dimensions? Surely you should know. Who stretched his measuring-line over it? On what do its supporting pillars rest? Who set its corner-stone in place, when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted aloud? Who watched over the birth of the sea, when it burst in flood from the womb? -- when I wrapped it in a blanket of cloud and cradled it in fog,

10 when I established its bounds, fixing its doors and bars in place, and said, 'Thus far shall you come and no farther, and here your surging waves shall halt.' In all your life have you ever called up the dawn or shown the morning its place? Have you taught it to grasp the fringes of the earth and shake the Dog-star from its place; to bring up the horizon in relief as clay under a seal, until all things stand out like the folds of a cloak, when the light of the Dog-star is dimmed and the stars of the Navigator's Line go out one by one? Have you descended to the springs of the sea or walked in the unfathomable deep? Have the gates of death been revealed to you? Have you ever seen the door-keepers of the place of darkness? Have you comprehended the vast expanse of the world? Come, tell me all this, if you know. Which is the way to the home of light and where does darkness dwell?

20 And can you then take each to its appointed bound and escort it on its homeward path? Doubtless you know all this; for you were born already, so long is the span of your life!

22 Have you visited the storehouse of the snow or seen the arsenal where hail is stored, which I have kept ready for the day of calamity, for war and for the hour of battle?

24 By what paths is the heat spread abroad or the east wind carried far and wide over the earth? Who has cut channels for the downpour and cleared a passage for the thunderstorm, for rain to fall on land

where no man lives and on the deserted wilderness, clothing lands waste and derelict with green and making grass grow on thirsty ground?

28 Has the rain a father? Who sired the drops of dew? Whose womb gave birth to the ice, and who was the mother of the frost from heaven, which lays a stony cover over the waters and freezes the expanse of ocean? Can you bind the cluster of the Pleiades or loose Orion's belt? Can you bring out the signs of the zodiac in their season or guide Aldebaran and its train?

33 Did you proclaim the rules that govern the heavens, or determine the laws of nature on earth? Can you command the dense clouds to cover you with their weight of waters? If you bid lightning speed on its way, will it say to you, 'I am ready'? Who put wisdom in depths of darkness and veiled understanding in secrecy? Who is wise enough to marshal the rain-clouds and empty the cisterns of heaven, when the dusty soil sets hard as iron, and the clods of earth cling together?

39 Do you hunt her prey for the lioness and satisfy the hunger of young lions, as they crouch in the lair or lie in wait in the covert? Who provides the raven with its quarry when its fledglings croak for lack of food?

## **JOB 39**

1 Do you know when the mountain-goats are born or attend the wild doe when she is in labour? Do you count the months that they carry their young or know the time of their delivery, when they crouch down to open their wombs and bring their offspring to the birth, when the fawns grow and thrive in the open forest, and go forth and do not return?

5 Who has let the wild ass of Syria range at will and given the wild ass of Arabia its freedom? -- whose home I have made in the wilderness and its lair in the saltings; it disdains the noise of the city and is deaf to the driver's shouting; it roams the hills as its pasture and searches for anything green.

9 Does the wild ox consent to serve you, does it spend the night in your stall? Can you harness its strength with ropes, or will it harrow the furrows after you? Can you depend on it, strong as it is, or leave your labour to it?

12 Do you trust it to come back and bring home your grain to the threshing-floor? The wings of the ostrich are stunted, her pinions and plumage are so scanty that she abandons her eggs to the ground, letting them be kept warm by the sand. She forgets that a foot may crush them, or a wild beast trample on them;

16 she treats her chicks heartlessly as if they were not hers, not caring if her labour is wasted (for God has denied her wisdom and left her without sense), while like a cock she struts over the uplands, scorning both horse and rider.

19 Did you give the horse his strength? Did you clothe his neck with a mane? Do you make him quiver like a locust's wings, when his shrill neighing strikes terror? He shows his mettle as he paws and prances; he charges the armoured line with all his might. He scorns alarms and knows no dismay; he does not flinch before the sword.

23 The quiver rattles at his side, the spear and sabre flash. Trembling with eagerness, he devours the ground and cannot be held in when he hears the horn; at the blast of the horn he cries 'Aha!' and from afar he scents the battle.

26 Does your skill teach the hawk to use its pinions and spread its

wings towards the south? Do you instruct the vulture to fly high and build its nest aloft? It dwells among the rocks and there it lodges; its station is a crevice in the rock; from there it searches for food, keenly scanning the distance, that its brood may be gorged with blood; and where the slain are, there the vulture is.

## **JOB 41**

1 Can you pull out the whale with a gaff or can you slip a noose round its tongue? Can you pass a cord through its nose or put a hook through its jaw? Will it plead with you for mercy or beg its life with soft words? Will it enter into an agreement with you to become your slave for life? Will you toy with it as with a bird or keep it on a string like a song-bird for your maidens? Do trading-partners haggle over it or merchants share it out?

## **JOB 40**

1 Then the Lord said to Job: Is it for a man who disputes with the Almighty to be stubborn? Should he that argues with God answer back?

3 And Job answered the Lord: What reply can I give thee, I who carry no weight? I put my finger to my lips. I have spoken once and now will not answer again; twice have I spoken, and I will do so no more.

6 Then the Lord answered Job out of the tempest: Brace yourself and stand up like a man; I will ask questions, and you shall answer. Dare you deny that I am just or put me in the wrong that you may be right?

9 Have you an arm like God's arm, can you thunder with a voice like his? Deck yourself out, if you can, in pride and dignity, array yourself

in pomp and splendour; unleash the fury of your wrath, look upon the proud man and humble him; look upon every proud man and bring him low, throw down the wicked where they stand; hide them in the dust together, and shroud them in an unknown grave. Then I in my turn will acknowledge that your own right hand can save you.

15 Consider the chief of the beasts, the crocodile, who devours cattle as if they were grass: what strength is in his loins! what power in the muscles of his belly! His tail is rigid as a cedar, the sinews of his flanks are closely knit, his bones are tubes of bronze, and his limbs like bars of iron. He is the chief of God's works, made to be a tyrant over his peers; for he takes the cattle of the hills for his prey and in his jaws he crunches all wild beasts.

21 There under the thorny lotus he lies, hidden in the reeds and the marsh; the lotus conceals him in its shadow, the poplars of the stream surround him. If the river is in spate, he is not scared, he sprawls at his ease though the stream is in flood. Can a man blind his eyes and take him or pierce his nose with the teeth of a trap?

## **JOB 41**

7 Can you fill his skin with harpoons or his head with fish-hooks? If ever you lift your hand against him, think of the struggle that awaits you, and let be.

9 No, such a man is in desperate case, hurled headlong at the very sight of him. How fierce he is when he is roused! Who is there to stand up to him? Who has ever attacked him unscathed? Not a man under the wide heaven.

12 I will not pass over in silence his limbs, his prowess and the grace of his proportions. Who has ever undone his outer garment or

penetrated his doublet of hide? Who has ever opened the portals of his face? for there is terror in his arching teeth. His back is row upon row of shields, enclosed in a wall of flints; one presses so close on the other that air cannot pass between them, each so firmly clamped to its neighbour that they hold and cannot spring apart. His sneezing sends out sprays of light, and his eyes gleam like the shimmer of dawn.

19 Firebrands shoot from his mouth, and sparks come streaming out; his nostrils pour forth smoke like a cauldron on a fire blown to full heat. His breath sets burning coals ablaze, and flames flash from his mouth. Strength is lodged in his neck, and untiring energy dances ahead of him. Close knit is his underbelly, no pressure will make it yield. His heart is firm as a rock, firm as the nether millstone. When he raises himself, strong men take fright, bewildered at the lashings of his tail. Sword or spear, dagger or javelin, if they touch him, they have no effect. Iron he counts as straw, and bronze as rotting wood. No arrow can pierce him, and for him sling-stones are turned into chaff; to him a club is a mere reed, and he laughs at the swish of the sabre.

30 Armoured beneath with jagged sherds, he sprawls on the mud like a threshing-sledge. He makes the deep water boil like a cauldron, he whips up the lake like ointment in a mixing-bowl. He leaves a shining trail behind him, and the great river is like white hair in his wake. He has no equal on earth; for he is made quite without fear. He looks down on all creatures, even the highest; he is king over all proud beasts.

## **JOB 42**

1 Then Job answered the Lord: I know that thou canst do all things and that no purpose is beyond thee. But I have spoken of great

things which I have not understood, things too wonderful for me to know. I knew of thee then only by report, but now I see thee with my own eyes. Therefore I melt away; I repent in dust and ashes.

## Epilogue

7 When the Lord had finished speaking to Job, he said to Eliphaz the Temanite, 'I am angry with you and your two friends, because you have not spoken as you ought about me, as my servant Job has done. So now take seven bulls and seven rams, go to my servant Job and offer a whole offering for yourselves, and he will intercede for you; I will surely show him favour by not being harsh with you because you have not spoken as you ought about me, as he has done.'

9 Then Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite went and carried out the Lord's command, and the Lord showed favour to Job when he had interceded for his friends. So the Lord restored Job's fortunes and doubled all his possessions.

11 Then all Job's brothers and sisters and his former acquaintance came and feasted with him in his home, and they consoled and comforted him for all the misfortunes which the Lord had brought on him; and each of them gave him a sheep and a gold ring. Furthermore, the Lord blessed the end of Job's life more than the beginning; and he had fourteen thousand head of small cattle and six thousand camels, a thousand yoke of oxen and as many she-asses.

13 He had seven sons and three daughters; and he named his eldest daughter Jemimah, the second Keziah and the third Kerenhappuch. There were no women in all the world so beautiful as Job's daughters; and their father gave them an inheritance with their brothers.

16 Thereafter Job lived another hundred and forty years, he saw his sons and his grandsons to four generations, and died at a very great age. (Job, The New English Bible Oxford Press 1970)

## In the Koran

4:163 We have revealed Our will to you as We revealed it to Noah and to the prophets who came after him; as We revealed it to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and the tribes; to Jesus, Job, Jonah, Aaron, Solomon and David, to whom We gave the Psalms. (The Qur'an Dawood, s04-women\_dawood)

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6:85 We gave him Isaac and Jacob and guided both as We had guided Noah before them. Among his descendants were David and Solomon, Job and Joseph and Moses and Aaron (thus do we reward the righteous); Zacharias and John, Jesus and Elias (all were upright men); and Ishmael, Elisha, Jonah and Lot. All these We exalted above the nations as We exalted some of their fathers, their children, and their brothers. We chose them and guided them to a straight path. (The Qur'an Dawood, s06-cattle\_dawood)

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21:148 Believers, fortify yourselves with patience and with prayer. God is with those that are patient. Do not say that those slain in the cause of God are dead. They are alive, but you are not aware of them.

...

21:83 And tell of Job: how he called on his Lord, saying: 'I am sorely

afflicted: but of all those that show mercy You are the most merciful.'

We answered his prayer and relieved his affliction. We restored to him his family and as many more with them: a blessing from Ourselves and an admonition to the devout. (The Qur'an Dawood, s21-prophets\_dawood)

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38:40 And tell of Our servant Job. He called out to his Lord, saying: 'Satan has afflicted me with sorrow and misfortune.'

We said: 'Stamp your feet upon the earth, and a cool spring will gush forth. Wash and refresh yourself.'

We restored to him his people and as many more with them: a blessing from Ourselves and an admonition to prudent men. (The Qur'an Dawood, s38-sad\_dawood)

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2:150 We shall test your steadfastness with fear and famine, with loss of property and life and crops. Give good news to those who endure with fortitude; who in adversity say: 'We belong to God, and to Him we shall return.' On such men will be God's blessing and mercy; such men are rightly guided. (The Qur'an Dawood, s02-cow\_dawood)

# From Baha'i Writings

As to the statement of Job, chapter 19, verses 25-27, 'I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth,' the meaning here is: I shall not be abased, I have a Sustainer and a Guardian, and my Helper, my Defender will in the end be made manifest. And although now my flesh be weak and clothed with worms, yet shall I be healed, and with these mine own eyes, that is, mine inner sight, I shall behold Him. This did Job say after they had reproached him, and he himself had lamented the harms that his tribulations had wreaked upon him. And even when, from the terrible inroads of the sickness, his body was covered with worms, he sought to tell those about him that still he would be fully healed, and that in his very body, with his very eyes, he would gaze on his Redeemer. (Abdu'l-Baha, Selections from the Writings of Abdu'l-Baha, p. 171)

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Reflect upon his holiness Job: What trials, calamities and perplexities did he not endure! But these tests were like unto the fire and his holiness Job was like unto pure gold. Assuredly gold is purified by being submitted to the fire and if it contain any alloy or imperfection, it will disappear. That is the reason why violent tests become the cause of the everlasting glory of the righteous and are conducive to the destruction and disappearance of the unrighteous. (Abdu'l-Baha, Tablets of Abdu'l-Baha v3, p. 654)

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He would sometimes ask his Iraqi companions to chant various passages of the Qur'an, to which he would listen with close attention, and would often be moved to unfold their meaning. In the course of one of their chantings, they came across the following verse: "With

somewhat of fear and hunger, and loss of wealth and lives and fruits, will We surely prove you: but bear good tidings to the patient." "These words," Quddus would remark, "were originally revealed with reference to Job and the afflictions that befell him. In this day, however, they are applicable to us, who are destined to suffer those same afflictions. Such will be the measure of our calamity that none but he who has been endowed with constancy and patience will be able to survive them." (Shoghi Effendi, *The Dawn-Breakers*, p. 355)

# Tablet of Patience, or Tablet of Job

by Baha'u'llah

This is the City of Patience.

Strive ye to enter it, O concourse of the patient ones!

In His name, the Exalted One, He Who is the Most Exalted.

This is the remembrance of God in the City of Patience regarding Job, Our servant, Whom We sheltered under the shade of that Holy Tree planted in His heart, to Whom We demonstrated the fire ignited in His Own Essence, and to Whose Self We revealed Our Own Self by His Own Self. We called Job from this sacred Spot whose environs are sanctified with this call, "Verily, He is God, Thy Lord and the Lord of all things. He is All-Powerful over all things, the Self-Subsisting One." When Job's face was illumined by the fire burning in the sacred Tree, We clothed Him with the garment of Prophethood and commanded Him to instruct men in the essence of graciousness and bounty and to invite the people to the holy and beloved Shore. We established Job on earth and caused the waters of divine munificence to descend on Him so that through riches He became independent of all the inhabitants of the earth. We conferred on Him a bounteous fortune and made Him very wealthy in the kingdom. We caused Him to receive a portion of all wealth and strengthened His back with great power. We gave Him sons from his loins and established an exalted station for Him in all the lands.

Job was amongst His people many years, counseling them with the hidden gems of the knowledge We taught Him, and He reminded His people of the Days of God that were truly to come. He said, "O my

people! In truth, oceans of knowledge are contained within the Self of God Who hath arisen to establish justice. Hasten ye therefore that ye may find a way unto it. Verily, the Sun of God's loving kindness continues to shine forth from the midmost zenith and the beauty of the Countenance of God hath appeared from behind the Holy Tabernacles. Attend unto His presence that haply He may bestow upon you portions of His much-loved splendor. The heavens of grandeur are uplifted and have become adorned with constellations of knowledge and wisdom. Thus has God's holy cause dawned forth from the sanctified horizon. O my people! Before Me Messengers came with the divine Word and They all announced unto you that which will turn you towards the exalted and glorious shore. The divinely appointed time hath come upon you and the Lights of God's justice hath shone forth, the Immortal Bird hath sung, the Dove of Revelation has warbled, the clouds of God's illumination have become uplifted, and the oceans of divine bounty have poured forth. O people of the earth! Ye are deprived of all this. Fear ye God, corrupt not the earth of God's wisdom, and hearken unto these words which are descending from the heaven of God's nearness."

From the beginning that hath no beginning, to the end that hath no end, We have thus counseled Our servants through the tongue of the Messengers, yet all have turned away from God's admonitions and have retreated therefrom save those who have been encompassed by Our loving-kindness. These are the souls who hearkened unto God's call as voiced from behind the hidden veils of glory. They responded to the Summoner unto God with both their inner and outer being and sought attraction through the melodies of the Beloved, attaining unto the stations of guidance. Upon them be the mercy of God, and the salutations of God, Who hath given them what no one knoweth and hath caused them to reach a station that is hidden from the eyes of all creation.

Ere long will the cause of God be manifested and truth shall be distinguished from falsehood. The standards of guidance will be uplifted and all traces of those who have joined partners with God obliterated. The earth shall be inherited by those servants who are wholly consecrated unto God, have not imbibed the love of the "Calf" in their hearts, and who turn away from those who continue to disbelieve despite clear evidences presented to them. Thus have the fingers of might upon the tablets of light inscribed the divine behest.

Call to mind Our servant, Job. When He appeared with the standards of wealth in the kingdom of earth, His people were envious of Him, continually defaming Him in their gatherings. All their deeds are preserved in God's secret scrolls. Their vainly imagined that Job summoned people to God merely because He had been granted the treasures of this nether world, although, in fact, Job was sanctified from both their vain beliefs and certain truths, and indeed from all that is in this world. When We purposed to show the signs of the one true God as demonstrated in Job's detachment and reliance, We caused to descend upon Him tribulations from all sides and truly tried Him with many tests. [1] We took His sons from Him and discontinued the bounty We had given Him. Every day We deprived Him of something good; not a day passed but there descended on Job, from the site of divine decree, what hath been written by the Pen of God's will and suffering. Loss engulfed Him as had been ordained by the Mighty, the Self-Subsisting One. We burnt what He had planted by the hands of the angels of God's command and everything was utterly lost. When We had cleansed Him of earthly ornaments and material pollution, and had purified Him of physical possessions, then, as a further test, We caused the angels of divine wrath to blow poisonous air on His skin, making His body weaken, His temple tremble, and His limbs quiver so much that no portion of His being was left uncovered by wounds, and yet, in all these states, His gratitude increased daily. He remained patient and did not

complain. We thus accounted Him of those who trust and are patient and grateful.

Job's people expelled Him from the town where He lived, showing no shame toward God, their Creator. They hurt Job as much as they could, and thus did We deem Him one of the wronged of this world. The portals of wealth were closed to His face and the doors of poverty opened in such wise that several days passed before He could satisfy His intense hunger. Thus was the matter decreed. There remained unto Him no friend or companion and He became alone in the world except for His wife, who believed in God and served Job in all His tribulations. We confirmed her to be His support in all matters. When this companion found her Husband in such a grievous state, she went to her people and asked them for a loaf of bread, but those embodiments of iniquity refused to give her any. In truth, We have registered all things in Our perspicuous Book.

As His condition grew extreme, she sought help from the worst of women, but even this woman refused to give a piece of bread until she had taken from Job's wife what she wanted. I swear by God! The pen is ashamed to recall such events, but God is a witness of their deeds. Job's wife came to Him with the bread, but when He saw that her hair cut off, He bewailed in such a way that all the heavens and earth bewailed as well. Said He, "O handmaiden of God! I see thou hath done what is truly not allowed. Why did you permit your hair, an adornment for thy beauty, to be cut off?" Said she, "O Job! The more I asked Thy people for a piece of bread for Thee, the more they refused, until I entered the house of one of the maidservants of God. She also refused to give me bread until she had taken my hair, and this is the bread I have brought before Thy face. In this manner hath she rebelled against God's law. She has truly waxed proud and the matter is finished between her and me. O Job, forgive me and do not punish me for this transgression. I was reduced to an extreme condition because of my concern for Thee. Have mercy on me and

forgive me, for Thou art always generous and forgiving."

What was decreed came to pass and in this wise Job was sorrowful that all heavens would well nigh have cloven asunder and the earth of patience would have been split and the mountain of long suffering would have been reduced to pieces. So he placed his face on the dust and he said. "O my Lord! Suffering has encompassed from all sides and truly Thou art the One Whose mercy has preceded all things. In Thy generosity have compassion on me and be kind to me in Thy bountiful favor, for Thou art compassionate unto Thy servants." And when We heard His call We caused there to flow under his right leg a clear sweet water and We commanded Job to immerse himself in it and to drink therefrom. And when he drank therefrom he became purified of all ailments and was manifest in the most beauteous form. We returned to him all We had taken from him and even more such that We rained on him from the Dominion of wealth what enriched him and made him independent of all earth. We solaced his eyes by the joy of his family and we fulfilled what We had promised the patient ones in all the holy and preserved Tablets. We made good all his affairs and We confirmed him with mighty arm of Our revelation. Thus We raise the submissive ones and thus We cause to perish those who wax proud, they who act wickedly in the land. Thus We accomplish that which We purpose and We fulfill the rewards of the long suffering and We vouchsafe to them generously of Our holy treasures.

O peoples of the earth! Be patient and persevering in the path of God and do not sorrow about that which will befall you in these "Days of the Spirit". Soon ye shall see the recompense of the patient ones in the transcendent and holy Garden (Ridvan). In truth God has created a Paradise in the retreats of immortality and has named it "patience". Its name was treasured in the immaculate treasures of God up to the present Day. And in it was ordained what was not

ordained in all other gardens and We have at this moment unveiled it for you and caused it to be remembered by you as a mercy on Our part to all the worlds. And in this paradise there are rivers of the providence of God and God has forbidden it from any one except those who have persevered in calamities seeking thereby the good pleasure of God. None shall enter these gardens except such as have not perverted the bounty of God in themselves and flew with the wings of might in the atmosphere of patience. These are they who have been long-suffering in all tribulations and the more the tribulations increased their love for their Lord waxed greater and with their entire being they turned to the exalted and holy One. The ecstasies of desire grew intense in their hearts and the breaths of enthusiasm became great in their being so much so and they gave of their wealth and they gave all that vouchsafed by God to them and in all those states they were grateful to their Lord and they did not seek help from any one and God inscribed the names of the patient ones in His holy and irrevocable tablets.

Truly blessed is the one who arrays himself with the garment of patience and equanimity and who does not change in afflictions and whose footsteps do not slip when the tempests of wrath blow and remains acquiescent at all times and relies on God at all times. I swear by God! Soon will God cause him to be manifested within the canopy of grandeur with a luminous garment which will scintillate like unto the scintillation of light above the spiritual horizon and eyes will be dazzled upon beholding him and above his head there will be a caller from God saying, "This is verily the one who was long suffering for God in the vain and futile world and in all that the unbelievers did unto him. The concourse on high will seek blessing from him and the occupiers of God's pavilions will seek to meet him as well as the holy maidens in the sacred and beautiful tabernacles." So O People of the Bayan! Be patient in these passing days and do not complain that your abject ornaments have been lost and do not bemoan of the

afflictive trials that have been ordained in the Mighty Scrolls of God.

[This is the end of the text dealing with Job. The rest I have included because some souls might be interested in the history of the Babi Faith – internet editor Baha'i Bookshelf]

Further know ye that for all good deeds there is ordained a limited reward in the Book of God with the exception of patience. This is the point that was made by God unto Muhammad, the Apostle of God. "Those who patiently persevere will truly receive a reward without measure." Thus has the Faithful Spirit revealed unto the heart of Muhammad in the Arabian Tongue and thus has it been revealed in all the mighty and new Tablets what has been ordained for the patient ones. Further know ye that God has ordained patience to be the garment of all the Messengers and no Prophet or Messenger has been sent but his temple has been ordained with the robe of patience. Thus has been taken God's Covenant with every Prophet sent by Him.

It behoveth in the beginning for the patient person to persevere in himself so that he will withhold himself from all wickedness, evil, and desires, and from all that God has forbidden in His Book and so will his name be inscribed in the Tablets as a patient one. And further he shall be persevering despite the afflictions that shall descend on him in the path of his Fashioner and that he be not shaken when the tempestuous winds of divine decree blow and when the ocean of God's destiny billows in the dominion of His irrevocable Plan and that he remain steadfast in the Faith of God.

And further that he should be patient with what the friends of God bring upon him and that he should be forbearing with the believers for the love of God and the pleasure of His Religion. Anticipate ye therefore the Day when the clouds of patience shall be uplifted and the immortal Bird shall warble, and the Peacock of holiness shall be

made manifest with the ornament of Revelation in the kingdom of His reunion, and the stammering tongues shall be freed singing the accents of the Nightingale, and the Dove of paradise shall sing betwixt earth and heaven and the Trumpet shall be sounded and bodies of existence shall all be renewed, and the Divine Fire shall be ignited, and God in His transcendent and glorious Beauty shall come in the clouds of the Spirit. Then haste ye to Him O peoples of the earth! And do not heed anything else of this world, and let nothing impede you, and let the affairs of learning should not hinder you and the matters of wisdom should not lock you out haste with all haste to the holy and uplifted Precinct. For if you had been of the patient ones from all eternity but if ye tarry on that Day less than a moment the quality of true patience shall not be yours. This has been revealed by the pen of the Omniscient One.

Say, O people of the world, fear God in these Days and do not fabricate falsehoods against His Trusted Ones and speak not of what ye have no cognizance. For ye are of the weak ones on earth and of the poor ones [3] in His land so wax not proud in your selves and hurry towards the accepted land of God's will.

I swear by God! This nether world shall pass away and all that ye delight in it with it, and the angels of His wrath shall assemble you in the presence of the Mighty and Omnipotent King. And you shall be asked of what you have wrought in your days for naught is left in the heavens or earth but that it is written in the tablets of His Knowledge. Then no one will assist you and none will befriend you and nothing will avail you but what you have planted in the field of your deeds. So be awakened O wicked ones and hearken unto the admonition of this kind Friend who admonishes you for the sake of God and does not want from you either a recompense or thanks. His reward is with the One that has sent Him in truth and has caused to descend on Him verses that the proof may be fulfilled unto all the world. How long will ye repose yourself on the seats of heedlessness and how long

shall ye follow that are not but the abject ones moved by others.

I swear by God! They whom you have taken to be lords beside the One True God do not have names or essences mentionable in the sight of God. Have mercy on yourself and fear God your Fashioner. Return to him that He may forgive your evil deeds and he is truly forgiving unto His servants.

Say I swear by God! They to whom you attribute knowledge and have accepted them as your divines they are in the sight of God the worst of men nay the quintessence of evil flees from them. Thus has the matter been inscribed in the scrolls of God's knowledge. We testify that they have not drunk from the fountains of knowledge and they have not attained unto a word of Wisdom and have not become aware of the mysteries of Revelation and have been racing in the land of their selfish desires. Nothing of rejection and denial against a prophet or a successor of a prophet has come to pass except after their permission. Thus has always been their injunction carried out on the Countenances of holiness.

Say to them: O ignorant ones! Did We not reveal in the past: "A Day that God shall come in the canopies of clouds." How is it that when He came down in the clouds of Revelation in the Temple of 'Ali, you turned away and rejected Him and waxed haughty and brought about your own perdition? Was it not also revealed in your Book: "the Day when Thy Lord comes or certain of the signs of Thy Lord." And when He did come with evident signs wherefore did ye turn away from those signs and veiled yourselves with the veils of self?

Say: Verily God is sanctified from coming and descent. For He is Single, Transcendent Whose knowledge encompasses all the heavens and the earth. For He never comes in His Essence nor can He be seen in His Innermost Being and cannot be recognized in His Divine Self and He cannot be comprehended with all His attributes.

Thus He that cometh is the Manifestation of His own Self and indeed He did come in the Name of 'Ali and ye gathered around Him with the claws of hatred and passed sentence on Him, O concourse of divines, and were not ashamed in the face of Him Who created you and fashioned you. Thus have We taken account of your affair in preserved Tablets of Glory.

O Ear of Immortal truth! Harken to what these unbelievers say: God has sealed Prophethood with the coming of His Beloved Muhammad, the Apostle of God, and He shall not raise any one after Him and He has made His own hands chained of disposing grace; the embodiments of sanctity shall never appear after Him; the Lights of grace shall never shine again; bounty is terminated; power has ended; loving-kindness has been consummated; the portals of grace are closed even though the breezes of divine grace are ever blowing from the Ridvan of might. Say: May your own hands be chained and accursed are you in these sayings. Rather His hands are stretched to give bounty to all the heavens and the earth. He will rise with power whoever He wishes and He shall not be asked of his doings. Verily He has power over all things.

Say: O People of the Qur'an! Ponder ye in the Book that was revealed in truth unto Muhammad in which he sealed Prophethood with the coming of His beloved Prophet until the day of resurrection. But this day is the day of Resurrection whereon God has risen in the Manifestation of His Self but you have become veiled from it just as the peoples before have become veiled on the advent of Muhammad and you have become drowned in the depths of an ocean of ignorance and denial.

Say: Were ye not promised "attaining the presence of God" in the "Days of God"? But when the Promise did come and the Beauty shone above the Horizon of Glory you turned your gaze away and were resurrected blind in the Plain of resurrection.

Say: Was it not revealed in the Qur'an, and His word is the Truth: "Thus have We made you a nation intermediate. That ye may be witnesses over the nations, and the Messenger a witness over yourselves."? But you have interpreted this verse according to your desires although at all times you admitted what was also revealed is truth: None knoweth the interpretation thereof except God and they that are firmly grounded in knowledge. Although you are certain of this verse and although you were prevented, yet you have interpreted and expounded the words of God. But you have risen to object to and to deny those "firmly grounded in knowledge." In fact you slay them as you slew them aforetime and are proud of what you perpetrate. Woe unto you and what your hands have wrought and woe unto what you have vain imaginings in the Cause of God in Days that the lights of guidance are manifest at this dawn of knowledge. Ask them then as to how they interpret that which has been revealed from the kingdom of glory unto the Arabian Prophet and what do they say the meaning of Intermediate is.

If Prophethood has been sealed with Him how is the Prophet's nation said to be intermediate amongst the nations? In this wise ascertain the limit of their cognizance. It is as though they have never hearkened the melodies of the Divine Nightingale or if they heard it they did not apprehend its purpose and in this manner the testimony of their own Book is completed unto them. This is what the word of all the peoples when the dispensation of each of the Prophets comes. As oft as a Messenger came to them they told that Messenger, "You have not been sent by God and Prophethood was sealed by the previous one." Thus does Satan embellish to their eyes their deeds and words and in this they are far remote from the shores of truth.

Tell them then the story of Muhammad when aforetime He came with clear sovereignty. Said He, "These are the verses of God that have been revealed in truth." Do not have discord in the Cause of

God but gather on around this glorious and transcendent shore. O people! Look at Me with the eye of God and follow not your desires and be not like those who call God in their days and night but when He came to them they turned away and denied him and were found prostrate upon the idols of their own selves.

The Jews said, "By God! This is He who has fabricated a falsehood against God, or He is possessed or He is under a spell." They said, "God has sealed Prophethood with Moses and this command of God is decreed in the Torah. Further the Law of the Torah shall never be abrogated as long as God exists and the One that is to be raised after Moses will arise under the auspices of the Mosaic Law so that he may spread its ordinances amongst all the peoples of the earth and thus has the command of God been revealed from the firmament His Revelation brought down.

The people of the Gospel spoke like unto them and are waiting from that Day till this. And their position was rejected by God in that which He revealed upon Muhammad in the Arabic tongue in the Sura of the Jinn: "They came to think as ye thought that God would not raise up any one (to Prophethood)."

I swear by God! This verse and what is treasured within it suffices all the peoples of the earth should they tread the goodly and honorable path. Say: God hath sent down His Messengers to succeed to Moses and Jesus, and He will continue to do so till 'the end that hath no end'; so that His grace may, from the heaven of Divine Bounty be continually vouchsafed to mankind. He doeth what He willeth and He shall not be asked of what He does. Rather all will be asked of all things in the court of divine Justice.

Hearken then unto what these objectors say and how they have come to think as the servants who were before have thought. Say: I swear by God! Ye are guilty of a misapprehension in this matter. For

verily the "Hour" has passed in truth and the "Resurrection" has risen despite you and despite those who are deafened unto divine melodies. Say: Ye speak as the peoples of bygone ages spoke at the time of the Apostle of God and ye are expectant as they were expectant and your footsteps have slipped upon this path which has been outstretched for truth. Ponder ye therefore on the significance of this verse that ye may be nourished from the nourishment of knowledge that is descending from the heaven of holiness in a preordained measure.

O Solace of the Eyes of Eternity! Witness what the unbelievers report about this verdant and blessed Tree that is upraised on the musk-laden mount. So high have its Branches grown that They have reached a place hidden beyond the Tabernacles of holiness. And these unbelievers have purposed to cut on its twigs. Say: it is protected in the fortress of God and is guarded in His loving providence and yet God has prevented the hands of the unbelievers and hypocrites from molesting it, such that their hands will never reach it. Soon will God gather under its shade all who are in the kingdom of existence and this is what God has written for His own Self to accomplish and all that has been irrevocable in the Tablets of might written with the Pen of knowledge.

O Solace of the Eyes of Beauty! Remind the servants with the remembrances of the spirit in these days and make them hear the immortal melodies that they may come to apprehend in themselves something even for lesser than a moment haply they may not entertain thoughts as the people aforetime thought and that they may have certitude that God is able to send a Messenger at all moments. Say O people of hatred! May you perish in your wrath! This victory has been decreed by the luminous and glorious Pen. Reveal unto them what the Dove of the Spirit has sung in the holy and beloved Ridvan haply they may follow the interpretation of the term "Seal" as was uttered by the Tongue of the Name of God 'Ali, He Who was

firmly grounded in knowledge, in His Visitation of the Prophet. He said in truth, "Muhammad the Sealer of what preceded Him and the Initiator of that which was to come." In this was uttered the significance of the term of Seal from that unapproachably holy tongue. Thus did God ordain Him to be the Seal of those Prophets that preceded Him and an Initiator of a series of Messengers to come after Him.

In this wise ponder ye in what We have revealed unto you in all truth that ye find a way to the precinct of God's Revelation on the shore of holiness. Be not veiled therefore because of what ye have heard from your divines and ask the questions of religion from him whom God has ordained to be "firmly grounded in knowledge" and from whose countenance resplendent lights are shed.

O people! Fear God and take not knowledge from muddled fountains that flow from a source of self and ignorance. Take ye your portion from sweet flowing, unsullied, waters that flow from the right hand of the throne and which God has apportioned for the righteous.

O Holy Countenance! Waft unto all existent things what God has vouchsafed in His munificence unto Thee that all things may rise from the sepulchres of their bodies and that they may all be cognizant of that Revelation that has come in all truth. Then send upon all beings musk-laden breezes that have been fragrant from thee from the source of immortality that haply moldering bones may be revived by them and that people may not deprive themselves from this Spirit that has been breathed by this pre-existent, eternal, and timeless Pen and thereby they, endowed with the most beauteous form, may attain resurrection in this holy and blest land.

O Pen of Revelation! Thou seest and bearest witness that beings do not seek this outspread bountiful mercy that encompasses all the heavens and the earth and seek not to turn to the Countenance from

whom the lights of the Spirit shine forth and by Whom all the Kingdoms of Revelation and creation have become illumined, and Thou art a witness unto all that. These people race in the valley of self and desire and immerse themselves with those who have not attained Thy presence even though Thou hast given them all the glad tidings of this Day by Thy glorious and perspicuous Pen. Thou sayest and Thy word is most sweet in the dominion of eternity. On that day the Cause belongs solely unto God.

Thus hath the matter pertaining to this day been inscribed by the Pen of Glory moved by the Finger of Spirit upon the Tablet of glory, and when the day did come to pass and when the hour did come and when the matter was consummated and when the lights of Thy beauty were shining in the midmost part of heaven then all of them rose in opposition to this light which shineth from all the horizons. They veiled themselves with thick veils of faithlessness. In this manner apprehend the position of all the peoples in all the ages namely that despite their waiting and their anticipation of the Days of God, when the time pre-ordained did come to pass they all denied him because of that which Satan had suggested in their hearts and caused themselves to be remote from the shores of holiness.

In this Day also you see these unbelievers awaited and they indeed were expectant in all their Days as they were promised by the tongue of Muhammad the Apostle of God. And whenever they heard the name of the Promised One they rose and shouted, "May God hasten by His Advent our deliverance!" And when He appeared in all truth they gainsaid Him, and raised objections to Him, and disputed idly with Him, and imprisoned Him in the midst of mountains, and the hatred of their hearts was not quenched until they perpetrated against Him what caused the hearts of all existence and visible reality to burn, and because of this the foundations of the City of immortality in the divine dominions trembled and the Beauty of the Unseen mourned in His holy and secret domains.

O Countenance of Glory! Remind the believers and the Concourse of the everlasting what the unbelievers used to utter in the Days commemorating the martyrdom of the Imam Husayn at the hands of the unjust and wicked ones. These people used to recite the verses of Visitation of Husayn every day and would accurse the doers of wrong against Him, so much so that every morning they would recite a hundred times, "O God, curse the first to wrong the just cause of Muhammad and the Family of Muhammad!" And when Husayn was resurrected once more in the Holy Land they wronged Him and killed Him and they perpetrated against him what was never done before. In this wise does God separate between truth and falsehood and between light and darkness and reveals to you what will make manifest the deeds of all wrong-doers.

Then make mention in the Book, the servant of God, Taqi. He who believed in God on the day when the revelation was resplendent from the dawning place of the spirit. He is the one who assisted his Lord as much as he could when Vahid entered the eastern city of love [i.e. Nayriz]. He said "O my people, in truth the testimony of God has come and the countenance of truth is unveiled." O people of the Qur'an! Haste ye to it and do not turn your back therefrom. O my people! The beauty of God has dawned from the horizon of holiness. The promise is fulfilled. Haste ye to the Ridvan in which his countenance is shining from. Beware that you do not deprive yourselves and your eyes from attaining the presence of God, for this is the day of God which has been ordained to be harsh unto the unbelievers.

O my people! Verily the Book of God has been set and this is the book wherein nothing of the deeds of the peoples of the world is left out from it even to the measure of a tiny pebble. O people! Do not become veiled from the beauty of God that has come in the shades of the clouds surrounded by holy angels for this is the way his

revelation has been decreed from his throne on high.

Remember when Vahid said, "O people, I have come to you bearing a Tablet of spirit from the Bab, the exalted One. O people, do not enter divisions in this Cause of God and answer this caller who calls you with all sincere truthfulness and who discloses for you what will approximate you to the right hand of the Beloved and glorious One. O people, you have been promised in all the tablets to attain the presence of God and this is the day that the beauty of God has been disclosed, the day in which His light has been manifest, the day in which the Summoner is calling you and the day in which the heavens have been cloven asunder with the clouds. Fear ye God and do not close your eyes from the most luminous and holy beauty."

This is the day you have been promised through the tongue of the messengers and this way God took a covenant from you in the heaven of pre-existence. Therefore fulfill your own covenant and do not tarry upon the land of misgiving. There is amongst the people one who has been faithful to the call of God and responded the truthful Summoned and there is one that has turned away and rebelled against God. Amongst those who have accepted God is the one named Taqi. He has believed and has been faithful to his promise. He attained the presence of Vahid, he adhered firmly to the most firm handle. He did not divide the word of God. He was faithful to the true religion. He assisted God at all times in whatever way he could, God has placed his name upon the lines of eternity written by the Pen of glory. Suffering and affliction embraced him and he bore in his own soul all manner of afflictions and under those circumstances he was always grateful and ever patient.

Those who assist God with their wealth and their lives and who are patient under all conditions of hardship for the purpose of attracting God's good pleasure these are the ones who shall attain victory for all eternity. Such people even if they are killed or burned because

they have been created of the spirit shall always soar in the spiritual atmosphere through God's permission. These shall not attend to their bodies in this world and these seek sufferings in the path of God as a sinner seeks forgiveness, as a babe seeks the breast milk given to it by the mercy of God thus does the nightingale remind you with spiritual recollections so that men may detach themselves from their own self, their money and wealth and to return to the holy and clear presence.

Days passed until such time as a group of people from the town which God has blessed and whose name has been uplifted in the Tablet from which the Mother Book has been derived gathered around Vahid. These people obeyed the commands of God, circled around his cause, sacrificed their wealth, gave up everything they had of the treasures of this world, and were not frightened of anyone and God is aware of everything. Their hearts were like iron in the aim to render victory to God, no blame from the blamer attached to them, no objection prevented them, rather they were exalted in the cities of God like holy and uplifted ensigns. Matters reached a point that the chieftain of the army of tyranny, he who disbelieved in God and His beauty and turned away from His proofs and was the most wicked man of the earth, heard about Vahid. Unto this bears witness those men who are hidden in the tabernacles of immortality.

O people of Nayriz! Thank ye God your creator who vouchsafed His bounty upon you, preferred you upon the peoples of the earth, honored you with attaining His presence, made you aware of His own self, nourished you from the fruits of the Tree of paradise at a time when all were depriving themselves of it. God gave you the bounty of appreciating His Days, God sent you the breezes of holiness and turned you to the right hand of divine unity and enabled you to get close to the holy Vale. Thus does God vouchsafe unto whomever He wishes and He chooses to confer His mercy upon those who have detached themselves of all earthly things. Thus cheer

yourself and pride yourself over all the peoples of the earth. Know you that God has written your names upon Holy Tablets and has ordained for you a praiseworthy station in paradise. I swear by God! If the station of anyone of you should become clear all the peoples will give their lives in their desire for this station created by the hand of God. But this station is hidden from the eyes of men that the good may be distinguished from the corrupt and thus does God test the people in this world that what is in their hearts may become manifest and you have been a witness to all that.

How many servants of God who worshipped God in the days of their life and who would order the people to good and righteousness and would weep over the afflictions of the family of God and who would cast their eyes down when they would recite their prayers and their Tablets of Visitation all these to express their devotion and adoration to the Seat of Sanctity. But when the Truth came to them they turned away and disbelieved in Him until they slew Him with their own hands and were happy in their deeds. Thus does God bring to naught the deeds of those who show pride and will accept the deeds of those who turn solely unto Him, and humble themselves before His countenance and tread the path of His good pleasure.

O people of Nayriz! Recall the bounty of God wherewith He has graciously vouchsafed unto you and whereby He has taught you what He has not taught the divines of the earth – divines who because of the great size of their turbans cannot even walk on earth and when they move it is as if a mountain of hatred moves.

I swear by God! It behooves you, O friends of God, that you sanctify yourself from all that ye have been forbidden and thank God in all your days and your nights because He chose you for a bounty from of which others did not have a portion. You must give account of your Lord, your Creator, so that because of you the fragrances of God may be wafted and in this way you may be distinguished from those

who have disbelieved and joined partners unto God. Thus does the Nightingale give counsel unto you and teach you the ways of knowledge that you may become steadfast in the religion of God and constant in that religion of love. Fear God and do not dissipate your deeds through negligence and do not impress on God as a favor that they believe in God and the person of His Manifestation. Rather it is God that has conferred the favor on you in that He has assisted you to recognize the Revelation and has shown you the paths of dignity and righteousness and has inspired you with His wondrous and treasured knowledge.

Blessed are ye the people of Nayriz in that you are patient in your suffering and afflictions in these times ordained by God and in all you heard with your ears and as all you witnessed soon God will reward you with the best reward and He shall give you what shall be pleasing to your souls and what shall establish your names in his hidden and holy Book. Strive therefore that you do not waste your fortitude with complaints and be ye acquiescent with what God has ordained unto you and what He shalt ordain in the future. For this world and its ornaments and its treasures shall all vanish in less than a moment for there is no permanence in it and you shall attain the presence of the glorious Beloved. Great is your blessedness therefore and those who sacrificed themselves in the days of God for they are of those who soared in the atmosphere of divine love until they reached a place that was forbidden unto those other than them.

O holy Pen! Recount what came to pass upon Vahid from the enemies of the self of God so that his affair may be mentioned amongst the Concourse on High in all truth. When he [i.e. Haji Zaynu'l-Abidin Khan, the governor of Nayriz] who disbelieved and waxed wicked and showed pride before God and rebelled against Him sent the armies of unbelief and commanded those armies to kill those people who had no equal or compare in the depth of their belief in God, and when he commanded them to shed the blood of

those people whose blood has caused everything to be made pure, he then ordered the multitude to perpetrate what was not revealed in the Book of God for such was his custom and degree. He then arranged that there be two chiefs for the hosts of the enemy, chiefs who had disbelieved in God and in His verses and who had exchanged for their religion this world and who bought for themselves everlasting and permanent deprivation and who were proceeding to face as a result of their tyranny the wrath of God. These two chieftains came with all their armies of disbelief and with all their hosts of wickedness and they surrounded the hosts of God and his loved ones and they are already inscribed in the Mother Book by the Pen of revelation as the most wicked of people. For they waged war against the companions of God, they fought with them, they disputed with them, they engaged in many battles with them, and they did whatever they could to vanquish the hosts of the one true God, but in all these battles God made them to be defeated in the hands of the believers.

When they were impotent to defeat the party of God and His loved ones, they engaged in many deliberations and arranged a deception and consulted on their plans until they decided to send to Vahid an envoy with a tongue of falsehood and deception. This envoy of Satan entered the presence of Vahid and said, "O Vahid, you are a descendent of the Prophet Muhammed and we admit that you have the dignity and honor above us and we have not come to antagonize thee but we wish for a reconciliation and we are prepared to hear what you have to tell us and we shall follow what you say and not dispute with that in the smallest way possible.

Then Vahid's spiritual utterance started and the Holy Spirit spoke through his tongue and said, "O people! If you accept my honor and dignity and if you admit that I am a descendent of the Prophet of God, why have you attacked me with your armies, why have you encircled our people and why have you turned away from the cause

of God and rebelled against him? O people! Fear God. Do not perpetrate mischief in God's earth. Do not abandon the true religion of God behind your backs. Fear God who has created you and nourished you and revealed to you these new and wondrous verses. O people! The world will pass away, your armies will disappear as will also the one who sent you with the intention of oppressing us. Consider what happened to the nations of the past and learn of those affairs that transpired. O people, I am nothing but a servant who has believed in God and in the verses of God that have been revealed through the utterance of 'Ali in truth [i.e. the Bab.] If you are not pleased with me, I shall travel away from you towards God as I do not seek anything here. Fear God and do not shed the blood of His lovers; do not take in vain the property of people; do not disbelieve after your claims of belief. These are my counsels unto you, follow my advice and do not deprive yourselves of a revelation that has dawned from the horizon of the spirit. O people, will you kill someone who says my Lord is God after he has brought verses whose comprehension is beyond the intelligence of all creation? Have mercy on yourselves and do not follow your selfish desires. You shall soon leave this evanescent world and you shall soon find yourselves in the presence of One Who is omnipotent and self-subsisting. You shall be asked then of what you have done in this world and you shall be requited with all your deeds in this perishing domain. All this has been decreed irrevocably in the Tablets of Glory."

Following this there were many envoys and communications between them until they introduced the Book of God, the Qur'an, and pledged a solemn oath on it and sealed it and sent it to Vahid, the beauteous one. In this way they sought to accomplish a deception in the cause of God by pledging by their tongue what was not in their heart for their hatred was like a fire smoldering behind the smoke of deception. They implored Vahid to adorn their tents and assemblies with his coming and they further emphasized all their pledges and

covenant although they were recumbent on the couch of self and desire. When the sealed Qur'an, the Book of God, came in front of Vahid he rose and said to his friends, "O people, the promised hour is come, the decrees of God will soon be accomplished, I shall go to them so that what is hidden behind the tabernacles of God's destiny will come to pass", for indeed he was always reliant upon God.

Vahid entered amongst the armies of tyranny and the hosts of Satan with a few souls. His enemies rose and welcomed him and gave him honor in their walking and sitting and he stayed with them a few days and in his name they composed a missive to the people of Nayriz that they should separate and that no trouble will await them until they made sure that they were all separated and then the armies of unbelief entered their residence and performed a great deception over them. When they were sure of what they had done they then bespoke their covenant and testament and turned away from the pledge sealed in the Book and it is thus that their names are written in the Books of God as those who are cursed. They took Vahid, they dishonored him, they made his body naked and they perpetrated against that body what causes the eyes of the People of Paradise to shed tears of blood. May God curse such people who cause such oppression and to those who act tyrannically in these days when the Son of Truth is still hidden behind the clouds of holiness. They were not happy in what they had done or how many they had slain or how many of their women they had enslaved or how much of their property they had plundered. In none of these they feared God who was their creator and their Lord rather they used to vie with each other as to how much oppression they laid loose on the believers in accord with what the evil one inspired them but God is a witness of all deeds.

Matters reached to this pass that they raised the decapitated heads on arrows and spears and brought these heads to the land which God has honored above all lands for the Merciful One sat on the

throne of His great Name. And when they brought these to that city, the inhabitants of the city gathered around them, some inflicted harm in their insults and some stoned them and in these circumstances the denizens of heaven raised the fingers of wonderment and astonishment at what they perpetrated against these luminous beings. After they caused them to enter that city He only knows what befell them for God is the one who has taken account of everything in His gracious and glorious Book.

O Thou beauty of the holy One! This is not the first deed the unbelievers perpetrated for in the past they killed Husayn and His companions and they enslaved His family and now they cry over him and lament His events every morning and eve. Say to them O Concourse of the ignorant, did you not seek to establish the truth of Husayn and His companions because they sacrificed themselves and their possessions? Is that not what you commemorate? Why is it then that you attribute unbelief to these holy martyrs for they also sacrificed their possessions and their families in the path of God and these believers also strove in that path until they were all slain in different ways in such wise that no ear has heard and no eye has seen? When it is said to them "Why did you kill those who believed in God and His verses?" they replied, "Because we find them to be unbelievers."

Say: by God, your reply is exactly what proceeded from your mouth against all the Prophets and Messengers and you kill them all with the sword of hatred for God comprehends everything. Woe unto you for you disbelieved in all the Messengers of God for you rose to fight all of them and shed their blood unjustly and the Tablets which are concealed testify to your deeds. Tell them, did not God ordain in his Book (the Qur'an) what distinguishes truth and falsehood with His words (yearn for death if you speak the truth? So why have you ascribed falsehood to those whom the Book of God testified to their

truth, a Book after which no falsehood comes as this has been sent down in the Tablet. But you are not conscious of this and you have abandoned the Book of God behind you, and you have slain those who yearn for martyrdom in the path of God, and this testifieth your own eyes, your tongue, your heart and beyond all this God is a witness unto this.

Fie on you, for you have shed the blood of people whom the eyes of existence have not seen like them and you have ascribed falsehood after the Book of God testified to their truth and in all this you have followed those who are not prepared to lose an atom of their prestige in the path of God. Their greatest endeavor in this world is to eat of the peoples' property and to sit at the high place in the assemblies of people and in all of this is their sole glory upon the peoples of the world. By God! It is worthy that you should indeed take these evildoers to be your friends and that you should follow them and as a result enter a fire that has been created for these unbelievers. Say to them, by God, if only you could have any awareness in yourselves even less than a moment, you would erase all your books that you have written without God's permission and you would hit your heads and you would flee from your own homes and you would live in mountains and you would feed yourselves only the dust of the earth.

Say unto them, the destiny of those who have been martyred is fulfilled and now they are flying in the atmosphere of God's nearness and they are circumambulating His mighty throne and at all times the angels of God's bounty descends upon them and gives them the glad tidings of a glorious station and at every day God reveals to them his ornament that if it should be disclosed to the peoples of the heavens and earth they would all fall down and become stupefied.

Say to them: O Concourse of evildoers, do not rejoice in your deeds for you shall soon return to God and you shall face the

resurrection in the mighty arena on a day which will result in the quaking of the limbs of all creation. God will then adjudicate against you with his justice because of what your hands have perpetrated against the believers in your worthless times. Nothing will be left of your deeds but it will all be presented to Him and you shall be requited with what your hands have wrought for nothing escapes God's knowledge and He comprehends all things. Soon will these wrongdoers say while sunk in the lowest grades of hellfire would to God that we had not taken these divines to be friends for us.

O people of Nayriz! Recall the bounty of God when you were on the edge of unbelief but God redeemed you with his loving kindness and guided you to His name, Vahid. Recall further when you were enemies that God brought harmony in your hearts and united you and uplifted your names and revealed to you verses from the tongue of glory of the well beloved. Recall further when We passed by you with the hosts of our angels when We opened the doors of paradise unto you when you were assembled in that fort. That was the time when the evil one whispered amongst you and caused fear to enter your hearts and it was then that We found some of you trembling and quaking but We forgave those who were trembling as a mercy on our part and upon all peoples.

Say: those of your town who have disbelieved are the worst of men as you are the best of men, thus has it been reckoned in the Tablet, which is sealed with the seal of glory. Those people who did not attain the presence of Vahid those who fought with him, disputed idly with him, they have been cursed in both this world and the next and the word of retribution has been enacted against them from the Mighty the Wise One.

O friends of God in that city! Take hold firmly the cord of God, then thank him as he has preferred you in all truth and because of His mercy you became steadfast upon the path of holiness. O trees of

that city, prostrate yourselves before God, your Creator, as the breezes of the divine springtime wafted over you in this resplendent and divine season. O land of that city, be thankful to God, your Lord, for you are the land changed by God on the day of resurrection and upon you has shone the light of the spirit from the most luminous horizon. O air of that city, make mention of God who has purified you from the dust of self and desire and caused you to be revived and to return back to His old self.

O Yahya! Great is your blessedness for you fulfilled the everlasting covenant when the heavens and the earth were created and you took hold of the Book of God with the strength of your sincere belief and turned yourself to the sanctuary of the divine beauty having been moved by the breezes of His day. Therefore, celebrate in the Concourse on High for you have been mentioned in the Tablet to which belongs the spirit of all divine books and beyond the books, the Mother Book that has been protected in the sanctuary of infallibility. Thus does God reward his servants who believe in Him and His verses and He taketh hold of those who act tyrannically on earth. May the malediction of God rest upon the wrong doers.

O Solace of the eye of eternity! Change your tone and chant upon the melodies of those nightingales singing in the tabernacle of divine names and in the dominions of divine attributes that the birds of the throne may detach themselves from the dust of themselves, and may therefore turn back to their original homeland which is sanctified beyond transcendence. O Thou Quintessence of truth! Sing and chant with the most beauteous melodies for all the maidens of paradise have come out of their assemblies and their tents of purity that they may hear Your own melody, the melody that has been sung in the pages of God in the book, Qayyumu'l-Asma. Do not deprive these of what they have desired to hear of Thy new and wondrous melodies and loving kindness for Thou art indeed the most generous One in the highest grades of immortality and in truth Thou art indeed

the most generous One in the dominion of eternity and Thy Name is well known amongst the concourse on high as the Generous One.

O Thou most holy Beauty! The unbelievers do not respite Thee that a breath should be exhaled from Thy chest for as My voice wishes to leave My mouth, they place the hand of hatred over My mouth and yet with all your knowledge of this matter you command Me to raise My call in this atmosphere for Thou art the doer in truth, Thou art the commander in justice. Thou does what Thou wishes and Thou art wise over all things. If Thou hearkenest to the call of Thy servant, if Thou fulfillst his wish then forgive them with the utmost kind word and delicate utterance that those handmaidens of eternity may return to their seats in the crimson and ruby laden chambers. Thou knowest that I have now become afflicted between the unbelievers from two parties and Thou commandest in both Revelations and overseest both Dispensations and Thou art manifest in the Twin garments and Thou art resplendent through the Two Suns and have been mentioned with the Twin Names, possessest the Twin Dawning-places, commandest the secret of the Twin Mysteries in these Two Lines and God is fully aware beyond all this.

Thou knowest that I have no fear for Myself rather I have sacrificed Myself, My soul and My spirit on the day that Thou graciously honored Me with Thy presence, the day that Thou made me recognize Thy new beauty and inspired me with the gems of Thy revelation which are shed upon everyone that entereth the shade of thy cause. My fear is that the limbs of they command may fall apart in this great revelation as these envious ones have created divisions on the day that Thou seated thyself upon the throne of existence with they all embracing mercy. Thus have we explained everything in a Tablet that is revealed from the heaven of the divine spirit.

O Thou blood soaked Garment! Do not heed the misgivings of mankind rather burn asunder their veils and appear with thy divine

ornament amongst earth and heaven and chant of they hidden and treasured melodies born of Thy spirit in these days whereon there has befallen upon the Manifestation of the self of God what the eyes of creation have not seen. O Thou most holy beauty! The Cause is in thy hand and I am not but a humble servant before Thee, commanded by Thee and it is because Thou commanded me to make mention of the most Great Remembrance and of the most Great Treasure. Therefore, thou shouldst order Thy heavenly angels to protect the limbs of the divine throne and the exalted angels to guard the tabernacles of grandeur lest veils of divinity may be torn asunder as a consequence of this call which has been hidden up to now in Thy chest. And yet Glory of the Spirit! Conceal not Thyself behind those veils but appear with the might of God and break the sew the Vessel of Spirit – a Vessel that has been sealed with the Seal of divine protection from the beginning that has no beginning, that perfume-laden fragrances may blow from this Pre-existent Vessel upon all creation so that it may revive all existence with the breath of the Merciful that they may all arise to serve the Cause in this day whereon the Spirit is evidently visible above the dawn of truth.

Say: this Tablet enjoins upon you patience on this day of the Great Terror and commands us to be forbear in this Most Great Agitation when this Dove of Hijaz flies from Iraq and sheds upon all contingent beings the fragrances of separation and on the face of heaven appears the color red for thus is the matter decreed in the Mother Book.

Say: The Bird of Immortality has flown from the Horizon of Eternity and has purposed the Sheba of the Spirit in the Sinai of holiness so that in the Mirror of divine destiny the commands of His decree may be reflected and this is but one of God's hidden secrets. Say: The Bird of Glory has flown from one branch and has sought the Branch of holiness planted in the land of exile. Say: the Breeze of Divine

Unity has dawned from the Abode of Peace [i.e. Baghdad] and has sought to blow over the city of separation as mentioned in the scrolls of divine Revelation. Say: O concourse in the heavens and on earth! Throw ye ashes [35] on your faces and on your heads because the Beauty of God disappears from these near cities and intends to dawn from the horizon of a remote heaven. All this has been decreed in truth and We are thankful to God in that He has caused to descend on Us tribulation after tribulation and at this moment too He rains upon Us from the Clouds of His Decree down-pouring of well-known sorrows.

O Thou Quintessence of sorrow! Seal thou the utterance in this remembrance for We have truly become saddened and the Concourse on High have become sorrowful and then make mention of that servant of God who asked of that true and veritable "Great Announcement." Say: I swear by the One True God! That "Announcement" came to pass in the Perspicuous Beauty of 'Ali . But the servants disagreed about it and the divines of this Age objected to Him -- divines who were veiled in the veils of self. And you did recognize the Beauty of God in The Raiment of 'Ali, the Self-Subsisting. And ere long all in the heavens and earth will recognize Him and this was previously inscribed in truth and has been irrevocable with God. And ye shall know of His Announcement at an inevitably approaching time.

But O people of the Bayan! Strive with the utmost striving that ye may not disagreed about the Cause of God and be ye as steadfast as the mountain in all truth in such wise that the whisperings of the Evil One may not cause you to slip and that nothing on earth may pervert you. All this is that which the Dove of Revelation counselled you at the time of departure from 'Iraq because of what the hands of unbelievers have wrought. Furthermore know ye, O concourse of chosen ones, that when the Sun sets, the birds of night will move about in the darkness, but you ought not pay heed to them. Rather

turn your faces in this well-beloved and holy direction. Beware lest ye follow the "Samiri" in your souls; beware lest ye fall behind the "Calf" when it bleats amongst you. This is my best counsel unto you and unto all created things. You shall hear the call of Samiri after Me and he will summon you to the Evil One. Go ye not therefore to him, rather turn to this Hidden and Glorious Beauty. At this point We address all who are in heaven and on earth from this City that haply all things may attain to what has been ordained for them from the Wise, the Omniscient One.

O Moment of time! Be not heedless of this moment that has come in truth during which the breeze of God is blowing from a holy and westerly direction. O Hour! Celebrate this hour that has arisen with thee and recognize this eternal, heavenly and everlasting banquet that has descended from the clouds of holiness and light from the heaven of might in the name of God. O Day! Illumine all existing things in this luminous, effulgent and divine Day that has become manifest from the horizon of Iraq.

In this wise We clarify for you the divine verses and We disclose to you the words of the spirit and vouchsafe unto all things what has been ordained in the Book of divine might so that everyone may know the fountain of divine bounty which is following from this Ridvan in all truth. May the spirit be upon you and upon those who have circumambulating and directing themselves in the direction of divine love.

(Other Writings, Tablet of Patience, or Tablet of Job)

Translated by Khazeh Fananapazir.

1997-04-21

Originally revealed as Surih-i-Sabr, or Lawh-i-Ayyub.

In 1863, on the first day of His arrival at the garden of Ridvan,

Baha'u'llah revealed a singularly important Tablet known as Suriy-i Sabr (Surih of Patience), or Lawh-i Ayyub (the Tablet of Job), thus named in memory of one of the survivors of the Nayriz-I holocaust, Haji Muhammad Taqiy-i Nayrizi, surnamed Ayyub. Some time ago, I asked Dr. Khazeh Fananapazir to prepare a translation of this Tablet for inclusion in a forthcoming study on Nayriz and I am now pleased to have Dr. Fananapazir's permission to share his labor [with this website -ed.]. -Ahang Rabbani

see <http://bahai-library.com/>