

The Seven Valleys

(Not translated)	An exposition of the mysteries enshrined in the stages of ascent for them that seek to journey unto God, the Almighty, the Ever-Forgiving
In the Name of God, the Clement, the Merciful.	IN THE NAME OF GOD, THE MERCIFUL, THE COMPASSIONATE!
Praise be to God Who hath made being to come forth from nothingness; graven upon the tablet of man the secrets of preexistence; taught him from the mysteries of divine utterance that which he knew not; made him a Luminous Book unto those who believed and surrendered themselves; caused him to witness the creation of all things (Kullu Shay') in this black and ruinous age, and to speak forth from the apex of eternity with a wondrous voice in the Excellent Temple: * to the end that every man may testify, in himself, by himself, in the station of the Manifestation of his Lord, that verily there is no God save Him, and that every man may thereby win his way to the summit of realities, until none shall contemplate anything whatsoever but that he shall see God therein.	Praise be to God Who hath made being to come forth from nothingness; graven upon the tablet of man a measure of the mysteries of His eternity; taught him from the storehouse of divine utterance that which he knew not; made him a perspicuous book unto such as have believed and surrendered their souls; given him to behold, in this dark and ruinous age, a new creation within all things; and caused him to speak forth, from the midmost heart of eternity, and in a new and wondrous voice, embodied in the most excellent Temple. † And all to this end: that every man may testify, in himself and by himself, before the Seat of the revelation of his Lord, that there is none other God but Him; and that all may reach that summit of realities where none shall contemplate anything but that he shall perceive God therein. This is the vision of the splendours which have been deposited within the realities of all things; for otherwise He, exalted be His glory, is entirely sanctified above being seen or witnessed: "No vision taketh in Him, but He taketh in all vision; He is the Subtile, the All-Perceiving." ‡

* The Manifestation.

† The Manifestation of God.

‡ Qur'án 6:103.

Original Trans. (Ali Kuli Khan & Marzieh Gail, 1945)	Revised Trans. (Bahá'í World Centre, 2019)
<p>And I praise and glorify the first sea which hath branched from the ocean of the Divine Essence, and the first morn which hath glowed from the Horizon of Oneness, and the first sun which hath risen in the Heaven of Eternity, and the first fire which was lit from the Lamp of Preexistence in the lantern of singleness: He who was Aḥmad in the kingdom of the exalted ones, and Muḥammad amongst the concourse of the near ones, and Maḥmúd* in the realm of the sincere ones. "...by whichsoever (name) ye will, invoke Him: He hath most excellent names"[†] in the hearts of those who know. And upon His household and companions be abundant and abiding and eternal peace!</p>	<p>And I praise and glorify that primal Sea which hath branched out from the ocean of the unseen Essence, and that primal Morn which hath broken forth upon the horizon of Singleness, and that primal Sun which hath risen in the heaven of everlasting splendour, and that primal Fire which was kindled from the Lamp of eternity within the Niche of oneness: He Who is called "Aḥmad" in the kingdom of the exalted ones, and "Muḥammad" amongst the concourse of the favoured ones, and "Maḥmúd" in the realm of the sincere;[‡] and in the hearts of the knowing, "whichsoever ye call upon, most beauteous are His names."[§] And upon His kindred and His companions be abundant, abiding, and eternal peace!</p>
<p>Further, we have harkened to what the nightingale of knowledge sang on the boughs of the tree of thy being, and learned what the dove of certitude cried on the branches of the bower of thy heart. Methinks I verily inhaled the pure fragrances of the garment of thy love, and attained thy very meeting from perusing thy letter. And since I noted thy mention of thy death in God, and thy life through Him, and thy love for the beloved of God and the Manifestations of His Names and the Dawning-Points of His Attributes—I therefore reveal unto thee sacred and resplendent tokens from the planes of glory, to attract thee into the court of holiness and nearness and beauty, and draw thee to a station wherein thou shalt see nothing in creation save the Face of thy Beloved One, the Honored, and behold all created things only as in the day wherein none hath a mention.</p>	<p>To continue: I have hearkened to the song of the nightingale of knowledge upon the twigs of the tree of thine inmost being, and to the cooing of the dove of certitude upon the branches of the bower of thine heart. Methinks I inhaled the fragrance of purity from the raiment of thy love and, in perusing thy letter, attained thy very presence. I noted, moreover, thine allusions to thy death in God and thy life through Him, and the love thou dost cherish for the beloved of the Lord and for the Manifestations of His names and the Exponents of His attributes. I have purposed, therefore, to acquaint thee with holy and resplendent tokens from the realms of might and glory, that haply they may draw thee nigh unto the court of holiness, nearness, and beauty, and draw thee to a station wherein thou shalt see naught in all existence but the hallowed Countenance of thy Beloved, and wilt behold all of creation as a day wherein none was deemed worthy of mention.**</p>

* Muḥammad, Aḥmad and Maḥmúd are names and titles of the Prophet, derived from the verb "to praise," "to exalt."

† Qur'án 17:110.

‡ Aḥmad, Muḥammad, and Maḥmúd are names and titles of the Prophet derived from the verb "to praise", "to extol".

§ Qur'án 17:110.

** Cf. Qur'án 76:1.

Original Trans. (Ali Kuli Khan & Marzieh Gail, 1945)	Revised Trans. (Bahá'í World Centre, 2019)
<p>Of this hath the nightingale of oneness sung in the garden of Ghawthíyyih.* He saith: “And there shall appear upon the tablet of thine heart a writing of the subtle mysteries of ‘Fear God and God will give you knowledge’;† and the bird of thy soul shall recall the holy sanctuaries of preexistence and soar on the wings of longing in the heaven of ‘walk the beaten paths of thy Lord’, ‡ and gather the fruits of communion in the gardens of ‘Then feed on every kind of fruit.’”§</p>	<p>Of this did the nightingale of oneness sing in the garden of his mystical treatise,** saying, “And there shall appear upon the tablet of thine heart an inscription of the subtle mysteries of the verse ‘Fear ye God; God will teach you’, and the bird of thy spirit shall recall the sanctuaries of ancient splendour, and soar upon the wings of longing into the heaven of the command ‘Walk the beaten paths of thy Lord’, and partake of the choice fruits of communion in the gardens of the utterance ‘Feed, moreover, on every kind of fruit.’”††</p>
<p>By My life, O friend, wert thou to taste of these fruits, from the green garden of these blossoms which grow in the lands of knowledge, beside the orient lights of the Essence in the mirrors of names and attributes—yearning would seize the reins of patience and reserve from out thy hand, and make thy soul to shake with the flashing light, and draw thee from the earthly homeland to the first, heavenly abode in the Center of Realities, and lift thee to a plane wherein thou wouldst soar in the air even as thou walkest upon the earth, and move over the water as thou runnest on the land. Wherefore, may it rejoice Me, and thee, and whosoever mounteth into the heaven of knowledge, and whose heart is refreshed by this, that the wind of certitude hath blown over the garden of his being, from the Sheba of the All-Merciful.</p>	<p>By My life, O friend! Wert thou to taste the fruits of these verdant trees that spring from the soil of true understanding, once the effulgent light of His Essence hath been reflected in the Mirrors of His names and attributes yearning would seize the reins of patience and restraint from out thy hand and stir thy spirit into commotion with the splendours of His light. It would draw thee from this abode of dust unto thy true and heavenly habitation in the midmost heart of mystic knowledge, and raise thee to a station wherein thou wilt soar in the air even as thou treadest upon the earth, and wilt walk upon the water even as thou movest over the land. Wherefore, may it rejoice me, and thee, and whosoever mounteth into the heaven of knowledge, and whose heart hath been revived by the breezes of certitude that waft from the Sheba of the All-Merciful upon the meadow of his inner being.</p>
<p>Peace be upon him who followeth the Right Path!</p>	<p>Peace be upon him who followeth the way of guidance!‡‡</p>

* Sermon by ‘Alí.

† Qur’án 2:282.

‡ Qur’án 16:71.

§ Qur’án 16:71.

** Literally, “in the garden of Ghawthíyyih”. The Risáliyy-i-Ghawthíyyih is a mystical treatise by ‘Abdu’l-Qádir-i-Gílání (ca. 1077–1166). The sentence that follows is a quotation from this work.

†† Qur’án 2:282, 16:69.

‡‡ Qur’án 20:47.

Original Trans. (Ali Kuli Khan & Marzieh Gail, 1945)	Revised Trans. (Bahá'í World Centre, 2019)
<p>And further: The stages that mark the wayfarer's journey from the abode of dust to the heavenly homeland are said to be seven. Some have called these Seven Valleys, and others, Seven Cities. And they say that until the wayfarer taketh leave of self, and traverseth these stages, he shall never reach to the ocean of nearness and union, nor drink of the peerless wine.</p>	<p>And further: the stages that mark the wayfarers' journey from their mortal abode to the heavenly homeland are said to be seven. Some have referred to them as seven valleys, and others, as seven cities. * And it is said that until the wayfarer taketh leave of self and traverseth these stages, he shall never attain the ocean of nearness and reunion nor taste of the matchless wine.</p>
<p>The first is</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The Valley of Search</p> <p>The steed of this Valley is patience; without patience the wayfarer on this journey will reach nowhere and attain no goal. Nor should he ever be downhearted; if he strive for a hundred thousand years and yet fail to behold the beauty of the Friend, he should not falter. For those who seek the Ka'bih[†] of "for Us" rejoice in the tidings: "In Our ways will We guide them."[‡] In their search, they have stoutly girded up the loins of service, and seek at every moment to journey from the plane of heedlessness into the realm of being. No bond shall hold them back, and no counsel shall deter them.</p>	<p>The first is the VALLEY OF SEARCH. The steed of this valley is patience; without patience the wayfarer on this journey will reach nowhere and attain no goal. Nor should he ever become downhearted: if he strive for a hundred thousand years and yet fail to behold the beauty of the Friend, he should not falter. For those who seek the Kaaba of "for Us" rejoice in the tidings "In Our ways shall We assuredly guide them."[§] In their search, they have stoutly girded up the loins of service and at every moment journey from the plane of heedlessness into the realm of search. No bond shall hold them back and no counsel deter them.</p>
<p>It is incumbent on these servants that they cleanse the heart—which is the wellspring of divine treasures—from every marking, and that they turn away from imitation, which is following the traces of their forefathers and sires, and shut the door of friendliness and enmity upon all the people of the earth.</p>	<p>It is incumbent upon these servants to cleanse the heart, which is the wellspring of divine treasures, of every marking; turn away from imitation, which is following the traces of their forefathers; and shut the door of friendship and enmity upon all the people of the earth.</p>

* 'Aṭṭár (ca. 1119–1230) in his *Maṭṭiqūṭ-Ṭayr* (The Conference of the Birds) has elaborated seven valleys through which the birds pass in search of their king. Bahá'u'lláh refers to 'Aṭṭár's scheme of the valleys. Rúmí (1207–1273) alludes to the "seven cities of love" crossed by 'Aṭṭár.

† The holy Sanctuary at Mecca. Here the word means "goal."

‡ Qur'án 29:69: "And whoso maketh efforts for Us, in Our ways will We guide them."

§ Qur'án 29:69.

Original Trans. (Ali Kuli Khan & Marzieh Gail, 1945)	Revised Trans. (Bahá'í World Centre, 2019)
<p>In this journey the seeker reacheth a stage wherein he seeth all created things wandering distracted in search of the Friend. How many a Jacob will he see, hunting after his Joseph; he will behold many a lover, hasting to seek the Beloved, he will witness a world of desiring ones searching after the One Desired. At every moment he findeth a weighty matter, in every hour he becometh aware of a mystery; for he hath taken his heart away from both worlds, and set out for the Ka'bih* of the Beloved. At every step, aid from the Invisible Realm will attend him and the heat of his search will grow.</p>	<p>In this journey the seeker reacheth a station wherein he seeth all created things wandering distracted in search of the Friend. How many a Jacob will he see searching after his Joseph, how many a lover will he behold hastening towards the Well-Beloved; a world of adoring souls will he witness tracing the path of the Adored One! At every moment he findeth a weighty matter, in every hour he becometh aware of a new mystery; for he hath severed his heart from both worlds and set out for the Kaaba of the Beloved. At every step, aid from the invisible Realm will attend him and the fervour of his search will grow.</p>
<p>One must judge of search by the standard of the Majnún of Love.† It is related that one day they came upon Majnún sifting the dust, and his tears flowing down. They said, “What doest thou?” He said, “I seek for Laylí.” They cried, “Alas for thee! Laylí is of pure spirit, and thou seekest her in the dust!” He said, “I seek her everywhere; haply somewhere I shall find her.”</p>	<p>One must judge of search by the standard of the Majnún of love.‡ It is related that one day they came upon Majnún sifting the dust, his tears flowing down. They asked, “What doest thou?” He said, “I seek for Laylí.” “Alas for thee!” they cried, “Laylí is of pure spirit, yet thou seekest her in the dust!” He said, “I seek her everywhere; haply somewhere I shall find her.”</p>
<p>Yea, although to the wise it be shameful to seek the Lord of Lords in the dust, yet this betokeneth intense ardor in searching. “Whoso seeketh out a thing with zeal shall find it.”§</p>	<p>Yea, though to the wise it be shameful to seek the Lord of Lords in the dust, yet this betokeneth intense ardour in searching. “Whoso seeketh out a thing and persisteth with zeal shall find it.”**</p>

* The holy Sanctuary at Mecca. Here the word means “goal.”

† Literally, Majnún means “insane.” This is the title of the celebrated lover of ancient Persian and Arabian lore, whose beloved was Laylí, daughter of an Arabian prince. Symbolizing true human love bordering on the divine, the story has been made the theme of many a Persian romantic poem, particularly that of Nizámí, written in 1188–1189 A.D.

‡ Majnún means “madman”. This is the title of the celebrated lover of ancient Persian and Arabian lore whose beloved was Laylí. Symbolizing true human love bordering on the divine, the story has been the theme of many Persian romantic poems, most famously that of Nizámí, written in 1188.

§ Arabian proverb.

** Arabic proverb.

Original Trans. (Ali Kuli Khan & Marzieh Gail, 1945)	Revised Trans. (Bahá'í World Centre, 2019)
<p>The true seeker hunteth naught but the object of his quest, and the lover hath no desire save union with his beloved. Nor shall the seeker reach his goal unless he sacrifice all things. That is, whatever he hath seen, and heard, and understood, all must he set at naught, that he may enter the realm of the spirit, which is the City of God. Labor is needed, if we are to seek Him; ardor is needed, if we are to drink of the honey of reunion with Him; and if we taste of this cup, we shall cast away the world.</p>	<p>The true seeker hunteth naught but the object of his quest, and the sincere lover hath no desire save reunion with his beloved. Nor shall the seeker reach his goal unless he sacrifice all things. That is, whatever he hath seen, and heard, and understood—all he must set at naught with “no God is there”, that he may enter into the realm of the spirit, which is the city of “but God”. * Labour is needed, if we are to seek Him; ardour is needed, if we are to drink the nectar of reunion with Him; and if we taste of this cup, we shall cast away the world.</p>
<p>On this journey the traveler abideth in every land and dwelleth in every region. In every face, he seeketh the beauty of the Friend; in every country he looketh for the Beloved. He joineth every company, and seeketh fellowship with every soul, that haply in some mind he may uncover the secret of the Friend, or in some face he may behold the beauty of the Loved One.</p>	<p>On this journey the wayfarer dwelleth in every abode, however humble, and resideth in every land. In every face he seeketh the beauty of the Friend; in every region he searcheth after the Beloved. He joineth every company and seeketh fellowship with every soul, that haply in some heart he may discern the secret of the Beloved, or in some face behold the beauty of the Adored One.</p>
<p>And if, by the help of God, he findeth on this journey a trace of the traceless Friend, and inhalet the fragrance of the long-lost Joseph from the heavenly messenger, † he shall straightway step into The Valley of Love and be dissolved in the fire of love. In this city the heaven of ecstasy is upraised and the world-illuminating sun of yearning shineth, and the fire of love is ablaze; and when the fire of love is ablaze, it burneth to ashes the harvest of reason.</p>	<p>And if, by the help of the Creator, he findeth on this journey a trace of the traceless Friend, and inhalet the fragrance of the long-lost Joseph from the heavenly herald, he shall straightway step into THE VALLEY OF LOVE and be consumed in the fire of love. In this city the heaven of rapture is upraised, and the world-illuminating sun of yearning shineth, and the fire of love is set ablaze; and when the fire of love is ablaze, it burneth to ashes the harvest of reason.</p>
<p>Now is the traveler unaware of himself, and of aught besides himself. He seeth neither ignorance nor knowledge, neither doubt nor certitude; he knoweth not the morn of guidance from the night of error. He fleeth both from unbelief and faith, and deadly poison is a balm to him. Wherefore Aṭṭár ‡ saith:</p>	<p>Now is the wayfarer oblivious of himself, and of aught besides himself. He seeth neither ignorance nor knowledge, neither doubt nor certitude; he knoweth not the morn of guidance from the night of error. He fleeth from both unbelief and faith, and findeth in deadly poison his heart's relief. Wherefore 'Aṭṭár saith:</p>

* A reference to the Islamic profession of faith: “No God is there but God, and Muḥammad is the Messenger of God.”

† Refer to the story of Joseph in the Qur'án and the Old Testament.

‡ Farīdu'd-Dín Aṭṭár (ca. 1150–1230 A.D.), the great Persian Súfí poet.

Original Trans. (Ali Kuli Khan & Marzieh Gail, 1945)	Revised Trans. (Bahá'í World Centre, 2019)
For the infidel, error—for the faithful, faith; For Aṭṭár's heart, an atom of Thy pain.	For the infidel, error—for the faithful, faith; For 'Aṭṭár's heart, an atom of thy pain.
The steed of this Valley is pain; and if there be no pain this journey will never end. In this station the lover hath no thought save the Beloved, and seeketh no refuge save the Friend. At every moment he offereth a hundred lives in the path of the Loved One, at every step he throweth a thousand heads at the feet of the Beloved.	The steed of this valley is pain, and if there be no pain this journey will never end. In this plane the lover hath no thought save the Beloved, and seeketh no refuge save the Friend. At every moment he offereth a hundred lives in the path of the Loved One, at every step he throweth a thousand heads at His feet.
O My Brother! Until thou enter the Egypt of love, thou shalt never come to the Joseph of the Beauty of the Friend; and until, like Jacob, thou forsake thine outward eyes, thou shalt never open the eye of thine inward being; and until thou burn with the fire of love, thou shalt never commune with the Lover of Longing.	O My brother! Until thou enter the Egypt of love, thou shalt never gaze upon the Joseph-like beauty of the Friend; and until, like Jacob, thou forsake thine outward eyes, thou shalt never open the eye of thine inward being; and until thou burn with the fire of love, thou shalt never find thyself in the true yearning's embrace.
A lover feareth nothing and no harm can come nigh him: Thou seest him chill in the fire and dry in the sea.	A lover feareth nothing and can suffer no harm: Thou seest him chill in the fire and dry in the sea.
A lover is he who is chill in hell fire; A knower is he who is dry in the sea.*	A lover is he who is chill in hellfire; A knower is he who is dry in the sea.†
Love accepteth no existence and wisheth no life: He seeth life in death, and in shame seeketh glory. To merit the madness of love, man must abound in sanity; to merit the bonds of the Friend, he must be full of spirit. Blessed the neck that is caught in His noose, happy the head that falleth on the dust in the pathway of His love. Wherefore, O friend, give up thy self that thou mayest find the Peerless One, pass by this mortal earth that thou mayest seek a home in the nest of heaven. Be as naught, if thou wouldst kindle the fire of being and be fit for the pathway of love.	Love accepteth no existence and wisheth no life: In death it seeth life, and in shame it seeketh glory. To merit the madness of love, one must abound in sanity; to merit the bonds of the Friend, one must be free in spirit. Blessed the neck that is caught in His noose, and happy the head that falleth on the dust in the path of His love. Wherefore, O friend, renounce thy self, that thou mayest find the Peerless One; and soar beyond this mortal world, that thou mayest find thy nest in the abode of heaven. Be as naught, if thou wouldst kindle the fire of being and be fit for the pathway of love.
Love seizeth not upon a living soul, The falcon preyeth not on a dead mouse.‡	Ne'er will love allow a living soul to tread its way; Ne'er will the falcon deign to seize a lifeless prey.§

* Persian mystic poem.

† Saná'í (ca. 1045–1131).

‡ Persian mystic poem. Cf. The Hidden Words, No. 7, Arabic.

§ Saná'í.

Original Trans. (Ali Kuli Khan & Marzieh Gail, 1945)	Revised Trans. (Bahá'í World Centre, 2019)
<p>Love setteth a world aflame at every turn, and he wasteth every land where he carrieth his banner. Being hath no existence in his kingdom; the wise wield no command within his realm. The leviathan of love swalloweth the master of reason and destroyeth the lord of knowledge. He drinketh the seven seas, but his heart's thirst is still unquenched, and he saith, "Is there yet any more?"* He shunneth himself and draweth away from all on earth.</p>	<p>Love setteth a world aflame at every turn and layeth waste every land wherein it raiseth its banner. Being hath no existence in its kingdom; the wise wield no command within its realm. The leviathan of love swalloweth the master of reason and slayeth the lord of knowledge. It drinketh the seven seas, but its heart's thirst is still unquenched and it asketh, "Is there yet any more?"[†] It shunneth its own self and draweth away from all on earth.</p>
<p>Love's a stranger to earth and heaven too; In him are lunacies seventy-and-two.[‡]</p>	<p>Love's a stranger to earth and heaven too; In him are lunacies seventy and two.[§]</p>
<p>He hath bound a myriad victims in his fetters, wounded a myriad wise men with his arrow. Know that every redness in the world is from his anger, and every paleness in men's cheeks is from his poison. He yieldeth no remedy but death, he walketh not save in the valley of the shadow; yet sweeter than honey is his venom on the lover's lips, and fairer his destruction in the seeker's eyes than a hundred thousand lives.</p>	<p>Love hath bound a myriad victims in its fetters and pierced a myriad wise men with its arrow. Know that every redness thou seest in the world is from its wrath, and every paleness in men's cheeks is from its poison. It yieldeth no remedy but death and walketh not save in the valley of extinction; yet sweeter than honey is its venom upon the lover's lips, and fairer its deadly sting, in the seeker's sight, than a hundred thousand lives.</p>
<p>Wherefore must the veils of the satanic self be burned away at the fire of love, that the spirit may be purified and cleansed and thus may know the station of the Lord of the Worlds.</p>	<p>Wherefore must the veils of the satanic self be burned away in the fire of love, that the spirit may be cleansed and refined, and thus may apprehend the station of Him but for Whom the world would not have been created.^{**}</p>
<p>Kindle the fire of love and burn away all things, Then set thy foot into the land of the lovers.^{††}</p>	<p>Kindle the fire of love and burn away all things; Then set thy foot into the land of the lovers.^{††}</p>

* Qur'án 50:29.

† Qur'án 50:30.

‡ Jalálu'd-Dín Rúmí (1207–1273 A.D.); The Mathnaví. Jalálu'd-Dín, called Mawláná ("our Master"), is the greatest of all Persian Súfí poets, and founder of the Mawlaví "whirling" dervish order.

§ Rúmí.

** An allusion to the Ḥadíth in which God is said to address the Prophet Muhammad in these words: "But for Thee, I would not have created the spheres."

†† From an ode by Bahá'u'lláh.

‡‡ From a poem of Bahá'u'lláh.

Original Trans. (Ali Kuli Khan & Marzieh Gail, 1945)	Revised Trans. (Bahá'í World Centre, 2019)
<p>And if, confirmed by the Creator, the lover escapes from the claws of the eagle of love, he will enter</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The Valley of Knowledge</p> <p>and come out of doubt into certitude, and turn from the darkness of illusion to the guiding light of the fear of God. His inner eyes will open and he will privily converse with his Beloved; he will set ajar the gate of truth and piety, and shut the doors of vain imaginings. He in this station is content with the decree of God, and seeth war as peace, and findeth in death the secrets of everlasting life. With inward and outward eyes he witnesseth the mysteries of resurrection in the realms of creation and the souls of men, and with a pure heart apprehendeth the divine wisdom in the endless Manifestations of God. In the ocean he findeth a drop, in a drop he beholdeth the secrets of the sea.</p>	<p>And if, confirmed by the Creator, the lover escapeth the claws of the eagle of love, he will enter THE REALM OF KNOWLEDGE and come out of doubt into certitude, and turn from the darkness of wayward desire to the guiding light of the fear of God. His inner eye will open and he will privily converse with his Beloved; he will unlock the gates of truth and supplication and shut the doors of idle fancy. He in this realm is content with the divine decree, and seeth war as peace, and in death findeth the meaning of everlasting life. With both inward and outward eyes he witnesseth the mysteries of resurrection in the realms of creation and in the souls of men, and with a spiritual heart apprehendeth the wisdom of God in His endless manifestations. In the sea he findeth a drop, in a drop he beholdeth the secrets of the sea.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Split the atom's heart, and lo! Within it thou wilt find a sun.*</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Split the atom's heart, and lo! Within it thou wilt find a sun.†</p>

* Persian mystic poem.

† Hátif-i-Işfahání (d.1783).

Original Trans. (Ali Kuli Khan & Marzieh Gail, 1945)	Revised Trans. (Bahá'í World Centre, 2019)
<p>The wayfarer in this Valley seeth in the fashionings of the True One nothing save clear providence, and at every moment saith: “No defect canst thou see in the creation of the God of Mercy: Repeat the gaze: Seest thou a single flaw?”* He beholdeth justice in injustice, and in justice, grace. In ignorance he findeth many a knowledge hidden, and in knowledge a myriad wisdoms manifest. He breaketh the cage of the body and the passions, and consorteth with the people of the immortal realm. He mounteth on the ladders of inner truth and hasteneth to the heaven of inner significance. He rideth in the ark of “we shall show them our signs in the regions and in themselves,”† and journeyeth over the sea of “until it become plain to them that (this Book) is the truth.”‡ And if he meeteth with injustice he shall have patience, and if he cometh upon wrath he shall manifest love.</p>	<p>Gazing with the eye of absolute insight, the wayfarer in this valley seeth in God’s creation neither contradiction nor incongruity, and at every moment exclaimeth, “No defect canst thou see in the creation of the God of mercy. Repeat the gaze: Seest thou a single flaw?”§ He beholdeth justice in injustice, and in justice, grace. In ignorance he findeth many a knowledge hidden, and in knowledge a myriad wisdoms manifest. He breaketh the cage of the body and the hold of the passions, and communeth with the denizens of the immortal realm. He scaleth the ladders of inner truth and hasteneth to the heaven of inner meanings. He rideth in the ark of “We will surely show them Our signs in the world and within themselves”, and saileth upon the sea of “until it become plain to them that it is the truth”.** And if he meeteth with injustice he shall have patience, and if he cometh upon wrath he shall manifest love.</p>
<p>There was once a lover who had sighed for long years in separation from his beloved, and wasted in the fire of remoteness. From the rule of love, his heart was empty of patience, and his body weary of his spirit; he reckoned life without her as a mockery, and time consumed him away. How many a day he found no rest in longing for her; how many a night the pain of her kept him from sleep; his body was worn to a sigh, his heart’s wound had turned him to a cry of sorrow. He had given a thousand lives for one taste of the cup of her presence, but it availed him not. The doctors knew no cure for him, and companions avoided his company; yea, physicians have no medicine for one sick of love, unless the favor of the beloved one deliver him.</p>	<p>There was once a lover, it is said, who had sighed for long years in separation from his beloved, and wasted in the fire of remoteness. From the rule of love, his breast was void of patience and his body weary of his spirit; he reckoned life without her as a mockery, and the world consumed him away. How many a day he found no respite from his longing; how many a night the pain of her kept him from sleep. His body was worn to a sigh, and his heart’s wound had turned him to a cry of sorrow. A thousand lives would he freely have given for one taste of the cup of her presence, and yet even this was not within his reach. The doctors knew no cure for him, and companions avoided his company; yea, physicians have no remedy for one sick of love, unless the favour of the beloved deliver him.</p>

* Qur’án 67:3.

† Qur’án 41:53.

‡ Qur’án 41:53.

§ Qur’án 67:3.

** Qur’án 41:53.

Original Trans. (Ali Kuli Khan & Marzieh Gail, 1945)	Revised Trans. (Bahá'í World Centre, 2019)
<p>At last, the tree of his longing yielded the fruit of despair, and the fire of his hope fell to ashes. Then one night he could live no more, and he went out of his house and made for the marketplace. On a sudden, a watchman followed after him. He broke into a run, with the watchman following; then other watchmen came together, and barred every passage to the weary one. And the wretched one cried from his heart, and ran here and there, and moaned to himself: “Surely this watchman is Izrá’íl, my angel of death, following so fast upon me; or he is a tyrant of men, seeking to harm me.” His feet carried him on, the one bleeding with the arrow of love, and his heart lamented. Then he came to a garden wall, and with untold pain he scaled it, for it proved very high; and forgetting his life, he threw himself down to the garden.</p>	<p>At last the tree of his longing yielded the fruit of despair, and the fire of his hope fell to ashes. Then one night he could bear life no more, and he left his house for the marketplace. On a sudden, a watchman followed after him. He broke into a run, with the watchman in swift pursuit; then other watchmen came together and barred every passage to the weary one. And that wretched one cried from his heart, and ran here and there, and moaned to himself, “Surely this watchman is ‘Izrá’íl, my angel of death, following so fast upon me, or he is a tyrant of men, prompted by hatred and malice.” His feet carried him on—that hapless one bleeding with the arrow of love—while his heart lamented. Then he came to a garden wall, and with untold pain and trouble he scaled it. He saw that it was very high; yet, forgetting his life, he threw himself down into the garden.</p>
<p>And there he beheld his beloved with a lamp in her hand, searching for a ring she had lost. When the heart-surrendered lover looked on his ravishing love, he drew a great breath and raised up his hands in prayer, crying: “O God! Give Thou glory to the watchman, and riches and long life. For the watchman was Gabriel, guiding this poor one; or he was Isráfíl, bringing life to this wretched one!”</p>	<p>And there he beheld his beloved with a lamp in her hand, searching for a ring she had lost. When the heart-surrendered lover looked upon his ravishing love, he drew a great breath and lifted his hands in prayer, crying, “O God! Bestow honour upon the watchman, and riches and long life. For the watchman was Gabriel, guiding this poor one; or he was Isráfíl, bringing life to this wretched one!”</p>
<p>Indeed, his words were true, for he had found many a secret justice in this seeming tyranny of the watchman, and seen how many a mercy lay hid behind the veil. Out of wrath, the guard had led him who was athirst in love’s desert to the sea of his loved one, and lit up the dark night of absence with the light of reunion. He had driven one who was afar, into the garden of nearness, had guided an ailing soul to the heart’s physician.</p>	<p>Indeed, his words were true; for he had found many a secret justice in this seeming tyranny of the watchman, and had seen how many a mercy lay hid behind the veil. In one stroke of wrath, the guard had joined one who was athirst in the desert of love to the sea of the beloved, and dispelled the darkness of separation with the shining light of reunion. He had led one who was afar to the garden of nearness, and guided an ailing soul to the heart’s physician.</p>

Original Trans. (Ali Kuli Khan & Marzieh Gail, 1945)	Revised Trans. (Bahá'í World Centre, 2019)
<p>Now if the lover could have looked ahead, he would have blessed the watchman at the start, and prayed on his behalf, and he would have seen that tyranny as justice; but since the end was veiled to him, he moaned and made his plaint in the beginning. Yet those who journey in the garden land of knowledge, because they see the end in the beginning, see peace in war and friendliness in anger.</p>	<p>Now if the lover could have seen the end, he would from the beginning have blessed the watchman, prayed God on his behalf, and seen his tyranny as justice; but since the end was veiled to him, he lamented and made his plaint in the beginning. Yet those who journey in the garden land of true knowledge, since they see the end in the beginning, behold peace in war and conciliation in enmity.</p>
<p>Such is the state of the wayfarers in this Valley; but the people of the Valleys above this see the end and the beginning as one; nay, they see neither beginning nor end, and witness neither “first” nor “last.”* Nay rather, the denizens of the undying city, who dwell in the green garden land, see not even “neither first nor last”; they fly from all that is first, and repulse all that is last. For these have passed over the worlds of names, and fled beyond the worlds of attributes as swift as lightning. Thus is it said: “Absolute Unity excludeth all attributes.”† And they have made their dwelling-place in the shadow of the Essence.</p>	<p>Such is the state of the wayfarers in this valley, but the people of the valleys above this see the end and the beginning as one. Nay, they see neither “beginning” nor “end” and witness neither “first” nor “last”. Nay rather, the denizens of the city of immortality, who dwell in the celestial garden, see not even “neither first nor last”: They fly from all that is first and repulse all that is last. For these have passed over the worlds of names and, swift as lightning, fled beyond the worlds of attributes. Thus is it said: “The perfection of belief in Divine Unity is to deny Him any attributes.”‡ And they have made their dwelling-place in the shadow of the Divine Essence.</p>
<p>Wherefore, relevant to this, Khájih ‘Abdu’lláh[§]—may God the Most High sanctify his beloved spirit—hath made a subtle point and spoken an eloquent word as to the meaning of “Guide Thou us on the straight path,”** which is: “Show us the right way, that is, honor us with the love of Thine Essence, that we may be freed from turning toward ourselves and toward all else save Thee, and may become wholly Thine, and know only Thee, and see only Thee, and think of none save Thee.”</p>	<p>Wherefore Khájih ‘Abdu’lláh^{††}—may God the Most High sanctify his blessed soul—hath made, in this connection, a subtle point and spoken an eloquent word as to the meaning of “Guide Thou us on the straight path”,^{‡‡} which is: “Show us the right way; that is, honour us with the love of Thine Essence, that we may be freed from occupation with ourselves and aught else save Thee, and may become wholly Thine; that we may know only Thee, and see only Thee, and think of none save Thee.”</p>
<p>Nay, these even mount above this station, wherefore it is said:</p>	<p>Nay, they would even soar above this station, as it is said:</p>

* Qur’án 57:3.

† Saying attributed to ‘Alí.

‡ From a Ḥadīth.

§ Shaykh Abú Ismá’íl ‘Abdu’lláh Anṣarí of Hirát (1006–1088 A.D.) Súfí leader, descended from the Prophet’s companion Abú Ayyúb. Chiefly known for his Munáját (Supplications) and Rubá’íyyát (Quatrains). “Anṣár” means the “Helpers” or companions of Muḥammad in Medina.

** Qur’án 1:5.

†† Shaykh Abú Ismá’íl ‘Abdu’lláh Anṣarí of Hirát (1006–1089), a Súfí master, poet, and scholar.

‡‡ Qur’án 1:6.

Original Trans. (Ali Kuli Khan & Marzieh Gail, 1945)	Revised Trans. (Bahá'í World Centre, 2019)
<p>Love is a veil betwixt the lover and the loved one; More than this I am not permitted to tell.*</p>	<p>“Love is a veil betwixt the lover and beloved.” “More than this I am not permitted to tell.”</p>
<p>At this hour the morn of knowledge hath arisen and the lamps of wayfaring and wandering are quenched.†</p>	<p>At this hour the morn of true knowledge hath dawned and the lamps of wayfaring and wandering have been quenched.</p>
<p>Veiled from this was Moses Though all strength and light; Then thou who hast no wings at all, Attempt not flight.‡</p>	<p>Veiled from this was Moses too, Despite His virtue and His light. Then thou who hast no wings at all, Abandon any hope of flight!§</p>
<p>If thou be a man of communion and prayer, soar up on the wings of assistance from Holy Souls, that thou mayest behold the mysteries of the Friend and attain to the lights of the Beloved, “Verily, we are from God and to Him shall we return.”**</p>	<p>If thou be a man of communion and prayer, soar upon the wings of assistance from the holy ones, that thou mayest behold the mysteries of the Friend and attain the lights of the Beloved: “Verily, we are God’s, and to Him shall we return.”††</p>

* The Mathnaví.

† This refers to the mystic wandering and search for truth guided by “Lights” or Súfí leaders. Bahá’u’lláh here warns the mystics that the coming of the Divine Manifestation in His Day makes further search unnecessary, as it was said by ‘Alí: “Quench the lamp when the sun hath risen”—the sun referring to the Manifestation of God in the New Day.

‡ The Mathnaví.

§ Rúmí.

** Qur’án 2:151.

†† Qur’án 2:156.

After passing through the Valley of knowledge, which is the last plane of limitation, the wayfarer cometh to

The Valley of Unity

and drinketh from the cup of the Absolute, and gazeth on the Manifestations of Oneness. In this station he pierceth the veils of plurality, fleeth from the worlds of the flesh, and ascendeth into the heaven of singleness. With the ear of God he heareth, with the eye of God he beholdeth the mysteries of divine creation. He steppeth into the sanctuary of the Friend, and shareth as an intimate the pavilion of the Loved One. He stretcheth out the hand of truth from the sleeve of the Absolute; he revealeth the secrets of power. He seeth in himself neither name nor fame nor rank, but findeth his own praise in praising God. He beholdeth in his own name the name of God; to him, "all songs are from the King,"* and every melody from Him. He sitteth on the throne of "Say, all is from God,"† and taketh his rest on the carpet of "There is no power or might but in God."‡ He looketh on all things with the eye of oneness, and seeth the brilliant rays of the divine sun shining from the dawning-point of Essence alike on all created things, and the lights of singleness reflected over all creation.

After passing through the Valley of Knowledge, which is the last station of limitation, the wayfarer cometh to THE FIRST STATION OF UNITY and drinketh from the cup of oneness, and gazeth upon the manifestations of singleness. In this station he pierceth the veils of plurality, fleeth the realms of the flesh, and ascendeth unto the heaven of unity. With the ear of God he heareth; with the eye of God he beholdeth the mysteries of divine creation. He steppeth into the inner sanctuary of the Friend and, as an intimate, shareth the pavilion of the Well-Beloved. He stretcheth forth the hand of truth from the sleeve of the Absolute and revealeth the mysteries of divine power. He seeth in himself neither name nor fame nor rank, but findeth his own praise in the praise of God, and in the name of God beholdeth his own. To him "all songs are from that sovereign King" and every melody from Him. He sitteth on the throne of "Say, all things are of God"§ and reclineth upon the seat of "There is no power nor strength but in God alone."** He looketh upon all things with the eye of Unity, and seeth the effulgent rays of the Sun of Truth shining from the dayspring of the Divine Essence upon all created things alike, and beholdeth the lights of Unity reflected upon all creation.

* The Mathnaví.

† Qur'án 4:80.

‡ Qur'án 18:37.

§ Qur'án 4:78.

** Qur'án 18:39.

Original Trans. (Ali Kuli Khan & Marzieh Gail, 1945)	Revised Trans. (Bahá'í World Centre, 2019)
<p>It is clear to thine Eminence that all the variations which the wayfarer in the stages of his journey beholdeth in the realms of being, proceed from his own vision. We shall give an example of this, that its meaning may become fully clear: Consider the visible sun; although it shineth with one radiance upon all things, and at the behest of the King of Manifestation bestoweth light on all creation, yet in each place it becometh manifest and sheddeth its bounty according to the potentialities of that place. For instance, in a mirror it reflecteth its own disk and shape, and this is due to the sensitivity of the mirror; in a crystal it maketh fire to appear, and in other things it showeth only the effect of its shining, but not its full disk. And yet, through that effect, by the command of the Creator, it traineth each thing according to the quality of that thing, as thou observest.</p>	<p>It is known to thine eminence that all the variations which the wayfarer in the stages of his journey beholdeth in the realms of being proceed from his own vision. We shall give an example of this, that the meaning may become fully clear. Consider the visible sun: Although it shineth with the same radiance upon all existence, and at the behest of the Lord of Revelation bestoweth light on all things, yet in each place it becometh manifest and sheddeth its bounty according to the potentialities of that place. For instance, in a mirror it reflecteth its own disk and shape, and this is due to the clarity of the mirror itself; through a crystal it maketh fire to appear; and in other things it showeth only the effect of its shining, but not its full disk. And yet, through that effect, by the command of the Creator it traineth each thing according to the capacity of that thing, even as thou dost observe.</p>
<p>In like manner, colors become visible in every object according to the nature of that object. For instance, in a yellow globe, the rays shine yellow; in a white the rays are white; and in a red, the red rays are manifest. Then these variations are from the object, not from the shining light. And if a place be shut away from the light, as by walls or a roof, it will be entirely bereft of the splendor of the light, nor will the sun shine thereon.</p>	<p>In like manner, colours become visible in each object according to its nature. For instance, in a yellow glass the rays shine yellow; in a white glass they are white; and in a red glass red rays are visible. These variations proceed from the object itself, not from the light. And if a place be shut away from the light, as by walls and a roof, it will be entirely bereft of the light of the sun and deprived of its rays.</p>
<p>Thus it is that certain invalid souls have confined the lands of knowledge within the wall of self and passion, and clouded them with ignorance and blindness, and have been veiled from the light of the mystic sun and the mysteries of the Eternal Beloved; they have strayed afar from the jewelled wisdom of the lucid Faith of the Lord of Messengers, have been shut out of the sanctuary of the All-Beauteous One, and banished from the Ka'bih* of splendor. Such is the worth of the people of this age!</p>	<p>Thus it is that certain feeble souls have confined the wide expanse of knowledge within the walls of self and passion, and beneath the cloak of ignorance and blindness, and have thereby veiled themselves from the light of the mystic Sun and the mysteries of the eternal Beloved. They have strayed far from the gem-like wisdom of the resplendent Faith of the Lord of the Messengers,[†] have been shut out of the inner court of the All-Beauteous, and have been banished from the Kaaba of glory. Such is the worth of the people of this age!</p>

* The holy Sanctuary at Mecca. Here the word means "goal."

† The Prophet Muḥammad.

Original Trans. (Ali Kuli Khan & Marzieh Gail, 1945)	Revised Trans. (Bahá'í World Centre, 2019)
<p>And if a nightingale* soar upward from the clay of self and dwell in the rose bower of the heart, and in Arabian melodies and sweet Íránian songs recount the mysteries of God—a single word of which quickeneth to fresh, new life the bodies of the dead, and bestoweth the Holy Spirit upon the moldering bones of this existence—thou wilt behold a thousand claws of envy, a myriad beaks of rancor hunting after Him and with all their power intent upon His death.</p>	<p>And if a nightingale soar beyond the clay of self and dwell in the rose bower of the heart, and in Arabian melodies and sweet Persian tones recount the mysteries of God—a single word whereof quickeneth anew every lifeless form and bestoweth the spirit of holiness upon every mouldering bone—thou wilt behold a thousand claws of envy and a myriad talons of hatred hunting after Him and striving with all their power to encompass His death.</p>
<p>Yea, to the beetle a sweet fragrance seemeth foul, and to the man sick of a rheum a pleasant perfume is as naught. Wherefore, it hath been said for the guidance of the ignorant:</p>	<p>Yea, to the beetle a sweet fragrance seemeth foul, and to the man sick of a rheum a pleasant perfume availeth naught. Wherefore hath it been said for the guidance of the ignorant:</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Cleanse thou the rheum from out thine head And breathe the breath of God instead.†</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Cleanse thou the rheum from out thine head And breathe the breath of God instead.‡</p>
<p>In sum, the differences in objects have now been made plain. Thus when the wayfarer gazeth only upon the place of appearance—that is, when he seeth only the many-colored globes—he beholdeth yellow and red and white; hence it is that conflict hath prevailed among the creatures, and a darksome dust from limited souls hath hid the world. And some do gaze upon the effulgence of the light; and some have drunk of the wine of oneness and these see nothing but the sun itself.</p>	<p>In sum, the differences among objects have now been made plain. Thus when the wayfarer gazeth only upon the place of appearance—that is, when he considereth only the glass—he seeth yellow and red and white. And so it is that conflict hath prevailed amongst men, and a darksome dust from limited souls hath settled over the world. Others gaze upon the effulgence of the light, while yet others have drunk of the wine of oneness and see naught but the sun itself.</p>

* This refers to Bahá'u'lláh's own Manifestation.

† The Mathnaví.

‡ Rúmí.

Original Trans. (Ali Kuli Khan & Marzieh Gail, 1945)	Revised Trans. (Bahá'í World Centre, 2019)
<p>Thus, for that they move on these three differing planes, the understanding and the words of the wayfarers have differed; and hence the sign of conflict doth continually appear on earth. For some there are who dwell upon the plane of oneness and speak of that world, and some inhabit the realms of limitation, and some the grades of self, while others are completely veiled. Thus do the ignorant people of the day, who have no portion of the radiance of Divine Beauty, make certain claims, and in every age and cycle inflict on the people of the sea of oneness what they themselves deserve. "Should God punish men for their perverse doings, He would not leave on earth a moving thing! But to an appointed term doth He respite them...."*</p>	<p>As the wayfarers traverse these three differing planes, their understanding and their words differ accordingly, and hence the sign of conflict hath ever appeared on earth. For there are some who dwell on the plane of Divine Unity and speak of that world, and some inhabit the realms of limitation, and some the grades of self, while others are completely veiled. Thus do the ignorant people of the day, who have no share of the radiance of the divine Beauty, make certain claims and, in every age and cycle, inflict upon the people of the ocean of Divine Unity what they themselves deserve. "If God should chastise men for their perverse doings, He would not leave upon the earth a moving thing! But to an appointed time doth He respite them."†</p>
<p>O My Brother! A pure heart is as a mirror; cleanse it with the burnish of love and severance from all save God, that the true sun may shine within it and the eternal morning dawn. Then wilt thou clearly see the meaning of "Neither doth My earth nor My heaven contain Me, but the heart of My faithful servant containeth Me."‡ And thou wilt take up thy life in thine hand, and with infinite longing cast it before the new Beloved One.</p>	<p>O My brother! A pure heart is as a mirror; cleanse it with the burnish of love and severance from all save God, that the true sun may shine therein and the eternal morning dawn. Then wilt thou clearly see the meaning of "Earth and heaven cannot contain Me; what can alone contain Me is the heart of him that believeth in Me."§ And thou wilt take up thy life in thy hand and with infinite longing cast it before thy newly found Beloved.</p>

* Qur'án 16:63.

† Qur'án 16:61.

‡ Hadíth, i.e. action or utterance traditionally attributed to the Prophet Muḥammad or to one of the holy Imáms.

§ From a Ḥadíth.

Original Trans. (Ali Kuli Khan & Marzieh Gail, 1945)	Revised Trans. (Bahá'í World Centre, 2019)
<p>Whensoever the light of Manifestation of the King of Oneness settleth upon the throne of the heart and soul, His shining becometh visible in every limb and member. At that time the mystery of the famed tradition gleameth out of the darkness: "A servant is drawn unto Me in prayer until I answer him; and when I have answered him, I become the ear wherewith he heareth...." For thus the Master of the house hath appeared within His home, and all the pillars of the dwelling are ashine with His light. And the action and effect of the light are from the Light-Giver; so it is that all move through Him and arise by His will. And this is that spring whereof the near ones drink, as it is said: "A fount whereof the near unto God shall drink...."*</p>	<p>Whensoever the light of the revelation of the King of Oneness settleth upon the throne of the heart and soul, His radiance becometh visible in every limb and member. At that time, the mystery of the famed tradition gleameth out of the darkness: "A servant is drawn unto Me in prayer until I answer him, and when I have answered him, I become the ear wherewith he heareth ..."+ For thus the Master of the house hath appeared within His home, and all the pillars of the dwelling are ashine with His light. And as the action and effect of the light are from the Light-Giver, so it is that all move through Him and arise by His will. This is that wellspring whereof the near ones drink, as it is said: "A fount whereof they who draw nigh to God shall drink".‡</p>
<p>However, let none construe these utterances to be anthropomorphism, nor see in them the descent of the worlds of God into the grades of the creatures; nor should they lead thine Eminence to such assumptions. For God is, in His Essence, holy above ascent and descent, entrance and exit; He hath through all eternity been free of the attributes of human creatures, and ever will remain so. No man hath ever known Him; no soul hath ever found the pathway to His Being. Every mystic knower hath wandered far astray in the valley of the knowledge of Him; every saint hath lost his way in seeking to comprehend His Essence. Sanctified is He above the understanding of the wise; exalted is He above the knowledge of the knowing! The way is barred and to seek it is impiety; His proof is His signs; His being is His evidence.§</p>	<p>However, let none construe these utterances to imply the incarnation or descent of the worlds of God into the grades of His creatures, nor should they lead thine eminence to such misapprehensions. For God, in His Essence, is sanctified above all ascent and descent, egress and regress; He hath through all eternity been exalted beyond the attributes of His creation, and will ever remain so. No man hath ever known Him; no soul hath ever fathomed the nature of His Being. In the valley of His knowledge every mystic wandereth astray; in the comprehension of His Essence every saint standeth bewildered. Sanctified is He above the understanding of the wise; exalted is He beyond the knowledge of the knowing! "The way is barred and all seeking rejected. His proof is His signs, His evidence His being."**</p>

* Qur'án 83:28.

† From a Ḥadīth.

‡ Qur'án 83:28.

§ Sermon by 'Alí.

** From a Ḥadīth.

Original Trans. (Ali Kuli Khan & Marzieh Gail, 1945)	Revised Trans. (Bahá'í World Centre, 2019)
<p>Wherefore, the lovers of the face of the Beloved have said: "O Thou, the One Whose Essence alone showeth the way to His Essence, and Who is sanctified above any likeness to His creatures."* How can utter nothingness gallop its steed in the field of preexistence, or a fleeting shadow reach to the everlasting sun? The Friend[†] hath said, "But for Thee, we had not known Thee," and the Beloved[‡] hath said, "nor attained Thy presence."</p>	<p>Wherefore the lovers of the countenance of the Beloved have said, "O Thou Whose Essence alone can lead to His Essence, and Who transcendeth all likeness to His creatures".[§] How can utter nothingness spur its charger in the arena of eternity, or a fleeting shadow reach to the everlasting sun? The Friend addressed by the words "But for Thee" hath said, "We have failed to know Thee"; and the Beloved alluded to by the words "or even closer" hath said, "nor attained Thy presence".**</p>
<p>Yea, these mentionings that have been made of the grades of knowledge relate to the knowledge of the Manifestations of that Sun of Reality, which casteth Its light upon the Mirrors. And the splendor of that light is in the hearts, yet it is hidden under the veilings of sense and the conditions of this earth, even as a candle within a lantern of iron, and only when the lantern is removed doth the light of the candle shine out.</p>	<p>Indeed, the references that have been made to the degrees of mystic knowledge pertain to the knowledge of the effulgences of that Sun of Truth as it becometh reflected in various mirrors. And the effulgence of that light is present within the hearts, yet it is hidden beneath the veils of selfish desires and earthly attachments, even as a candle within a lantern of iron, and only when the cover is lifted doth the light of the candle shine out.</p>
<p>In like manner, when thou strippest the wrappings of illusion from off thine heart, the lights of oneness will be made manifest.</p>	<p>In like manner, when thou dost strip the veils of illusion from the face of thine heart, the lights of Oneness will be made manifest.</p>
<p>Then it is clear that even for the rays there is neither entrance nor exit—how much less for that Essence of Being and that longed-for Mystery. O My Brother, journey upon these planes in the spirit of search, not in blind imitation. A true wayfarer will not be kept back by the bludgeon of words nor debarred by the warning of allusions.</p>	<p>It is clear, then, that even these rays are not subject to egress or regress—how much less that Essence of existence and longed-for Mystery. O My brother, consider these matters in the spirit of enquiry, not in blind imitation. A true wayfarer will not be deterred by the impediment of words, nor daunted by the sway of insinuations.</p>
<p>How shall a curtain part the lover and the loved one? Not Alexander's wall can separate them!^{††}</p>	<p>How can a curtain part the lover from his love, When Alexander's wall cannot keep them apart?^{††}</p>

* Hadith, i.e. action or utterance traditionally attributed to the Prophet Muḥammad or to one of the holy Imáms.

† The Prophet Muḥammad.

‡ The Prophet Muḥammad.

§ From a prayer of Imám 'Alí.

** "But for Thee" refers to the Ḥadith quoted in note 26. "We have failed to know Thee" alludes to a prayer attributed to Muḥammad that says, "We have not known Thee, O God, as Thou oughtest to be known." "Or even closer" alludes to Qur'án 53:9.

†† Háfiz: Shamsu'd-Dín Muḥammad, of Shíráz, died ca. 1389 A.D. One of the greatest of Persian poets.

‡‡ Sa'dí (ca. 1213–1292), author of the Gulistán and other poetical works.

Original Trans. (Ali Kuli Khan & Marzieh Gail, 1945)	Revised Trans. (Bahá'í World Centre, 2019)
<p>Secrets are many, but strangers are myriad. Volumes will not suffice to hold the mystery of the Beloved One, nor can it be exhausted in these pages, although it be no more than a word, no more than a sign. “Knowledge is a single point, but the ignorant have multiplied it.”*</p>	<p>Secrets are many, and strangers are myriad. Volumes will not suffice to hold the mystery of the Beloved, nor can it be exhausted in these pages, though it be no more than a word, no more than a sign. “Knowledge is one point, which the foolish have multiplied.”†</p>
<p>On this same basis, ponder likewise the differences among the worlds. Although the divine worlds be never ending, yet some refer to them as four: The world of time (zamán), which is the one that hath both a beginning and an end; the world of duration (dahr), which hath a beginning, but whose end is not revealed; the world of perpetuity (sarmad), whose beginning is not to be seen but which is known to have an end; and the world of eternity (azal), neither a beginning nor an end of which is visible. Although there are many differing statements as to these points, to recount them in detail would result in weariness. Thus, some have said that the world of perpetuity hath neither beginning nor end, and have named the world of eternity as the invisible, impregnable Empyrean. Others have called these the worlds of the Heavenly Court (Lahút), of the Empyrean Heaven (Jabarút), of the Kingdom of the Angels (Malakút), and of the mortal world (Násút).</p>	<p>Infer, then, from this the differences among the worlds. Though the worlds of God be infinite, yet some refer to them as four: the world of time, which hath both a beginning and an end; the world of duration, which hath a beginning but whose end is not apparent; the world of primordial reality, whose beginning is not to be seen but which is known to have an end; and the world of eternity, of which neither the beginning nor the end is visible. Although there are many differing statements as to these points, to recount them in detail would result in weariness. Thus some have said that the world of perpetuity hath neither beginning nor end, and have equated the world of eternity with the invisible, inaccessible, and unknowable Essence. Others have called these the worlds of the Heavenly Court, of the Celestial Dominion, of the Divine Kingdom, and of Mortal Existence.</p>
<p>The journeys in the pathway of love are reckoned as four: From the creatures to the True One; from the True One to the creatures; from the creatures to the creatures; from the True One to the True One.</p>	<p>Moreover, the journeys in the pathway of love have been reckoned as four: from the creatures to the True One, from the True One to the creatures, from the creatures to the creatures, and from the True One to the True One.</p>

* Hadíth, i.e. action or utterance traditionally attributed to the Prophet Muḥammad or to one of the holy Imáms.

† From a Ḥadíth.

Original Trans. (Ali Kuli Khan & Marzieh Gail, 1945)	Revised Trans. (Bahá'í World Centre, 2019)
<p>There is many an utterance of the mystic seers and doctors of former times which I have not mentioned here, since I mislike the copious citation from sayings of the past; for quotation from the words of others proveth acquired learning, not the divine bestowal. Even so much as We have quoted here is out of deference to the wont of men and after the manner of the friends. Further, such matters are beyond the scope of this epistle. Our unwillingness to recount their sayings is not from pride, rather is it a manifestation of wisdom and a demonstration of grace.</p>	<p>There is many an utterance of the sages and mystics of former times which I have not mentioned here, since I mislike copious citation from the sayings of the past; for quotation from the words of others betokeneth acquired learning and not divine bestowal. Even so much as I have quoted here is out of deference to the wont of men and after the manner of the learned. Further, such matters are beyond the scope of this epistle. My unwillingness to recount their sayings is not from pride; rather, it is the manifestation of wisdom and the revelation of bounty.</p>
<p>If Khidr did wreck the vessel on the sea, Yet in this wrong there are a thousand rights.*</p>	<p>If Khiḍr did wreck the vessel on the sea, A thousand rights are in this wrong concealed.†</p>
<p>Otherwise, this Servant regardeth Himself as utterly lost and as nothing, even beside one of the beloved of God, how much less in the presence of His holy ones. Exalted be My Lord, the Supreme! Moreover, our aim is to recount the stages of the wayfarer's journey, not to set forth the conflicting utterances of the mystics.</p>	<p>Otherwise, this Servant regardeth Himself as utterly lost and non-existent, even before one of the beloved of God, how much less in the presence of His holy ones. Glorified be my Lord, the Most High! Moreover, our aim is to recount the stages of the wayfarer's journey, not to set forth the conflicting utterances of the mystics.</p>

* The Mathnaví.

† Rúmí; a reference to Qur'án 18:71.

Original Trans. (Ali Kuli Khan & Marzieh Gail, 1945)	Revised Trans. (Bahá'í World Centre, 2019)
<p>Although a brief example hath been given concerning the beginning and ending of the relative world, the world of attributes, yet a second illustration is now added, that the full meaning may be manifest. For instance, let thine Eminence consider his own self; thou art first in relation to thy son, last in relation to thy father. In thine outward appearance, thou tellest of the appearance of power in the realms of divine creation; in thine inward being thou revealest the hidden mysteries which are the divine trust deposited within thee. And thus firstness and lastness, outwardness and inwardness are, in the sense referred to, true of thyself, that in these four states conferred upon thee thou shouldst comprehend the four divine states, and that the nightingale of thine heart on all the branches of the rosetree of existence, whether visible or concealed, should cry out: "He is the first and the last, the Seen and the Hidden...."*</p>	<p>Although a brief example hath been given concerning the beginning and ending of the relative and contingent world, yet a further illustration is now provided, that the full meaning may become clear. For instance, let thine eminence consider his own self: Thou art first in relation to thy son, and last in relation to thy father. In thine outward appearance thou tellest of the appearance of power in the realms of divine creation; in thine inward being thou revealest the hidden mysteries which are the divine trust deposited within thee. And thus firstness and lastness, outwardness and inwardness, are, in the sense referred to, all true of thyself, so that in these four states conferred upon thee thou mayest comprehend the four divine states, and that the nightingale of thine heart, warbling on all the flowering branches of the tree of existence, whether seen or unseen, might cry out: "He is the First and the Last, the Seen and the Hidden!"†</p>
<p>These statements are made in the sphere of that which is relative, because of the limitations of men. Otherwise, those personages who in a single step have passed over the world of the relative and the limited, and dwelt on the fair plane of the Absolute, and pitched their tent in the worlds of authority and command—have burned away these relativities with a single spark, and blotted out these words with a drop of dew. And they swim in the sea of the spirit, and soar in the holy air of light. Then what life have words, on such a plane, that "first" and "last" or other than these be seen or mentioned! In this realm, the first is the last itself, and the last is but the first.</p>	<p>These statements are made in the sphere of that which is relative. Otherwise, those souls who with but one step have traversed the world of the relative and the conditioned, and dwelt in the court of independent sovereignty, and pitched their tent in the realms of absolute authority and command, have burned away these relativities with a single spark, and blotted out these words with a mere dewdrop. And they swim in the sea of the spirit, and soar in the holy atmosphere of light. Then what existence have words, on such a plane, that "first" and "last", or other than these, should be mentioned or described? In this realm, the first is the same as the last, and the last is the same as the first.</p>
<p>In thy soul of love build thou a fire And burn all thoughts and words entire.‡</p>	<p>In thy soul, of love build thou a fire And burn all thoughts and words entire.§</p>

* Qur'án 57:3.

† Qur'án 57:3.

‡ The Mathnaví.

§ Rúmí.

Original Trans. (Ali Kuli Khan & Marzieh Gail, 1945)	Revised Trans. (Bahá'í World Centre, 2019)
O my friend, look upon thyself: Hadst thou not become a father nor begotten a son, neither wouldst thou have heard these sayings. Now forget them all, that thou mayest learn from the Master of Love in the schoolhouse of oneness, and return unto God, and forsake the inner land of unreality* for thy true station, and dwell within the shadow of the tree of knowledge.	O My friend, look to thyself: Hadst thou not become a father and begotten a son, neither wouldst thou have comprehended these words. Now forget them one and all, that thou mayest learn from the Master of Love in the schoolhouse of Divine Unity, mayest return unto God, forsake the land of unreality for thy true station, and dwell beneath the shadow of the tree of knowledge.
O thou dear one! Impoverish thyself, that thou mayest enter the high court of riches; and humble thy body, that thou mayest drink from the river of glory, and attain to the full meaning of the poems whereof thou hadst asked.	O thou dear one! Impoverish thyself, that thou mayest enter the lofty court of riches; and humble thy body, that thou mayest drink from the stream of glory and attain to the full meaning of the poems whereof thou hadst asked.
Thus it hath been made clear that these stages depend on the vision of the wayfarer. In every city he will behold a world, in every Valley reach a spring, in every meadow hear a song. But the falcon of the mystic heaven hath many a wondrous carol of the spirit in His breast, and the Persian bird keepeth in His soul many a sweet Arab melody; yet these are hidden, and hidden shall remain.	Thus it hath been made clear that these stages depend on the attainment of the wayfarer. In every city he will behold a world, in every valley reach a spring, in every meadow hear a song. But the falcon of the mystic heaven hath many a wondrous carol of the spirit in its breast, and the Persian bird keepeth in its soul many a sweet Arabian melody; yet these are hidden, and hidden shall remain.
If I speak forth, many a mind will shatter, And if I write, many a pen will break. ^{†,‡}	If I speak forth, many a mind will shatter, And if I write, many a pen will break. [§]
Peace be upon him who concludeth this exalted journey and followeth the True One by the lights of guidance.	Peace be upon him who concludeth this exalted journey and followeth the way of truth by the lights of guidance.

* This refers to the Súfí idea of the inner plane, which compared to Revealed Truth is but unreal.

† The Mathnaví.

‡ This refers to Bahá'u'lláh Himself, Who had not yet declared His mission.

§ This refers to Bahá'u'lláh Himself, Who had not yet declared His mission.

Original Trans. (Ali Kuli Khan & Marzieh Gail, 1945)	Revised Trans. (Bahá'í World Centre, 2019)
<p>And the wayfarer, after traversing the high planes of this supernal journey, entereth</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The Valley of Contentment</p> <p>In this Valley he feeleth the winds of divine contentment blowing from the plane of the spirit. He burneth away the veils of want, and with inward and outward eye, perceiveth within and without all things the day of: "God will compensate each one out of His abundance."* From sorrow he turneth to bliss, from anguish to joy. His grief and mourning yield to delight and rapture.</p>	<p>The wayfarer, after traversing the high planes of this supernal journey, entereth into THE CITY OF CONTENTMENT. In this valley he feeleth the breezes of divine contentment blowing from the plane of the spirit. He burneth away the veils of want, and with inward and outward eye perceiveth within and without all things the day of "God will satisfy everyone out of His abundance."† From sorrow he turneth to bliss, and from grief to joy, and from anguish and dejection to delight and rapture.</p>
<p>Although to outward view, the wayfarers in this Valley may dwell upon the dust, yet inwardly they are throned in the heights of mystic meaning; they eat of the endless bounties of inner significances, and drink of the delicate wines of the spirit.</p>	<p>Although, to outward seeming, the wayfarers in this valley may dwell upon the dust, yet inwardly they are throned in the heights of mystic meaning; they partake of the eternal bounties of heaven and drink of the delicate wines of the spirit.</p>
<p>The tongue faileth in describing these three Valleys, and speech falleth short. The pen steppeth not into this region, the ink leaveth only a blot. In these planes, the nightingale of the heart hath other songs and secrets, which make the heart to stir and the soul to clamor, but this mystery of inner meaning may be whispered only from heart to heart, confided only from breast to breast.</p>	<p>The tongue faileth in describing these three valleys, and speech falleth short. The pen steppeth not into this arena, the ink leaveth only a blot. In these stations, the nightingale of the heart hath other songs and secrets, which make the heart to leap and the soul to cry out, but this mystery of inner meaning may be whispered only from heart to heart, and confided only from breast to breast.</p>
<p>Only heart to heart can speak the bliss of mystic knowers; No messenger can tell it and no missive bear it.‡</p>	<p>The bliss of mystic knowers can be only told from heart to heart, A bliss no messenger can bear and no missive dare impart.§</p>
<p>I am silent from weakness on many a matter, For my words could not reckon them and my speech would fall short.**</p>	<p>How many are the matters I have out of weakness left unsaid; For my words would fail to reckon them and mine every effort would fall short.††</p>

* Qur'án 4:129.

† Qur'án 4:130.

‡ Háfiz: Shamsu'd-Dín Muḥammad, of Shíráz, died ca. 1389 A.D. One of the greatest of Persian poets.

§ Cf. 'Atṭár.

** Arabian poem.

†† Ibn-i-Fárid (1181–1235).

O friend, till thou enter the garden of such mysteries, thou shalt never set lip to the undying wine of this Valley. And shouldst thou taste of it, thou wilt shield thine eyes from all things else, and drink of the wine of contentment; and thou wilt loose thyself from all things else, and bind thyself to Him, and throw thy life down in His path, and cast thy soul away. However, there is no other in this region that thou need forget: "There was God and there was naught beside Him."* For on this plane the traveler witnesseth the beauty of the Friend in everything. Even in fire, he seeth the face of the Beloved. He beholdeth in illusion the secret of reality, and readeth from the attributes the riddle of the Essence. For he hath burnt away the veils with his sighing, and unwrapped the shroudings with a single glance; with piercing sight he gazeth on the new creation; with lucid heart he graspeth subtle verities. This is sufficiently attested by: "And we have made thy sight sharp in this day."[†]

O friend, till thou enter the garden of these inner meanings, thou shalt never taste of the imperishable wine of this valley. And shouldst thou taste of it, thou wilt turn away from all else and drink of the cup of contentment; thou wilt loose thyself from all things and bind thyself unto Him, and lay down thy life in His path and offer up thy soul for His sake. And this, even though in this realm there is no "all else" that thou needst forget: "God was alone; there was none else besides Him."[‡] For on this plane the traveller witnesseth the beauty of the Friend in all things. In fire he seeth the face of the Beloved; in illusion he beholdeth the secret of reality; in the attributes he readeth the riddle of the Essence. For he hath burnt away all veils with a sigh, and cast aside all coverings with a glance. With piercing sight he gazeth upon the new creation, and with lucid heart he graspeth subtle verities. The words "And we have made thy sight sharp in this day"[§] are a sufficient proof of this assertion and a befitting description of this state.

* Hadith, i.e. action or utterance traditionally attributed to the Prophet Muḥammad or to one of the holy Imáms.

† From Qur'án 50:21.

‡ From a Ḥadith.

§ Cf. Qur'án 50:21.

Original Trans. (Ali Kuli Khan & Marzieh Gail, 1945)	Revised Trans. (Bahá'í World Centre, 2019)
<p>After journeying through the planes of pure contentment, the traveler cometh to</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The Valley of Wonderment</p> <p>and is tossed in the oceans of grandeur, and at every moment his wonder groweth. Now he seeth the shape of wealth as poverty itself, and the essence of freedom as sheer impotence. Now is he struck dumb with the beauty of the All-Glorious; again is he wearied out with his own life. How many a mystic tree hath this whirlwind of wonderment snatched by the roots, how many a soul hath it exhausted. For in this Valley the traveler is flung into confusion, albeit, in the eye of him who hath attained, such marvels are esteemed and well beloved. At every moment he beholdeth a wondrous world, a new creation, and goeth from astonishment to astonishment, and is lost in awe at the works of the Lord of Oneness.</p>	<p>After journeying through the planes of pure contentment, the traveller cometh to THE VALLEY OF WONDERMENT and is tossed upon the oceans of grandeur, and at every moment his wonder increaseth. Now he seeth the embodiment of wealth as poverty itself, and the essence of independence as sheer impotence. Now is he struck dumb with the beauty of the All-Glorious; again is he wearied out with his own life. How many a mystic tree hath this whirlwind of bewilderment snatched by the roots, how many a soul hath it worn out and exhausted. For in this valley the traveller is flung into confusion, albeit, in the eyes of him who hath attained, such signs are esteemed and well beloved. At every moment, he beholdeth a wondrous world and a new creation, and goeth from astonishment to astonishment, and is lost in awe before the new handiwork of Him Who is the sovereign Lord of all.</p>
<p>Indeed, O Brother, if we ponder each created thing, we shall witness a myriad perfect wisdoms and learn a myriad new and wondrous truths. One of the created phenomena is the dream. Behold how many secrets are deposited therein, how many wisdoms treasured up, how many worlds concealed. Observe, how thou art asleep in a dwelling, and its doors are barred; on a sudden thou findest thyself in a far-off city, which thou enterest without moving thy feet or wearying thy body; without using thine eyes, thou seest; without taxing thine ears, thou hearest; without a tongue, thou speakest. And perchance when ten years are gone, thou wilt witness in the outer world the very things thou hast dreamed tonight.</p>	<p>Indeed, O brother, if we ponder each created thing, we shall witness a myriad consummate wisdoms and learn a myriad new and wondrous truths. One of the created phenomena is the dream. Behold how many secrets have been deposited therein, how many wisdoms treasured up, how many worlds concealed. Observe how thou art asleep in a dwelling, and its doors are shut; on a sudden thou findest thyself in a far-off city, which thou enterest without moving thy feet or wearying thy body. Without taxing thine eyes, thou seest; without troubling thine ears, thou hearest; without a tongue, thou speakest. And perchance when ten years have passed, thou wilt witness in this temporal world the very things thou hast dreamt tonight.</p>

Original Trans. (Ali Kuli Khan & Marzieh Gail, 1945)	Revised Trans. (Bahá'í World Centre, 2019)
<p>Now there are many wisdoms to ponder in the dream, which none but the people of this Valley can comprehend in their true elements. First, what is this world, where without eye and ear and hand and tongue a man puts all of these to use? Second, how is it that in the outer world thou seest today the effect of a dream, when thou didst vision it in the world of sleep some ten years past? Consider the difference between these two worlds and the mysteries which they conceal, that thou mayest attain to divine confirmations and heavenly discoveries and enter the regions of holiness.</p>	<p>Now there are many wisdoms to ponder in the dream, which none but the people of this valley can comprehend in their reality. First, what is this world where without eye or ear or hand or tongue one can put all these to use? Second, how is it that in the outer world thou seest today the effect of a dream which thou didst witness in the world of sleep some ten years past? Consider the difference between these two worlds, and the mysteries they conceal, that, attended by divine confirmations, thou mayest attain unto heavenly discoveries and enter the realms of holiness.</p>
<p>God, the Exalted, hath placed these signs in men, to the end that philosophers may not deny the mysteries of the life beyond nor belittle that which hath been promised them. For some hold to reason and deny whatever the reason comprehendeth not, and yet weak minds can never grasp the matters which we have related, but only the Supreme, Divine Intelligence can comprehend them:</p>	<p>God, the Most High, hath placed these signs in men so that veiled minds might not deny the mysteries of the life beyond, nor belittle that which hath been promised them. For some hold fast to reason and deny whatever reason comprehendeth not, and yet feeble minds can never grasp the reality of the stages that we have related: The universal divine Intellect alone can comprehend them.</p>
<p>How can feeble reason encompass the Qur'án, Or the spider snare a phoenix in his web?*</p>	<p>How can feeble reason embrace the Qur'án Or the spider snare a phoenix in its web?†</p>
<p>All these states are to be witnessed in the Valley of Wonderment, and the traveler at every moment seeketh for more, and is not wearied. Thus the Lord of the First and the Last in setting forth the grades of contemplation, and expressing wonderment hath said: "O Lord, increase my astonishment at Thee!"</p>	<p>All these states are to be found and witnessed in the Valley of Wonderment, wherein the wayfarer at every moment seeketh for more and is not wearied. Thus the Lord of the first and the last,‡ in setting forth the grades of contemplation and expressing bewilderment, hath said: "Increase my wonder and amazement at Thee, O God!"§</p>
<p>Likewise, reflect upon the perfection of man's creation, and that all these planes and states are folded up and hidden away within him.</p>	<p>Likewise, reflect upon the perfection of man's creation, and that all these planes and states are folded up and hidden away within him.</p>

* Persian mystic poem.

† Saná'í.

‡ The Prophet Muḥammad.

§ From a Ḥadīth.

Original Trans. (Ali Kuli Khan & Marzieh Gail, 1945)	Revised Trans. (Bahá'í World Centre, 2019)
Dost thou reckon thyself only a puny form When within thee the universe is folded?*	Dost thou deem thyself a small and puny form, When thou foldest within thyself the greater world?
Then we must labor to destroy the animal condition, till the meaning of humanity shall come to light.	We must therefore labour to destroy the animal condition, till the meaning of humanity cometh to light.
Thus, too, Luqmán, who had drunk from the wellspring of wisdom and tasted of the waters of mercy, in proving to his son Nathan the planes of resurrection and death, advanced the dream as an evidence and an example. We relate it here, that through this evanescent Servant a memory may endure of that youth of the school of Divine Unity, that elder of the art of instruction and the Absolute. He said: “O Son, if thou art able not to sleep, then thou art able not to die. And if thou art able not to waken after sleep, then thou shalt be able not to rise after death.”	Likewise, Luqmán, who had drunk from the wellspring of wisdom and tasted of the waters of mercy, in proving to his son Nathan the planes of resurrection and death, advanced the dream as evidence and example. We relate it here, that through this evanescent Servant a memory may endure of that youth of the school of Divine Unity, that elder of the realms of instruction and detachment. He said: “O son, if thou art able not to sleep, then thou art able not to die. And if thou art able not to waken after sleep, then thou shalt be able not to rise after death.”
O friend, the heart is the dwelling of eternal mysteries, make it not the home of fleeting fancies; waste not the treasure of thy precious life in employment with this swiftly passing world. Thou comest from the world of holiness—bind not thine heart to the earth; thou art a dweller in the court of nearness—choose not the homeland of the dust.	O friend, the heart is the dwelling-place of eternal mysteries: Make it not the home of fleeting fancies. Waste not the treasure of thy precious life occupied with this swiftly passing world. Thou comest from the world of holiness: Bind not thine heart to the earth. Thou art a dweller in the court of reunion: Choose not the homeland of the dust.
In sum, there is no end to the description of these stages, but because of the wrongs inflicted by the peoples of the earth, this Servant is in no mood to continue:	In sum, there is no end to the description of these stages, but because of the wrongs inflicted by the peoples of this age, this Servant is disinclined to continue:
The tale is still unfinished and I have no heart for it— Then pray forgive me.†	The tale remaineth yet unfinished and untold; Forgive me, then, for weariness hath taken hold.‡

* ‘Alí.

† The Mathnaví.

‡ Rúmí.

Original Trans. (Ali Kuli Khan & Marzieh Gail, 1945)	Revised Trans. (Bahá'í World Centre, 2019)
<p>The pen groaneth and the ink sheddeth tears, and the river* of the heart moveth in waves of blood. “Nothing can befall us but what God hath destined for us.”† Peace be upon him who followeth the Right Path!</p>	<p>The pen groaneth and the ink sheddeth tears, and the river of the heart surgeth in waves of blood. “Nothing can befall us but what God hath destined for us.”‡ Peace be upon him who followeth the way of guidance!</p>
<p>After scaling the high summits of wonderment the wayfarer cometh to</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The Valley of True Poverty and Absolute Nothingness</p> <p>This station is the dying from self and the living in God, the being poor in self and rich in the Desired One. Poverty as here referred to signifieth being poor in the things of the created world, rich in the things of God’s world. For when the true lover and devoted friend reacheth to the presence of the Beloved, the sparkling beauty of the Loved One and the fire of the lover’s heart will kindle a blaze and burn away all veils and wrappings. Yea, all he hath, from heart to skin, will be set aflame, so that nothing will remain save the Friend.</p>	<p>After scaling the high summits of wonderment, the wayfarer cometh to THE VALLEY OF TRUE POVERTY AND ABSOLUTE NOTHINGNESS. This station is that of dying to the self and living in God, of being poor in self and rich in the Desired One. Poverty, as here referred to, signifieth being poor in that which pertaineth to the world of creation and rich in what belongeth to the realms of God. For when the true lover and devoted friend reacheth the presence of the Beloved, the radiant beauty of the Loved One and the fire of the lover’s heart will kindle a blaze and burn away all veils and wrappings. Yea, all that he hath, from marrow to skin, will be set aflame, so that nothing will remain save the Friend.</p>
<p>When the qualities of the Ancient of Days stood revealed, Then the qualities of earthly things did Moses burn away.§</p>	<p>When once shone forth the attributes Of Him Who is the ancient King, All mention Moses burned away Of every fleeting, transient thing.**</p>

* Literally “Jayhún,” a river in Turkistán.

† Qur’án 9:51.

‡ Qur’án 9:51.

§ The Mathnaví.

** Rúmí.

Original Trans. (Ali Kuli Khan & Marzieh Gail, 1945)	Revised Trans. (Bahá'í World Centre, 2019)
<p>He who hath attained this station is sanctified from all that pertaineth to the world. Wherefore, if those who have come to the sea of His presence are found to possess none of the limited things of this perishable world, whether it be outer wealth or personal opinions, it mattereth not. For whatever the creatures have is limited by their own limits, and whatever the True One hath is sanctified therefrom; this utterance must be deeply pondered that its purport may be clear. “Verily the righteous shall drink of a winecup tempered at the camphor fountain.”* If the interpretation of “camphor” become known, the true intention will be evident.</p>	<p>Whoso hath attained this station is sanctified from all that pertaineth to the world. Wherefore, if those who have reached the ocean of His presence are found to possess none of the limited things of this perishable world, whether earthly riches or worldly opinions, it mattereth not. For that which is with His creatures is circumscribed by their own limitations, whereas that which is with God is sanctified therefrom. This utterance must be deeply pondered, that its purport may be clear. “Verily the righteous shall drink of a cup tempered at the camphor fountain.”† If the true meaning of “camphor” become known, our true intent will become evident.</p>
<p>This state is that poverty of which it is said, “Poverty is My glory.”‡ And of inward and outward poverty there is many a stage and many a meaning which I have not thought pertinent to mention here; hence I have reserved these for another time, dependent on what God may desire and fate may seal.</p>	<p>This station is that poverty of which it is said, “Poverty is My glory.”§ And of inward and outward poverty there is many a stage and many a meaning which I have not thought pertinent to mention here; hence I have reserved these for another time, dependent on what God may desire and fate may seal.</p>
<p>This is the plane whereon the vestiges of all things (Kullu Shay’) are destroyed in the traveler, and on the horizon of eternity the Divine Face riseth out of the darkness, and the meaning of “All on the earth shall pass away, but the face of thy Lord...”** is made manifest.</p>	<p>This is the station wherein the multiplicity of all things perisheth in the wayfarer; and the divine Countenance, dawning above the horizon of eternity, riseth out of the darkness; and the meaning of “All on the earth shall pass away, but the face of thy Lord” is made manifest.††</p>

* Qur’án 76:5.

† Qur’án 76:5.

‡ Muḥammad.

§ From a Ḥadīth.

** Qur’án 55:26, 27.

†† Qur’án 28:88.

Original Trans. (Ali Kuli Khan & Marzieh Gail, 1945)	Revised Trans. (Bahá'í World Centre, 2019)
<p>O My friend, listen with heart and soul to the songs of the spirit, and treasure them as thine own eyes. For the heavenly wisdoms, like the clouds of spring, will not rain down on the earth of men's hearts forever; and though the grace of the All-Bounteous One is never stilled and never ceasing, yet to each time and era a portion is allotted and a bounty set apart, this in a given measure. "And no one thing is there, but with Us are its storehouses; and We send it not down but in settled measure."* The cloud of the Loved One's mercy raineth only on the garden of the spirit, and bestoweth this bounty only in the season of spring. The other seasons have no share in this greatest grace, and barren lands no portion of this favor.</p>	<p>O My friend! Listen with heart and soul to the songs of the spirit, and treasure them as thine own eyes; for heavenly wisdoms, even as vernal showers, will not rain forever upon the earth of men's hearts, and though the grace of the All-Bounteous One is never ceasing and never stilled, yet to every time and era a portion is allotted and a bounty assigned, which is vouchsafed in a given measure. "And no one thing is there, but with Us are its storehouses; and We send it not down but in settled measure."† Indeed, the clouds of the Loved One's mercy rain only on the garden of the spirit, and bestow this bounty only in the season of spring. Other seasons have no share in this supernal grace, and barren lands hold no portion of this bounteous favour.</p>
<p>O Brother! Not every sea hath pearls; not every branch will flower, nor will the nightingale sing thereon. Then, ere the nightingale of the mystic paradise repair to the garden of God, and the rays of the heavenly morning return to the Sun of Truth—make thou an effort, that haply in this dustheap of the mortal world thou mayest catch a fragrance from the everlasting garden, and live forever in the shadow of the peoples of this city. And when thou hast attained this highest station and come to this mightiest plane, then shalt thou gaze on the Beloved, and forget all else.</p>	<p>O My brother! Not every sea hath pearls; not every branch will flower, nor will the nightingale sing thereon. Then, ere the nightingale of the mystic Paradise repair to the celestial garden, and the rays of the morn of inner meaning return to the Day-Star of Truth, make thou an effort, that haply in this dustheap of a mortal world thou mayest catch a fragrance from the everlasting rose-garden and live in the shadow of the inhabitants of this everlasting city. And when thou hast attained this highest plane and most exalted degree, then shalt thou gaze on the Beloved and forget all else.</p>
<p>The Beloved shineth on gate and wall Without a veil, O men of vision.‡</p>	<p>The Friend, unveiled, doth shed the splendour of His light Through every door and wall, O ye endued with sight!§</p>
<p>Now hast thou abandoned the drop of life and come to the sea of the Life-Bestower. This is the goal thou didst ask for; if it be God's will, thou wilt gain it.</p>	<p>Thou hast given up the drop of life and drawn nigh unto the ocean of the Well-Beloved. This is the goal thou didst seek; God grant thou mayest attain thereunto.</p>

* Qur'án 15:21.

† Qur'án 15:21.

‡ Farídu'd-Dín Aṭṭár (ca. 1150–1230 A.D.), the great Persian Súfí poet.

§ Hátif-i-Işfahání.

Original Trans. (Ali Kuli Khan & Marzieh Gail, 1945)	Revised Trans. (Bahá'í World Centre, 2019)
<p>In this city, even the veils of light are split asunder and vanish away. “His beauty hath no veiling save light, His face no covering save revelation.”* How strange that while the Beloved is visible as the sun, yet the heedless still hunt after tinsel and base metal. Yea, the intensity of His revelation hath covered Him, and the fullness of His shining forth hath hidden Him.</p>	<p>In this city, even the veils of light are rent asunder and vanish away. “His beauty hath no veiling save light, His countenance no covering save revelation.”† How strange that the Beloved is as visible as the sun and yet the heedless still hunt after tinsel and base metal. Yea, the intensity of His revelation hath veiled Him, and the fullness of His shining forth hath hidden Him.</p>
<p>Even as the sun, bright hath He shined, But alas, He hath come to the town of the blind!‡</p>	<p>Even as the noontide sun Hath the True One brightly shined, But alas that He hath come To the city of the blind!§</p>
<p>In this Valley, the wayfarer leaveth behind him the stages of the “oneness of Being and Manifestation”** and reacheth a oneness that is sanctified above these two stations. Ecstasy alone can encompass this theme, not utterance nor argument; and whosoever hath dwelt at this stage of the journey, or caught a breath from this garden land, knoweth whereof We speak.</p>	<p>In this valley the wayfarer passeth beyond the stages of the “unity of existence” and the “unity of appearance” and reacheth a unity that is sanctified above both of these stations.†† Ecstasy alone can encompass this theme, not utterance nor argument; and whosoever hath dwelt at this stage of the journey, or caught a breath from this garden, knoweth whereof We speak.</p>
<p>In all these journeys the traveler must stray not the breadth of a hair from the “Law,” for this is indeed the secret of the “Path” and the fruit of the Tree of “Truth”; and in all these stages he must cling to the robe of obedience to the commandments, and hold fast to the cord of shunning all forbidden things, that he may be nourished from the cup of the Law and informed of the mysteries of Truth.‡‡</p>	<p>In all these journeys the wayfarer must stray not a hair’s breadth from the Law, for this is indeed the secret of the Path and the fruit of the Tree of Truth. And in all these stages he must cling to the robe of obedience to all that hath been enjoined, and hold fast to the cord of shunning all that is forbidden, that he may partake of the cup of the Law and be informed of the mysteries of Truth.</p>

* Hadíth, i.e. action or utterance traditionally attributed to the Prophet Muḥammad or to one of the holy Imáms.

† From a Ḥadíth.

‡ The Mathnaví.

§ Attributed to Rúmí.

** Pantheism, a Súfí doctrine derived from the formula: “Only God exists; He is in all things, and all things are in Him.”

†† A reference to two Súfí concepts. The doctrine of the unity of existence is commonly ascribed to Ibnu’l-Arabí (1165–1240), that of the unity of appearance to Aḥmad Sirhindí (1564–1624). See ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Some Answered Questions*, chapter 82.

‡‡ This refers to the three stages of Súfí life: 1. Sharí’at, or Religious Laws; 2. Tariqat, or the Path on which the mystic wayfarer journeys in search of the True One; this stage also includes anchoretism. 3. Haqíqat, or the Truth which, to the Súfí, is the goal of the journey through all three stages. Here Bahá’u’lláh teaches that, contrary to the belief of certain Súfís who in their search for the Truth consider themselves above all law, obedience to the Laws of Religion is essential.

Original Trans. (Ali Kuli Khan & Marzieh Gail, 1945)	Revised Trans. (Bahá'í World Centre, 2019)
If any of the utterances of this Servant may not be comprehended, or may lead to perturbation, the same must be inquired of again, that no doubt may linger, and the meaning be clear as the Face of the Beloved One shining from the “Glorious Station.”*	If any of the utterances of this Servant be not understood, or lead to perplexity, the same must be enquired of again, that no doubt may linger, and that the meaning may shine as resplendent as the face of the Beloved dawning from His “Glorious Station”.†
These journeys have no visible ending in the world of time, but the severed wayfarer—if invisible confirmation descend upon him and the Guardian of the Cause assist him—may cross these seven stages in seven steps, nay rather in seven breaths, nay rather in a single breath, if God will and desire it. And this is of “His grace on such of His servants as He pleaseth.”‡	These journeys have no visible ending in this temporal world, but the detached wayfarer—should invisible confirmation descend upon him and the Guardian of the Cause§ assist him—may traverse these seven stages in seven steps, nay rather in seven breaths, nay even in a single breath, should God will and desire it. This is “a token of His grace vouchsafed unto whomsoever He pleaseth.”***
They who soar in the heaven of singleness and reach to the sea of the Absolute, reckon this city—which is the station of life in God—as the furthest state of mystic knowers, and the farthest homeland of the lovers. But to this evanescent One of the mystic ocean, this station is the first gate of the heart’s citadel, that is, man’s first entrance to the city of the heart; and the heart is endowed with four stages, which would be recounted should a kindred soul be found.	They who soar in the heaven of Divine Unity and attain the depths of the sea of detachment reckon this city—which is the station of life in God—as the loftiest state of the mystic knowers and the furthest homeland of the faithful lovers. But to this evanescent One of the mystic ocean, this station is the first gate of the heart’s citadel, that is, man’s first entrance to the city of the heart; and the heart is endowed with four stages, which would be recounted should a kindred soul be found.
When the pen set to picturing this station, It broke in pieces and the page was torn.††	Shattered was the pen at once, Rent and torn in twain the page, When the pen did reach the point Of depicting such a stage.‡‡
Salám!§§	(Not translated)

* Maqám-i-Mahmúd. Qur’án 17:81.

† Qur’án 17:79. A reference to the station of the Manifestation of God.

‡ Qur’án 2:84.

§ “The word ‘Guardian’ in the Seven Valleys has no connection with the Bahá’í Guardianship.” (From a letter dated 8 January 1949 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi.)

** Qur’án 2:90.

†† Persian mystic poem.

‡‡ Rúmí.

§§ “Peace.” This word is used in concluding a thesis.

Original Trans. (Ali Kuli Khan & Marzieh Gail, 1945)	Revised Trans. (Bahá'í World Centre, 2019)
<p>O My friend! Many a hound pursueth this gazelle of the desert of oneness; many a talon claweth at this thrush of the eternal garden. Pitiless ravens do lie in wait for this bird of the heavens of God, and the huntsman of envy stalketh this deer of the meadow of love.</p>	<p>O My friend! Many a hound hunteth this gazelle of the desert of oneness; many an eagle pursueth this nightingale of the garden of eternity. Ravens of hatred lie in wait for this bird of the heavens of God, and the huntsman of envy stalketh this deer of the meadow of love.</p>
<p>O Shaykh! Make of thine effort a glass, perchance it may shelter this flame from the contrary winds; albeit this light doth long to be kindled in the lamp of the Lord, and to shine in the globe of the spirit. For the head raised up in the love of God will certainly fall by the sword, and the life that is kindled with longing will surely be sacrificed, and the heart which remembereth the Loved One will surely brim with blood. How well is it said:</p>	<p>O Shaykh! Make of thine effort a glass, that perchance it may shelter this flame from contrary winds, albeit this flame doth long to be kindled in the lamp of the Lord and to shine in the niche of the spirit. For the head that is raised up in the love of God will assuredly fall by the sword, and the life that is aflame with longing will assuredly be extinguished, and the heart that cleaveth to the remembrance of the Beloved will assuredly break. How well hath it been said:</p>
<p>Live free of love, for its very peace is anguish; Its beginning is pain, its end is death.*</p>	<p>Live free of love, for its peace Is grief and sorrow at each breath. It starteth but with ache and pain; It endeth but with loss and death.†</p>
<p>Peace be upon him who followeth the Right Path!</p>	<p>Peace be upon him who followeth the way of guidance!</p>
<p>The thoughts thou hast expressed as to the interpretation of the common species of bird that is called in Persian Gunjishk (sparrow) were considered.‡ Thou appearest to be well-grounded in mystic truth. However, on every plane, to every letter a meaning is allotted which relateth to that plane. Indeed, the wayfarer findeth a secret in every name, a mystery in every letter. In one sense, these letters refer to holiness.</p>	<p>The novel thoughts thou hast expressed as to the symbolism contained in the word “sparrow” were considered.§ Thou appearest to be well grounded in mystic truth. However, in each realm, to every letter a meaning is allotted which pertaineth to that realm. Indeed, the wayfarer findeth a secret in every name and a mystery in every letter.</p>

* Arabian poem.

† Ibn-i-Fárid.

‡ The five letters comprising this word in Persian are: G, N, J, SH, K, that is, Gáf, Nún, Jím, Shín, Káf.

§ In what follows, Bahá'u'lláh interprets the meaning of each of the five letters comprising the word “sparrow” (gunjishk) in Persian.

Original Trans. (Ali Kuli Khan & Marzieh Gail, 1945)	Revised Trans. (Bahá'í World Centre, 2019)
<p>Káf or Gáf (K or G) referreth to Kuffi (“free”), that is, “Free thyself from that which thy passion desireth; then advance unto thy Lord.” Nún referreth to Nazzih (“purify”), that is, “Purify thyself from all else save Him, that thou mayest surrender thy life in His love.” Jím is Jánib (“draw back”), that is, “Draw back from the threshold of the True One if thou still possessest earthly attributes.” Shín is Ushkúr (“thank”)—“Thank thy Lord on His earth that He may bless thee in His heaven; albeit in the world of oneness, this heaven is the same as His earth.” Káf referreth to Kuffi, that is: “Take off from thyself the wrappings of limitations, that thou mayest come to know what thou hast not known of the states of Sanctity.”*</p>	<p>In one sense, these letters refer to the states of holiness. The first meaneth “Free thyself from the promptings of self, then approach thy Lord.” The second meaneth “Purify thyself from all save Him, that thou mayest offer up thy life for His sake.” The third meaneth “Draw back from the threshold of the one true God if thou art still possessed of earthly attributes.” The fourth meaneth “Render thanks unto thy Lord on His earth, that He may bless thee in His heaven, albeit in the realm of His unity His heaven is the same as His earth.” The fifth meaneth “Remove from thine eyes the veils of limitation, that thou mayest learn that which thou knewest not of the stations of holiness.”</p>
<p>Wert thou to harken to the melodies of this mortal Bird,[†] then wouldst thou seek out the undying chalice and pass by every perishable cup. Peace be upon those who walk in the Right Path!</p>	<p>Wert thou to hearken unto the melodies of this mortal Bird, then wouldst thou seek out the eternal and undying chalice and renounce every fleeting and perishable cup. Peace be upon him who followeth the way of guidance!</p>

- End of *The Seven Valleys* -

* This and the foregoing quotations are from the teachings of Islám.

† This is a reference in the traditional Persian style to Bahá'u'lláh Himself.

The Four Valleys

He is the Strong, the Well-Beloved!	HE IS THE EVER-LIVING.
O light of truth, Hisám-i-Dín, the bounteous, No prince hath the world begot like unto Thee! [*]	O light of truth and sword of faith And soul of generosity! No prince hath sky or earth begot Who fain could hope to rival thee! [†]
I am wondering why the tie of love was so abruptly severed, and the firm covenant of friendship broken. Did ever, God forbid, My devotion lessen, or My deep affection fail, that thou hast thus forgot Me and blotted Me from thy thoughts?	I know not why the tie of love was so abruptly severed and the firm covenant of friendship broken. Did ever, God forbid, My devotion lessen or My sincere affection fail, that I came to be so neglected and forgotten?
What fault of Mine hath made thee cease thy favors? Is it that We are lowly and thou of high degree? [‡]	What fault didst thou observe in me That made thee cease thy tender care? Is it that poverty's our lot And wealth and pageantry thy share? [§]
Or is that a single arrow hath driven thee from the battle? ^{**} Have they not told thee that faithfulness is a duty on those who follow the mystic way, that it is the true guide to His Holy Presence? "But as for those who say, 'Our Lord is God,' and who go straight to Him, the angels shall descend to them...." ^{††}	Or is it that a single arrow hath driven thee from the battle? Hast thou not heard that steadfastness is the prime requisite of the mystic path and the means of admittance to His holy Court? "They that say 'Our Lord is God', and continue steadfast in His way, upon them, verily, shall the angels descend." ^{††}
Likewise He saith, "Go straight on then as thou hast been commanded." ^{§§} Wherefore, this course is incumbent on those who dwell in the presence of God.	Likewise He saith, "Be thou steadfast as thou hast been bidden." ^{***} It followeth that they that abide in the court of reunion must needs conduct themselves accordingly.
I do as bidden, and I bring the message, Whether it give thee counsel or offense. ^{†††}	I do as bidden and convey the message, Whether it give thee counsel or offence. ^{†††}

* Mathnaví of Rúmí.

† Rúmí. Bahá'u'lláh is here comparing Shaykh 'Abdu'r-Rahmán, the recipient of the Tablet, with Ḥusámu'd-Dín Chalabí, to whom Rúmí dedicated his Mathnaví. Ḥusámu'd-Dín means "sword of faith".

‡ Sa'dí, Muslihu'd-Dín of Shíráz (ca. 1184–1291), famed author of the Gulistán and other poetical works.

§ Sa'dí.

** Persian proverb describing a man who gives up easily. As used here one connotation is that the Shaykh might have considered his station as a mystic leader compromised by the fact of his being taught the new truth by Bahá'u'lláh.

†† Qur'án 41:30.

†† Qur'án 41:30.

§§ Qur'án 11:114; 42:14.

*** Qur'án 11:112.

††† Sa'dí.

††† Sa'dí.

Original Trans. (Ali Kuli Khan & Marzieh Gail, 1945)	Revised Trans. (Bahá'í World Centre, 2019)
Albeit I have received no answer to My letters and it is contrary to the usage of the wise to express My regard anew, yet this new love hath broken all the old rules and ways.	Though I have received no reply to My letter, and it would be unbefitting, in the eyes of the wise, to express anew My devotion, yet this new love hath annulled and effaced all the old rules and ways.
<p>Tell us not the tale of Laylí or of Majnún's woe— Thy love hath made the world forget the loves of long ago. When once thy name was on the tongue, the lovers caught it And it set the speakers and the hearers dancing to and fro.*</p>	<p>Tell us not the tale of Laylí, nor speak of Majnún's woe— Thy love hath made the world forget the loves of long ago. When once thy name was on the tongue, it reached the lovers' ears And set the speakers and the hearers dancing to and fro.†</p>
And of divine wisdom and heavenly counsel, [Rúmi says]:	And as to divine wisdom and heavenly admonitions:
<p>Each moon, O my beloved, for three days I go mad; Today's the first of these—'Tis why thou seest me glad.</p>	<p>Each moon, O my beloved, For three days I go mad; Today's the first of these— 'Tis why thou seest me glad.‡</p>
We hear that thou hast journeyed to Tabríz and Tiflis to disseminate knowledge, or that some other high purpose hath taken thee to Sanandaj. ^{§,**}	I hear that that thou hast journeyed to Tabríz and Tiflis to engage in debate and instruction, or hast set out for Sanandaj to scale the heights of knowledge.
O My eminent friend! Those who progress in mystic wayfaring are of four kinds. I shall describe them in brief, that the grades and qualities of each kind may become plain to thee.	O my eminent friend! They that seek to ascend to the heaven of mystic wayfaring are of four kinds only. I shall describe them in brief, that the signs and degrees of each may become plain and manifest to thee.

* Ibid.

† Sa'dí.

‡ Rúmí.

§ Senna, capital of Persian Kurdistan.

** This preamble to The Four Valleys is written in the finest Persian epistolary style. The rules of classical letter writing in Persian require quotations from literary works, and assertions of abiding love for the one addressed, who is chided for having neglected the writer.

Original Trans. (Ali Kuli Khan & Marzieh Gail, 1945)	Revised Trans. (Bahá'í World Centre, 2019)
<p style="text-align: center;">The First Valley</p> <p>If the travelers seek after the goal of the Intended One (maqṣúd), this station appertaineth to the self—but that self which is “The Self of God standing within Him with laws.”* On this plane, the self is not rejected but beloved; it is well-pleasing and not to be shunned. Although at the beginning, this plane is the realm of conflict, yet it endeth in attainment to the throne of splendor. As they have said:</p>	<p>If the wayfarers be among them that seek after THE SANCTUARY OF THE DESIRED ONE, this plane pertaineth to the self—but the self which is intended is “the Self of God that pervadeth all His laws”.[†] In this station the self is not rejected but beloved; it is regarded with favour and is not to be shunned. Although at the beginning this plane is the realm of conflict, yet it endeth in the ascent to the throne of glory. As it hath been said:</p>
<p>“O Abraham of this day, O Friend Abraham of the Spirit! Kill these four birds of prey,”[‡]</p>	<p>O Abraham of the Spirit and God’s Friend in this day! Slay! Slay these four thieving birds of prey![§]</p>
<p>that after death the riddle of life may be unraveled.</p>	<p>that after death the mystery of life may be unravelled.</p>
<p>This is the plane of the soul who is pleasing unto God. Refer to the verse:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">O thou soul who art well assured, Return to thy Lord, well-pleased, and pleasing unto Him.**</p> <p>which endeth:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Enter thou among My servants, And enter thou My paradise.^{††}</p>	<p>This is the plane of the soul that is pleasing unto God, whereof He saith: “Enter thou among My servants, and enter thou My Paradise.”^{‡‡}</p>
<p>This station hath many signs, unnumbered proofs. Hence it is said: “Hereafter We will show them Our signs in the regions of the earth, and in themselves, until it become manifest unto them that it is the truth,”^{§§} and that there is no God save Him.</p>	<p>This station hath myriad signs and countless tokens. Hence it is said: “We will surely show them Our signs in the world and within themselves, until it become plain to them that there is no God save Him.”^{***}</p>

* Hadíth.

†

‡ The Mathnaví. Here Rúmí tells a story of four evil birds which, when put to death, changed into four birds of goodness. The allegory refers to subduing evil qualities and replacing them with good.

§ Cf. Rúmí. Here Rúmí tells a story of four evil birds which, when put to death, changed into four birds of goodness. The allegory refers to subduing evil qualities and replacing them with good.

** Qur’án 89:27–30.

†† Qur’án 89:27–30.

‡‡ Qur’án 89:29–30.

§§ Qur’án 41:53.

*** Cf. Qur’án 41:53.

Original Trans. (Ali Kuli Khan & Marzieh Gail, 1945)	Revised Trans. (Bahá'í World Centre, 2019)
<p>One must, then, read the book of his own self, rather than some treatise on rhetoric. Wherefore He hath said, "Read thy Book: There needeth none but thyself to make out an account against thee this day."*</p>	<p>One must, then, read the book of one's own self, rather than the treatise of some grammarian. Wherefore He hath said, "Read thy Book: There needeth none but thyself to make out an account against thee this day."†</p>
<p>The story is told of a mystic knower, who went on a journey with a learned grammarian as his companion. They came to the shore of the Sea of Grandeur. The knower straightway flung himself into the waves, but the grammarian stood lost in his reasonings, which were as words that are written on water. The knower called out to him, "Why dost thou not follow?" The grammarian answered, "O Brother, I dare not advance. I must needs go back again." Then the knower cried, "Forget what thou didst read in the books of Síbávayh and Qawlavayh, of Ibn-i-Hajíb and Ibn-i-Málik, ‡ and cross the water."</p>	<p>The story is told of a mystic knower who went on a journey with a learned grammarian for a companion. They came to the shore of the Sea of Grandeur. The knower, putting his trust in God, straightway flung himself into the waves, but the grammarian stood bewildered and lost in thoughts that were as words traced upon the water. The mystic called out to him, "Why dost thou not follow?" The grammarian answered, "O brother, what can I do? As I dare not advance, I must needs go back again." Then the mystic cried, "Cast aside what thou hast learned from Síbavayh and Qawlavayh, from Ibn-i-Hájib and Ibn-i-Málik, and cross the water!"§</p>
<p>The death of self is needed here, not rhetoric: Be nothing, then, and walk upon the waves.**</p>	<p>With renunciation, not with grammar's rules, one must be armed: Be nothing, then, and cross this sea unharmed.††</p>
<p>Likewise is it written, "And be ye not like those who forget God, and whom He hath therefore caused to forget their own selves. These are the wicked doers."‡‡</p>	<p>Likewise He saith, "And be ye not like those who forget God, and whom He hath therefore caused to forget their own selves. Such men are the evil doers."§§</p>

* Qur'án 17:15.

† Qur'án 17:14.

‡ Famed writers on grammar and rhetoric.

§ Famed writers on grammar and rhetoric.

** The Mathnaví.

†† Rúmí.

‡‡ Qur'án 59:19.

§§ Qur'án 59:19.

Original Trans. (Ali Kuli Khan & Marzieh Gail, 1945)	Revised Trans. (Bahá'í World Centre, 2019)
<p style="text-align: center;">The Second Valley</p> <p>If the wayfarer's goal be the dwelling of the Praiseworthy One (Maḥmúd),* this is the station of primal reason which is known as the Prophet and the Most Great Pillar.† Here reason signifieth the divine, universal mind, whose sovereignty enlighteneth all created things—nor doth it refer to every feeble brain; for it is as the wise Saná'í hath written:</p>	<p>If the wayfarers be among them that dwell in THE COURT OF THE ALL-PRAISED, this is the station of the Intellect, which is known as the messenger of the realm of the body and the most great pillar. That which is intended, however, is the universal divine Intellect, whose sovereignty fostereth the growth of all things, and not every vain and feeble mind. Thus hath the wise Saná'í written:</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">How can feeble reason encompass the Qur'án, Or the spider snare a phoenix in his web? Wouldst thou that the mind should not entrap thee? Teach it the science of the love of God!</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">How can meagre reason comprehend the Book, Or the spider trap a phoenix in its web? Wouldst thou that the mind not hold thee in its snare? Seize it and enrol it in the school of God instead!</p>
<p>On this plane, the traveler meeteth with many a trial and reverse. Now is he lifted up to heaven, now is he cast into the depths. As it hath been said: “Now Thou drawest me to the summit of glory, again Thou castest me into the lowest abyss.” The mystery treasured in this plane is divulged in the following holy verse from the Súrih of THE CAVE:‡ “And thou mightest have seen the sun when it arose, pass on the right of their cave, and when it set, leave them on the left, while they were in its spacious chamber. This is one of the signs of God. Guided indeed is he whom God guideth; but for him whom He misleadeth, thou shalt by no means find a patron.”</p>	<p>On this plane, the traveller meeteth with many a trial and reverse. Now is he lifted up to heaven, now is he cast into the depths. As it hath been said: “Now Thou drawest me to the throne of the realms above, again Thou scorcest me in the fire of hell.” The hidden mystery of this station is divulged in the following blessed verse from the Súrih of the Cave: “And thou mightest have seen the sun when it arose, pass on the right of their cave, and, when it set, leave them on the left, while they were in its spacious chamber. This is one of the signs of God. Guided indeed is he whom God guideth; but for him whom He misleadeth, thou shalt by no means find a guardian and guide.”§</p>
<p>If a man could know what lieth hid in this one verse, it would suffice him. Wherefore, in praise of such as these, He hath said: “Men whom neither merchandise nor traffic beguile from the remembrance of God....”**</p>	<p>If a soul could grasp the allusions that lie hid in this single verse, it would suffice him. Such indeed are those whom He hath extolled as “men whom neither merchandise nor traffic beguile from the remembrance of God”.††</p>

* An attribute of God and one of the titles of Muḥammad.

† Maqám-i-Maḥmúd—Praiseworthy Station—is the rank of Prophets endowed with constancy.

‡ Qur'án 18:16. This is a reference to the station of complete faith. The companions of the Cave are identified with early Christian martyrs.

§ Qur'án 18:17.

** Qur'án 24:37.

†† Qur'án 24:37.

Original Trans. (Ali Kuli Khan & Marzieh Gail, 1945)	Revised Trans. (Bahá'í World Centre, 2019)
This station conferreth the true standard of knowledge, and freeth man from tests. In this realm, to search after knowledge is irrelevant, for He hath said concerning the guidance of travelers on this plane, "Fear God, and God will instruct thee." [*] And again: "Knowledge is a light which God casteth into the heart of whomsoever He willeth." [†]	This station is that of the true standard of knowledge and the final end of tests and trials. Nor is it needed, in this realm, to seek after knowledge, for He hath said concerning the guidance of wayfarers on this plane, "Fear ye God; God will teach you", [‡] and again, "Knowledge is a light which God casteth into the heart of whomsoever He willeth." [§]
Wherefore, a man should make ready his heart that it be worthy of the descent of heavenly grace, and that the bounteous Cup-Bearer may give him to drink of the wine of bestowal from the merciful vessel. "For the like of this let the travailers travail!" ^{**} And now do I say, "Verily we are from God, and to Him shall we return." ^{††}	Wherefore, one must make ready the receptacle and become worthy of the descent of heavenly bestowals, that the all-sufficing Cup-Bearer may give one to drink of the wine of bounty from the crystal chalice of mercy. "For this let the striving strive!" ^{††} And now do I say, "Verily, we are God's, and to Him shall we return." ^{§§}
The Third Valley If the loving seekers wish to live within the precincts of the Attracting One (Majdhúb), ^{***} no soul may dwell on this Kingly Throne save the beauty of love. This realm is not to be pictured in words.	If the lovers be among them that abide within the precincts of THE ABODE OF THE LODESTONE OF HEARTS, no soul may dwell on this kingly throne save the countenance of love. I am powerless to describe this station or to depict it in words.
Love shunneth this world and that world too, In him are lunacies seventy-and-two. The minstrel of love harpeth this lay: Servitude enslaveth, kingship doth betray. ^{†††}	Love shunneth this world and that world too; In him are lunacies seventy-and-two. The minstrel of love harpeth this lay: Servitude enslaveth, lordship doth betray. ^{†††}
This plane requireth pure affection and the bright stream of fellowship. In telling of these companions of the Cave He saith: "They speak not till He hath spoken; and they do His bidding." ^{§§§}	This plane demandeth pure love and unalloyed affection. In describing these companions He saith: "They speak not till He hath spoken, and act according to His commandment." ^{****}

* Qur'án 2:282.

† Hadíth.

‡ Qur'án 2:282.

§ From a Hadíth.

** Qur'án 37:59.

†† Qur'án 2:151.

†† Qur'án 83:26.

§§ Qur'án 2:156.

*** That attribute of God which draws all creatures to Him.

††† The Mathnaví.

††† Rúmí.

§§§ Qur'án 21:27.

**** Qur'án 21:27.

Original Trans. (Ali Kuli Khan & Marzieh Gail, 1945)	Revised Trans. (Bahá'í World Centre, 2019)
<p>On this plane, neither the reign of reason is sufficient nor the authority of self. Hence, one of the Prophets of God hath asked: "O my Lord, how shall we reach unto Thee?" And the answer came, "Leave thyself behind, and then approach Me."</p>	<p>In this station, neither the reign of the intellect is sufficient nor the rule of self. Thus one of the Prophets of God asked, "O my Lord, how shall I reach Thee?" And the answer came: "Leave thyself behind, and then approach Me."</p>
<p>These are a people who deem the lowest place to be one with the throne of glory, and to them beauty's bower differeth not from the field of a battle fought in the cause of the Beloved.</p>	<p>In the estimation of such souls, to be seated amidst the sandals by the door is the same as to abide at the place of honour, and in the path of the Beloved the retreats of earthly beauty differ not from the field of a battle waged.</p>
<p>The denizens of this plane speak no words—but they gallop their chargers. They see but the inner reality of the Beloved. To them all words of sense are meaningless, and senseless words are full of meaning. They cannot tell one limb from another, one part from another. To them the mirage is the real river; to them going away is returning. Wherefore hath it been said:</p>	<p>The dwellers of this abode know not the destination, yet they spur on their chargers. They see naught in the Beloved but His very Self. They find all words of sense to be meaningless, and senseless words to be full of meaning. They cannot distinguish head from foot or one limb from another. To them the mirage is water itself and departure is the mystery of return. Wherefore hath it been said:</p>
<p>The story of Thy beauty reached the hermit's dell; Crazed, he sought the Tavern where the wine they buy and sell. The love of Thee hath leveled down the fort of patience, The pain of Thee hath firmly barred the gate of hope as well.*</p>	<p>The story of Thy beauty reached the hermit's dell; Crazed, he sought the Tavern where the wine they buy and sell. The love of Thee hath levelled down the fort of patience; The pain of Thee hath firmly barred the gate of hope as well.†</p>
<p>In this realm, instruction is assuredly of no avail.</p>	<p>In this station, both instruction and apprenticeship are assuredly of no avail:</p>

* Sa'dí.

† Sa'dí.

Original Trans. (Ali Kuli Khan & Marzieh Gail, 1945)	Revised Trans. (Bahá'í World Centre, 2019)
<p>The lover's teacher is the Loved One's beauty, His face their lesson and their only book. Learning of wonderment, of longing love their duty, Not on learned chapters and dull themes they look. The chain that binds them is His musky hair, The Cyclic Scheme,* to them, is but to Him a stair.†</p>	<p>The lovers' teacher is the Loved One's beauty, His face their lesson and their only book. Learning of wonderment, of longing love their duty; Not on learned chapters and dull themes they look. The chains that bind them are His musky hair; The Cyclic Scheme, to them, is but to Him a stair.‡</p>
<p>Here followeth a supplication to God, the Exalted, the Glorified:</p>	<p>Here followeth a supplication to God—blessed and glorified be He:</p>
<p>O Lord! O Thou Whose bounty granteth wishes! I stand before Thee, all save Thee forgetting. Grant that the mote of knowledge in my spirit Escape desire and the lowly clay; Grant that Thine ancient gift, this drop of wisdom, Merge with Thy mighty sea.§</p>	<p>O Lord, O Thou Whose grace fulfilleth every need! To mention aught before Thee would be sin indeed. Allow this mote of knowledge hidden in my soul To free itself of lowly clay and reach its goal. And grant this drop of wisdom that Thou gavest me To be at last united with Thy mighty sea.**</p>
<p>Thus do I say: There is no power or might save in God, the Protector, the Self-Subsistent.††</p>	<p>Thus do I say: There is no power nor strength except in God, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting.</p>

* The Cyclic Theory of Abú-'Alí Síná (Avicenna—980–1037) as expressed by him in the quatrain:

Every semblance, every shape that perisheth today
In the treasure-house of Time is safely stored away.
When the world revolveth to its former place,
Out of the Invisible He draweth forth its face.

See also Some Answered Questions, [p. 284](#).

† The Mathnaví.

‡ Rúmí. A reference to the Cyclic Theory of Avicenna (Abu-'Alí Síná [980–1037]).

§ Ibid.

** Rúmí

†† From Qur'án 18:37.

Original Trans. (Ali Kuli Khan & Marzieh Gail, 1945)	Revised Trans. (Bahá'í World Centre, 2019)
<p style="text-align: center;">The Fourth Valley</p> <p>If the mystic knowers be of those who have reached to the beauty of the Beloved One (Mahbúb), this station is the apex of consciousness and the secret of divine guidance. This is the center of the mystery: "He doth what He willeth, ordaineth what He pleaseth."[*] Were all the denizens of earth and heaven to unravel this shining allusion, this darksome riddle, until the Day when the Trumpet soundeth, yet would they fail to comprehend even a letter thereof, for this is the station of God's immutable decree, His foreordained mystery. Hence, when searchers inquired of this, He made reply, "This is a bottomless sea which none shall ever fathom."[†] And they asked again, and He answered, "It is the blackest of nights through which none can find his way."</p>	<p>If the mystic knowers be among them that have attained THE BEAUTY OF THE BELOVED, this station is the throne of the inmost heart and the secret of divine guidance. This is the seat of the mystery "He doeth what He willeth, and ordaineth what He pleaseth." Should all that are in heaven and on earth attempt to unravel this exalted allusion and subtle mystery, from now until the Day whereon the Trumpet shall sound, yet would they fail to comprehend even a letter thereof, for this is the station of God's immutable decree and His foreordained mystery. Hence, when asked regarding this matter, He made reply: "It is a bottomless sea that none shall ever fathom." And when the question was repeated, He answered: "It is the blackest of nights through which none can find his way."[‡]</p>
<p>Whoso knoweth this secret will assuredly hide it, and were he to reveal but its faintest trace they would nail him to the cross. Yet, by the Living God, were there any true seeker, I would divulge it to him; for they have said: "Love is a light that never dwelleth in a heart possessed by fear."</p>	<p>Whoso comprehendeth this station will assuredly conceal it, and were he to reveal but the faintest trace thereof, they would assuredly hang him from the gallows. And yet, by God, were a true seeker to be found, I would divulge it to him; for He saith: "Love is a distinction never conferred upon a heart possessed by fear and dread."[§]</p>
<p>Verily, the wayfarer who journeyeth unto God, unto the Crimson Pillar in the snow-white path, will never reach unto his heavenly goal unless he abandoneth all that men possess: "And if he feareth not God, God will make him to fear all things; whereas all things fear him who feareth God."^{**}</p>	<p>In truth, the wayfarer who journeyeth unto God, who treadeth the snow-white Path and turneth towards the Crimson Pillar, will never reach his heavenly home unless his hands are empty of such worldly things as are cherished by men. "And he that feareth not God, God shall make him to fear all things; whereas all things fear him who feareth God."</p>
<p>Speak in the Persian tongue, though the Arab please thee more; A lover hath many a tongue at his command.^{††}</p>	<p>Speak the Persian tongue, though the Arabian pleaseth more: Love indeed doth have a hundred other tongues in store.^{‡‡}</p>

* Qur'án 2:254; 5:1, etc

† Statement attributed to 'Alí.

‡ From a Ḥadīth.

§ From a Ḥadīth.

** This quotation is in Arabic.

†† The Mathnaví.

‡‡ Rúmí.

Original Trans. (Ali Kuli Khan & Marzieh Gail, 1945)	Revised Trans. (Bahá'í World Centre, 2019)
How sweet is this couplet which revealeth such a truth:	How sweet in this connection is the following couplet:
<p style="text-align: center;">See, our hearts come open like shells, when He raineth grace like pearls, And our lives are ready targets, when agony's arrows He hurls.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Our hearts will be as open shells Should He the pearls of grace bestow; Our lives will ready targets be Were He to hurl the darts of woe.</p>
<p>And were it not contrary to the Law of the Book, I would verily bequeath a part of My possessions to the one who would put Me to death, and I would name him My heir; yea, I would bestow upon him a portion, would render him thanks, would seek to refresh Mine eyes with the touch of his hand. But what can I do? I have no possessions, no power, and this is what God hath ordained.*</p>	<p>And were it not contrary to the commandment of the Book, I would surely have bestowed a part of My possessions upon My would-be murderer, and given him to inherit Mine earthly goods, and rendered him a myriad thanks, and solaced Mine own eyes with the touch of his hand. But what can I do? Neither have I any wealth, nor hath the Lord of destiny so decreed.</p>
<p>Methinks at this moment, I catch the fragrance of His garment blowing from the Egypt of Bahá';[†] verily He seemeth near at hand, though men may think Him far away.[‡]</p>	<p>Methinks at this moment I perceive the musk-scented fragrance of the garment of Há' from the Joseph of Bahá'; verily He seemeth near at hand, though ye may think Him far away. 124</p>
<p>My soul doth smell the perfume shed by the Beloved One; My sense is filled with the fragrance of My dear Companion.</p>	<p>My soul doth sense the fragrant breath Of a well-beloved soul: The fragrance of that kindly friend Who's my heart's desire and goal.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">The duty of long years of love obey And tell the tale of happy days gone by, That land and sky may laugh aloud today, And it may gladden mind and heart and eye.[§]</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">The duty of long years of love obey, And tell the tale of blissful days gone by, That land and sky may laugh aloud today, And it may gladden mind and heart and eye.^{**}</p>
<p>This is the realm of full awareness, of utter self-effacement. Even love is no pathway to this region, and longing hath no dwelling here; wherefore is it said, "Love is a veil betwixt the lover and the beloved." Here love becometh an obstruction and a barrier, and all else save Him is but a curtain. The wise Saná'í hath written:</p>	<p>This is the realm of pure awareness and utter self-effacement. Not even love can find a way to this plane, nor doth affection have a place therein. Wherefore is it said: "Love is a veil betwixt the lover and the beloved." Here love becometh but an obstructing veil, and aught save the Friend but a curtain. Thus the wise Saná'í hath written:</p>

* This was revealed before the Declaration of Bahá'u'lláh. The lines following refer to the imminence of His Manifestation.

† This reference is to the story of Joseph in the Qur'án and the Bible.

‡ This refers to those who did not expect the imminent advent of Him Whom God Shall Manifest.

§ The Mathnaví.

** Rúmí.

Original Trans. (Ali Kuli Khan & Marzieh Gail, 1945)	Revised Trans. (Bahá'í World Centre, 2019)
<p>Never the covetous heart shall come to the stealer of hearts, Never the shrouded soul unite with beauty's rose.</p>	<p>None may approach that well-belov'd Who harboreth his own desire; None may embrace that beauteous form Who's burdened with his own attire.</p>
<p>For this is the realm of Absolute Command and is free of all the attributes of earth.</p>	<p>For this is the realm of God and is sanctified above every allusion of His creatures.</p>
<p>The exalted dwellers in this mansion do wield divine authority in the court of rapture, with utter gladness, and they do bear a kingly sceptre. On the high seats of justice, they issue their commands, and they send down gifts according to each man's deserving. Those who drink of this cup abide in the high bowers of splendor above the Throne of the Ancient of Days, and they sit in the Empyrean of Might within the Lofty Pavilion: "Naught shall they know of sun or piercing cold."*</p>	<p>Abiding in the court of rapture, the dwellers of this mansion wield with utmost joy and gladness the sceptres of divinity and lordship; and, established upon the lofty seats of justice, they exert their rule and bestow upon every soul its due. Those who drink of this cup abide beneath the canopy of glory, above the throne of the Ancient of Days, and dwell upon the seat of grandeur beneath the tabernacle of majesty. These are they that "know neither sun nor piercing cold".†</p>
<p>Herein the high heavens are in no conflict with the lowly earth, nor do they seek to excel it, for this is the land of mercy, not the realm of distinction. Albeit at every moment these souls appear in a new office, yet their condition is ever the same. Wherefore of this realm it is written, "No work withholdeth Him from another."‡ And of another state it is said: "Every day doth some new work employ Him."§</p>	<p>On this plane the highest heavens are neither opposed to, nor distinguished from, the lowly earth, for this is the realm of divine favours, not the arena of worldly contraries. Albeit at every moment a new condition be displayed, yet that condition is ever the same. Wherefore He saith in one instance, "Nothing whatsoever keepeth Him from being occupied with any other thing."** And in another He saith, "Verily, His ways differ every day."††</p>

* Qur'án 76:13.

† Qur'án 76:13.

‡ This quotation is from one of the commentators on Qur'án 55:29. Cf. the dictionary Lisánu'l-'Arab.

§ Qur'án 55:29.

** A famous adage cited in many Islamic sources.

†† Qur'án 55:29.

Original Trans. (Ali Kuli Khan & Marzieh Gail, 1945)	Revised Trans. (Bahá'í World Centre, 2019)
<p>This is the food whose savor changeth not, whose color altereth not. If thou eatest thereof, thou shalt verily chant this verse: "I turn my face to Him Who hath created the Heavens and the earth ... I am not one of those who add gods to God."* "And thus did we show Abraham the Kingdom of the Heavens and of the Earth, that He might be established in knowledge."† Wherefore, put thy hand into thy bosom, then stretch it forth with power, and behold, thou shalt find it a light unto all the world."‡</p>	<p>This is the food whose savour changeth not and whose colour altereth not. Wert thou to partake thereof, thou wouldst assuredly recite the verse "I have turned my face to Him Who hath created the heavens and the earth, following the right religion and submissive before God. I am not one of those who add gods to God."§ "And thus did We show Abraham the kingdom of the heavens and of the earth, that he might be established in knowledge."** Wherefore, put thy hand into thy bosom, then stretch it forth with power, and behold, thou shalt find it a light unto all the world.</p>
<p>How crystal this cool water that the Cup-Bearer bringeth! How bright this pure wine in the hands of the Beloved! How delicate this draught from the Heavenly Cup! May it do them good, whoso drink thereof, and taste of its sweetness and attain to its knowledge.</p>	<p>How clear this crystal water that the enraptured Cup-Bearer passeth round! How exquisite this pure wine that the intoxicated Beauty doth proffer! How pleasing this draught of joy that floweth from the Heavenly Cup! Well is it with him who drinketh thereof, and tasteth of its sweetness, and attaineth unto its knowledge.</p>
<p>It is not fitting that I tell thee more, For the stream's bed cannot hold the sea.††</p>	<p>No more than this will I impart to thee: The riverbed can never hold the sea.‡‡</p>
<p>For the mystery of this utterance is hid within the storehouse of the Great Infallibility^{§§} and laid up in the treasuries of power. It is sanctified above the jewels of explanation; it is beyond what the most subtle of tongues can tell.</p>	<p>For its mystery lieth hid in the storehouses of His inviolable protection and is laid up in the treasuries of His power. It is exalted above the highest essence of utterance and sanctified beyond the subtlest mode of explanation.</p>

* Qur'án 6:79.

† Qur'án 6:75.

‡ Cf. Qur'án 7:105 etc., and Hadíth.

§ Cf. Qur'án 6:79.

** Qur'án 6:75.

†† The Mathnaví.

‡‡ Rúmí.

§§ Ismat-i-Kubrâ, the invariable attribute of the Divine Manifestation.

Original Trans. (Ali Kuli Khan & Marzieh Gail, 1945)	Revised Trans. (Bahá'í World Centre, 2019)
Astonishment here is highly prized, and utter poverty essential. Wherefore hath it been said, "Poverty is My pride."* And again: "God hath a people beneath the dome of glory, whom He hideth in the clothing of radiant poverty."† These are they who see with His eyes, hear with His ears, as it is written in the well-known tradition.	Astonishment here is highly prized, and utter poverty greatly cherished. Wherefore hath He said, "Poverty is My pride."‡ And again: "God hath a people beneath the canopy of grandeur, whom He hath concealed in the garment of poverty to exalt in rank."§ These are they who see with His eyes and hear with His ears, as hath been recorded in the well-known tradition.**
Concerning this realm, there is many a tradition and many a verse, of broad or special relevancy, but two of these will suffice to serve as a light for men of mind and heart.	Concerning this realm there is many a tradition and many a verse, whether of general or specific import, but two of these will suffice, that they may serve as a light for knowing hearts and bring delight to longing souls.
The first is His statement: "O My Servant! Obey Me and I shall make thee like unto Myself. I say 'Be,' and it is, and thou shalt say 'Be,' and it shall be." And the second: "O Son of Adam! Seek fellowship with none until thou hast found Me, and whenever thou shalt long for Me, thou shalt find Me close to thee."	The first is His statement "O My servant! Obey Me, that I may make thee like unto Myself. For I say 'Be', and it is, and thou shalt say 'Be', and it shall be." And the second: "O son of Adam! Seek fellowship with none until thou hast found Me, and whensoever thou shalt long for Me, thou shalt find Me nigh unto thee."
Whatever high proofs and wondrous allusions are recounted herein, concern but a single Letter, a single Point. "Such hath been the way of God ... and no change canst thou find in the way of God."††	Whatever high proofs and wondrous allusions are recounted herein concern but a single letter and a single point. For such is God's method, and no change canst thou find in His mode of dealing.††
I began this epistle some time ago, in thy remembrance, and since thy letter had not reached me then, I began with some words of reproach. Now, thy new missive hath dispelled that feeling and causeth Me to write thee. To speak of My love for thine Eminence is needless. "God is a sufficient witness!"§§	I undertook to write this epistle some time ago in thy remembrance, and, since thy letter had not reached Me yet, I began with a few words of grievance and reproach. Now, thy new missive hath dispelled that feeling and hath caused Me to send thee this letter. To speak of My love for thine eminence is needless. "Sufficient witness is God unto us."***

* Muḥammad.

† Hadīth.

‡ From a Ḥadīth.

§ From a Ḥadīth.

** See the Seven Valleys, ¶ 44.

†† Qur'án 33:62; 48:23.

‡‡ Cf. Qur'án 35:43, 48:23.

§§ Qur'án 4:164.

*** Qur'án 4:166.

Original Trans. (Ali Kuli Khan & Marzieh Gail, 1945)	Revised Trans. (Bahá'í World Centre, 2019)
For his Eminence Shaykh Muḥammad—May God the Exalted bless him!—I shall confine Myself to the two following verses which I request be delivered to him:	As for his eminence Shaykh Muḥammad—may God, the Exalted, bless him!—I shall confine Myself to the two following lines, which I request be delivered to him:
I seek thy nearness, dearer than sweet Heaven; I see thy visage, fairer than Paradise bowers.*	I seek thy nearness, more desired than heaven in mine eyes; I see thy visage, fairer than the bowers of Paradise.
When I entrusted this message of love to My pen, it refused the burden, and it swooned away. Then coming to itself, it spoke and said, “Glory be to Thee! To Thee do I turn in penitence, and I am the first of them that believe.”† Praise be to God, the Lord of the worlds!	When I entrusted this message of love to My pen, it refused the burden and swooned away. Then, coming to itself, it spoke and said, “Glory be to Thee! To Thee do I turn in penitence, and I am the first of them that implore Thy pardon.”‡ All praise be to God, the Lord of the worlds!
Let us tell, some other day This parting hurt and woe; Let us write, some other way, Love’s secrets—better so. Leave blood and noise and all of these, And say no more of Shams-i-Tabríz.§	Let us tell, some other day This parting hurt and woe; Let us write, some other way, Love’s secrets—better so. Leave blood and noise and all of these, And say no more of Shams-i-Tabríz.**
Peace be upon thee, and upon those who circle around thee and attain thy meeting.	Peace be upon thee, and upon them who circle round thee and attain thy presence.
What I had written ere this hath been eaten by the flies, so sweet was the ink. As Sa’dí saith:	That which I had written ere this hath been eaten by the flies, so rich was the ink to their taste, even as Sa’dí hath said:
“I shall forbear from writing any longer, for my sweet words have drawn the flies about me.”	I write no more, beleaguered by the flies That my sweet words have drawn about the page.
And now the hand can write no more, and pleadeth that this is enough. Wherefore do I say, “Far be the glory of thy Lord, the Lord of all greatness, from what they affirm of Him.”††	And now the hand can write no more, and pleadeth that this is enough. Wherefore do I say: Far from the glory of my Lord, the All-Glorious, be that which His creatures affirm of Him!

- End of *The Four Valleys* -

* Sa’dí.

† Qur’án 7:140.

‡ Cf. Qur’án 7:143.

§ Shams-i-Tabríz, the Súfí who exerted a powerful influence on Jalálu’d-Dín Rúmí, diverting his attention from science to Mysticism. A great part of Rúmí’s works are dedicated to him. These lines are from the Mathnaví.

** Rúmí. Shams-i-Tabríz was the Súfí who exerted a powerful influence on Rúmí, diverting his attention from science to mysticism. A great part of Rúmí’s works are dedicated to him.

†† Qur’án 37:180.