

## THE SEVEN VALLEYS

Notes from Deepening Class led by Hand of the Cause, A. Q. Paizi  
(August 1, 1966 - Haifa, Israel)

### INTRODUCTION

The Seven Valleys is not one of the major, basic texts of Baha'u'llah, such as Hidden Words, the Kitab-i-Iqan, etc. In beginning a study of The Seven Valleys, the reader should know that this particular "Tablet" revealed by Baha'u'llah is a letter to an individual who was familiar with the terms of the reference in which the letter was written. For our understanding, it will be necessary to learn something of the references appearing in the Text which are not familiar to the western reader.

For example, if you say to a westerner, "It was a herculean task", the hearer will recognize the name "Hercules"; know something of his reputation; and will immediately visualize extraordinary, towering strength. The statement will therefore have a special meaning to the western hearer. If this same statement is made to an oriental, it probably would have no meaning whatever! Most likely, he has never heard of Hercules.

The Seven Valleys contains many references which have a special meaning to the oriental reader, but mean no more to the western reader at first glance than a reference to Hercules might convey to the oriental who knows nothing of this hero.

There is mysticism throughout all of the Holy Books. This Book, too, is mystically inclined and makes us think in mystical terms. The history of religion shows us that stories and statements in the Holy Books become cut and dried by the people. Mysticism releases man from these rigid fetters and boundaries.

For example, in the Qur'an it is said that nothing can come to you except that which is written for you. From this text has sprung the cut and dried philosophy of "Why try?". This school of philosophy fails to note that the Qur'an also states that man is born to try and to strive.

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All oriental books begin with a sermon or with praise of God. So Baha'u'llah opens the Seven Valleys with a sermon beginning with "Praise be to God Who ..." and ending at the end of the fourth paragraph, "... Then feed on every kind of fruit!".

We are being prepared in this short sermon to know the Manifestation of God. He says that God taught man from the Bayan that which he knew not; made him a Luminous Book unto those who believed and surrendered themselves.

Regarding the Luminous Book, man (one individual) may be likened to a single letter of the alphabet. (Example: Letters of the Living). A letter standing alone has no meaning. By combining many letters we gain a word. The Manifestation is referred to as "The Word", thus establishing the Station of the Manifestation...and preparing us for acceptance of the Luminous Book.



Baha'u'llah speaks further in the first paragraph about the dark ("black and ruinous") age in which we live and tells us WHY he has caused the Manifestation to speak forth: "...that every man may testify, in himself, by himself..."

*+ "you challenge it"*  
Faith is to accept. Certitude involves some suffering. *foundation ~ life -*  
*Christ of our life ~ his sacrifice ~ tree tree to fruit etc.*

Imagine that a room filled with people is closed from any outside view. All of the people are suffering from thirst. There is no water inside the room. Someone pushes back a drape at the window and says that there is a garden outside with a fountain filled with pure, crystal-clear, cold water. You can drink all you wish.

Everyone in the room looks. They all know that it is there, so they have faith. Faith is accepting.

Suppose there is a hindrance between you and the fountain...some obstacle such as a wall or a locked door. If you break through the obstacle and drink, that is certitude. Faith knows the water is there. Certitude quenches the thirst.

The first paragraph concludes with the statement that "...none shall contemplate anything whatsoever but that he shall see God therein".

If you recall, poor Manjun could see nothing that was not obscured by the vision of his love, Layli. On one occasion, the story is told, a man came to Manjun and spoke for two hours relating the details of a business problem. When the man had finished his very lengthy explanation he asked Manjun, "Was I right or was he?". Manjun said, "Layli was right". We should be as Manjun. Whatever we do .. whatever we undertake we should see God therein.

*Christ said "Let yr eye be single"*

SECOND PARAGRAPH +

Baha'u'llah continues describing the Manifestation: "...the first sea...the first morn...the first sun...the first fire..."

He continues, "He who was Ahmad...and Muhammad...and Mahmud...". These are all names of the Prophet Muhammad.

The paragraph ends, "And upon His household and companions be abundant and abiding and eternal peace!" In other words, Greetings to the family!

THIRD PARAGRAPH

Here we read, "methinks I verily inhaled the pure fragrances of the garment of thy love..."

This is a reference to the story of Joseph. If you recall, Jacob, Joseph's father, was blind, but when Joseph's cloak was brought to him he knew it belonged to Joseph though he could not see. The fragrance of love emanating from the garment told him that his beloved son had been found.

*ya ya = John (mirza ya ya)*  
*translation of B Baha's Persian to Eng*  
*+ back to Persian*



## FOURTH PARAGRAPH

He (Baha'u'llah) says, "Fear God and God will give you knowledge". The word "Fear" as it is used here is a translation of the Arabic word "Vikoyam". (phonetic spelling) which means to protect one's self against his own ego. So He tells the reader to protect himself against his own ego and God will teach him everything.

If you DO THIS, He tells us, then the bird of your soul will soar. *"Pure in heart shall see God"*

This ends the brief sermon.

## ASSIGNMENT

The further study of The Seven Valleys begins with our re-reading the book with this in mind: There are two categories:

1. The valleys of limitations. i.e., valleys in which growth or distance of ~~spirit~~ spiritual travel can be measured (or limited).

- 2/ The valleys which have no measurements or limitations.

To begin the search there must be discomfort. If a man is not thirsty he will not seek water. The pain which precedes search is a praise-worthy thing. First we must feel pain, then we go to the physician. First we feel the inward longing, then we search for God.

The story is told of a man who wished to sell a servant. To make the sale more attractive to prospective bidders he said something to attract by pretending to detract. He said, "He is a good servant, but he has a tendency to prophecy." *negative sell!*

The servant was purchased and his new master told the servant to bring him water. "You are not thirsty yet", was the prophecy. Finally, after repeating ~~this~~ this performance, the master arose to advance toward the servant in anger. "Now!" exclaimed the prophet, "you are thirsty."

We all begin our trip through the valleys..and after man traverses the first valley he will fall in love..then he will KNOW. Demanding, Knowledge..all with limitations..before man begins to traverse the unlimited words of God.

REMEMBER: Read with the eye to which are the valleys of "limitations" and which can be termed valleys which have no limitations.



THE SEVEN VALLEYS - Notes from Deepening Class conducted by Hand of the Cause, A. Q. Faizi.

LESSON II

It will be recalled that some time has elapsed between Lesson I and Lesson II, so much of Lesson II is a review of Lesson I.

Note: Before beginning, assign someone the task of looking up the story of Joseph's Coat in the Bible and have them bring the reference with them to class so that memories may be refreshed.

The Title Page reads, "THE SEVEN VALLEYS", then beneath that title is "In the Name of God, the Clement, the Merciful". The word "clement" should be changed to read "compassionate". Mr. Faizi indicates that this translation was checked with the Guardian, otherwise he would not presume to change the word. (It is my understanding that some later editions of the book have this change incorporated in them)

Then we begin: "Praise be to God who hath made being to come forth from nothingness..."

This nothingness refers to the mind of man. In other words, God told man of that which he did not know. Revelation was not known... then the Manifestation spoke, and it was known. It had "come forth from nothingness".

Continuing the first sentence: "...graven upon the tablet of man..."

The Tablet of man refers to the mind of man again.

Then, still in the first sentence: "caused him to witness the creation..."

This is a paraphrase of a quotation from the Qur'an. In the Qur'an it says "God created Adam, called all angels to prostrate themselves." It then says that all did except the highest one (reference to Covenant-breakers).

These partial quotes or references to familiar verses in the Qur'an are similar to our references in every-day usage to Biblical verses which are familiar to us. For example: I may say to you that he has had an extremely difficult time. He has been going "through the valley of the shadow". This reference to the valley of the shadow brings to mind the entire passage and contains a background of reference to which we are all familiar. The sentence would have special meaning to the Biblical scholar... just as these have special meaning to one familiar with the Qur'an.

Then the end of the first sentence: "...to the end that every man may thankly testify, in himself, by himself, in the station of the Manifestation of his Lord..."

This refers to the station of understanding the Manifestation...



Paragraph 2

Here are the references which we mentioned in Lesson I, to Muhammad (Ahmad, Muhammad and Mahmud).

The root word in Arabic here is "Hamd" meaning "Praise".

- "Ahmad" means "More praised" (in the Kingdom)
- "Muhammad", "The praised One" (in this world)
- "Mahmud", "The most praised" (among the near ones)

Paragraph 3

Note that Paragraph 3 begins with the word, "Further..."

As was pointed out in Lesson I, all literature begins with praise of God. At some point the praise must end and the message begin. Therefore we find sentences beginning with "Further", "And further", etc. This indicates that the preliminary praise of God is to be understood. Sometimes books or Tablets will begin with these words or with the words, "And after...", also leaving the praise of God up to the reader to take for granted...or to understand that it is not to be omitted.

This paragraph also refers to the Fragrances of the garment... Here, it would be wise to review the story of Joseph.

Paragraph 4

"...fear God and God will give you knowledge"

As we mentioned in Lesson I, the Arabic word used here, refers to protection of one's self against one's own ego. There evidently are many Arabic words with subtle shades of meaning which are sometimes translated as "fear" in the English language.

In this same paragraph: "...the bird of thy soul shall recall the holy sanctuaries..."

The Arabic word which appears in this sentence (in lieu of holy sanctuaries) is "Hazirah".

- "Hazirah" means places where sheep and cattle are protected.. in other words, a "Fold".
- "El-Quds" means "Paradise".
- "Hazirat'1-Quds" then means the Sacred Fold, or the Fold of Paradise.

This word, Hazirat'1-Quds, was first applied to the Shrine of the Bab by the Master. That is why the Guardian evidently endowed Baha'i Centers everywhere with that same glorious title.

The last paragraph just preceding the VALLEY OF SEARCH:

The stages that mark the wayfarer's journey .. some have called these seven valleys. Where "valley" appears, the Arabic word is "Wadi". (From personal observation, I have noted that a Wadi has very steep sides!)

Everyone read reference from all of the



THE SEVEN VALLEYS - LESSON 111  
(Study Class notes - class conducted by Hand of the Cause, A.Q. Faizi)

Return to the final paragraph preceding the VALLEY OF SEARCH.

Here it says we have seven valleys or "wadis" to traverse..or seven cities. This terminology is according to the expression of those times.

Notice that He says that ..."until the wayfarer taketh leave of self..."

The first requirement mentioned here is to cleanse one's self...the first great hurdle before we begin to traverse the valleys.

There is a "self" which is the lowest stage of mankind. This is the self which commands man to commit evil.

There is another self which springs from the existence of our inner being which begins to scold when the lower self begins suggesting. This "scolding" self starts to work only after we listen to the promptings of the first self. Otherwise, the "scolding" self remains dormant. This is the test for mankind..which self to obey?

When the second self operates we become pleased with ourselves; God is pleased with us; then we can enter the Kingdom.

If we repeatedly obey the lower self, the "scolding" self becomes dulled and repetition of unworthy action becomes habitual.

The second self or "scolding" self must be taught by the words of God. Neither self will tell us the right thing to do automatically. If the "scolding" self is not educated, it will go hand in hand with the lower self. If children are educated in such a way that they are led only to their first selves, they become the victims of nature, and nature is merciless. Millions might die of malaria, but nature has no mercy. Children must be educated so that they are aware of the second self..and adults must learn this lesson if they have not done so.

Repetition forms habit. That is why we are told to read the Holy Word. That is why we must have obligatory prayer..so that the words become imprinted on our minds and implanted in the second self (whether or not we are aware of the fact that they are being implanted at the time).

No matter how strong the "scolding" self may become, no matter how good our deeds we must always strive. Always there may come a greater test and we must be prepared to meet the tests and grow.

This so-called evil self is created by God. It is a good thing if we use it properly, as a means to growth. Remember, God also created opium which may be used for either good or evil. We all know that to grow strong physically, we need exercise. This same principle applies to spiritual growth.

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We then enter the Valley of Search and the steed of this Valley is PATIENCE.



## The Valley of Search - Paragraph 1

...for those who seek the Ka'bih...

"Ka'bih" means cube or square and refers to the house built by Abraham.

From the Quran: "O ye who have believed, seek assistance through patience and prayer. Surely God is with the patient ones."

Notice that He mentions patience first, then prayer. In the Seven Valleys it is noted that "without patience the traveler will reach nowhere..."

Our relationship with God is child-like. A father assists a child to plant a seed. The child is impatient. The father knows that if a seed is planted and tended, a tree will grow, but the child is continually impatient to see the results.

So..the first requirement is FAITH. Patience and other qualities will be fruit of our faith.

The story of the patience of the Central Figures of the Faith regarding teaching the Faith in India is a good example:

The first teacher (Jamal Effendi) was sent into India in 1872 by Baha'u'llah. He was told to go to all the provinces and speak to the people there. He spent some years, spoke to many people, spoke to all of the Maharajas of the Provinces and returned. Baha'u'llah asked him who had told him to come back! He went again. The second time the travelled to India, Burma, the Philippines and many islands (including Java). When he died, there was not one Baha'i in all of India.

Later, fifty people from Persia immigrated from Yazd in Persia to India. Abdu'l-Baha told them that mass conversion would definitely take place there. He told them that the Indians will rise to serve in such a way that they will become examples to neighboring countries.

Years passed with no apparent results..but these people did their best. They traveled and announced the message at some great personal sacrifice.

The Master sent Hands of the Cause, he sent many Americans including Lua Getsinger..and Mr. Faizi was there many times. He says that there were great conferences, large audiences. After he had finished telling them of the Faith, the multitude applauded, saluted him, hung flowers on him, and went home without a single pamphlet!

In 1953 the Guardian established a Conference there. He said that this was the time for the natives of India to come into the Faith. (Shoghi Effendi did not live to see the fruit of the great victories in India).

In 1962 one village accepted the Faith, now there are more than 200,000 Baha'is there...the results of more than 80 YEARS of CONSTANT TEACHING AND FAITH.

In the end for those who are patient, there must be results.



So we are back to the beginning statement; "taketh leave of self...", which brings to mind the first of the Hidden Words, "...possess a pure...heart...".

In the Star of the West, the story is told of Corrinne True who once visited Haifa during the life of the Master. She looked at the dirty people here and asked herself how in the world we could ever love these people.

Abdu'l-Baha told her when she went away she should look at every individual she came across as a letter from the Beloved...no matter how crooked the paper...no matter how crumpled the paper... imagine that the paper bears a letter from the Beloved. How happy we would then be to have such a dirty, crumpled scrap of paper!

Paragraph 2 in Valley of Search begins, "It is incumbent on these servants that they cleanse the heart..." A reiteration of this theme.

Paragraph 4 of Valley of Search:

*detachment*

(regarding the search for Layli):

The story is told of the ruler who pretended to search for God. A Dervish approached this ruler one day and began searching beneath the throne, behind draperies, under carpets, etc.

When asked what he was searching for, the Dervish replied that he was searching for his capel. Well, naturally, the ruler indicated that this was no place to search for a capel. "Nor", replied the Dervish, "is the throne the place to search for God." The ruler later became steadfast.

NEXT LESSON: We begin with Paragraph 4 of Valley of Search "One must judge of search by the standard of the Manjun of Love..."



Lesson 11

THE SEVEN VALLEYS - Notes from Study Class conducted by  
Hand of the Cause, A. C. Faizi (Haifa, Israeli)

The stages of man's journey towards God are mentioned in many many of the writings of the Baha'i Faith. The reference to these stages is not limited to the Tablets entitled "The Seven Valleys."

For example:

"He is the King, the All-Knowing, the Wise!

"Lo, the Nightingale of Paradise singeth upon the twigs of the Tree of Eternity, with holy and sweet melodies, proclaiming to the sincere ones the glad tidings of the nearness of God, calling the Believers in the Divine Unity to the court of the Presence of the Generous One, informing the severed ones of the message which hath been revealed by God, the King, the Glorious, the Peerless, guiding the lovers to the seat of sanctity and to this resplendent Beauty."

Note ~~hasnt~~ the four categories of people .. or the people who have reached these various stages on the journey.

Another Example: (From the Dawn-Breakers, p. 72)

"When Qaddus arrived in Shiraz and embraced the Faith declared by the Bab, he was only twenty-two years of age. Though young in years, he showed that indomitable courage and faith which none among the disciples of his master could exceed. He exemplified by his life and glorious martyrdom the truth of this tradition: "Whoso seeketh Me, shall find Me. Whoso findeth Me, shall be drawn towards Me. Whoso draweth nigh unto Me, shall love Me. Whoso loveth Me, him shall I also love. He who is beloved of Me, him shall I slay. He who is slain by Me, I Myself shall be his ransom."

Again, we have the seeker, the Believer (Whoso findeth Me), the near ones and the beloved.  
↑ the lovers

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Before we continue with the study of the Seven Valleys it is necessary that we pause a moment and reflect carefully on the requirement which we are told is necessary before beginning the journey...to be rid of SELF! It is very important that we understand this basic requirement.



Read the following verses from the Koran (Penguin Classics translated by N. J. Dawood, p 25)

Read merely to familiarize yourself with the language which was familiar to Baha'u'llah's first followers ..

### THE DAWN

"In the Name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful

"By the Dawn and the Ten Nights;\* by that which is dual and that which is single; by the night, when it comes!

"(Is there not in this a mighty oath for a man of sense?)"

"Have you not heard how Allah dealt with Aad?\*" The people of the many-columned city of Iram, whose like has never been built in the whole land?

"And with Thamoud\*\* who hewed out their dwellings among the rocks of the valley?

"And with Pharaoh, who impaled his victims upon the stake?

"They had all led sinful lives and made the land teem with wickedness. Therefore your Lord let loose on them the scourge of His punishment; for from His high eminence He observes the actions of all men.

"As for man, when his Lord tests him by exalting him and bestowing favours on him, he says: 'My Lord is bounteous to me.' But when He tests him by grudging him His favours, he says: 'My Lord despises me.'

"Yes! But you show no kindness to the orphan, nor do you vie with each other in feeding the poor. Greedily you lay your hands on the inheritance of the weak, and you love riches with all your hearts.

"Yes! But when the earth is crushed to fine dust, and your Lord comes down with the angels in their ranks, and Hell is brought near -- on that day man will remember his deeds. But what will memory avail him?

"He will say: 'Would that I had been charitable in my lifetime!' But on that day none will punish as He will punish, nor will any bind with chains like His.

"O serene soul! Return to your Lord, joyful, and pleasing in His sight. Enter My Paradise and join My servants."



The last verse of the preceding verses from the Koran is addressed to the soul of man. "Return to your Lord, joyful" refers to the time when the higher self has gained victory over the lower self.

Regarding this particular verse, read the following reference:

(The Holy Qur'an - Arabic Text, Translation and Commentary - by Maulana Muhammad Ali - Published by Ahmadiyyah Anjuman Ish'at Islam- Lahore, Pakistan) Page 1174-1175:

"The concluding verses of this chapter refer to the highest stage of the spiritual development of man, the stage in which he RESTS CONTENTED with his Lord, and finds his quietude, his happiness, and his delight in Him. This is the heavenly life. It has already been noted...that the Holy Qur'an recognizes three stages in spiritual development, the ANIMALIAH or the animal stage...the LADHANIAH or the human stage...and the MUMMA'INNIAH or the heavenly or spiritual stage, mentioned here. At this last stage, the pure and perfect sincerity, truth and righteousness of a person are regarded by Almighty God by granting him a heaven on this earth. All others look to a prospective paradise, but he enters paradise in this very life. It is at this stage, too, that a person realizes that the prayers and worship which at first appeared to him as a burden are really a nourishment on which the growth of his soul depends, and that this is the basis of his spiritual development. The spirit -- which is in the second stage, although blaming a man for the impurities of life, is yet powerless to resist the evil tendencies, or to blot them out wholly, and too infirm to establish a man upon the principle of virtue with firmness -- now reaches a stage of development in which its efforts are crowned with success. The state of struggle with sinful propensities passes away, an entire change comes over the nature of man, and the former habits undergo a complete ~~transmex~~ transformation."

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The theme of Majnun and Layli has often been repeated in poetry and prose. The literal translation of the word "Majnun" is "Insane". "Layli" translates literally into one whose hair is very black..

Another version of the story with essentially the same meaning as the one told by Baha'u'llah follows.



LAILI AND MEJNUN

"A certain King of the Arabs was told the story of Laili and Mejnun, and of the latter's madness; how that, notwithstanding his learning and eloquence, he had turned to a life in the desert and let slip the reins of self-control. The king commanded that they should bring him into his presence and when this was done, he began to rebuke him, asking him what flaw he had seen in the nobility of human nature that he should take upon him the manners of beasts and forsake the society of his fellows?

"Mejnun answered:

The many friends that oft my passion banned,  
Could they behold her face, might understand.

COUPLETS

Would that they that do reprove me  
Saw the beauty that doth move me!  
O ravisher of hearts! the knives that strip  
the lemon-peel would on their fingers slip. \*

Then indeed the truth might bear witness to the saying: "This is he for whose sake ye blamed me." + The King desired to see for himself the beauty of Laili, the cause of so much misery, and ordered search to be made for her. Having sought through many Arab tribes, they found her and brought her to the King, into the courtyard of the Palace. For a time he looked upon her form, and she appeared contemptible in his eyes, since the meanest of the slaves in his Harem surpassed her in beauty and charm. Mejnun, who in his wisdom understood (the King's mind), said: "It would behove thee to look from the window of Mejnun's eye on the beauty of Laili, that the miracle of her appearance might be made known th thee."

\* Meaning that they would cut their fingers neglecting the banquet to gaze upon her beauty.

+ Koran Xii v. 32

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Recall from these verses that there were many persons who saw the Manifestation of God; they spent much time in the company of Baba'u'llah but did not respond, even when they met him personally, because their eyes were closed to His beauty.



THE SEVEN MILESTONES - PART IV - PAGE 5

13

When we speak of the lower self and the necessity for the victory over that self we are speaking of something which occurs in our every-day dealings with others.

An example of this conversation between the higher and lower self is found in much of our literature. Perhaps the best example of this sort of thing is found in Dostoyevsky's "The Brothers Karamazov" (Dell #F55 modern abridgment by Edmund Fuller)

Book III - The Sensualists, Chapter 3, "The Confession of a Passionate Heart"

Read from the top of Page 92, "I am telling it. If I tell the whole truth just as it happened I shan't spare myself ...

continue to the top of page 93: "...I only kissed my sword and put it back in the scabbard--which there was no need to have told you, by the way."

Here is a passage about a young man who would never dare approach the lady about whom he speaks, much less tell her that he loves her. Now, she is in circumstances which make it necessary for her to ask him for help.. and the various stages of his thinking are exemplary of man's behavior...note he considers what others will think of him...that they might think him a fool... and of course, his first inclination is to "get even".

To introduce this passage is not to stray from the Sacred Writings, but rather to give an excellent example of the argument between higher and lower self about which we have been reading.

NOTE: Read the story of Adam and Eve from Some Answered Questions. Read it through in order to put the final statements into context...and note that the Serpent means Attachment to this World.

Laura Clifford Barney said that the most tired moments of the Master's life went into this book. The book was written at a time when the Master's days were all very full...and ~~and~~ at the end of a very long, tiring day a paragraph or two more would be done until the book was completed.

Once when he was asked what the "near ones" means, the Master did not answer. Later, when walking, he said "If a gale or tempest should occur, all of the herbs on the ground will be safe and sound!" He struck a huge tree. "But this", he is reported to have said, "will be shaken!"

We all saw that after the passing of the beloved Guardian, there was a violent storm and Mason Remey was shaken.



AND THE VALLEY OF LOVE

Suggestion: Exams Have a good reader read it through before going back to begin consultation on the chapter.

Page 8 e Paragraph 2:

"He fleeth both from unbelief and faith, and deadly poison is a balm to him. Wherefore Attar saith:

For the infidel, error--for the faithful, faith;  
For Attar's heart, an atom of Thy pain."

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The name Attar generally refers to one who sells perfume or medicine. The Attar is a person with a little shop who sells herbs and perfumes.

Attar mentioned here is a specific person. It is said that he was very successful and used to receive at least 200 patients each day. One day, a Dervish passed by, and examining the Attar's mode of luxurious living with all of his material comforts said, "It is very hard for you to die with all of these things."

"How would you die?" Attar asked the Dervish.

"In this way!" the Dervish answered. He then put his sack over his head and promptly died.

Since that time, Attar became a Sufi and a composer of poems.

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Before proceeding through the Valley of Love you might wish to know that the Arabic word for "love" is "Ia'shq". A literal translation of this word was originally a wild plant which grows around trees and feeds on the trees until the tree becomes absolutely dry and has no existence whatever.

Love is sometimes described in this way. True love must be <sup>mistle tree</sup> *Parasit* like this. You cannot have your own will and the will of your Beloved.



"The steed of this Valley is pain; and if there be no pain this journey will never end."

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Recall that in earlier lessons it was mentioned that the patient does not seek the remedy from the physician unless there be some pain or discomfort.

"...and seeketh no refuge save the Friend."

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Persian mystics use the term "Friend" synonymously with the word "God".

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On page 9:

"Until thou enter the Egypt of love..."

This is an allusion. In this instance Egypt refers to the place where Joseph may be found.

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On page 10:

"Love seizeth not upon a living soul..."

In love, you have no existence for yourself so that the fire of love will consume everything.

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ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK:

CLEANINGS: Find the passage in which Baha'u'llah explains the influence upon the world brought about by the martyrdom of Christ. This passage will help to illumine further this chapter on the Valley of Love.

Then proceed with the Valley of Knowledge.



Before we leave the Valleys of Love and Knowledge, those Valleys which are so closely related, we should pause a bit and become better acquainted with the language of these Tablets.

Sa'idi, the poet whose works are often quoted in these Tablets studied for the first 30 years of his life; for the next 30 years he traveled through all of the known parts of the world; and for the last 30 years of his life he wrote. He died at the age of 90.

The more we read of the Mystic Poets who were being read at the time of Baha'u'llah's announcement, the better we understand the language of Baha'u'llah. These people who spoke this language came to the Faith and twenty thousand of them gave their lives for the Faith. For them a familiar voice was heard by each of them.

One of the voices with which these people was familiar was that of the Persian Mystic, Jami:

#### P R I D E

"Boast not of having no pride, because it is more  
invisible  
"Than the mark of an ant's foot on a black rock in  
the dark night;  
"Think it not easy to extirpate it from thy heart,  
"For it is more easy to root up a mountain from the  
earth with a needle."

Pride and boasting is a manifestation of the lower self in man.

There is a story told of a shepherd who was faithful to the King. The shepherd loved the king very much and finally went to see the King and to serve him. The shepherd grew in power and in stature.

One day the king gave a melon to the shepherd. The shepherd ate the melon with great relish, praising its sweet quality. The king asked for a bit of the melon and found to his surprise that the melon was quite bitter and questioned the shepherd about his praising this bitter gift. The shepherd told the king that he remembered all of the sweet bounties given to him by the king and could not complain about one bitter melon.



Sa'di has said:

"Yet apart from the mirror of mortal loveliness is that God in little, that wandering fragment of Divinity -- the soul. As the wife is part of the husband, so is the soul a part of God."

"Sa'di, preaching to the people of Damascus, quotes from the Koran the following verse: 'Verily we created man, and we know what his soul whispereth unto him, for we are nearer to him than the vein in his neck.' And so at its appointed time complete unity with the Beloved is attained; the atom is restored to the world dust, the planet is withdrawn into the solar system, and the soul is merged in God."

The lovers by the Loved One all are slain;  
No voice can answer from the dead again."

From The Rose-Garden of Sa'di, p 16

When we enter the Valley of Knowledge we find that "Love is a veil betwixt the lover and the loved one." Sometimes love itself becomes a hindrance.

We read that:

"Veiled from this was Moses  
Though all strength and light;  
Then thou who hast no wings at all,  
At tempt not flight."

In the Quran it is recorded that Moses said, "O, God, show me Thy face. And God said, "You will never see Me." If God said this to Moses, then it follows that we certainly will never know Him. Only through His Manifestations can we know him.

Sa'di says: (P 34 Rose-Garden of Sa'di)

"A band of vagabonds meeting a Dervish spoke evilly to him, beat him and ill-used him, whereupon he brought his complaint to his superior. The Director (\*) replied: 'My son! The patched gown of the Dervishes is the garb of resignation, and he who, wearing it, cannot bear with injury, is but a pretender to whom our garb is forbidden.'"

(\*) Persian, "Pir" - i.e., "he who points out the way".



## Seven Valleys - Lesson V - Page 3

In South America monkeys are often caught for shipment to zoos and for pets. The way that these monkeys are trapped offer an excellent lesson for all of us. See what avarice can do:

Cut a gourd just large enough for the monkey's fist and after affixing the gourd to some solid object, fill it with nuts. The monkey will reach into the gourd, close his fist around the nuts and his hand will be stuck. The monkey could regain his freedom at any time by merely letting go and releasing the nuts. All he has to do is to open his hand.

The "hunters" depend on the greed of the monkey. These poor animals will not let go of the prize and hence are waiting there at the gourd when the trapper calls to collect his prey.

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Before entering the Valley of Unity,

READ:           Gleanings, Tablet No. 32  
                   Gleanings, Tablet No. 36



Before we go into the Valley of Unity, we will return for a moment to the Valley of Love.

One of the goals of the Ten Year Plan was to transfer the body of the father of Baha'u'llah and the mother of the Bab to fitting resting places, because these two believed in their Sons.

On Page 112 of the Dawn-Breakers you see the photograph of an inscription placed by Baha'u'llah's father above the entrance of the door of his house in Takur. This poem which is inscribed above the door says:

"When you approach the threshold of the Beloved,  
hold your step.  
Do not go any further.  
This is the place where greetings are not exchanged.  
This is the Valley of Love.  
Be steadfast.  
This is the Holy Land.  
Take off your shoes."

Rawhani, who performed the task of transfer of the remains of Baha'u'llah's father and the Bab's mother to the Baha'i Cemetery in Bagdad is now buried near the Guardian. The transfer was dangerous. The Moslem Cemetery is considered holy ground, and to remove the body to a place which you might consider even more holy than this, calls for great courage.

The Guardian guided the believers, but always was concerned that they should be relieved of their burdens .. should be free to serve the Faith better.

This same Rawhani who performed the important task for the beloved Guardian once went to Mecca as a pioneer. While there he went to the Qiblah and recited Moslem prayers. Some of the Baha'i pioneers criticized this. He said that they were in the holiest shrine of the Moslems...but the issue was not really settled as to whether Rawhani's prayers in the Qiblah should have been offered.

Rawhani came to Haifa on pilgrimage. With the Guardian he went to the Shrine of the Bab..but he was troubled about the prayers in Mecca which the pioneers had criticized. The Guardian said to him, "Your Pilgrimage is accepted ... as well as the prayers you offered at Mecca!"

There are beautiful Persian Carpets in the Shrine of Abdu'l-Baha. Vahid brought these carpets during the lifetime of Abdu'l-Baha and offered them as a gift. Woven on the top of each carpet is woven "Offered by Vahid". During the lifetime of the Guardian Vahid came on Pilgrimage and to his surprise saw each of these carpets in the Shrine of Abdu'l-Baha.



2002 Valid was dejected and rebuked himself for having put his name on each carpet. Coming out of the Shrine the Guardian said, "aren't you happy that your name is here and everyone remembers you?"

This is an example for us - to be as loving and understanding as we can so that we can achieve the most loving actions we are capable of performing.

Baha'u'llah says "...until thou burn with the fire of love, thou shalt never commune with the Lover of Longing." So wherever love pitches his tent there will be no praise for the fire of love burns the harvest of reason.

It is said that three persons reached a river which they were to cross. Two of the men were philosophers and one was a lover. The philosophers debated about how to cross best. They considered where the nearest bridge might be according to the map. They studied the river to determine where the shallow water might be. While they were discussing the matter they looked, and the lover was on the other side!

---

With all of the vast store of knowledge which Islam has given to the world, the knowledge did actually become a veil.

The scholars got the books of the Greek scholars from the Byzantine monasteries. But the Islamic scholars ran into a stumbling block. "Why ask if there is a God", they argued, "When Muhammad said there is. There is no need for discussion."

They concentrated on the human mystery of life and considered how man could develop himself. They also concentrated on man's external life.

Some of these scholars took the path of reason. Find something known. From the known facts, make a path to the unknown.

They then found that reason is an incapable instrument. This occurred to them at about the same time Spinoza endeavored to prove the existence of God via geometry.

So the Moslem scholars' contribution to the world of reason sits in one end of the balancing scale. There was no standard to determine whether the balance was right or wrong.

Then they found the way of Love. Fall in love with God. Know that each man is created separately with a destiny to reach God...and when love came, reason was forgotten.



These lovers of God were called "The Knowers". The mystics were the least accepted at that time.. They were disliked because they went about in garments of mendicants and lived an isolated life. They did not agree with the lovers who said man was born to work, to love and to grow closer to God.

The most outstanding of these Lovers or Knowers are the ones who are quoted by Baha'u'llah. It is just a step from kn loving to knowing. When you love, you know.

This is the basis for success:

If you love something, you will do it.

If you love pioneering, nothing will stand in the way.

If you love Baha'u'llah you will wish to tell everyone about him.

The first line in the Kitab-i-Iqan is this:

"No man shall attain the shores of the ocean of true understanding except he be detached from all that is heaven and on earth..."

By the force of love man advances and he becomes a knower.

In Turkey a group of Dervishes lived who went to a certain "monastery" for worship. Their service consisted of music. They would hum songs and arise and dance for hours until they literally fell unconscious.

Baha'u'llah went there once. They were all dancing and whirling about the floor. Suddenly they stopped and looked at Baha'u'llah who frowned and said, "Is this called worship of God?"

It was here that Baha'u'llah first said "Work is worship".

---- "After passing through the Valley of Knowledge, which is the last plane of limitation, the wayfarer cometh to THE VALLEY OF UNITY. Having become Knowers, we then enter the VALLEY OF UNITY.

"He stretcheth out the hand of truth from the sleeve of the Absolute."

This form of speech should not be too strange to either the Moslem or the Christian. Moses drew forth from the bosom of his clothing a shining hand! This became a saying in the oriental languages.



Notice that in this Valley it is said that the sun is reflected through glass of many colors. It is also said that the faithful ones look through the eyes of God.

The life of the Guardian clearly illustrates what it means to look through the eyes of God. Nothing ever stopped him. Walls did not stand when he wished to go forward. Time meant nothing to him.

On seven different occasions seven groups of pioneers were sent from Persia by the Guardian to Afghanistan. Each of these groups was forced to leave Afghanistan. From the last group of the pioneers who were expelled from that country, one came to Haifa on pilgrimage. He told the Guardian the sad story of how everything they owned was confiscated, how they were all thrown into trucks and sent back to Persia, penniless.

The Guardian did not say what we might expect him to say to this sad story. Offering no condolences, he said, "Yes. The friends of Afghanistan will help the propagation of the Cause in China!" Our beloved Guardian was looking at the future, at the ultimate accomplishment of the goals, not at the story of this temporary set-back.

Remember also the story of India. Recall that with a weak little handful of pioneers the Master set out to conquer that vast land. These pioneers were weak in body and weak spiritually, yet of their efforts Abdu'l-Baha said that the friends in India will rise in such a way that they will be an example to neighboring countries.

So man is told, "...see through the eyes of your Lord".

There is some danger of misunderstanding in this Valley. The reader must not believe that statements indicating we are all waves of one sea moving by the Will of one God indicates we are not responsible for what we do. In the Writings we learn that this may never be interpreted to mean that man is not responsible for his own deeds. The sun is shining through these many colored globes, it is true.

Whatever we do individually, we cannot cause the sun to cease shining. To employ that sunshine in some way is a matter of employing man's own will. Man is responsible.

-----  
 "How can utter nothingness gallop its steed in the field of pre-existence, or a fleeting shadow reach to the everlasting sun?"

Here is a statement to shrink the ego. There is always more to learn, no matter how much we know and understand. To equate our learning with the station of the Manifestation .. even in a comparative way by measuring our own learning next to that of a friend is as foolish as relating our comparative positions here with relation to the physical position of the sun.



A Shaykh in the court in Sulaymaniyyah once gave a book to Baha'u'llah for His blessing. It is reported that Baha'u'llah wrote in the book as follows:

"I hope that the fortune of your enemies will be utterly changed  
The sovereignty of the two worlds will be available for you.  
You are the shadow of the mercy of God,  
And how strange the world is illumined by a Shadow!"

From the Valley of Unity:

"Secrets are many but strangers are myriad".

Even if we find the meaning of one secret, then we may be sure that there are thousand and thousands more.

"Knowledge is a single point, but the ignorant have multiplied it."

Here, jokingly it is suggested that you might give a group of small children the problem of adding  $1 + 3$ . You may very well get ten answers ~~from~~ from ten children!

Mr. Faizi tells us of stopping at an Arab Coffee House where the unlettered dock workers, all laborers, sit and wait for time to go to their ships to work. There was a "speaker" among them one day. "Do you believe God is most powerful?" he asked his audience. All answered, "Of course."

"Can He do anything?" was the next question.

"Yes" was the rapid reply.

"There is one thing which he will never be able to do," informed the speaker.

"What?"

"No matter how many sins we commit He can never send us out of His own kingdom!"

Great wisdom is in this ~~xxxxxx~~ statement...even the Covenant-breakers will not be sent out of His own kingdom.



"...so it is that all move through Him and arise by His will."

Always man must strive to be sure that his will is the Will of God.

Abdu'l-Baha once said that when He tells you something .. whatever he FIRST said, do that.

A man once asked where to go to teach.

The man was told to go to India.

If the man says that water in India isn't good for him, the Master may then say to go to Australia... thus the Faith will be served, but it is the first instruction which is the Will of God and a compromise is not to be confused with that first instruction.

Self and Ego always are present and can often be considered the Will of God, when it is merely the lower self asserting itself.

The greatest danger of this ego is this:

Whatever the ego-infected individual wishes you to do .. he first convinces you that this is the best thing to do...with absolute reason. He brings the verses of God to convince you. It is here that man must weigh his own wishes ...and in this day we have the perfect standard by which to weigh them.



THE FOLLOWING STORIES WERE NOT PART OF THE LESSON, BUT ARE BEING PASSED ALONG BECAUSE THEY WERE ENJOYED BY EVERYONE IN THE CLASS.

One pilgrim once indicated to the beloved Guardian that Shoghi Effendi and Abdu'l-Baha were one and the same. The pilgrim went on to explain this. The expounder of the Text must comprehend the words, therefore with his understanding and interpretation, he would be the same as Abdu'l-Baha.

"Is that so?" the Guardian is reported to have said.

"Yes" was the firm response of the pilgrim.

"Well, I am the Expounder and I say I am not the same as Abdu'l-Baha!"

--

A persian poet is reported to have once sent a poem to the Master. The poem indicated that Abdu'l-Baha is the same as Baha'u'llah. The Master wrote the poet as follows:

"I received your poem. It is beautiful, like flowing water but bitter to my taste. I adorn My head with the crown of servitude, but alas! Poets are pouring the waters of godlessness on my head.

"Either compose an ode in praise of my servitude or I will have you here and will flog you!"

"One friend will hold your head, two will hold your feet and I will flog you."

The recipient was so happy that he wrote another poem along the same lines as the original and said, "Now I am ready if the flogging takes place in Your presence."

After two months the Tehran Assembly asked this poet to go to the city of Qum to visit new contacts there. The first day the people knew him as a Baha'i teacher and attacked him. One held his head and two held his feet and another flogged him. The Governor was there and, pretending a rape he did not feel, demanded that the prisoner be given to him to deal with. The Governor sent the poet back to his home.

After many years the poet came to Haifa. The first night Abdu'l-Baha asked him, "How much were you beaten?"

"As much as you had ~~written~~ promised when you wrote," was the reply.

Our beloved Hand of the Cause Zikrullah Khadem once aspired to be a poet, and wrote to the Guardian requesting a pen from Shoghi Effendi.

The Guardian sent him a purse!



THE SEVEN VALLEYS - "The Valley of Unity" - Continued

"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 (zaman), which is the one that hath 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 seen but which is known to have an end; and the world of eternity (azal), neither a beginning or an end which is visible."

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Before continuing to the next paragraph, consider what we have just read. Give examples of each of these four worlds described.

1. ZAMAN      There are many examples of things which have a beginning and an end.
2. DAHR      (Has a beginning - but end is not revealed)
  - . An individual soul.
  - . This earth.
  - . Creative energy.
  - . Numbers (they begin, but where do they end?)
3. SARMAD    (Beginning not seen but known to have an end)
  - . The sun
4. AZAL      Only God can be described thus.

- - - - -

"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."

Baha'u'llah made many moves from place to place which had an inner spiritual significance in relation to these journeys in the pathway of love. For example:

Recall the time when Baha'u'llah was in Baghdad. Because of the nefarious activities of Subh-i-Azal who brought many afflictions on Baha'u'llah, Baha'u'llah was forced to leave Baghdad incognito. At that time Abdu'l-Baha was between 12 and 15 years of age. The mother of Abdu'l-Baha was then responsible for the family, and for the pilgrims. This was the time when she spent all of her luxuries. Baha'u'llah went to Sulaymaniyyih, lived there for two years and after two years, returned. This is the apparent or outward movement.



The spiritual journey in this instance was highly significant:

"From the creatures to the True One"

Baha'u'llah left the people and went into the mountains to be alone with God.

"From the True One to the True One"

There Baha'u'llah had nothing but God in Him and around Him. Only the Will of God remained.

"From the True One to the creatures"

After being filled with inspiration, From God to Himself, Baha'u'llah then came back to the creatures.

With this thought in mind, meditate on the spiritual journey of Baha'u'llah throughout His lifetime.

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"If Khidr did wreck the vessel on the sea,  
Yet in this wrong there are a thousand rights."

"Khidr is the Arabic word for "Elijah". The verse above refers to this story:

Moses accompanied Khidr on a certain journey. Khidr told Moses, "You may be my companion on this journey on one condition: You must never ask me 'Why'. Just surrender your will to mine." Moses agreed to do so and with this understanding, they set out on the journey.

As the two companions passed/certain portion of a sea, they saw a boat which appeared to be empty. Khidr immediately caused the boat to sink. Moses knew that the boat belonged to some orphans, and that the use of the boat made the orphans very happy. The act seemed ruthless to him. Finally he could contain the question no longer. "Why", he asked Khidr, "did you do it?"

"I told you not to ask me why", was Khidr's response. "I will tell you this. The boat seemed to be empty. Inside the boat was a cruel king who had hidden himself there. When the boat touches the shore, the children will come to the boat. He kills little children. To save the lives of hundreds of children, we had to sink this boat."

Man is governed by two forces:

The force of love - and the force of reason.

In oriental mythology, Khidr is the symbol of love and the Will of God, and Moses is the symbol of reason.



"He is the first and the last, the Seen and the Hidden..."

Here is the law of relativity described by Baha'u'llah.

Consider the ~~xxx~~ examples given by Baha'u'llah here.

You are the father to your own son.

This means that in relation to your son, you are first and your son is last.

Your son is last in relation to you.

In relation to your own father, your father is first and you are last.

One person may be, in relationship to others, either first or last-- or both in relationship to many others.

Our spiritual relationship to others may also vary.

This brings us to the thought of the prophecy with which we are all familiar: "The first shall be last and the last shall be first".

Recall the situation concerning the family of Abdu'l-Baha. They were first in physical relationship to the Center of the Covenant. They were last in relationship to the Covenant.

Baha'u'llah defines this relationship to the Covenant as the meaning of the term "last" in the Iqan.

"X...the Persian bird keepeth in His soul many a sweet Arab melody; yet these are hidden..."

The Persian bird and the Arab melody refers to the two Prophets who were expected at the time of the end.

It is said that there were four fore-runners for Muhammad. Salman, ~~xxxx~~ knew that it was time for a Prophet of God to manifest Himself even before Muhammad went to Mecca. Salman went to the fore-runners of Muhammad. The last one of these fore-runners said to Salman, "You will see the Manifestation of God."

One day it is said that Muhammad was with some of His followers. He suddenly started to cry. "Why?" they all asked Him, to ~~xx~~ which he replied. "I am weeping for my ~~fixxx~~ friends."



"Aren't we your friends?", they wanted to know.

"You are my companions", was the reply of Muhammad. "My friends are the followers of the Promised One who will come at the end of the days."

"From which nation will He come?" Muhammad was asked.

Muhammad patted Salman on the hand and said, "From this nation". He continued, "They are Persians but they understand Arabic. Even if knowledge is placed in the heavens these Persians will have it because of that Manifestation."

"And the wayfarer, after traversing the high planes of this supernal journey, entereth

#### THE VALLEY OF CONTENTMENT"

In the Tablets of Abdu'l-Baha it is said that the friends should try to give themselves spiritual practice and discipline until they reach the Valley of Contentment. It is also said that when they are truly in this Valley, they will never feel the loss of anything.

We strive too much in the world of matter. People always want more. If we reach this state where we do not feel the loss of anything, we are happy and contented with whatever is available for us.

Both Baha'u'llah and Abdu'l-Baha give us many statements which to outward appearances are contradictions. We must meditate on these. You all know the sort of thing referred to: They seem to tell us "Go into the water, but don't get wet!" (This is NOT an example from the Writings...it's just an example).

We have pointed out that man should be content with what is available for him. Also we note that we are warned that the Sufi practice of withdrawal from society is absolutely useless. Man must go into life, strive, do his best, earn, spend, but at the same time, be above all of these things.

In the Aqdas it is said that any man who has adorned his heart with the love of God has the right to sit upon a chair made of gold. Now, in view of the statement that "...to outward view, the wayfarers in this Valley may dwell upon the dust..." we must see what this apparent contradiction means.



In Islam it is forbidden for men to use plates made from gold and silver. Baha'u'llah is saying that in this Dispensation, that is no longer true. He ~~is~~ tells us that now man must have the best life possible...may possess beautiful things...but in order to remain in the Valley of Contentment, he must never put his heart into these things.

To pay interest on a loan is forbidden in Islam. Men have followed practices of trickery in order to avoid the "letter" of Muhammad's law, but they violate the spirit of the law. Assume you and I are Moslems and I wish to borrow money from you. We compute interest for the period of time I will need the money and I sign a note for the amount of the loan plus interest!

Baha'u'llah knew of these practices and said that this is not pleasing to God. He further indicates that interest may be charged for lending money since this is the basis of business life today.

Mr. Fayzi tells us of his own uncle who was a Supreme Divine in the Moslem religious order in Persia. This uncle would come to Mr. Fayzi's home and drink tea from a silver cup. If anyone other than family members entered the room, the uncle would immediately push the cup away from him. This, of course, raised many questions. If it is bad to drink from a silver cup, why do it at all? This example is, in essence, the same as the "note signing".

How many a deed had never been accepted by God, and how many intentions are accepted by God as pure deeds.

+ St. Paul "Be in a world but not of it."

Sylvia asked A.B. how to live if left in  
 of deeds. A.B. said - "all depends on  
 the motive"



THE SEVEN VALLEYS - Lesson VIII

Study Class Notes - Class conducted by Hand of the Cause,  
A. C. Paizi

THE VALLEY OF WONDERMENT

*carpenter  
can understand  
his created table but  
table  
not  
artist*

Religious leaders in the past have tried to describe this valley but they have been in error since they have assumed the mind of man (the limited power of man) can comprehend the endless mysteries of God.

Suppose there is a garden full of beautiful trees bearing various kinds of fruit. On each tree is a lamp. You enter the garden at night. The first lamp will be ignited as you enter, and you will wonder at the beauty of this tree .. its leaves, blossoms and its fruits. If this is the end, that is the end of this valley. However, there are millions of different trees in this garden. The moment you reach the end of your pleasure and say, "Now I know all about this garden", another lamp will be ignited and astonishment will be increased. There is no end to this valley.

Ali (the first Imam) said: "O Lord, show me more of the secrets you have in this dark world".

There is an oriental poem which indicates that all arguments end with this: You will reach the end of the divine mysteries if a bush will ever reach the bottom of the ocean. (By nature, a bush floats, and will not sink.)

Ali has further said: "I never worship God whom I cannot see." By this was meant that he saw beauty in, before and after objects in this world.

And so, because this is a never-ending valley, we cry out,

"O Lord, increase my astonishment at Thee!"

- - - - -

"Now there are many wisdoms to ponder in the dream, which none but the people of this Valley can comprehend in their true elements."

Baha'u'llah tells us that the world of the dream was created by God. Man could go to sleep in the same manner the trees sleep if God had not decreed otherwise. If you will check with one who knows, you will find that trees do, indeed, sleep and that it is dangerous to transplant trees when they are not "awake". *sleeping (dormant)*

Today, man places great trust in people who deal with psychology. The psychologist cannot deal with the human spirit, the soul and the heart unless and until he becomes well acquainted with the world of God and what He has planned and destined for man.



Think of what we know of the study of dreams today. Freud's interpretations of dreams were based on his own life. He indicates that dreams have no spiritual value, but rather they expressed man's relationship to his own self, a lack of fulfilled life, lack of gratification of all unsatisfied desires and wishes.

Abdu'l-Baha has told us to think of the soul of man like a pond of crystal pure water. Look into the pond and see all of the stars reflected. All heaven is reflected in this pond. Now bring one piece of feather, or straw, the lightest object in the world, and place it on the surface of the pond. Very tiny ripples are created. You can still see the stars, but not so clearly as before. Your soul is like that pond. If it is in absolute comfort you can be sure you will see everything very clearly in your dream. If you are confused, you will not see clearly.

Another example. Take a pure white canvas. Color it blue, then add yellow. The paint will then appear to be green. You dream of green. The one who interprets the dream must separate the various factors, the things which make up "green" otherwise the dream cannot be interpreted properly.

-----

"Dost thou reckon thyself only a puny form  
when within thee the universe is folded?"

In the Arabic text this appears, "Do you think of yourself as only an atom. In thee is hidden the whole universe."

-----

"Then we must labor to destroy the animal condition  
till the meaning of humanity shall come to light."

"The ailment comes from you and the remedy is also  
within you".

-----

"Thus, too, Lugman, who had drunk from the wellspring  
of wisdom and tasted of the waters of mercy... advanced  
the dream as an evidence and an example."

The Western world knows Lugman as "Aesop". There is an entire chapter in the Quran about this great African teacher and philosopher.

Note that Baha'u'llah states that (with regard to Aesop) "We relate it here, that ... a memory may endure of that youth of the school of Divine Unity, that elder of the art of instruction and the Absolute."

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The Valley of Wonderment is a Valley of apparent confusion and contradiction. It is for man to surrender his will and know that God's Will is most great.

In oriental literature, Khidr is depicted as the old sage in many stories (similar to Hercules in Greek mythology).

According to the interpreters of the Quran someone once asked Moses whether God had created anyone higher and more exalted than He (Moses) to which He replied, "No." Then God told him to accompany Khidr on his journey.

In the Quran is told the story which illustrates and gives examples of the wonder after wonder which man sees .. things about which man always wants to ask, "Why?"

Following is the story from the Surah of the Cave (Penguin Classics - Translation by N. J. Dawood, pp 94-95-96)

Moses said to his servant: "I will journey on until I reach the land where the two seas meet, though I may march for ages."

But when at last they came to the land where the two seas meet, they forgot their fish, which made its way into the water, swimming at will.

And when they had journeyed further on, Moses said to his servant: "Bring us some food; we are worn out with traveling."

"Know", replied the other, "that I forgot the fish when we were resting on the rock. Thanks to Satan, I forgot to mention this. The fish made its way into the sea in a miraculous fashion."

"This is what we have been seeking," said Moses. They went back by the way they came and found one of Our servants to whom We had vouchsafed Our mercy and whom We had endowed with knowledge of Our own. Moses said to him: "May I follow you so that you may guide me by that which you have been taught?"

"You will not bear with me," replied the other. "For how can you bear with that which is beyond your knowledge?"

Moses said: "If Allah wills, you shall find me patient; I shall not in anything disobey you."

He said: "If you are bent on following me, you must ask no question about anything till I myself speak to you concerning it."

The two set forth, but as soon as they embarked, Moses' companion bored a hole in the bottom of the ship.

"A strange thing you have done!" exclaimed Moses. "Is it to drown her passengers that you have bored a hole in her?"



"Did I not tell you," he replied, "that you would not bear with me?"

"Pardon my forgetfulness," said Moses. "Do not be angry with me on account of this."

They journeyed on until they fell in with a certain youth. Moses' companion slew him, and Moses said: "You have killed an innocent man who has done no harm. Surely you have committed a wicked crime."

"Did I not tell you," he replied, "that you would not bear with me?"

Moses said: "If ever I question you again, abandon me; for then I shall deserve it."

They travelled on until they came to a certain city. They asked the people for some food, but they declined to receive them as their guests. There they found a wall on the point of falling down. His companion restored it, and Moses said: "Had you wished, you could have demanded payment for your labors."

"Now has the time arrived when we must part," said the other. "But first I will explain to you those acts of mine which you could not bear to watch with patience."

"Know that the ship belonged to some poor fishermen. I damaged it because in their rear there was a king who was taking every ship by force."

"As for the youth, his parents both are true believers, and we feared lest he should plague them with his wickedness and unbelief. It was our wish that their Lord should grant them another in his place, a son more righteous and more filial."

"As for the wall, it belonged to two orphan boys in the city whose father was an honest man. Beneath it their treasure is buried. Your Lord decreed in His mercy that they should dig out their treasure when they grew to manhood. What I did was not done by my will."

"That is the meaning of what you could not bear to watch with patience."



Conversation following this class will undoubtedly turn to dreams we have had or dreams which others have related to us.

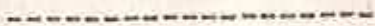
The Guardian once dreamed that all of the leaves on the trees surrounding the Shrine had turned yellow. He was disturbed, but fell asleep again and dreamed the same dream. That morning they brought him the news of the passing of Abdu'l-Qasim, the beloved gardener. For three days the Guardian would not visit the Shrine. He could not bear to see the gardens without Abdu'l-Qasim. The epitaph which the Guardian wrote for this soul refers to Abdu'l-Qasim as the "Breeze which was wafted from the garden of detachment."

Be sure when thinking of the latent powers enfolded within man that these should be manifested in due time. They should not be manifested by force, but rather by spiritual discipline.



THE VALLEY OF TRUE POVERTY AND ABSOLUTE NOTHINGNESS:

Following is a story, an African legend, which has been translated from the Persian language. This story shows the similarity of all religious stories. It is an expression of the longing of man to reach God.



Kabzia, who was the wealthiest of all gods, created the heaven and earth and two human beings: one man and the other, a woman. He conferred upon the two human beings wisdom, but none of them had a heart which could pulsate.

Kabzia had four children: Sun, Moon, Rain and Darkness. He summoned all of them and said, "Now I desire to abandon this place in such a way as they will never be able to see me. I shall return the heart to its own place, but before doing so, tell me, you Rain, what will you do?"

The Rain: "I shall rain ceaselessly and cover all places with water."

Kabzia: "Look at these two - man and woman. Do you think they will be able to live in water? Don't do as you planned. When you rain sufficiently, let the sun shine and dry the earth."

Then Kabzia turned to the Sun and asked him, "What will you do?"

His second child, the Sun, replied and said:

"I shall shine on the earth with such hot and burning rays that nothing will survive. All will vanish."

Kabzia: "No, you can't do that. Then how can these two whom I have created be able to find their sustenance? When you warm the earth, let the rain shower upon it until the fruits will ripen."

Then he faced the Darkness and said, "What will you do?"

Darkness: "I shall rule the earth forever."



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Lesson IX - Con'td

Kabzia's voice was then raised while uttering these words:

"Pity! Do you desire the lions, tigers and vipers to swallow all and everything created on the earth. Let the Moon shine on the earth. Towards the end of the moon, then you rule the world..."

After a little silence .. Kabzia said:

"It seems that I lingered here for a long time. Now is the time for me to leave this place for my own..."

Saying this, Kabzia disappeared.

No sooner had Kabzia disappeared than a little box descended on the earth - containing the heart. The heart said to the Sun, Moon, Darkness and the Rain:

"Where is our Father?"

They all answered:

"He turned his face away from here but where no one knows."

Then the heart said:

"How I yearn to talk to our Father!"

He said this and afterwards uttered the following words:

"Therefore I go within man, reside there and shall search for our Father from one generation to the other."

This is what happened once and ever since then man's heart, longing to find God, is in a perpetual pulsation.



As we begin reading from the "Valley of True Poverty and Absolute Nothingness" we find that the first paragraph ends with these words:

"...so that nothing will remain save the Friend."

In the Gospel of John, John describes the condition of the Disciples at the time of Christ. In the Arabic Bible a word is used to describe the Disciples which is not translated in the English, French or Persian version of the Book. John says, "Khala" which means "something which dissolves". An example might be sugar - the way that it dissolves in water.

HALLA



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By that he means that the human temple had been filled with Christ. Christ replaced all. That is why Abdu'l-Baha praised the Disciples so and told us to follow their example. The ego was gone. Nothing remained "save the Friend".

As we read on in the next paragraph, we find reference to these people:

"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."

The pilgrims are an excellent example of this. If they bring nothing except themselves to the Holy Land they go away more spiritual beings than ever before. From the first day this transformation begins.

The story is told of a great spiritual teacher in India, known as Ghuru. A university graduate wanted to know more about life. He was introduced to this Ghuru. He kneeled and said, "I have studied philosophy and other subjects. I have a Master's Degree and now I want to learn more."

The Ghuru filled a glass of water in the presence of the graduate and then started to pour more into the glass. The boy did not understand, and asked for an explanation.

"As long as the glass is full it will not hold any more", was the reply. "Come without these things and we can pour more in."

"Verily the righteous shall drink of a winecup tempered at the camphor fountain".

In oriental medicines, things are divided into two categories: food or beverages, and drugs, all of which are either created to heat or to cool the human body.

In the Quran these two things are mentioned: Ginger, which is the symbol for heat and Camphor which is a cooling agent.

There are people who have a fever of gathering things for themselves. Let them drink from the well spring of camphor. This will bring down the great appetite of man.



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Lesson IX - Cont'd

Napoleon had the fever to conquer. The Russian General was advised to send an army against Napoleon...but he said, "No, let him come to us".

There was no war. No force. Napoleon, by his own fever was forced to go back.

From the last Tablets mailed after the death of the Master, (dictated prior to His ascension) we find that there were Tablets to two individuals. To one of them, He said, "I hope you will drink from the fountain the nature of which is Ginger".

To the other man, He said the opposite and wished that this man might drink from the camphor fountain.



"O My friend, listen with heart and <sup>clouds</sup> soul...For the heavenly wisdoms, like the clouds of spring, will not rain down on the earth of men's hearts forever."

Every era is divided into four seasons. It is only through the first 300 years that the rain of confirmation comes for teaching the Cause. Remember, "The clouds of spring will not rain down .. forever". <sub>clouds</sub>

Since a portion of the time for teaching is given for this springtime of teaching, we can better understand why Shoghi Effendi said that a pioneer is worth many philosophers these days.



"O Brother! Not every sea hath pearls..."

When Baha'u'llah ascended, the Covenant-breakers took possession of the Mansion of Baha'u'llah. Abdu'l-Baha lived in the House of Abbud for five years in constant pain and anguish. This was the worst period of his life. A Committee of Investigation came and took residence in the Bezoun Mansion near the Bahji Mansion and the Covenant-breakers of Bahji helped them in their charges being instigated against Abdu'l-Baha. The Committee came to the conclusion that either Abdu'l-Baha would be hanged at the gate of Jerusalem, exiled to the desert of Africa or drawn drowned in the Mediterranean Sea.

At that time a cousin of Abdu'l-Baha went to see Nim. The cousin, who was a Covenant-breaker had great rejoicing in his heart and a victorious attitude. Abdu'l-Baha was found sitting on a bench in Abbud's House, very calm and quiet. The cousin started to talk in great agitation. "Everything is finished for you", he told the Master. "We told you, advised you to come



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Lesson IX - Cont'd

and help us, but you would not listen!" Then the cousin told the Master that he either would be hanged at the gate of Jerusalem, exiled to the desert of Africa or drowned in the Mediterranean Sea. At that, the Master said, "What an immense shrine!" (the entire Mediterranean Sea).

Abdu'l-Baha then asked the cousin if he had finished his talk. He then advised the cousin to recall that God would give the cousin a very long life so that he could see all of his plans as paintings on the waters. He told the cousin he would make demand death and it would not be given to him.

This was the man who lived in the house along-side of Bahji. He was paralyzed except for his head ..and he lived to see the Guardian arranging all of the gardens. Once he became very weak and was taken to the hospital. The Guardian said he would not die because the Master had said he would have a long life.

When beloved Dorothy Baker was drowned in the Mediterranean the Guardian said, "Now that shrine is hers. Shoghi Effendi, referring to Luli Mathews' book entitled "Not every Sea Hath Pearls", said, "Now change the title of your book to say, "All Seas Have Pearls".

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"His face no covering save revelation."

The radiance of the Manifestation is a veil. Just as we cannot see the sun except for the rays of the sun, neither can we see the full splendour of the Manifestation save through the Revelation. They, Themselves, cannot be properly seen.

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"Ecstasy alone can encompass this theme, not utterance nor argument..."

The following prayer elaborates on the above statement and explains what is meant by the statement.



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Lesson IX - Cont'd

"Make firm our steps, O Lord! in Thy path and strengthen Thou our hearts in Thine obedience. Turn our faces toward the beauty of Thy oneness and gladden our bosoms with the signs of Thy divine unity. Adorn our bodies with the robe of Thy bounty and remove from our eyes the veil of sinfulness and give us the chalice of Thy grace; that the essence of all beings may sing Thy praise before the vision of Thy grandeur. Reveal then Thyself, O Lord! by Thy merciful utterance and the mystery of Thy Divine Being, that the holy ecstasy of prayer may fill our souls--a prayer that shall rise above words and letters and transcend the murmur of syllables and sounds--that all things may be merged into nothingness before the revelation of Thy splendor.

"Lord! These are servants that have remained fast and firm in Thy Covenant and Thy Testament, that have held fast unto the cord of constancy in Thy Cause and clung unto the hem of the robe of Thy grandeur. Assist them, O Lord! with Thy grace, confirm with Thy power and strengthen their loins in obedience to Thee.

"Thou art the Pardoner, the Gracious."

- Abdu'l-Baha

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"In all these journeys the traveler must stray not the breadth of a hair from the 'Law'..."

If you recall, we have noted that the mystics are divided into two groups. Some are mendicants or beggars. They say that when you know the truth you don't need prayer, fasting, etc. Baha'u'llah says that as long as you are journeying throughout these valleys you must always abide by the commandments of the Prophets. This obedience protects us and it protects the Faith of God.

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Note that Baha'u'llah states that those who believe they have reached the "farthest homeland of the lovers" have actually only reached the "first gate of the heart's citadel".

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Lesson IX - Cont'd

"The thoughts thou hast expressed as to the interpretation of the common species of bird that is called in Persian Gunjishk (sparrow)..."

Here a number of quotations or "sayings" from the Quran or teachings of Islam were stated. The first letters from each of the sayings combined, and form a word, "sparrow".

This practice in the western world is usually restricted to names of organizations such as:

Committee  
Of  
Racial  
Equality - known as "Core"

or  
World  
Health  
Organization - "WHO"

etc.



To return for a moment to the fact that this is the season for teaching the Faith:

It is said that when the Master knew that he was about to ascend, he asked someone here in the Holy Land to send a cable to Shoghi Effendi. A letter was sent instead. The Guardian often mentioned this and wished that he might have known in time to be here to speak to the Master ...

There are many lessons for all of us in this story...if we are told that NOW is the time for a certain action, then we must not delay!