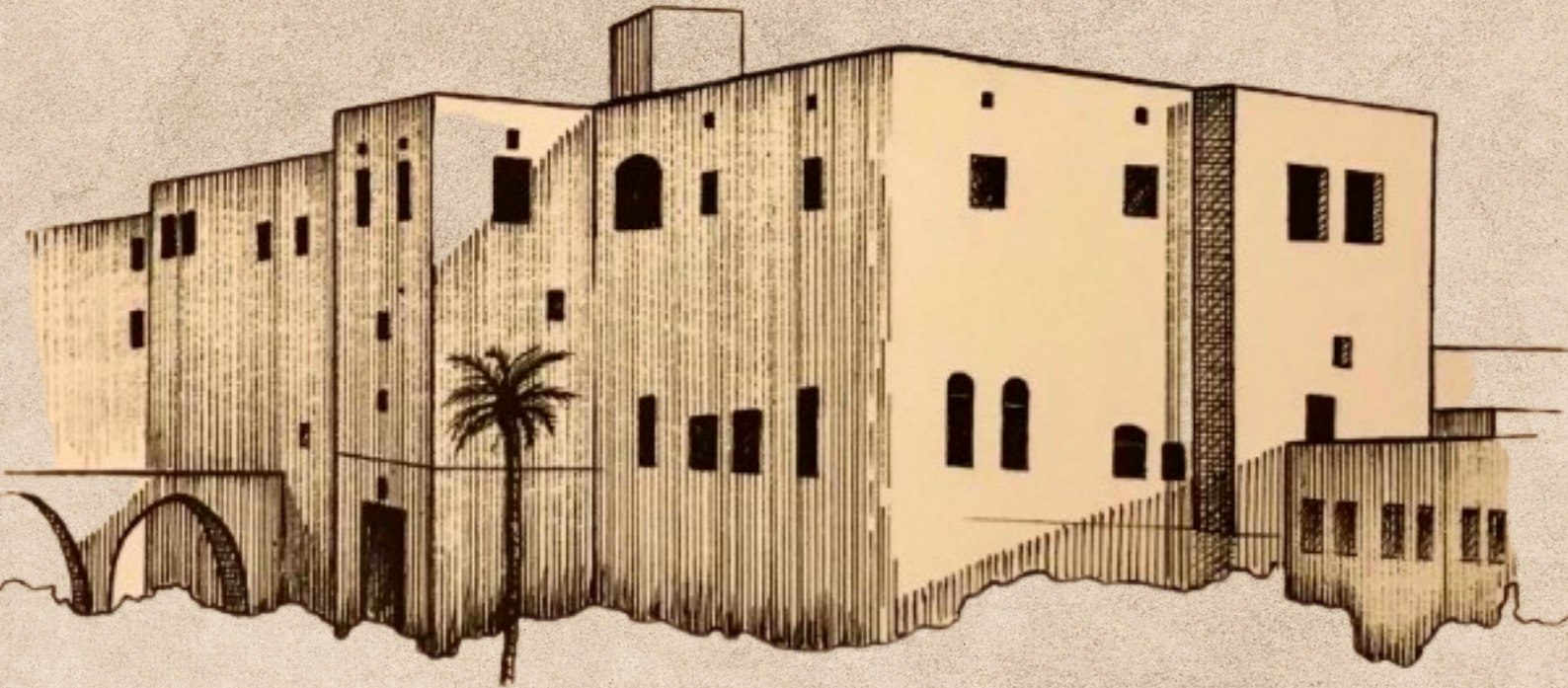


بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

# BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

**Provisional Translations**



14 JAMÁL 179 B.E

ERIC MICHOT

Personal Selection Volume IV

About translations:

Translations are identified by three categories: **authoritative translations** are those prepared either by the Guardian or by a committee of translators, as in the 1992 edition of the Aqdas; authorized translations are those produced by individuals but published in official, vetted Baha'i publications, as in translations by Habib Taherzadeh or Marzieh Gail printed under the "Baha'i World Center" **imprimatur**, or translations published in Baha'i World or Star of the West; **provisional translations** are those produced by individuals on their own, are usually not published, and are rarely edited or peer-reviewed.

[Wilmette Institute notes on the Tablets of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh](#)

by Jonah Winters

“Individual believers [Bahá'ís] are free to translate into English any of the Holy Writings for their own use. Such translations may also be issued electronically, and may be published in circulars or journals without review by anyone other than the editors of the publications, but they must, in all cases, be clearly labeled as “provisional translations.”

Policies Governing Authorized and Provisional Translations of the Bahá'í Holy writings into English and their Publication. (4 July 1999)

Personal note:

Although we are truly blessed with having access to a vast number of authorized translations, to me, there remains a need for provisional translations that are of the highest quality for those who are yearning to immerse themselves in the Ocean that is the Revelation of His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh.

It is my hope that these personal compilations of selected provisional translations are solely considered as such, provisional translations, and not as authoritative translations.

That being said, God willing, these provisional translations and the research notes generously provided by the translators will nonetheless avail many pearls and gems to those who are taking the time to explore and read them.

With loving Bahá'ís greetings

Eric Michot



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**A TABLET BY BAHÁ'U'LLÁH  
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REVELATION**



# Mathnaviyí-i Mubárah

Bahá'u'lláh

Provisional translation by Frank Lewis

Published in Bahá'í Studies Review, 9

London: Association for Bahá'í Studies English-Speaking Europe, 1999

Originally revealed as "Mathnaviyí-i Mubárah" in Persian.

He is the Most Glorious!

You!

Life-force of God's throne, compassion's sun!

Time's universe has birthed no light like Yours!

1

From seeing God, creation's eyes are barred, [1]

or in few words I'd show the Unseen world

2

that all souls might pledge fealty to You [2]

that every heart become a thrall to You

3

that all the world grow drunk and mad with love,  
with both hands offering up their willing souls;

4

Pride of the age!  
Just state the word, Your Cause, [3]  
and they'll lay scattered at Your blessed feet

5

Raise up Your sunny head above souls' peaks  
that all from every point may see You plain

6

Reveal that face bright as the orb of night [4]  
make verdant with Your grace this withered straw

7

From Your ocean, heaven's rivers ask one drop [5]  
Let flow paradise, since You are Lord and King!

8

The atoms beg their share of light from You:  
through Your unquestioned boundless grace, illumine!

9

The seeds turn up their mouths unto the heavens  
hoping for Your gifts: anointing glory [6]

10

Rain the droplets of Your mercy on them  
O Ruler of the realms, King of the Throne!

11

Rend through these curtains of a hundred folds  
Regale us now with glimpses of Your face

12

Pile up provisions for us through Your grace,  
for Your munificence is past all doubt.

13

Make our West light up with global dawn [7]  
Spice this drink with cheer like vintage wine

14

Light up the heart's light with the shafts of light [8]  
that they may see in Your face Sinai's lights

15

Unsheathe the dagger of Divinity  
and swiftly slay those hostile to Your Faith



16

Stoke your Lordly fire, incinerate  
the heretics who war against You

17

They are nocturnal bats; but raise Your head,  
O Sun of day, and burn all dark away

18

Clarify this vintage of grief-tainted dregs [9]  
Light up this candle which the night oppressed

19

You stood up in our soul, the world arose [10]  
to make clear through Your cause "Be and it was" [11]

20

Soul's glory! [12] in remembrance of Your face  
I'll speak whole volumes of Your character

21

to rouse with wisdom all the spirits  
to see who'll pay the price for Your love's pearl

22

I'll strike a conflagration through the world,  
consume the veils concealing heaven's holies

23

I'll lead the Mystic Maiden from her veil,  
draw back the curtain from the hidden light

24

I'll give a hint, since You've returned in spirit,  
Of Love's eternal unseen mystery

25

Soar, fiery bird, through exposition's heaven[13]  
till no more sign of being can be seen

26

Purify these envy-riddled hearts  
Guide these consciences which lack all compass [14]

27

Let those heedless, Great One, of Your covenant,  
sip the ancient chalice to regain their wits,

28

to transport us with Your melodies, my Friend,  
past rubrics like "intoxicated," "sober"

29

Heraldic angel of Bahá! Spirit's Lord! [15]  
Inspire the dead with new vitality

30

He is that primal tree branched from the heart  
redeem Him from earthmire, from air and water

31

that He, released, may transcend form and matter,  
His candle may set solar stars ablaze

32

Plant this tender sapling in the heart's soil  
and keep it sacred, safe from sun or shade: [16]

33

protect it from contrariness of wind,  
set free from pagan supposition's hold,

34

make strong and firm its roots in soil of soul,  
and raise its branches past the firmament

35

Bring anew a new green spring for all to see  
raise up the dead for Your Resurrection

36

Love's oceans all are surging with Your tide,  
immortal birds through Your awareness know

37

From Spirit's Egypt send us that coat's scent [17]

Reveal right here the burning bush of Moses [18]

38

Your face, my Beauty, sets the spring in motion

and with it, spring brings countless mystic truths: [19]

39

Each rose, an album of the beautiful Friend

Each heart He fills with God's Edenic grace [20]

40

No fall will ever overtake such springs [21]

all flowers circumambulate round Him

41

Such spring as this the soul cannot conceive

Such spring as this reanimates the spirits

42

For fair-faced youths the mortal springs bring ardour,

while such a spring as this brings love of God

43

Mortal springs will wane and fade out in the end

Such springs as this we designate "immortal"

44

Earthly spring arrives in nature's season

This spring basks in light from His breath-taking face [22]

45

Those earthly springs bring forth the tulip buds

This spring ethereal now fills up with wails [23]

46

The eternal spring which shines in this King's light

illumines vistas of God's court and throne [24]

47

All cross the threshold of His court's Pavilion;

You of insight, look, if you have eyes, and see!

48

When our King casts the veil from off His face,

eternal springs will blossom in the skies [25]

49

When our Friend casts the cover from His face,

eternal springs will shine with undimmed glory

50

His face in springs eternal bathes us all

– No garden's rose can draw our eyes from Him

51

His remembrance blots out thought of treasure [26]

His daystar makes us shine throughout the world

52

Should breezes touch us from His pleasant spring,

you'll see Joseph after Joseph come in view

53

Should breezes reach us from this rosy bower,

you'll see Josephs of the spirit fill the world

54

You'll see the bodies seeming just like souls

- the souls confirmed by victories all the time

55

In the Beloved's sacred springtime sing

countless expositions; yet who can hear? [27]

56

Such Exposition transcends any tongue;

how could these nobodies grasp its meaning? [28]

57

This Exposition's not just words and sound -

this Exposition's life itself, undying

58

You'll see the lovers in this endless spring,  
a million strong, freely offer up their lives [29]

59

This is the Spring of Spiritual Might,  
the holy vernal tidings of the Lord

60

If this zephyr's breeze wafts over you  
your fleeting soul will drain the immortal cup

61

If breezes touch you from the Friend's abode,  
give life – which comes from Him – in sacrifice

62

See this Spring's tulips of unicity, [30]  
the Friend's locks: hyacinths of sanctity.

63

Buds of mystic knowledge line this stream bank,  
all turn longingly in search of Him [31]

64

Its cypress trees evoke that Darling's stature,  
Its leaves a book depicting our Friend's cheeks,

65

Its ringdoves drunk on beauty of the Friend,  
Its nightingales on cups of "Am I not" [32]

66

The songbirds in desire of tryst with Him  
all drunk on breezes of the grace of "He" [33]

67

This nightingale's soft melody, if heard, [34]  
would purge creation's souls of jealousy

68

The seas of meaning surge with Exposition  
The Ark of Being rides this bounty's crest [35]

69

Every wind-flower blooming in this spring [36]  
tells countless truths and mysteries of that Friend

70

The Friend's dark locks emit a fragrant musk!  
His hand of bounty showers you with gifts

71

Like salamanders in the fire, His curls; [37]  
they coil about the fire of the Friend's face



72

The holy songbird, separate from the Friend,  
burns up both skin and marrow with laments

73

Should it heave a sigh in separation's throes  
it would inflame the souls of the elect

74

(The elect alone enjoy a share of this –  
so from such bounteous grace take warmth, my friend!) [38]

75

Waft from the soul Your scent of musk divine  
that these degenerates may catch sweet hints

76

This is the spring of endless spirit  
- not a spring soon chased away by autumn

77

In this holy springtide, spirit blossoms  
in its atmosphere, the light of Noah shines

78

It boards the passengers into the Ark [39]  
and grants each one of them untold dominion

79

Beauty of God! Emerge from out the veil,  
so that the sun may rise up in the west! [40]

80

Unseal the musk of God's own privileged knowledge  
Open treasure chests of mysteries unseen –

81

so that the dead discern Your scent of musk  
so that Your wine will stir the numb to mirth

82

Through kind largesse, clothe in Your robe of Might [41]  
this Meek one of the earth of unity

83

This fleeting one – outfit in garb immortal  
This abject wretch – give taste of honied riches

84

That He might step out fully from the curtain  
and rend contingent being's veil to shreds,

85

intoxicated and impelled, emerge,  
like a candle in the glass of "they return" [42]

86

It was in Your garden that this thistle grew,  
so make through it a thousand gardens bloom [43]

87

Upon each garden, then, inscribe a name  
and write the ancient secrets on each leaf

88

that Your face may beam with rays resplendent  
and fill the earth and heavens with Your light

89

Waft over them with mercy's generous breeze;  
Tear from this afflicted one all heedless veils [44]

90

Grant, bright-miened Sovereign, to the spirits pure  
the sheltering shade of Your Divine Lote tree

91

Unlock for them a Gate [45] to Ridván's meaning [46]  
For God's sake! do not bar this Gate to them

92

that I may step unveiled into the world,  
expound upon one of Your righteous signs

93

He said: By God, by God, my righteous man,  
don't tell the ignorant the signs of Truth!

94

God, God! O Tongue of God! Tell this secret  
soft and slow, have patience with the people;

95

perchance Your grace may take them by the hand  
and free them from all fear of this and that

96

Stretch the wings of meaning, fly aloft,  
soar through the spheres of nearness unto Him,

97

near Him in spirit, not by taking steps  
Strive with soul and enter realms eternal

98

To thus traverse the heavens in a flash  
is easy if you bow your head in prayer

99

In Exposition of this let me speak –  
that from the Fount of Life you quaff your share

100

and reach the Riván of eternity  
and find your way to where you meet with God

101

and fathom what is meant by "Cross the earth" [47]  
and soar like spirit through His atmosphere -

102

Since at this moment you're enmeshed in clay,  
How can you sense the scent of heart's Ridván?

103

Strip yourself of all restriction's garments  
and sanctify your soul from limitation

104

Illumine your heart's darkness with His light  
Make yourself in spirit's realm the leader

105

Your darkness once dispelled, His light arises;  
His Sinai's rays will sparkle on your heart [48]

106

Once night comes to an end, the morning dawns  
Majestic breezes of the spirit blow

107

You are, and your corrupted soul, that darkness [49]  
God's self-revelation, your Water of Life

108

Just pass beyond the darkness of your self;  
you'll quaff, always refreshed, the wine of life

109

Then step into the shade of Soul's own Khezzr [50]  
that from the realms of darkness you'll be freed

110

The Khezzr of old drank deep, was freed from death  
while this new Khezzr grants countless founts of life

111

To all He has bestowed the water of life  
To the sole King, he's sacrificed his soul!

112

That Khezzr through striving finally arrived;  
This Khezzr at once made fountains flow with life

113

That Khezzr ran after traces of the fount  
This Khezzr is chased each step by flowing founts

114

Return, O spirit's Glory,[118] from this trek,  
and so hunt down a million meanings more!

115

Don't hunt the vagrant beasts, leave them to their graves! [119]  
Capture mystic meaning's prize on Sinai's plain

116

You hunted lovers' souls down on the plains  
till all souls passed beyond the plane of Being.

117

You have no chance to tell the nightingale,  
O King of All, of secrets of the Rose [120]

118

Let a bird fly from the falconer's forearm  
and bring back mysteries from the farther realms

119

And now hunt for the mystic bird of meaning; [121]  
Open a treasure with the key of "Be" [122]

120

The promise that you made, fulfill it now,  
you whose light has brightened earth and heaven!

121

Deck the world with Your spring's vernal verdure;  
make Eden envious of Your own Ridván

122

Of Truth, make blossom fields of wind-flowers  
within this atmosphere of soul's springtide

123

So make each rose a nightingale's sign  
To all the kings explain the heart's rose [123]

124

For at this moment there are strangers here  
(though stranger here and confidant are one) [124]

125

O morning breeze, from tresses of the Friend  
bring fragrances of spiritual musk

126

O clouds of spiritual bounty, rain  
so that the shells may all engender pearls

127

The mysteries divine: deciphered, shown!  
The meaning "cross the earth" is mentioned, told! [125]



128

Then, you who're drunk on chalices of pride,  
exchange your fiery selfish souls for light,

129

and cross the span of earth with just one breath [126]  
to win release from confines of your cage

130

Till you enter in the shelter of the Friend,  
you've no conception of what's pith, what's husk

131

Your legs of meaning stand quagmired in mud,  
ignorant of His fair and radiant face [127]

132

Once harbored in the King of soul's soft shadow  
it's time to uproot heart from worldly earth

133

For a while at first in dust you wallowed  
but in the end you pass beyond the sun

134

See how, sojourner, you crossed spirit's worlds  
in an instant without lifting up a foot!

135

Now fragrance from sweet meadows of the soul  
wafts by, perfuming us and earth in scent

136

Again that bounteous Riván's soulful musk  
wafts by, and blows away all things that were

137

Of "heed" and "heedlessness" we here lose hold  
Both drunk and sober have been carried off

138

Sobriety erased, effacement fades [128] –  
The drunk finds wits, no sober one remains

139

Whatever names and ways the world once had  
have been proved fleeting since my King appeared

140

For Names, though striving towards Him for an age,  
could never comprehend His smallest station

141

All that your eye and ear have seen and heard,  
sure guide,[129] above all that, He's holier.

142

Then how with ear and eye of insight void  
perceive the inner mystery of the Beloved?

143

Open your eye anew to the new Friend [130]  
Clear your inner ear, then listen!

144

Ignorant eyes see nothing but the dust,  
Gnostic eyes see primordial secrets

145

Gnostic eyes see down the road a million years –  
Ignorant eyes can't see the King's own face! [131]

146

Once someone posed this question to a gnostic:  
O you, who've grasped the mysteries of God

147

O you, by bounty's wine intoxicate,  
do you recall the day of "Am I not?" [132]

148

He said: I do recall that sound, those words, [133]  
as if it were but yesterday, no less! [134]

149

It lingers ever in my ears, His call,  
that sweet, soul-vivifying voice of His. [135]

150

Another gnostic, who had climbed beyond, [136]  
had bored the mystic pearls divine, replied:

151

That day of God has never ended nor  
has fallen short, we're living in that day! [137]

152

His day's unending, not pursued by night –  
That we're alive on such a day's not strange

153

Had Time's Soul ceased its yearning for this day,  
then Heaven's court and throne would fall to dust

154

For through God's power this eternal day  
was made unending by His Majesty.

155

Then you, my dear, please heed this paradox  
and mind the counsels of God's mysteries,

156

that you may find soul's nurture in His wisdom,  
your life be for His face a sacrifice

157

that you may always hear His melodies  
and deeply drain the chalice of His grace

158

that you may comprehend love's mysteries,  
quaff Love's rejuvenating streams of wine [138]

159

I'll never flinch from riff-raffs' brandished swords  
though infidels may slay me over and over

160

From the start my soul drank deep Your vintage  
At last I'll give my life to Your remembrance

161

O Bahá! Kindle once again the fire,  
burn up earth's learning and investigation

162

and clean its soul of worldly qualities;  
unlock one symbol of the hidden mysteries,

163

cast a wave up from the depths of mystic seas  
and crack the Ark of superficiality

164

Pour out a glass that frees me from myself,  
that I, like champions,[139] may slash through veils.

165

You, through whose name the Tree of Life bears fruit,  
whose hand wields manifest the powers of Truth,

166

A world entire in Your palm's destiny  
tumultuous now, grows tranquil by Your plan

167

Light up, bright King, this candle and through it,  
illuminate the various directions.

168

This lantern flame which You've illumined  
and protected in protection's glass, [140]

169

with magnanimity's oil You've succoured it  
and tapered it with wicks of God's Command -

170

Protect it, then, from all oppression's winds  
that Your irradiant light may shine through it

171

Make hands of enemies fall short of it,  
Orb of command! Of "We, in truth," the King! [141]

172

Look at your candle, how it's buffeted  
by calamitous contrary winds!

173

It's through Your beauty's rays it gets its light  
let no contingency, then, snuff it out

174

Since You have kindled it, then quench it not  
Since You have made it quick, extinguish not

175

You whose kindness makes a mote into a sun,  
whose wrath reduces lions into sparrows,

176

Your candle, O Creator, stands exposed  
by harsh winds buffeted from every side

177

If You wish, even water turns to fire  
but if You don't, the fire itself turns cold

178

Through Your wisdom, demons turn to angels  
Through Your command, hell's fire turns into light

179

Should You wish, the winds will work like oil,  
will make the spirits blaze and give off light [142]

180

O Bahá'u'lláh, how fierce Your fire!  
it burns the lovers' beings all to stubble

181

You struck the hearts with one spark from the flame  
and set afire whole forests on Sinai

182

So, from each heart You've conjured burning bushes: [143]  
O Moses, here it is! come running fast,

183

behold the meaning of the fire of God  
and free yourselves from the grip of the Egyptians!



184

O Sacrifice of God,[144] do not forsake  
love's altar; give your life in paths of love!

185

Come soul-shorn and headlorn to the Friend's lane,  
thus worthy of the folk whose realm this is.

186

Spirit of God![145] Step in the vale of love[146]  
walk the road, blaze a trail, the Cross in tow [147]

187

Above the skies and physical ascent [148]  
climb, King of soul and body's Jubilation!

188

You're spirit's nightingale on spirit's rose  
Won't you please, O Host of spirit, return?

189

Your home, Spirit-Falcon: the King's forearm –  
so aim directly for your home right here!

190

You, likewise, Noah, break the body's Ark  
and hurl yourself into the Sea of Light!

191

Don't seek self-preservation; Drown this self!  
then you'll come up for air in God's embrace [149]

192

Seek out the King's protection, not the ship's  
– the King's preserve will then provide refuge

193

You, too, hasten Moses, come to Soul's Sinai!  
Forget your cloak and sandals, rush unrobed! [150]

194

that you may know the mysteries of that Fire  
which flames from each lock of the Loved One's hair

195

His locks a fire that burn the soul of love –  
both faith and unbelief and love's set ways -

196

His locks a fire that dance on Mount Párán [151]  
The back of Time's bent by His curly strands

197

O Dove,[152] leave now the tale of Fire's mysteries  
Don't bring the pearls of Soul before the blind –

198

This Staff[153] – the Hand of Truth wields as a sword  
and cuts contingent outward forms to shreds

199

All other staffs[154] are hewn from orchard tree  
but this Staff's brought to be through Truth's command

200

Those staffs in stuff like clay and water grow;  
Behold this Staff, composed of hot heart's fire!

201

This Staff is a consuming fire whose flame  
burns through the veils of falsehood, counterfeit

202

This Staff's the wind that smote the folk of Hud [155]  
first sifting faithful out from infidel

203

This Staff became an ark in Noah's age  
and then in Jesus' time to spirit changed

204

O Moses, you must rush to Soul's Sinai –  
Your fire roars with animated flames

205

Forget the sandals! fly through spirit's realm  
like wind, and leave belief and soul behind

206

(O Bird-soul, fly beyond ephemeral space  
to feast eternal with cherubs rosy-cheeked) [156]

207

The fire of Moses flares in His Lote tree [157]  
His breaths respire with hosts of Christ-like spirits

208

That Moses saw the fire on Sinai glow  
This Moses saw his soul ablaze with fire

209

(Upon the Mount of Soul full many creeds [158]  
are manifest like branches lade with fruit)

210

God's Mount, His breast; the Friend's bright flame, His fire  
Snow-white, His hand; and Sinai is His heart

211

(Not with the whiteness His command created,  
but whiteness that itself creates Command!)

212

Now, in this age, Love's Mount Párán [159] appears  
as our Friend rends the veil from off His face

213

The scent of soul now permeates the air  
but I know not from where this fragrance comes

214

I do know, though, the tresses of the Friend  
draw souls forth with their scent to sacrifice

215

The musk of God has been released, unsealed –  
His memory brought our souls to share a secret

216

Blow, breeze of spiritual morning, soft –  
Blow, sacred zephyr of the Merciful

217

Intoxicate the souls with your aroma  
bear them up past being's world to "Am I not" [160]

218

The Immortal Phoenix from the Mount of Faith [161]  
has winged its way into the infinite [162]

219

and crossed at single stroke the world's horizons  
through confirmations from the Spirit-King

220

Now from the Friend's Throne once again it comes  
and infinite the melodies it sings

221

His rosy face makes dead of winter spring  
His lips of ruby make the night daybright

222

His tresses make the lovers suffer long  
His absence brings beloveds abject need

223

His hair lassoes brave champions by the neck  
The head of God's hosts wounded by His shafts

224

His lips rob every lover's soul of wit  
the souls of kings for union with Him yearn

225

The eye of inner soul – look well, you'll see –  
was made to light up by His beauty

226

Had it not been for His eye, the founts of light  
would not have sprung or flowed throughout the world

227

His rose brings ample gardens into blossom  
His cheeks abloom with inner meaning's roses

228

Where He dwells, Moses' fire seeks its light  
In His face, the soul of Christ seeks spirit

229

From behind the veil should He but step one night,  
He'll light a hundred worlds up like the sun

230

What's night, if not the dark tress of that beauty?  
What's morn, if not the light of that Friend's face?

231

Each and every monarch in Love's city  
has scattered for the sake of love his soul

232

God's beauty in His beauty stands revealed  
and from His lips the hearts quaff soulful wine

233

All the world's entangled in His hair  
their wounded chests all heave in pain for Him

234

When the Zulaykhá of Beauty saw that face  
in the place of her hand, she cut her heart [163]

235

He blew with just one breath of His own spirit  
and brought a million Christ-like spirits to life

236

But this does not describe Him – just His light,  
from which you, who're made of attributes, draw life [164]

237

But find a way His beauty to describe,  
and you will cross a thousand seas of meaning

238

One ray, devout one, being thus described,  
imagine the description of Himself!

239

When the lover's eye espied His beauty,  
it cut all heart-ties to this world and beyond



240

The wave of love's seas surges with His wave  
Love's phoenix finds its zenith in His heights

241

Your eye receives its light from His, and so  
to turn to any other's a dark deed

242

Since the soul's eye takes its light from Him,  
what shame were it to light upon another!

243

Your eye came into sight from Truth's own eye  
to see naught but His beauty in the world

244

(I tell this mystery sotto voce, friend;  
I bore this pearl in secret, kind companion!

245

that the evil eye may never touch Him  
that the stranger may not find the way to Him)

246

Perceive this in your limbs and members, all;  
Cast off the fetters of the folk of darkness

247

For your ear has heard His mystic melodies,  
and hearkened to His music's soulful secrets [165]

248

Now that the handiwork divine's revealed,  
turn your eyes to it and from all worldly folk

249

Look to the world with His eye, if you can [166] –  
a thousand realms of meaning you will see

250

His eye perceives no thing except God's face  
His bird takes perch nowhere except His lane

251

With Him united, lovers' souls burn up;  
their hearts, in separation, blaze with flame

252

So both in separation and reunion  
the life-lorn, soul-shorn lover burns, my son! [167]

253

Then know that love of Truth is your companion  
that you may soar away from worldly trappings

254

Love means a letting go of mortal life  
to claim with heart and soul eternity

255

Seek to hear the secret meaning, if you can, [168]  
that you may make divine ascent to God, [169]

256

that spirit's harvest grow upon your palm tree,  
and give forth luminous and sacred fruits

257

O Breeze, bring us fragrance from His tresses  
Clouds, sprinkle on us showers of His grace [170]

258

that the meadows of His lovers' souls  
may bring forth Love's most beautiful tulips

259

The throne of God is but the lover's heart [171]  
which has been purified of all but Him

260

Once His House, through love of such a heart, was raised [172]  
Both House and Him within the House were hid [173]

261

Know this, O youth! His House resides in hearts  
and was not raised upon mere stone and clay [174]

262

And when His light has bathed and cleansed your heart  
your heart becomes His seat – it's His Sinai!

263

God's House, a Lover now from head to toe,  
shines ever effulgent with the Beloved

264

When Love returns, the veil of reason burns; [175]  
of virtue, knowledge, gnosis, harvests burn

265

Since none but Him is in the House, my son,  
from wall to wall know all is His command

266

Know, then, your eye and ear and hand from Him  
and He will see for you and take your hand

267

The gnostic soul, His highest temple, [176]  
and the mystic treasures of His close approach [177]

268

And now a new way must be found, my son –  
this counsel you must heed with all your soul –

269

So rise beyond reunion/separation [178]  
until you reach the precincts of the Source [179]

270

Separated, you're as sure as in the fire;  
reunited with Him, you are febrile, ill

271

Enter the pure and everlasting realm,  
the plane where all but Him do fade away [180]

272

If you have read the Hadíth "There was God" [181]  
then you know secrets of "There's naught but Him" [182]

273

Walk this path with striving feet to free yourself  
from either care: the Friend's absence or union

274

When you sense for sure the spirit's mystery –  
that there is nothing anywhere but God

275

then wash away in spirit's stream the mire  
that you may see the Pure One's emanations

276

that you may see reunion in reunion  
that you may see your heart with Beauty shine

277

Such union never will be contradicted  
such union never ends in separation

278

If you've an ear for fatherly advice,  
both are blasphemy: reunion, absence!

279

Fly, regal bird, from either consequence [183]  
into His, the Sovereign's, sphere of Unity

280

But I fear your feet will lose their footing,  
that evil suppositions cloud your mind

281

I must explain the meaning for you,  
uproot satanic whisperings from your heart

282

free you from games, evil, hauteur, unrest  
lest this exposition[184] tempt you into pride

283

Know this: His emanations are reunion  
which shine within you endless, unconditioned

284

Within you He has placed His light, in trust; [185]  
Strive hard to make it become manifest!

285

Then in yourself, my sweet, seek union with Him  
and you'll no longer feel the Friend's absence

286

You are yourself the storehouse of God's treasure,  
yet heedless, you chase after this and that [186]

287

Until His attributes appear in you,  
know yourself as lost, in separation

288

His bounty has not left you portionless  
of His names and ways and qualities, o sage!

289

Through His grace, He's opened gates unto you  
do not, like ingrates, close those opened gates [187]

290

Since you have heard the reed pipe's plaint of love, [188]  
recognize it now renewed this day through love

291

You've heard the reed pipe sing, now look Who plays it  
(or you'll stay wholly heedless of the King!)

292

The Piper felt a stranger to the world  
and so He donned the reed pipe as His veil [189]

293

Tear off the veil then from your face, at last  
and show alone the Piper to the world

294

Slice the veils to pieces like a champion [190]  
to show God, the Giver's, effulgence revealed

295

Cry out pipe-like in your separation  
until the Piper makes new pact with you



296

At the clarion call of spirit's Piper  
all simmering lovers' breasts begin to boil

297

With this reed pipe's sighs light conflagrations  
to purge the world of egotism's trace

298

When all the scum burns off the creed of Self  
pure reed alone remains within the world [191]

299

Your eye, lit with His light – O you who know! –  
at last can see, perceives alone the Piper

300

So listen to the mysteries of the Piper,  
that you inhale these roses' sweet fragrance!

301

A single spark of His love's fire caught hold  
and scorched the royal harvest of existence

302

When Beauty drew the curtain from His face  
it tore away each sovereign's veils of glory [192]

303

As if eyelashes were arrows, that Darling  
cast His glance, pierced breast bones in the monarch's soul

304

swift struck the regal crown from off his head [193]  
enslaving him, reducing him to fetters [194]

305

Like prey he fell into the hunter's hands [195]  
Like straw, snatched up by wind, thrown down to dust [196]

306

Will no messenger be heading to Iraq,  
to tell of parting's pain, separation's tale? [197]

307

Wrenched from you, fervent pining souls are scorched  
Separation's arrows pierce the hearts of kings

308

Between you and I, city of spirit,  
a million mythic mountains intervene

309

No messenger have I but fire-hot sighs  
Unless the zephyr's breeze can spread the news

310

My hand cannot attain the date-palm's fruit  
My soul's eyes weep deep seas in separation

311

O Zephyr, fly off now from the Beloved  
waft sweetly to the exiles of Baghdad [198]

312

and ask: City of the Lord!  
How sit still, now that the Friend's departed from your side?

313

Your lover languishes away in prison, [199]  
suffering like Husayn on plains of Karbalâ: [200]

314

One Husayn, untold Yazîds have hemmed him in! [201]  
One Friend, and hostile demons all around, [202]

315

Like Moses held among the folk of Egypt,  
or God's Spirit detained among the Jews, [203]

316

or cast like Joseph deep into the well –  
that endless pit from which there's no way out.

Your nightingale's afflicted in a cage! [204]  
 Bars keep him in, almost choking out His breath...

### End Notes

See the Koran, 7:143. Moses asks God to reveal Himself in person, to which God replies "thou shalt not see Me." Instead, God reveals his majesty on a mountain, which splits apart from the force of the Lord's mysterium tremendum, knocking Moses unconscious.

"Fealty" to be read as three syllables: fé-al-ty.

One meaning of the noun *amr* (plural *avâmer*) is "command," "order;" this meaning occurs in Bahá'í theology to distinguish between the realm of God's command (*amr*) and the contingent realm of creation (*khalq*). However, *amr* also has the meaning of "cause," "affair" (plural *omur*), as in the phrase "The Cause of God" (*Amr Allâh*). I have attempted to preserve both meanings by rendering "word" and "cause." Literally, the line appears to suggest that as soon as God's cause is revealed, or as soon as God commands, all will respond to that announcement with exuberant joy. i.e., the moon, which in the dark, pre-electrified skyline, was an impressive sight dominating the nightscape, and compared frequently in Persian poetry to the beautiful, radiant face of the beloved, which likewise dominated and illumined the field of vision of the lover.

*Qatre mi-juyad ze bahr-at kowsari*: This could also be understood as: the drop seeks from Your ocean heaven's stream.

Glory here renders "Bahá", a double meaning alluding to Bahá'u'lláh himself. Thus the earth's face turns to heaven, hoping that in the absence of the Báb, God will send down Bahá, in a shower of glory.

Among the signs of the Day of Resurrection and the appearance of the Qá'im is sometimes included that the sun would rise from the west.

We are probably meant to understand a double meaning for núr in this line: both light, and the place from which Bahá'u'lláh's family came, Núr. The line literally reads, Give núr to the núr of the heart with the lights of Núr.

The word "d-r-d" can be read as "dard" or "dord", meaning respectively "pain" or "dregs." Either one could make sense here, but the verb used here, to purify or clarify (sâf kardan), suggests a wine image, clearing the cask of dregs before pouring it out. In this case the "wine" of divine revelation is adulterated with the dregs of grief, perhaps over the martyrdom of the Báb or the exile of Bahá'u'lláh.

Qá'im is the word translated as "arose." This line, and indeed the entire strophe, would appear to be addressed to the Báb, and alludes to his station as Imami Shiism's promised Qá'im, one who would arise to fight for the Cause of 'Alí and Husayn, and their descendants. Literally, the line would mean "a world arises to its feet for you, the Qá'im, just as you stand tall within our hearts and soul."

The phrase kun fa yakûn appears several times in the Koran (e.g., 2:117), meaning that God wills a thing by speaking it, and it comes to be; literally, God commands "Be," and it comes to be. In Bahá'u'lláh's poem the phrase is alluded to, but it appears as kun fa kân, using the imperative and then the past tense of the verb "to be" in order to complete the rhyme with jân. The word "amr" can mean Cause or command, so we can understand either "so that there will appear from your command of 'Be and it Was'," or, as I have preferred, "so that there will appear from your Cause/religion 'Be and it Was.'"

The word translated here as "glory" is again Bahá, but this word could also mean the indemnity or compensation paid to the family of a slain person (khun-bahâ, "blood-money"). Thus, we could understand this to mean something like "Redemption of the soul," the compensation one receives for having offered his or her life.

Exposition renders the word Bayán, which can have an ordinary meaning, but which could also be taken as an allusion to the two books by that name of the Báb, one in Persian, one in Arabic.

The poetic convention typically calls for the second instance of a word in a given line of Persian verse to have a different meaning; hence the second occurrence of qalb here should have a meaning other than the usual "heart." Qalb can also mean "conscience" (and "inversion," among other things), as well as false coin. The text in *Âsâr-e qalam-e a'lâ* reads naqd kon, meaning to assay or test the purity of a metal coin. The *Mishkín Qalam* text is inconclusive, because of blotches on this line, but it also appears to read naqd kon. One is therefore tempted to read this as "Assay these unwatched-over consciences," or "Assay the mettle of these wandering values."

However, the word bi-rasad ("unwatched" or "wandering" in the above renderings) suggests an association with astronomy, rather than one with counterfeit coinage (The 1914/1332 text of Faraj Allâh Zakiy al-Kordi reads bi-rasad with the letter sin rather than with sâd, which seems to be a mistake).

Dr. Khazeh Fananapazir has informed me that in his family recitation tradition of this poem, the first word has been read as naqdh kon, with a dot over the dâl. This reading makes more sense, as naqdh kon would mean to deliver, save, lead out of trouble, and it has a Koranic basis. For example, Koran 3:103 (a verse in which the word "hearts" [qulûb] also occurs earlier), concludes as follows: "You were on the edge of a pit of fire, and God led you from it. Thus does God make clear to you His signs, that you may be guided." The idea of guidance or deliverance fits better with the astronomical rasad, for sailors and caravan drivers would navigate at night by the stars and be saved from perdition. In view of the flight imagery in the previous line, it seems particularly appropriate. For these reasons I have opted to read naqdh kon, "to deliver," and qalb in the meaning of "conscience." A conclusive resolution

of the matter would, however, require an examination of the most authoritative manuscripts of the poem.

Esrâfil (cognate with the Hebrew "Seraphim") is the angel who will blow the trumpet on the Day of Resurrection, according to Islamic apocalyptic legend. I have translated "Heraldic Angel" here, as the allusion would seem to be to the Báb announcing the advent of Him Whom God would make manifest.

Mírzá Haydar-'Alí wrote to 'Abdu'l-Bahá asking about the Master's station as appointed interpreter of Bahá'u'lláh's writings. In the course of this letter, Haydar-'Alí quotes about thirty lines from the "Blessed Couplets" of Bahá'u'lláh (from lines 25 to 41 and again from lines 147 to 157), including this one, which uses the word *aghsán* for branches, a word that Bahá'u'lláh later used in the singular in many tablets to refer to his sons, designating 'Abdu'l-Bahá as the Most Great Branch (*Ghusn-i A'zam*) and Mírzá Muhammad-'Alí as the Greater Branch (*Ghusn-i Akbar*). In reply to Haydar-'Alí, 'Abdu'l-Bahá replies insisting that his station is that of servitude to Bahá'u'lláh, and that by *Expounder of the text* (*mobayyen-e mansus*) is meant interpreter of [his father's] words (*mofasser-e kalemât*). In the end of the reply, 'Abdu'l-Bahá quotes this line of the *Mathnavíy-i Mubáarak* and insists that he seeks no titles, stations, praises or other distinctions, but as the verse suggests, he flees from both the sun and shade of fame. A facsimile of both Haydar-'Alí's letter and 'Abdu'l-Bahá's response can be seen in Mohammad-'Ali Fayzi, *Hayât-e Hazrat-e 'Abd al-Bahâ*, 3rd edition (Langenhain, 1994) 58-61.

An allusion to the scent of Joseph's coat, which was sent to his father, the blind Jacob, to prove that Joseph was still alive. The scent of this coat, proving that his son was still alive, restored Jacob's sight to him.

"Burning Bush" for *Sidrih*, as in *sidratu'l-muntahá* of the Koran, which designates the tree that marked Muhammad's utmost approach to God on his ascension into the heavens. It is translated by Shoghi Effendi as the Divine Lote Tree (beyond which

there is no passing), or sometimes rendered in transliteration: Sadratu'l-Muntahá (Gleanings, 70). In the Persian Hidden Words, #7, Sedre-ye ertefâ'-e 'eshq is rendered as "the celestial Tree of love."

Here, however, as in the rest of Bahá'u'lláh's Mathnaví (see, e.g., lines 182-3 and 208, and the notes that go with them), Moses' burning bush and the Divine Lote Tree are identified etymologically and theophanically, symbolizing the sacred nearness of the divine presence in revealing itself to the Manifestations. For an excellent study of this motif in Jewish, Islamic and Bahá'í scripture, see Stephen Lambden, "The Sinaitic Mysteries: Notes on Moses/Sinai Motifs in Bábí and Bahá'í scripture," in Moojan Momen, ed., *Studies in Honor of the Late Hasan M. Balyuzi* (Los Angeles: Kalimát Press, 1988) 65-183.

Mírzá Haydar-'Alí copies it as shaqâyeq âshkâr (wind-flowers evident), whereas the other texts have haqâyeq bi-shomâr (countless mystic truths). See Fayzi, *Hayât-e Hazrat-e 'Abd al-Bahá*, op. cit.

Literally, every heart through Him is made a paradisaal river (Kowsar, a river in paradise referred to in the Koran) of God's beneficence (fazl).

"Fall" here in its (American) sense of autumn. Though this may, following upon the mention of "Edenic grace" in the previous line, inadvertently create an overtone of Adam, Eve and the Serpent, the Persian original does not evoke the fall from heaven. Literally, this spring comes from the light of the face of the heart-stealer, an epithet of the typical beloved in Persian poetry, who carries with him (or her) the hearts away.

Literally, those springs bring out the tulips and these springs now have their wailing. Tulips, though associated with spring and beauty, can also suggest mourning, their red bulbs evoking the blood of those who have been laid to rest in the earth during the past year. While earthly spring is normally a time of joy, the spring of 1863 was a time of sorrow for Bahá'u'lláh's exile (compare the concluding lines of the poem).



It may not be completely impertinent here to mention that the ten days of 'Āshûrâ, the Shiite period of ritual mourning for Husayn, began in 1863 at the very end of spring; the 10th of Muharram, the day of Husayn's martyrdom, fell on 27 June in 1863.

For the meter, "ethereal" should here be read as three syllables: e-thére-al.

This suggests the scene on the plain of Resurrection, as envisioned in Islamic apocalyptic narratives.

Literally: these springs will pitch their tent upon the skies. This image of the king and his royal entourage pitching their tents on the plain is elevated here into the heavens, as something visible to the entire world.

Reading Kân here in its Persian sense of a mine of precious stones. However, the word has a different meaning in Arabic, as in the phrase mâ kân, would mean what has past. It is tempting to understand this as an ellipsis for zekr-e mâ kân, the remembrance of all that has been in the past, but the wording does not, I think, support such a reading.

"Yet who can hear" renders vali ku mahrami, literally "where is a confidant," that is a close, compatible friend who can be trusted with a secret.

"Countless expositions" renders sad bayân, which can be read, as noted earlier, as allusions to the two works of the Báb by that name. However, Bahá'u'lláh uses the phrase Rabî' al-Bayân (literally, Spring of Exposition/Bayân) in the tablet of Ridván to symbolize the advent of the new Manifestation and the renewal of the divine message (see Gleanings XIV, where Shoghi Effendi translates this phrase as "The Divine Springtime"). Both spring (rabi') and exposition (bayân) appear in this line of the Mathnaví as well, and though not paired together, would nevertheless seem to echo the passage from the Ridván tablet. That same tablet also contains the phrase rahîq al-bayân ("the wine of utterance").

Bayân means "exposition," but once again, could perhaps be understood as an allusion to the books of that name by the Báb. "These Nobodies" for in *nâ kasân*, which in Persian conveys less of a sense of social station, and more of baseness or failure to observe the standards expected of a just and noble human being.

Sad hezâr, literally 100,000, but one hundred thousand, which Shoghi Effendi often translated as "a myriad," does not denote a specific number, so much as it means "countless" or "unimaginably vast." "Million" not only fits the meter, but I think better connotes innumerable today than a more finite number like 100,000.

Towhid, the unity of God, a central doctrine of Islam, is rendered here as "unicity." Its surface meaning suggests the doctrine that God is starkly one (not multiple as in pagan belief or triune as in Christianity), and does not give birth in physical form (See Koran, Sura 112). For Muslim pietists and mystics, though, it often meant seeing God's handiwork in everything. "Sanctity," which comes in the second hemistich, renders *Tajrid*, which connotes disentangling, or abstracting, God from material and limited conception of His attributes.

The image of buds here perhaps evokes the narcissus (a daffodil-like flower, which looks something like an opened eye), typically compared in Persian poetry to the languid eye of the beloved. Unlike the Narcissus of Greek mythology, who gazed at his own reflection in the water, these blossoms of gnostic insight (*ghonche-hâ-ye ma'refat*) look longingly for the divine beloved. *Z'in tarf-e ju*, "from this bank of the stream," perhaps also hints that the search is conducted with furtive glances (*tarf-e 'ayn*), and from a distance (across the river), as the lover would transgress against modesty by staring boldly and impudently at the unattainable beloved.

This refers to a passage in the Koran (7:172), in which God asks the descendants of Adam at a primordial meeting, "Am I not your Lord," and the people reply "Yes! We testify to this." This motif occurs again in the poem at lines 148 and 218.

"He" rendering Hu, from the Arabic third person masculine pronoun meaning simply "he" (huwa). It is used among Sufis as a zekr, or meditative mantra, and appears in Persian poetic and esoteric texts as a mystical name of God, simply "He" in its most abstracted, and at the same time monistic sense, as the source of all being and existence.

"If heard" for ar zâher shavad, meaning literally, "if it is manifested." Since zâher and its derivative mazhar have a technical meaning in the writings of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh, this word here suggests the manifestation of God's message.

Lajláj suggests tossing or heaving on the depths of the sea, and, as Dr. Khazeh Fananapazir has kindly informed me, in the writings attributed to Imam 'Alí, lajláj is often paired with mavváj (surging), the word with which it rhymes in this poem. The flower here – shaqâyeq meaning anemone, peony, or as Shoghi Effendi translates it (Persian Hidden Word, #18), wind-flowers – does not seem to me to have any particular symbolic significance, but occurs because it rhymes with truths (haqâyeq).

Persian folklore holds that salamanders lived in fire. Here, the bright face of the beloved is likened to fire, while the dark curls coiling about his face are likened to salamanders.

"Friend" renders habíb, which is probably just a general apostrophe to the reader and not addressed to anyone in particular (see the note to line 253). However, "Habíb" was the title or nickname given to Jináb-i Muníb in the Súriy-i Asháb, addressed to him by Bahá'u'lláh from Edirne. Jináb-i Muníb accompanied Bahá'u'lláh from Baghdad to Istanbul and from there to Edirne, and thus was with Bahá'u'lláh during the time that the Mathnavíy-i Mubáarak was revealed. For the meter of the English, read "The elect" and "fiery" and "bounteous" all as two syllables: th' elect, fie-ry, boun-tous.

The Persian reads *bar neshânad ahl-e keshti râ be-folk*, but perhaps intends a visual play on the last word, *f-l-k*. Since Perso/Arabic script does not supply the short vowels, *f-l-k* could otherwise be vowelled and read as *falak* (meaning "the heavens"), particularly because the phrase *bar neshânad be falak* (to elevate someone high into the heavens) is a common metaphor in Persian. In this line the meaning, the meter, and the rhyme (with *molk*) all require us to read *folk* (Ark), giving us literally "he seats the people of the boat within the Ark", but there is perhaps a hint of a secondary image (especially in view of the imagery of atmosphere and sun that appear in lines 78 and 80), of a celestial ark swimming across the skies. "The passengers in the boat" (*ahl-e keshti*) probably intends the People of Bahá in the Crimson Ark (*al-safînat al-hamrâ'*), or the Ship of God (*safînat Allâh*), or the Ark of Bahá (*fulk al-Bahâ'*), a connection made explicit in Bahá'u'lláh's Tablet of Carmel (*sawfa tajrî safînat Allâh 'alayka wa yazharu ahl al-Bahâ' alladhîna dhakarâhum fî Kitâb al-asmâ'*). Reference to the Ark (in the sense of the Ark of Noah, not the Ark of the Covenant [*tâbût*]) is also to be found in other places in the writings of Bahá'u'lláh, such as *innahu min ashâb al-safînat al-hamrâ' allatî ja'ala-hâ Allâh li-ahl al-Bahâ...*, and again *rakibta 'alâ fulk al-Bahâ' wa kunta sâyiran 'alâ bahr al-kibriyâ*, and finally in Persian, *ahl-e Bahâ ke dar safîne-ye elâhiyeh sâken-and....* For the English translation of these passages, see *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1939; reprint 1976), 16, 212, 302 and 170, respectively.

See line 14 of the poem and the accompanying endnote.

Literally, "This meek one of the earth of unity, through largesse, clothe with a robe of might, O Ruthful one." I take the apostrophe here (*ay vodud*) as an address to God (O compassionate one), which I have indirectly suggested through the adjective "kind" before *largesse*, and the pronoun "Your" before "robe of Might."

This combines an allusion to the Koranic verse of the light (24:35), with the Bábí doctrine of "return" (raj'at). The Koran speaks of the lamp of God shining with a flame lit from a blessed olive tree that is neither of the East nor of the West. This has often been understood as a symbol for God's Manifestations. Various forms of the word "return" also occur in the Koran, but almost always in the sense of human beings returning to God after death or after the Day of Reckoning. Here "return" suggests the doctrine of "return" (raj'at), as explained by the Báb in the Bayán, the idea being that the Prophets return as the light in the lamp of God. A few years prior to the Mathnaví, Bahá'u'lláh explained this doctrine of "return" as follows in the Kitáb-i Iqán (167-8):

Likewise, strive thou to comprehend the meaning of the melody of that eternal beauty, Husayn, son of 'Alí, who, addressing Salmán, spoke words such as these: "I was with a thousand Adams, the interval between each and the next Adam was fifty thousand years, and to each one of these I declared the Successorship conferred upon my father." He then recounteth certain details, until he saith: "I have fought one thousand battles in the path of God, the least and most insignificant of which was like the battle of Khaybar, in which battle my father fought and contended against the infidels." Endeavour now to apprehend from these two traditions the mysteries of "end," "return," and "creation without beginning or end."

Though he himself feels inadequate to and unworthy of the task, Bahá'u'lláh has been raised up in God's garden, and so asks the Holy Spirit which appeared in the Báb, and has now re-appeared in him (as light appears the same in different lamps), to make gardens of truth and beauty appear through him.

The 1914/1332 text reads *sad golestân âr az vay now padid*, whereas the other texts read *to padid*. The latter reading seems syntactically preferable to me, but the former would mean "so make a thousand [literally 100] new gardens bloom through him."

Literally, tear off the veils of heedlessness from this afflicted one.

"Gate" renders Báb, and the word occurs again in the second half of the couplet, alluding to the Manifestation of the Holy Spirit in the person of the Báb: Do not allow the Gate of the Báb to be closed shut, but re-open it on to the Ridván of meaning.

Ridván (pronounced Rezvân in Persian), connotes contentment or good-pleasure (of God), but is also the proper name of the angel guarding the gates to paradise. In a Bahá'í context, of course, it alludes to the garden outside Baghdad where Bahá'u'lláh announced his prophetic mission to his companions. For this reason, I have left it untranslated.

This is an allusion to a belief among Sufis that a true saint had power to move through the imaginal world at will, or to "cross the earth" (*tayy al-arz* is the phrase used here, and in line 128 below, but it is elsewhere referred to in the Sufi tradition as *tayy-e makân*, *tayy-e zamân*, *tayy-e zamin*). In the hagiographies of Sufi saints, this concept of crossing the earth often leads to fabulous stories about teleportation, telekinesis, premonitions or extra sensory perception (Cf. the story of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba in the Koran, 27:23-44, where the Queen's throne apparently crosses the earth in the twinkling of an eye).

However, the classical meaning of *tayy al-arz*, and the one to which Bahá'u'lláh apparently refers here, distinguishes between the gnostic (*tayyâr* or bird, representing the journey of the soul), and the ascetic (*sayyâr* or traveller on foot, making a more mundane journey). This terminology is noted by Abû Nasr al-Sarrâj in his *Kitâb al-luma'* for the different kinds of wayfarers on the Sufi path. Rumi also alludes to it in his *Masnavi* (M5:2180 and 2191-2):

The gnostic constant towards the King's throne arcs

The ascete travels each month one day's road.... Love has a thousand feathers and each one soars over the throne beyond the Pleiades

The fearful ascete charges on his feet

Lovers fly lighter than lightning and air

Ibn 'Arabî speaks at length of the imaginal, spiritual world, upon which Henri Corbin has elaborated at length in his *Spiritual Body, Celestial Earth: From Mazdean Iran to Shi'ite Iran*, tr. Nancy Pearson (Princeton University Press, 1977).

The 1914/1332 text reads bâzegh, whereas both the Âsâr-e qalam-e a'lâ text and the Mishkín Qalam text read bâreq. Either reading gives very much the same meaning, but bâreq forms a more complete rhyme with moshreq, corresponding better with the expected rules of Persian prosody.

See Koran which explains that the unbelievers are as if in a deep sea of darkness (24:40), or that their spiritual blindness has left them "deaf, dumb and blind" (2:18). Zu al-Qarnayn, usually identified with Alexander the Great, is said in the Koran to have travelled into the land of the setting sun and found a spring of water (18:86), and Muslim tradition has elaborated this into Alexander's search for the Water of Life. In order to find it he first had to cross through the realm of darkness (zolomât). This word Zolomât occurs in lines 108-9 of the Mathnaví, and the singular form (zolmat appears in lines 105-6 and 110).

In Islamic lore, the mythical figure Khezzr (Khidr, sometimes associated with the Biblical Elijah), is believed to have initiated Moses into the ways of esoteric knowledge and to have guided Alexander through the realms of darkness to the Water of Life. Khezzr, who is the focus of lines 110-115 of Bahá'u'lláh's Mathnaví, is not mentioned by name in the Koran, but commentators identify him with the man described as "one of God's servants" in a parable from the Sura of the Cave (Surat al-kahf, K18:65-82). Bahá'u'lláh here calls himself the new Khezzr.

Note: the jump from #49 to #118 in the footnote reference numbers is in the original document. I do not know if anything is missing, or not. [-J.W., 2010]

Bahá is the word rendered here by glory. Hence, "O Spirit of Bahá," a clear allusion to Bahá'u'lláh himself.

Literally, leave off hunting onagers to the grave. The line is predicated on a pun that is difficult to mimic in English. The Iranian royal hunt, particularly in the Sasanian period, focused on the wild onager (gur). Gur also means "grave." So, let the gur lead themselves to the gur.

The 1914/1332 and the Mishkín Qalam text both read

nist forsat tâ to az asrâr-e koll  
pish-e bolbol gu'i ay soltân-e mol

This would mean: there is no opportunity for you, o Sultan of wine, to tell the secrets of all in the presence of the nightingale. I have, however, adopted the variant given in the Âsâr-e qalam-e a'lâ text:

nist forsat tâ to az asrâr-e gol  
pish-e bolbol gu'i ay soltân-e koll

In view of the well-established topos of the nightingale and the rose in Persian poetry, this reading makes far more sense: there is no opportunity for you, O Sultan of all, to tell the secrets of the rose to the nightingale. But compare line 124, below, where the same topos reappears, and the words gol and mol both appear, though not in the rhyme position.

This is the Simorgh, the mythical bird which in Ferdowsi's Shâh Nâme protects the epic warriors of Iran with its magic feather.

See the note to Line 20.

Literally, "Then make the symbol/sign/secret of the nightingale appear in every rose; Explain the wine in the heart to the kings." The Persian plays upon the internal rhyme of gol (rose), traditionally associated with the adoring nightingale, and mol (sweetened or mulled wine), a staple of the ceremonial wine banquet at the Iranian court. In an attempt to preserve something of the gol/mol sound play, I have



translated mol as rosé. Rosé, being a specifically French wine, is something of an anachronism or a cultural solipsism here, but I trust this poetic license will not greatly jar or intrude upon the meaning.

In Persian poetry, the lover typically cannot tell his love to strangers or in public, but only to his trusted confidants who are sympathetic to him and will not reveal his secret. Those unsympathetic will mock or reprove him for being in love. Bahá'u'lláh had at this time confided his station only to a restricted circle of his companions, but as he would soon make a general announcement, the distinction between confidant and stranger was becoming irrelevant.

See the note to line 101 of the poem.

The Persian plays upon the word nafs, meaning the concupiscent, or selfish, soul (this must be trained so that the spiritual soul, ruh, gains control); and the word nafas, meaning breath.

Ignorant and radiant should both be read as two syllables here for the meter: ig-nrant, rad-yant.

Sobriety (sahv) and effacement (mahv) are both technical terms for the Sufis. Sobriety refers to the temperate expression of mystical truths, as opposed to the ecstatic outbursts (shathiyât) that sometimes result in accusations of blasphemy, as was the case with Hallâj. Effacement can be (like fanâ) the fading away of the selfish self, the concupiscent soul, allowing the divine virtues to appear in their place. It may also refer to the absolute contingency of all created being in comparison to the divine essence, which alone can truly be said to exist.

ay rashid, literally a mature person, guide, or leader, probably used here as a general term of endearing address to the reader, though it could also be a masculine proper name.

The language here is reminiscent of Bahá'u'lláh's Persian Hidden Words, #12. For the meter, read the following all as two syllables: "the inner" (th'in-ner); "mystery" (mys-try); "Beloved" (be-loved).

The Persian reads:

cheshm-e 'âref sad hezârân sâle râh

cheshm-e jâhel mi-nabinad ru-ye shâh

Compare this with the following verse from the Mathnaví of Jalâl al-Din Rumi (5:2180):

sayr-e 'âref har dami tâ takht-e shâh

sayr-e zâhed har mahi yek ruze râh

The gnostic constantly attains the king's throne

The ascete in a month makes one day's progress

The similarity of theme and phrasing of these verses suggests that Bahá'u'lláh is deliberately alluding to or echoing Rumi.

See lines 66 and 218, and the note to line 66.

Compare the passage from Rumi's Mathnaví, 1:2106-2111 in Nicholson's edition, in which the Caliph 'Umar has a dream, wherein he hears the call (nedâ) of God coming to him, described as follows:

That call which is the root of every shout and song –

That is the Call itself, and all the rest but sound

The Turk and Kurd, the Persian and the Arab, all  
have understood that Call, and not by ears or lips!

Why talk of Turk and Tâjik and of Ethiop?

Even wood and stone have understood that Call!

At every moment "Am I not" is heard from it  
bringing essence and appearance into being.

But were they not replying "Yes" in affirmation,

Their coming into being from nothing would be naught!

[or, their coming into being from nothing would be "Yes"!]

ku b-d-i bud seems susceptible of various readings, but I understand it to read k-u be-di bud (a reading which a diacritical mark supplied in Mishkín Qalam's text seems to support), meaning "which it/he was yesterday," i.e., for that was (just) yesterday.

The Kitáb-i Badí' quotes a variant of this line:

The sound of it's still ringing in my ears  
and His soul-vivifying spirit's voice.

The second hemistich in this reading (I cite a manuscript of the Kitáb-i Badí' copied in shekaste hand, 15 lines to the page, acquired by Abul-Qasem Faizi in the fall of 1940, in which this passage occurs at pp. 99-100) is as follows:

v'ân sedâ-ye ruh-e jân-afzâ-ye u

On the other hand, the Âsâr-e qalam-e a'lâ text, Mishkín Qalam's calligraphic version, and the 1914/1332 Cairo text all read:

ân sedâ-ye khub-e jân-afzâ-ye u

The text critical principle of *lectio difficilior* would incline us to accept the more complex wording of the Kitáb-i Badí' text, as would, also, the fact that the Kitáb-i Badí', written later, may represent an authorial emendation to the line. However, I have translated as per the version attested in all of the printed editions of the Mathnaví consulted.

Compare the phrasing of this line with Rumi's Mathnaví 4:394:

bar sedâ-ye khub-e jân-pardâz-e to

This hemistich also exhibits a slight, non-essential variant. The Kitáb-i Badí' records 'árifí dígar (another gnostic), whereas the âsâr-e qalam-e a'lâ text, along with the Cairo text of 1332 A.H., and the Mishkín Qalam text, have 'árif-i dígar (the other gnostic). Since only one gnostic has been thus far introduced, the reading of the Kitáb-i Badí' seems logically preferable in this case.

Âsâr-e qalam-e a'lâ, Mishkín Qalam and the 1914/1332 Cairo text all read:

goft ân ruz-e khodâ âkher na-shod

mâ dar ân yowm-im o ân qâser na-shod

In the text of the Kitáb-i Badí', instead of yowm (the Arabic word for "day"), we find ruz (the Persian word for "day") repeated again in the second hemistich. Though there is no difference either way in the meaning, the repetition of the word ruz seems stylistically inferior, and, in any case, the printed editions of the poem all attest the ruz/yowm variation. Therefore, unless we assume that the Kitáb-i Badí' version replaces any earlier version of the poem, the ruz/yowm reading seems preferable.

Literally, taste the wine of eternity from the rivers of love. This is a Koranic image of paradise, in which wine that does not cause inebriation flows eternally from a fountain.

Safdar, a brave champion who tears through the enemy lines, is sometimes used as an epithet of 'Alí.

See Koran 24:35 for the famous verse of the light guiding men to God, literally by an oil that is neither from the east or west, and is protected in a lamp, set within a niche. The 1914/1332 text, as well as the Mishkín Qalam text, read: in cherâgh-at r cho(h) rowshan karde'i, whereas âsâr-e qalam-e a'lâ text reads in cherâghi râke rowshan karde'i. The difference in meaning is insignificant; the second version seems to flow more smoothly, but the first is a more complex reading (choh being a more difficult reading that a scribe would not be likely to accidentally introduce into the text), and perhaps therefore represents an earlier or more authentic reading.

Literally, the Moon of Command and the Shah of Innamá. Innamá is an Arabic phrase which occurs often in the Koran, meaning, "verily." It occurs in some places in the Koran referring to Muhammad, such as (8:7): "Verily thou art a warner and to all people, a guide." One occurrence in the Koran is believed by Shiites to apply to Imam 'Alí (5:55): "Verily your guardian (walíy) is God and His messenger and those

who have believed, those of you who perform the prayers and bring alms and bow in prayer." As this was revealed, 'Alí was kneeling in prayer and gave his ring to a beggar. Generally speaking, though, we can interpret this as a reference to the Manifestation, who speaks with the voice of God.

The 1914/1332 text reads in the second hemistich *nuri shavad*, but the *Âsâr-e qalam-e a'lâ* text and *Mishkín Qalam* both read *nuri bovad*, which, on the principle of *lectio difficilior*, is to be preferred, though neither reading will affect the meaning. In the first instance the last syllables of *nuri* and *dohni* would rhyme, with *shavad* being understood as a refrain (*radif*). In the second case, the last syllable of *shavad* rhymes with the last syllable of *bovad*.

143. In this line, "burning bushes" translates *Sidrih* (*sedre-hâ*), properly *lote* trees. In the previous line, *sad hezârân Sedre*, literally a hundred thousand Divine *Lote* Trees, has become a forest on Sinai. See line 38 and the accompanying note.

A traditional epithet for the son which Abraham, in conformity to divine command, took to sacrifice (Ishmael, according to the Koran and Isaac, according to the Bible). For those in Bahá'u'lláh's immediate circle, this might also possibly have had an overtone of allusion to áqá Sayyid Ismá'íl-i Zavári'í, who Bahá'í tradition records was so overwhelmed by the vision of the next world which Bahá'u'lláh revealed to him in Baghdad, that he slit his own throat.

An epithet for Jesus.

See the second of Bahá'u'lláh's Seven Valleys.

*Bâ salib az râh o ham bi-rah biâ*. The *Mishkín Qalam* text omits the *o* (...*az râh ham...*), with no change in the meaning. *Az râh o ham bi-rah*, a phrase suggesting by whatever means possible, whether prepared or not, but literally "by the path or without a path," which becomes in the translation "walk the path, blaze a trail." Perhaps this means to evoke the image of Christ, veering side-to-side under the weight of the Cross as he walks along the *Via Dolorosa*.

An allusion to the Night Journey, or spiritual ascent, of Muhammad into the heavens to meet with God. Bahá'u'lláh obliquely alludes to this ascent elsewhere, in the Hidden Words (Persian #7).

Literally, that you may raise your head in God's collar (jayb). Though it is tempting to see this as a modern image of a life-preserver, what is more likely intended is that once having slain the selfish aspect of our baser being, what will remain is the divine soul, attired with divine attributes, so close to God as to be sharing the same garment. The Persian uses the word 'oryân, which means either "naked," or "plain" (in the sense that a thing is said or viewed bluntly or clearly). The idea here seems to be that the spirit of Moses should appear plainly and quickly, without pausing to don its prophetic insignia of sandals and cloak.

The mythopoetic mountain in the "hallowed precincts" of Time (perhaps pre-eternity), where God made a covenant with man in the presence of the angels. See Bahá'u'lláh's Hidden Words, Persian #71. See also line 213, below.

The dove (Varqâ), both here and in Bahá'u'lláh's Qasídiy-i 'Izz-i Varqâ'iyiyih or the Tablet of Ahmad, seems to symbolize the Holy Spirit.

An allusion to the staff of Moses.

The Mishkín Qalam text of the poem has "This Staff" (in 'asâ), which seems to be an error, since a contrast is being drawn through these lines between an ordinary staff and the Staff of God.

Among the tribe of 'Âd, God designated Hud as a messenger or prophet, calling the people to recognize the one true God, but they rejected him and were destroyed by a calamity. The Koran alludes to this story four times, pointing out the parallel to the situation of Muhammad and the Quraysh. Three times it does not specify how the tribe of 'Âd was destroyed (Suras 7, 11, 26), but in Sura 46 it specifies that a cloud, which they supposed to be a rain cloud, swooped down upon their dwellings like a horrific wind, destroying all but Hud and those who believed in him.

tâ be-bazm-e bâqi-ye ân gol-rokhân (read bâqe-yân for the meter) is probably an allusion to the Koranic vision of paradise, wherein feasts of delectable foods and drink are enjoyed with beautiful companions (of remarkable eyes, though not necessarily of rosy cheeks). See, for example, Súras 37, 38, 52, 55.

See lines 38 and 182-3, and accompanying notes.

dar miân-e kuh-e jân bas farq-hâ, literally "between the mountain of (the various) souls there are many differences", though one might also read ferqe-hâ (sects). All of these different manifestations of the tree of Soul, like various fruits growing from the various leaves/branches (varqe-hâ), are good.

See the note to line 197, above.

For "Am I not," see lines 66 and 148, and the note to line 66. "Being's world" translates arz-e hasti, literally the world, or plane, of being/mortal life.

Read "The Immortal" as just three syllables : Th'Immortal.

This image comes from the Hidden Words, Persian #1.

According to the story of Joseph in the Koran (Sura 12), Joseph is purchased as a slave in Egypt by a powerful man. The wife of his owner, finding him irresistibly attractive, attempts to seduce him and tears his shirt from behind as he tries to run out of the house. She then accuses him of attacking her, and he is put in prison. However, to stop the gossip of the women in town, the wife invites her friends to see Joseph, giving them knives first, presumably to cut the fruit she has served them. When Joseph enters, dazzled by his beauty, the women all cut their hands. This story is elaborated in Jewish and Islamic literature, and the characters are given names; the wife is given the name Zulaykhâ, and she and Joseph are the subject of Persian miniature paintings and a verse romance by the 15th century poet Jâmi. The legend also exists in the west; in English, Zulaykhâ is known as "the wife of Potiphar."

The 1914/1332 text and the Mishkín Qalam text both read hast-ash hayât (she, he or it has life), whereas the Âsâr-e qalam-e a'lâ text reads hast-at hayât (you have life).

This makes some difference in understanding the theological import of the line; though either reading seems equally plausible, I have translated according to the latter.

This line probably intends for the reader to call to mind the opening lines of Rumi's *Mathnaví*, where the listener is admonished to heed the mystic secrets to which the reed flute gives voice.

Bahá'u'lláh in the *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf* (Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1941) quotes from the Báb as follows (151): "Behold ye Him with His own eyes. Were ye to behold Him with the eyes of another, ye would never recognise and know Him" (be cheshm-e u u-râ be-binid va agar be-cheshm-e ghayr molâheze konid har gez be-shenâsâ'i va âgâhi fâ'ez na-shavid). This quote, as Bahá'u'lláh explains, refers to his "Most Great Revelation." It would appear that Bahá'u'lláh here alludes to this verse of the Báb, and thereby calls upon the Bábís to recognize the new Manifestation. I am indebted to Dr. Khazeh Fananapazir for pointing out this allusion.

In a common convention of didactic or homiletic Persian poetry, the poet addresses the reader as a father would address a son, or as a teacher addresses a disciple. It is in this context that the lines containing apostrophes like "my son", "companion," "my friend," "devout one," etc., should be understood. It does not necessarily mean that the poet has a specific person or addressee in mind. See the note for line 75.

Another allusion to the secret of the reed pipe (*serr-e nay*) to which the reader of the beginning of Rumi's *Masnavi* is encouraged to listen.

An allusion to the *Me'râj*, or Muhammad's spiritual "Night Journey" into heaven. See the notes to line 268, below.

An allusion to Bahá'u'lláh's own poem, *Rashh-i 'Amá*, "Sprinklings of the Divine Cloud."

This alludes to a Hadith which Bahá'u'lláh quotes directly in one of his other tablets: "My earth and My heavens cannot contain Me, but the heart of my faithful servant



contains Me" (See Mâ'ede-ye âsmâni, ed. 'Abd al-Hamid Eshrâq-Khâvari [Tehran: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 128 B.E./1971] 1:58). Compare also the Hidden Words, Arabic #58 and 59.

This hemistich is susceptible of different interpretations and could be understood to mean any of the following: Once the heart's house was built with the Love of God; once God's house was built through the love of God; once God's house was built through the love of that lover.

House (bayt) alludes to the Ka'bih, the House of God in Mecca, to which pilgrimage is made. The Ka'bih is kept draped in a black cloth and is, therefore, as it were, physically hidden. Metaphorically, since the heart is the home of God, it, too, is hidden inside the human chest. After the errata on the colophon page of the 1914/1332 edition, the editor reports that for this line some of the manuscripts consulted gave the reading *u na bayt o bayt-e u mastur shod* (He is not the house, and His house is hidden), and this is the reading that the *Mishkín Qalam* text appears to give. The *Âsâr-e qalam-e a'lâ* text, however, reads *u be bayt o bayt-e u mastur shod* (he is in the house, and His house is hidden), and it is this latter variant I have adopted for the translation.

Compare this and the following lines with the story of the building of the *Masjed-e Aqsâ*, the Farthest Mosque, in the *Mathnaví* of Rumi, 4:388-90 and 4:466-486, which also refers to the House of the heart and the construction of the walls of such a temple consisting of more than the physical stones and clay.

Sufi poetry, including especially Rumi's *Mathnaví*, grapples with the opposition between human reason, or the limited rational faculties ('aql), and love ('eshq). Love is seen as an overpowering force that carries reason away, and in so doing empowers the mystic to validate his trans-rational experience of the Divine and his longing to be with God. Reason is, on the other hand, equated with the traditional religious knowledge and book learning of the *ulama*.

See Koran 17:1. God took his servant for a journey by night from the Sacred mosque, in Mecca, to "the farthest mosque" (masjed al-aqsâ), or the most distant place of prostration to and worship of God. This is traditionally associated with the temple of Solomon in Jerusalem (see Rumi's Mathnaví 4:388ff and 466ff, where David and then Solomon undertake this project), and an actual mosque was built here in A.H. 68 (687 A.D.), on the complex of the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem. The more metaphysical "distant temple," or literally, place of prostration in worship (masjed), mentioned in the Koran is the referent here, and not the actual Aqsâ Mosque.

This alludes to the story of the Prophet Muhammad's Night Journey (Me'raj) into heaven, the basis for which is in the Koran (17:1 and 53:6-11). Muhammad is taken up into the heavens, brought into the highest horizon and allowed to approach to within two bow lengths of God (as far as two arrows can be shot), or perhaps even nearer than this. At this spot, God revealed to him what He revealed (i.e., the Koran).

However, Muhammad cannot proceed closer to the Divine Essence than the Sadratu'l-Muntahá, the Divine Lote Tree beyond which there is no passing. This tree is also equated, in Bahá'í theology, with the Manifestation of God. Bahá'u'lláh refers elsewhere to this tradition of Muhammad's journey into heaven: "Whoso hath recognized the Day Spring of Divine guidance and entered His holy court hath drawn nigh unto God and attained His Presence, a Presence which is the real Paradise, and of which the loftiest mansions of heaven are but a symbol. Such a man hath attained the knowledge of the station of Him Who is "at the distance of two bows," Who standeth beyond the Sadratu'l-Muntahá." Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, trans. Shoghi Effendi (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust) 70. See also line 256, above.

Hajr or hejrán (absence, separation) and vasl or vesâl (union, reunion, embracing the beloved) are terms originating in love poetry, which later took on a theological significance. In Sufi terminology, absence can stand for the absence of Divine

confirmation, as the sense that grace has left the mystic in a state (hâl) or station (maqâm) of contraction (qabz), whereas union represents the state or station in which the mystic feels the grace of God open freely to him (bast) in the form of visions or divine confirmations. These terms can also stand for divine transcendence (absence) and divine immanence (union), or in the case of progressive revelation, the absence of the Manifestation and his return.

These words inform the next several lines of the poem. They will be respectively translated as separation, absence, emptiness (hajr, commonly pronounced hejr in Persian); and as union, reunion (vasl, and vesâl in line 277), depending on the meter. Here there is another allusion to the Me'râj story. Islamic lore elaborated upon Muhammad's journey into the presence of God, indicating that he travelled on a winged horse named Borâq to a certain distance and then continued on a kind of flying carpet or cushion (rafrâf). In this sense, we might think of it as something fluffy and buoyant bearing Muhammad into God's presence in the highest heaven; therefore it appears here as "precincts."

In the Hidden Words (Persian #7), Bahá'u'lláh mentions this rafrâf, which Shoghi Effendi translated as "heights" (rafrâf-e emtenâ'-e qorb = the glorious heights above), for rafrâf also means "place," "station." Shaykh Ahmad speaks of the Green Place (rafrâf-e akhzar), one of the levels of heaven. Paired with another adjective, rafrâf-e asnâ or rafrâf-e a'lâ, this means the highest level or an exalted station.

There is perhaps also an allusion in this line to the opening section of Rûmí's Mathnaví, where "origin" is the divine pre-existence of the soul from which we are separated, just as the reed is cut from the reed bed. Our physical lives are spent trying to return to that original source.

An allusion to Koran 55:26-7.

Perhaps an allusion to the Hadíth: Kâna 'llâhu wa lam yakun ma'ahu min shay'in, "There was God, and there was nothing with Him."

Perhaps an allusion to the Hadíth, "There is none but Him in the house" (Laysa fí al-dár ghayruhu dayyár), a suggestion I owe to Dr. Khazeh Fananapazir.

'aqabe (read 'aqbe here for the meter) is a difficult or dangerous passage in a mountain, and is also the name of a stony hill near Minâ between Mecca and 'Arafât, on the pilgrimage route. The semantic range of the root '-Q-B also includes something which ensues from something else, a consequence or punishment.

Again, the word Bayán is used. A double meaning could be understood here: That you not fall from the book of the Bayán into pride. Several Bábís seem to have made claims of some sort to be Him Whom God will make manifest; this may be an allusion to those folk who filled with pride after reading the Bayán.

Compare this and the following lines with the Hidden Words, Arabic #11, #10 and #12.

186. The Mishkín Qalam text appears to read pay-ye insân davi, which though syntactically awkward, could mean "you're running around like this." Asâr-e qalam-e a'lâ and the 1914/1332 text both have pay-ye inân davi, meaning "you're running after these" (alluding to absence and separation). In either case, the last word should probably be recited in its colloquial form, dowi in order to rhyme with the first hemistich's to'i. None of the manuscripts encourage it, but if we read do'i (with a hamza), this could also be understood as "you are two," since the passage speaks of the perception of duality between God and servant.

The line actually refers to a verse of the Koran (5:67) in which the Jews claim that no prophet can come after Moses, that the hands of God are chained up. Just a year or two before composing this poem, Bahá'u'lláh had explained this verse of the Koran at some length in his Kitáb-i-Iqán (135-38), including this sentence: "Thou art surely aware of their idle contention, that all Revelation is ended, that the portals [gates, abváb, plural of báb] of Divine mercy are closed, that from the day-springs of eternal holiness no sun shall rise again...." This line in the "Mathnavíy-i Mubárak"

Blessed Couplets" reads hamchun Yahúd, meaning literally, "just like the Jews" and the line would therefore be rendered "do not close those gates, as did the Jews" (i.e., by failing to recognize Jesus or Muhammad). I have translated "like ingrates" here for purposes of internal rhyme and wordplay, and because the point is the failure of any religious community to recognize the subsequent Manifestation.

An explicit reference to the opening passages of Jalâl al-Din Rumi's Mathnaví.

An allusion to the fact that Muslim women, when in the company of strangers or non-family members, veil themselves; similarly, Iranian kings would sometimes remain veiled from their interlocutors at court by a curtain. Here, Bahá'u'lláh, as God's pen, does not wish to speak openly and clearly, but has donned the garb of Rumi's reed flute as a veil, under cover of which form, he announces his claim to the Bábís.

Safdar, see line 224.

The Persian literally says that when the "ma" (in and of itself, a particle of negation) of "mani" (egotism, "I-ness") is burned up throughout the world, then will only the eternal "ni" (which as a separate word in Persian would be read as nay, meaning reed pipe) remain among us.

The "sovereigns" perhaps alludes to the various Bábí heroes, all of whom were eclipsed by Bahá'u'lláh, as Him Whom God will make Manifest.

Perhaps an allusion to the fact that Bahá'u'lláh began to wear the tâj, a crown-shaped felt hat, from the time he went to the Ridván Garden and announced his mission; see Balyuzi, *King of Glory* 176.

Perhaps an allusion to what befell Bahá'u'lláh upon becoming a Bábí, his arrest and imprisonment and finally his incarceration in the Síyáh Chál. The chains on Bahá'u'lláh were so heavy that he gave each one a name.

The 1914/1332 text and the Mishkín Qalam text both read: hamcho sayd u dast-e sayyâdi fetâd, whereas the Âsâr-e qalam-e a'lâ text reads hamchu saydi dast-e

sayyâdi fetâd, which seems to flow better to my ear, though there is no difference in the meaning.

Compare the Persian Hidden Words, #23, in which the "Celestial Youth" is veiled in "the darkness of dust" and caught in the "talons of owls" (the owl being a bird of inauspicious omen, and one that inhabits ruined places). Likewise, in #77, we find the "doves of holiness" caught in the "claws of the dogs of earth," which is perhaps an allusion to the Bábí leaders and martyrs.

i.e., returning to Bahá'u'lláh's house in Baghdad and the Bábí community back in Iraq, which Bahá'u'lláh left behind when exiled to Istanbul.

Zowrá'iyân, literally the people of Zowrá'. Zowrá' in the Bahá'í writings is used as an epithet of Baghdad, or of the Tigris. Etymologically, Zowrá' could suggest visitants or pilgrims to a shrine or holy place; it may also simply be an adjective meaning inclined, sloped or crooked (perhaps a description of the course of the Tigris?). In this context, where the people of Zowrá' seem identified with "the City of the Lord" (See line 313), I take it to mean those who did not accompany Bahá'u'lláh on his exile to Istanbul, but stayed behind in Bahá'u'lláh's house in Baghdad, or in the city itself. However, Zowrá' is also used to refer to Tehran, or more specifically, a place in the old city of Rayy, where, according to a tradition ascribed to Ja'far al-Sâdeq (the sixth Imam), eighty men of religion would be martyred. The Bábís saw this prophecy fulfilled in the persecutions following the attempt on the life of Nâser al-Din Shâh. Since Tehran was the birthplace of Bahá'u'lláh, the City of God may therefore alternatively, or simultaneously, be an allusion to Tehran, which, however is more often described by Bahá'u'lláh as the "Land of Tâ" (Arz-e Tâ' or Ard al-Tâ'). See Riâz Ghadimi, Farhang-e loġhât-e montakhabe (University of Toronto Press, 1986), s.v. "Zowrá'" and "Tâ" and "Arz-e Tâ".

The Kitáb-i Badí' (Faizi manuscript, 263) has: yâr-e to dar dast-e a'dâ mobtalâ, "your lover languishes in hostile hands."

Âsâr-e qalam-e a'lâ, Mishkîn Qalam and the 1914/1332 text, however, all read: yâr-e to dar habs o zendân mobtalâ. Bahá'u'lláh was not imprisoned, strictly speaking, until his arrival in the town of Akka (and the second version may very well date to the Akka period), but he was under house arrest in Edirne and, in view of the Ottoman government's summoning him to Istanbul, his freedom had been restricted and his movements proscribed. Bahá'u'lláh's followers who remained behind in Baghdad, however, were taken away as captives to Mosul, as 'Abdu'l-Bahá says in Memorials of the Faithful, 30, 81, 102, 108, 152-3.

Karbalâ lies to the southwest of Baghdad, not in the direction that Bahá'u'lláh and his band of exiles followed, and must obviously be meant metaphorically here. However, as Karbalâ was an open unpopulated plain in Iraq at the time of Husayn's martyrdom, it would have been a particularly apt comparison for the rugged open ground that Bahá'u'lláh crossed on his way to Istanbul.

Yazîd, the son of Mu'âwiyya (who had usurped the Caliphate from Imam 'Alî), became Caliph in 680 and was responsible for the slaughter of the Imam Husayn and his tiny band of followers.

"Friend" here is an epithet for the Prophet, Muhammad. The Kitáb-i Badí' (Fayzi ms, 263) quotes this line, giving the text as: o sad Abu Jahl-e 'anid, "and a hundred hostile Abu Jahls," a reference to the uncle of the Prophet Muhammad, who bitterly opposed him. It does not seem to me that a scribe could accidentally mistake the reading sad Abu Jahl for in hame div. It therefore seems likely that this difference reflects a deliberate change made by Bahá'u'lláh in quoting this verse in the Kitáb-i Badí'.

God's Spirit is an epithet of Jesus. Asâr-e qalam-e a'lâ, Mishkîn Qalam and the 1914/1332 text all read The Spirit of God detained among the Sebtîân (the twelve tribes of Israel descended from Jacob, hence the children of Israel), hence Jesus

detained among the Jews. However, the Kitáb-i Badí' (Fayzi ms, 263) reads Jâhedân (atheists, those who war against God) instead of Sebtîân. This difference seems unlikely to result from scribal error, and is therefore once again more likely to be due to authorial revision.

Possibly this alludes to the story in Rumi's Masnavi of the parrot in the cage of a merchant (Masnavi, Book 1, 1547-1848). The bird, alternately called parrot (tuti) and nightingale (bolbol, 'andalib) feigns to be dead, causing the merchant to open its cage and set it free. This story gives Rumi the occasion to say that the parrot whose song comes from revelation (vahy) created before the beginning of creation – his song is hidden within you (1717-18). He also speaks of the bird whose every breath contains one hundred messages from God (1578), and of being veiled from speaking the divine secrets (1761-2). Elsewhere, Bahá'u'lláh himself alludes to the motif of the human soul as a bird caught captive in the cage of worldliness (e.g., Persian Hidden Words, #38).





Lawḥ-i-Ridvānu'l-'Adl  
(Tablet of the Paradise of Justice)

Bahá'u'lláh

Provisional translation by Adib Masumian.

Three passages from this Tablet have been translated by Shoghi Effendi.

Revealed by Baha'u'llah in Adrianople in 1868 in honour of Aqa Siyyid Mohamad Reza Shahmirzadi who was one of the survivors of Sheikh Tabarsi.

The title Promised Day is Come is derived from this important tablet.

The original Arabic text has been published in *Áthár-i-Qalam-i-A'lá* (133 BE), vol. 4, pp. 245–258.

The passage which begins with “Erelong will God make manifest on earth...” can be found in [The Promised Day is Come, p. 74](#).

The passage which begins with “Know verily that the essence of justice...” can be found in [Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh LXXXVIII](#).

The passage which begins with “Bestir yourselves, O people...” can be found in [Gleanings XII](#).

Additionally, two other passages from this Tablet were included—in authorized translation—in a memorandum dated August 7, 2006 from the Research Department of the Universal House of Justice, and later published in Udo Schaefer, *Bahá'í Ethics in Light of Scripture*, vol. II, pp. 433–434.

This is the Paradise of Justice, which hath appeared as a token of God's grace and been adorned by Him with wondrous fruits.

In the Name of the All-Just, the All-Wise

This is a Tablet in which God hath raised up His Name, "The Just," and from which He hath breathed the Spirit of Justice into the mortal frames of all that dwell on earth, that they may arise to rule over themselves and over others with pure justice—a justice from which they shall not deviate by one jot or one tittle.

O this name! We, verily, have made thee one of the suns of Our most excellent names between earth and heaven. Shed thou thy mighty and wondrous splendor upon the whole of creation, that perchance they may gather together beneath thy shadow, cast the ways of oppression behind their backs, and be illumined by thy hallowed and resplendent light.

O this name! We have indeed made thee the very source of Our justice amidst such among Our servants as are near unto Us. Through thee, We have manifested the justice of every just one, and have adorned the sincere ones among Our servants with thine ornament.

O this name! Beware lest this station deceive thee and prevent thee from showing humility before God, the Almighty, the Most Powerful. Know thou that thy relationship unto Us is the same as any other relationship; no distinction is there between thee and all else besides thee that have been created in heaven and on earth. For when We ascended the throne of justice, we fashioned all created things through

a single word from Our side. Thy Lord is the All-Wise, and His wisdom encompasseth all things. We have exalted certain names to the kingdom of eternity as a token of Our grace, and I verily am the Most Powerful, the Most Exalted, the Mighty, the Incomparable.

Say: No relationship is there between God and His creation. Sanctified is He from whatsoever He hath created, and from the remembrances of such among His servants as make mention of Him. Indeed, the relationship which is attributed to Him and mentioned in the Tablets hath been revealed through the decree that was sent down from the Heaven of the Divine Will, Which was brought into being through My all-pervading and all-compelling behest. Nevertheless, We have singled thee out and exalted thee in this Tablet, that thou mayest render thanks unto thy Lord, and be of them that are rid of all attachment to any one but Him. Beware lest the loftiness of thy name debar thee from God, thy Lord and the Lord of all worlds.

Verily, We exalt whomsoever We will through Our behest. We have, from eternity, been powerful to do what We have willed, and to ordain what We have pleased. Behold naught within thyself but the radiance of the Sun of the Word of Revelation, which hath shone forth above the horizon of the Will of thy Lord, the Compassionate, the Merciful. In like manner, behold naught within thine essence any power, any strength, any movement, or any tranquility unless it be bidden by God, the Sovereign, the Almighty, the All-Powerful. Be thou animated by the breezes of thy Lord, the Most High, the All-Glorious, and not by that which wafteth from the precincts of passion and desire. Thus biddeth thee the Pen of the Most High, that thou mayest be reckoned with them who observe Our precepts. Beware lest thou follow the example of the one We adorned with the ornament of names in the kingdom of creation—the one who, when he looked upon his own self and perceived

the loftiness of his name, repudiated God, Who created him and sustained him, and thereupon fell from the most exalted station to the depths of degradation.

Say: The Names are as raiments; We adorn those of Our servants We desire with them, and We take them away from whomsoever We will through Our behest. I am the All-Powerful, the Ordainer, the Omniscient. We take no counsel with Our servants before divesting them of this bounty, even as We consult them not before We bestow Our blessings upon them. Know, then, the command of thy Lord, and be of them who possess manifest certitude. The power We hold over all things can never be wrested from Us, neither can the Hands of Our power ever be chained up, couldst thou but understand.

Say: The station of every name that knoweth his Lord, and doth not transgress his limit, shall wax greater at every moment, and the Day-Star of the tender mercies of his Lord—the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Generous—will shine upon him continually. He shall ascend the ladder of detachment until he reacheth a station none can describe, save the One Who created it. He speaketh not except by the leave of his Lord, and moveth not unless it be ordained by Him. He is, in truth, the Almighty, the Just, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.

O this name! Pride thyself in this, that We have made thee the dawning-place of Our justice amidst all people. The day is approaching when We shall raise up manifestations of thee upon the earth, through whom We shall roll up the standard of oppression and unfurl the banner of justice between the heavens and the earth. It is through them that God shall blot out every trace of injustice from the earth, and adorn the whole of creation in every land with these names. All beings, both seen and unseen, shall rejoice at their advent, for They are the mirrors of My justice amidst My servants, and the daysprings of My names amidst My creation. Through

them, the hands of oppression shall be severed, and the arms of command strengthened. Such is the decree We have set forth in this holy and preserved Tablet.

O this name! We, verily, have made thee an ornament of the sovereigns. Blessed are they that adorn their bodies with thee, act with equity and complete sincerity towards their subjects, and decree for them what God Himself hath decreed in His mighty and everlasting Book. No better adornment is there for them than thee, for it is through thee that their sovereignty is made manifest, their praise is glorified, and their names are remembered in the Kingdom of God, the Almighty, the Most Great. Whoso depriveth himself of thee would indeed be as one denuded before the entire creation, though outwardly he be clothed in the finest garments of silk.

O concourse of kings! Crown your heads with the diadems of justice, that the regions of every land may be illumined with their light. Thus have We bidden ye in token of Our grace unto you.

O concourse of kings! Erelong will God make manifest on earth kings who will recline on the couches of justice, and will rule amongst men even as they rule their own selves. They, indeed, are among the choicest of My creatures in the entire creation.

Adorn yourselves, O people, with the raiment of justice, inasmuch as the exercise thereof befitteth all mankind, did ye but know it. Thus have We enjoined courtesy and equity upon you in most of Our Tablets, that ye may be of them who comprehend. The Almighty ordaineth naught for a soul unless it be what is best for him, and what shall profit him in this world and in the world to come. He, verily, is independent of the doings of every doer, and of the knowledge of every man of

discernment and understanding. Through this name, God hath shed His splendor upon all things in this tablet. Well is it with them who are illumined with its light and have attained thereunto, for they are the truly devoted among Our servants. With the Hands of Our power, We have planted trees of justice in this Paradise, and have watered them with the waters of Our grace. Every one of those trees will, ere long, bear fruit. Such is the irrevocable decree We have set forth, for truly We are potent to command.

O ye who are the embodiments of justice! When the breezes of power have wafted over all things, summon ye the people of the Bayán, and call their attention to this Great Announcement. Ask of them: O people! By what proof have ye believed in ‘Alí [The Báb], but denied the One Who brought you glad-tidings in all the Tablets? Ponder this, O concourse of foolish ones, and fear ye God, O assemblage of the heedless. Do ye claim to believe in the One Who heralded Mine advent though you have repudiated Me, the All-Powerful, the All-Wise? Ye are even as the ones who believed in John the Baptist, who summoned men to the Kingdom of God, yet when Christ, the Word Himself, appeared unto them, they rejected Him and condemned Him to death. The curse of God be upon the oppressors! At all times, and in the loudest voice, that herald imparted glad-tidings unto men. He exhorted them to swear fealty unto Christ, and informed them of His imminent advent. At last, out of his love for Christ, he yielded up his spirit to Him, the Almighty, the Wondrous. And when the veil of concealment was rent asunder, and the Word of God appeared unto men, they caviled at Him and protested, saying: “This Man hath violated the decree of John the Baptist!” Thus did their souls prompt them in such wise that they were deprived of the Presence of their Lord, the Almighty, the Most Powerful. One of the infidels among them said: “The thing for which the son of Zechariah [John the Baptist] came to this world hath not yet come to pass, neither hath his law been

established amongst men. Unseemly indeed would it be for any one to appear until that law is established.” Such was the reasoning by which they waxed disdainful before the Spirit of God [Jesus Christ] and rejected His Truth. Still others among them said: “John the Baptist baptised men with water. The One Who hath appeared unto us, however, doth baptise with the Holy Spirit, yet He associateth with the sinful!”

And now ye hear the same arguments made by the people of the Bayán in these days. They repeat that which the followers of John the Baptist said aforetime; nay worse, they utter such things as have never been uttered before. Woe betide them that follow these infidels!

Say: O people of the Bayán! Blush before the beauty of your Lord, the All-Merciful, Who appeared in the midmost heart of the world with a clear and irrefutable proof. The One Who came unto you aforetime by the name of ‘Alí informed you of Me and heralded unto you My coming, and He moved not except through His love for Me, and breathed not except to make mention of Me, the Most Powerful, the Most Wondrous. He proclaimed unto you that every luminous one would be eclipsed by His splendor, that every woman that hath a burden in her womb would cast her burden, [1] and that every bearer of a trust would cast it aside. Such is the decree that hath descended from the Heaven of the Will of your Lord, the Most High, the All-Knowing. The appointed Hour came upon you in your heedlessness, for when the Beauty of the Beloved shone forth above the horizon of the Will of your Lord—the Almighty, the All-Powerful—you turned away from Him, caviled at Him, rejected His signs, and ascribed partners unto Him, and in this heedlessness you persisted until you resolved to shed His blood—the blood of the Most Holy, the Most Pure, the Most Powerful, the Most Luminous.



Say: O people! Fear God, and confine not His command to your own limitations. He, verily, ordaineth as He pleaseth through His behest, and He is indeed the Help in Peril, the Almighty, the Most Powerful.

Say: I swear by God that He speaketh in My breast, calleth out to My spirit, and giveth utterance through My tongue. It is He that hath wakened Me with the breezes of His command, and hath caused Me to speak between heaven and earth.

Say: I swear by God—the Almighty, the Most High—that I am in your midst, and hear from you that which no ear hath heard before. Nevertheless, God hath, in truth, made Me manifest, and I have been bidden not to worship any one but Him, and to remind you of that which is better for you than all that is in the kingdoms of earth and heaven. Had it been in My power, I would have never consented to manifest Myself unto these makers of mischief. Yet, the Almighty is unconstrained in His bidding; He doeth as He willeth, and ordaineth as He pleaseth.

Look not upon Me, O people, with your eyes, or with the eyes of your leaders. I swear by God that this would avail you not, even were you to seek the aid of the former and the latter generations.

Say: O people! Behold My beauty with Mine eye, for if you look upon Me with any other sight, you will never recognize Me. Thus hath it been sent down in the Tablets of God, the Almighty, the All-Powerful, the All-Wise. Say: O people! It is neither through Mine own Self nor for Mine own Self that I cry aloud unto you; rather, God crieth out as He willeth through His own Self for His servants, and unto this do My groaning, and My wailing, and the lamentation of My heart bear witness, if ye be of them who judge fairly.

This indeed is the Leaf that hath been stirred by the winds of the Will of God. Hath it any power of its own to remain still? No, by the One Who hath caused Me to speak

in truth! The winds move as they will, and God indeed is powerful over whatsoever He pleaseth. The movement of that Leaf, and the manner in which it stirreth, bear witness to its truth, would ye but understand. Consider, O people, the Flute that resteth beneath the fingers of the Will of His Lord, the All-Merciful, and how He doth breathe His sanctified breath into it. Can that Flute remain silent in its inmost self? Nay, by your Lord, the Almighty, the Beneficent! He will, rather, make manifest from it diverse melodies as He willeth, and He verily is the All-Powerful, the Ordainer, the Omnipotent. Can the sun that riseth above the horizon of Revelation shine aught but light from itself? Is it able, moreover, to deprive any thing of its light? Nay, by the essence of glory! And unto this doth every fair-minded and discerning one bear witness.

Say: O people! Verily, it is the fingers of your Lord—the Most High, the All-Glorious—that move this Supreme Pen. This is not My doing, rather is it the bidding of God, your Lord and the Lord of your forefathers. And do ye, O concourse of infidels, protest this Pen? Or do ye cavil at the One Who hath caused it to move through His sovereignty?

Say: Woe betide you! The dwellers of the Realms above are astonished by your deeds. The Eye of Justice weepeth sore over Me, and the Reality of Justice bewaileth the harm I have sustained and the calamities I have endured. It bemoaneth, moreover, that which hath befallen Me at the hands of them who were created through My Will, who pride themselves in standing in My Presence and seek blessings from the dust that My feet—the feet of the Blessed, the Almighty, the Sublime—have trodden.

O thou who art the embodiment of justice! I complain unto thee concerning them who have disbelieved in Me and ascribed partners unto Me, even after Mine advent hath been promised in every Tablet—and in the Tablet, too, that God hath preserved

in His inviolable treasuries, which He hath safeguarded from even the most discerning ones among His creation.

Say: O people! Ye have entered Paradise, and have attained unto a Rose. Inhale it, then, if ye find its fragrance to be sweet. Fear ye God, and be not of them who gainsay Him, nor of them who recognize Him and then disclaim Him. Ye would indeed be numbered with the infidels for such an act. Were a person with a keen sense of smell to be found, he would, of a certainty, be able to detect—among all the things that are made manifest from Me—the fragrance of the Most Holy, the Most Powerful, the Most Generous.

O ye who are the embodiments of this name! Ye were called into being through My behest, and were risen up by My command. Beware lest your rank prevent you from humbling yourselves before your Lord—the Almighty, the Omniscient—on the day when He shall come down unto you overshadowed with clouds and invested with a mighty sovereignty. On that day, He shall breathe the spirit of life into the entire creation; adorn the whole of Paradise with My Name, the Name of the Almighty, the Beneficent; regenerate mankind with the ornament of the All-Merciful; and attire all things with the raiment of names that belongeth to the Wondrous Creator. That indeed is a day for which ye have been created. Fear ye God and take heed, lest ye deprive yourselves of so great a bounty.

O ye who are called by this name! Let not the names deceive you on that day. Hasten ye to the court of grace, even if the clouds of Revelation should rain down the darts of wrath upon you. Take heed that ye not tarry for less than a single moment. On that day, none shall have any possessions to their name, for command on that day will be with God, the All-Powerful, the All-Wise.

Say: Be ye faithful, O people, to the Testament of God, and break not the covenant of the One with Whom you covenanted from time immemorial in the Presence of God, the Almighty, the All-Powerful, the Omniscient.

Say: Open your eyes! I swear by the One True God that He hath been made manifest on this day, at this very moment, and that He hath come overshadowed with clouds. [2] Blessed is God, the Quickener, the All-Powerful, the Most Lofty, the Almighty. Thereupon were the inmates of heaven and earth stricken with terror, and the entire company of the Concourse on High moaned, except for them who were seized by the Hand of the All-Glorious, invested with the sovereignty of the Most Powerful, the Most Exalted, the Most High—the Hand Whose Finger of decree hath rent asunder the veil before their eyes, and hath delivered them from the company of the ones who doubted the Presence of God, the Sovereign, the Almighty, the All-Glorious.

Say: By God! Every name hath been changed, everything hath cried out in lamentation, and every soul hath become perturbed, save them who were quickened by the breezes of sanctity that wafted from the precincts of your Lord, the All-Merciful—the breezes that awakened them from their slumber, and cleansed them from the defilement of the infidels.

Alter thou these verses, O Tongue of Eternity, for the ears of men are incapable of hearing that which hath been sent down from the firmament of Thine Essence and the heaven of Thy Will. Impart unto them, in accordance with their capacity, that which Thou dost possess, for this verily is manifest justice.

O people of the earth! Know ye that justice consisteth of innumerable degrees and incalculable meanings, yet We have given you only a sprinkling from this Ocean, that it may cleanse you from the defilement of oppression and cause you to be

numbered with the sincere ones. Know verily that the essence of justice and the source thereof are both embodied in the ordinances prescribed by Him Who is the Manifestation of the Self of God amongst men, if ye be of them that recognize this truth. He doth verily incarnate the highest, the infallible standard of justice unto all creation. Were His law to be such as to strike terror into the hearts of all that are in heaven and on earth, that law is naught but manifest justice. The fears and agitation which the revelation of this law provokes in men's hearts should indeed be likened to the cries of the suckling babe weaned from his mother's milk, if ye be of them that perceive. Were men to discover the motivating purpose of God's Revelation, they would assuredly cast away their fears, and, with hearts filled with gratitude, rejoice with exceeding gladness.

Say: If the autumn winds strip the trees of their vernal adornment, this is only to allow for the emergence of another adornment. Thus hath it been decreed by the Almighty, the All-Powerful. It is through justice that every one is rendered his due, even as ye behold this in the manifestations of the world of being; it is not as most of the people imagine. Ponder, then, that ye may understand the purpose of what was revealed by the Wondrous Pen.

Say: That justice which causeth the pillars of tyranny to quake and the foundations of misbelief to crumble is the recognition of this Revelation in this resplendent dawn, wherein the Sun of Bahá shineth with manifest sovereignty above the horizon of eternity. And whoso believeth not therein hath abandoned the stronghold of justice, and his name is recorded among the oppressors in God's mighty and guarded Tablets. Even if a man were to strive until the end that hath no end and bend every possible effort to deal equitably with others, if he should ever hesitate in his recognition of this Cause, he would verily have committed an injustice against his own self, and would be regarded as one of the oppressors.

Bestir yourselves, O people, in anticipation of the days of Divine justice, for the promised hour is now come. Beware lest ye fail to apprehend its import and be accounted among the erring.

Say: O people! Adorn your bodies with the ornament of justice. Enjoin ye that which God Himself hath enjoined, and be not of them that transgress their bounds.

Say: Should any one drink even a drop of water in accordance with My command, it verily would be preferable to the acts of worship and devotion offered by the entire creation, for God doth not accept an act from any one unless it be adorned with the ornament of My leave amidst all people.

Act ye, O people, in accordance with what We have bidden you in the Tablets that were sent down from the Kingdom of God, the Help in Peril, the Almighty, the All-Powerful. He whose sight is restored through the sweet savors that waft from the raiment of My Name—the Name of the All-Merciful—shall discern in all things the signs of his Lord, the Just, the All-Wise. [3]

O Supreme Pen! Raise up the servant who was named “Riḍá after Nabíl” [4], and cause him to be one of the embodiments of justice in this contingent realm. Verily, his justice is his faith in God, and it is a justice unmatched by any other.

O servant! Harken thou unto the shrill voice of the Pen of the Most High, and gather all men upon the shore of the Most Mighty Ocean, which hath emerged through this Most Ancient and Everlasting Name. Protect thou the servants of the All-Merciful, lest the blows dealt by the evil suggestions of the manifestations of Satan transform the faces of them that have recognized their Lord. Such is the commandment of thy Lord—the Almighty, the Beneficent—unto thee. Act thou in accordance with what the All-Powerful, the Beauteous, hath bidden thee.

Be thou a barrier between the forces of unbelief and the hosts of the All-Merciful, lest that blasphemous horde transgress their bounds. [5] Thus hath the decree been sent down from the Kingdom of the judgment of thy Lord, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise. We, verily, have made thee a means of Our remembrance amidst Our servants, and a fortress for Our creation in this world, that thou mayest shelter them from the darts of doubt and draw their attention to this Announcement, through which the temples of names have trembled, the faces of men have been changed, the earth of vainglory hath been cleft, [6] and the fruit hath fallen from every lofty and wondrous tree. Blessed art thou for having utterly abolished the idol of vain imagination through the power of thy Lord, for having cast off from thy body the robe of blind imitation, and for having adorned it instead with the raiment of Divine Unity through this Name, the Most Holy, the Blessed, the Most Exalted, the All-Encompassing.

Know thou, then, that the People of the Bayán caviled at their Lord, and rejected the One in Whom they had already believed, and this after We had admonished them in all the Tablets not to let any thing betwixt earth and heaven prevent them from recognizing Me in the hour of Mine advent. Some among them have repudiated Me even as they read My Words, and others glory in the Book that was revealed aforetime through My power.

Say: If, in this day, the whole earth were to be filled with the knowledge contained in prized and precious books, yet from these books neither the sweet-smelling savors of My command nor the fragrances of My love could be detected, then this knowledge would not be worthy of mention in the Presence of God, thy Lord and the Lord of all worlds.

Say: Woe betide you, O people! The purpose of all that hath descended from the Kingdom of the Bayán was to make mention of Me and celebrate My praise, did ye but know it.

Say: Fie upon you for having broken the Covenant of God and cast it behind your backs! In so doing, ye have returned unto your abode in the nethermost hell.

O My name! I am left alone amidst the people of the Bayán in the absence of the One Who revealed that Book only to make mention of Me, the Wronged One, the Incomparable.

Say: Fear ye God, O people! I swear by Him that the Primal Point breathed not except to make mention of Me, and spoke not unless it was to celebrate My praise, and that the Beloved of His heart was none other than My luminous and resplendent Beauty.

O My name! Know thou that the infidels ascribed oppression unto the One through Whom the embodiments of justice were raised up, and from Whom the light of grace shone forth. Such is the manner in which those oppressors acted against Me. Ere long will the cruelty of these oppressors change this earth and frustrate the affairs of men. Thus informeth thee the Tongue of Him that speaketh the truth and is the Knower of all things.

The tablets of fire have been spread throughout every land, and the manifestation of Satan passeth you by with a book in hand.

Then say: O servants of the All-Merciful! Cast it behind your backs, and turn your faces towards the Word of God, the Mighty, the Wondrous. Verily, nothing that hath ever been revealed from the beginning that hath no beginning, or will ever be sent down from the supreme and glorious firmament, can compare with a single letter of that Word.



O My name! Cleanse My servants of every fragrance that is not of Me, attract them with the wonders of My melodies and My words, and cause them to soar in the atmosphere of My nearness and good-pleasure, that perchance they may attain unto the sanctuary of My glory and the habitation of My grandeur. This is what hath been sent down in truth, and it verily is a thing sent down by thy Lord, the Exalted, the Omniscient.

Do thou forbid them to shed blood. We, verily, have made this unlawful unto them in all the Tablets, yet they have treated the Laws of God with scorn. They have abandoned the stronghold of command, and are accounted among the wayward. The harmful effect of their deeds hath redounded upon the very Root of the Tree; such is the decree, if only thou wouldst hear it. They who dispute with and wage war against men have indeed forsaken the Paradise of Justice, and have been numbered with the oppressors in the sublime and preserved Tablets. As for them who suffer martyrdom in the path of God in these days, they are the most exalted among the entire creation. They make mention of their Creator openly, and the multitude of their enemies are powerless to prevent them from the remembrance of their Lord, until such time as they are martyred and attain the Object of their desire. And when their souls ascend, the entire company of the Concourse on High shall stand ready to receive them bearing the banners of this Cause. Such is the decree that hath, in truth, been set forth at the behest of the Most Powerful, the All-Wise.

Say: O My Lord and My Master! Thou art the One Who hath planted the trees of justice in the Paradise of Thy Revelation and Thy Wisdom. Shelter them, O My God, from the raging storms of fate and the rolling thunder of calamity, that their boughs and their branches may grow and develop beneath the shade of Thy bounty and the canopy of Thy mercy.

O My God! Cause them who are the chosen ones amongst Thy creatures and the truly devoted amidst Thy servants to abide beneath the shadow of their leaves. Thou verily art powerful over whatsoever Thou willest, and Thou verily art the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Merciful.

We have, in truth, created the Paradise of Justice through Our strength and power, and have sent it unto Thee with a glorious and wondrous fruit. Taste, then, the fruits of these trees, and rest beneath the shadow of their leaves, that thou mayest be protected from the fire of the infidels.

Thus have We perfected this Bounty unto thee, that thou mayest render thanks unto thy Lord and be accounted among the grateful. Praise be to God, the Lord of the Worlds.

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[1] A reference to Qur'án 22:2.

[2] cf. Qur'án 2:210.

[3] This appears to be a reference to Jacob, whose sight was restored when the garment of Joseph was cast over his face; cf. Qur'án 12:96.

[4] A reference to Áqá Siyyid Muḥammad-Riḍá Shahrírádí, the recipient of this tablet. “Nabíl” and “Muḥammad” share the same value in the Abjad system, and the two names are often used synonymously in the Bahá'í Writings.

[5] cf. Qur'án 18:94, 21:96.

[6] cf. Micah 1:3–4 and Qur'án 50:44.



## Lawh Basít al-Haqíqa

Bahá'u'lláh

Provisional translation by Moojan Momen

He is God, exalted be He in Might and Greatness!

Concerning what the questioner has asked regarding the statement of the philosophers (hukamá) that "the uncompounded reality(16) is all things", say: know that what is intended by "things" in this context (lit. station, maqám) is none other than being (wujúd) and the perfections (kamalát) of being in so far as they are existent [and not privative](17); and by "all" is meant the obtainer (al-wájid).(18) This "all" contains no plurality and no part of it can be compared to the whole. The meaning is that the uncompounded reality, insofar as it is uncompounded in all respects, is the obtainer and gatherer of all the infinite and endless perfections.(19) As it has been said: "His works are limitless."

In the Persian language, it may be said that what the philosopher means by the word "things" in the afore-mentioned expression is the perfections of being in so far as these are existent [and not privative]; and by the word "all", is meant possession

(dárá'í) that is to say obtaining--the gathering together of all of the limitless perfections, in an uncompounded manner. They have mentioned similar things throughout their discourse on the Divine unity (tawhíd), power (quwwat), and intensity (shiddat) of existence.

The meaning of the philosopher was not that the Necessarily Existent [God] has become dispersed among (resolved into, lit. dissolved into, munhal) the innumerable existent things. No! Praised be He! Exalted is He above that! Even as the philosophers themselves have stated: "The uncompounded reality is all things, but is not any one thing."

And viewed from another aspect, the lights of the uncompounded reality can be seen in all things. This however is dependent upon the vision of the seer and the discernment of the beholder. A penetrating vision (absar-i hadídh) is able to see the signs of the Primal Divine Unity in all things, since all things have been and are the places wherein the Divine Names are manifested. The Absolute Reality, however, has been and will continue unceasingly to be sanctified from ascent and descent, from limitations, connections and relationships, while "things" exist and appear in the loci of limitations. Thus it has been said: "The existence of the Necessarily [Existent] would not be in the full perfection of its power and intensity, were it possible for It to disperse Itself into the innumerable existent things, but such a dispersion is not possible." There is much to be said about this statement and if one were to elaborate fully on the meaning of the philosophers, the matter would become lengthy.(20) Because the hearts of the noble are perceived to be subtle and refined, the pen chooses to confine itself to brevity.

Two stations can be observed in the Divine Unity: Existential Oneness (tawhíd-i wujúdí), and this is that [station] wherein all things are negated with a "no" and only the Absolute Reality is affirmed. This means the existence of nothing is acknowledged except the Absolute Reality, in the sense that all things, when compared with Its manifestation and remembrance, have been and will continue to be absolute nothingness (faná-yi mahd). "All things perish save the [Divine] Face(21)", which means that compared with Its existence, nothing else has the capacity for existence and so no mention of the existence of anything else should be made. It has been said "God was and there was nothing else beside Him. And He is now as He always has been." And yet it can be seen that things exist and have existed. The meaning of these words is that, in His court, nothing has, or has ever had, existence. In the Existential Oneness, "all things" perish and are nothing and the [Divine] "Face(22)", which is the Absolute Reality, and is eternal and unceasing.

[The second station in Divine Unity,] Manifestational Oneness (tawhíd-i shuhúdí), is that [station] where the signs of the Primal Divine Unity, the manifestations of Eternity, and the effulgences of the light of Singleness can be observed in all things. Thus in the divine book it is revealed: "We shall show them Our signs on the horizons and in themselves."(23) In this station the effulgences of the signs of the uncompounded reality can be observed and are apparent in all things. The meaning of the philosopher was not that the Absolute Reality is dispersed among the innumerable existent things. Immeasurably exalted is It from being dispersed in any thing or from being constrained by any limits or from being associated with any other thing in creation. It is and continues to be sanctified from and exalted above all else except Itself. We bear witness that It is one in Its Essence and one in Its attributes. And all things are held in the grasp of the power of Him [God] Who is the sovereign Protector of all the worlds.

In one aspect, all that has been said or will be said refers back to the first assertion, that the glorified and exalted Absolute Reality is unknowable, unattainable, and invisible, and this station has been and will continued to be sanctified from all references and names, and freed from whatever the people of creation may understand of It. The path is barred and the quest denied. For whatever wondrous references and powerful descriptions have appeared from the tongue and pen refer to the sublime Word [of God], the most exalted Pen, the primal Summit, the true Homeland, and the Dawning-place of the manifestation of mercy. This is the source of Divine Unity (tawhíd) and the Manifestation of singleness and abstraction. In this station, all of the most beautiful Names [of God] and the most lofty [Divine] Attributes refer to Him (i.e. the manifestation of God), and do not refer to anything beyond Him, for, as has been stated, the Unseen Reality is sanctified from all reference. This locus of the light of Divine Unity, even though outwardly He is given a name and appears to be bound by limitations, is in His inner reality uncompounded (basít), sanctified from limitations. This uncompounded state is relative and attributive (idáfí wa nisbí) and not uncompounded in an absolute sense (min kull al-jihát). In this station, the meaning is as follows: the Primal Word and the Dawning-place of the light of Primal Oneness is the educator of all things and the possessor of innumerable perfections. For this word in this station, there is an exposition, hidden in the treasures of purity (infallibility, `ismat) and recorded in the guarded tablet, which it is not appropriate to mention now. Perchance God will produce it. He is the All-Knowing, the All-Informed.

And the objections that have been raised by some to the words of the philosopher are not based on evidence in that the meaning of his words has not been understood. Truly one cannot regard it as sufficient to look to the literal (external) meaning of a statement and then stir up malice. This is except in case of the words of those who

are notorious for their unbelief and idolatry. The words of such souls are not worthy of commentary.

The philosophers have been and are of various factions. Some have derived what they say from the books of the prophets. And the first who taught divine wisdom (hikma) was Idrís, on account of which he was given his name,(24) and he is also called Hermes. He is called by a different name in each language. He has given thorough and convincing expositions in every arena of divine wisdom. And after him Balínús (Apollonius) derived some of the sciences from the Hermetic tablets. Most of the philosophers have derived their philosophical and scientific discoveries from his words and expositions.

Thus this exposition of the philosopher has been and is still capable of numerous praiseworthy and specific interpretations (ta'wílát). Some of those who have attained [the Divine Presence], wishing to protect the Cause of God, have outwardly refuted (the words of the philosopher). But this imprisoned servant does not mention anything but that which is good. Furthermore this day is not the day for human beings to occupy themselves with understanding such expositions, for such knowledge and its like has never been and will never be conducive to making human beings self-sufficient (able to do without, detached from all save God, ghaní). For example, the philosopher who spoke these words, were he to be alive, and also both they who accepted what he said and those who opposed him over it, all of them would now be in one position: every single one of them who, after the raising of the call of the King of Names from the right hand of the luminous spot, affirmed his belief, is accepted and praiseworthy,(25) and all others are rejected.



How many the souls who considered themselves as being at the highest pinnacle of reality and mystical knowledge to the extent that they considered that what issued forth from their mouths was the balance by which [the truth of] human utterance should be weighed or the astrolabe with which the calendar of the beginning and the end should be fixed. Despite all this, in the days of the spring-time of the All-Merciful and the blowing of the winds of trials, we did not discover in them either acceptance or constancy. If a soul were today to be omniscient in all the sciences of the world and yet hesitate in affirming his belief (lit. speaking the word "yes"(26)), he would not be mentioned in the Divine Presence and would be accounted among the most ignorant of people. The goal of the religious sciences is to attain knowledge of the Absolute Reality. Any soul who holds back from this most holy and most mighty adornment is recorded in the tablets as being of the dead.

O Husyan! This wronged one declares: words need deeds. Words without deeds are as bees without honey or as trees without fruit.

Consider the philosopher Sabzivárí (27). Among his verses, there is a poem, which conveys the following meaning: "No Moses is alive to hear it, otherwise the chant of 'I verily am God!' exists in every tree [bush]." Such words as these has he spoken and his meaning is that the true knower of God rises to such a station that his eyes perceive the lights of the effulgences of the luminous Source of manifestation (mujallí) and his ears discern His call from all things. There is no objection to these words of the philosopher(28), but, as we have already stated, this is the realm of words. In the realm of deeds, however, it can be seen that although the call of the divine lote-tree has been raised upon the highest spot in creation in clear and unambiguous (min ghayr ta'wíl) language and is inviting all beings through the loftiest of summonses, he has paid no heed whatsoever. For had he hearkened, he

would have arisen to make mention of it. Either we must say that these were empty words which flowed from his mouth, or that, for fear for his reputation and love of his livelihood (lit. his bread), he remained deprived of this station (of belief) and of testifying to it. Either he understood and concealed [his belief] or he understood and denied [Bahá'u'lláh's claim].

Woe to those who waste their whole lives in trying to establish the truth of their vain imaginings and yet, when the lights of the Divine Presence are shining forth from the horizon of the name of the Self-Subsisting (al-Qayyúm), they remain deprived thereof. The Cause is in God's hands. He grants what He wishes to whomever He wishes, and withholds whatever He desires from whomever He desires. He is to be praised in His doings and obeyed in His judgements. No God is there but He, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.(29)

In these days, the following was revealed in a tablet: How many men, attired with a turban [i.e. learned], have held back and opposed and how many women wearing veils have recognized and accepted and have said "Praise be to Thee, O God of the Worlds!" Thus it is that we have made the most exalted among them to become the most abased, and the most abased to become the most exalted. Verily your Lord is Ruler over whatsoever He wishes.

O Husayn! Say to the questioner: forsake this small pond when the most mighty ocean is before you. Draw near and drink from its waters in the name of your Lord, the Knowing, the All-Informed. By my life! It will cause you to reach a station wherein you will see in the whole world naught but the effulgences of the presence of the Ancient of Days and you will hearken unto the lote-tree which has been

elevated upon the knowledge that there is no god but He, the Powerful, the Mighty, the Omnipotent.

In this day, it is incumbent upon all souls, when they hear the call from the Dawning-Place of Creation, to leave behind the people of the world and their opinions and arise and say: "Yes,(30) O my Desire!" and then to say: "I obey! O Beloved of the Worlds."

Say: O questioner! Were the sweetness of the wine of the exposition of your Lord to seize you and were you to recognize the wisdom and illumination that is in it, you would forsake this contingent world and arise to assist this wronged exile and would proclaim: "Praise be to the one who has manifested the fluid [waters] as the solid [ice],(31) and the uncompounded [reality] as a circumscribed [creation], and the hidden as the manifest; the one who, were one to behold him in his outward form, one would find him in the form of a man standing before the people of tyranny. Were one to contemplate his inner reality, however, one would recognize him as lord over all who are in the heavens and earths."

Listen to what the fire is proclaiming from the luminous lote-tree raised upon the crimson spot: "O People! Hasten with all of your hearts to the shore of the Beloved. Thus has the matter been decided and the decree has been issued forth from He who is all-powerful and trustworthy."

O questioner! Your words have been mentioned in the Divine Presence(32) in this manifest prison. Thus has been revealed this tablet from the horizon of which shines forth the sun of the benevolence of your Lord the mighty, the all-praised. Know its true worth and value it greatly. This would be best for you, if you are among those

who have true knowledge. We ask of God that He confirm you in His Cause and make mention of you and decree for you that which will profit you in this world and the next. He verily answers the prayers of those who call upon Him and He is the most merciful of the merciful.

O servant! Were you to be attracted by the breezes of the utterances of the Lord of Names and were you to seek illumination from the lights of the [Divine] Face(33), which shine forth from the Dawning-place of eternity, you would turn your face towards the all-highest Horizon.

Say: O Creator of the heavens and Lord of Names! I ask You by Your name through which You have opened the door of meeting with You to Your creatures and have caused the sun of Your bounty to shine forth upon those who are in Your kingdom, that You may cause me to be sincere in Your love, detached from all save You, arising for Your service, looking towards Your Face, and speaking in praise of You. O Lord! assist me in the days of the Manifestation of Your Self and the Dawning-place of Your Cause, such that I may burn away the clouds [that obscure You] by Your grace and favour and may consume the veils [that separate me from You] with the fire of Your love. O Lord! You are strong and I am weak; You are rich and I am poor. I ask You, by the ocean of Your bounty, that You do not cause me to be deprived of Your grace and Your Love. All things bear witness to Your greatness, Your glory, Your power and Your might. Guide and assist me through (lit. take my hand in the hand of) Your will and save me by Your sovereignty. Write down then for me what You have written down for Your confidants, those who have near access to You and are faithful to Your Covenant and Testament, who soar in the atmosphere of Your will and speak Your praise among Your creatures. Verily You are the Powerful, the Protector, the Lofty, the Mighty, the Generous.

## Notes

16. Basít al-Haqíqa. Basít is here translated as "uncompounded". It has been translated by James Morris as "simple" (*The Wisdom of the Throne*, pp. ). Although this is technically a correct translation in the philosophical sense of the word as something that is uncompounded, I felt that the word "simple" has too many other meanings in common use and would be confusing. The translator of the *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh* (p. 61) has translated the term as "elementary". There is also the fact that this word is being used in a genitive construction and not adjectivally (i.e. the Arabic may be rendered literally as "the uncompounded of reality"). The root of the word basít means "to spread out" or "to stretch out", and in this sense of something spread out, I was tempted to translate the phrase as "the field of reality". This would render the passage "the field of reality is all things" which has a striking resonance with modern physics in the sense that all physical reality is in modern physics considered to consist of electro-magnetic fields in which fluxes occur. This would however, apart from being anachronistic also be a departure from the sense in which the original author Mullá Sadrá intended this passage. His meaning was derived from the philosophical notion that all reality is compounded and that the only uncompounded reality is God.

17. i.e. those perfections that are positive and existent, rather than those which are negative and privative.

18. This is a somewhat unusual use of the word wájid, which derives from the root meaning "to get" or "obtain". According to Sayyid Ja`far Sajjádí, (*Farhang-i Ma`árif-i Islámí*, Tehran, 1373, 3rd vol., p. 2090, citing *Sharh-i Kalamát-i Bábá Táhir*) wájid

is used by Bábá Táhir `Uryán to refer to someone who has emptied himself of all vestige of self and has detached himself from all save God.

19. The basic language of the text changes from Arabic to Persian at this point, although there continue to be numerous Arabic phrases and passages in what follows.

20. These numbers refer to the page numbers in the original text in Iqtidarát.

21. Qur'án 28:88

22. Qur'án, see note 19

23. Qur'án 41:53

24. The name Idrís can be considered to derive from the root "d-r-s" which means "to teach".

25. Lit. Attained to the word "Balá" (lit. "Yes"). A reference to Qur'án

7:172, where, in the pre-eternal Covenant, to God's question "Am I not your Lord?" The children of Adam are made to reply "Yes (Balá)." In other words, Bahá'u'lláh is saying that were Mullá Sadrá together with his supporters and opponents all to be alive in Bahá'u'lláh's day, they would all be in the position of having to face the challenge of Bahá'u'lláh's claim.

26. See note 23

27. Mullá Hádí Sabzivári (d. 1878) the most prominent of the Iranian philosophers of the nineteenth century. An English translation of one of his major works is available *The Metaphysics of Sabzivári* (trans. T. Izutsu and M. Mohaghegh, New York, 1977).

28. Indeed Bahá'u'lláh himself says much the same in one of the prayers for the fast: "...this Revelation - a Revelation the potency of which hath caused every tree to cry out what the Burning Bush had aforesaid proclaimed unto Moses, Who conversed with Thee" (*Prayers and Meditations*, no. 85, p. 144).

29. This paragraph is paraphrased and quoted by Bahá'u'lláh in the *Words of Paradise* (*Kalimát Firdawsíyyih*), *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 61

30. See 23

31. Cf. Bahá'u'lláh, *Prayers and Meditations*, no. 38, p. 49

32. lit. "before the Face"; a Qur'anic allusion, see note 19

33. Qur'anic reference, see note 19

## At Dawn the Friend came to my bed

Bahá'u'lláh

Provisional translation by Julio Savi

Bahá'u'lláh's poem which begins with the verse Sa'ar ámad bi bistar-am Yár, "At dawn the Friend came to my bed," is one among eight Persian poems signed "Dervish," and published by the Iranian Bahá'í scholar 'Abdu'l-Óamíd Ishráq Khávarí (1902–1972) in his multi-volume anthology of the Writings of the Central Figures of the Bahá'í Faith Má'idiy-i-Asmání (4:176-211)



He is the Provider in all circumstances

At dawn the Friend came to my bed:

“O fool for love, O broken heart,

O thou, who pinest for Me wherever thou art,

And wherever thou art, liest in prison for Me,

Now an asp twisted at thy foot,

Now a rutilant chain at thy neck.

O thou, who didn't spend a night on a bed of ease, O thou,

Who didn't find a moment of relief from the woes of the world.

The heart of the world was burnt by the fire of thy wails,

The eye of the universe was consumed by the fire of thine afflictions.

Now is placed in fetters thy neck,

as if thou werest a rebellious Servant, now,

bound in chains, thou art hurried to the bazaar.

Now thou art wronged in the hands of the oppressor,

Now thou spendest days and nights in the prison of cruelty.

Thy pains set on fire the hearts of the friends,

Thy groans darkened the faces of the lovers.

Thine eyes shed rubies of blood, whereby

The eye of the twilight hath turned pomegranate red.

After so many toils thou met in My path,

Thou doest not cool down, nor bitterly regret.

Wherefore art thou restless tonight?

Wherefore Hath thy body become as thin as a thread?

In the night thou tосsest and turnest on thy couch,

Thou tосsest and groanest, as bitten by a snake.  
Why doest thou turn and groan, now?  
Why doth thy face turn pale?”  
I answered: “O Friend! O Healer of my soul!  
How is it that Thou camest to this sick bed?  
O Thou, by Whose Face the sun is enlightened in the sky,  
O Thou, by Whose love the essence of peace is unsettled.  
The sky hath filled its skirt with pearls,  
That it may lay it down at the feet of Thy Majesty.  
Doest Thou wonder about Thy lover’s plight?  
Thou wilt discover its secrets in the pallor of his face.  
My groans proclaim the secret of my heart;  
My tearful eyes reveal the riddle of my soul.  
In my love for Thee I received many an arrow  
Of cruelty, I fell into infidel hands.  
I was dragged through mountains and plains,  
I was drawn in front of the wicked.  
Should I tell what I saw in my love for Thee,  
My tongue would grow weary of speaking.  
I don’t complain, O Friend, for Thy pitiless sword  
And I cherish my pains for Thee as my own heart.  
I embrace Thy decree with heart and soul,  
My spirit yearns after Thy tribulations.  
My soul won’t cut the lace of Thy love,  
Should it be beheaded with a deadly blade.  
I tied my heart to the curl of Thy tresses,  
That it may not be unloose till the Judgement Day.

Should I be slaughtered a myriad times,  
with every Moment, still I wouldn't rebel against Thy love.  
In the night season I burn in the fire of anguish,  
Cause my head hasn't been, O Friend, hung on the gallows.  
I come with no veil before Thee to behold, O Almighty,  
Thy Face beyond any mortal frame, O Unique One.  
The Birds of Eternity returned to their nest,  
We remained downtrodden and wretched on earth.  
The time hath come for the banner to be hoisted.  
O Mystery of God! Draw forth Thy hand from the Unseen,  
That Thou mayest discharge the mortals from their clay,  
And cleanse the mirrors of their hearts from their rust.  
From the shackles of the world, O Thou,  
Release all these pilgrims and companions  
Attire their heads with the crown of acceptance,  
Gird up their temples with the girdle of love.”  
That's enough, O Dervish! Don't torment us any longer,  
Cause many sparks have fallen from these words.

## NOTES

For a general introduction to this and other poems by Bahá'u'lláh see Julio Savi, “Bahá'u'lláh's Persian poems written before 1863,” in *Lights of Irfan* 13 (2012): 317-361.

(Sa'ar ámad) A poem composed by Bahá'u'lláh. The Persian text used for this provisional translation is published in *Isráq-Khávarí, Má'idíy-iAsmání* 4:181-84. The poem also is published in *Majmú'iy-i-Áthár* 30:163-

This translation has been done with the precious assistance of Ms. Faezeh Mardani Mazzoli, lecturer of Persian language at the University of Bologna, translated by Julio Savi.



Az Bágh-i-Iláhí

(Hailing from the Godly Garden)

Bahá'u'lláh

Provisional translation by Adib Masumian

A Tablet of Bahá'u'lláh, the original text of which appears in INBA 19:27–31. The translation is set to blank verse (iambic tetrameter).

In My Name, the Most Effulgent, the All-Glorious

[1]

Hailing from the godly garden,  
Invested with the Burning Bush,  
That fresh and novel Youth is come!  
Make haste, make haste![1]

[2]

This is the Ecstasy divine!  
This is the Robe celestial!  
This is the Raiment of the Lord!  
With vast oceans of living waters,  
And spirit-vivifying rivers,

That Lord of all mankind is come!  
Make haste, make haste!

[3]

This is the cooling Draught of God!  
This is the Merciful's Bestowal!  
This is the wholesome Ornament!  
Descending from the lofty city,  
With much allure and famous name,  
That Joseph of Shíráz is come!  
Make haste, make haste!

[4]

This is the Face transcending time!  
This is the radiant Countenance!  
This is the ancient Innovation!  
With sword in hand and shaft in quiver,  
That Slayer of the loving souls,  
That Quickener of the loved is come!  
Make haste, make haste!

[5]

This is the Blade enamoring![2]  
This is the captivating Spear![3]  
This is the curved bewitching Dart![4]  
From out the veiling of the soul,  
From out the city of God's Presence,

With gifts and favors He is come!

Make haste, make haste!

[6]

This is the holy dazzling Light!

This is the Ancient all-preceding!

This is the Bounty all-predating!

From the supernal treasury,

That supremely deathless Essence,

Beneath the shade of clouds is come![5]

Make haste, make haste!

[7]

This is the Trove beyond measure!

This is the shell-embosomed Pearl!

This is the name-embracing Trait![6]

Armed with keen and cutting blades,

That dauntless Knight of the arena,

That Slayer of the loved is come!

Make haste, make haste!

[8]

This is the Throat so delicate![7]

This is the Breast of ample bounty!

This is a generous Sustenance!

Upon this Day of Resurrection,

That snow-white Fashioner of being,

That Glorious Revealer's[8] come!



Make haste, make haste!

[9]

This is a God like ne'er before!

This is indeed the holy Lord!

This is delectable Sweetness!

With voice and message at the ready,

That mystery of God's beauty,

His glory unalloyed is come!

Make haste, make haste!

[10]

This is the Bliss of brilliance!

This is the ancient Ecstasy!

This is the hidden Jubilation!

With the warbling of the dove,

With the rosebud of the spirit,

With bowl and cup in hand He's come!

Make haste, make haste!

[11]

This is the winsome Form of youth!

This is the heavenly Decree!

This is enraptured coquetry!

With a world-devouring fire,

With a heart-rending secret,

From placeless[9] dayspring He is come!

Make haste, make haste!

[12]

This is the Dance of wonderment!

This is the Heart riddled with holes!

This is the Soul consumed with flames!

Alighting from the kingly arm,

Accompanied by drums and tents,

That hunting Falcon now is come!

Make haste, make haste!

[13]

This is the Bird of Paradise!

This is Ascension raining down!

This is the lush and verdant Leaf!

The Object of the world's desire,

At once a man and worshipped God,

With ceaseless ebullition's [10] come!

Make haste, make haste!

[14]

This is Decree in flesh and bone!

This is the Frame that well ordains!

This is the Body bubbling over! [11]

That Essence of the godly Spirit,

Trumpeting, "I am the Truth!" [12]

Like one who breaks idols is come!

Make haste, make haste!

[15]

This is the sound of Syriac![13]

This is the ringing tone of Hebrew![14]

This is the pitch of Arabic![15]

With curls disheveled here and there,

With locks comely and serpentine,

Inspired and merciful He's come!

Make haste, make haste!

[16]

This is the preexistent Pardon!

This is the all-effulgent Grace!

This is the most exalted Gift!

That lofty Spirit quintessential,

Setting fire to all likeness,

Like rushing lions He is come!

Make haste, make haste!

[17]

This is the Burning of the souls!

This is the Knowledge of the conscience!

This is the Pen that's serpent-like!

Like unto radiant morn divine,

Piercing the pall of darksome night,

That everlasting Face is come!

Make haste, make haste!

[18]

This is the splendid Eastern Sun!

This is the Moon of inner meaning!

This is the Star so well adorned!

A single strand of His black hair,

The faintest hint of His fragrance,

Have graced our senses with their scents!

Make haste, make haste!

[19]

This is the brilliant Resurrection!

This is the promised Gathering!

This is the Bounty of the Lord!

From morn of God's fidelity,

From dawn of His holy presence,

That Joy's fulfilled all hopes and dreams!

Make haste, make haste!

[20]

This is the Youth born in Shíráz!

This is the Lantern in the niche!

This is the Shining of the lamp!

A hundred goblets in His hand,

A hundred snares beneath His thumb,

With utter charm and grace He's come!

Make haste, make haste!

[21]

This is the spreading Lote divine!

This is the magnetizing Tree!

This is the youthful Beckoning!

With His all-transcending digit,

His ruby finger of decree,

With exceeding joy He's come—

With flowing speech and utterance,

With total rapture He is come!

Make haste, make haste!

[22]

This is the Wine of nourishment!

This is the joy-inducing Drink!

This is the Movement of the spirit!

That lordly Flame which shines so bright,

That Fire on the mountaintop,[16]

Equipped with cold and peace is come!

Make haste, make haste!

[23]

This is indeed delightful Sweetness!

This is the most refulgent Veil!

This is the God of night journeys!

That One concealed yet manifest,

That One hidden yet visible,  
From square to rooftop He is come!  
Make haste, make haste!

[24]

This is the wondrous Eventide!  
This is the Brow that bends with grace!  
This is the Spirit set aflame!  
From His breath is Christ revived,  
And Moses wounded from His sorrow,  
For now that Perfect Sun is come!  
Make haste, make haste!

[25]

This is the Breath benevolent!  
This is the life-instilling Soul!  
This is the perfect Word of God!  
That Emperor Who wears the crown,  
With "I am God!" etched on its face,  
Like night[17] to day that Ruler's come!  
Make haste, make haste!

[26]

This is the Crown[18] munificent!  
This is the Morn of flashing light!  
This is the Glory which creates!  
From out the veil of sanctity,

From out the covering of communion,  
That soothing Companion is come!  
Make haste, make haste!

[27]

This is the maiden's comely Face!  
This is the gleaming crystal Chalice!  
This is the captivating Eye!  
Dancing to the holy rhythm,  
With glorifying coquetry,  
With everlasting cup He's come!  
Make haste, make haste!

[28]

This is the Bird of Paradise!  
This is the peacock's strident Cry!  
This is the Pealing of the bell!  
Within that land of the divine,  
With stature tall and heavenly,  
With gait most elegant He's come!  
Make haste, make haste!

[29]

This is the Fowl of inspiration!  
This is a Tiding to relish!  
This is the plainly written Line!  
Tempered with celestial essence,

That Sword fashioned by God Himself,  
From out its holy sheath is come!  
Make haste, make haste!

[30]

This is the all-subduing Blade!  
This is the pardoning Rebuke!  
This is the most compelling Force!  
From flower-beds of mysteries,  
From the field into the snare,  
That Bird of rosy meadow's come!  
Make haste, make haste!

[31]

This is the overpowering Joy!  
This is the Sign of God Himself!  
This is none other than His Breath!  
Bringing death unto the veiled,  
Inflicting pain upon the torpid,  
That mighty King of days is come—  
That perfect Treasure, famed Unseen,  
Despite the hearts of beasts is come!  
Make haste, make haste!

[32]

This is the Grandeur of the Sovereign!  
This is the self-effacing Star!



This is the Flame that's blazing forth!

With the celestial breath, that divine Fire was breathed into manifold centuries, and with the crimson blood of the lovers, the everlasting Heaven was made manifest. Thereafter, with the Spirit of the Lord, a myriad eras dawned forth, emerging with the black curls of the Beloved. Innumerably, incalculably, He circled round the cynosure of nearness unto the Most Beauteous, and traveled the path to the sanctuary of the All-Glorious, till He had the honor of appearing through mention in this Tablet—and in the forms of holy spirits, out of divine love, with lowliness and humility, standing and sitting, He was made evident through the body of written words that constitute the perspicuous verses.

Thus, the birds of the Throne who seek the destinations of holy ascensions must chant with rapturous song, that all the peoples of the earth may be imbued with an undying spirit, an eternal life, and a perpetual existence. Perchance the drops of fire may, by the leave of God as ever, be sprinkled upon the breasts of the righteous.

## NOTES:

[1] This meaning of های های has been noted by Dehkhoda (here) and Steingass (here). It may alternatively (or additionally) be read as a cry of jubilation, such as “Rejoice, rejoice!”

[2] Probably a subtle reference to the eyebrows of Bahá'u'lláh.

[3] Possibly another subtle reference to the eyebrows of Bahá'u'lláh.

[4] An explicit reference to the eyelashes (مژگان) of Bahá'u'lláh.

[5] Refer to Qur'án 2:210 and the many Biblical references to the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven.

[6] Which is to say that Bahá'u'lláh's defining “attribute” of glory is one that embraces (or encompasses) all others. The word اسمائی may alternatively be read as a derivation of اسمی , the relative form of سمو , meaning “lofty,” which would give this line the meaning of, “This is the highest Attribute!”

[7] My choice of “Throat so delicate” here assumes that its corresponding original, جيد حضرائی , should be read as jídun ḥaḍaraní, with jíd meaning “throat” (as opposed to jayd, meaning “good”) and ḥaḍaraní pertaining to civilization in contradistinction to nomadism (as opposed to ḥadraní, signifying “presence”). The imagery used in this rendering is reminiscent of this passage from a prayer of Bahá'u'lláh: “The throat Thou didst accustom to the touch of silk Thou hast, in the end, clasped with strong chains . . .”

[8] My choice of “revealer” here assumes that its corresponding original, مظهر , should be read as muzhīr, consistent with the preceding موجد . A less likely possibility is that it reads mazhar, meaning “manifestation.”

[9] My choice of “placeless” here assumes that its corresponding original, لام , is an abbreviation of لا مكان , meaning “placeless.” The phrase مشرق لا مكان occurs in The Hidden Words – from the Persian, no. 28. Alternatively, لام might be read as an abbreviation of the Quranic phrase لن ترانى (“Thou shalt never see Me”), which God says to Moses on Mount Sinai (Qur’án 7:143), consistent with this ode’s overarching theme of emergence from concealment.

[10] I have chosen “ebullition,” noted by Steingass (here), over the more obvious choice of “army” for جيش , as that meaning made no sense to me in this context, whereas “ceaseless overflow” might refer to the perpetual stream of divine revelation from the Manifestations of God or the agitation it always provokes in the world.

[11] See the preceding note on my interpretation of جيش as “bubbling over” rather than “army.”

[12] Originally انا الحق , a heretical exclamation of the Sufi mystic and martyr Mansúr al-Hallaj (d. 922) for which it is often thought he was put to death.

[13] A reference to the Christian dispensation.

[14] A reference to the Mosaic dispensation.

[15] A reference to the Islamic dispensation, the original word translated as “Arabic” being فرقانی , signifying the Qur’án.

[16] The original for “mountaintop” being فارانی , a reference to Mount Paran, another name for Mount Sinai; refer to Deuteronomy 1:1 & 33:2 and Habakkuk 3:3. In the Islamic tradition, Mount Paran is where God made the covenant of Alast with all creation; Bahá’u’lláh Himself alludes to this in The Hidden Words – from the Persian, no. 71.

[17] My choice of “night” here assumes that its corresponding original, شام , has that meaning in this context. Another possibility is that it refers to the historical region of Syria.

[18] My choice of “crown” here assumes that its corresponding original, تيج , is a variant of تاج , which has that meaning here, as if to symbolize the king wearing it (Bahá’u’lláh). A less likely alternative is that this word is a variant of تژ , which according to Mu‘ín (here) and ‘Amíd (here) can have the meaning of “sprout.” Steingass also corroborates this meaning (here). Yet another alternative, noted by Dehkhoda (here), is that the word means “arrow.”

Translator’s Introduction:

Keen students of Bahá’í history may be familiar with the work of Bahá’u’lláh called Az Bágh-i-Iláhí, cataloged in the “Partial Inventory of the Works of the Central Figures of the Bahá’í Faith” with the ID number BH01007, through its inclusion in the “List of Bahá’u’lláh’s Best-Known Writings” featured in many of the volumes of Bahá’í World, or through this summary by Adib Taherzadeh:

*Az-Bágh-i-Iláhí* is an ode revealed not long before the Declaration of Bahá'u'lláh. It is one of His most joyous odes, composed in an exalted style. Each Persian verse is followed by one in Arabic, and the combination of the two creates a rich melody of unsurpassed beauty and enchantment. Its theme is the advent of the Promised Day of God, but to describe its contents is not an easy task, especially in the absence of an English translation.

In each and every line Bahá'u'lláh alludes to Himself and extols His own attributes. He unveils the splendours of His exalted station and, among other designations, refers to Himself as the Lord of all mankind, the Day-star of Truth, the Promise of all ages, the Youth of Paradise, the Quickener of men and the Essence of the Spirit of Truth. This poem is an eloquent description of Bahá'u'lláh's stupendous station, the character of His Mission and the outpourings of His Revelation.

The chanting of this beautiful ode creates an atmosphere of ecstasy and joy. It moves the heart and evokes a feeling of awe and excitement within the soul. No wonder that the companions of Bahá'u'lláh in Baghdád, who chanted it in their gatherings, were carried away into the realms of spirit, completely oblivious of this world and all its peoples.

(The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, vol. 1, pp. 218–19)

Taherzadeh notes the absence of an English translation—and from the time he first wrote those words in 1974 to the present day, this ode had remained untranslated. It was only when I read the full Writing for the first time just a few days ago that I experienced the ecstasy he described and felt compelled to try my hand at a provisional rendering. I felt the structure of the original text best lent itself to iambic

tetrameter in English, and that is the meter to which I have set the translation. It is, however, in blank verse, meaning there is no consistent terminal rhyme—only occasional instances, some of them half-rhymes, along with internal rhyming here and there—as I believed a conventional rhyme scheme would needlessly constrain the translation and that the content of the original ode itself was not all that amenable to one. My deepest thanks to Khazeh Fananapazir, Abir Majid, and Sen McGlinn for enriching the translation with their valuable suggestions.

Az Bágh-i-Iláhí is a masterclass in linguistic innovation for devotional purposes. It not only alternates between Arabic and Persian as Taherzadeh mentioned, but it also blends the two languages together in a wondrously inseparable mixture by pairing Arabic nouns with Persian adjectives and vice-versa (سهم مژگانی، سیف یزدانی، جگر (حراقی). In addition to this, the work is filled with neologisms (رُنَن، رُبَب، كُنَس) as well as unconventional inflections (جُدْب، مَلَح، نُجْم) unprecedented variations (ازلانی، رَوّاح، (جگردوز) and irregular spellings (ابها، ابقا، شَسْت) of existing words. It must be noted here that there can be no room for doubt about these innovations; they come to us from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, who transcribed the full Writing Himself and added all of the short vowel marks seen in the original-language typescript below. In the source text I consulted (INBA 19:27–31) to prepare that typescript, the handwritten reproduction of the Writing begins with a marginal note stating that it is based identically on that transcription by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and, to reinforce its accuracy, the reproduction ends with a brief confirmation: muqábilih shud (“It has been checked against the original”). I think these deviations from standard language actually make a kind of lyrical sense; there is a distinct musicality to them, and Taherzadeh does note that the companions of Bahá’u’lláh would chant this ode at their gatherings in Baghdád. The Writing ultimately concludes with some lines in prose that seem to

discuss the nature of Bahá'u'lláh's advent and the longevity of His Dispensation, and also enjoin the believers to teach the Cause with zeal and ecstasy.

How fitting that Bahá'u'lláh should have revealed so revolutionary an ode so shortly before His public declaration. What better way to signalize the novelty entailed by His imminent Revelation, that all things are about to be made new, than by upending something as fundamental and well-established as language itself?

—Adib Masumian

24 October 2021

## Lawḥ-i āyah-yi nūr

(Tablet about the Light Verse)

Bahá'u'lláh

Provisional translation by Stephen N. Lambden

In the Name of God, the Splendid, the All-Glorious

Praise be to God who created the letters (al-ḥurūfāt) in the worlds of the Theophanic Cloud (‘awālim al-‘amā’) beyond the Pavilions of Holiness (surādiqāt al-qūds) in the Lofty Heights of the Most Resplendent Sphere (rafā’rif al-asnā) then gave them to drink from the Goblet of Eternal Subsistence as ordained in the Tablets of the Divine Decree (alwāḥ al-qiḍā’).

This that He might bring life to the inmost hearts of those who are nigh unto God in the Omnipotent sphere of Divine realization (jabarūt al-qiḍā’).

He then clothed the letters in a black robe in accordance with what was decreed through the measure of His eternity respecting the possibilities of divine



foreordination (qadar). This relative to the [fate regulating] crimson domes (qibāb al-ḥamrā') and to the status of [explicit] knowledge for He has concealed the Water of Life in the shadows of the worlds of Names nigh unto the Lote-Tree of the Extremity (sidrat al-muntahā'). [4] He then caused them [the letters] to descend into the Kingdom of the Divine Will (malakūt al-inshā') in the atmosphere of the Divine Decree (hawa' al-qida') whereupon a great Cry was heard from the Most-Exalted Realm thus addressing the Primordial Pen (al-qalam al-awwalī), [5] 'O Pen! Set down the mysteries of pre-existence (asrār al-qidam) upon the Perspicuous, Snow-White Tablet (al-lawḥ al-munīr al-bayḍā').'

## II

[1] On account of this Cry (al-nidā') was the Pen stupefied with intense yearning for 70,000 years according to the computations of such as calculate these things. [2] When it recovered from its having swooned away according to the further operations of the Divine Decree, it wept crimson tears for 70,000 years. [3] Then it stood up erect between the hands of God at a time which was neither preceded by the decree of firstness in the beginning nor by the decree of lastness in the end. [4] While it was burning in the fire of separation on account of the cessation of the most-sweet Cry, there appeared within its tears a black hue (lawn al-sawda') in the heavenly sphere of fidelity (jabarūt al-wafā'). [5] A black teardrop sprinkled down upon the Tablet whereupon the Point (al-nuqta) was made manifest in the world of origination ('ālam al-badā'). [6] This Point assumed the primordial shape upon the mirrors of the letters in the beings of the Names. [7] The [Arabic letter] "A" (al-alif) received it [within itself] before all the other letters, in the [pre-eternal] elemental particles of things (fi dharr al-ashyā') for thus did this Divine Point take on the form of this

Eternal [Arabic letter] "A" (alif). [8] This inasmuch as the merciful breezes blew upon it from the Source of Singleness whereupon the Countenance of the Divine Singularity (wajh al-wahidiyya) was disclosed from behind the Green Veils. [9] The substance (body, temple, form.. haykal) of the Point was made manifest in the shape of the letter "A" (al-alif) "A" and rose up from the Tablet for the promotion of the Most-Exalted, Most-Great Cause of God in the world of Names and Attributes. [10] This is a station (maqām) [by virtue of] which the reality of the Divine Will (al-mashiyya) was clothed in the nominal robe and invested in the garment of qualificative attributes in the City of Grandeur.

### III

[1] When this upright letter "A" (al-alif) was established upon the Luminous Tablet it was again transfigured with renewed splendor whereupon the isolated letters (al-ḥurūfāt al-muqatta`āt) shone forth in the primordial theophanies (awwal al-zuhūrāt) in order that they might be an evidence of the worlds of incomparability and command in the Citadels of origination. [2] Then there appeared from these [Isolated] Letters which shone forth from the Primordial [letter] "A" (al-alif al-awwliyya) in the first of the theophanies, the worlds of delineation and multiplicity. [3] They were differentiated, separated and isolated then gathered together, reconciled, united and linked together. [4] Then assembled words and compounded letters appeared in the worlds of creation in the forms of Names and Attributes (hayākil al-asmā' wa'l-ṣifāt).

#### IV

[1] Wherefore was the completion of the creation of the worlds of dominion and the Predestined Ornament (ṭarāz al-qadariyya) among the manifestations of existing beings, to the end that all things might demonstrate, through the tongue of their inmost realities, that He, verily, is the Eternal, the Enduring, the Creator, the Powerful, the Mighty, the Sovereign. [2] And [they might testify to the fact] that `Alī before Muhammad [the Bāb] is the Manifestation of the Divine Essence (maẓhar al-dhāt) and the Manifestation of the Divine Attributes (maẓhar al-ṣifāt) from whom existence derives and unto whom beings return. [3] And that he [the Bāb] is the one from whose beneficent Logos-Self (nafsīhi al-mann) is the Breath of the All-Merciful (nafas al-rahman) for thereby were created the realities of the essences and the receptive dispositions (ḥaqā'iq al-jawhariyyāt al-qābiliyyāt) in the world of being as well as the manifestations of existing beings in the worlds of existence. [4] The Mirrors [of the Bayān] that speak of Him and the Letters [of the Living] that cry out about Him are foremost in the creation of God; the source of outward things and the refuge [point of return] for the servants [of God] in the [eschatological] Day of Dispersion. [5] In this way God hath distinguished them above the rest of the creatures in the worlds of preexistence (ʿawālim al-qidam). [6] Through them it was that the Lights shone forth, the moons gleamed, the suns shed splendor and the stars were evident. [7] They all testify of Him and demonstrate Him such that there is no distinction between Him and between them except that they were created by His Command, were raised up in accordance with His Intention, and were assembled through His Power. [8] They are those through whom is the cyclic scheme (tadūr al-adwār); the revolving of the spheres of existence (takūr al-akwār) and [the ones] through whom the Trees of the Divine Unity sprung up and the incomparable fruits were made manifest.

## V

[1] Through them are the rains of detachment sent down until the Point returns to its original station after revolving around itself and arriving at its place whereupon the end returns unto the beginning. [2] Then the Primal Call was raised up from the Furthestmost Tree with the splendor of the Sun once again. [3] And this is that which the Dove hath sung in the midst of Eternity in this singular Night in which [4] the Fire of the Divine Oneness hath been ignited from the Tree of Sinai in the shade of the most-ancient Name [5] and the Eternal Secret which [or who] was named the Living (al-ḥayy), the Pre-existent (al-qadim) in the Qayyūm al-asmā' [6] in order that every manifestation may bear witness in the secret recesses of their hearts unto the secret things, that He, verily, is the Mighty, the Powerful, the Protector, the Bestower.

## VI

This is a book from the [Arabic letter] "B" ( al-bā') before the [Arabic letter] "H" ( al-hā') [= Bahā'-Allāh] unto those who have believed in God and have attained unto the lights of guidance for the purpose of bringing them unto the Pavilion of Holiness (surādiq al-quds) and drawing them nigh unto a Seat (maq`ād) to which none who disbelieve in God have attained. [2] And to this testify the Embodiments of Names (hayākil al-asmā') in the Cities of Attributes (madā'in al-ṣifāt) and beyond them also the angels of holiness. [3] Say: `In the cooing of the Dove upon the branches, the soaring of the Doves of Holiness, the surging of the Sea of Singleness, the uplifting of the Clouds of Wisdom, the descent of the Rains, the gushing of the Rivers from the rocks [4] and in the establishment of the Temple of Eternity upon the Throne of

Lights are signs unto those who gaze upon the realities of things with the eye of God.' [5] Ponder therefore, O concourse of lovers, upon the creation of the heavens and of the earth, then within yourselves that you might be guided by the Manifestations of Power unto the Lights of Guidance in the Days of the Divine Countenance.

## VII

We received a communication [letter] (kitāb) from the letter "Q" who had journeyed from his self and emigrated unto God, the Protector, the Self-Subsisting. [2] He attained unto the regions of holiness and entered the Egypt of certitude (miṣr al-īqān) in a place wherein the Fire of God (nār Allāh) blazed up beyond the veils of Light and in which the Luminary of Singleness (sirāj al-aḥadiyya ) was ignited in a mighty, concealed Lamp. [3] Thus are those to be preferred who have left their homes for the love of God above those who failed to turn towards the precincts of holiness in the City which those who are nigh unto God have circumambulated. [4] In his letter there was enquiry about mysteries (asrār) which none among the creatures hath anticipated; the veil on the face of which none among humankind hath drawn aside and which hath not been comprehended by the mystic knowers.

## VIII

[1] Then know thou that that which thou hast asked concerning the "Light Verse" [Qur'ān 24:35] which was sent down upon Muhammad, the Messenger of God aforetime, concerns a verse the comprehension of which the worlds cannot sustain.

[2] Even if whatever lieth within God's knowledge became "Pens" and all that has been decreed became oceans of "Ink" and the Fingers of Might wrote [its mysteries] for all time, this would not suffice to exhaust even a single letter of the meaning of this honorable and blessed verse which hath been revealed by the Tongue of Grandeur. [3] Nevertheless, I shall cause to be sprinkled down upon thee a dewdrop from the fathomless ocean of the sea of knowledge and wisdom in order that thou might be amongst those who have hastened to the plains of knowledge and who have drunk deep of the goblet of Divine Favour from the hand of the Youth seated upon the Throne of Paradise.

## IX

[1] When, for Moses, the appointed term in the Median of the Divine Will was completed he returned to his people and entered the environs of Sinai in the Holy Vale at the right-hand side of the region of Paradise by the precincts of the Eternal Realm. [2] He heard the Call from the Most-Exalted Realm, from the retreat of the Divinity Ipseity (shaṭr al-huwiyya ), [3] O Moses! Behold! What do You see? I verily, am God! your Lord and the Lord of your fathers, Ishmael, Isaac and Jacob. [4] Then Moses veiled his face out of the fear of God, the Mighty, the Powerful, the Self-Subsisting.

## X

[1] Again was Moses summoned before the shores of the Ocean of Grandeur in the Crimson Dome: "Lift up. O Moses, Your head!". [2] When he lifted it up he saw a

Light, blazing and luminous from the Furthestmost Tree in the Verdant [Green] Vale. [3] Wherefore was he guided by the Most-Great Guidance from the Fire kindled from the Eternal Lote-Tree. [4] Then did he doff the sandals of desire and detached himself from the dominion of this world and of the hereafter. [5] All this was what God had decreed for him even as thou hath been informed in the scriptural Tablets. [6] Wherefore was his Cause raised up and his remembrance exalted. [7] He was among those who turned their faces by the lights of the Fire towards the paths of Justice. [8] And this is what was ordained for Moses son of `Imran in the Dome of Time (qubbat al-zamān) [as thou would know] if thou are of such as are informed. [9] Thus hath borne witness the Paran of Love nigh the Paran of Fire in the Horeb of Holiness and the Sinai of Nearness if thou should scan the Pages of Justice (ṣaḥā'if al-`adl) with the eye of God.

## XI

[1] When the veils of Singleness were uncovered and the lights of the Divine Unity shone forth in the Muhammedan countenance [= Muhammad] the Fire of the Divine Ipseity (nār al-huwiyya) was ignited for His Logos-Self, in His Logos-Self, through His Logos-Self and the Fire of the [Divine] Lote-Tree blazed up in his breast. [2] He was seized by the pangs of love and the yearnings of desire on all sides and he heard the Call of God from the Tree of [the Perfect] Man (shajarat al-insān) in his inmost Being, `He, verily is Thou [Who] art God, the King, the Protector, the Mighty, the Holy'. [3] This is what was ordained for Muhammad in the realm of the Spirit in a realm [station] unto which the hearts of those of old did not draw nigh. [4] Thus do we mention unto thee something of the mysteries of knowledge and the

jewels of wisdom perchance the people might be enkindled and illumined by the Fire of God in the Lote-Tree of the Remembrance (sidrat al-dhikr).

## XII

[1] When Muhammad the Messenger of God desired to make mention of this most-exalted station in order that he might inform them [his people, the Jews] of the mysteries of the Divine Unity (asrār al-aḥadiyya) in the Tree of his Logos-Self (shajarat nafsihi) and might enable them to be independent of the Fire which shone forth in the Sinai of the Decree (sina' al-ḥukm) upon the Moses of the Cause (mūsā al-amr), God inspired unto him this luminous verse [Q. 24:35] that it might be a proof unto those who were given the Torah and a guidance unto those who were guided by the lights of guidance in the Muhammedan Lote-Tree. [2] And God commanded Moses to announce unto the people this [Muhammadan] Sinai in this Aḥmadian spot (al-buq`a al-aḥmadiyya). [3] Unto this beareth witness that which was revealed in the Book:

"We verily sent Moses with Our signs [and the command to] `Bring out the [thy] people from the darkness into the light and announce unto them the Days of God" (cf. Qur'ān 14:5).

[4] This is that which was inscribed in the Tablets if you are of those who are informed. [5] He indeed is the one who gave tidings unto the people concerning His [eschatological] Days; how attainment unto his station might be realized [as would be clear] should thou be numbered among such as comprehend.



### XIII

[1] Know thou that when Moses became aware of the Fire of the Tree (nār al-shajara) about the shore of the right-hand side of the [sacred] Vale he was guided by it and was among those who, with the permission of God, have entered the Blessed Spot (buq`at al-mubāraka). [2] Aforetime it was the case that if Muhammad became familiar with some reality or something interacted [touched] with him as Fire (min nar) he made it Light (nūr) unto whomsoever are in the heavens and upon the earth. [3] And he guideth unto this Light (al-nūr) whomsoever he willeth among His creatures. [4] Such is what was inscribed in the [Archetypal] Book (al-kitab) and which thou recite through the Criterion (al-furqan = the Qur'ān). [5] Then know thou that the locus (maqām) of the "Niche" (mishkat) in this [Light] verse (Q. 24:35) is His Logos-Self (nafs; = Muhammad) and that the "Lamp" (miṣbāḥ) is his resplendent heart (qalbihi al-munīr). [6] The "Glass" (zijaj) is his sanctified Person [Temple, Body] (haykalihi al-qudsiyya) in which the Lamp of the Divine Singularity (siraj al-aḥadiyya) shines forth. [7] The "Light" (al-nūr) is ignited and radiates splendor from Muhammad, for from him derives the splendor of all who are in the heavens and on the earth. [8] Wherefore do We mention this unto thee that thou might be illuminated by means of this "Light" (al-nūr) in the [eschatological] Days of the Spirit (ayyam al-rūḥ).

### XIV

[1] After this "Light" (al-nūr) had shone forth in the Muhammedan "Lamp" (miṣbāḥ al-muhammadiyya), was ignited in the Aḥmadian "Niche" (mishkat al-aḥmadiyya) and the creation of the Unique One (al-aḥadiyya : the Bāb) was completed through

the creation of the pre-existent Temple (haykal al-qadmiyya), God hath decreed that he might remind the people about the Encounter with Him [God] at the time of the latter resurrection (qiyāmat al-ukhra) and give them tidings of a Holy, Laudable Reality in a locale in which the concourse of the Elevated Ones and the Spirits of the cherubic Beings ('those who are nigh unto God')(arwāḥ al-muqarribīn) shall be gathered together. [2] Therein shall be uplifted the clouds of Divine Bounty and through the rejoicing of God the believers shall be made to greatly rejoice. [3] This is what was promised in mighty, Preserved Tablets (alwāḥ `izz maḥfūz) in which He says, exalted be His sovereignty,

"The Day when your Lord shall come or certain of the signs of your Lord" (cf. Q. 6:158).

[4] And this is what all who are in the heavens and on the earth were promised about him [the theophany of the Bāb] to the end that all might bear witness within themselves that this One is certainly the True One (al-ḥaqq); no God is there except Him. [5] He undoubtedly is the Ultimately Real (al-ḥaqq), the One Aware of things Unseen ('allām al-ghuyūb).

## XV

[1] Then know [thou of] the station of he who came in the garment of `Alī [= the Bāb or `a sublime robe'; bi-qamīṣ `alīyy] upon clouds of Light (ghamam min al-nūr) and that Muhammad, the Messenger of God was an announcer of the glad-tidings of the Encounter [Meeting] with Him on a Day in which the righteous shall greatly rejoice on his account. [2] Know also that after he came unto them with manifest

signs the slanderers spoke against him and treated him in such wise that the Pen loath to dwell upon it. [3] And God beareth witness unto this even if thou do not so testify. [4] They disbelieved in him and denied him and among them was one who slandered God accusing him of enchanting the people. [5] Thus were they veiled from the Encounter with God; did not assist him in his Cause and failed to turn in the direction of the Countenance unto which those who are nigh unto God have turned.

## XVI

[1] And thou, O Concourse of the Bayān! Render thanks unto God in that he hath bestowed his bounty upon thee in such wise that thou hast been enabled to know His Logos-Self (nafs = the Bāb) and were ennobled through attaining the Encounter with God (liqā'-Allāh). [2] He, in very truth, raised thee up and sent down unto thee that which enabled thee to be free of those who disbelieved and inclined to associate gods with God even though all expected the advent of His Days and all were heirs to the promise of His coming. [3] Wherefore know that We have, in very truth, awakened thee, raised thee up and ennobled thee through the divine Grace inasmuch as We gave thee a refuge in the precincts of knowledge (shāṭī al-`ilm), instructed thee in the paths of gnosis (subul al-`irfān) and drew thee nigh unto a Fire (nār) through which the hearts of those who have believed in God, their Lord and trusted in Him were at every moment made to blaze.

## XVII

[1] Then know that the significance of the [Light] verse (Q. 24:35) cannot be [understood] except that We should instruct thee through the Truth [through the True One?] since none shall comprehend it save those who were patient in God and inasmuch as none shall understand it except those who were sincere. [2] This is from the [divine] Bounty which hath neither beginning nor end. [3] Yet thou, O thou hopeful petitioner, during these days in which the Sun of Bounty hath shone forth from the Dawning-Place of Singularity (mashriq al-aḥadiyya) and the Lamp of the Divine Ipseity (siraj al-huwiyya) hath shed splendor in the Niche of Holiness (mishkat al-qudsiyya), shall not witness [the significance of] this [Light] verse save in a Temple (haykal) which God has secreted beyond the Pavilion of Might in the beloved heights of divine nearness. [4] Do thou not witness how God hath caused His Logos-Self (nafs) to radiate through the Fire of His Own Logos-Self (nafs), in the Eternal "Niche" (mishkat al-baqā') and preserved it in the "Lamp" of Power (miṣbāḥ al-qudrat) between the earth and the heavens; lest the breezes of ungodliness should blow upon it and there be manifest therefrom the Light (al-nūr) from behind the 70, 000 veils [of light and darkness] according to a prescribed measure [to the extent of the eye of-the needle] and [how] He caused to radiate from the Glasses the possibilities of existence (zujajat wujud al-mumkinat). [5] This in such wise that they may all give account about God, their Creator in view of the theophany (tajallī) upon them of this Divine Light (al-nūr al-ilāhiyya).

## XVIII

[1] This is what We bring to thine attention of the wonders of hidden knowledge in order that at every moment thou might render thanks unto God thy Lord as also all the believers. [2] This to the end that thou might be contented within thyself in that thou be oriented towards a region upon which not a single footstep of the creatures hath attained; save those, that is, those who are at every moment consumed by the fire of love and unto which none have drawn nigh except such as are detached from all that is within the mighty domain of the Divine command (jabarut al-amr) and in the world of creation and who, with the permission of God, tread the paths of submission. [3] Thus have We given thee sufficient through that which We have expounded for thee relative to this sanctified verse. [4] We have abridged the elucidation of its significances in that We have previously commented upon it in diverse ways and modes which have astonished the intellects of mystic knowers.

[5] Be satisfied with what hath been sent down for thee in this blessed Night (cf. laylat al-qadr) which God hath set aside among nights as one in which He hath decreed every affair as something ordained [sealed] before One Mighty, Self-Subsisting. [6] If this be deemed that which the Pen of Might hath written down upon these Perspicuous Tablets, then return unto what was previously inscribed by a mighty, evident Finger, since in the Lote-Tree of the Words (sidrat al-kalimat) through the Fire of Singleness (nūr al-aḥadiyya) hath blazed forth, and none shall grasp it save such as profess the unity of God [7] On its branches are Doves all of which were created from the Fire of the Divine Ipseity (nūr al-huwiyya); and none doth hear their cooing save those who are detached.

By God!

If thou should make careful observation thou would assuredly become informed of all branches of knowledge according to what hath been inscribed in these Tablets and be free from all except Him. This, verily, is the certain truth.

## XIX

[1] Now regarding that which thou enquired of the isolated letters (hurufat al-muqatta`āt) in the writings and the scriptures (al-ṣaḥā'if wa'l-zubūrāt). [2] Know thou that every single one of these letters are assuredly signs (ayat) unto such as are informed. [3] In them are ciphers (rumuzat), allusions (isharat), deep significances (ma`ānī) and testimonies (dalalat) not a letter of which can be grasped save by those who tread the path of God's good-pleasure and delight in the Riḍwān of knowledge [4] From all eternity hath their mysteries been hidden in the Storehouses of Infallibility (kanā'iz al-`ismat), sealed with the Seal of Power (bi-khitm al-qudrat) and veiled in the Veil of Might (bi-qina' al-`izzat); [5] though at this moment hath their Seal been broken in view thy capacity, and thy desire and in accordance with what the people are capable of understanding. [6] This such that those to whom hath been given the guidance which cometh from God, might assuredly testify that everything created exists by virtue of an Embodied Reality [theophany] ( fi haykal) who, in very truth, crieth out [Divine guidance], for around Him do circumambulate all the Elevated Letters (al-hurufat al-`a[i]liyya) and the compounded words (al-kalimat al-jami`ah) as thou would realize if thou should [truly] comprehend.

## XX

Then know thou that those letters in the station of the Names give testimony unto eternal levels of Being without beginning (al-kaynunat al-azaliyyat), the realities of the Divine Oneness (al-haqā'iq al-aḥadiyyat) and the pristine sublimities of the Divine Ipseity (sawazij al-huwiyya) the like of which thou dost recite in the Criterion (al-furqān= the Qur'ān). [2] He [God] saith -- magnified be His Light -- at the commencement of the Book [= the Qur'an]:

This is a Book about which there is no doubt. It is a guidance unto the pious" (Q. 2:1-2).

In this place God hath designated His Beloved One [= Muhammad] by these extended, isolated letters (al-hurūfat al-munbasit al-muqatta`āt) as a means of confirming such as hath soared upon the wings of detachment in the atmosphere of the Spirit.

O Muhammad!

That "Book" (hadha kitāb) is indicative of the Book of thine own Logos-Self (kitāb nafsika) which deriveth from a Hidden, Preserved Book (kitāb ghayb maḥfūz) which hath not been understood by anyone save God. [5] All the Books (kutub) derive therefrom if thou art of such as are confirmed. [6] And this is from a[n Archetypal] Book in which is distinguished the knowledge of all that hath been and will be and by means of which the rightly-guided ones are guided. [7] All that which was revealed from the beginning which hath no beginning of the various Books and the Scriptures (al-kutub wa'l-zubur) are but a letter of "that Book" (dhalik al-kitāb). [8]

And none are informed of this save such as have [mi`rāj-like] ascended on the Buraq [celestial Steed] of Might (buraq al-`izz) unto the atmosphere of divine nearness (haw'a al-qurb). [9] Everything is capable of being registered on the level of description (maqam al-wasf) except this Hidden Book (al-kitab al-maknūn) which is abstracted beyond all that can be characterized and all that those who describe things can depict. [10] And He creates from it all that hath been and will be through His saying,

"Be! And it is!" (Q. 6:73 etc).

## XXI

Then know that ["that] "Book" (kitāb) signifies the Logos-Self (nafs) of Muhammad in which all mysteries (asrār) hath been inscribed by the Pen of God (qalām Allāh), the Protector, the Mighty, the Self-Subsisting. [2] This to the end that thou should testify to the fact that there is no God except Him, the King, the Protector, the Beloved One. [3] Thus has it been sent down aforetime,

"Read! the Book of thine own Self [for this Day it suffices to reckon against thee]" (Q. 17:15a).

[4] This is a "Book" which suffices those who have believed and which enables them to attain unto the precincts of a Treasured Name [5] And on another level reference is made to a Book which was, in very truth, sent down upon him and which God made to be a Distinguisher [Criterion] (al-furqan) between such as have believed and such as have disbelieved in their Lord, as accords with [divine] justice.



## XXII

[1] And on another level know thou that God named His Beloved One [Muhammad] by means of the composite letters (al-hurūfāt al-murakkabat) and the compounded words (al-kalimat al-jami`at) the like of which thou do utter through his Names, Muhammad, Aḥmad and Maḥmud in the Kingdom of Names (malakūt al-asmā'). [2] Thus He named him by means of extended letters (al-hurūfāt al-munbasīṭa) and Isolated characters (al-ruqūmāt al-muqaṭṭa`ah[āt]) in order that all possessed of some knowledge of God might acknowledge that all the Most-Beautiful Letters (al-hurufat al-abha') and the Most Beautiful Names (al-asma al-husnā') were created for him such that nothing appears from the Beloved One [= Muhammad] except that He hath thereby intended His Beloved [Muhammad / Baha'-Allah]. [3] And this indeed is His Beloved One as thou would realize if thou should observe with the eye of the spirit. [4] The utterance is confirmed in the light of that which the Dove of Timeless Eternality (warqa' al-azaliyya) daily crieth out, `Supplicate ye! for his are the Most Beautiful Names (al-asmā' al-husna').' [5] This indeed is what was sent down aforetime and which thou dost recite during his days; the same also do most of the people recite (see Q. 7:179[180]).

## XXIII

[1] Then know thou that God is the One Who created by means of these extended, Isolated letters (al-hurufat al-munbasitah al-muqaṭṭa`ah) aspects of a Name of His Beloved One (fi ism habibihi) which is an expression of the essential realities of the extendedness (jawhariyyat al-munbasitah) and of the subtle, elevated, pristine characteristics (al-sadhijat al-rafi`ah` al-latifah) the like of which thou do witness in

the Mirrors which reflect the Muhammadan Sun [= the Twelver Imams] (shams al-muhamadaniyya). [2] Wherefore did He create in his Name through the Sacred Words (al-kalimat al-mubarakah) the Blessed Definitive Temples (hayakil al-mahdud) from the elements of the Divine Singularity (ʿanasir al-wahidiyya) wholly in accordance with their respective degrees of reflecting this Sun (al-shams).[3] Then ponder upon the creation of the heavens and of the earth in order that thou might be aware that every [Divine] Name is in the shadow of his [Muhammad's ?] Name and every [Divine] Attribute (ṣifāt) is but a shadow of his Attribute. [4] Be assured that everything lies within the grasp of his power and is created from the Letters of his Name (hurufat ismihi) and be thou reckoned among such as have discerned with the eye of God (ʿayn Allāh) the manifestations of Divine artistry (mazāhir al-sana`).

#### XXIV

[1] And on another level the [isolated Arabic letter] "A" (alif) represents the Absolute Divinity (al-uluhiyya al-muṭāqah). [2] The [isolated letter] "L" (al-lām) represents the Absolute Wilāya ("Providential Overseership") al-wilāya al-muṭlaqah) which is realized through His "Logos- Self" (nafs); actualized (al-qa'ima) through His saying, "Thy waliyy ("Patron") is [only] God" (Q. 5:55a). [3] This is by virtue of the Mighty, Praiseworthy Trusteeship (wilāya al-ʿaziz al-maḥmūd). [4] The [isolated, Isolated letter] "M" (al-Mīm) is expressive of the Muhammandan Actuality [Beingness] (al-kaynūnah al-muhammadiyya) and the Aḥmadī Modality (al-ṭarāz al-aḥmadiyya). [5] And God addressed him [Muhammad] by means of these [isolated] letters to the end that all might attain certitude for everything that He expounds is of importance, is communicated through created languages or made meaningful relative to the earthly originated domain (arḍ al-inshā'iyya). [6] All of

this appears in the Muhammadan garment (qamīṣ al-muhammadiyya) and thus doth the Dove (al-warqā') warble forth on every level the melodies of the Spirit perchance thou might comprehend something of what is communicated unto thee.

## XXV

By God!

If I desired to expound these three levels [of interpretation] relative to these three [isolated] letters [A-L-M] [numerous] scriptural Tablets (al-alwah) would in no wise suffice [to register their significances]; insufficient ink would be available such that it would prove necessary to select on every level something of what thou art capable of apprehending. [2] This inasmuch as the moment for the Pen (al-qalām) to write even a [single] letter is beyond my grasp in the light of [the actions of] such as have disbelieved and added gods to God. [3] And this since the shackling of this Youth (al-ghulām) [Bahā'-Allāh] seems something conspired within their breasts; the Youth who reposes in the region of Iraq (shatr al-'Iraq), summons all unto progress and orients himself towards the horizon of the Divine Singularity (afaq al-aḥadiyya) by virtue of the splendours of the radiance of the [mystic] Horizons [4] These matters do We mention unto thee relating to the mysteries of the Cause (asrar al-amr) perchance thou might be attentive. [5] Wherefore! By he in whose hand is the Logos-Self of Ḥusayn! If it were not for the fact that the dangerous ways of the practitioners of dissimulation (ahl al-nifaq = [proto-] Azali Bābis?) had inhibited me mention would have been made in the scriptural Tablet (al-lawh) of that which would enable thee to be detached from all that is in the heavens and on the earth and enable thee to attain unto a station which no ear hath ever heard and no eye hath ever perceived.

[6] Such an ever-flowing bounty can never be surpassed! even if it should flow out from the beginning which hath no beginning unto the end for which no end can be perceived. [7] This in that the Fountainhead of this Divine Watercourse this Ocean of the Divine Singularity (al-bahr al-aḥadiyya) is none other than the Reality of the Lordly Bounty (haqiqat fadl al-rabbaniyya), the very Beingness of the knowledge of Perpetuity (kaynunah `ilm al-samadaniyya). [8] In view of this how could it ever be that this delicious, ever-flowing Reality could be exhausted? [9] Nay rather! By my Lord! it shall never cease; neither shall it pass away for there shall be made manifest through it what shall give testimony unto Us and in addition also the witness of the denizens of the Supreme Concourse (sukkan mala' al-a`la). [10] How can the Bounty of God ever be terminated? Or the Divine Grace be cut off on His part? [11] Nay! By the very Lord of the of the heavens and of the earth! His Mercy hath ever preceded all things and His Bounty hath forever circumambulated all existence!

## XXVI

Say: O People!

This is an expression of His Bounty which He sends down unto thee, the rains of divine Wisdom from the clouds of knowledge. [2] Its effect wafts over all realms of possible being to the end that they might be enabled to enter the Riḍwān of Holiness (riḍwān al-quds) and be clothed in garment of Eternal Subsistence (qamīṣ al-baqā'). [3] Ponder ye, therefore, upon the mysteries of this Divine Bounty.

Say: `O people!

You were asleep upon the bedclothes and failed to rise up from the couches of heedlessness (maqā'id al-ghaflat) when there dawned forth the Sun of the Divine Love (shams al-ḥubb). [5] When, that is, all mouldering bodies (al-ajsad al-ramīmah) were resuscitated through its energizing effect you were as a frozen ice-mountain (al-jabal al-bard) failing to melt down with the beaming radiance of this celestial [Sinaitic] Fire (al-nar) when all who dwelt within the lofty heights of Paradise (rafārif al-khuld) were set ablaze thereby.

## XXVII

Say: O People!

Thou failed to hearken unto this servant (al-`abd) possessed of certitude in God (al-muqin bi-Allāh) for, through this Luminary (al-siraj) didst thou become aware of the gradations of mystical love (marātib al-ḥubb). [2] How magnificently is he enkindled with the Fire of Love (nūr al-ḥubb) and how fiercely does he at every moment burn up through the fire of His [Own] Logos-Self (nar al-nafsihi). [3] Wherefore, should thou be set ablaze through the wonders of the Remembrance (bada`i al-dhikr). [4] So hearken thou [within thine own selves] and supplicate God within [regarding His mystery] (fi sirrihi) with a tongue dedicated unto Him [5] [Wherefore] say, `O my God and my Master (sayyid)! I supplicate Thee through Thy Luminary (siraj) whom Thou didst make to be sanctified above the Lamp (al-miṣbāḥ) in that Thou raised me up in the assemblage of the lovers in a locale wherein mention is made of the Name of God, the Mighty, Help in Peril, the One Promised.' [6] The One that is, Who, in very truth, shall come upon a cloud-canopy of fire (ʿala zill min al-nar) and about whom circumambulate the angels of the sacred Cause (mala'ikat al-amr). [7] At this

will the cloud[s] of holiness be upraised and the Dove (al-warqa') warble out accents the like which of shall enrapture the inmost hearts of the cherubic beings who are nigh unto God (af'idat al-muqarribīn).

## XXVIII

Say: O People!

Hearken unto My Speech! Realize the importance (qadr) of these days and hold ye firm unto the brilliant, hidden Thread (al-khayt). [2] Be not entrapped by this mortal world (al-dunya') and its embellishments and do not allow thyself to be saddened by adversity or disoriented on account of what may harm thee through such as have disbelieved and turned away from God, the Mighty, the Beloved One. [3] Be among the choicest of creatures who would not be held back by any hindrance of the hinderer, veiled by the baseness of the censurer or withheld by antagonisms of an antagonist; even though, as thou wouldst realize, all who dwell on earth should oppose them. [4] Such persons are among those who do not orient themselves in the direction of any single Countenance and are unconcerned with anything in the created domain (al-mulk). [5] And were such persons to chance upon cities of gold they would assuredly, even as the lightening, flee therefrom. [6] They would in no way be entangled therewith but render glory in the exuberance of their detachment [7] These are such that when the verses of thy Lord are recited unto them, the Fire of the Divine Singularity (nūr al-aḥadiyya ) is generated within their hearts and their limbs are made to quake with spiritual yearning (al-shawq). [8] Their very countenances prostrate before God, the King, the Help in Peril, the Mighty, the Most Holy. [9] Everything aforementioned, regarding such as is evidenced in the inmost

disposition of those who are truly detached, do We cast upon thee perchance thou might with thine own eyes speedily attain unto the shore of the Divine Bounty (shaṭī' al-fadl).

## XXIX

[1] Then know thou that on another level God intends by these [isolated] letters (al-ḥurūfāt) the mysteries indicative of the [chronological] fulfillment [of prophecy] (asrār ilā nihāyāt) by means of which He alludes unto the period of the concealment of the [expected eschatological] Beauty (ikhfā' al-jamāl) behind pavilions of Glory (surādīqat al-jalāl) the like of which is evidenced in the recorded traces (āthār) of the [twelver] Imams of the Criterion (a'imma al-furqān). [2] [Thus, for example, the words] [3] Wherefore should thou, in like manner, observe and be informed of such [chronological] mysteries in all the [isolated] letters (al-ḥurūfāt) until the moment (ḥīn, abjad = 68 = 1268?) when there shall beam forth the [messianic] Lights of a sacred, beloved Dawn (fajr quds maḥbūb).

## XXX

Say: `Thou, O Concourse of the Bayān!

Behold all of this [latter interpretation] is relevant to the levels of the creatures and of things originated (maratib al-khalq wa'l-ibda`); to manifestations of things computed (mazahir al-ijad) and brought into being (al-ikhtira`). [2] It is otherwise with respect to those levels (‘modes of interpretation’; maqamat) which God made

to be a locus (maḥall an) for his sacred, theophanic self-manifestations (li-tajalliyyāhi al-qudsiyya). [3] Such [levels of significance] are totally beyond the merest allusion; account thereof can never be intimated nor evidenced by means of any indication (dalalah). [4] They [the Letters] all lie within the Abode of Holiness (maqarr al-quds) where they assuredly await Realization (fulfillment) (li-wāqifūn).

### XXXI

Say: `O Concourse of the Criterion!

(al-furqan = the Qur'ān)

The [isolated] letters (al-ḥurūfāt) have ascended unto their respective stations (mawaqif) and the Words (al-kalimat) unto their seats of repose (maqā'id) yet thou [Muslims], up until this very moment, have failed to perceive anything at all! [2] Hast thou not heard of the [eschatological] "Day when the Crier [Herald] (al-munad) shall cry out" (= Q. 50:41[40]a)? [3] And hast thou not heard of the [eschatological, devastating ] "Shout" (al-saiha) with the very Truth (bi'l-ḥaqq)? (see Q. 50:42[41] etc) [4] How is it that until this very moment thou hast remained lifeless in the veils of thine own selves? [5] Rise up then! from the resting places of heedlessness (marāqid al-ghaflah), ignorance (al-jahl) and hostility (baghda') then proceed unto the Remembrance of God (dhikr Allāh) for such is best for thee if thou desirest to return unto the precincts of the divine nearness (awtān al-qurb). [6] And dost thou not consider bygone centuries with respect to what befell some [persons] in view of the fact that they opposed the Messengers of God (rusul Allāh) and rejected their verses (or `signs'; ayat)? [7] Consequent upon this God did not commission any



Messenger (min rasul) save He was sent down with a [conclusive] Proof (hujjat) before which [even] the mature (al-balighun) were incapacitated. [8] And He hath given tidings to every Messenger (rasul); news of the sent Messenger (rasul) who shall come after him. [9] And all were assuredly promised about his [forthcoming] advent.

## XXXII

So observe such as were given the Torah aforetime!

Unto them was Moses raised up and they were given good news from God, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting; [good news that is] about a Prophet who would come after him (cf. Deut. 18:15,18). [2] But when Moses came unto them with the rod of the Command (‘aşā al-amr) and the Paran of Love (fārān al-ḥubb) they turned aside from him [Moses] and they said, "This is naught but a crazed magician (sāhir majnūn)." [3] And they disavowed him and debated with him; they disputed with him until innumerable years passed by and God lifted him up through His command and enabled him to attain unto a [place] station (maqam) which was ordained for him. [4] Thus were matters implemented through His wisdom (hikmat) and His Proof (burhan) was established; those who had disbelieved, added gods to God and without justification acted tyrannically and were [consequently] were cut off. [5] Just as thou, even today, uttereth supplications for Moses and such as hath believed in him and curse Pharaoh and his hosts.[6] Thus do We narrate for thee something of the narrative of established Reality (qaṣaṣ al-ḥaqq) perchance thou might be mindful in the Days of God!

### XXXIII

[1] Then Moses gave the people tidings of he who would appear after him. [2] And when Jesus came unto them with manifest, sacred expositions (bayyināt quds mashhūd ) they waxed proud against him and said, "Thou art not that [expected] one but naught except a man bewitched (rajul mashur)." [3] Subsequently, Jesus gave glad-tidings of a prophet (nabī) who would come after him by means of mighty, laudable allusions (bi-ishārāt `izz maḥmūd). [4] Thus, when Muhammad, the Messenger of God (rasul Allāh) came unto them they rejected him and disavowed him. [5] They said, `This is naught but a man feeble against God, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting.' [6] And when he was lifted up unto God they gathered together in support of his Cause just as thou dost witness today. [7] And they all in the light of what had befallen him [Muhammad] were made to weep and evinced humility, then cursed such as wronged him [Muhammad]. [8] And the moment he was raised up unto Sublime Intimacy (`Transcendent Partnership'; rafiq al-a`la) and had ascended unto the furthestmost Lofty Heights (rafārif al-quṣwā) he promised the people the one who would come subsequently. All of the people of the Criterion (malā' al-furqān = Muslims) are affirmative of that.

### XXXIV

[1] And the Cause (al-amr) was in motion and the appointed times (mudda) transpired until there came about the advent of `Alī before Muhammad [= the Bāb] with brilliant signs ([verses] āyāt wāḥidāt) and dazzling proofs (ḥujaj bāhirāt); with solid arguments (dalā'il muḥkamāt) and resplendent testimonies (barāhin lā'ihāt). [2] Yet did all wax proud before God regarding his Cause [Bābism] despite the fact that

they were all promised the Meeting with Him (God; liqā'ihī). [3] Unto this testifieth all that was inscribed in Preserved Tablets (alwāḥ al-maḥfūz) just as thou dost recite in the Book [the Qur'ān]. [4] This in that when God sealed prophethood (khatama al-nubuwwat) through His Beloved One (ḥabīb = Muhammad, the khātam al-nabbiyīn "Seal of the prophets" in Q. 33:40b) he gave the servants the glad-tidings of the Encounter with Him [God] and thus was the matter definitively resolved (khatama al-makhtūm). [5] Then when God came [unto them] in the shadows of the clouds (fi zulal al-ghamam, Q.2:210), breathed into the Trumpet of the Cause (nafakha fi sur al-amr; cf. Q.18:99; etc), split the Heaven asunder (inṣhaqqat al-sama' cf. Q.55:37 ; 69:16; 84:1) and crushed the mountains to dust (Q.56:5; 69:14, etc), did all retreat back upon their heels (cf. Q.3:144; 6:71..) continuing to await the Encounter [Meeting] with Him [God]. [6] This just as the Jews and the Christians continue to await that which they were promised aforetime; from that day until this very moment they all remain in a state of [eschatological] expectation! [7] How many Messengers (rusul) hath God, in very truth, sent unto them after Moses up until this moment? [8] The Jews failed to perceive this and have for all these years stated that `He [the Messiah] shall come in a subsequent year (fi sanat ukhra !' [9] Know therefore their measure (maqadir) and the measure of such as are enshadowed within their own their own shadow (fi zill anfusihim).[10] So observe those who join partners with God! the nature of their past ways and what they are still doing today. [11] In this way do We graciously aid thee in distinguishing every particular [prophetic] announcement (al-naba') and lay before thee what hath befallen the Messengers of God. [12] This to the end that thou be informed about the mysteries of the Cause (asrār al-amr) and be numbered among such as are today reckoned among those who have entered neath the shadow of the Face (zilal al-wajh); such as God hath elevated to a station which is known to His Own Logos-Self after which all had calumniated against Him.

## XXXV

[1] At this moment do We return unto what We had previously mentioned and establish anew the garment of mystic meaning (qamīṣ al-ma`ānī) upon the repositories of the words (hayākil al-kalimat) which are pristine (mujarrad), unprecedented (bad`) and multi-faceted (mansūj). [2] This that thou might become certain about the fact that the timing of the Cause (zamān al-amr) is in the grasp of One Powerful, Awesome (marhūb) and One capable, should He so will, of initiating change [revolution] (munqalib). [3] Thus, when His Cause came unto all who are in the created dominion, there occurred revolution for all were overturned.

## XXXVI

[1] Then know that were I to make mention of the [mystical] meaning of the [letter] "A" (ma`ānī al-alif) which was revealed at the commencement of the Book (al-kitab = the Qur'ān 2:1) according to that which was ordained therein of the pearls of hidden knowledge (lū`lū` `ilm maknūn), it would assuredly cause the swooning away of all who inhabit the heavens and the earth; save, that is, such as are immersed within the surging waves (ṭamṭām) of the Ocean of the Divine Power (yawm al-qudrat) in the proximity of the divine Countenance (muqābalat al-wajh). [2] These are such persons as are leagued against the dogs of the earth (kilāb al-ard) which seize Us [me] with the clutches of enmity and reject the bounty which hath descended from a cloud raised up in the name of God (bi-ism Allāh) that quencheth the thirst of those who are consumed in the Paran of Separation (fārān al-firāq) nigh thee unto the raging Fire (fawārān al-nār). [3] Some of them would assuredly expire and this to the extent that even if the spirit of life (rūḥ al-ḥaywān) were breathed into them they

would not even come alive again [lit. `be able to crawl..']. [4] But a very few of them would quaff from the Life-giving Spring (al-ma`īn al-ḥayawān) which floweth in the shadows of these words and would glorify God their Creator in that He hath caused to shine upon them from the direction of `Iraq the Luminosity of the Horizons (nayyīr al-āfāq) following the swooning away of the spirits and their subsequent recovery (thumma afāq)!

### XXXVII

[1] Know therefore that the people have been scattered in view of the fact that they were given to disputation. [2] And thus was sent down aforetime unto Muhammad, the Messenger of God (rasul Allāh) that ["] And only a handful of My servants evinced gratitude.["] [3] Yet, in spite of all this, it is beloved to Us [me] that I should give special attention to the one who striveth in the way of God, journeyeth towards Him, and migrateth unto Him. [4] In this light do I cast, according to the capacity of such among the servants [of God] who can bear it, of those souls who can sustain and of such intellects as can fathom it, what might serve as a memorial and an expression of glad-tidings (tadhkirat wa bisharat) unto the servants and [unto] those who desire to hasten unto the Abode of Peace (dār al-salām = Baghdad) and enter beneath the shade of the Tree of Reunion (shajarat al-wasl). [5] Hearken then unto what is revealed (w-ḥ-y) unto thee in this blessed [Sinaitic] Spot (buq`at al-mubarakat) from this all-eternal [Sinaitic] Tree [Bush] (al-shajarat al-sarmadiyya) which is not consumed by Fire (mā qabasa `anhā al-nār)(cf. Exod. 3:2b) [6] Unto this do none draw nigh except such as circumambulate about its domain and, with His consent, sacrifice themselves in His path thereafter rendering thanks.

### XXXVIII

[1] Know thou then that the [isolated] letter ا "A" (Alif) is, on a certain level a herald [indicative] (bashir) of His Greatest Name (al-ism al-a`zam) which is Allāh ["God" 1st letter = "A"]. [2] The ل [isolated letter] "L" (lām) is an aspect of His Hidden Knowledge (min `ilmihi al-maknūn). [3] The م [isolated letter] "M" (mīm) indicateth his Name the Bestower (al-mu`ṭi). [4] That is to say [A-L-M] [semi-acrostically indicates the sentence], `I am God, the Most-Informed (al-a`lām), the Bestower (al-mu`ṭi). [5] And these Names are what God hath singled out for His own Logos-Self (bi-nafsihi) at the commencement of the Book (al-kitāb = Q. 2:1). [6] By this means doth He accomplish that which He desireth and none can ever know the nature of what He desireth nor outstrip Him in His knowledge. [7] And We one and all are certain and confident of this matter.

### XXXIX

[1] Now on another level God, glorified be He, intendeth by the ا [letter] "A" (alif) of the [isolated letters A-L-M] the Oneness of His Essence (aḥadiyya dhātihi). [2] By the ل [letter] "L" (lām) [is indicated] the wilāya (providential custodianship) of His والى walī (intimate authority, custodian, legatee, guardian, etc) for the [letter] "L" (lām) is the letter indicative of al-wilāya (one representative of special custodianship) if thou art of such are informed. [3] By the م [isolated letter] "M" (mīm) is indicated the prophethood (nubuwwa) of His Beloved (ḥabīb, = Muhammad) for this letter ("M") is the letter of prophethood (nubuwwa) as is indicated by the fact that it appears at the beginning of the name of His Messenger (= Muhammad) just as thou dost witness. [4] And the letter of the wilāya (ḥarf al-

wilāya custodianship = "L") hath precedence over the letter of Prophethood (ḥarf al-nubuwwa = M)[5] This so that those possessed of heartfelt vision testify to the fact that this is an expression of eschatological glad-tidings (bishāra min ba`d) unto all who inhabit the heavens and the earth for he who succeeded Muhammad (= the Bāb) hath in his mighty name (= `Alī Muhammad) the name of wilāya (custodianship..) (ism al-wilāya) [= `Alī] precede the name of prophethood (ism al-nubuwwa) [= Muhammad] just as thou art aware in [the Bāb's name] `Ali before Muhammad (`Ali Muhammad = the Bāb). [6] Evidence of this is furnished by the second verse of the Criterion (al-furqan = the Qur`ān) which, in very truth, was revealed as follows, "No doubt is there about this Book wherein there is guidance for the god fearing who believe in the Unseen (al-ghayb)" (Q. 2:2). [7] Now the "Unseen" (al-ghayb) doth not relate to the era (`asr) of Muhammad except through `Alī before Nabīl [= Muhammad = the Bāb] if thou be of those who believe in this "Unseen" (al-ghayb). [8] Through this "Unseen" (al-ghayb) did God take a covenant (al-`ahd), by virtue of the very [pre-eternal] constituent atoms of the Criterion (the Qur`ān = Muslims; fi dharr al-furqan), with all such as inhabit the heavens and the earth; though most of the peoples remain devoid of comprehension.

## XL

[1] Know therefore in what manner the Bird of the Throne (dīk al-`arsh) extendeth its tongue and warbleth in the lofty heights of Eternal Subsistence (rafāraf al-baqā') informing thee of that through which thou shouldst find thy minds calmed, thy souls refreshed and thine hearts delighted. [2] Through this also should the believers in the Divine Oneness (al-muwāḥḥidun) be exhilarated. [3] Know then! the greatness of this Cause (al-amr) for God hath made mention of it at the very beginning of His

Book [the Qur'ān, 2:1] and at the very commencement of His address with His Beloved One [Muhammad]. [4] In spite of this these profligate souls [Muslims] broke the covenant of God (naqisu `ahd Allāh) violated His testament (mithāq) and repudiated His Proof (burhān). [5] Not satisfied with all this they did unto him [the Bāb] what shattereth the very patience of the truly patient. [6] Thus do We inform thee of the mysteries of the Cause if thou dost hearken with the ears of sanctity.

## XLI

So by God!

Shouldst thou ponder upon the ل "L" (lām) which was sent down between the two [isolated] letters (al-ḥarfayn = "A" and "M") thou wouldst assuredly attain everything that thou desirest for the ل "L" (lām) hath the form of three [letters] (hai`atihi thalatha, = ل = l+ā+m) [when spelled out in full], as accords with the reckoning of the practitioners of computation in their examination thereof. [2] The latter [persons] thus assign to its reality (nafs) three [letters]; that is, [1] the [letter] ل "L" (al-lām), [2] the [letter] ا "A" (al-alif) and [3] the [letter] م "M" (al-mīm). [3] It [the isolated letter "L"] thus combines within itself everything about which we might be questioned [regarding the A-L-M]. [4] The [letter] م "M" (al-mīm) appeareth within its reality (nafs) and this is an evidence of its being self-contained (istighna') as thou wouldst realize if thou shouldst soar in the firmament of self-sufficiency (hawā' al-tajrīd) and the expanse of the Divine Oneness (fadā' al-tawhīd). [5] In view of this do the proof seekers (al-mustadillun) demonstrate the fact that "He, verily, no God is there save Him" (innahu la ilaha ila huwa). [6] He, verily, hath ever been exclusively One (wāḥid) in His Essence (dhāt), One in His Attributes



(ṣifāt), One in His Name (ism), One in His [cosmological-chemical] handiwork (san`a). [7] Could there possibly be any God other than He?

Say: `Praised be God! There is no God other than He'.

[8] And we, one and all, before Him and His handiwork (san`a) do stand in bewildered awe (mutahayyirun). [9] Through this are the veils of blasphemous idolatry (hijabat al-shirkiyya) burned up, the intimations of self-guidance dissipated and the banners of the champions of the Divine Oneness upraised.

## XLII

[1] Ponder now upon the ا "a" (al-alif) which God placed in an intermediary position between the ل "L" (al-lām) and the م "m" (al-mīm) [in the isolated letter "L" ل = l+ā+m]. [2] Such is what cannot be comprehended through discernment nor fathomed by means of knowledge (al-`ilm) even if all such as inhabit the heavens should consider this matter for an eternity of eternities (fi azal al-azal). [3] [In the effort to comprehend] The very doors of the mystical senses (abwāb al-ma`ānī) of this all-perpetual letter (al-ḥarf al-samadani) would be bolted and the portals of explication (abwab al-alfaz) would be opened that thou might make due progress should thou hearken aright!

### XLIII

[1] Know then that should thou make this divine "A" (al-alif al-ilahi) to revolve about its self (nafsihi) there would be manifest two upright "A"s (al-alfayn al-qa'imayn). [2] And then after that if thou should raise them both up unto [the value of] the tens (al-`asharat) then there would be manifest the number of twice ten (= twenty; `adad al-`asharayn;  $1+1 = 2 \times 10 = 20$ ). [3] Then would surely be made manifest the [letter] "K" (al-kāf; abjad = 20) of the [creative imperative] command [= kun = "Be!"] by means of which the "Temples of the Divine Unity" (hayākil al-tawhīd), the Manifestations of Singleness (mazāhir al-tafrīd) and the loci of abstracted reality (mawāqī` al-tajrid) were called into being. [4] And this [creative "K" as the imperative] actualized the [qur'ānic] "and it is" (fa-yakun) [= kun fa-yakūn, "Be and it is!", Q. 2:115; 3:42; 6:72 etc.] before it was associated with the supportive letter "N" (bi-rukn al-nūn) [as thou dost know] if thou art of such as are informed. [5] Following this conjoining [of "K" and "N" as the creative imperative] the modalities (al-ishārat) were created in the worlds of limitation (ʿawālim al-tahdīd) as well as the concrete [worldly] testimonies (dalalat al-mulkiyya) in the worlds of constructed reality (ʿawālim al-tarkib). [6] Unto this do testify such as are privy to the knowledge of the mysteries of wisdom (ulu al-`ilm asrār al-ḥikmat) the like of which hath streamed forth from a manifest and mighty Pen (qalām `izz mashud).

### XLIV

[1] Know then that all of the [Isolated] Letters (al-ḥurūfāt) and the Words (al-kalimāt) return unto this all-eternal [letter] "A" (al-alif al-samadani) and this Lordly

Cipher (al-raqm al-rabbani) [as would be evident to thee] if thou should observe with the vision of the heart [2] It assuredly is a manifestation of the Letters (mazhar al-hurufat) without it being [in the least] alluded to (min ghayr al-ishara alayihi). [3] And thus was the knowledge which originateth with Him, in very truth, sent down should thou estimate correctly and be of such as comprehend. [4] Otherwise beseech God, thy Lord that He instruct thee in His knowledge and proffer unto thee what shall enable thee to be independent of such as resist guidance by the verses [signs] of God (bi- āyat Allāh), who do amble in the shadowy enclaves of the abysmal deep and are engulfed therein from all directions by waves of hellfire causing them to sweat profusely though utterly failing to realize [spiritual] intimacy.

## XLV

Observe now!

the mysteries which are deposited in this [letter] "A" (al-alif) for in all the Letters (al-ḥurūfāt) are theophanies (tajalliyyāt) of this "A" (al-alif). Then observe ye this! [2] Witness ye, for example, that in this [letter] ٱ "A" (al-alif) is the [letter] ب "B" (ḥarf al-bā') in an humbled, innocent condition (bi- khudū` a barā'a), utterly prostrate upon the dust its whole being manifesting fear before God (khushū` an li-lāhī ) as thou mayest observe if thou beholds its shape (Arabic ٱ "A" = "B", leveled, turned on its side). [3] Subsequently was it [the locus of "A" / "B"] manifested in the Temple of [the letter] "D" (haykal al-dāl) exhibiting its prostration (al-rukū`) before God, the Help in Peril, the Beloved One (note the bent, prostrate shape of the Arabic letter "D", . And [4] And when it has prostrated itself before God the essence of the [letter] Šād (ʿayn al-šād) was made manifest. [5] From this there floweth the [Cosmic]

Watery Expanse (al-mā') through which God reviveth all who exist within the heavens and on the earth in the category of creatures (marātib al-khalq) [as would be evident] if thou should scrutinize the constituent nature of the creatures (āthār al-khalq).

[6] Wherefore be informed that all the Letters (al-ḥurūfāt) and all of the creatures are in this light subject to such theophany on account of the theophanic transformations of this [letter] "A" (tajalliyyāt hadhā al-alif) which is manifested within diverse [letter-shaped] receptacles (hayākil al-mukhtalifa) evident unto thee if thou should examine the [diverse forms of] the letters of the alphabet (al-ḥurūfāt al-hijā'iyya).

#### XLVI

[1] And when it came about that God desired to manifest the theophanic transformations (tajalliyyāt) of this [letter] "A" (al-alif) there radiated forth upon these [primordial] letters a theophanic disclosure of His likeness [image](tajallī an min mithālihi). [2] As a result all these [primordial] letters(al-ḥurūfāt) were effected by the [creative imperative] "Be!" (kun) and their very garments (qamā'id, `outer forms') were made manifest. [3] If they should sanctify their own selves from these transient embodiments (al-ishārat al-maḥdudat) they would one and all exist in the [disembodied] form (haykal) of this [letter] "A" (al-alif) and [when necessary] would arise in accordance with their respective forms. [4] And should thou desire to witness a theophanic self-disclosure (tajallī) of this [letter] "A" (al-alif), rising up (al-qā'ima) in the [primordial essence of the] letters (al-ḥurūfāt) according to their [own] shape and its [own] subsistent being (qiyāmihi) thou shouldst assuredly evince certitude within thyself for it [the "A"] doth assuredly arise up above all things

## XLVII

[1] Then observe the devolved cryptic dimensions (al-ruqūmāt) [of the letter[s] "A"] just as thou dost witness their [mundane] numerical-alphabetical aspect (a`dād al-handasa). [2] This [letter] "A" (al-alif), for example, if thou submerge it in the oceans of the decads (abḥār al-`asharāt) the "A" would appear,[maintaining] its own shape through the replication of the [Primordial] "Point" (bi-ziyādat al-nuqṭa) [as 2 dots] and from it would appear the [letter] "Y" (al-yā') for its numerical value is ten (yā' = abjad 10 = 1 & 0) according to the manner of enumeration in which thou dost calculate. [3] In like manner, if thou shouldst cause the letter "A" (al-alif), to ascend unto the heaven of the hundreds it would appear in its very essence through the compounding of the dual "Points" (ziyādat al-nuqatayn) such that thou would, this moment observe the letter "Q" (al-qāf) [again with 2 dots] [4] Wherefore is it that it the letter "A" (al-alif) traverseth until it terminateth at the end of numerical computation (ākhir al-`addād) when the letter "A" (ḥarf al-alif) appeareth on the fourth level [of the thousands] (rutbat al-rābi`) [again] through the compounding of the [Primordial] "Points" (bi-ziyādat al-niqāt). [5] Wherefore is there manifest the numerical reckoning of the thousands (`adād al-alīf). [6] In this respect thou shalt observe the letter "Gh" (al-ghayn; abjad = 1,000).

## XLVIII

[1] Then witness thou in what manner the tokens of the Divine Unity (āthār al-tawḥīd) become evident in the Omnipotent realm of the Letters (jabarūt al-ḥurūfāt) such that thou might bear witness in the horizons of the realms of possibility (āfāq al-mumkināt) and the selves possessed of intellectuality (anfus al-ma`qulat) [cf. Q.

XX :XX] the fact that He is God and that there is none other God save Him and [that] all return unto Him. [2] So when the locus ["Self"] (nafs) of the [letter] "A" (ḥarf al-alif) became evident in the first of the letters as well as the last of them, there appeared in its essence (dhat), through the tongue of their inmost reality (bi-lisān sirrihi), [the words] "He is the First and the Last, the Seen and the Hidden" (huwa al-awwā al- akhir al-zāhir al-bāṭin) (= Q. 57:3.. ). [3] And all in this respect were one as regards the unity of their Creator [= the "A"] for before Him were they prostrate. [4] On that level (al-maqām) He appropriated to this [letter] "A" (al-alif) all the [other emergent] Letters (al-ḥurufāt) and thus was the theophany (tajallī ) of this [letter] "A" (al-alīf) [ made manifest] through its own Self (bi-nafsihi) upon [all] the [other] Letters [as thou would evident] if thou were [of such as are] enraptured in the Riḍwān of the Divine Unity (riḍwān al-tawḥīd). [5] At any given moment what applieth to the [letter] ۱ "A" (alif an) is truly affirmed of the letter "B" (ḥarf al-ba'); and the reverse also may be observed. [6] Then be aware of the "Points" (al-niqāṭ) which are increased relative to it [the "A"] on all of its levels and degrees. [7] This is that which establisheth the outward forms (al-ishārat) which it [the "A"] assimilateth in the expression of its [alphabetic] self-manifestations (tanzilāt tajalliyātihi) to the end that the people realize that He alloteth them [= the "Points" in "A" = the various letters] in accordance with their varying capacity (miqdār) and according to what is ordained for them relative to it. [8] Otherwise, if it were in its [alphabetical] mode and it [= the "Points" in the "A" = various letters] failed to become clothed in the garment of [alphabetic] limitation (qamīṣ al-ḥudūd) it would prove incomprehensible unto the inmost hearts of such as are possessed of discernment as well as unfathomable unto those possessors of intellect.

## XLIX

[1] Then witness an [alphabetical] self-manifestation (tajalli) of this [locus of the letter] "A" (al-alif) within thine own self! for thou, verily, at the moment in which thou hearken and envision [this "A"] thou shall cry out whatsoever thou desire inasmuch as no single affair hold thee back and no single action obstructs thee just as thou witnesseth all that within thine own selves. [2] And in like manner experience something of the Divine Names (fāshida fī 'l-asmā') at the moment when the Divine Name "the Hearing" (ism al-samī') is confirmed for thee. [3] In consequence there will [also] be confirmed for thee the Divine Name the "Seer" (ism al-baṣīr) and likewise further Divine Names if, that is, thou shouldst gaze within thy selves with unblemished vision (bi-'uyūn al-ṣāfiyya). [4] And all of this [may transpire] relative to Divine Attributes (ṣifāt) which all the people up till this moment return unto their Creator (khāliq) for they lack [insightful awareness]. [5] So testify [also] within thyself that all of these Divine Attributes hath been created within His dominion and He casteth them out upon such of His servants as He willeth for He, verily, no God is there save Him. [6] He would not be comprehended in any respect through thine own comprehension neither would He be understood in any fashion after the manner in which thou doth understand. [7] Nay rather! He created these various levels [abilities] in the realities (anfus) of His servants to the end that thereby they all might become informed of the fact that He, verily, created the Names (al-asmā') but hath ever been sanctified therefrom; and He fashioned the Attributes (al-ṣifāt) but hath ever remained abstracted therefrom. [8] There indeed is no Originator (mubdi') other than Him for His is the Logos-Command (al-amr) and the Creation (al-khalq) for were not all created through His Logos-Command (bi-amrihi). [9] Wherefore shouldst [thou] exclaim: So exalted be God, the King, the Help in Peril, the Self-

Subsisting. So exalted be God, the Omnipotent, the Creator, the Powerful, the Mighty, the Beloved One.'

## L

O Concourse of the Bayān!

Strive thou in thy spirits and thy souls in order that thou might attain this station and be not of such as have failed hold fast unto any one of the Divine Names (ism min al-asmā') and among those who give no attention unto these Divine Attributes (al-ṣifāt). [2] Be thou not of such as have eyes but fail to perceive anything, for whom a hearing ear is inoperative and who have hearts that fail to comprehend. [3] So testify within thyself that thou art rising up, sleeping and walking yet retain but a single identity (bi-shay' wāḥid) for such is an established reality! [4] In spite of this there riseth up from amongst thee the [expression of] the various Divine Names and Attributes (al-asmā' wa'l-ṣifāt) just as thou dost witness and submit unto all of them within thine own selves. [5] And these diverse [divine] names and numerous attributes were manifest in diverse ways the like of which was decreed for thy selves and were created in thy bodies; perchance thou might ascend within thyself through the [experience of] celestial ascents of [mystical] gnosis (ma`ārij al-irfān). [6] For example, thou dost take an action which is but a single thing even though thou dost name or designate it with all the various names (bi-kull al-asmā'). [7] In reality, in its very essence [the action] is abstracted from everything that thou speak of or the like of which thou dost [inwardly] make reference to. [8] In turning, however, unto the locus of "hearing" and its root bases, there should be manifest a trace (athar), an attribute (ṣifāt) or a[nother] name (ism), it would in no wise appear distinct from



that [action]. [9] Likewise, in turning unto the locus of "vision" and through such of the faculties as are implicit therein, there would be manifested another trace of a [specific] attribute (şifāt). [10] Such is what thou wouldst find relative to thine own selves. [11] It is [also] likewise with respect to the tongue (al-lisān); should the action be oriented towards the tongue there would appear [the power of] speech (al-nuṭq) just [in fact] as thou dost articulate. [12] And this is the result of focusing upon the outer foundations (aşbāb al-ẓāhiriyya) [of the various divine Names] in the condition of the human identity (haykal al-bashariyya). [13] And again it is likewise with respect to the interior dimension (al-bāṭin) through the insightful vision (bi-başar al-bāṭin) [as though would realise] shouldst thou [befittingly] bear witness. [14] For example, in [the association of the action] with the heart, the liver, the spleen, the head and more besides, it is manifested in these diverse situations [resulting in] diverse names the like of which thou dost name [through] the intellect (al-`aql), the spirit [soul] (al-nafs) and the inmost heart (al-fu'ad).

## LI

[1] Wherefore be informed of the [alphabetical] theophany (al-tajallī) of [the letter] "A" within thine own self (nafs) in spite of the fact that it is a but a single reality (cf. "A" = abjad 1, wāḥid); God makes manifest therefrom the [various] Divine Names (al-asmā' al-mutaghāyira) and the variegated traces (al-athar al-mukhtalifa) which result in the realization of the station of mystical apprehension [gnosis] (maqam al-`irfan). [2] And thou shalt witness in this respect that diversity which shall be made manifest as a result of the differentiation of the locus [cf. "A"=1] and the foundational bases (al-maḥall wa'l-asbāb). [3] Notwithstanding [this differentiation] the Manifestor (mujallī) is One (wāḥid) and the thing manifested

(al-tajallī) is [likewise] one (wāḥid) [4]. All of this taketh place within thy self if thou would be insightful and thus be assured that there is none other God save Him. [5] He it is Who fashioned the entirety of the creation; through all of the His [Divine] Names and His [Divine] Attributes (bi-jami` asmā'ihī wa ṣifātihi) as thou wouldst realize if thou didst not blot out within thyself the wonders of the Divine artistry (badā'ī ` al-ṣan`a). [6] All of this He created in His dominion and made manifest on the level of the created realm (fi maqam al-khalq).

## LII

And ye, O Concourse of the Bayān!

Overstep ye not thy limitations! Fear ye God! and appropriate not to thyself what hath not been ordained for thee. [2] Be ye not then [such as] elevate their station. [3] We, verily, have clarified for thee that whereby the inmost hearts of the mystic knowers (af'ida al-urafā'), the sages (al-ḥukamā') and the divines (al-`ulāma') were bewildered through the subtle allusions of these words [4] This to the end that through them thou might thereby gain insight and cause all such as are in the heavens and on the earth to drink deep of this flowing spring (al-ma`īn al-jāriyya) in accordance with their [varying] capacities and levels [of mystic progress] (maratib) and in line with that which they are capable of apprehending. [5] Know therefore how this Spiritual [letter] "A" (al-alif al-ruḥānī), this all-enduring Ornament (al-ṭarāz al-samadānī), this Unitative, Upright Thread (al-khayt al-mustaqīm al-aḥadāī ) [Bahā'-Allāh?] hath risen up unto and through its own self in the encounter [with] the denizens of the heavens and of the earth. [6] And at one time it ["A"= Bahā'-Allāh] lifteth up its head unto heaven, whereupon the Supreme Concourse (malā' al-a`lā)

is enraptured thereby and at another it inclineth it towards the earth whereupon the bodies of the cherubic beings (ajsad al-muqarribīn) are raised up from the sepulchers of extinction (qubur al-fanā'). [7] Wherefore do We deliver unto thee something of that which is inscribed with the fingers of Power upon sacred, Preserved Tablets (alwāḥ quds maḥfūz).

### LIII

[1] Then know furthermore that this upright, established [isolated letter] "A" (al-alif al-mustaqīmah al-rāsikha) hath a similitude (mithāl) in all the worlds; every thread [ray] of its bounty (khayt min `inayatihi) is empowered [2] [Indeed!] Everything that thou dost observe in all that hath been created and will evermore be created, is a [direct] result of its uprightness or its uprising or a result of its being solidly established, or indeed, of its power or might (quwwat aw qudrat). [3] Know therefore that all of this hath been made manifest by virtue of the [very] uprightness of this Divine [letter] "A" (istiḡamat hadha al-alif al-ilahi); and everything is sheltered neath the shadow of this divine "A" (al-alif al-ilahi) and becometh established as a result of its uprightness.

### LIV

So by God!

The discourse hath reached a level at which the allusive meanings of knowledge (isharat al-`ilm) and the testimonies of wisdom (dalalat al-hikma) have been set

forth. [2] This that thou might be especially thankful unto God, thy Lord during thy days and be numbered among such as turn aside from all upon the earth then incline unto the Beauty of the Divine Oneness (jamāl al-aḥadiyya) in the Robe of Light (qamis al-nūr) [= the Bāb / Yaḥya / Bahā'-Allāh?] beyond the [celestial] Veils [of Light]. [3] Those that is who drink deep of the Wine of mystic Meaning and Spiritual Life from the hands of the Spirit (al-rūḥ = Bahā'-Allāh?) and at every moment do so quaff. [4] And if there should be displayed before them [the spiritually pious] all manner of [erotic] visions (kull al-tala`āt) and there be manifested unto them females [bedecked] with every adornment and bejewelled trinket (zīna wa ḥaly) they would in no wise be distracted thereby. [5] And if, furthermore, such damsels should enter unto them [the pious, adorned] with bracelets of gold (asāwir al-dhahāb) and mighty flowing robes (jalābīb al-`izzat), [adorned] in silken brocade (al-sundus), [nay indeed] in gilded silk brocade (al-istabraq) and desire to beguile [seduce, snatch] one of them [the pious] or desire that they [damsels] should command the affection (lit. `enter the heart') of anyone of them [the pious], then by God! they [the pious] would prove unwilling and would evince no desire to [even] consider them. [6] (Such would be the case with the pious) even if these female beings should ornament themselves with all [such finery] as is possible in [the spheres of] existence and make use of eye-coloring, evincing [seductively] wholly black lashes [all manner of eye-makeup] (al-akhāl)! [7] Should, in fact, any one of them [the pious] be confronted with all that is possible [of distractions] on earth be it [even] of gold or of silver or of all the adornments of the earthly domain (zakhārif al-mulk), they would in no wise take note of such things neither would they be inclined thereto. [8] Such [aforementioned saintly] persons are [indeed] the [chosen] saints of God (awliyā' Allāh) for whom there is neither fear nor sorrow; they stand in dread of no one even if [it should be the case that] all who inhabit the heavens and the earth should rise up against them. [9] They would not be discomforted inasmuch as their

hearts, their very selves and their [deep] inmost bosoms have been filled with the wine of the Mercy of God as well as of His love. [10] There is no space within their hearts such that there should enter therein a love for anything other than Him. [11] Thus do We inform thee regarding the sincere ones perchance thou wilt comprehend their [exalted] nature. [12] And thou shalt follow their mode of behavior so as not to be moved by the tempests of the worldly domain (‘awāsaif al-mulk) nor have thy footsteps falter in the violent winds of the course of time (qawāsif al-dahr). [13] Then be thou of such as are resolute in the love of God (ḥubb Allāh).

## LV

[1] Then know that this [letter] "A" (al-alif) is expressive of mysteries relative to all sciences (kull al-‘ulum) inasmuch as God hath bestowed upon it a portion of the wonders of His Bounty. [2] Within it is a fore ordainment [measure] of knowledge relative to what hath been and what will be. [3] If, for example, thou deduce the [other] letters (al-ḥurufāt) which are inner dimensions (sarā'ir) of this [isolated letter] "A" in the light of that which We have divulged unto thee previously of the four levels [implicit] therein and thou write down [the secrets of] its power of articulation (al-istintāq) and after that divide it according to its four divisions (taqsīmāt) and thou apply this according to these [four] divisions in line with its requirement in terms of augmentation and diminution (al-iqtidā' min al-taraqqī wa'l-tanazzul), of ascent and equilibrium (al-taraffu` wa'l-tasāwī) there shall assuredly appear before thee something of such mysteries as shall astonish the intellects. [4] And thereby will be evident that which thou hast heard regarding the all-encompassing [comprehensive science of] jafr (al- jafr al-jāmi` ) and thou shalt attain unto the genesis of the sciences (madbā' al-‘ulūm).

## LVI

[1] So Oh! would that We had found some [receptive] soul meeting with Our approval such that We might bestow upon him what God hath taught Us of His Bounty! [2] But inasmuch as We failed to find such an one did We communicate this unto thee to only to a limited extent; for We restrict the matter somewhat lest there become privy thereto every tyrannical apostate (jabbār mardūd). [3] Know then that these [qur'ānic] isolated letters (al-hurufat al-muqaṭṭa'āt) are on one level an intimate link (ramz) between the enraptured soul and the Beloved One (ʿāshiq wa'l-mashūq), the lover and the Loved One (habib wa'l-mahbub). [4] And none shall become privy thereto except those whose hearts God hath made repositories of His knowledge and treasuries of His wisdom [5] For such is what is hath been anticipated in the knowledge of God, the Help in Peril, the Beloved One.

## LVII

[1] Then know [thou furthermore] that this [isolated letter] "A" (al-alif) is on one level allusive of the Snow-White Earth (al-arḍ al-bayḍā'), [which is] the Brilliant, Most secreted Light (al-nūr al-durri al-akhfa) [if that ] is thou should desire to be perceptive of the mysteries of the [divine alchemical ] artistry in the sphere of nature (asrār al-sanā` al-ṭabī`ah). [2] And this is the [Snow-White] Earth (al-arḍ) whose basis and being are derived from the [cosmic] Watery Expanse (al-mā') (as would be evident should thou apply reason) for it doth exhibit solidity [freeze] when placed within the [cosmic] Watery Expanse (al-mā'). [3] Then praised be to God its Originator (mūjjid)! and exalted be He above that which they assert. [4] And should thou solidify [freeze] and coagulate [thicken] this brilliant watery substance (al-mā'

al-durri) in this Fiery Water (al-mā' al-nārī) and extract the heat (al-harārah) from the [resultant] Golden Fiery Water (al-mā' al-dhahabī al-nārī) there would be united therein the three [realities] which are the Spirit (al-rūḥ ), the Soul (al-nafs) and the Body (al-jasad). [5] And this is what hath not been anticipated by the knowledge of anyone among the people for all are bewildered thereby. [6] It is thus the case that when thou hast coagulated this [Snow-White] Earth (al-arḍ) engendered from the [cosmic] Water (al-mā') there shall appear the Crimson [hue] (al-ḥamrā') in the [cosmic] Water (al-mā') [which] should then be extracted. [7] And when thou hast extracted it [the Crimson Water] thou should find on its surface the residue [dust] of the Fire (ghubra al-nār). [8] That is to say, it should darken at which thou should not be sorrowful for if it is darkened it is perfectly acceptable since God hath transformed this darkness through the Light. [9] This inasmuch as it is ignited and given radiance with the permission of God, the Help in Peril, the Praised One.

## LVIII

[1] And this is the Fruit of Holiness (thamarat al-quḍs) which hath been manifested from the [celestial] Tree (al-shajarat) planted in the Heaven of the celestial spheres (samā' al-aflak) and the Earth of the Intelligences [Intellects] (ard al-`uqul). [2] And this is [also] the Philosopher's Stone (ḥajr al-ḥukamā') and their [alchemist's] Silver (fiḍḍa) and the Coveted Substance [?] (ard al-`ashan) as well as their [alchemist's] Quicksilver [Mercury] (al-zaybaq) and all which they do [synonymously] so designate. [3] And if thou extract it from the Divine Mine [Metal] (ma`din al-ilahi) let something of the Spirit (al-rūḥ) which deriveth therefrom empower [prevail upon] it by virtue of its affinity, for the Body (al-jasad) doth not receive the Spirit (al-rūḥ) which is contrary to it [as thou wouldst know] if thou wert mindful of that which We

have bestowed upon thee. [4] And naught shall transpire of the days [of successfully completing the alchemical task] except thou shalt, with the permission of God, [perform the alchemical] whitening [process].

So strive thou to the utmost degree with respect to its purification such that nothing shall remain therein of the darkness which is the existing impurity (al-fasad). [6] Then thou shalt dry it in the Fire of Virtue (bi-nūr al-salihāt) and empower [prevail upon] it with this [same] Spirit (al-rūḥ) another time. [7] Then set it ablaze in the Fire of Reeds (nār al-qasab) until there riseth up above this [cosmic] Water (al-mā') what [deriveth] from a [greatly] treasured Crimson Oil (duhn aḥmar [an] makhzun).

## LIX

By God!

This is indeed a result of the Gold of the Sages [= Philosopher's Stone] (min dhahab al-ḥukamā') over which souls (al-nufus) hath been perplexed and the intellects of the wise (al-hukama') bewildered. [2] Up until this moment, however, none hath attained thereto save those servants who hath not been distracted by the trappings of the world (zakharif al-dunya') from the [messianic] Remembrance of God (dhikr-Allāh), the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting. [3] This is indeed [known as] the [transformative] Logos-Soul (al-nafs), the Blood (al-damm) and the Red Gum (al-samghat al-ḥamrā') with which he [the divine alchemist] enliveneth the mouldering bodies (ajsad al-ramīm); if, that is, he bloweth thereon with this [life-giving] Spirit (al-rūḥ).



## LX

Then thou, O Assemblage occupied with Alchemical practise! (malā' al-san`a)

Seek ye fervently! but be thou conscious of the [dangers of the cosmic] Fire (al-nār) such that thou shalt not bring it to bear upon [the proto-"Gold"] to the extent which results in injury for this [ethereal] Fire (al-nār) doth both decompose (yufsid) and restore (yuslih) as thou wouldst know if thou wert befittingly aware. [2] Such is that which We mentioned about the Fire (al-nar), the Gold (al-dhahab), the Soul (al-nafs), the sulphurous Water (mā' al-kibrit), the Divine Water (mā' al-ilāhī) and the Airy Water (mā' al-hawā').[3] And there applieth unto this [Elixir] all the divine Names and Attributes (al-asmā' wa'l-ṣifāt) in its various inner grades and levels in the light of their appropriate correspondences as indicated by the manifestation of [miscellaneous] hues [colours] and modes of activity (al-alwān wa'l-af`al). [4] Wherefore do We instruct thee to the end that all may attain certitude through this unlettered Iraqi Youth [Bahā'-Allāh] (al-fata al-umm al-`iraq ) possessed of such sciences (li-`ulum) as surpass those of the ancients (al-awwalin) and have never been comprehended by those of this latter period (al-ākhirūn). [5] This perchance their souls might thereby inwardly comprehend and they desist from such idle speculations as they indulge in this day.

## LXI

Wherefore, O my Brother!

should there be manifested for thee upon the surface of the [cosmic] Water (al-mā') this Luminous Child (al-walad al-nūrānī) and this Spiritual Infant (al-tufl al-ruḥānī) then little by little remove it until thy [alchemical] charge (amr) shall be completed for thee. [2] By God! If this [image on the surface of the water] should be envisioned, the [fervent] heat of the [cosmic] Fire (humma al-nār) would bedazzle the sight. [3] Then exalted be the [Divine] [Fashioner] Alchemist (al-sani`), the Creator, the Omnipotent, the Ruler, the Mighty, the Awesome. [4] This [visage] is indeed of the substance [foundation] of the Spirit (al al-ruh) as well as an established reality (haqiqa). [5] And if it should be designated something else it would [again] be [something] metaphorical(majaz). [6] Through it the bodies of the dead (ajsād al-mayyita) would be brought to life and would rise up from their tombs and be gathered in the domain of reconstitution (arḍ al-tadbīr). [7] Then shall the resurrection of bodies (qiyāmat al-ajsad) be manifest for thee on the Day in which He shall sound the Trumpet (yanfaha fi al-ṣūr), on which the [bodily] garment of the creatures (qamīṣ al-khalā'iq) shall be renewed and all [present] be confronted by their [past] deeds in the Sanctified Presence (mahdar al-quds) [8] And they shall be punished for all that they have committed of falsehood during their wayward lifetime; they shall discover that they will in every respect be fully recompensed. [9] Wherefore shall the melodies of the Dove be renewed and He replace all [that exists] in the heavens and on the earth. [10] He shall spread out the earth of mystic knowledge [gnosis] (arḍ al-ma`rifa), the Bird of the Divine Oneness (dīk al-aḥadiyya) shall loll [stick its tongue out] and the [true] believers shall at this moment ride upon the [Steed] Burāq of Light. [11] Should We divulge for thee all that shall take place on this [eschatological] Day the [Sacred] Tablets (al-alwāḥ) would prove unable to bear it and souls would be convulsed thereby. [12] Thus do We refrain from mention thereof and return to Our previous theme to the end that the [Divine]

Bounty which derives from God might take precedence and surround such as are clothed in the garment of existence (qamīṣ al-wujūd).

## LXII

[1] Then know that thou, if thou combine this [alchemical] Oil (al-duhn) which We have, in truth disclosed for thee, with this [Snow-White] Earth [of Gnosis?] (arḍ [al-ma`rifa]) it would assuredly unite to the extent that it [the Elixir] would be produced; it would indeed be most proximate, closer than if it had been disclosed for thee before thine own vision! This, if, that is, thou should befittingly carry out this [alchemical] task (al-`amal). [2] Wherefore know thou [appropriately the secrets of] the "Gold" and the "Silver" (al-dhahāb wa'l-fiḍḍā), then the "Sun" and the "Moon" (al-shams wa'l-qamr), the "White Gum" and the "Red [Gum]" (al-samgat al-bayḍā' wa'l-ḥamrā') perchance thou might be befittingly informed. [3] And regarding this they [alchemists] say, `The alchemical work (al-`amal) is naught save the [mystery of] the two most great luminaries' (al-nayyirayn al-a`zamayn)' [= the Sun and the Moon]; just as thou art aware from the books of the people. [4] And in this respect know thou also that they say that our "Gold" is not the common gold and likewise the "Silver" (al-fiḍḍa) that thou do ordinarily know about. [5] Such "Gold" (dhahab) is indeed that which We have named `Possessed of Dual Wings' (dhu'l-janahayn) for it was a bird soaring in all of the bodies (ta'ir fi'l-ajsad) and [something] designated with all the [various alchemical] names (al-asmā'). [6]It [the Bird] so designates, for example, the [element] Water (al-mā') to the end that it might stream and flow and it designates Fire (al-nār) so that it might, by its own nature, heat things up. [7] It likewise, [designates the element] the Earth (al-arḍ) [such that it may might prove inwardly solidified]. [8] Similarly again, it [so designates] the [element] Air (al-

hawa') such that it might effect combination (li-ijtima'); a uniting of what is within it [?] [9] All such as are perceptive of the mysteries of nature (asrār al-al-tabi`at) bear witness [unto] the [truth of] this matter. [10] Such are among those who have attained detachment from what is other than God and have been enabled to orient themselves towards Him; towards attaining unto a transcendent station (maqām al-a`lā).

### LXIII

[1] Then know furthermore that this radiant [elixiroial], fiery Oil (al-duhn al-musha`sha`a al-nari) is assuredly the Crown of Crowns (iklil al-akalil), the Divine Crown (iklil al-ilahi) and the Crown of Victory (iklil al-ghalbat) since, by virtue of it, all of the bodies (al-ajsad) are regenerated [transmuted, transformed]. [2] That is to say, through it are all bodies (al-ajsād) made to recover from viscous, decayed moistness [wetnesses] (al-rutbat al-lazija al-mufside) and the abysmal, base drynesses (al-yubusat al-muzlima al-radiyya). [3] Through it also, all that hath been created upon the earth will be cured from all diseases. [4] It is assuredly the quintessence of [the divine, Cosmic] Activity (jawhar al-fa`il) from which are established the foundations of the world (qawwam al-`alām). [5] It is [also] the "Heat" without which there would be no motion (al-haraka); for motion is a result of the action which is engendered thereby. [6] Wherefore know ye that all science [knowledge] is by virtue of the heat (min al-harara) [as thou would realise] if, that is, thou should ponder the essences of the science [knowledge] of reality (jawahir `ilm al-haqiqah). [7] Assuredly is it the resting-place of the valiant (rahl al-shuj`an), [as well as] the Male Organ (al-dhakar), the Youth (al-shabāb), the Mercury (al-zaibaq), the Orient (al-mashriq), and the Spirit [Soul] (al-rūḥ) which bloweth over

the mouldering bones (al-`azam al-ramīma) causing them (with the permission of God, the King, the Powerful, the Self-Subsisting) to rise up.

#### LXIV

[1] Then know thou that the Spirit (al-rūḥ) is naught but the increased density [of the ethereal] Water (al-mā' al-munjamid) upon the face of the snow-white Earth (al-arḍ al-bayḍā'). [2] This results from a directive [Cause-Logos] (amr) from which it doth suddenly appear; even as rapid divine revelation (al-waḥy al-sari`). [3] And God made it [the Spirit] to be triumphant over all things for this is assuredly that which, from time immemorial overshadoweth all things through the shadow of the name of God, the Triumphant (al-ghalib), the Powerful (al-qadir). [4] Manifest therefrom are the traces of power (āthār al-quḍrat) [as thou wouldst observe] if thou should attain unto this station (maqām).

#### LXV

[1] And this snow-white Earth (al-arḍ al-bayḍā') is assuredly a [philosopher's] Stone (li-hajar) from which gusheth forth streams (al-anhār) which are one in their species [gender, class] (hiya waḥdat fi jinsihā) and likewise one in their organized mode (tadbīriha waḥidat) if thou would multiply this oneness (wāḥid) thou wouldst witness four. [2] It's similitude (mithāl) is the [isolated letter] "A" (al-alif) the like of which We have already made mention for this [letter] "A" is one in its "Soul" (nafs). [3] It is not subject to enumeration though enumeration does result from it. [4] Multiplicity emergeth therefrom though thou do yet observe the multiplicity of

the worlds of numbers (kathirāt `awālim al-a`dād) through the Countenance of the One (ṭal`at al-wāḥid). [5] This ["A"] is [indeed] the [Philosopher's] Stone (al-hajar) in which the three species (ajnās al-thalālitha) are combined as thou do assuredly testify with thine own eyes, if, that is, thou art experienced in the knowledge [science] of God (`ilm Allāh). [6] It [the "A" = Elixir= Stone =Spirit] is certainly evocative of the "Night of Destiny" (laylat al-qadr; Q. 97:1f) for thereon is a thing determined according to a hidden knowledge (`ilm maknūn). [7] God concealeth it from the inmost hearts of His servants just as the "Night of Destiny" (laylat al-qadr) is concealed from such as fail to gaze with the vision of God (bi-baṣar Allāh) into the realities of things (haqā'iq al-ashyā'). [8] And We compare it [the hidden decree?] to the "Night" (al-layla) because darkness and shadows (al-sawād wa'l-ḡalima) become manifest therein after the primordial structuring [regulation of fate?] (tadbīr al-awwāl). [9] This resulteth from the shadows (al-ḡalimat) within which was determined the Water of Life (mā' al-ḥayawān). [10] Such is of the Reality (al-ḥaqq) about which thou hast heard aforetime.

## LXVI

Now Harken thou! O concourse of the Bayān!

Then ponder upon that which hath been sent down aforetime in the Criterion (al-furqān = the Qur`ān) [regarding the] determination of the threefold shadows; this to the end that thine eyes might be solaced thereby and thou attain unto the acme of that after which the people hath striven in their search. [2] And thou, O thou servant! Know thou that Bahā' [-Allāh] was immortalized (khaḍara, `rendered verdant' as Khidr?) when he attained unto the Dawning-Place of Eternal Subsistence (mashriq

al-baqā') nigh the Source of this Water (ma`īn al-mā'); [though] he was not concerned therewith neither did he drink therefrom inasmuch as the Spirit [Soul] (al-ruh) reoriented him (qallabahu) through his own Logos-Self (min nafsihi) in a Mighty, Beloved, Right-Hand direction (cf. Q. 18:18). [3] This inasmuch as this Youth (al-fata) [Bahā'-Allāh] desireth not Eternal Subsistence (al-baqā') for his [own] Self in this earthly domain (al-mulk); [nay, rather!] he extendeth his Logos-Spirit (rūḥ) and all that is before him for the sake of all that inhabit the heavens and the earth. [4] Such is what he hath chosen for his own Self (li-nafsihi) in a state of love before God, the King, the Help in Peril, the Powerful, the Praised One.

Say: O people! By God!

This servant desireth nothing at all for himself and seeketh assistance from no one in the earthly domain save God alone. [6] Unto the truth of this testifieth the Tongue of the Divine Oneness (lisān al-aḥadiyya) in a concealed, Unseen Pavilion (surādiq ghayb maṣṭūr).

## LXVII

Say: This is the "Lamp" (al-sirāj)

which hath not sought the "Niche" (al-mishkat) from anyone; [2] He doth not take exclusive possession within his own Logos-Self of the [theophanic] Fire (al-nār) and hath not beamed forth by virtue of anything other than God, the Unique, the Mighty, the Transcendent, the Self-Subsisting. [3] Then thank thou God, thy Creator! in that he hath unveiled for thee the mysteries through this resplendent, delimited Pen (al-

qalam al-durrī al-mahdud). [4] It [revelation of the Pen] was indeed a thing delimited only by virtue of its self-generated delimitation (maḥdūd an bi-ḥudūdihi) though God maketh to flow therefrom what is unlimited, what hath no extremity for therein thou should indeed witness the mysteries of the [transcendent divine] abstraction (asrār al-tafrīd) in this delimited reality (fī hadhā al-taḥdīd). [10] Such is of the knowledge which God hath taught My Pen! [11] This to the end that all might attain certitude since (with His permission) are the heavens of knowledge (samāwāt al-`ilm) folded up in His right-hand (matwiyyati fi yaminihi) and the earth of wisdom (ard al-ḥikma) (again, with His permission) deposited therein. [12] Yet do all [still wonder whether to] enquire [of Us/Him] after the wonders of His knowledge!

## LXVIII

[1] Then know that the first thing that was originated from the genesis of pre-existent Eternity (hadatha min muhdath al-qadim) in the worlds of creation were the four Elements (al-`anasir al-arba`ah).[2] According to thy time-honoured and current designation they are (1) Fire (al-nār), (2) Air (al-hawā'), (3) Water (al-mā') and (4) Earth (al-arḍ). [3] Thereafter appeared the four Natures (Gk stoicheia [elements] usuqusāt al-arba`ah) which, as thou do enumerate and know [them], are (1) "Hotness" (al-harara), (2) "Wetness" (al-rutūbah), (3) "Coldness" (al-burūdah) and (4) "Dryness" (al-yubūсах). [4] Hence, when thou do mix and combine them there is manifested for every one of them two pillars (ruknayn); thus, relative to the Fire (li'l-nār), it is [the two `elements'] (1) Hotness (al-harara) and (4) Dryness (al-yubūсах). [5] And it is likewise for the three remaining [Elements, al-`anasir] about which fundamentals (al-qawā'id) thou shouldst acquaint thyself. [6] Through them did God create all that does exist in the worlds of creation be they transcendental



realities or things mundane (al-`ulwiyyat wa'l-sufliyyat), which is all that maintains through time due [equilibrium] [the] balance of their natures (taba'[y]i`uhu) just as thou witnesseth in the sun and the moon. [7] And whatever fails to maintain [the] requisite balance of their natures does speedily perish just as thou can observe in the lower worlds of creation (`awālim al-suflā).

## LXIX

[1] Strive thou then to become aware of the diverse aspects of the harmonious balance associated with the metals [minerals] (al-mu`adila min al-ma`ādin). [2] Such will prove more straightforward of being regulated relative to the [accomplishment of the alchemical] task (ashal tasbīr an fi'l-`amal); if that is, thou act appropriately for the [alchemical] process (al-amr) is not actualized save through separation (tafsīl), purification (tathīr) and [re-] combination (tazwīj). [3] This is in conformity with the reality about which all the Prophets (al-anbiyā') have spoken forth. [4] And thou, when thou become aware of the foundational reality of nature (uss al-tabi`a) pertaining to the divine metal [mineral] (min ma`din al-ilāhiyya) take therefrom only according to thy requirement then refine [distill] it though the Water of Life (qattirhā bi-mā' al-ḥayy) which lieth within its nature and is the very closest of things within and relative to it (aqrab al-ashya' bi-hā wa li-hā). [5] This such that the foundational nature is transmuted and becomes snow-white (bayḍā'), of pristine purity (naqiyya). [6] Then allow the [internal] "water" to empower it [the transformed foundational reality] (thumma sallit `alayha al-ma') and produce [moisture] dew therefrom, (wa-dha`aha fi 'l-nada) until, to a limited extent, this [resultant] foundational reality (al-uss) is subject to differentiation [transmutation]. [7] And [thus will] this [interactive cosmic] Spirit (al-rūḥ) [= "Water"] reconfigure

this "Earth" [8] After that place it [the reconfigured `Earth'] in darkness until it is mixed and reconstituted into a single reality whereupon [thou should] coagulate [thicken] it upon a gentle fire and repeat this [process] twice or even more times; the process, that is, of coagulation (al-`aqd) and differentiation (al-hall) for such is especially in conformity with reality if thou desire to operate in this way. [9] If thou should prove incapable of this, then cause this [intrinsic] "water" (al-mā') to empower this "earth" substance (al-ard) then maintain it in the differentiated state until this [internal] Water (al-mā') is reconstituted [as something] snow-white (bayda'), of pristine purity (naqiyya). [10] Thereafter wax this [new] "earth" (al-ard) with this [intrinsic] "water" (bi'l-ma') such that thou shalt attain to the utmost degree according to thy desire. [11] Then differentiate it after the waxing process (al-tashmi`) for the final stage of the waxing process (muntaha al-tashmi`) was the first state of differentiation (maqam al-hall). [12] After the differentiation thou shalt coagulate it and then shall the [alchemical] work of the Moon (`amal al-qamar) be completed and thou shalt witness the power of God (qudrat Allāh) with thine own vision; if that is thou wouldst come to realization in accordance with that which We have stipulated in this Tablet. [13] In such manner shalt thou perform the [alchemical] task for knowledge [necessarily] precedes the [alchemical] work (al-`aml).

## LXX

Heed ye! Heed ye! O Concourse of the Bayān!

Before ye take [alchemical] action with respect to all that We have taught thee, do not carry out this matter. [2] Such is My [Our] advice unto thee so hearken ye! if

that is, thou desire to tread the paths of Reality. [3] Then know thou that foundational reality [is a term which] might designate the "water" (al-mā') for the "water" (al-mā') is the basis of the [alchemical] operations (al-asl fi al-a`mal) from which cometh the pure Oil (al-duhn al-safi); whatsoever is oiled therewith shall never be [destructively] set ablaze. [4] This is indeed of the "Water" (al-mā') through which God giveth life unto the "earth" (al-ard) after its death and from which the revivification [resurrection] (al-nushur) is realized [5] Some there are among the Prophets (al-anbiya') who are sages (al-hukama') [alchemical initiates] such as were wholly self-sufficient through this "water" (al-mā') by virtue of [the performance of] this [alchemical] work (ʿaml). [6] They extracted by means of it whatsoever they desired according to the superlative procedures (ghayat al-quswā) and [the mysteries of] this [alchemy] is of the real, the hidden science (ʿilm ḥaqq maktūm). [7] Whoso acknowledgeth [the truth of] this is numbered among such as hath had their hearts examined for faith by God and been taught by God about the Mercury (al-zaibaq) and its unique oneness. [8] This [alchemical secret] is a treasure which hath assuredly been sealed with the Seal of God. [9] And if thou desire to [perform] the [alchemical] task of the Sun (ʿaml al-shams) relative to the [production of] gold (al-dhahab) then return ye to this body (al-jasad) which is of the Pure Oil (min al-duhn al-safi). [10] This [Oil] is that which We hath mentioned aforetime and which We designated the "Gold of the people" (dhahab al-qawm) and the "Sulphur of the Ultimately Real" (kibrīt al-ḥaqq) for thou art bewildered over the performance of the [alchemical] task.

## LXXI

[1] By God! We mentioned for thee all of the aspects of the [alchemical] work (kull al-a`mal) and cast upon thee science such as hath not been available to any soul aforetime. [2] And thou shalt bear witness thereto in both thy spirits and thy souls if thou art truly perceptive [3] We have mentioned unto thee what is a clarification of the miscellaneous allusions pertaining to the [theory of the] balance of the qualities [of the foundational nature of things] for whosoever hath become privy thereto hath assuredly become insightful [successful] through the superlative Divine bounty (bi'l-`inaya [ghayat] al-quswā) through this Lordly Wisdom and this Divine Bestowal [as thou wouldst know] if thou wert truly aware.

## LXXII

[1] Thus at this moment have We cast upon thee what will make thee independent of such as have been devoted to the [alchemical] art (al-san`a). [2] Know then that if thou should understand that the [alchemical] matter (al-amr) is naught save what is accomplished through "Mercury" and "Sulphur" (min al-zaibāq al-kibrīt) [3] then thou would realize also that these two are [alchemically] represented by the "Sun" and the "Moon" (fi al-shams wa'l-qamar) which are [in the symbolic language of certain alchemists] "Gold" and "Silver" (al-dhahab wa'l-fiḍḍah). [4] Know [thou] also that salt (milh) is saline (malīh) in the subsistent constituency of bodies (tahlil al-ajsad) since thou [pl.] shall in no wise find better that it for the sake of [obtaining] Gold [as would be evident] if, that is thou should [carefully] examine all aspects of the[constituent alchemical realities of] things. [5] This in that within the spiritual essence of their nature is a universal archetype (munasibat kulliyya) which is not

fully explicable through the pen even if thou should write for the duration of thy lifetime. [6] And thou, if thou should produce this salt from its source mine, then distill [filter] it and disassociate the lime (kils) which is produced and generated there from until it become a single Reality [unique Spirit] (nafs an waḥdat) and a durable Oil (duhn an thabit); then, by God! thou would attain unto the summit of knowledge and the apex of whatsoever is known. [7] This since within the salts (al-amlah) are secreted the inmost mysteries of concealed hidden things like unto the penultimate sciences which thou might witness treasured up within purified hearts. [8] [The realization of] Such [truth] is [indeed] an aspect of the reality of certitude (ḥaqq al-yaqīn) after which all the people, being destitute thereof, do assuredly wander aimlessly in the vale of ignorance.

### LXXIII

[1] Thus doth the Dove of Knowledge warble in beloved, ecstatic accents upon the branches of wisdom [2] In this respect have We communicated sufficiently; though We remain fearful of the [disclosure of the alchemical] matter (al-amr) which We have unveiled for thee in sublime, lucid allusions (even though none shall attain thereto save through the love of God and of his chosen ones). [3] This is what this Supreme Pen bestoweth upon thee in these specified Tablets (al-alwāḥ al-ma`dud) though thou, if thou should hearken unto My bounty, would seek from God what would render thee self-sufficiently independent of gold and silver. [4] By God! Should thou befittingly hearken [unto what hath just been communicated] thou would realize that this is the very furthestmost degree of the [mysteries of the alchemical] matter (al-amr). [5] This inasmuch as gold and silver maketh none truly self-sufficient [wealthy]. [6] Nay rather! they increase [naught but] poverty (al-faqr)

[as thou would realize] if thou should befittingly observe! [7] Yet, relative to this matter, do We make supplication for thee to the end that thou be made self-sufficiently independent of all such as inhabit the heavens and the earth. [8] This that is, if thou should take firm hold of the thread of the [reality of the alchemical] matter (khayt al-amr) contained in this discourse.

#### LXXIV

[1] Then know [thou] that this [letter] "A" (al-alif) was revealed at the beginning of the Criterion (al-furqan) [= the Qur'ān] and We, verily, have expounded it for thee by means of subtle allusions such as render intellects speechless. [2] It, verily, hath been created by means of the [letter] "A" (al-alif) which was revealed in the Bayān on the part of God, the Help in Peril, the Exalted, the Self-Subsisting. [3] Yet before Him [the Ultimate God] is it [the letter "A"] something non-existent as would be evident if thou should ponder over its mysteries. [4] [And if thou consider the matter] on another level it [the "A"] represents His [God's] Logos-Self and His Essence (fi maqām kana nafsihi wa dhātihi) [as would be evident] if thou should enter into the pavilion of the divine Unity (surādiq al-tawḥīd).

#### LXXV

[1] And relative to this matter know thou the station of this straight, upright [letter] "A" (maqām al-alif al-qā'ima al-mustaqīma) on the Day on which God will commission [raise up] the gems of knowledge through a sanctified, expected Point [= the Bāb]. [2] [So too shall it be] When man yuzhiru-hu Allah ("Him Whom God

shall make manifest" = the Bābi messiah) shall come upon the cloud of knowledge and power (ʿala sahab al-ʿilm wa'l-qudrat) with the angels of the Cause (malā'ikat al-amr) at his right-hand and when all in the heavens and on the earth shall swoon away at the [judgemental] thunderbolt (sayqa) of that Day. [3] On that [eschatological] Day shall the pillars of the creatures be seized with trembling and all be overtaken with turmoil at the Majesty of the Cause of God (amr Allāh). [4] So shall there be joyous felicitation for such as have attained unto [the presence of] His Beauty (jamāl); then, in his presence, enter into the Paradise of Holiness [5] Should they at that instant be commanded to do something they would neither say "why?" or "wherefore?" [6] In the light of what they had been commanded they would assuredly speed on and not be at all fearful regarding the [inhibiting limitations of] the concourse of the Bayān; they would be as a suckling infant galloping forward at the bosom of the Mercy of God. [7] They would neither vacillate over anything nor be fearful of anyone. [8] And if all in the [concourse of the] Bayān or another religious community should [attempt to] hinder them they would not be held back, neither would they be made to turn aside in consequence of any [single] thing. [9] They would not even open their eyes towards anyone for they would [be forever] gazing upon the pristine [divine, messianic] Beauty (arf al-jamāl).

Now do We beseech God that He render Us successful and beware ye of the factions which do circle around him; such as are present upon his carpet and who give heroic testimony in his presence to the effect that He, verily, is assuredly the Powerful, the Giver, the Mighty, the Beloved One.

## Lawh-i huwwa munfikhu 'r-ruh

### Bahá'u'lláh

Provisional translation by Juan Cole

In the name of the one who breathed spirit into the bodies of the words by means of the holy and illumined spirit.

Praise be to God that the invisible springs of life that were concealed behind the divine veil are now abundantly flowing from the reality of the Word by virtue of the confirmations of the exalted holy spirit. Yes, the renowned fountain of life, in search of which some have set out, was said to bestow physical life. But the spring of life that flows unseen in the words of the All-Praised grants eternal life and holy spirit. The origin and site of the former fountain is the gloom of the earth. The genesis and cause of this spring is the tresses of the beloved.

For the houri of meaning had been concealed from all eternity behind the pavilions of divine purity. Then she sought permission from the holy court of the sovereign to depart from the chambers of spiritual solitude and enter the compassionate, divine assemblage, and to shed upon the worlds of holiness and unity one of the hidden rays of epiphany. At that point, a crier from the source of the most great divinity and



the treasury of the most grand lordship called out, saying that no creature who would accept this effulgence and radiance could be seen. Therefore, the command was given that a new creation and an unprecedented handiwork be brought into being. All the people of the concourse on high and those who dwell beneath the canopies of eternity were stricken with bewilderment, wondering from what element this new creation would be fashioned, and from what reality it would take its being.

Then the breeze of the holy east wind blew from the Sheba of true paradise, bearing a fine, perfumed mist from the locks of that spiritual houri. At that moment, several droplets of luminous wine from the spring of the beauty of the All-Merciful condensed in that mist, and the hand of immortal power became manifest from the hidden treasury of sovereign grace. It kneaded that numinous mist into the sweet water of light, then breathed a pre-existent breath into it. Behold, a new creation arose. Were any one of them to glimpse from the corner of his eye the people of the heavens and the earth, they would, one and all, be obliterated, and would be inverted, and would be returned to pre-existent nothingness.

An irresistible decree now went forth that the people of the pavilions of grandeur, the people of the veils of power, the assemblage of cherubs, and the pure realities must embellish the garden of immortality with the lights of beauty, and must carpet it with brocade and sacred silk embroidered with calligraphy. Then the permission to come out arrived from the heaven of manifestation, and that houri of the spirit emerged from behind the most great curtain, bestowing true spirit upon those who dwell among the people of the heavens and the earth. She stood upon the brocade carpet and began to move. Her movements tossed her hair, causing a few black droplets to be distilled on the embroidered silk upon the ground, bespeaking that resplendent darkness. These wondrous words were embellished by those few

droplets, and the river of love was concealed beneath the dark depths of the spring of these words.

Then, O birds of the sacred skies, do not deprive yourselves, by virtue of your concentration upon this ephemeral world, of this immortal fountain. Possibly you will receive permission to enter the eternal chamber of audience with the glorious beauty. Thus do we make mention to you of the mysteries, insofar as what was referred to in all the tablets as the water of life was hidden from your intellects and your hearts. Perhaps you will attain to the water in that spring after severing yourselves from all who are in the heavens and on earth, and will return to the wonders of his overflowing grace.



## Lawh-i-Husayn

### Bahá'u'lláh

Provisional translation by Adib Masumian

A Tablet of Bahá'u'lláh, the original text of which has been published digitally on the Bahá'í Reference Library here:

<https://www.bahai.org/fa/library/authoritative-texts/bahauallah/additional-tablets-bahauallah/138668790/1#553658425>

Immortal is the Friend, while all else shall perish

O Husayn! Commune with the remembrance of God and become oblivious of all but Him, inasmuch as His mention is an intimate free of hypocrisy and a most agreeable confidant. He is a guest bereft of treachery, a companion who poseth no harm and committeth no crime. A trusted associate is He, dependably firm and steadfast. So faithful a friend is He that wherever thou goest, He will come with thee and never leave thy side. He changeth thy sorrow into happiness and cleanseth the rust of heedlessness. This is the day in which the Word of God is suspended between earth and heaven, drawing to itself, even as a magnet, the very essences of the hearts of all creation, while the judgment passed on the peoples of bygone ages—the pronouncement of rejection—is passed by God on whatsoever ascendeth not from the denizens of this earthly realm. I swear by the sun of divine knowledge that if an atom's worth of essence, nay smaller, were to be hidden in the heart of a mountain,

the magnetic power of that Word would assuredly attract that essence and extract it from that mountain. It is even as thou seest in the people of the Bayán; whatsoever was held in the pure hearts, the refined souls, and the luminous breasts of this people hath ascended to the most sublime repository and risen to the habitation of the divine Lote-Tree, while that which belonged to the foul and impure among them hath returned whence it came. Prompted by an idle fancy, they have turned away from an undoubted majesty, and in their contentment with a fleeting shadow, they have remained heedless of an unfading beauty. In this day the most rejected of the world's outcasts, the most deprived of men, are clearly visible before God. Thus doth He nullify the deeds of them who disbelieve in Him, join partners with Him, and entertain any doubt about the presence of their Lord after He hath appeared with a myriad signs and an omniscient sovereignty.

O Ḥusayn! With this most conclusive of revelations and this most decisive of disclosures, the chalice of immortality is now passed round by the hands of the angels of both heaven and hell. Well is it, then, with him who nourisheth himself with this goblet of life everlasting, and leaveth the cup of ephemeral existence unto them that desire it.

O Ḥusayn! Regard the revelation of God in this day as a sun, and all creation as mirrors. The form of the sun can be seen in every mirror that hath set itself in its direction, and today the splendors emanating from the Countenance of the Most Glorious Beauty are readily apparent in the heart that hath turned towards it. All else are deprived; nay, they are even as nothing. None but a few in this day have inclined themselves thereto, and it is they who are accounted in the sight of God as the essences of being.

The Pen of the Ancient of Days declareth: No ear but Mine can hear My words, nor any eye but Mine apprehend My beauty. How can the eye beclouded by the film of vain desire ever behold the Most Great Vision? The cure for all sickness hath ever been My love, and the healer of every disease will always be My affection. Know thou that the love of God is a purifying agent; wherever it entereth, there no stranger will remain. It turneth illness into health, and changeth sinfulness into mercy. Blessed are they who have attained to this incomparable bounty. Wherefore, render praise, O servant who believest in God, that thou art mentioned as one of the everlasting letters before His presence. The clouds of His heavenly mercy and divine generosity have rained down a bountiful shower upon thee. Thou hast earned thyself a place in that lauded habitation which is the native land of all things: the city of divine love. God grant that thou mayest strive at every moment to be sustained with His wondrous mercy, reserved exclusively for that time, for at every instant the Most Glorious Beauty sheddeth His splendor with a marvelous effulgence, and they who hesitate shall have no share of that celebrated bestowal. Arise with firmness in the Cause of God, and endeavor to thine utmost to teach His Cause, inasmuch as this lofty station is, in the estimation of Him Who is the King of Names and Attributes, the most effective means for drawing nigh unto Him.

O Ḥusayn! Walk in the footsteps of this Youth, and be not at all saddened by the things that have come to pass. By the One in Whose hand is my soul! If the limitless realms of God were confined to this realm alone, and the bounties of this world restricted only to that which its inhabitants possess, I would have never subjected myself to the agony of innumerable afflictions. Reflect on those Prophets who enjoyed near access to God, and ponder the harm that befell them each on His path. I swear by the Ancient Pen that whosoever remembereth this utterance and meditateth thereon, even if he possesseth the smallest possible measure of

understanding, shall pay no mind whatever to this world, and in no wise grieve either its existence or its absence. Such a one would likewise achieve that which none hath ever attained, save them whom God hath aided to recognize Him and whose eyes He hath opened to behold His mysteries. And were I to recount the harm that hath befallen me in this city, thou wouldst certainly be saddened, but know this much: that by the One in Whose praise the voice of the mystic Morn hath rung out, such oppression as this hath never occurred from the beginning of creation until now. Thereby have all things been made to wail, and yet they fail to comprehend. Verily I say that nothing befalleth us save that which God Himself hath willed for us. In Him have we placed our trust, and on Him do the near ones rely.

Jináb-i-Muḥammad-‘Alí is with Us; rest thou assured with regard to him. Give thanks unto God that He hath made him to be His companion in the world. Render praise unto God, moreover, that his eyes are set on the Most Great Vision—that his ears are occupied with hearing the words of God, and that his heart is fixed on His remembrance. Blessed is he, and well is it with you. Convey unto the loved ones of God the mention of the remembrance of this Wronged One.

## Lawh-i-Haqq

"The Tablet of The Ultimately Real "

Bahá'u'lláh

Provisional translation by Stephen N. Lambden

Translated from Ishraq Khavari (ed.) Ma'ida-yi asmani vol. IV

My God, the All-Glorious (ilāhī al-abhā)

(Or)

He is The Luminous, the All Glorious (al-bahiyy al-abhā)

This is the Lawḥ al-ḥaqq ("Tablet of the Ultimately Real").

It was sent down from the realm of the Divine Command (jabarūt al-amr).

Whoso recites it and ponders thereon shall be raised up by God nigh unto the pivot of Ridwān. This by virtue of an ornamented Reality (ṭarāz) from whom radiates the orient Lights of the All- Merciful (anwār al-raḥmān), from which the denizens of the concourse of all the worlds are illumined.



He is the True One  
(huwa al-ḥaqq).

Assuredly was he, as befits the Real Truth, in very Truth (‘ala al-ḥaqq bi'l-ḥaqq),  
made manifest from the horizon of the Ultimately Real (‘an ufq al-ḥaqq).

## II

O concourse of the Ultimately Real One (malā' al-ḥaqq)!

The Truly Real One (al-ḥaqq) has, in very Truth, been made manifest from the  
horizon of Ultimately Real (‘an ufq al-ḥaqq fī hadha al-ḥaqq), for he hath dawned  
forth from the Dawning-Place of the Ultimately Real (maṭla' al-ḥaqq).

Assuredly was He the One who utters the Real Truth (bi'l-ḥaqq) and, as befits the  
Ultimately Real, (‘alā al-ḥaqq), celebrates thee, O thou who did in no wise forget the  
Ultimate Reality (al-ḥaqq) at the time when a covenant was taken with thee  
regarding His Logos-Self, the Truly Real One (‘ahd nafsihi al-ḥaqq). [4] Thou  
indeed are not of such as have turned aside from the Ultimately Real (al-ḥaqq) and  
are numbered among the negligent.

Say: `By God!

Should at this moment the Truly Real One (al-ḥaqq) make a declarative summons  
unto those before Him, he would undoubtedly partition all existence, for this is  
assuredly the Ultimate Reality (al-ḥaqq) who hath, as befits the Truly Real (‘ala al-

ḥaqq) been made manifest. [6] He is undoubtedly the Ultimately Real One (al-ḥaqq) through whom the ultimately true Reality (ḥaqqaq al-ḥaqq) was established aforetime and who shall in time to come confirm its Ultimate Reality (yuḥaqqaq al-ḥaqq).

### III

And thou, O concourse of the True One! (malā' al-ḥaqq)

Gaze ye upon the Ultimately Real One (al-ḥaqq) for I have shed splendor from the Sun of His Beauty (shams jamālihi). [2] Then hearken ye unto melodies of the True One (naghāmāt al-ḥaqq), unto whatsoever emerges from His lips. [3] Then drink you deep of the nectar of Truth (tasnīm al-ḥaqq cf. Q 83:27-8), from what he bestows upon thee from the Goblet of His Bestowal (kā's al-'inayāt). [4] Then feast upon the Bountiful Favor of the Truly Real One (ni`mat al-ḥaqq), from what hath been sent down from the heaven of the majesty of His Sovereignty as well as from the sanctified clouds of His bounties [5] Then be ye protected through the patronage of the Tree of Ultimate Reality (shajarat al-ḥaqq) which is none other than this Youth (ghulām). [6] Should he be stirred up within his Logos-Self the very theophanic manifestations of Reality (zuhūrāt al-ḥaqqiyya) and the suns of the Divine Oneness (shumūs al-aḥadiyya) would assuredly be set in motion. [7] And should he be stilled within his Own Logos-Self the very Beauty of the True One (jamāl al-ḥaqq) would be solaced thereby and furthermore, His Temple (haykal) would be reclining upon that celestial Throne (ʿarsh) which is sanctified and inaccessible.

#### IV

And thou, O concourse of the Truly Real One! (malā' al-ḥaqq)

Should you enable your eyes to envision the enveloping dust of contingent existence (ghabār al-mumkināt) and whatsoever has originated from it, as contrasted with that which is befitting of the Sovereign of Names and Attributes (sulṭān al-asmā' wa'l-ṣifāt), you would assuredly testify to the fact that the manifestations of the True One (mazāhir al-ḥaqq), His Dawning-Points (maṭāli'), His Effulgences (mashāriq) and His Hidden Retreats do assuredly circumambulate about this Ultimately True One (al-ḥaqq) Who hath, in very Truth (bi'l-ḥaqq), assuredly been made manifest. [2] This whereupon he, in very Truth (bi'l-ḥaqq), became established upon the celestial Throne (al-arsh) before the shadow of which all who are in both the heavens and on the earth do prostrate themselves. [3] Should they prove unable to comprehend this truth or fail to perceive it within themselves, they would assuredly be reckoned among such as are heedless of this Truth [of the Truly Real One] (al-ḥaqq). [4] The One that is Who, should he rend asunder the covering of the Divine Majesty (raq'a al-jalāl) through the Countenance of the Divine Beauty (wajh al-jamā) all things would assuredly be caused to cry out - [his Reality] for the Holy Spirit (rūḥ al-quds) would confirm them in view of the fact that the Logos-Reality [Person] of Bahā' (nafs al-baha') hath assisted them in the world of eternal subsistence ('alam al-baqa') - [5] through the [declaration] "I verily am the Truly Real (ana al-ḥaqq) no God is there except Him. [6] And We, one and all, before the theophany of this Ultimate Reality (zuhur hadha al-ḥaqq) are numbered among such as prostrate themselves. [7] This is undoubtedly He before whom do proceed the manifestations of the Truly Real One (mazahir al-ḥaqq), from behind Whom proceed the dawning-places of Lordliness

(matali` al-arbab); at whose right-hand proceed the essences of laudation (jawahir al-suhban) and on whose left are the Embodiments [Temples] of the All-Merciful (hayākil al-rahman).

## V

Every single one of the aforementioned beings cries out, shouts and proclaims,

‘O Concourse of the Bayan! By God!

The very voices of the All-Merciful (alsan al-rahman) do accuse you of falsehood in that within your own selves you claimed [true] faith in God, the Help in Peril, the Mighty, the Omnipotent, yet did falsely claim within your selves that you did believe in God and the manifestation of His Logos-Self (mazahar nafsihi) who was named ‘Ali before Nabil [Muhammad] (= the Bab) [2] Yet, when His Emissary (mursalihi) [Baha'-Allah] came with the Sovereignty of the Divine Authority (bi-sultan min al-amr) upon clouds of holiness within the Supreme Paradise (firdaws al-a`la ) you disbelieved in him then accused him of falsehood until you decreed his death; just as the divines of the Criterion [Qur'an] (‘ulamā' al-furqan) did to ‘Ali [Muhammad the Bab] before the [coming of Baha'-Allah as] the Manifestation of His Self (mazhar nafsihi), the Exalted (al-‘aliyy), the Transcendent, the Powerful, the Help in Peril, the Omnipotent. [3] Naught came to pass regarding a single thing but that he refuted thee, disassociated himself from thee and sought protection in God from any encounter with thee. [4] So by God! Shouldst you act justly within yourselves you wouldst assuredly witness that Logos-Soul (nafs) who emerged from amongst you to the end that he might refute thee. [5] The very heaven (sama') which hath been

raised up above your heads is such that he may assuredly be disassociated from thee. [6] Everything that rains down from the cloud[s] rejects whatever emerges from your voices as you wouldst realize should you be among such as do hearken. [7] In thy [Bab] case was the cloud of the All-Merciful and the divine Bounty (al-fadl) interdicted and the livelihood of the denizens of the Supreme Concourse altered. [8] At this did the Countenance of the Divine Grandeur (wajh al-kubriya') turn white for you did commit the like of what none had committed aforetime. [9] We concealed this matter through a bounty which derives from Us for We indeed are the Dispenser of Bounty (al-fiddal), the Powerful, the Wise. [10] We did not manifest among the servants [a single] iota [sprinkling] (rashḥ) of the ramifications ['sprinklings'] (tarashshuhat) of the seas of your actions otherwise the announcement of the truth (ʿala al-ḥaqq) of what you did commit might precipitate the retrogression of the Divine Cause and the return of existence (al-wujud) unto sheer (baht), categorical (al-batt) non-existence (ʿadm) and everything that you witnessed in the earthly dominion (al-mulk) would be transformed into dust. [11] Wherefore was the Religious Cause (decree, al-amr) sent down from a Mighty Bestower as you would realize if you were to be numbered amongst the mindful (al-mutanabbihin).

## Lawh-i Madinatu'r-Rida

Bahá'u'lláh

Provisional translation by Juan Cole

In the name of God, the exalted, the most high.

Remind his servant of God's clemency in truth, that he might be honored thereby among the concourse of the worlds, and might give thanks to his lord at all times, insofar as God's bounties to him and the people of the heavens and the earth have been completed. This is from a Book wherein is mentioned that which will bring the people near to the court of the holy, the manifest. It bears witness that there is no God but him and all are his servants, and all shall return to him. The likeness of those who listen to the melodies of God and follow them is: A light illumined by the radiance of God, the mighty, the All-Powerful. Likewise, gaze at the crystal that ignites fires when the sun shines on it. This is a reminder from us to those who remember. Say, O people of the earth: If you sanctify your souls and spirits, you will find them more fine than crystal, and this is an indisputable truth. And if you allow God, your creator, to shine on them, there would be reflected in them the Word of God, the help in peril, the uncreated. Then the fire of nearness would be ignited

therein, whereby your physical and ethereal bodies would be illumined, as would everything that pertains to you. Thus would the torch of love be kindled in the bush of your soul, which would burn away the veils that come between you and the splendor of the divine countenance. Thus do we teach you the paths of the soul, that you might be among the mystic knowers.

Say: If the odor of evanescence lingers in your heart with regard to this world and its baubles, you shall never perceive the fragrance of immortality from the coat of the holy, the radiant One. Follow, people of the earth, what God had enjoined upon you and do not differ with regard to the ordinances ordained in the Book. Then hold fast to the sure handle of God, the omnipotent, the magnificent, the All-Praised. In truth, in this tablet the dove warbles the songs of everlasting life and speaks to you from the kingdoms of the spirit. Herein is guidance and a reminder to the believers. Thus does God single out for his compassion whomever he pleases, and reveals to you from the heaven of glory mighty and wondrous fruits.

Say: People of the earth, the lamp of light has been ignited within the glass of sanctity, whereby the concourse of eternal life has been illumined. Fear God, and do not veil yourselves from him. The ark of God has been fashioned by the hands of the angels of paradise. So cling to it, people of the Bayan. It is better for you than the treasures and the glorious and sparkling gems found in the earth. The sun of beauty has risen to the zenith, but you are lying in the beds of heedlessness, deprived of this grace that even the eyes of the near ones have never seen. Fear God, then set out on the paths of radiant acquiescence in the days of God, the powerful, the splendid, the All-Praised. If you do not know his paths, we shall teach them to you in truth by virtue of a letter that God revealed to me so as to complete his proof to all those who are in the realm.

Know that radiant acquiescence has infinite stages. We shall instruct you in them by means of the words God makes to flow from my pen. This shall enable you to dispense with all that the ancients and moderns possess. Whoever wishes to tread the path of radiant acquiescence must be content with God, his creator, and with what he has ordained for him and written with an exalted pen in truth, and with whatever he has specified in holy and guarded tablets. He must be content with himself. But no one can attain this state until he has severed himself from all who are in the heavens and the earth, if you be among the mystic knowers. For if a human being commits the least iniquity within himself, he will not be content with himself.

This is that which we have shown you in truth, so that you might be content and might ascend to the station wherein honey and poison are the same, since both are decreed by the mighty, the ordainer. Were someone to worship God from all eternity and yet abhors within himself any of the calamities and adversities that have afflicted him, his name shall not be entered in the tablets as among those who are content with the holy and radiant pen. For those who claim in themselves the love of God but who regret their tribulations in his path cannot rightly be called content. This is what we say to you in truth, that you might be steadfast in love. How can someone assert that he has the love of God in his heart and then despise what befalls him from his beloved, the mighty, the generous? Or that he is content with the friends of God in the land and is humble before the believers? For if he deems himself above the believers, it is as though he has grown haughty toward God. We take refuge in God from that, concourse of the sincere! Whoever is content with God, his lord, will be content with his servants, who have believed in him and his signs on the day whereon all who are in the heavens and the earth have swooned. For a servant's satisfaction with God cannot be demonstrated save by his satisfaction with the friends of God, who have detached themselves from everything but God and depended on him.



Await, then, the day whereon the trump shall be sounded, the dove shall warble, the gates of paradise shall be thrown open, and God shall come with a wondrous Cause. Therefore, hasten to him, people of the Bayan, and do not hesitate for less than an instant. This is the basis of radiant acquiescence. Do not differ regarding it, concourse of near ones. At that time you will discover the breezes of radiant acquiescence from the east of sanctity. You shall be overcome by yearning and you shall be transformed upon the seat of the mighty, the trustworthy. Beware, people of the Bayan, that you do not delay within yourselves. Do not veil yourselves from the beauty of God, the glorious, the All-Praised. By God, it is better for you to stand in his presence once than to possess all that is on earth and in the heavens.

But you, who have asked of God, rejoice in yourself, for you have arrived at the city of radiant acquiescence and wended your way to the squares of sanctity. At this time, we bear witness to you that you have soared into the heaven of contentment. You have avoided your own regions and drawn near to the precincts of God, the mighty, the generous. You have emigrated from your homeland and journeyed unto God, until you arrived in the place that is visited by the people of the pavilions of eternity at morn and eve. Blessed are you and those like you, whom God has enabled to attain to the shore of eternity along the crimson sea. They hastened to the melodies of God from behind the veils of power. Then they made pilgrimage to the place around which circumambulate the bushes of Sinai, wherein all beings, whether among the ancients or the moderns, have removed their sandals.

Then know that your love for God is God's good-pleasure with you and your good-pleasure with him. This is the religious path that was ordained by the right hand of God's wisdom, and it shall not change with a change of prophets, nor is it renewed by the advent of a new messenger. Rather, all enjoin this upon the people, and it is a

trust of God deposited in the hearts of the sincere. This is what suffices you above all else. Whoever attains this flowing spring shall never forsake an iota of the Book, and shall only be pleased with what God desires for him. Thus do we set forth for you the verses in truth, so that you might attain certitude. After you revive your spirit by means of the warbling of the dove and renew the temple of your soul with the robe of immortality, then return to the house of God in your own land and spread the glad tidings from us among those who rejoice in the gladness of the spirit. Remind them of the verses of God and be as the breezes of spring to the people of your homeland, whereby they may renew their souls and spirits. This is what we command you in truth if you are among those who hear. You shall never be capable of this unless you turn toward God with your entire being and unless you reject all that is in the hands of the people.

Once you have renewed yourself then you will be able to renew the people. This is what the dove counsels you in truth, so that you might be among the reformers who have been encompassed by the guidance of God, who have tasted the sweetness of love and drunk from the springs that flow from the direction of a mighty throne.

Then remind for us all those who believe in God and his verses in your land, as well as those who have emigrated unto God and entered into the precincts of God, the glorious, the noble. Among them is K, who has surpassed all others in virtue, and whom we are at this time mentioning in the book as among the myriad of saints. Also among them is Q, who emigrated toward God in his days and was among the devout. They include H, who emigrated and then returned with our permission, who was immersed in the ocean of love. R heard the melodies of the dove and entered under the shadow of God, the mighty, the knowing. Among them are they who emigrated and returned, but whose names we have not mentioned, all of whom have

attained a high station with regard to virtue, which none among the creation can comprehend. God will manifest to them the fruits of their deeds and they shall soar with sapphire wings into the garden of the holy, the generous. Some made the journey with their hearts, and their names were inscribed by the pen of power upon glorious and inaccessible tablets. The doors of paradise shall be thrown open before their faces, and they shall enter therein by virtue of our peace and compassion, where they shall reside. By God, were he to manifest to the people of the heavens and the earth an incalculably small portion of what he has decreed for those who journeyed and emigrated unto God, all would be led to the wondrous and sacred shore. But all have been veiled as a result of what they have committed in the days of God, and they were another, evil people.

Say: Concourse of believers, be patient at what has befallen you and be not anxious concerning the harm and suffering that have afflicted you. He shall bestow full recompense upon the long-suffering. The world and its people shall pass away, and all shall return to their abode in the fire, nor is there any escape for them from the vengeance of the lord, the conquering, the subduing, the mighty, the omnipotent. Say: People of the earth, do you not see the transformations occurring in the land, and the changes the earth is undergoing, such that no second goes by without most affairs therein suffering an alteration? Therefore, what sign reassures your hearts and souls? Woe unto you! Upon what basis have you acted in this vain life? For you have advanced toward your base selves, and turned away from the one who created you, nourished you, and showed greater compassion to you than has any other. Say: By God, you are only as a wayfarer resting in the shade of a tree. But that shade is of necessity ephemeral, and you must not repose your confidence in it or in anything that will pass away. Put your trust in what does not perish, in what endures in the immortality of God, the everlasting, the eternal, the glorious. Have you found that

your mornings are like your evenings, or that your youth is like your old age? All this is a reminder to you, Muslims. The contradictions apparent in all things were only ordained to remind you of the impermanence of your selves, so that you might become aware of it and not be obdurate. Hold fast instead to the cord of God, then firmly grasp the firm handle of the Bayan. This is what was writ for you by the finger of the glorious, the true. Thus have we taught you the gems of knowledge, acquainted you with the wonders of wisdom, spoken to you of the realities of mystical insight, and shown you the paths of paradise - so that thereby your hearts and the hearts of the mystic knowers might be reassured.

Praise be to the lord of the worlds, and mercy be upon you, followers of the Bayan. Behold, I desire to sever myself from all names, and to call out to my lord with the melodies that enthrall the hearts of the unitarians. Praise be to you, O God, my God. Send to your lovers what will refresh their hearts and calm their souls, so that they might make mention of you aloud just as they make mention of you in their hearts. That is within your power, which encompasses both the easy and the hard. My beloved, raise the standards of your triumph and victory above the people of your kingdom, that they might gather together in the shade of your loving-kindness. These are the scattered, who have dispersed through your lands, and shall never find for themselves a refuge save with you, or a sanctuary other than you, or an asylum except for you. Then gather them beneath the shadow of the tree of your loving-kindness and honor them with your grace, and verily you are the most generous of the generous.

You know, my beloved, what your enemies have done to your friends, such that they usurped from them everything you had bestowed upon them by your munificence and inflicted on them that of which no ear had ever heard. In every land their blood

was shed, and on every pyre their bodies were cremated. How many a little one was left with no elder, how many a mother wailed for her son, and how many a son wept for his father. You have reckoned all of that, and were witness to it. In truth, my God, you witness and see how tyranny has encompassed your earth and your countries such that the traits of justice will not be visible to anyone. All have followed the demons, and affairs have nearly reached the point where your name and attributes have been lifted from the earth. All have adopted a deity for themselves other than you. You are, concerning all this, knowing, informed. The darkness of heedlessness has encompassed all the people of your earth, such that were any of your servants to mention your name, they would ridicule him. My heart, and the breasts of the unitarians, have burned at this. By your glory, my beloved, I shall never find any of your servants following your path, nor shall I ever perceive from them the fragrance of your love. All have adopted this world for themselves as a protector, save for those who returned to you and were among the returnees.

Every day I associate with the servants, and I see them heedless of you, such that they turn their faces toward every countenance but not toward your illumined visage, and they turn toward every city save the city of your glorious divinity. It is as though it was not you who had created them and nourished them. Thus have we found affairs to be among those idolaters. Abasement has reached the point where your friends will be unable to make mention of you, and when they wish to recite your words they will have to hide in their homes. Thus have the hearts of the lovers been filled with sorrow. If you accept this state of affairs for yourself, O my God, then woe betide your pure ones in your land. How can they hear from your enemies what does not befit your station? Would that all of them were struck blind so as not to see it, and struck deaf so as not to hear what is inappropriate to your radiant beauty. In truth, were you to leave them in this condition, by your might, the evidences of your

sovereignty would be effaced in your kingdom, the pillars of your rule in your land would be demolished, and your name and epithet would be erased throughout all creation.

O my God and my beloved, do not make them wait, after matters have come to this. Rather, reveal to them what will turn them toward you. Then remove this lad who has arisen against you with his entire being, and those who followed him in his passions, so as to purify your sanctified land from those infidels. I know, O my God, that you desired this every year, but it did not occur because you changed your mind, and this is the evident truth. Then send down, O my God, your fixed decrees and effective laws, which can never be repelled by a change of mind or altered by selfish passion. Then fix all this, my beloved, upon glorious and preserved Tablets and in a holy and wise book that shall never be effaced and which shall not be subject to limitations, but rather in which matters shall be inscribed by the mighty pen of command. Then decree thereafter, my God, what is good for your servants, for in your hand is all good. In truth, you are the ruler, the judge, the knowing, the giving, the wise.

How long, O my God, will you forebear toward your own enemies? By your glory, your patience has reached the point where your servants complain of the wonders of your might, rather they have become convinced it does not exist, whereas I remain certain that you are powerful over all things. In truth, you are the most powerful of the powerful.

You know that my anxiety was not for myself, nor for the abasement of your lovers. Rather, I see that all have risen in opposition to you and your beauty, and have ridiculed your verses. For this reason, my breast burns, my inmost soul cries out, and

my eye weeps. In truth, you know what is in my soul, and you encompass all things. Therefore, my beloved, forgive me and my offenses, which I have committed in your presence, for my very mention of you is a sin unmatched by anything in the heavens or on earth. Then forgive my parents, my loved ones, my kith and kin. In truth, you are the most merciful of the merciful. Then forgive the one who hurried unto you and arrived in your presence, and his parents. Do not seize hold of them, my beloved, for their offenses and sins. Rather, show compassion to them and show them forbearance. In truth, you are the most clement of the clement, and the most generous of the generous.

This is a Book from Bahá to all who are in the heavens and on earth. Praise be to God, lord of the worlds.

## Lawh-i-Ziyarát-i-Vahíd-i-Darabí

Bahá'u'lláh

Tablet of Visitation for Vahid-i Darabi

Provisional translation by Ahang Rabbani.

originally revealed as "Lawh-i-Ziyarát-i-Vahíd-i-Darabí".

For his holiness Vahid hath this been revealed, he who beheld the Countenance of God, the All-Glorious, the Almighty, and who in His path sacrificed himself, arose to serve His Cause and quaffed his fill of the draught of certitude from the Hand of his Lord, the Munificent.

"He is supreme over His Cause and powerful over His creation."

The first wave of exaltation from the ocean of grace of thy Lord, the Compassionate, be upon thee [Vahid] who art the essence of the Qur'an and possessor of the mysteries of the Bayan.



I testify that thou drank of the choice wine of His Revelation from the hand of His favor and grace, and attained the presence of Him Who was the Promised One in all the sacred Books, Scriptures and Tablets. Thou didst hearken unto the divine Call when raised and perceived its manifestation above the Exalted horizon on a Day when all the dwellers of the mortal kingdom rejected the Creator of the heavens. Thou hast, moreover, discerned the Most Great Announcement and inhaled the fragrance of the garment of the Lord of Days.

I testify that thou rendered victorious the Faith of God and His Cause through thy pen, thy tongue and thy hand until thou didst surrender thy life in His path and quaffed from the Kawthar (heavenly fountain) of self-renunciation in His name and in His love. Thou wast intoxicated from the spring of His Recognition and hath soared with the wings of certitude in the heaven of the murmur of thy God, the Lord of Grandeur. Over thy sufferings have all the atoms of the earth cried and the eye of creation wept.

I testify that because of thee all the treasures of earth appeared and all the pearls of sea were revealed. Through thee, the pinnacle of understanding was adorned with the crown of revelation. Thou art the one who accepted the choice sealed wine in the presence of all and drank thy fill in the Name of thy Lord, the Ancient of Days.

May the resplendent glory which hath dawned from the horizon of divine grace, and effulgent light from the heaven of sanctified justice, rest upon thee and upon those who have assisted thee. For they accepted the One that thou had accepted and repudiated those who had risen against thee. With thee and under thy shadow, they rendered the Cause victorious, having beheld thee and circled around thee.

O God, my God, creator of me and of the heavens, I beseech Thee by the pearls of the ocean of Thy Oneness, by the mysteries of Thy Book, and by lamentation of Thy loved ones in their separation from Thee, and by the tears of the pure ones on their remoteness from Thee, I invoke thee, O Thou Lord of indomitable Strength, by this sacred Tomb and by this exalted Shrine [Vahid's], to forgive me and my father, and all those who for Thy sake have approach these sacred remains, and all those who have come and will come on pilgrimage to this spot.

O my God, I beseech Thee by him [Vahid] and those who have suffered martyrdom in Thy path to grant me and to those who remain faithful in Thy Covenant, the necessities of life. Thou art the All-knowing, the All-wise, Sovereign of creation.



## Lawh-i-Ziyarát-i-Vahíd-i-Darabí

Bahá'u'lláh

Provisional Translation by John Weigley

He is Supreme over His Cause and Almighty over His Creation.

May the first wave of exaltation breaking forth from the sea of the mercy of Thy Lord, the All-Compassionate, be upon thee, O mystery of the Qur'an and possessor of the secrets of the Bayan!

I testify that thou hast quaffed the nectar of inspiration from the chalice of the Hand of His favor and grace and attained the presence of Him Who is the Promised One of all the heavenly Books, the Scriptures and Tablets.

Thou didst hearken to the Divine Call when it was raised and perceived its dawning above the Exalted Horizon on the Day when all the kingdoms of the earth turned their backs on God, the Lord of all men.

Thou dist inhale the fragrance of the Great Announcement as it wafted from the garment of the King of Eternity.

I testify that thou hast championed the religion of God and His Cause through thy pen, thy tongue, and thy hand until thou didst surrender thy very self in His path and drank from the Kawthar of martyrdom in His Name and in His Love.

Thou wert inebriated through the Salsabil of His Knowledge until thou didst soar upon the wings of certitude into a space where naught can be heard but for the stirrings of the soft breezes of the mercy of Thy Lord, the King of all religions.

Thou art he by whose calamity all the atoms of the universe have wailed and all the eyes of its creatures have wept. I testify that through thee hath appeared all the treasures of the earth and all the pearls of its seas.

Through thee the Brow of True Knowledge was adorned with the Crown of the Bayan, O thou who didst imbibe the choice, sealed wine before all eyes in the Name of Thy Lord, the Self-Subsisting.

The Glory that hath dawned from the Horizon of Bounty and the Light that hath shone from the Heaven of Justice be upon thee and upon all those who have striven with thee; who accepted Him Whom thou didst approach and repudiated whosoever had risen against thee; who arose to champion the Cause of God with thee and in thy shadow; and who gained thy presence and circled around thee.

I beg of Thee O my God and the God of Names, My Fashioner and the Fashioner of the Heavens, by the pearls of the Ocean of Thy Oneness and by the mysteries of Thy Book and by the sighing of Thy loved ones in their remoteness from Thee and by the cries of the sincere ones in their separation from Thee and by this sacred resting place and this exalted shrine, to forgive me and my parents and whosoever hath

drawn nigh unto or will draw nigh unto this purified tomb, and he who hath visited or will visit it for Thy sake, O King of Destiny.

Moreover, I ask of Thee My Lord, by Him and by those who suffered martyrdom in Thy Path, to supply me with the necessities of life and to sustain Thy creatures who have laid firm hold on Thy Covenant and who have tasted the sweetness of Thy Utterance.

Thou art the Sovereign, the All-Knowing the All-Wise.

Bahá'u'lláh



Man ‘arafa nafsahú faqad ‘arafa Rabbahú

Bahá'u'lláh

He who knoweth his self hath known his Lord:

Commentary by Bahá'u'lláh

translated by Shoghi Effendi and Juan Cole. 1996

originally revealed as "Man ‘arafa nafsahú faqad ‘arafa Rabbahú".

He is God, the August, the Beautiful.

How wondrous is the unity of the Living, the Ever-Abiding God — a unity which is exalted above all limitations, that transcendeth the comprehension of all created things![1] He hath, from everlasting, dwelt in His inaccessible habitation of holiness and glory, and will unto everlasting continue to be enthroned upon the heights of His independent sovereignty and grandeur. How lofty hath been His incorruptible Essence, how completely independent of the knowledge of all created things, and how immensely exalted will it remain above the praise of all the inhabitants of the heavens and the earth!



From the exalted source, and out of the essence of His favor and bounty He hath entrusted every created thing with a sign of His knowledge, so that none of His creatures may be deprived of its share in expressing, each according to its capacity and rank, this knowledge. This sign is the mirror of His beauty in the world of creation. The greater the effort exerted for the refinement of this sublime and noble mirror, the more faithfully will it be made to reflect the glory of the names and attributes of God, and reveal the wonders of His signs and knowledge. Every created thing will be enabled (so great is this reflecting power) to reveal the potentialities of its pre-ordained station, will recognize its capacity and limitations, and will testify to the truth that "He, verily, is God; there is none other God besides Him [and that `Ali Muhammad (the Bab) is the Manifestation of all the Names, and is the Dawning-Point of all the Attributes, and that all were created by His will and all act according to His command.]

There can be no doubt whatever that, in consequence of the efforts which every man may consciously exert and as a result of the exertion of his own spiritual faculties, this mirror can be so cleansed from the dross of earthly defilement and purged from satanic fancies as to be able to draw nigh unto the meads of eternal holiness and attain the courts of everlasting fellowship. In pursuance, however, of the principle that for every thing a time hath been fixed, and for every fruit a season hath been ordained, the latent energies of such a bounty can best be released, and the vernal glory of such a gift can only be manifested, in the Days of God. Invested though each day may be with its pre-ordained share of God's wondrous grace, the Days immediately associated with the Manifestation of God possess a unique distinction and occupy a station which no mind can ever comprehend. Such is the virtue infused into them that if the hearts of all that dwell in the heavens and the earth were, in those days of everlasting delight, to be brought face to face with that Day Star of

unfading glory and attuned to His Will, each would find itself exalted above all earthly things, radiant with His light, and sanctified through His grace. All hail to this grace which no blessing, however great, can excel, and all honor to such a loving-kindness the like of which the eye of creation hath not seen! Exalted is He above that which they attribute unto Him or recount about Him!

It is for this reason that, in those days, no man shall ever stand in need of his neighbor.[2] It hath already been abundantly demonstrated that in that divinely-appointed Day the majority of them that have sought and attained His holy court have revealed such knowledge and wisdom, a drop of which none else besides these holy and sanctified souls, however long he may have taught or studied, hath grasped or will ever comprehend. It is by virtue of this power that the beloved of God have, in the days of the Manifestation of the Day Star of Truth, been exalted above, and made independent of, all human learning. Nay, from their hearts and the springs of their innate powers hath gushed out unceasingly the inmost essence of human learning and wisdom.

[O Hadi! God willing, thou hast been guided to the lights of the dawn of eternity and the manifestation of the everlasting morn. For in such wise doth the heart become sanctified from the ephemeral, wicked selves, and thus wilt thou witness that all branches of knowledge and their secrets are inscribed upon it. For He possesseth the comprehensive Book and the complete Word, and the mirrors that reflect the verse, "Everything we have numbered in a clear register,"[3] did you but know.

Thou hast inquired about detachment. It is well known to thee that by detachment is intended the detachment of the soul from all else but God. That is, it consisteth in soaring up to an eternal station, wherein nothing that can be seen between heaven

and earth deterreth the seeker from the Absolute Truth. In other words, he is not veiled from divine love or from busying himself with the mention of God by the love of any other thing or by his immersion therein. For it can clearly be seen that today most of the people have seized upon fleeting baubles and clung to defective goods, and have remained deprived of perpetual bounty and of the fruits of the blessed Tree.]

Although a wayfarer upon the path of the Absolute Truth might reach a particular station, without detachment he would not be able to perceive that station or any other plane. This topic, however, shall never be mentioned by any translator, nor shall any pen set it down or any author discourse upon it. This is from the grace of God; He bestoweth it upon whoso He willeth. By detachment is not meant giving away and depleting all one's wealth. Rather, it denotes turning unto God and supplicating Him. This plane can be attained in every precinct and is manifest and visible from every thing. He is detachment, and is the alpha and the omega thereof. Therefore, we beseech God to make us detached from anyone save Him and to grace us with the attainment of His presence. Verily, there is no God but He. Command and creation belong to Him. He maketh beloved whatever he wisheth to whomever He desireth, and verily He is Powerful over all things.

Another question regarded the Return. This matter hath been treated in detail and at length in all the Tablets, in diverse statements and innumerable aphorisms. God willing, thou shalt refer to them, that thou mightest attain an understanding thereof. The genesis of all things is from God and all things shall return unto Him. There is no escape for anyone. All return to the Absolute Truth, but some to His mercy and good pleasure, and others to His wrath and fire. In Persian and Arabic Tablets this matter hath been commented upon in its entirety. Refer to them if ye desire to know.

Likewise, the Primal Point, may his grandeur be glorified, wrote in detail concerning this subject in the Persian Bayan. Consult it, for a single letter thereof sufficeth all the people of the earth. Verily, God hath made mention of all things in a perspicuous Book. Consider thine own origin, which was from God, and which shall return unto Him. As ye began, so shall ye return, and shall return to Him.

Thou has asked about the saying, "Whoso knoweth his own self hath known his Lord." It is well known to thee that this statement hath, in every one of the infinite worlds, wondrous meanings according to the exigencies of that world, of which no one else hath or ever will have any knowledge. Were all of this to be discussed as it deserveth, all the pens of the universe and oceans of ink would not suffice. However, a droplet from this most great, endless ocean shall be mentioned, that perhaps seekers might be enabled to reach their destination and wayfarers might attain the original goal. God guideth whoso He desireth to the path of the Mighty, the Powerful, the Omnipotent.]

Consider the rational faculty with which God hath endowed the essence of man. Examine thine own self, and behold how thy motion and stillness, thy will and purpose, thy sight and hearing, thy sense of smell and power of speech, and whatever else is related to, or transcendeth, thy physical senses or spiritual perceptions, all proceed from, and owe their existence to, this same faculty.[4] So closely are they related unto it, that if in less than the twinkling of an eye its relationship to the human body be severed, each and every one of these senses will cease immediately to exercise its function, and will be deprived of the power to manifest the evidences of its activity. It is indubitably clear and evident that each of these afore-mentioned instruments has depended, and will ever continue to depend, for its proper functioning on this rational faculty, which should be regarded as a sign of the

revelation of Him Who is the sovereign Lord of all. Through its manifestation, all these names and attributes have been revealed, and by the suspension of its action they are all destroyed and perish.

It would be wholly untrue to maintain that this faculty is the same as the power of vision, inasmuch as the power of vision is derived from it and acteth in dependence upon it. It would, likewise, be idle to contend that this faculty can be identified with the sense of hearing, as the sense of hearing receiveth from the rational faculty the requisite energy for performing its functions.

This same relationship bindeth this faculty with whatsoever hath been the recipient of these names and attributes within the human temple. These diverse names and revealed attributes have been generated through the agency of this sign of God. Immeasurably exalted is this sign, in its essence and reality, above all such names and attributes. Nay, all else besides it will, when compared with its glory, fade into utter nothingness and become a thing forgotten.

Wert thou to ponder in thy heart, from now until the end that hath no end, and with all the concentrated intelligence and understanding which the greatest minds have attained in the past or will attain in the future, this divinely ordained and subtle Reality, this sign of the revelation of the All-Abiding, All-Glorious God, thou wilt fail to comprehend its mystery or to appraise its virtue. Having recognized thy powerlessness to attain to an adequate understanding of that Reality which abideth within thee, thou wilt readily admit the futility of such efforts as may be attempted by thee, or by any of the created things, to fathom the mystery of the Living God, the Day Star of unfading glory, the Ancient of everlasting days. This confession of helplessness which mature contemplation must eventually impel every mind to make

is in itself the acme of human understanding [‘irfan] and marketh the culmination of man's development.

[If thou wert to ascend the stages of reliance upon God and detachment by means of the ladders of glory and inaccessibility, and if thou wert to open thy spiritual eye, thou wouldst see this utterance as an abstract truth, free of the limitations of self. And thou wouldst hear the words, "Whoso hath known any thing hath known his Lord" in the ear of thy consciousness through the angelic call of the divine dove of holiness. For in all things is present and visible the sign of the effulgence of the self-subsistent Glory and the rays of the manifestation of the unique Sun. This sign is not and never shall be confined to any one soul. This is the truth, and no doubt lies therein, if you be among those who know. But the primary intent of knowing the self in this station is the knowledge of the Self of God in every era and age. For the pre-existent essence and the ocean of reality is exalted above the knowledge of all else but Him. Therefore, the insight attained by all the mystics actually hath reference to their insight into the Manifestations of His Cause. They are the Self of God among His servants, His Manifestation in His Creation, His Sign among His creatures. Whoso knoweth them hath known god, whoso hath affirmed them hath affirmed God, whoso hath acknowledged Their truth hath acknowledged the signs of God, the Help in Peril, the Everlasting. Thus do We reveal for you the signs, that you might be guided by the Signs of God.

O Hadi, follow the guidance of God, thy Lord and the Lord of all things. Then gird up thy loins to aid the Cause of God. Do not follow those who took pharaoh's magician, Samiri, as their friend instead of God, who ridicule the verses of God and are of the transgressors. And when the verses of thy Lord are recited to them, they say, "These are veils."

Say: By virtue of what word have you believed in god, your Lord? Produce it, if you speak the truth. Now, matters have reached such a pass that, by Him Who holds my soul in His hands, all who are in the heavens and on earth weep and wail with the eye of mystery at how this Servant is oppressed. We have relied upon God, Our Lord and the Lord of all things. I shall ever view all who are in the world as nothing but a handful of dust, save for those who have entered into the depths of the love and knowledge of God. Thus do we remind thee, that though mightiest be among they who know.

As for thy question concerning the Saying, "The believer is alive in both worlds:" Yes, that is a truth, like the existence of the sun, which shone forth in this atmosphere, which hath appeared in this sky, which subsisteth in this Cloud of the Unseen, if thou art among those who know. Indeed, wert thou to be steadfast in thy love for thy Lord and to attain that station wherein thou shalt never stumble, there would appear from thee that whereby both worlds would be revived. This is revelation from the Mighty, the All-Knowing. Then thank God for having given thee to drink from this spring, which giveth new life to the spirits of the Near Ones; for having lifted thee up in truth; and for having revealed to thee those Words whereby the proof of God to all the worlds was perfected. By God, if a drop thereof were bestowed on the people of the heavens and the earth, thou wouldst find them all subsisting in the eternity of thy Lord, the Mighty, the Powerful.]

It is clear and evident that when the veils that conceal the realities of the manifestations of the Names and Attributes of God, nay of all created things visible or invisible, have been rent asunder, nothing except the Sign of God will remain — a sign which He, Himself hath placed within these realities.[5] This sign will endure

as long as is the wish of the Lord thy god, the Lord of the heavens and of the earth. If such be the blessings conferred on all created things, how superior must be the destiny of the true believer, whose existence and life are to be regarded as the originating purpose of all creation. Just as the conception of faith hath existed from the beginning that hath no beginning, and will endure till the end that hath no end, in like manner will the true believer eternally live and endure. His spirit will everlastingly circle round the Will of God. He will last as long as God, Himself, will last. He is revealed through the Revelation of God, and is hidden at His bidding. It is evident that the loftiest mansions in the Realm of Immortality have been ordained as the habitation of them that have truly believed in God and in His signs. Death can never invade that holy seat. Thus have We entrusted thee with the signs of Thy Lord, that thou mayest persevere in thy love for Him, and be of them that comprehend this truth.

[Since all these matters have been mentioned extensively and in detail in most of the Tablets, We have adverted to them here only with the utmost brevity. We hope that, God willing, thou shalt attain the farthest horizon of holiness, shalt arrive at the reality of those journeys that are the station of subsistence in God, and shalt have influence, shine and glow like a sun in the world of dominion and sovereignty. Despair not of the clemency of God, for none despaireth of His generosity save those in loss . . .]



## NOTES:

The Persian is in Majmu`ih-i Misr, pp. 346-362. Cf. Taherzadeh, Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, vol. 2, pp. 144-145.

Thus begins Shoghi Effendi's translation, Gleanings CXXIV

This verse has possible Uvaysi implications, abolishing the need for a Sufi pir.

Qur'an 36:11, 78:29.

Shoghi Effendi's translation, again, Gleanings LXXXIII

Shoghi Effendi's translation, in Gleanings, LXXIII

Cole's introduction:

This is a provisional translation of an important Tablet that, it seems to me, has central mystical significance. The "Commentary on `He who hath known his self hath known his Lord'" was written by Bahá'u'lláh in Edirne before the public break with Azal, and was addressed to Mirza Hadi Qazvini, one of the original 18 Letters of the Living, who was then in Baghdad. It treats briefly a number of key questions in Islamic mysticism, including the meaning of detachment; the meaning of the Saying about knowing one's self; the meaning of Return; and the meaning of another Saying, "The believer is alive in both worlds."

Much of the Tablet was translated by the Guardian; I have simply assembled those passages in order, and inserted between them my provisional translations of the rest of the Tablet. The Guardian's translations of passages from this piece are marked by a footnote after the first sentence. The Cole provisional translations are marked by beginning and ending brackets. The final two pages are left untranslated because they mainly consist of greetings to the Babis in Baghdad. The Cole provisional translations between [brackets] have not been double-checked by anyone else and may contain errors. [-J.C., 1996]

## Musíbat-i-Hurúf-i-‘Álín

(The Suffering of the Exalted Letters)

Bahá’u’lláh

Ad’iyyih-i-Hadrat-i-Maḥbúb, Pages 217-85

Provisional Translation by Joshua Hall

Bahá’u’lláh revealed the Musíbat-Hurúf-i-Álín, or the Suffering of the Exalted Letters, during the Baghdad period following the death of His cousin, Muḥammad Vazír. He addressed it to His cousins Maryam and Havvá, the former being the sister of Muḥammad Vazír and the latter his wife, to the end that it might be a consolation to them and others in facing the ineluctable passing of family and loved ones. The Tablet takes the form of an extended supplication to God composed in eight parts, in which Bahá’u’lláh illustrates the creation of man, the journey to maturity and perfection, and then the process of death and the pain of desolation.

## I

He is that He is.

Glory be unto Thee, O Lord my God! How is the pen to write and the ink to flow, inasmuch as the gentle breezes of affection have been stilled, the daystar of the divine decree hath arisen from the horizon of fulfillment, the sword of tribulation hath been unsheathed from the scabbard of creation, the firmament of sorrow hath been upraised, and the arrows of hardship and the darts of trials have rained down from the clouds of fate, in such wise that the stars of joy in the hearts of Thy loved ones have fallen, every measure of happiness in the souls of Thy chosen ones hath been effaced, and successive tribulations have waxed so severe that no man hath the power to bear them, nor any soul the ability to withstand them. For the doors of hope have been slammed shut, the sweet-scented breezes of fidelity have ceased to waft, and the odours of extinction have been diffused.

I swear by Thy glory! The pen weepeth, the ink crieth aloud, the Tablet hath swooned away, bodies have trembled, and pillars have quaked. Alas, alas, for what hath been decreed and come to pass! Verily, this is the first token of Thy loving Providence.

## II

Thou art He Who kindled the lamps of love in the niche of providential care, and Who nourished them with the oil of learning and wisdom, until they became radiant and refulgent. By their illumination did the lights of Thy oneness shine forth in the niche of Thy sovereignty, and the foundations of the house of Thine eternity were

established in the gardens of Thy hallowed Being. In the globe of Thy grace and the crystal glass of Thy mercy didst Thou protect them, lest they be assailed by the winds of antipathy.

Thereafter Thou didst clothe them in the vesture of Thy generosity and compassion, and first make them manifest in the kingdom of attributes in the temple of Thy names. And when their creation reached its consummation and they were made well-pleasing, the gales of annihilation struck them and left them bereft of the fragrances of eternity, until their lives were taken, their niches shattered, and their lights extinguished. Alas, alas, for what hath been decreed and come to pass! Verily, this is a token of Thy latter decrees.

### III

How am I to make mention, O my God, of the marvels of Thy handiwork and the mysteries of Thy wisdom, inasmuch as Thou hast created that gleaming white fluid out of the substance of divine bounty? Thou hast made it to flow from the loins of the fathers, generation after generation, until it attained unto one among Thy servants. Thereupon, Thou didst make the subtle, limpid fluid to descend into the shell of one of Thy handmaidens, didst nurture it with the hands of Thy mystery and by the essence of Thy tender mercy therein, and didst design it in accordance with the exigencies of Thy wisdom, until Thou didst fashion it in the mother's womb, clothe it with the most noble form, and invest it with the most excellent attributes.

Thereafter, Thou didst cause him to depart from the womb, and didst suckle him, nourish him, feed him, bestow Thy grace upon him, exalt him, stand him erect, and

deliver him unto the stage of maturity, until Thou didst enable him to reach that boundless extremity in Thy fashioning, and that limitless exaltation in Thy creation, in such wise that Thou didst lift him unto the heaven of Thy Cause and the atmosphere of Thy transcendent holiness, didst cause him to attain unto the lofty heights of the wayfarer's journey, didst detach him from every side, and didst return him from Thyself unto Thyself, such that he came and stood present before Thee.

But the moment he entered Thy presence, O my God, Thou didst strip his body, for Thou didst love naught else beside him, and Thou didst divest him of his attire, for Thou didst not desire aught else except him. Thou didst cause him to dwell in an abode bereft of any friend to have compassion for him, any companion to console him, a dwelling without either a lamp or bed. Therein did he abide, lowly, impoverished, alone, and seeking Thy refuge.

Alas, alas! On account of this were the gentle breezes of honor shut out from the realm of eternity, the dove of the Cause was no longer able to warble her melodies, creation torn asunder its yellow robe, the celestial Maiden cast ashes upon Her face, and the eyes of divine majesty in the inmost souls of contingent being wept crimson tears. Alas, alas, for what hath been decreed and come to pass! Verily, these are among Thy grievous afflictions.

#### IV

Glory be unto Thee, O Lord, my God! After Thou didst enable him to ascend unto the realms of Há, the throne of eternity; after his dying to his own self and his living in the celestial splendour in the heights of manifestation; and after his attaining unto

himself, his knowing of himself, his realization of his light, and his recognition of his beauty, Thou gavest him to drink from the wondrous crystal springs begotten of the essence of Thy hidden knowledge, didst attire him with the robe of guidance, and didst proffer unto him the brimming cups of divine virtue, until he gave ear unto the melody of the Dove in the midmost heaven.

There he stood, transfixed at the Supreme Vision, before the holy sanctuary of divine grandeur. Thereupon he clung to the yellow handhold in the crimson spot, sufficient now in his own being, and subsisted by virtue of his own essence. He saw with his own eyes such as he beheld, apprehended with his own heart such as he understood, and ascended with his all to such heights as no man can ever surpass in his love for Thee, his acquiescence under Thy decree, and his submission under Thy trials.

In this most exalted condition, this most lofty, most sublime station did he abide, until Thou didst breathe over him the breaths of Thy decree and the winds of Thy trials, and didst take from him all that Thou hadst given him out of Thy generosity, such that his feet were bereft of the power to walk, his hands from the ability to grasp, his eyes from beholding Thy beauty, his ears from hearkening unto Thy melodies, his heart from the knowledge of the stations of Thy unity, and his soul from certitude in the Manifestations of Thy oneness. Thou wert yet unsatisfied, however, until Thou didst strip him of the robes of Thy loving-kindness, didst cast him out of the palaces of glory unto the dust of abject lowliness, and from the acme of affluence into the depths of deprivation. In the earth's womb did he dwell, alone, estranged, naked, bereft, and exiled.

Alas, alas, for what hath been decreed and come to pass! Verily, this is a token of Thy dire calamities.

## V

Verily Thou art He Who planted a goodly tree in a blessed and clement land, Who gave it to drink of the camphor water from the springs of Divine Dispensation, Who reared it by the power of Thy sovereignty, and protected it with the hands of Thine omnipotence, until it grew lofty and exalted.

Its root Thou madest firm in the earth of Thy will, by virtue of a name from amongst Thy names, and its branch Thou madest to rise up unto the heaven of Thy behest. Firmly established and exalted, it became the bearer of high-reaching and lofty branches, an indomitable trunk, and inaccessible and mighty boughs. Upon its branches dwelt the spirits of Thy sublime divinity and rested the doves of Thine hallowed eternity. Upon it were suspended bird cages of light, wherein songbirds of divine majesty were chanting and doves of holiness were warbling. They, one and all, made mention of their Lord God in the wondrous tongue with melodies and peerless utterance upon the branches. By virtue of their hymns were the hearts of the faithful enraptured, and the souls of those brought nigh confirmed.

And when it had attained its most exalted station, it was assailed by the fierce lightning of Thy wrath and the raging tempests of Thy trials, such that its branches snapped, its leaves withered, its fruits fell, its bird cages were shattered, and its songbirds took flight, in such a pass that it was razed to the ground, uprooted with branches fallen. 'Twas as though it had never been planted, never been created, never been called into being, nor made lofty and exalted. Alas, alas, for what hath been decreed and come to pass! Verily, this is a token of the supreme might of Thy sovereignty.

## VI

Verily, Thou art He Who sent down the mandate of compelling power from the realm of glory, by Whose leave Destiny's decree dawned as Thou didst preordain it in the kingdom of creation, in order that the abode of divine majesty be established upon stakes of unyielding, fortified iron. Thou didst form it out of the dust of loving-kindness from the garden of Thine eternity, and Thou didst build it upon four pillars of the temples of Thy transcendental unity, and didst beautify it with the daystars of Thine eternity, didst adorn it with the pure gold of Thy mercy, didst ordain that its doors be embellished with crimson ruby in Thy name, the Exalted, the Most High, and its walls inlaid with the pearls of Thy most excellent attributes in Thy supreme and most glorious Remembrance, and its ceiling and throne Thou didst hew out of scintillating, clear diamond, in Thy consummate, ancient, and truest Remembrance. Glorified be God, He Who fashioned and created this exalted abode, and Who revealed and ordained it!

And after it had attained unto the pinnacle of perfection, and had been manifested in the most beauteous form, it remained in such wise until its appointed time had come. Thereupon, the firmament of Thy trials was upraised in the divine realm of Thine ascendancy, and the angels of Thy wrath pronounced over it Thy word of destruction. The foundation of the House was made to quake, until its pillars collapsed, its thrones fell, its doors lay demolished, its walls crumbled, and every indication thereof was effaced.

'Twas as though it had never been built upon Thine earth, been reared in Thy domains, or been called into being in Thy lands. All its dust was scattered, its memory was forgotten, and every trace thereof had vanished. Alas, alas, for what hath been decreed and come to pass! Verily, this is a token of the marvels of Thine



immutable judgement. Praise be unto Thee for the excellence of Thy most sweet decree!

## VII

I swear by Thy glory, O my God! Not a single plaint do I yield Thee for what hath occurred at Thy behest, rather I beseech Thy forgiveness for all that I have mentioned, all that I have recounted, and all that I have uttered in my trespasses, which speak only of mine own heedlessness of Thy remembrance and my renunciation of the gardens of Thy nearness, for I recognize the exigencies of Thy wisdom, am cognizant of the ordering principles of Thy transcendent sovereignty, and know of a certainty that, through the power of Thy grace, Thou shalt never deal with Thy servants in a manner that doth not befit Thine exalted majesty, or become the marvels of Thy beneficence, and that the mandate of the return doth not shine forth from the horizon of Thy might and the kingdom of Thy behest, save that Thy servants may attain unto the pinnacle of Thy grace and the greatest measure of Thine overflowing generosity.

I know full well that he who ascended unto Thee and came before Thee, hath verily risen unto the heavens of Thy sublime eternity, hath dwelt in the holy precincts of Thy lordship, hath mounted the throne of glory before the effulgent light of Thy beauty, and hath reposed in the cradle of life eternal at the manifestation of Thine exalted divinity. It is as though I behold him at this very moment soaring on the wings of majesty in the expanse of Thy hallowed mercy, marching through the realms of the spirit of Thy oneness, drinking from the brimming cup of reunion with Thee, and partaking of the nourishing repast of Thy nearness and close embrace.

May my life be offered up for this glorious honor, this supreme token of divine solicitude!

And yet, inasmuch as Thou hast concealed from Thy creatures what Thou hast revealed unto Thy Servant, the decree of separation is most difficult for humanity, the time of parting as ordained by Thee is most trying unto Thy thralls, and the appearance of death in the temples of eternity is a cause of sorrow to Thy loved ones. Thus hath befallen Thy lovers what no man could reckon, no soul could grasp, no heart could contain, nor any mind could bear, and the token thereof is this hardship wherewith they are afflicted, and this suffering wherewith they are encompassed, which hath set the heart and soul aflame, and raised tumult in Thy lands.

Indeed, not an eye remaineth unless it weepeth, nor a single head unless it be made bare on account of grief, nor a single heart unless it be bereaved, nor any light unless it be darkened, nor any soul unless it be severed, nor any happiness unless it be exchanged for sorrow.

Alas, alas, for what hath been decreed and come to pass! Verily, this is a token of Thy decree as confirmed in the crimson tree.

## VIII

O my God, my Beloved and mine Aspiration, Thou knowest full well that these hardships have arisen from the horizon of Thy decree and have encompassed the contingent realm and whatsoever abideth therein. They have overcome all created things and all that pertaineth unto them. But Thou hast chosen in these times two

women: the first Thou hast named after her whom Thou hadst singled out and made to be the mother of all creation, and the second Thou hast named after her whom Thou hadst chosen above all the women in the world.

These tribulations hast Thou visited upon them in such a time when neither of them hath a mother who might rend asunder her garment, or cast ash upon her head, or commiserate with them in their loss, or weep for what hath befallen them, or divest her head by reason of what hath afflicted them. Neither have they companions to keep them company and still their weeping, nor confidants to dry the tears from off their cheeks, nor maidservants to veil their hair, nor any who might have compassion on them and be a solace unto them in their bereavement, or weep for their sufferings, or dye their hands, or comb their locks after they have been disarrayed in grief.

Wherefore, O my God, inasmuch as Thou hast decreed by Thy command such as Thou didst ordain, and hast made to pass such as Thou didst destine by Thy mandate, do Thou bestow Thy grace upon them both, clothe them in robes of silk and in luminous vestures with the word of glorification, that their eyes may be solaced by the marvels of Thy mercy, and their sorrow be transformed into the essence of joy and the splendour of the light in the orient of Thy Sacred Mount. Incline Thou their ears unto the warblings of Thine essence from the sidrah of Thine exalted eternity and the tree of Thy hallowed oneness, and unto the melodies which stupefy the minds of men when heard, before whose revelation souls tremble, and at whose appearance spirits are enraptured.

Nourish them, moreover, with the fruits of the tree of Thy lordship, and enable them to taste the wine of life everlasting that floweth from the springs of Thine eternity. Set them on the path unto the wellspring of Thy nearness and the city of reunion with Thee, and grant that they may repose in the precincts of Thy mercy neath the

shade of the garden of Thy presence. Pour over them such patience as is given by Thee. Enable them and those in their company to trust in Thee, to be severed from aught else except Thee, to be engaged in Thy remembrance, to delight in Thy name, to long for Thy beauty, to hasten unto Thine embrace, to drink from the brimming cup of Thy nourishing bounty, to circle round Thine Essence, to repose in the cradle of Thy nearness, to take flight in the heaven of Thy love, to walk in the lands of Thy good-pleasure, to hasten unto the repository of Thy light, to seek the excellence of Thy decree, to be content when Thy trials are sent down, to be patient in Thee, and to be well-satisfied with Thee, that their gaze may be set upon the marvels of Thy mercy and their hearts may await the

revelation of Thy munificence, for they have not taken unto themselves any lord besides Thee, any beloved but Thee, or any aspiration save Thee.

And I beseech Thee by Him Whom Thou didst make manifest in the past and shalt make manifest in the future to forbid neither them nor Thy servants from the holy sanctuary of Thy grandeur, nor turn them back from the gates of the city before whose threshold all in the heavens and earth have gathered, and at whose door they stand—the city which none hath entered save those whom Thou hast singled out in Thy generosity, and whom Thou hast made mirrors of Thine Own Self, manifestations of Thine Essence, daysprings of Thy glory, orients of Thy holiness, abodes of Thy spirit, treasuries of Thy Revelation, lamps of Thy light, embodiments of Thy knowledge, and waves of the ocean of Thy wisdom.

Inasmuch as Thou art potent to do as Thou willest and sovereign to do as Thou pleasest, and art in truth the Omnipotent, the Self-Subsistent, cause this guest who hath come before Thee to rise above all that Thou hast exalted, until he entereth the pavilions of majesty behind the tabernacles of divine oneness in the precincts of Thy name, the All-Glorious, and of Thine Essence, the Most Exalted, before the Tree of

the farthest extremity, the Garden of sheltering refuge, and Thy most radiant spirit, that the holy fragrances diffusing from the Primal Point—the Most Exalted Centre, the Most Exquisite Gem—may overcome him, and that he may revolve around His beauty, circle round the holy sanctuary of His glory, and behold the light of His attributes in the Kaaba of His names.

Clothe him, then, in the robes of gladness, that he may thereby enter the fold of the concourse of manifestation and give ear unto the sweet accents of nearness from the Camphor tree, that the snow-white dove may warble the song of enraptured ecstasy in this crimson leaf—and indeed in every tree—with the melody of the All-Compelling in this flame kindled from this fire, proclaiming that there is none other god but Him, the King, the Omnipotent, the Almighty, the All-Powerful, and that He is God, the Sublime, the All-Encompassing, the All-Subduing.

And with these words is Mine utterance ended: Praise be unto God, the Incomparable Lord of unsurpassed might! Verily Thou shalt fulfil, O my God, such as is hoped, and this indeed is a token of Thy consummate, ancient, and veritable bounty.

Ad'iyih-i-Ḥadrat-i-Maḥbúb, Pages 217-85

## Lawh-i-Malláhu'l-Quds

Bahá'u'lláh

(Tablet of the Holy Mariner), Persian portion

Provisional translation by Mehran Ghasempour

He is the Ajami,[2] the Persian, the 'Iráqí![3]

Whilst the dwellers in the divine Ark,[4] by the permission of the Holy Mariner, held fast unto one name amongst all names in the ancient Ark[5] and sailed upon the ocean of names, they passed the grades of worldly limitation[6] that perchance, through the felicity[7] and lofty purpose of the Sovereign of Oneness, they mightest reach the shore of divine unity and quaff from the chalice of detachment.[8]

That Ark of Eternity moved by divine assistance, and sailed upon the water of spiritual wisdom until the dwellers thereof reached a station whereat the Name which dwelt therein[9] overtook their course and triumphed. Thence, that Spiritual Ark was stilled and forbidden to move. Whereupon, the firm decree of God descended from the heaven of imperishable holiness, and the Mariner of Eternity was commanded to

impart one letter from the concealed Word unto the dwellers in the Ark, so that by the invisible assistance of God, they might traverse the valley of inner bewilderment, enter the delightful realm of divine unity, reach the Qa'f[10] of everlasting life and attain unto the holy presence of the Well-Beloved.[11]

Inasmuch as the dwellers in the Ark[12] attained unto the Word of the mystic[13] Friend, they forthwith stretched out the wings of their spirits[14] and soared in the air of holiness. Through divine grace and blessing, they didst leave behind the pursuit of self and passion[15] and heedless, blind understandings. Whereupon, the breezes of paradise from the realm[16] of the All-Merciful wafted upon their spirits,[17] and after soaring in the air of the nearness of God and traversing the mystical stations, they descended in a state of safety and security, unto the highest abodes of those who loveth Him. The inhabitants thereof thence arose in service and benevolence; the immortal youths[18] and the holy cup-bearer[19] proffered unto them ruby wine. The intoxicating wine of divine knowledge and the cup of eternal wisdom caused such ecstasy and rapture[20] that they transcended the existence of self and all beings and gave their hearts to the beauty of the Beloved.[21]

For centuries and ages, with perfect joy and delight, they dwelt in that pleasant and spiritual realm and that sacred flower garden of the All-Merciful. Whereupon, the breezes and winds of divine tests and difficulties blew from the Sheba of the imperishable Cause. Thence, they busied themselves with the beauty of the cup-bearer and neglected the Immortal Countenance, inasmuch as they imagined the shadow to be the sun, and specters as light. They desired to rise to the exalted heights of the Greatest Name that they might soar in that realm and attain that seat and place. And as they rose, the divine assayers descended upon them with the sacred touchstone and the irresistible Command of God, and forbade admittance unto all,

for they inhaled not the fragrance of the mystic Youth. Thus, that which was inscribed upon the Guarded Tablet[22] didst come to pass.

Therefore, O ye that dwell in the domain of divine love and ye that drink the wine of everlasting mercy! Barter not nearness unto the beauty of the Friend for both worlds. Turn not thy gaze away from His Countenance towards the countenance of the cup-bearer, and cast not thy heart from the wine of His knowledge and wisdom unto the dregs of ignorance and heedlessness. The lips are for the mention of the Beloved; defile them not with foul water. The heart is the abode of the immortal mysteries; busy it not with attention unto ephemeral things. Seek not the water of life from the embodiments of satanic fancy, but from the Kawthar[23] of the Beauty of the All-Glorious.

This lowly Youth, in the highest station of love, admonisheth the divine friends unto the wondrous verses of unity and the gems of wisdom of the Eternal King, that perhaps some soul, with courage and honor,[24] mightest arise and emerge from the robe of heedlessness and worldly desire, and, even as the beauty of the illumined Friend, become cleansed, resplendent and sanctified and wander in the land of love, detachment, affection, and loftiness. They should partake, at least, as much from the light of the resplendent brow and the advent of the manifest day so that they may become enabled to unite their outward and inward selves.

We traversed the loftiness of detachment,[25] the exaltation of divine unity, the great purification, and the most great consecration. Now must they make eloquent effort and exalted endeavor that the inward mysteries not oppose the outward deeds, nor the outward deeds turn away from the inward mysteries.



We traversed, expending Our life in the path of the Well-Beloved. Arise ye with justice and equity for the sake of your inner selves. Do ye purpose, in the end, to prefer the garment of greed and selfish desires to the attire of divine consecration? Wilst ye exchange the melody of the Nightingale of Eternity with the dissenting sound of mortality from the people of iniquity and hatred?! Wretched is that which ye exchange![25]

“Verily, we are God’s, and to Him shall we all return.”[26] God willing, We hope that the temples of immortal glory, adorned with the ornament of holiness and divine attributes, may become manifested as brilliant, ethereal, cleansed and pure as the everlasting sun. And verily, this is not difficult for God.[27]

- Bahá’u’lláh

## NOTES

[1] Published in *Athar-i-Qalam-i-A`lá* Vol. 4, pp. 335-341; *Ma`iydih-i-`Asmaní* Vol. 4, pp. 335-41.

Of the circumstances of its revelation and its importance, Taherzadeh writes, in part:

On the occasion of Naw-Rúz 1863, Bahá'u'lláh had pitched His tent in a field on the outskirts of Baghdád, known as the *Mazra'iy-i-Vashshash*--a place rented by His faithful brother Mírzá Músá. Bahá'u'lláh was celebrating this festival with a number of His companions, who were likewise living in tents in the open countryside. Outings at this time of year when the spring season had just begun and the weather was mild were extremely pleasant, and Bahá'u'lláh always enjoyed nature and beautiful scenery and loved to be in the country....

On the fifth day of Naw-Rúz, the *Lawh-i-Malláhu'l-Quds* (Tablet of the Holy Mariner) was revealed. Mírzá Áqá Ján, Bahá'u'lláh's amanuensis, emerged from the tent of Bahá'u'lláh, gathered the believers around him and chanted that mournful Tablet to them. Although during the last year of His sojourn in 'Iráq He had, on several occasions, alluded to trials and tribulations which were to come, His companions had not felt previously such sadness as they did on that day.

The theme of this Tablet is the story of the Covenant and man's unfaithfulness to it. Its message is applicable not only to the days of Bahá'u'lláh, but also to the ministries of 'Abdu'l-Bahá' and Shoghi Effendi, and indeed to the present time. Concerning this Tablet 'Abdu'l-Bahá' said: "Study the Tablet of the Holy Mariner that ye may know the truth, and consider that the Blessed Beauty hath fully foretold

future events. Let them who perceive, take warning!” (British Bahá’í Prayers. These words of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s are a preface to the Tablet).

Not only did ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’ ask the believers to study this Tablet during His own ministry, when the Covenant of Bahá’u’lláh was being violated by the Covenant-breakers, but He urged them shortly before His passing to study it again. For He knew too well that there were a few among His followers who would violate the Covenant and rise up against Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian of the Cause of God.

The Tablet of the Holy Mariner is revealed in symbolic language. To appreciate it one must acquire for himself a knowledge of the spiritual verities enshrined within Bahá’u’lláh’s Writings and meditate upon His words. Although the allegorical terms Bahá’u’lláh has used in this Tablet assume various meanings, He has nonetheless manifestly foreshadowed coming events and conveyed some aspects of the Covenant. (Taken from, Taherzadeh, ‘Adib. *The Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh*. Vol. 1, pp. 228, 229-230.

(MW’s note, based on the entry for this text in the Leiden List of the Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh)

[2] “Ajami” is an Arabic expression which refers to a “non-Arab” person, specifically a Persian (MG’s note).

[3] “Iraqí” is also translated as “Arabian” in *The Tablet of the Holy Mariner* (Arabic) (MG’s note).

[4] “Fulk”; “ark, ship, vessel”; this word has no vowel points and I have translated it as the one with the same spelling and no vowel points in the Tablet of the Holy Mariner (Arabic). However, it is spelled the same as another word (FaLak) only with different vowel points, which means; “heaven, sphere, firmament” as in the Persian Hidden Words, no. 8, The Kitáb-i-Íqán, pp. 62 & 186, and Chihár-Vádí (The Four Valleys), p. 1. In fact, both FaLak and Fulk are used in p. 62 of the Kitáb-i-Íqán but they are clearly marked with vowel points in the Persian print of the Kitáb-i-Íqán to distinguish between “heaven” and “Ark”, respectively (MG’s note).

[5] “safinih”; another word for “ark, ship, vessel” (MG’s note).

[6] “maráhil-i-tahdíid”; “manazel attahdíid”, “grades of worldly limitation”; The Tablet of the Holy Mariner (Arabic) (MG’s note).

[7] “bih yomn-i” “by the felicity of”, “by the blessing of” (MG’s note).

[8] “tajríd”; “detachment”; The Kitáb-i-Íqán, p. 33 (MG’s note).

[9] “sákin”; “dweller, dwelling”; The Kitáb-i-Íqán, p. 91. The understanding of this passage has been most difficult. Christopher Buck, in a recent article, has suggested that ism-i-sákin, translated here as “name that dwelt therein” should be rendered “Stagnant Name” and taken as a veiled allusion to Mírzá Yahyá. On this interpretation, Mírzá Yahyá seized control (sabaqat girift) of the Ark and diverted its course (majrá), and this action caused the vessel to be stilled. See Buck, Christopher. “A Symbolic Profile of the Bahá’í Faith”. The Journal of Bahá’í Studies, Vol. 8, no. 4 (Sept.-Dec., 1998) (MG’s note, expanded by MW)

[10] The actual word in the text is “Qáf”: which in Persian mythology, literature, and mysticism “Kúh-i-Qáf” (Mount Qáf) or simply “Qáf” is the abode of the immortal Simorgh (phoenix); Shoghi Effendi translated it as “mount” in the Persian hidden words no. 1 (MG’s note).

[11] “jánán”; “Well-Beloved”; Persian Hidden Words, no. 1 (MG’s note).

[12] “kashti”; “ark”; another word for “ship, ark, vessel” (MG’s note).

[13] “manavy”; “mystic”; Persian Hidden Words , no. 16 (MG’s note).

[14] “par-i-maní goshodand”; is a an expression. See The Persian Hidden Words, no. 79 (MG’s note).

[15] “nafs va hawa”; “self and passion”; The Tablet of the Holy Mariner (Arabic) (MG’s note).

[16] “makman”: “realm”; The Tablet of the Holy Mariner (Arabic).

[17] “hayákil”; “spirits”; The Tablet of the Holy Mariner (Arabic) (MG’s note).

[18] “gholámán”; “youths”; see “youth” in The Tablet of the Holy Mariner (Arabic) (MG’s note).

[19] “sághi”; “Cupbearer”; Persian Hidden Words, no. 59 (MG’s note).

[20] “Jazb va Valah”; “ecstasy and rapture”; The Kitáb-i-Íqán, p. 195 (MG’s note).

[21] “jamál-i-Dust”; “beauty of the Beloved”; Persian Hidden Words, no. 82 (MG’s note).

[22] “Lawh-i-Mahfuz”; “Guarded Tablet”; The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, 79, 97. The Kitáb-i-Íqán, p. 223 (MG’s note).

[23] “Kawthar”; The Kitáb-i-Íqán, p. 27. Also “the river of everlasting life”; Persian Hidden Words , no. 37 (MG’s note).

[24] “ghad-i-mard-i-va marda’negi alam nama’yad”; Persian colloquialism which literally means to erect one’s posture as if to stand tall and show manliness (i.e. to arise and show courage and honor in the face of a challenge) (MG’s note).

[25] Compare to the Kitáb-i-Íqán, p. 116 (MG’s note).

[26] Qur’án: Al-Baqarah(2): 156 (2:151 in J.M. Rodwell translation) (MG’s note).

[27] Compare to Qur’án: Ibrahim(14): 20. (MG’s note)



## Tablet to Jináb-i-Mullá ‘Alí-Akbar fiard i’l-álif

Bahá’u’lláh

Provisional translation by: Julio Savi and Faezeh Mardani

He is the Ever-Abiding, the All- Knowing, the Omniscient.

1. O Pen of the Most High! Make mention of him who is immersed in the seas of doubt and passion, that perchance thou mayest purify him through that which floweth from thee and purge him from the defilement of the superstitious.
2. Say: O servant who tarrieth in the land of bewilderment, and droneth round the Fire, say: “In the name of God, the Most Mighty, the Most Holy, the Most Glorious.” Then enter therein, and let the fear of no one dismay thee, put thy trust in God, the Lord of might and power. Verily, He causes it to become a light for thee, and a mercy upon thee, and a safety to the worlds. Beware, beware lest thou fearest the God Who created thee by virtue of His behest, or hast a doubt about the Revealer of the Bayán and what is therein whereby they may recognize Him Who is the Compassionate, the All- Merciful, and God hath quickened all things that they may attain His presence. This is what We have revealed in all the Tablets, if thou art of



them that apprehend. All things are in the grasp of His power, all faces submit to His sovereignty and all were created through the potency of His weighty and unerring Command.

3. Hast thou any doubt concerning Him before Whose countenance every luminary bows down (see Koran 12:4), before Whose majesty every man of glory is submissive, before Whose sovereignty every man of light humbles himself, before Whose knowledge every man of learning is ignorant, before Whose door every man of wealth is poor, before the manifestations of Whose might every man of power is abject, before the signs of Whose potency every mighty one is powerless, before Whose holiness every essence is subjected to limitations, before the evidences of the lights of Whose eternity every man of the eternal realm is extinguished, and before the brilliance of Whose sanctified and luminous Face every man of splendor is eclipsed?

4. Dost thou hesitate in your acceptance of Him on Whom all books have descended, to Whom all Scriptures have been revealed, and through Whom all the most glorious and exalted Names have been created? Dost thou ask the shadow about the sun and its light? Open thine eyes, then behold so that thou mayest find it in its zenith, in its sovereignty, might and grandeur with the lights that have enveloped with their brightness the Concourse on high and the denizens of the oceans of names and all that was and is, couldst thou but perceive it. And should the ophthalmia of vain imaginings prevent thine eyes from beholding the lights of the Beauty of thy Lord, the Exalted, the Most High, heal thou them, in My Name, the Healing, the Sufficing, the Manifest, the Wondrous. Dost thou ask the drop that hath remained in the depths of the darkest abyss about the ocean and its waves and sovereignty? I swear by God, this is an injustice from thyself towards thyself and towards thy Lord,

the Mighty, the All- Knowing. Doth it beseem a man that hath eyes to perceive to ask about the sun in the sky after it has shone forth? No, by the Lord of the worlds.

5. Beware, beware, the Decree of thy Lord is not dependent upon the sanction of anything but Him or the acceptance of any creature. Verily, all else besides Him have been created through His command and have been fashioned through His will. And He hath created them as He hath created thee, and there is no difference in this day between thee and all else except thyself, except him whom God hath assisted through His Cause and acquainted with the manifestation of His Self. And verily he is the best among all creatures in the holy and preserved Tablets. Say: Verily He hath been known from eternity through Himself, and not by the testimony of anyone among His servants and their acceptance. He remaineth for eternity as He was, and no one denieth this truth but all contumacious deniers.

6. Therefore, O servant, be fair in thyself. Is God powerful over His Cause or canst thou fix His manifestation in a time of times? If thou recognizeth that He is powerful to exalt His transcendent sovereignty, verily He manifesteth Himself as He wisheth and no one questions what He desireth. And if thou dost imagine that thou art powerful, adduce then thy proof and be not of the negligent. Beware lest thou deemest the Cause of God subject either to the limitations of thy self or to those of any of His people. Know thou, then, that all else besides Him is powerless to know His Being and the nature of His Manifestation, except they who know Him through a bounty on His part and a mercy from Him. Verily, He is the Most Merciful of the Merciful. The whirlwinds of wrath and the tempests of rage were ready to blow from thy doubts upon all beings. Fear thou God, then beg thou forgiveness seventy times, so that He may forgive thee by His grace. And verily He is the Great Giver, the Bountiful.

7. Purify thine heart from all allusions that are in thee and from the words of the people of the Qur'án. Then, arise towards the atmosphere wherein the lights of the Face of thy Lord, the Merciful, shine forth, that thou mayest perceive thyself independent from whatever thou hast heard and mayest find thyself freed from the worlds. O servant! I swear by God! Verily, in this most great, most mighty Revelation, the testimony of God hath been fulfilled ere the revelation of a single letter of His Verses which the most learned of the learned are powerless to comprehend. After this Revelation, look thou with thine inward eyes upon the proof through which thy faith hath been previously confirmed. Beware lest thou question anyone about this. Content thyself with what is revealed on the part of thy Lord. Verily, He suffices thee above anything else but Him. Say: Praised be God, the King of the Mighty Throne. Often in the time of the Revelation to those to whom the people turn for answers (mas'ul, lit. questioned persons) are wrapt in the dense veils of the self and are among the heedless. And whosoever questions such people as these is like unto one born blind who questions another born blind. Does this profit him in any way? No, by the Self of the Lord, the Most Exalted, the All-Wise.

8. Beware lest thou art among them that have clung to the hem of their leaders in the time when God came upon the clouds of the Cause in His Name, the Most August, the Most Mighty, and have turned their back upon God in opposition, and therefore the verdict of divine chastisement was pronounced against them and they returned to their abode, and wretched is the abode of them that have repudiated the Truth. Cast the veil of vain imaginings under thy feet. Then ascend towards the resplendent court of Sanctity and Majesty, that thou mayest see all things under the shadow of the Word that was revealed by His Pen, or even better under the shadow of His Self, the Exalted, the Incomparable.

9. O servant! Verily, We have perceived from thee the odor of the ancient allusions of them to whom the Qur'án was given, allusions about references to the vicegerency and others, wherefore I was saddened and the Manifestations of the Names in their Realms and the Revealers of His attributes in their dominions were grieved. For We have enjoined Our servants in the Bayán to sanctify themselves from all that pertaineth unto them, because all that pertaineth unto them does not make them wholly independent in the Day of Judgment and shuts them out from the presence of God and deprives them of His holy fragrance, as thou thyself didst behold and didst bear witness.

10. Hast thou not heard that He liveth in the All-Glorious Horizon and hath no need of a vicegerent after His Revelation? Say: Far be from the glory of God what I have imagined in my heart and the wrongs I have committed, and I was among the oppressors. And there is no temporal thing with Him that His vicegerent may divide among his heirs. As to His Cause, it is with Him and is not separated from Him. Beware lest thou dost assign to Him any representative, or vicegerent, or reckoner, or counselor, or peer, and be among them that have truly repented. Verily, He is sufficient through Himself to all creation and nothing is independent of Him in the heavens and on earth, if thou art among the mindful.

11. Yea, God hath mirrors for Himself wherein He may shine to themselves for themselves, if they are placed before the sun and its rays. This is what thou beholdest in the outer mirrors, if thou art among the observers. And they speak of the splendor of the sun, if they are placed before it and if they remain where they were beforehand. When they depart, the light returns unto its source and place, and with the mirrors the veils remain. Thus have We explained unto thee that of which thou wert unaware, that thou mayest be among the true believers. And this station is not specially set

aside for anyone at the exception of any other one. By God, the True One, in this Day should all creatures turn themselves towards the lights of the sun that shine above the All-Glorious Horizon with the ornament of God, the Omnipotent, the Exalted, the Mighty, the splendor of the lights of the sun would be reflected in them and none would deny it, except those who are ignorant and far removed and others similar to them.

12. Hast thou not heard, O servant, that the Manifestation that became manifest in the year Sixty was the Manifestation of God and brought to a close the Prophethood of Muhammad, the Messenger of God? Verily, God, thy Lord, is sanctified from all mention, and allusion, and proof, and relation, and association. Verily, He has been established throughout eternity upon the Throne of Holiness and sanctified from all created things and it would be unseemly for anyone to assign to Him a vicegerent. Verily, the vicegerent is for those prophets who were created through His word. Say: Blessed be God, the most excellent of creators! Blessed be God, the most excellent of makers! Verily, We have abrogated such names in the Bayán and We have dashed to the ground the idols of fancy, that none should remain shut out as by a veil by them from God, thy Lord and the Lord of thy fathers. Beware lest thou lookest at Me through the eyes of anyone but Me and if thou wishest to know Me, look at Me through My eyes and thou wilt not know Me through anything but those,<sup>2</sup> although thou ponderest so that thou mayest know Me till the end that none among the reckoners can reckon.<sup>3</sup>

13. Whenever thou wishest to attain to the pinnacle of grace and draw nigh unto the most exalted court and desirest that all the good in the heaven of the divine decree may be ordained for thee, on the part of thy Lord, the Most Exalted, the Most Glorious, detach thyself from all things, perform ablutions with clear<sup>4</sup> and pure

water, as hast been ordained for thee in the Book (Bayán)<sup>5</sup> on the part of Him Who is the Sovereign Revealer, the Ancient of Days and, while thou art washing thy hands, say:<sup>6</sup>

14. O Lord! Cleanse me from all save Thee, and prepare me to meet thee (liqá) in the day of the manifestation of Thy Beauty and the rise (qiyámi) of Thy Self. Sanctify me from whatsoever may shut me out as by a veil from Thy resplendent Beauty. Purify me, moreover, O my God, that I may recognise Thy Self, the Most Exalted, the Omniscient.<sup>7</sup>

15. And while washing thy face, say:<sup>8</sup>

16. O Lord! This is my face that I wash with this water, as Thou didst ordain. I beseech Thee, therefore, O my God, by Thy Name from which Thy servants,<sup>9</sup> except the faithful (muwaÓidún) among Thy creatures, are shut out as by a veil, to cleanse my face with the waters of Thy mercy, flowing out from the right hand of the throne of Thy Majesty, that it may be purified through Thine hallowed, resplendent and luminous Face. O Lord! Protect it, through Thy Name, the Most Holy, the Most Exalted, the Most Wondrous, the Most Glorious, that it may have no regard for aught else besides Thee, and may not turn towards them who have disbelieved in the greatest of Thy signs in the day of the manifestation of Thy Self, the Exalted, the Most High. O my God! Withhold not from me the glances of the eye of Thy loving-kindness, and shatter not my hopes in the holy breezes of Thy favour. Verily, Thou art He Who is ready to answer whosoever calleth upon Thee and is nigh unto them that seek Thy presence.<sup>10</sup> Verily, Thou art the Possessor of Great Bounty! O Lord! Illumine my face in the day when faces<sup>11</sup> have turned black and enlighten it with the lights of Thy bountiful Face.

17. And shouldst thou recite this after ablutions, it would be permissible, and this is a grace on the part of thy Lord, the Omniscient. When thou hast finished, perfume thyself, then attire thyself with thy finest raiment, turn thy face towards the Sanctuary of God (the Qiblih), round which at this moment the spirits of every existence, whether seen or unseen, and those who were not enjoined to prostrate themselves before Adam and who have been and will always be turned towards the countenance of thy Lord, the Most Exalted, the Mighty, the Most High circle.

18. Then, stand firm in your place, raise thy hands<sup>12</sup> towards God with manifest poise and dignity and say:<sup>13</sup>

19. O Lord! I ask Thee by Thy Name, whereby Thou didst shine forth upon all beings and didst transcend the entire creation, that even as I have anointed myself with this perfume, so Thou mayest imbue me with the fragrances of the holy paradise<sup>14</sup> of Thy mercy and with the breezes wafting the savours of the raiment of Thy Self, the Almighty, the Luminous, so that none<sup>15</sup> may inhale from me but the pure scent of Thy Grace and Favour, and I may be wholly turned towards Thee and detached from all save Thee. Verily, potent art Thou to do as Thou willest, and Thou art, in truth, the Bestower, the Pitiful. O Lord! My Beloved,<sup>16</sup> my Hope, the Possessor of my being and my soul! Send down, at this moment, upon Thy servant that which beseemeth the sovereignty of Thy generosity and bounty and is worthy of the wonders of Thy grace and celestial glory.<sup>17</sup> Deprive me not, O my God, of the things Thou hast ordained, in the heaven of Thy will and the clouds<sup>18</sup> of Thy purpose, for Thy chosen ones, whom Thou hast singled out for Thine own Self, the Almighty, the Beauteous. O Lord! I am poor, and I cling to the cord of Thy wealth;<sup>19</sup> I am lowly, and I hold fast to the rope of Thy might and majesty; I am weak, and I have drawn nigh unto the Pavillions of Thy transcendent power and unto the

glorified Tabernacle of the glory of Thy dominion and sovereignty. Therefore, O my God, I am standing before Thee, longing for Thy grace, forgetful of anyone except Thee, fleeing from all else save Thee, turning towards the sanctuary of Thy presence and the goal of Thy good- pleasure.<sup>20</sup> Is there anyone save Thee to whom<sup>21</sup> I may turn? Or any manifestation, except Thine Own,<sup>22</sup> that I may approach? No, by Thy Beauty. All that is manifest is as nothing when compared with the revelations of the holy lights of Thy greatness. and all that is exalted sinks into oblivion when brought before the manifestations of Thy glorious highness and loftiness. Send down, then, O my God, upon Thy servant that which shall so enrich him as to dispense with all the things which have been created in the heavens and on the earth. Verily, Thou art the Most Merciful of the Merciful.

20. Then, take three paces forward, turning towards God, and while taking the first pace say:<sup>23</sup>

21. O Lord! Reveal unto me, in this station,<sup>24</sup> that which Thou didst reveal unto the Speaker (Moses) upon the Paran of Thy love, and the Horeb of Thy benevolence, and on the Sinai of Thine glorious and most exalted might and mercy! Detach me, moreover, O my God, from the Names and their kingdoms, lest I be shut out as by a veil, through them, from Him Who created them by a command from Him. Thy might, in truth, is equal to all things over all things. O my God! Cause me to hear, moreover, Thy call from every tree, as Thou didst cause Thy servant,<sup>25</sup> whom Thou hast chosen and sent to the worlds, to hearken to Thy call from the Lote-Tree of Thy Cause.

22. Then take a second pace, stop and say:<sup>26</sup>



23. O Lord! Shine forth upon me,<sup>27</sup> in this station, as Thou didst shine forth upon the Spirit (Jesus), that I may arise to praise Thy Self and to proclaim Thy verses among Thy heedless servants, perchance thereby their hearts may be cleansed<sup>28</sup> from all doubts and uncertainty regarding Thy Cause, at which all, except a few, of them that dwell in the kingdoms of names<sup>29</sup> swooned away.<sup>30</sup> O Lord! Sanctify me, in this station,<sup>31</sup> from the attributes and their kingdom, that have come<sup>32</sup> between me and the sight of the splendour of the divine Essence. Give me to drink, moreover, O my God, of the cup of immortality from the hands of the remembrance of the Name of my Lord, the Exalted, the Most High,<sup>33</sup> once more.<sup>34</sup> Verily, Thou<sup>35</sup> art the Lord of immeasurable Grace. O Lord! Give me to drink from the stream of everlasting life, that I may be set afire by the heat of Thy love, in such wise that Thy servants may be inflamed thereof. Cause, moreover, the waters (salsabíl) of knowledge to flow out from my mouth, in my recognition of Thy Self, the Merciful, that through it I may produce Thy proof unto such of Thy creatures as trembled on Thy manifest, radiant and undeviating path.

24. Then,<sup>36</sup> take a third pace forward, stop and say:<sup>37</sup>

25. O Lord! Shine forth upon me,<sup>38</sup> in this station, as Thou didst shine forth upon all Thy Prophets and Chosen Ones as have drawn nigh unto Thee. Then, detach me, O my God, from this world and from the world to come, cause me to enter the Paradise of Thy presence and<sup>39</sup> the Garden of Thy mighty and luminous glory.<sup>40</sup> O Lord! Blot out from my heart every remembrance except Thine,<sup>41</sup> that I may arise to praise Thy Being<sup>42</sup> between earth and heaven. O Lord! Forgive my mighty sins, my grievous trespasses, all that in which I have failed in my duty towards my Lord, the Exalted, the Most High and my hesitation upon the path<sup>43</sup> that hath encompassed

the worlds. O Lord! Attire me with the raiment of forgiveness and the robe of certitude. Verily, Thou art He Who supplieth the needs of those who seek Him.

26. Then fall down<sup>44</sup> upon the ground and say:<sup>45</sup>

27. Praise be to Thee, O my God, for the wonders of Thy bounties and the revelations of Thy benevolence towards me, inasmuch as Thou taught me the ways of Thy knowledge and<sup>46</sup> the paths of Thy guidance! I beseech Thee, O my God, by the light of Thy face, through which all beings have been enlightened and the entire creation hath been illumined, not to reckon me among them who heard Thy voice and failed to answer Thy call, or them unto whom Thou hast revealed Thy Being in Thy most exalted manifestation and glorious splendour, and did not obey Thee. Then, establish me upon a seat of glory nigh unto Thy Name, the Merciful, in the garden Thou hast created in the midmost heart of Paradise and join me with such of Thy servants as have drawn nigh unto Thee. Send down upon me,<sup>47</sup> then, every good thing that is in Thy knowledge, and cause me to be raised up on the Day of Resurrection in the presence of the Manifestation of Thy Self, the Inaccessible, the Most Exalted, the Powerful.<sup>48</sup>

28. Then lift up thy face from the ground, for thou hast completed that which has been prescribed unto thee in this lucid Tablet. I swear by the life of Him Whom God shall make manifest, whoever performs this action wholly for the sake of his Lord and rid of all attachment to all else except Him, verily God can satisfy his wants and shall raise him up on the day of resurrection in such wise that the company of the favoured angels will be bewildered.<sup>49</sup> Verily, We have instructed and warned thee, that thou mayest attain unto the presence of thy Lord and mayest not<sup>50</sup> be deprived of what is better for thee than the treasures of the heavens and the earth. If thou dost

perform it, it is for thine own sake, and if thou dost neglect it, thy Lord, verily, can well dispense with all creatures.<sup>51</sup>

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1 This provisional translation by Julio Savi and Faezeh Mardani Mazzoli refers to the Arabic text of “Tablet to Jináb-i-Mullá ‘Alí-Akbar fí arḏi’l- álif,” received by the authors from the Bahá’í World Centre. The Tablet was attached to the following letter:

Dear Bahá’í Friends, Your email letter of 24 July 2006 requesting the full original-language text of a Tablet of Bahá’u’lláh, including a prayer to be recited in time of need, published in part in “Má’idiy-i-Ásmání” (Ihrán: Mu’assisiy-i-Malbu’át-i-Amr, 129 BE), volume 7, pages 131–

135 and “Amr va Khalq” (Hofheim-Langenhain: Bahá’í-Verlag, 1986), volume 4, pages 74–79, was referred to the Research Department for study. A partial provisional translation into English has been published in “Rituals in Babism and Bahá’ism” (London: British Academic Press, 1994), pages 115-118. However, we enclose a copy of the full text of the Tablet in its original language. With loving Bahá’í greetings. (The Department of the Secretariat, 10 December 2006, to Dr. Faezeh Mardani and Dr. Julio Savi)

Má’idiy-i-Ásmání and Amr u Khalq are two commented collections of Tablets by Bahá’u’lláh edited by ‘Abdu’l-Hamíd Ishráq Khavári (1902- 1972) and Mírzá

Asadu'lláh Fálil-i-Mázandarání (1880c.-1957) respectively. The authors have also consulted a text of this prayer handwritten by Zaynu'l-Muqarrabín, sent by the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Iran on 11 Kalimát 133 BE [23 July 1976], through a photocopy dispatched by Mr. Ya'yá Haydarí to Mr. Ibrahím Takallú, on 6 Mihr 2536 [28 September 1977] (from now on "Iran edition").

2 See "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 "

(Bahá'u'lláh, Seven Valleys 22, see also Hidden Words, 14, Ar. no. 44).

3 At this point the so called "Balát-i-Óájat" begins. Má'idiy-i-Ásmání introduces it with the following words: "A prayer revealed by the Supreme Pen to realize important legitimate needs (Burat-i-Balatí kih baráy-i-barávardih shudanih 'áját-i-mashrú'iy-i-muhimmi az qalam-i-A'la

názil dhudih ast)" (131). Amr u Khalq calls this prayer "Balát-i-'ájat" and presents it, in a chapter entitled "Prayers (dar 'ibádát)" with these words: "And the Most High has said in a Tablet (va níz dar lawhí ast qawlahu al- A'lá)" (74). The Iran edition is introduced by the following note handwritten by Mr. Ya'yá Haydarí:

Mr. Ishráq Khávarí in Má'idiy-i-Ásmání, vol. 2, 1st ed., p. 133, vol. 7, p. 131, 2nd ed., calls the quoted prayer "Balát-i-Óájat," that is Prayer in time of needs. The Universal House of Justice writes in a letter written on its behalf, to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Iran, on 11 Kalimát 133 BE [23 July 1976], to which a photocopy of the Blessed Tablet revealed in honor of Mullá 'Alí-Akbar Ardistaní, handwritten by Zaynu'l-Muqarrabín, is attached: "It must be explained that the prayer, which sometimes has been called 'Balát-i-'ájat,' that is Prayer in time of needs, is part of a longer Tablet. This Tablet has not been called 'Balát-i-Óájat' by the Supreme Pen" (Ya'yá Haydarí, 17 Murdád 2536 [8 August 1977]).

4 “clear (Báfi),” Amr u Khalq writes Báfín (74).

5 See “Quand vous voulez faire vos ablutions, asseyez-vous suivant la forme de l’Unité (accroupisses-vous) et parfumez-vous avec des eaux parfumées.

/ Le fruit de cet ordre est, que, au jour du jugement vous arriviez avec de bonnes odeurs auprès du soleil de la Vérité” (The Bab, Le Báyân Arabe 8:10, p. 174. “L’eau est pure par elle-même et purifie par elle-même les autres objets quand elle n’a pas changé ses trois qualités: couleur, odeur, goût” (The Bab, Sayyid ‘Ali Muhammad, Le Báyân Persan 6:2, III, p. 74).

6 The Iran edition and Amr u Khalq write this prescription in Persian: “While washing his hands, let him say (Dar hingám-i-shustán-i-dast bi- gúyad)” (2, 231).

7 “the Omniscient (‘Alím).” Amr u Khalq writes “the Mighty (‘AΩím)” (74).

8 The Iran edition and Má’idiy-i-Ásmání write this prescription in Persian: “And while washing his face, let him say (Dar Óayn-i-shustan-i-Búrat bigúyad)” (2, 131).

9 “Thy servants (‘ibádu).” Amr u Khalq writes “most of Thy servants (‘anhu áktharu’l-‘ibádu)” (74).

10 Má’idiy-i-Ásmání writes mujíban ... qaríban (132) instead of mujíban ... qaríban.

11 “faces (wujúhu).” Má’idiy-i-Ásmání writes “existence (wujúd)” (132). 12 “thy hands (yadayk).” Amr u Khalq writes yadák (75).

13 The Iran edition and Má’idiy-i-Ásmání summarize paragraphs 17 and 18 in Persian as follows: “Then let him perfume himself, and stand up, and facing the Qiblih, let him raise his hands towards the threshold of

God, and say (Pas az án khud-rá mu‘aṭṭar namayad va rúy bi qiblih bi-ístad va hard u dast bi dargáh-i-khudá buland kunad va bi-gúyad)” (3, 132).

14 “the fragrances of the holy paradise (nafa’ati riḍváni qudsi).” Amr u Khalq writes “the holy fragrances (nafa’ati qudsi)” (75).

15 “none (a’adun).” Má’idiy-i-Ásmání does not write the word a’adun (132).

16 The Iran edition adds at this point “my Desire (wa Maqṣúdí)” (4)

17 “[Thy] celestial glory (imtináni-ka).” Má’idiy-i-Ásmání writes “Thy restraint (imtiná’i-ka)” (132).

18 “clouds (saÓábi).” Má’idiy-i-Ásmání writes “atmosphere (hawá’)” (132).

19 “Thy wealth (ghaná’i-ka).” Má’idiy-i-Ásmání writes “Thy tender mercy (‘ináyata-ka)” (133)

20 “Thy good-pleasure (riḍá’a-ka).” Amr u Khalq writes riḍá’i-ka (76).

21 “to whom (ilayhi).” Amr u Khalq writes ilay-ka (76), which seems a mistake in transcription.

22 “except Thine Own (li-siwá-ka).” Má’idiy-i-Ásmání writes li-siwá’i-ka (133).

23 The Iran edition and Má’idiy-i-Ásmání write: “Then, let him put down his hands, take one pace forward in the direction of the Qiblih, stop, and say (dast-háy-i-khud-rá bi-zír ávardih va yik qadam bi-samt-i- qiblih pish ravad bi-ístad va bi-gúyad)” (5, 133).

24 “hadha’l- maqámi.” Amr u Khalq, the Iran edition and Má’idiy-i-Ásmání add fi (77, 5, 133). In the text received from the Bahá’í World Centre the preposition fī, in, is not written (a typo?). The word maqam has connotations of both “place” and “station.”

25 “Thy servant (‘abdaka).” Amr u Khalq writes “[this] servant (abda)” (77).

26 The Iran edition and Má’idiy-i-Ásmání write in Persian: “Then, let him take another pace, and say (yik qadam píshtar bi-ravad va bi-gúyad)” (6, 133).

27 “upon me (‘allí).” Amr u Khalq does not write “unto me (‘allí)” (77).

28 “may be cleansed (yutahharu).” Amr u Khalq writes tatahhara (77), feminine passive, imperfect, conjunctive form of the verb tahara, whose masculine form is yutahharu.

29 “in the kingdoms of names (fī jabarúta’l-‘asmá’i).” Má’idiy-i-Ásmání writes: “in the heaven and in the earth (fī’s-samawát wa’l-araḥayn)” (134).

30 “swooned away (inḥa‘aqat).” Amr u Khalq writes inḥa‘aqat (77).

- 31 “in this station (fī dhalika’l-maqámi).” Má’idiy-i-Ásmání writes fī fi’lika’l-maqám (a typo?) (134).
- 32 “have come (yakúnu).” Amr u Khalq writes takúnu (77), feminine imperfect, indicative form of the verb kaná, whose masculine form is yakúnu.
- 33 “my Lord, the Exalted, the Most High (Rabbí al-‘Alíyi’l-’Alá).” Amr u Khalq writes “my Lord, the Most High (Rabbí al-A‘lá)” (77).
- 34 “once more (fī hadha’l-karrati’l-ukhrá).” This locution may also be translated as “in this second cycle.” An allusion to the Bahá’í vs the Babí Dispensation?
- 35 “Thou (anta).” Má’idiy-i-Ásmání does not write anta (134).
- 36 “Then (thumma).” Amr u Khalq does not write thumma (77).
- 37 The Iran edition and Má’idiy-i-Ásmání write in Persian: “Then, let him take a third pace towards the Qiblih, and say (qadami siyyum rá bardáshtih píshtar bi-ravad bi-ístad va bi-gúyad)” (7, 134).
- 38 “upon me (‘allí).” The Iran edition and Amr u Khalq do not write the locution “upon me (‘allí)” (7, 78).
- 39 The Iran edition and Má’idiy-i-Ásmání repeat the preposition “in (fī)” (7, 134).
- 40 “Thy mighty and luminous glory (bahá’i-ka’l-‘azízi’l-muníri).” Amr u Khalq writes “Thy utterance (bayán’ika)” (78).
- 41 “except Thine [mention] (dúna dhikrika).” Má’idiy-i-Ásmání does not write the locution “except Thine [mention] (dúna dhikrika)” (134).
- 42 “to praise Thy Being (bi thaná’i nafsi-ka).” Má’idiy-i-Ásmání writes “to praise Thee (‘alá thaná’ika)” (134).
- 43 “the path (siráti).” Má’idiy-i-Ásmání and Amr u Khalq write “His path (sirátihi)” (134, 78)
- 44 “fall down (akhrur).” Amr u Khalq writes akharra (78), the perfect indicative form of kharra, whereas akhrur is the imperative form, 2nd person, masculine.

45 The Iran edition and Má'idíy-i-Ásmání write: "Let him then bow his fore-head to the ground and say (bi-sijdiḥ bi-ravad va dar sijdiḥ bi-gúyad)" (8, 135)

46 "and (wa)." Amr u Khalq writes "on (fi)" (78).

47 "Send down upon me (anzil 'allí)" (9). The Iran Edition does not write the locution "to me ('allí)," and Má'idíy-i-Ásmání writes "nourish me (arziqní)" (135).

48 At this point Amr u Khalq and Má'idíy-i-Ásmání insert the locution "the end (intihá)" (78, 135).

49 The Iran edition writes: "dar ín hingám bardár búratat rá az khák, zírá tu anjám dádiḥ-í 'amalí rá kih amr shudí bidán dar ín law'-i-mubín. Sawgand bi-ján-i-man yaΩharuhu'lláh kasí-kih anjám dahad ín 'amal rá kháliβan li-vajha'lláh va munkqati'an 'an dúnihú, bi-ta'qíq bar avarad

'aváhij-ash rá va bar míangízad úrá rúz-i-rastkhíz bi-zívarí kih mutiÓayyir shavand az 'an malá'ikiy-i-muqarrabín" (9) that is a Persian translation of the Arabic text.

50 "mayest not (lá takúna)." Amr u Khalq writes lá takúnanna (79).

51 The Iran edition writes: "chinín ta'lim dádim bi-tu va yád-kardím tu-rá sháyad dark kuní liqá'i parvardigárat rá va mabáshí ma'rúm az ánychih bihtar ast baráy-i-tu az án-chi dar zamínhá va ásimánhá ast. Agar anjám dahí baráy-i-khudat hast, va agar tark kuní parvardigárat bínyáz ast az 'álamyán" (9) that is a Persian translation of the Arabic text. Má'idíy-i-Ásmání abridges paragraph 28 as follows: "Let him then raise his head, and ask from God whatever he desireth (Pas az án sar az sujdiḥ bardárad va Óájat-i-khud-rá az khudávand bikhwahad)" (135).





## Tablets of the Hair

### Bahá'u'lláh

Published in Bahá'í News, 121, page 11  
1938-12

Note accompanying 1938 publication in Bahá'í News: "This is the Tablet read by Mrs. Thomas Collins in presenting at the Convention the Guardian's gift of locks of Bahá'u'lláh's Hair. The Tablet is shared with the believers with the Guardian's permission." Though the translation had been approved by Shoghi Effendi, it was more recently (2001) sent to the Bahá'í World Center to verify its authenticity. The translation given here is an authorized translation from the BWC, approved for distribution. Translator not identified.

## I

### HE IS THE ALMIGHTY

My hair is my Messenger. It is calling aloud at all times upon the branch of fire within the hallowed and luminous Garden of Paradise, that perchance the inmates of the realm of creation may detach themselves from the world of dust and ascend unto the retreats of nearness — the Spot where the Fire seeketh illumination from the light of the countenance of God, the Glorious, the Powerful.

O ye that have consecrated yourselves to this Fire! Sing ye melodies, pour out sweet tones, rejoice with exceeding gladness and make haste to attain the presence of Him Who is the Object of adoration, bearing witness that no God is there besides God, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise, the All-Compelling.

## II

### HE IS THE GOD OF WISDOM

My hair is My Phoenix. Therefore hath it set itself upon the blazing fire of My Face and receiveth sustenance from the garden of My Countenance. This is the station wherein the Son of "Imran" (Moses) removed from the feet of selfish desire the coverings of the attachment to all else but Him and was illumined by the splendours

of the Light of holiness in the undying Fire kindled by God, the Potent, the Gracious, the Ever-Forgiving.

### III

HE IS THE MOST EXCELLENT, THE BEST BELOVED!

A lock of My hair is My Cord. He who layeth fast hold on it shall never to all eternity go astray, for therein is his guidance to the splendours of the Light of His beauty.

### IV

HE IS GOD

My hair is My Veil whereby I conceal My beauty, that haply the eyes of the non-believers among My servants may not fall upon it. Thus do We conceal from the sight of the ungodly the glorious and sublime beauty of Our Countenance.

## V

### HE IS THE ETERNAL

My hair beareth witness for My beauty that verily I am God and that there is none other God but me. In My ancient eternity I have ever been God, the One, the Peerless, the Everlasting, the Ever-living, the Ever-Abiding, the Self-Subsistent.

O denizens of the everlasting Realm! Let your ears be attentive to the stirrings of this restless and agitated hair, as it moveth upon the Sinai of Fire, within the precincts of Light, this celestial Seat of divine Revelation. Indeed there is no God besides me. In My most ancient pre-existence I have ever been the King, the Sovereign, the Incomparable, the Eternal, the Single, the Everlasting, the Most Exalted.

O peoples of the heavens and of the earth! Were ye to sanctify your ears ye would hear My hair proclaim that there is none other God except Him, and that He is One in His Essence and in everything that beareth relationship unto Him. And yet how fiercely have you cavilled at this beauty; notwithstanding that the outpourings of His grace have encompassed all that dwell in the billowing oceans of His Revelation and Creation. Be ye fair therefore in your judgement concerning His upright Religion, for the love of this Youth who is riding high upon the snow-white She-Camel betwixt earth and heaven; and be ye firm and steadfast in the path of Truth.

NOTES:

La'áliyü'l-Hikmat Vol. 3 (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Bahá'í Brazil, 1991) p. 75. The Bahá'í Library gratefully acknowledges the aid of Khazeh Fananapazir in finding the references for all five Tablets and providing the Arabic transliteration of the title.  
(-M.W.)

La'áliyü'l-Hikmat Vol. 3, p. 75 [-K.F.]

La'áliyü'l-Hikmat Vol. 3, p. 75 [-K.F.]

La'áliyü'l-Hikmat Vol. 3, p. 68 [-K.F.]

La'áliyü'l-Hikmat Vol. 3, p. 76 [-K.F.]



## Resurrection and the World to Come

Bahá'u'lláh

From a tablet to Sayyid Yusuf Isfahani

Provisional translation by William Faizi McCants

As for what thou hast asked regarding “the origin” and “the return,” “resurrection” and “assembling for judgment,” “the bridge,” “paradise,” and “hell”: all of them are real, the truth of which none can doubt. Verily, a person of certitude and insight perceiveth all these ranks and stations with the inner and outer eye at every moment, for he is not limited by time nor deprived of grace. If thou soarest in the heavens of divine grace, thou shalt witness creation happening at every moment and in all things, regardless of whether in the past or in the future, and shall behold all that appeareth and transpireth in everything, for His grace hath never been reserved for one thing over another and never shall be.

However, the divine meaning of “assembling for judgment,” “resurrection,” “paradise,” “hell,” and similar expressions mentioned in the divine tablets is limited to the time of the Manifestation. Notice, for example, that at the time of the Manifestation the tongue of God speaketh a Word, and from this Word that cometh



from his mouth paradise, hell, the bridge, and everything thou hast asked and not asked are revealed and disclosed. Every soul who hath attained certitude hath crossed the bridge and attained the paradise of good-pleasure.

In like manner, it joineth the assemblage of the near ones and the elect and is mentioned before God among the people of paradise, the exalted ones, and those who are steadfast. Every soul that hath opposed the Word of God is in hell and is among the people of negation and wickedness who assemble in the shade of those who join partners with God. These stations appear when the Word appeareth.

As for souls who attain the good pleasure of God and His Cause, they shall obtain recompense for their works in the world to come after their spirits leave their bodies. For in this world they do not have the capacity for more, even if all the divine worlds have ever, and will ever, circumambulate this world. In each world, however, there is an ordained and prescribed mission for each soul. Think not that what hath been mentioned in the book of God is a sham. Exalted is He above that! I swear by the sun of the horizon of inner meanings that, in truth, none of the paradises are alike. Paradise in the first life is His good-pleasure and entering His Cause.

After the ascent of the believers from this world, they attain the peerless paradises and are blessed with innumerable bounties. Those paradises are the fruits of the actions that were undertaken in this world. Hast thou noticed that if one of His servants serveth another soul and beareth a hardship for its sake, he receiveth a recompense and compensation for what he did? How can the Bountiful One be free to issue commands for His servants to obey and later withhold the wonders of His mercy from them? Far, far be it from His glory and exalted, exalted is He above what His servants fancy about Him.

In short, today all of these stations are manifest. Therefore, happy is the soul that attaineth the Abha paradise, which is the most exalted paradise.

If there be ears that are cleansed and souls who have attained, then make mention of the wonders of the divine bounties at every moment so all may be freed and purified from everything they have perceived, known, and seen and turn toward the Most Pure, the Most Sublime Vision.

But of what avail! Despite the teachings of the Point of the Bayan (may the souls of all else but Him be His sacrifice), these servants did not advance from the station of the clot to the station of the lump of flesh, much less to the station of acquiring a body and further stations that have never been mentioned (cf. Qur'an 23:14).

Alas for those who change God's grace unto them and by their own existence prevent the heaven of inner meanings from disclosing their manifestations and qualities. Behold the state of these creatures and be of those who bear witness.

Briefly, paradise and hell in this earthly life have been, and will ever be, recognition and opposition. After the ascent of the spirit, it shall reach the peerless paradises or arrive at the fire that hath no likeness, which are the fruits of the actions of those who have recognized or opposed. However, none but God can ever perceive these stations.

For the believer He hath created stations far beyond what hath been heard of the wonders of the immeasurable divine bounties ordained in the paradises of eternal glory. Likewise, He hath ordained for the opponent eternal torments of which none hath heard their like.

Verily, we bear witness that the bridge hath been upraised in truth, and the criterion established with justice! The manifestations have assembled, the evidences have appeared, the trumpet hath sounded, the horn hath blown, the hell-fire hath blazed, and paradise hath drawn close! The herald hath cried out, the heavens have folded up, the earth hath spread out, the breeze of God hath wafted, and the Spirit of God hath gone forth! The heavenly maidens have been adorned, the heavenly youth have been beautified, the palaces have been erected, and the chambers have been festooned! The buried have risen, the lofty have been brought low, and the lowly have been raised aloft! The sun hath darkened, the moon hath split, the stars have fallen, the waters have flooded, the grapes have been plucked, and the fruits have been gathered! The verses have descended, the deeds of those who oppose have been erased, and the actions of those who recognize have been affirmed! The preserved tablet hath appeared in truth, the written tablet hath spoken with bounty, and the Object of wonders, the Beloved of creation, He who is worshiped on earth and in heaven, hath appeared in the form of the Youth, whereupon the tongues of all things say: praise be God, the most wondrous of Creators!

## Nightingale of Separation

Bahá'u'lláh

Provisional translation by Juan R. I. Cole

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Original Text, from Athar-i Qalam-i A`la Vol. 4 (Tehran: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1968), pp. 363-367.

The nightingale of separation, perched upon the branch  
of the horizon, calls out in grief, you who are filled with yearning;  
The bird of loyalty sings upon the tree of eternity  
with the strains of this parting, you who are filled with yearning;

As does the dove of the two seas upon the twigs of the lote-tree of separation--  
that the departure is imminent, you who are filled with yearning.

Say: the time of union has been fulfilled, and by virtue of the decree  
that of absence has begun through this parting, you who are filled with yearning;

Tears have flowed from the eyes of the immortals in the concourse

on high because of this farewell, you who are filled with yearning;  
The breezes of joy that blew from the paradise of splendor  
have been stilled by this departure, you who are filled with yearning.

By God, the faces of the celestial maidens in their chambers  
have paled at the prospect of this absence, you who are filled with yearning;

The houris rouge their cheeks blood red, for they have heard  
about this leave-taking, you who are filled with yearning;

And will never adorn their bodies with the silks of eternity  
after learning of this departure, you who are filled with yearning:

No sorrow shall ever compare to this grief in the realm of the unknowable essence,  
for the wind of separation is blowing, you who are filled with yearning!

In this time, when the bird of eternity has flown from the land of Iraq and the people of longing and yearning burn with the fire of separation, this letter is being sent by this ephemeral ant to the friends of God. Friends, weep for as long as you have eyes, and cry out for as long as your souls exist, for the carpet of union, joining, nearness and encounter has been rolled up. Instead, the sovereign of destiny has, by virtue of a preordained decree, spread out the quilt of parting, leave-taking, absence and departure. The gales of separation and regret have gusted with such force that they have clothed the branches of being, whether visible or invisible, with the cloak of nothingness, then repaired to the blustery autumn of eternity.

Then, eyes should weep, ears listen to the wailing, tongues moan and lament, and bodies tumble into the dust of their birth-places. Nevertheless, we praise God for having singled us out for these repeated misfortunes and unceasing afflictions, and give thanks to him at all times and in all circumstances. He is, in truth, witness to his own words. In all the past scriptures it is mentioned that a time will come, a season will arrive, that the bird of Persia shall sing an Arabian melody. Therefore, hasten to him, lovers of the celestial beauty, you who are distracted by the divine sanctum. Now, that time has arrived, that breeze has wafted, and that bird has flown, but you have not seen it nor attained to it, and have not accomplished the goal. Indeed, you have not advanced toward what was written, nor have you listened. Now that moment has passed, and that day has slipped out of your grasp. That breeze shall not blow again in this land, that rose shall not again flower here, and that door shall never again open. Have you never heard that the nightingale of the divine garden seeks repose and settles only in the spiritual rose bower; that the hoopoe of the Sheba of love only makes its home in the Sinai of the spirit; or that the hearts of lovers seek no visage save the beauty of the beloved?

Lovers, you have become immersed in thoughts of your own selves, and never set out for the lands of the beloved. What a marvelous heedlessness has overtaken contingent being and encompassed existence! The sun is radiant, brilliant and shining in the midst of the sky, but all are singing along with and have become intimates of the birds of night. I shall close with what the nightingale of separation sang in the land of Iraq, calling out to all who dwell beneath the horizon: The bird of immortality has flown to the city of the unknowable divine Cloud, and the dove of the spirit has taken flight from its branch and sought another perch. Then weep, lovers and people of the concourse on high.

Thus do we cast upon you the verses of parting, so that perhaps you will rise from the couches of heedlessness and join the ranks of the mindful. Say: Hypocrites, this nightingale of constancy has taken wing from the rose of union, has set out for the garden of separation, and has consumed all the lovers in the precincts of Iraq. Friends, do not forget the union of souls while you are in the affliction of separation. Lament this departure, but sow the seed of patience in the good earth of the heart, watering it with your tears, so that it will give forth sweet fruit. This is the counsel of the nightingale of the divine garden. Therefore, heed it.

## A Tablet by Bahá'u'lláh

Provisional translation by Julio Savi and Faezeh Mardani

Last night the shaikh went all about the city, lamp in hand crying, “I am weary of beast and devil, a man is my desire.”<sup>2</sup>

O loving friend, I render thanks unto God that thou art, on the whole, in good health, and that the stainless mirror of thine heart telleth of the tokens and ecstasies of thy soul. May, God willing, thine heart's purpose be attained and thy soul's wish be fulfilled, although it is preferred that we purify this luminous tablet, which is among the pages of illuminated breasts, from the allusions of both and that we hasten naked unto the wide plain of the spirit, as it was said by the divine sage:

Never the covetous heart shall come to the stealer of hearts,  
Never the shrouded soul unite with beauty's rose. [FV 60]  
One cannot advance in the path of oneness with two qiblas,  
Either one will please the Beloved, or will consent to one's  
Passions.<sup>3</sup>



Not only the shirt but being itself becometh a veil, and otherness a curtain. The scholar of Shíráz hath said: “Óáfiz! thou thyself art thy own veil. From the midst, arise.”<sup>4</sup>

Likewise, should the Jacob of love have cleansed the essence of his heart and soul from the foulness of water and clay, undoubtedly he would have not necessitated the Egyptian shirt, or an announcer bringing him the glad tiding, or an ambassador speaking to him. On the contrary, he would have perceived the pure and sanctified breezes from the north of the Spirit and he would have dwelt in perfect union with the Beloved.

He would have tasted the joy of the Divine Presence and the ecstasy of the flavor of subsistence from the fount of purity, and he would have obtained the eternal life and everlasting perpetuity, and he would have entered into the immortal Paradise after the spiritual resurrection. He would have seen a thousand Josephs circling in adoration without any voice of complaint and would have received the sweetness of the Egypt of fidelity from the City of the court of the Incomparable.

Yea, as long as the impurities of the world of multiplicity, whose only outcome is death, will not be destroyed and annihilated, the eternal countenance of His Face will not come out unconcealed from the veils, and the meaning of “Everything will perish except His own Face”<sup>5</sup> will not become manifest from the lucid brow. What else can I write? One ought to perceive the perfume of the Beloved from Uways’ camel hair. As the Mathnaví’s author says:

The perfume of the Beloved exaleth from the camel hair.

This camel is of the herd of that pearl who is Lord Uways.

However, the musky fragrance of the Beloved and the breezes of the Merciful have ceased to waft from the Yemen of the Friend.

Yea, the casket of the white pearl is concealed within the seashell, inasmuch as the untouched pearl, which bestows perfect power upon the inner powers of the heart and adds the light of vision to intelligence, is more acceptable and agreeable. May its concealment be conducive to revelation, and its occultation be followed by an unveiling, or a child clarify this symbolic language, or a power break this seal.

When seeds are hidden in the earth, their inward secret becomes the verdure of the garden.<sup>6</sup>

Imagine what will the power of the Friend's arm do?

O dear one, thy Companion sayeth that one ought to be purified from the defilement of imitation, so that the Phoenix of the West may emerge from the Orient of the Beloved and wing its flight into the sanctified atmosphere of the Spirit, that is the city of the soul.

I swear by God! Even if the armies of death would ride at full gallop, they will not catch up with the dust lifted by this Horseman, and 'Isrá'il, the angel of death, will stand as a servant at His door, ready to serve Him, and will implore favors from whoever is bound towards His sanctuary, that haply he may be accepted in the court of glory, and may circle in adoration in those lofty precincts, which are loftier than a shining star, and he may perceive.

Praise be to God! The breeze of love hath wafted and hath perfumed the assembly of intimacy. The Spirit hath intoned a new melody. The lovers of the desert of the intellect have swooned away because of the call from the Unseen.

Such were the joy and the ecstasy and the delight and the happiness, that the breath of the Holy Spirit hath wafted from the moldering bones and Gabriel hath winged its flight on the wings of success. The Isráfíl of life wondereth with which melody he could wake up these companions and beseecheth that haply he may share their swoon.

I will cease (from speech): the Sweetheart has begun to speak,

be (all) ear — and God best knoweth the right course.<sup>7</sup>

In this day life hath come out of my body, It sayeth to me:

verily, unto Him shall we return.<sup>8</sup>

## NOTES:

1 Quoted in Ráfatí, Má'akhidh 3281-2. See also Majmu'ih 36:374-6.

2 Rúmí, Mystical Poems 1:46, no. 51, v.14.

3 Saná'í, Díván (Furúzánfar) 253.

4 Óáfiz, Díván 534, 308:9.

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5 Koran 28:88, Yusuf Ali.

6 Rúmí, Mathnaví 1:177.

7 Rúmí, Mathnaví 3:3844.

8 Rúmí, Mathnaví 3:3906, Koran 2:156.

Ancient Poems as Means of Revelation,

in an Early Tablet by Bahá'u'lláh

Julio Savi and Faezeh Mardani

## Ancient Poems as Means of Revelation

### in an Early Tablet by Bahá'u'lláh

Paper By Julio Savi and Faezeh Mardani

#### Abstract

This paper offers a provisional translation of a Persian Tablet revealed by Bahá'u'lláh in the Iraqi period [above]. The Tablet is rich in quotations from ancient Iranian poets. Our paper examines the importance of poetry in the history of the Faith and in its Writings.

It analyzes the quoted poems and the many poetical metaphors used in the Tablet. It ends with a short commentary on the contents of the Tablet: absolute detachment is a fundamental prerequisite for attaining “unto the divine Presence.”

The authors learned about this Tablet by Bahá'u'lláh through a publication by Vahid Rafati, *Má'akhidh* 3:281-2. This book is part of a set of four Persian volumes, commendably published by Rafati, in which he lists one by one all verses quoted by Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá in Their Writings and examines them in their contexts.

This Tablet, wholly written in Persian, is also published in *Majmú'iyi- Áthár-Qalam-i-A'lá* 36:374-6. According to Rafati it was revealed in Baghdad.

The Iranian Bahá'í scholar Mírzá Asadu'lláh Fádíl Mázandarání (ca. 1880–1957) states that it was revealed in Kurdistan (*Asráru'l-Áthár* 5:15). Its mystical subject is certainly typical of the Writings composed by Bahá'u'lláh in that period.

We have been especially impressed by this Tablet, not only because of its contents, that emphasizes absolute detachment as an indispensable prerequisite for the “attainment unto the Divine Presence” [KI 141, π149], but also because in the short space of two pages offers six quotations of verses by three different poets. And this has appeared to us as a sign of the importance that Bahá'u'lláh ascribed to poetry.

### Poetry in the history of the Faith and in the Writings

Nabíl narrates that the Báb told him about a verse by Óáfiz which says: “O zephyr, shouldst thou pass by the banks of the Araxes, implant a kiss on the earth of that valley and make fragrant thy breath. Hail, a thousand times hail, to thee, O abode of Salma! How dear is the voice of thy camel-drivers, how sweet the jingling of thy bells!” [see *Díván* 537, no. 310, vv.1-2]:

It is the immediate influence of the Holy Spirit that causes words such as these to stream from the tongue of poets, the significance of which they themselves are oftentimes unable to apprehend. The following verse is also divinely inspired:

‘Shíráz will be thrown into a tumult; a Youth of sugar-tongue will appear. I fear lest the breath of His mouth should agitate and upset Baghdád.’<sup>1</sup> The mystery enshrined within this verse is now concealed; it will be revealed in the year after Him.” The Báb subsequently quoted this well-known tradition: “Treasures lie hidden beneath the throne of God; the key to those treasures is the tongue of poets. [DB 258-9]

Bahá’u’lláh and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá were both refined poets. One of “the first fruits of ... [Bahá’u’lláh’s] Divine Pen” that arrived into our hands is a Persian poem entitled *Rash’-i-‘Amá*, that was “revealed in Tīhrán” [GPB 121]. And *Rash’-i-‘Amá* is just one among many Persian and Arabic poems revealed by Bahá’u’lláh. Bahá’u’lláh praised Mírzá Maqṣúd, one of the believers who lived in Damascus and Jerusalem, because of a number of poems he sent to him, and described those poems as being “like unto a mirror in which the evidences of the devotion and love ... [he cherished] for God and His chosen ones ... [were] reflected” [TB 175, *Law’-i-Maqṣúd*]. He wrote about poetry in general:

Blessed the poet who hath been filled with the spirit of the Day of God and from whose words hath wafted the sweet-smelling savour of the love of his Lord, the All-Merciful, over all created things. Such a one is, in truth, among the blissful. Woe betide the poet who hath drawn spears of sarcasm toward people and turned away from this Wondrous Remembrance. Keep in mind the grace of God in causing your tongues to unlock treasures and to reveal wisdom and mysteries. Let God be your fear and be not of the heedless. This is the day to celebrate His praise, the day in which the Creator of the heavens hath appeared with the kingdom of your Lord, the Almighty, the All-Praised. [provisional translation by Omid Ghaemmaghani]<sup>2</sup>

‘Abdu’l-Bahá Himself wrote various poems both in Persian and Turkish. He pointed out the special value of words in poetry when He said: “Poetry is much more effective and complete than prose. It stirs more deeply, for it is of a finer composition” [CC 2:78]. And reportedly said: “All Art is a gift of the Holy Spirit. When this light shines through the mind of a musician, it manifests itself in beautiful harmonies. Again, shining through the mind of a poet, it is seen in fine poetry and poetic prose. When the Light of the Sun of Truth inspires the mind of a painter, he produces marvelous pictures. These gifts are fulfilling their highest purpose, when showing forth the praise of God” [CH 167]. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá expressed His admiration for those among His fellows-prisoners who, like Nabíl-i-Zarandí, Darvish Şidq-‘Alí, Áqá Muhammad-Ibráhím, Ustad ‘Alí-Akbar and Jináb-i-Muníb [MF 32-6, 36-8, 81-2, 102-3, 145-7] had a fine poetical vein. He received poems from a number of Western Bahá’ís, which He often acknowledged with words of approval. To James Simpson, He wrote that his poems showed that he was “ablaze with the burning fire of the love of God,” that he had “secured a share and portion from the bounty of the Spirit and ... purposed to render a distinguished service to the divine Kingdom and to be the cause of the promulgation of the oneness of mankind” [Tablets Received 166]. To Marie Watson He wrote that her poems were “in the utmost sweetness and delicacy” [Tablets to Bahais 307]. To Louise R. Waite, who was both a poetess and a musician, and to whom He conferred the title of Shahnáz — which is the name of a musical mode — He wrote that her poems were “in the utmost eloquence and sweetness” [Recent Tablets 318], “wonderful .. fluent ... and ... most thrilling” [Tablets revealed 198], “sweet melodies in the Rose garden of the love of God” [Tablets to Bahais 276], “the cause of the gladness of their hearers” [Recent Tablets 318], and that their “vibration” would “forever, give pleasure to the ears of the children of the Kingdom” [Tablets to Bahais 276]. He advised her, to strive “in the composition of such pieces, so that at all times the river of pure poesy may flow from



... [her] tongue” [Tablets revealed 198]. To other poets, whose names have not been identified, He wrote: “I chanted thy poem. Its significance was beautiful, its composition eloquent and its words excellent. It was like the melody of the birds of holiness in the paradise of El-Abha ... Blessed art thou for uttering forth such an excellent poem and brilliant pearl” [Tablets 1: 57]. And also: “Verily, I read thy poem, which contained new significances and beautiful words. My heart was dilated by its eloquent sense” [Tablets 1:58]. And moreover: “Thy little book of poems, which were very sweet, was read. It was a source of joy, for it was a spiritual anthem and a melody of the love of God” [Tablets 1:59]. And finally: “Thy poetry was received. The context was elegant. The words were eloquent and the theme, the Manifest Light. Consequently, it was highly appreciated” [Tablets 3:546]. He openly encouraged some of those poets. He wrote to one of them: “Verily, these verses shall be sung in the divine meetings and in the assemblages of the spiritual in the course of ages and centuries to come, for thou hast uttered the praise of thy Lord and expressed significant meanings in eulogy of thy Lord, the Merciful, the Clement” [Tablets 1:58]. And to another one: “Endeavour your utmost to compose beautiful poems to be chanted with heavenly music; thus may their beauty affect the minds and impress the hearts of those who listen” [Tablets 1:59]. And finally: “finish the poem which thou art composing and send it here, that through reading it the breast of the believers may be refreshed and dilated with joy” [Tablets 3:669].

The earliest believers wrote poems and Shoghi Effendi describes “[t]he joyous feasts which these companions, despite their extremely modest earnings, continually offered in honor of their Beloved; the gatherings, lasting far into the night, in which they loudly celebrated, with prayers, poetry and song, the praises of the Báb, of Quddús and of Bahá’u’lláh” [GPB 135] in the late Baghdád period. No wonder then that both Bahá’u’lláh and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá drew from the poetic Arabic and Persian

legacy in the Writings which They revealed. Western readers are especially familiar with the Seven Valleys and the Four Valleys, as works comprising many poetical quotations.

### Poems quoted in this Tablet

In this Tablet Bahá'u'lláh quotes Khájih Shamsu'd-Dín Mu'ammad Óáfiz-i-Shírází (ca. 1318–1390), Mawláná Jalálu'd-Dín Rúmí (1207–1273) and Majdúd Saná'í (ca. 1045–ca. 1141). As to Óáfiz He quotes an hemistich from a ghazal, “a shorter, sonnet-like, lyrical form, observing mono-rhyme, the conventional meters and other prosodic rules” [Lewis, “Short Poem” 83]. As to Rúmí, He quotes a distich from a known ghazal at the beginning of the Tablet; and a distich of another ghazal, which has not yet been identified, in the context of the Tablet; He also quotes a distich from the Mathnaví in the context of, and two different distiches from the same Mathnaví, at the end of the Tablet. As to Saná'í, He quotes two distiches from a ghazal in the context of His Tablet.

The hemistich by Óáfiz says: “Óáfiz! thou thyself art thy own veil. From the midst, arise.” The whole ghazal has been translated into English by Henri Wilberforce-Clark (1840–1905), an officer in the British India corps, first translator of the Bústán of Sa'dí (1257) and of the Sikandar Námih by Nízamí (ca. 1202) [Óáfiz, Díván 534, no. 308]:

Ravished is my heart by one like a singing girl, clamour- exciter, False of promise, slayer by nature, and colour (of deceit)- mixer.

A ransom for the rent garment of those of moon-face, be A thousand garments of piety and the khirka of austerity!

In thanks for that, in beauty, thou tookest from the (glorious) angel the ball of superiority, The cup, demand; and on Adam's dust, a little water sprinkle.

Poor and shattered, to Thy court, I have come.

A little pity, For, save attachment to Thee, attachment, mine is none.

The slave, I am of that word that enkindleth the fire (of love)

Not (the slave of that word, that), in speech, dasheth cold water on the fierce fire (of love).

Come; for last night, to me, the invisible messenger spake, Saying: "In contentment's stage, be; from destiny, flee not."

Of thy own arm, be not proud; for in record it is:

"In (by, under) the order of the king-maker a thousand arrayings."

In my coffin, put up the cup; so that, on the morning of rising,

I may, with wine, take from my heart the terror of the day up-rising and springing.

Between the lover and the Beloved, veil is none:

Hafiz! thou thyself art thy own veil. From the midst, arise;

and attain unto the Beloved.

It is a beautiful love poem, in which the "one like a singing girl" is the Beloved, with capital B. The poet sings His beauty, His cruelty, and his own dependence on Him. He concludes with a distich of high mysticism, whose second hemistich is quoted by Bahá'u'lláh, in which he mentions that he should be annihilated, so that he may be united with the Beloved. It is the usual concept of faná, which Bahá'u'lláh later on described in such Writings as the Seven Valleys, in the Valley of True Poverty and Utter Nothingness [SV 36-9], and Gems of Divine Mysteries, in the City of Absolute Nothingness [GDM 70-1, π101-4].

As to Rúmí, Bahá'u'lláh gives preference to him over other poets in this Tablet, as in other Writings, as for example the Seven Valleys. And thus He quotes Him five times, comprising at the beginning and at the end of the Tablet. His love towards Rúmí is demonstrated by an episode of His life, recorded by 'Abdu'l-Bahá. The Master narrates in His description of the life of Ustád Ismá'íl, one of the companions who followed Bahá'u'lláh in the Holy Land, that:

At one time, Bahá'u'lláh had written down an ode of Rúmí's for him, and had told him to turn his face toward the Báb and sing the words, set to a melody. And so as he wandered through the long dark nights, Ustád would sing these lines:

I am lost, O Love, possessed and dazed,  
Love's fool am I, in all the earth.  
They call me first among the crazed,  
Though I once came first for wit and worth. O Love, who sellest me this wine,  
O Love, for whom I burn and bleed,  
Love, for whom I cry and pine –  
Thou the Piper, I the reed.  
If Thou wishest me to live,  
Through me blow Thy holy breath.  
The touch of Jesus Thou wilt give  
To me, who've lain an age in death.  
Thou, both End and Origin.  
Thou without and Thou within –  
From every eye Thou hidest well,  
And yet in every eye dost dwell. [MF 30-1]3

The verse by Rúmí quoted at the opening of the Tablet reads as follows:

Last night the shaikh went all about the city, lamp in hand crying, ‘I am weary of beast and devil, a man is my desire.’

This ghazal has been entirely translated into English by both Reynold A. Nicholson (1868–1945), an expert in Sufism and especially in the work of Rúmí [Selected Poems 65-9, no. 16], and Arthur John Arberry (1905–1969), the well-known British orientalist [Mystical Poems 1:46, no. 51, v. 14]. It comprises 24 verses, and thus like many of Rúmí’s ghazal is quite longer than usual ghazals, which according to the Italian Iranist Alessandro Bausani (1921–1988) comprise “generally not less than five and no more than twelve” [“Ghazal. ii. In Persian literature”]. The Bahá’í world knows its verse 20, “In one hand the wine-cup, in one hand the tresses of the Friend. Such a dance in the midst of the market-place is my desire!”, because Shoghi Effendi adds this note to the Dawn Breakers [DB 620n1]:

The extraordinary heroism with which Sulaymán Khán bore these frightful tortures is notorious and I have repeatedly heard it related how he ceased not during the long agony which he endured to testify his joy that he should be accounted worthy to suffer martyrdom for his Master's cause. He even sang and recited verses of poetry, amongst them the following: “I have returned! I have returned! I have come by the way of Shíráz! I have come with winsome airs and graces! Such is the lover’s madness!” “Why do you not dance,” asked the executioners mockingly, “since you find death so pleasant?” “Dance!” cried Sulaymán Khán. “In one hand the wine-cup, in one hand the tresses of the Friend. Such a dance in the midst of the market-place is my desire!” [Browne, “A Traveller’s Narrative,” Note T, pp. 333-4]

Its central theme is the quest after the Perfect Man. But it also can be interpreted as the quest after a human being that has made great progress on the path of spiritual

quest, among many other spiritual immature human beings. This is the whole poem in Arberry's translation:

Show your face, for the orchard and rosegarden are my desire; open your lips, for abundant sugar is my desire.

Sun of beauty, come forth one moment out of the cloud, for that glittering, glowing countenance is my desire.

Out of your air I heard the sound of the falcon-drum; I returned, for the sultan's forearm is my desire.

You said capriciously, "Trouble me no more; be gone!" That saying of yours, "Trouble me no more," is my desire,

And your repulse, "Be gone, the king is not at home," and those mighty airs and brusqueness of the doorkeeper, are my desire.

In the hand of every one who exists there are filings of beauty; that quarry of elegance and that mine are my desire.

This bread and water of heaven's wheel are like a treacherous torrent; I am a fish, a leviathan, Oman is my desire.

Like Jacob I am crying alas, alas; the fair visage of Joseph of Canaan is my desire.

By Allah, without you the city is a prison for me; I wander abroad, mountain and desert are my desire.

My heart is weary of these weak-spirited fellow-travellers; the Lion of God and Rustam-i Dastán are my desire.

My soul is sick of Pharaoh and his tyranny; that light of the countenance of Moses son of 'Imrán is my desire.

I am aweary of these tearful people so full of complaining; that ranting and roaring of the drunkards is my desire.

I am more eloquent than the nightingale, but because of vulgar envy a seal is on my tongue, and lamentation is my desire.

Last night the shaikh went all about the city, lamp in hand, crying, “I am weary of beast and devil, a man is my desire.”

They said, “He is not to be found, we too have searched.”

He answered, “He who is not to be found is my desire.”

Though I am penniless, I will not accept a small carnelian, for that rare, precious carnelian is my desire.

Hidden from every eye, and all things seen are from Him — that hidden One manifest in works is my desire.

My state has gone beyond every desire and yearning; from mine and place to the elements is my desire.

My ear heard the tale of faith and became drunk; where is the portion of sight? The form of faith is my desire.

In one hand the winecup, in the other the Beloved’s curl — to dance so in the midst of the arena is my desire.

That rebeck says, “I am dead of expectation; the hand and bosom and plectrum of ‘Uthmán are my desire.”

I am at once Love’s rebeck, and Love is my rebeck-player; those favours of the plucking of the All-merciful are my desire.

Cunning minstrel, number the rest of this ode after this fashion, for it is after this fashion I desire.

Show your face from the east, Sun of the Pride of Tabriz; I am the hoopoe, the presence of Solomon is my desire.

The first distich from Rúmí's Mathnaví quoted by Bahá'u'lláh in our Tablet is as follows:

When seeds are hidden in the earth, their inward secret becomes the verdure of the garden. [Mathnaví 1:177]

This distich is part of a story that narrates of a great king who saw a slave girl, fell in love with her, and bought her, but the girl became sick and none of the king's physicians could heal her. Finally, one day the king found a doctor, who was well known for his special skill. He brought him to his slave and the physician asked to be left alone with her. In his interview with the slave he discovered that the cause of her sickness was that she was in love with a goldsmith from Samarkand. The doctor promised the girl that he would help her, but asked her not to reveal her secret to anyone else. And Rúmí comments upon this advice as follows:

The Prophet said that any one who hides his inmost thought will soon attain to the object of his desire.

When seeds are hidden in the earth, their inward secret becomes the verdure of the garden.

If gold and silver were not hidden, how would they get nourishment (grow and ripen) in the mine? [ibid. 1:176-8]

Two verses from this long story are quoted in the Four Valleys:

Let us write, some other way,

Love's secrets — better so. [Mathnaví 1:136, SV 64]

Leave blood and noise and all of these,



And say no more of Shams-i-Tabriz. [Mathnaví 1:142, SV 65]

The two distiches quoted at the end of the Tablet are as follows:

I will cease (from speech): the Sweetheart has begun to  
speak, be (all) ear — and God best knoweth the right course. [Rúmi, Mathnaví  
3:3844]

In this day life hath come out of my body, It sayeth to me:  
verily, unto Him shall we return. [see Rúmi, Mathnaví 3:3906, Koran 2:156]

The first distich repeats a typical topos of Persian lyrical poetry: at the end of a  
discourse the poet states that he has concluded his argument. In this case, he explains  
that whenever the Beloved speaks, any other voice becomes superfluous. The second  
one ascribes silence to the attainment unto annihilation.

Finally, Bahá'u'lláh quotes two distiches by Saná'í. The first one also is quoted in  
the Four Valleys:

Never the covetous heart shall come to the stealer of hearts, Never the shrouded soul  
unite with beauty's rose. [SV 60]

[which could also be translated: With that rose bud no one sleeps with a shirt.]

One cannot advance in the path of oneness with two qiblas,  
Either one will please the Beloved, or will consent to one's passions.

These verses are part of a ghazal which says:

Don the garb of faith, so that you may last forever; if you won't die in this garb, you will become rotten with your shroud.

Faith swallows this and the Other world in a breath, as soon as the leviathan of its pain opens its mouth.

One cannot advance in the path of oneness with two qiblas. Either one will please the Beloved or will consent to one's passions.

Never the covetous heart shall come to the stealer of hearts, Never the shrouded soul unite with beauty's rose. [SV 60]

Do not lift the veil of continence and shame from the face of belief, that you may not be bewitched by the evil eye of the unworthy.

Walk by the Qur'án, 'cause whoever takes refuge in the Qur'án escapes the torments of the Other world and the temptations of this one.

[Saná'í, Díván [Furúzánfar] 253, translated from the

Persian by the authors, except the couplet marked SV 60, translated by Gail; see Radmihr, Samavát 558].

These two distiches also suggest detachment. It is symbolized in the first one by the shirt, which the lower should take off, if he wants to be really close to the Beloved; in the second one by the two qiblihs, one of which — that of passion — should be abandoned, while preserving only that of the Beloved.

## Images used in the Tablet

This Tablet is written in the imaginative language typical of Persian mystics, as most of Bahá'u'lláh's Writings revealed in the Iraqi period. Some of the images may

prove less comprehensible for Westerners and thus some of them will be shortly explained.

## The Tablet of the Heart

At the beginning of this Tablet Bahá'u'lláh writes: “May, God willing, thine heart’s purpose be attained and thy soul’s wish be fulfilled, although it is preferred that we purify this luminous tablet (law’-i-núr), which is among the pages of illuminated breasts (ḡafa’át-i-af’adiy-i-munírih), from the allusions of both...” This image is often used by the Sufis to describe the human heart, as the essence of the soul. These are three examples, one from Rúmí and two from Óáfiz, respectively:

Recite entirely this ode from the tablet of the heart; regard not the tongue, for lips and tongue do not remain. [Rúmí, Mystical Poems 1:83, no. 96, v.8]

From the tablet of my heart and soul, Thy image, ever goeth not:

From my recollection, that proudly moving cypress ever goeth not.

[Óáfiz, Díván 462, no. 258, v.1]

On my heart’s tablet is naught save the (straight) alif of the

Friend’s stature:

What may I do? Me, recollection of other letter the teacher (the murshid) gave not.

[Óáfiz, Díván 703, no. 416, v.8]

Bahá'u'lláh Himself sometimes uses this image in other Writings. For example He writes: “It behoveth every man to blot out the trace of every idle word from the tablet of his heart, and to gaze, with an open and unbiased mind, on the signs of His Revelation, the proofs of His Mission, and the tokens of His glory” [GWB 11, sec.7, Súriy-i- Qamíß]. He also writes: “... O my brother, when a true seeker determineth to take the step of search in the path leading to the knowledge of the Ancient of Days, he must ... wash away from the tablet of his heart every trace of pride and vainglory” [KI 192-3, π213]. This image reminds us of the Aristotelian “tabula rasa” the unscribed tablet [see Aristotle, De Anima [On the soul], 3:4, 430-31). The soul seems described as a tablet upon which the beautiful features of the Face of the Lord can be drawn through the combined efforts of pure love and a purified intellect.

### Dil-bar, the heart-ravisher

The image of the heart-ravisher or stealer of hearts (dil-bar), “Heart-ravishing; a lovely woman, a sweetheart” [Steingass 531], is very common in Persian mystical poetry. Javad Nurbakhsh (1926-2008), a Sufi master who published a 16 volume encyclopedia entitled Sufi Symbolism, explains that this locution, which he translates “heart- ravisher,” “is said to represent the attribute of contraction engendered in the heart through ‘anguish’ (anduh) and tribulation (me`nat)” [2:40]. Óáfiz uses this image in the following distich:

If of the Sulṭán, I formed expectation, a fault it was:

If of the Heart-Ravisher (dil-bar), I sought fidelity, tyranny he made. [Díván 242, no. 116, v.6; Díván 136, “Ghazalyát,” no. 130, v.5]

This image also is included in the verse of Saná’í that Bahá’u’lláh quotes in this Tablet:

Never the covetous heart shall come to the stealer of hearts (dil-bar),  
Never the shrouded soul unite with beauty’s rose.

[SV 60]

The stealer of hearts describes the cruelty of the Beloved, Who denies Himself to the absolute love of the lover, abandoning him to his pains in the desert of loneliness and remoteness. It is an allusion to God’s unknowability. In the Bahá’í Writings this topos is less important, because Bahá’u’lláh has come to bring a glad tidings:

Behold how the manifold grace of God, which is being showered from the clouds of Divine glory, hath, in this day, encompassed the world. For whereas in days past every lover besought and searched after his Beloved, it is the Beloved Himself Who now is calling His lovers and is inviting them to attain His presence. Take heed lest ye forfeit so precious a favor; beware lest ye belittle so remarkable a token of His grace. [GWB 319, sec. CLI, Law’-i- ‘Áshiq va Ma‘shúq] The day of sadness for lovers are ended, a new age of joy has begun.

## The Beauty's rose

This image also belongs to Saná'í's verses quoted by Bahá'u'lláh. In the Sufi world the rose (gul) “symbolizes the result of the knowledge that appears in the heart of the gnostic” (Nurbakhsh 4:39). It may also be interpreted as “the supreme manifestation of Divine beauty or the symbol of the beloved cheek” [Schimmel, *Deciphering* 26]. Annemarie Schimmel (1922–2003) explains: “in the Islamic tradition, as elsewhere, the rose has pride of place. The Prophet kissed the rose and placed it on his eyes, for ‘the red rose is part of God’s glory, kibriya’.

On the other hand, legend claims that the rose grew out of the drops of perspiration which fell from the Prophet’s body during his nightly journey — therefore it carries his sweet fragrance” [*Deciphering* 20].

In the Bahá'í collective imagination the rose has come to be especially associated with the story of Bahá'u'lláh's Declaration in the Garden of Riḏván in Baghdad, as described by Nabíl. A famous passage by Bahá'u'lláh turns around the images of the rose-garden and the flower par excellence, the rose: “In the Rose Garden of changeless splendor a Flower hath begun to bloom, compared to which every other flower is but a thorn, and before the brightness of Whose glory the very essence of beauty must pale and wither” [GWB 320-1, sec. 151, π3, *Law'-'i-'Áshiq va Ma'shúq*].

## Two qiblas

The above mentioned quotation by Saná'í goes on saying: “One cannot advance in the path of oneness with two qiblas.” The Qiblih is “The ‘Point of Adoration,’ that is, the point to which the worshipper should turn when offering obligatory prayer, is called the Qiblih” [“Preface and Notes” 168n7] and Bahá'u'lláh has decreed: “The Qiblih is indeed He Whom God will make manifest; whenever He moveth, it moveth, until He shall come to rest” [KA 68, π137]. The poetical image is very clear: the qiblih “symbolizes the focus of the attention of the heart” [Nurbakhsh 3:101] and the heart cannot at the same time turn towards two goals. Either he loves the Beloved or he walks away from Him. The Gospel also states: “No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon” [Luke 16:13, KJB].

## The veils

Bahá'u'lláh quotes an hemistich by Óáfiz which says: “Óáfiz! thou thyself art thy own veil. From the midst, arise.” The Sufis think that while living on this earthly world each person is separated from the Reality hidden behind everything by many obstacles, which they call “veils:” the veil of the flesh, the veil of passion, the veil of ignorance, the veil of heedlessness, the veil of human learning, the veil of attachment to the glories of the world, the veil of self, etcetera. This image often recurs in the Bahá'í Writings. Bahá'u'lláh mentions the “veils of glory” [KI 164,

π175], the “veils of learning” [KI 214, π237], the “veil of self” [GWB 316, sec. 147, Law’-i-Salmán] “the veils of heedlessness” [GWB 322, sec. 152, Law’-i-A`mad bi Fársí], the veils of desire [SLH 31, sec. 1, π60. Súriy-i-Haykal], “veils of light” [TB 143, Law’-i- Óikmat), etcetera. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá classifies the veils as follows:

Know thou, verily, there are many veils in which the Truth is enveloped: gloomy veils; then delicate and transparent veils; then the envelopment of Light, the sight of which dazzles the eyes, as doth the sun which is enveloped only in its own light and, as we look at it, the sight is blinded and eyes are dazzled. [TAB1 71-2]

## Joseph and Jacob

Bahá’u’lláh writes: “Likewise, should the Jacob of love have cleansed the essence of his heart and soul from the foulness of water and clay, undoubtedly he would have not necessitated the Egyptian shirt, or an announcer bringing him the glad tiding, or an ambassador speaking to him.” Joseph, who is presented in the Qur’án not only as a judicious, wise and pious man but also as a youth of such extraordinary beauty as to appear as “a noble angel” [12:31], is considered to be the symbol of absolute Beauty. Jacob is viewed as the human soul in search of that Beauty and turned blind because of the many tears it has shed in its remoteness from its Beloved.



## The Egyptian shirt

This allusion to the Egyptian shirt may also be found in the Kitáb- i-Aqdas: “Say: From My laws the sweet-smelling savour of My garment can be smelled, and by their aid the standards of Victory will be planted upon the highest peaks” [KA 20, π4]. This verse of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas is commented as follows:

This is an allusion to the story of Joseph in the Qur’án and the Old Testament, in which Joseph’s garment, brought by his brothers to Jacob, their father, enabled Jacob to identify his beloved long-lost son. The metaphor of the fragrant “garment” is frequently used in the Bahá’í Writings to refer to the recognition of the Manifestation of God and His Revelation. [“Preface and Notes” 165 n1]

## The Egypt of fidelity

Bahá’u’lláh mentions “the Egypt of fidelity (Mißr-i-vafá).” This image also belongs to the overall image of the story of Joseph. Interestingly, when Sufi poets refer to the story of Moses, Egypt, the reign of Pharaoh, the great oppressor of Moses and the Jews, mostly denotes materialism, the prison of the self and passions. This demonstrates the great fluidity of mystic symbolism, which defies the strict rules of the human mind.

## The north of the Spirit (shimál-i-rú')

Bahá'u'lláh writes: “On the contrary, he would have perceived the pure and sanctified breezes from the north (shimál) of the Spirit and he would have dwelt in perfect union with the Beloved.” The word shimál means both north and left. But when it means “left” it has a negative connotation, as in Koran 56:9, where it denotes the damned souls, as opposed to the right denoting the blessed ones. In this case the locution shimál-i-rú' is mentioned, that could be rendered as “the north of the Spirit.” The French Iranist Henry Corbin (1903-1978) writes about shimál as north what follows:

Now one of the leitmotiv of Iranian Sufi literature is the “Quest for the Orient,” but this is a Quest for an Orient which, as we are forewarned (if we do not already realize), is not — and cannot be — situated on our geographical maps. This Orient is not comprised in any of the seven climes (keshvar); it is in fact the eighth clime. And the direction in which we must seek this “eighth clime” is not on the horizontal but on the vertical. This suprasensory, mystical Orient, the place of the Origin and of the Return, object of the eternal Quest, is at the heavenly pole; it is the Pole, at the extreme north, so far off that it is the threshold of the dimension “beyond.” That is why it is only revealed to a definite mode of presence in the world, and can be revealed only through this mode of presence. There are other modes to which it will never be revealed. It is precisely this mode of presence that characterizes the mode of being of the Sufi, but also, through his person, the mode of being of the entire spiritual family to which Sufism — and especially Iranian Sufism — belongs. The Orient sought by the mystic, the Orient that cannot be located on our maps, is in the direction of the north, beyond the north. Only an ascensional progress can lead toward this cosmic north chosen as a point of orientation. [Man of Light 2]

Corbin also points out that the north is “on the one hand... the situs of the angel Sraoshah (who thus would correspond to the angel Seraphiel); on the other hand this is the qualification given in Sufism to the great shaykh of a period (even the shaykh of a Sufi community, a taríqat, insofar as the latter is taken as the homologue of a microcosm) and for this reason is considered in Shí’ite Sufism as representing the hidden Imám” (ibid. 56). Óáfiz uses this metaphor in the two following verses:

O (cool) breeze of the north! the breeze of good news, thou art,

That, us, at union’s time, reacheth. [Díván 621, no. 360, v.1]

The breeze of love’s perfume, I perceived; and, expectant of the flashing of the lightning of union, became:

O (cool) breeze of the north! come: for, for the perfume of thy body, I die! [Díván 626, no.364, v.1]

### The joy of the Divine Presence (Shawq-i-laqá)

Bahá’u’lláh writes: “[Likewise, should the Jacob of love have cleansed the essence of his heart and soul from the foulness of water and clay...] he would have tasted the joy of the Divine Presence and the flavor of eternity.” Bahá’u’lláh Himself explains the spiritual meaning of the concept of the Divine Presence in the Kitáb-i-<sup>^</sup>qán: “by ‘attainment unto the divine Presence’ is meant attainment unto the presence of His Beauty in the person of His Manifestation” [KI 170, π182].

## The eternal life

Bahá'u'lláh writes: “[Likewise, should the Jacob of love have cleansed the essence of his heart and soul from the foulness of water and clay...] he would have obtained the eternal life...” This concept also is explained in the Kitáb-i-<sup>^</sup>qán: “whosoever, and in whatever Dispensation, hath recognized and attained unto the presence of these glorious, these resplendent and most excellent Luminaries, hath verily attained unto the ‘Presence of God’ Himself, and entered the city of eternal and immortal life” [KI 142, π151].

## Resurrection

Bahá'u'lláh writes: “[Likewise, should the Jacob of love have cleansed the essence of his heart and soul from the foulness of water and clay...] he would have entered into the immortal Paradise after the spiritual resurrection.” Resurrection can be seen in two different perspectives, personal and eschatological. As to the personal perspective, the key to read this metaphor is in the Kitáb-i-<sup>^</sup>qán:

Such things have come to pass in the days of every Manifestation of God. Even as Jesus said: “Ye must be born again” [1 John 3:7]. Again He saith: “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” [2 John 3:5-6]. The purport of these words is that whosoever in every dispensation is born of the Spirit and is quickened by the breath of the Manifestation of Holiness, he verily is

of those that have attained unto “life” and “resurrection” and have entered into the “paradise” of the love of God. And whosoever is not of them, is condemned to “death” and “deprivation,” to the “fire” of unbelief, and to the “wrath” of God. In all the scriptures, the books and chronicles, the sentence of death, of fire, of blindness, of want of understanding and hearing, hath been pronounced against those whose lips have tasted not the ethereal cup of true knowledge, and whose hearts have been deprived of the grace of the holy Spirit in their day. Even as it hath been previously recorded: “Hearts have they with which they understand not.” [Koran 7:178]. [KI 118-9, π125]

In this case it seems that resurrection is intended in its personal perspective.

“Everything will perish except His own Face

(kullu shay‘in hálíka illa vajhahu)”

[28:88, Yusuf Ali]

Yusuf Ali comments upon this verse as follows: “This sums up the lesson of the whole Surah. The only Eternal Reality is Allah. His ‘Face’ or Self, Personality or Being is what we should seek, knowing that it is the only enduring thing of which we can have any conception. The whole phenomenal world is subject to flux and change and will pass away, but He will endure forever” [The Holy Quran 1027 n3421]. This Koranic verse appears in a verse by Rúmí in the following context:

I died to the inorganic state and became endowed with growth, and (then) I died to (vegetable) growth and attained to the animal.

I died from animality and became Adam (man): why, then, should I fear? When have I become less by dying?

At the next remove I shall die to man, that I may soar and lift up my head amongst the angels;

And I must escape even from (the state of) the angel:  
everything is perishing except His Face.

Once more I shall be sacrificed and die to the angel: I shall become that which enters not into the imagination.

Then I shall become non-existence: non-existence saith to me, (in tones loud) as an organ, Verily, unto Him shall we return.

Know death to be (the thing signified by) what the (Mohammedan) community are agreed upon, namely, that the Water of Life is hidden in the (Land of) Darkness.

Grow from this river-bank, like the water-lily, greedy and craving for death as the sufferer from dropsy.

The water is death to him, and (yet) he is seeking the water and drinking it — and God best knoweth the right course. [Mathnaví 3:3901-9]

Human beings are here described in their ascending progress from the mineral world to the station of the angels, and then to their annihilation in their return to God.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá wrote a Tablet in which He explained several meanings of the word “face (vajh)”:

The word “face” (vajh) hath many meanings, among which there is submissiveness to the Will of God (riḏá), as God, exalted be He, says: “Seeking His Face” [Koran

6:52], and also: “We feed you for the sake of God alone” [Koran 76:9], and moreover His good-pleasure (riḏá). And the face also means the Essence (dhát). God, exalted be He, says: “Everything ... will perish except His own Face” [Koran 28:88]. And the face (vajh) also means the unveiling (jilwat). God, exalted be He, says: “whithersoever ye turn, there is the Presence of God” [Koran 2:115]. And the face (vajh) hath various interpretations and allusions, beside what hath been said. However, due to lack of time, it hath been chosen not to expatiate the subject. On the ground of all this, submission (taslím) of the face is one thing of the special virtues of the righteous and of the greatest gifts of the free. Whosoever is so aided is graciously favored with absolute faith in the highest level of certitude and assurance. [Makátíb 1:396, provisional translation by the authors]

## Uways and the camel

Bahá'u'lláh writes:

One ought to perceive the perfume of the Beloved from Uways' camel hair.

As the Mathnaví's author says:

The perfume of the Beloved exaleth from the camel hair.

This camel is of the herd of that pearl who is Lord Uways.

Uwaysu'l-Qaraní is “a legendary or semi-legendary younger contemporary of Mu'ammad said to have been killed at the battle of Şiffín in 37/657, fighting on the side of 'Alí ... [The legend says that] Mu'ammad and Uways corresponded by telepathy” [Bosworth, ”Uways al-Ḳaraní”]. The morning breeze, according to

the Tradition, brought to Muhammad the scent of the holiness of Uways al-Qarani who lived in Yemen.

According to Nurbakhsh, the camel “is said to represent humanity (ensániyat)” [4:153].

### Breezes, scents and the Yemen

Bahá'u'lláh writes: “However, the musky fragrance of the Beloved and the breezes of the Merciful have ceased to waft from the Yemen of the Friend.” In the Sufi language breezes and winds have positive connotations. The breeze, “nasím,” is often described as a messenger of love, because at dawn it wafts the scent of the rose, the traditional metaphor of the Beloved, or the musk scent of the Friend. Breezes and winds are often associated with the idea of scent, a concept which has many connotations in the Sufi world. Among them, as in the Western world, a spiritual person may be described as a person in the odor of sanctity. In this case the Tablet alludes to the above mentioned legend of Uways. Yemen, the southern region of the Arabic Peninsula, is here mentioned because it was the place where Uways lived.



## The pearl and the shell

Bahá'u'lláh writes: “Yeah, the casket of the white pearl (lú-lú-i- bayḏá) is concealed within the sea shell (ḡadaf), inasmuch as the untouched pearl, which bestows perfect power upon the inner powers of the heart and adds the light of vision to intelligence, is more acceptable and agreeable.” According to Nurbakhsh the symbol of the pearl refers to the perfect Man. Ebn ‘Arabi refers to it as the “white pearl” [4:240]. As to the shell, according to Nurbakhsh “it is said to symbolize the form of the multiplicity of the existential names and Attribute” [4:152]. As to the untouched pearls, they are reminiscent of the Koranic image of the Óurís, that are “large-eyed ones with modest refraining glances, fair like the sheltered egg” [37:48-9, Rodwell], girls “with large dark eyes” [44:54, Rodwell], beautiful “like jacynts and pearls” [55:58, Rodwell], “whom no man nor spirit hath touched before” [55:56, Rodwell], given as brides to the believers in the Heaven’s gardens of delight. Other meanings of this metaphor are explained in the following words by Bahá'u'lláh: “How many the húrís of inner meaning that are as yet concealed within the chambers of divine wisdom! None hath yet approached them; — húrís, ‘whom no man nor spirit hath touched before’” [KI 70-1, π78].

## The arm of the Beloved

In the language of the Sufis the arm, bázú, “represents the Divine Will (masheyat)” [Nurbakhsh 1:14]. The image is commonly used in Persian mystical poems to describe strength and power. For example Óáfiz writes:

O sky! Away from the purpose of king Manþúr,<sup>4</sup> thy face turn not  
The keenness of his sword, behold: the power of his arm, behold. [Díván 761, no.  
456, v.8]

Bahá'u'lláh uses this image in this Tablet when He says:

“Imagine what will the power of the Friend’s arm do?”

### The Phoenix of the West and the city of the soul

Bahá'u'lláh writes:

“O dear one, thy Companion sayeth that one ought to be purified from the defilement of imitation, so that the Phoenix of the West may emerge from the Orient of the Beloved and wing its flight into the sanctified atmosphere of the Spirit, that is the city of the soul.”

According to Nurbakhsh the Phoenix of the West “is said to represent the Perfect Man, the wayfarer who is in Union, and one who has gnosis of the Divine Essence” [4:148]. In this case we also have the symbolism of the two opposed directions of the West and the East. The West denotes occultation and the East theophany.

As to “the city of the soul (madíniy-i-ján),” this locution is reminiscent of a sentence in the Seven Valleys, which says:

“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” [SV 41].

## The desert of the intellect and the “swoon”

Bahá'u'lláh writes: “The lovers of the desert of the intellect have swooned away because of the call from the Unseen.” Nurbakhsh gives us an interesting background to understand the symbol of the desert:

We know that to reach Mecca, one must pass through cities and cross the desert. Sháh Ne‘matollah,<sup>5</sup> in the following passage, has used the images of “city” and “desert” to symbolize the nafs and its inclinations along the way of the “Pilgrimage” to Reality:

“Love of women, property, status, food and drink, or whatever tempts the nafs, stands like cities along the way of the ‘Pilgrimage’ to Reality. Once these are passed, the blood-thirsty desert lies ahead and must be traversed for the sake of austerity, the caravan chief being the Prophet. If one is remiss in following him, one falls behind, and is destroyed by the nafs, which is like a desert thief.” [3:112]

As to the “swoon,” the Persian locution “madhúsh shudand” corresponds with the Arabic word “βá’íqan.” Therefore this sentence seems to be a reference to the story of Moses, and specifically to Moses’s swoon when God showed Himself to Him on Mount Sinai described in the Koran as follows: “And when God manifested Himself to the mountain he turned it to dust! and Moses fell in a swoon (βá’íqan)” [Koran 7:139]. It is the annihilation of the human qualities of the seeker in front of the Manifestation of God. Similar ideas are explained by Bahá'u'lláh in the Four Valleys when He quotes this verse by Saná’í:

Wouldst thou that the mind should not entrap thee? Teach it the science of the love of God! [SV 52]

In other words, the mind can be deceitful. Only a mind that has been educated and thus transformed through its perusal and internalization of Scripture is a reliable source of knowledge.

### The moldering bones (‘azm-i-ramím)

Bahá’u’lláh writes. “Such were the joy and the ecstasy and the delight and the happiness, that the breath of the Holy Spirit hath wafted from the moldering bones....” This image comes from the Koran, which says. “Who ... shall give life to bones when they are rotten?” [36:78, Rodwell]. Bahá’u’lláh draws from this verse an attribute of God the “Fashioner of mouldering bones” [SLH 53, sec. 1, π118, Súriy-i-Haykal], and also “God, Who fashioneth the crumbling and rotten bones” [GWB 243, sec. 115, Law’-i-Dhabíh].

### ‘Izrá’íl, Gabriel (Rú’u’l-Amín), and Isráfíl

Interestingly in the last part of the Tablet three angels are directly or indirectly mentioned: ‘Izrá’íl, the angel of death, Gabriel, the angel of revelation, and Isráfíl, the angel of life.

As to ‘Izrá’íl, of the one who is “purified from the defilement of imitation” Bahá’u’lláh says: “‘Izrá’íl, the angel of death, will stand as a servant at His door, ready to serve Him.” The Koran says: “Say: The angel of death, who is charged with you, shall cause you to die; then shall he be returned to your Lord” (32:11). The name of this angel is, according to tradition, ‘Izrá’íl or Azrá’íl (the servant of the Highest), in English Azrael. He may be compared to Ezrael, the angel of divine wrath of the Christian apocrypha. Rúmí defines him as “tyrannous and enraged” [Mathnaví 5:1571]. The tradition describes Izrá’íl as an enormous angel who appears in a different shape to believers and unbelievers. He appears to a dying believer as a pleasant and reassuring vision, but to an infidel as the most terrifying figure.

As to Gabriel, Bahá’u’lláh writes. “Such were the joy and the ecstasy and the delight and the happiness, that the breath of the Holy Spirit hath wafted from the moldering bones and the Spirit of Faith hath winged its flight on the wings of success.” Shoghi Effendi translates the locution Rú’u’l-Amín [literally, the Trusted Spirit] “Gabriel” [GWB 103, sec. 50], and “Spirit of God” [KI 114, π121]. Rúmí Writes: “Since the Name of Ahmad became (to the Christians) an impregnable fortress, what then must be the Essence of that trusted Spirit?” [1:738]. According to Nurbakhsh “The trusted Spirit normally refers to Gabriel, although occasionally in Rumi’s Mathnaví it may represent the Mo’ammadan Spirit” [9:100].

As to Isráfíl, Bahá’u’lláh writes: “The Isráfíl of life wondereth with which melody he could wake up these companions and beseecheth that haply he may share their swoon (bí-húshí).” Israfíl, whose etymology could be the same as Seraphim, corresponds to the English Seraphiel. In the Muslim tradition he is the angel who in the Day of Judgement will awake the dead “calling” them with his trumpet. The Qur’án [54:6-8] calls him “the summoner (dá’í)”. Rúmí describes him as the “life of

the body,” whereas he describes Gabriel as the “life of the inspired spirit” [Mathnaví 5:1566, 1565]. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá has reportedly said that the two angels ‘Izrá’íl and Isráfíl are symbols:

As by the will of God the power of composition exists, so, also by the will of God the power of decomposition exists.

These two are expressed in scripture by “Isráfíl” the angel who gives life to men, and the Angel of Death who takes it away. The first is the power of composition or attraction, the other the power of decomposition. They are not angels. [qtd. in Goodall and Goodall Cooper 43-4]

and God best knoweth the right course

(w’alláhua‘lambi’ß-ßawáb)

This statement is frequently used by Rúmí in his Mathnaví. It comes from a Koranic verse which says: “The Day that the Spirit and the angels will stand forth in ranks, none shall speak except any who is permitted by (Allah) Most Gracious, and he will say what is right (aß- ßawában)” [78:38, Yusuf Ali].

verily, unto Him shall we return [Rúmí, Mathnaví 3:3906, Koran 2:156]

This Koranic verse is often used in the Bahá’í Writings, as for example the Seven Valleys, The Four Valleys, and Javáhiru’l-Asrár. It is an allusion to the so called

“second birth,” that is, that process whereby the human soul gradually detaches itself from the lower world, and actualizes its God-given spiritual attributes.

## The contents of the Tablet

It is not certainly easy to summarize the contents of a Tablet revealed by Bahá'u'lláh. He quotes an Islamic tradition which says: “We speak one word, and by it we intend one and seventy meanings; each one of these meanings we can explain” [KI 255, π283]. And thus we will be satisfied with a very short review of this inspiring Text.

Bahá'u'lláh wishes that the most cherished desires of His addressee may be fulfilled. However, He suggests that the highest aspiration of a human heart, that is, the attainment unto His Holy Presence, will be fulfilled, only if the soul will forget anything else but its Lord. This overall concept is conveyed, in a language enriched by poetical images and quotations, through six different explanations.

First. The first quotation — ”Last night the shaikh went all about the city, lamp in hand crying, ‘I am weary of beast and devil, a man is my desire’” [Rúmi, Mystical Poems 1:46, no. 51, v.14] — is in itself, as it often is the case with mystic writings, an epitome of the whole Tablet. The shaykh is tired to meet with people who may be compared to “beast and devil,” he wants to finally find a real human being. And Bahá'u'lláh wrote later in a Tablet: “Lofty is the station of man, were he to hold fast to righteousness and truth and to remain firm and steadfast in the Cause. In the eyes of the All-Merciful a true man appeareth even as a firmament; its sun and moon are his sight and hearing, and his shining and resplendent character its stars. His is the

loftiest station, and his influence educateth the world of being” [TB 219, Kitáb-i-Ahd]. Therefore the whole Tablet is about the quest for a man who has attained unto his divinely appointed lofty station.

Second. The second quotation emphasizes the importance of detachment in two different perspectives:

Never the covetous heart shall come to the stealer of hearts, Never the shrouded soul unite with beauty’s rose [SV 60].

With that rose bud no one sleeps with a shirt.

One cannot advance in the path of oneness with two qiblas,

Either one will please the Beloved, or will consent to one’s passions. [Saná’í, Díván [Furúzánfar] 253]

The first verse recommends detachment through the language of erotic-mystical poetry: the closest intimacy with the Beloved requires that the lover takes off even his shirt. Soon after the Tablet suggests that the most important detachment is that from oneself, here described as a veil: “Óáfiz! thou thyself art thy own veil. From the midst, arise” [Óáfiz, Díván 534, 308:9]. The second verse uses the language of the ascetic. The ascetic cannot have two qiblihs. Nurbakhsh explains that the qiblih “symbolizes the focus of attention of the heart” [3:101]. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá said on the subject of the attachment of the heart:

God has given man a heart and the heart must have some attachment. We have proved that nothing is completely worthy of our heart’s devotion save reality, for all else is destined to perish. Therefore the heart is never at rest and never finds real joy and happiness until it attaches itself to the eternal. How foolish the bird that builds



its nest in a tree that may perish when it could build its nest in an ever-verdant garden of paradise.

Man must attach himself to an infinite reality, so that his glory, his joy, and his progress may be infinite. Only the spirit is real; everything else is as shadow. [ADP 133]

Third. Later on the Tablet explains that if Jacob would have been wholly purified from his attachment to the world, he would have found Joseph even without the assistance of his shirt. It is a reference to the story of Joseph, that has been explained above [Koran 12:93-96].

Fourth. The Tablet explains that only through detachment the meaning of the Koranic verse 28:88, “Everything will perish except His own Face,” will become apparent. In other words, only a detached person is able to look at the world “with the eye of God” [SV 17] and thus to behold “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” [ibid.].

Fifth. A detached person recognizes the Perfect Man even in the smell of the hair of the camel of Uwaysu'l-Qaraní. The Uways of the legend worked as the guardian of the camels of his tribe and wore a rough cloak made of camel hair [see Attár, Tadhkiratu'l-Awlya, Dhikr 2]. He was an ascetic and lived in loneliness, detached from all the things of the world. He was so poor and destitute, that no one would have thought him to be a true saint. This reference to Uways is followed by a passage, that is not easily comprehensible. It could allude to the fact that the time was not yet ripe for Bahá'u'lláh to announce His Manifestation.

Sixth. Only a detached seeker will see the Phoenix winging its flight and taking its place in the city of the soul. The Phoenix is the symbol of the Manifestation of God. The city of the soul is the symbol of the human heart. This image is reminiscent of one of the images of the Seven Valleys:

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. [SV 22]

In both cases the Manifestation of God takes His place in a human heart that approaches Him in a detached attitude of prayer and adoration.

The Tablet ends with a difficult passage, which could allude to Bahá'u'lláh's high station, here described as that of One to Whom angels promptly render service.

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NOTES:

1 A verse very similar to this may be found in a ghazal by Muḥlihu'd-Dín Sa'dí (ca. 1184–1291). See Rafati, *Má'akhidh* 4:81-4. It says: “Shíráz will be thrown into a tumult by Thine upsetting and joyous gaze | I fear lest this turmoil may inflame Shíráz (Shírázpur-ghawgháshud-ast az fitniy-i- chashm-i-khushat | tars-am kiháshúbí ‘ajab bar ham zanad Shíráz-rá).”

2 Bahá'u'lláh, qtd. in Rafati, *Yádnámih* 296, provisional translation by Omid Ghaemmaghami. The authors thank Mr. Ghaemmaghami for having given his permission to use it in this paper.

3 We did not find this ghazal in the collections of Rúmí's ghazals recorded on the Internet.

4 A Muzafarrid king of Iran, who reigned between ca. 1391 and ca. 1393.

5 Sháh Ni'matulláh Valí (1330-1431) was a Sufi master and poet.

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