

**A Study Guide
to**

**The Seven Valleys
of
Bahá'u'lláh**

“journey from the abode of dust to the heavenly homeland”

**by
Arline J. Bogie
(c) 1968-2019**

DEDICATION

This book is dedicated in deepest gratitude to:

Jean and Dr. Nicholas Janus

for being my mentors guiding me on my quest for truth, especially in their sharing their research and providing guidance on how to approach my fledgling studies of the Writings, particularly seeding my interest to plumb the depths of *The Seven Valleys* that resulted in these study guides.



First Local Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Ipswich, Massachusetts, formed April 21, 1960. Front row: Mrs. Jean Janus, Mr. Nicholas Janus, Mrs. Leonora Norman, Mrs. Caroline Cruikshank. Back row: Mr. Donald H. Cruikshank, Mr. T. C. Lucas, Mrs. Joan E. Appleton, Mr. Bradford Lucas, Mrs. Joye Lucas.

PREFACE

Dear Reader,

I was born on August 26, 1926 in Salem, MA, USA and was raised as a “Canadian French Catholic” typical to my era, background, and area. But over the years I came to question more, and seek my own path and truth.

In 1968 facing severe “sea changes” in both my family and personal life, I found myself open to, and extremely curious about the Bahá’í Faith. After some serious study and prayer I found it was my truth and I declared my faith and became a servant of Bahá'u'lláh.

An elderly couple, Jean and Dr. Nicholas Janus, played a major part in my quest and offered to support and “deepen” me in my new life. I am forever grateful for their taking me under their wings for their love and for and challenging me to grow.

They introduced me to the importance of directly and fearlessly tackling the revealed Writings, especially *The Seven Valleys*. Jean has studied and taught about *The Seven Valleys* since the 1950’s, so I was very excited about learning what she had to share.

She adopted me as a “disciple” in hopes that I would take what she has developed and further “spread the word” with future generations. I took this “mission” very much to heart and this book is the result of over fifty years of evolution.

I have been developing and sharing these Seven Valleys study guides over all of my Bahá’í life, and I hope they will continue to be of use to current and future generations. Please read, study, meditate, share and enjoy now and forever!

Bahá'u'lláh’s beautiful words draw us closer to Him and are revealed to each of us according to our own capacity and receptivity. The truth is there for the taking, if it be God’s Will.

Arline J. Bogie,
Salisbury, MD, USA, 2018

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many thanks to:

my niece, **Theresa Glenn**, and

my son, **David Alexander**

who together managed to transcribe the hundreds of my 19th century typewritten manuscript paper sheets, into a 21st century word-processing computerized format!

Without their dogged efforts, these study guides would have certainly been lost to obscurity and would never have survived into their present form.

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Foreword

I am blessed to be among the “wayfarers” who has read and studied *The Seven Valleys* with the aid of *A Study Guide to The Seven Valleys of Bahá'u'lláh*, developed by my beloved aunt, Arline Bogie. The completion of this study guide marks over 50 years of Aunt Arline’s journey as a Bahá’í. This included the study of many sacred texts which awakened and deepened Aunt Arline’s love of Bahá’í teachings. Among the many sacred texts she studied *The Seven Valleys* awakened a unique calling for her and led to the development of the this comprehensive guide.

The Seven Valleys is considered by some to be among Bahá'u'lláh’s greatest mystical writings. It is written in a rich, poetic style, using allegorical terminology, quoting Qur’an verses, Islamic traditions and poems from the Persian and Arab mystical poets. While beautiful and inviting, the text is dense and has many references unfamiliar to the average reader. To assist interested seekers, this study guide was prepared to offer a resource which illuminates the text supported by research, spiritual writings and insights gained through study with her mentors, on her own and with others. Arline also includes reference resources which provides background to the Bahá’í faith.

This study guide helps us to consider our own spiritual path and to consider both where we have travelled and what lies ahead. Simply the name “Seven Valleys” speaks of action, of movement, discovery and adventure. This is an important consideration for readers of *The Seven Valleys* through which Bahá’u’lláh guides the wayfarer by utilizing the metaphor of a physical journey and the actions needed to venture forth.

The Seven Valleys, as presented in this study guide, causes us to look inward, as we all must do when seeking and finding God in our the intimacies of our daily life. This extends out into the vastness of the world we hope to know - the world of such deep divinity that the line between who we are and who God is no longer exists. We are unified with each other and develop the highest level of spirituality losing and gaining ourselves all at the same time. *The Seven Valleys* represents the deepest kind of love and sensitivity that transcends intuitive knowing to a place of divine revelation.

It is with Love and great sensitivity that this study guide was developed - Love of God as revealed by Bahá’u’lláh, Love for the journey, and Love of every seeker to find their way and ultimately to be one with each other and God. Aunt Arline’s own spiritual journey and years of study of the Bahá’í faith is embodied in this Guide.

As I continue my own personal journey I am forever blessed by *The Seven Valleys* as lovingly shared by Bahá’u’lláh. I am grateful to Aunt Arline and her dedication to create this Guide. As you study this remarkable text with the assistance of this study guide, may your journey be equally blessed.

Teresa Glenn

Introduction

The Seven Valleys was written around 1856-1860 in Baghdad after Bahá'u'lláh had returned from the Sulaymaniyah region in Kurdistan where He spent two years anonymously. The work was written in response to questions posed by Shaykh Muhyi'd-Din, a judge, who was a follower of the Qádiríyyih Order of Sufism.

This work has been called by Shoghi Effendi Bahá'u'lláh's "greatest mystical composition" (*God Passes By*, page 140), and in the West was one of the earliest available books of Bahá'u'lláh, first translated directly to French in 1905, and English in 1906. The knowledge contained in *The Seven Valleys* is unlimited in value therefore it behooves every Bahá'í to make efforts to catch a glimpse of it.

The aim of this outline is to help the student understand the symbolic language of *The Seven Valleys*. Even those who are well acquainted with the Bahá'í Writings will benefit from a study class discussion on this book while making their "independent investigation". It is hoped that by this method, the student will become a trained teacher and, in turn, supervise future classes on *The Seven Valleys*.

All comments in the outline are based on the Bahá'í Writings. Any new thoughts were stimulated by the Bahá'í Writings, thus there was no source other than the Bahá'í Writings.

The quotations from the Qur'an in this outline may sometimes be longer than in the text. This was done to make the meaning of a given quotation clearer. Throughout *The Seven Valleys* Bahá'u'lláh confirms His teachings with quotations from the Qur'an. This is easily understood because this work was written to a Sufi leader for whom the Qur'an was the only authority.

Bahá'u'lláh also explains the Seven Valleys in several additional texts as well, including: *The Pen of Glory*, *The Selected Works of Bahá'u'lláh* (Pg. 51) and in *Gems of Divine Mysteries*. Additional insights can also be gained by referencing *Ocean of His Words*, *A Reader's Guide to the Art of Bahá'u'lláh* by John S. Hatcher and others.

Our spiritual knowledge and understanding is progressive. There are many meanings to the Words of Bahá'u'lláh. In this outline you will find that there is sometimes more than one meaning expressed about one phrase or sentence. This is not for contradiction. "Knowledge is a single point". As we study together, we will find more meanings.

About my personal notes: The thoughts inserted about His Word are not to be taken as final or even correct, as we are all in the process of growth in our understanding. I feel that they are food for thought and discussion. We are encouraged to develop our understanding of His Word, however, if we wish, we can discuss them and perhaps in this process develop more insights, however, we are not free to impose our personal insights on another.

The Seven Valleys

The Seven Valleys are like songs the Nightingale of Paradise sings to our hearts. It is not to be taken apart, but we can deepen in it step by step if we keep in mind that it is one song about the progress of our soul.

Spiritual progress, spiritual awareness, spiritual consciousness is not only to be looked forward to after our bodies die. This progress from one awareness to another higher awareness can be done while we are walking on this earth.

The Seven Valleys are the Words of Bahá'u'lláh explaining this progress of our souls, which can be done here on earth even though we are caged in our bodies. He draws us up to higher stages through His Words in *The Seven Valleys*.

We do not go through one valley, then forget it, such. On the contrary, it is like using a cord of seven notes while playing the piano, for example. We can play these seven notes at a time in perfect harmony. Or we can play one or two, or three or more, and still be in harmony. The more notes we play that are the true notes, the more enriched our true selves become.

There is a formula in the first valley for example which we follow and do throughout all the valleys, so not leaving one valley, to forget it, to get to the other, but, to keep what we have become aware of and keep adding new knowledge in our journey to our Beloved. However, this knowledge, as we become aware of it, is seen from a different point of view, broader and broader as we progress.

In the first few valleys, Bahá'u'lláh speaks to our hearts and to our minds, and draws us to the level where He speaks to us from heart to heart, leaving our logic behind is best at this point.

A guide to studying The Seven Valleys

Part One

The mind is the connection between our brains and our souls. First we must bring to our conscious minds a few points; this will help us to understand the Seven Valleys more clearly (this concept is beautifully explained by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in *Some Answered Questions PS-2nd Edition*).

“the nature of man has two conditions. One condition is spiritual, the other, material. ... a condition of radiance ruled by mind and a condition of darkness ruled by desire.” ('Abdu'l-Bahá, as quoted in *The Life and Teachings of Abbas Effendi* by Myron Phelps, 1912 ed. page 191-2)

From this quotation we can see that the material condition is derived through our sense perception, from what we see, hear, touch, etc. (the animal spirit or condition). In this condition, our desires rule our body and emotions. This is the perfect condition for the animal and the imperfect condition for us; so we can say that for humankind it is the condition of darkness. The other condition, the condition of radiance, is ruled by our minds. The mind or reason is on the

human level, the level above the level of the animal. This is the level of the human spirit - rational soul.

There is constant conflict between these two conditions or levels. The higher level pulls up and the lower level pulls down. This constant conflict, this never-ending struggle, starts with the awakening of the intellect and lasts the lifetime of the individual.

The instrument that regulates this conflict is the mind which is a part of the rational soul (the human spirit). ‘Abdu’l-Bahá tells us that the mind is to the soul as the rays of the sun are to the earth. Our characters are formed through this instrument of the mind because it is through our minds that we make decisions between acting rightly or wrongly. The conflict between reason and emotions is strictly personal, just as the character is personal; there are no two conflicts alike; there are no two characters alike.

Therefore, to improve means a different effort for each of us. One who is lazy should try to be more active; one who is too active should try to slow down. The virtue is moderation and this is in the middle. We are given the free will to make choices.

“When we speak of the soul we mean the motive power of this physical body which lives under its entire control in accordance with its dictates. If the soul identifies itself with the material world it remains dark, ... but if it becomes the recipient of the graces of the world of mind, its darkness will be transformed into light” (‘Abdu’l-Bahá as quoted in *Abdul Baha on Divine Philosophy* by Isabel Chamberlain, 1918 ed. page 121)

Through the decision of the mind, the soul can identify with the material (dark) world or it can identify with the spiritual (light) world. Each person has a different kind of a struggle, based on capacity, environment, education, etc. If we turn our "soul-power" to the world of darkness (material), we will eventually become slaves to desires, and will be on the road to spiritual destruction. We will not be suffering struggles because we will be sliding one way: downhill. If we choose to turn our "soul-power" to the world of light (spiritual), we will begin a journey into the spiritual world. While still living here on this planet, we will be fulfilling our purpose: To know and to love God and carry forward an ever-advancing civilization. We will have struggles and with the help of God, we will progress and find freedom and happiness by becoming a servant of God through the Manifestation of our day, which is the highest station humankind can attain.

God has given us the gift of Free Will so we may freely choose to turn to the light or to the darkness. This gives each of us the opportunity to earn, in a way, the graces of God. (I say "in a way" because God is all merciful and gives us many, many graces without earning, or even asking for them, so the graces of God that we do earn are additional graces.)

The Spirit of God is one

This single power is reflected by the whole creation, according to one's own capacity.

Of all created forms and beings, only humankind is potentially able to increase the reflection of the Divine Spirit. Humankind alone is able to acquire virtues, for we alone have consciousness. We may allow ourselves to be influenced by this Divine Spirit, or may allow ourselves to be dominated our senses and desires. We have the free will to choose.

If we choose to turn to the light, we will day by day, in a gradual manner develop our willpower in the right direction and build character by recognizing our weaknesses and by constant effort, dominate them. We will gradually improve, for "perfection is endless". This is the road to attain our goal. Every person is potentially able to become a saint, but also we have the potential to become as an animal, or even worse than an animal.

Because it is the Divine Law, the Will of God, His purpose for creation, for humankind to increase our reflection of the Names and Attributes of God, He sends His Manifestations. Through these Perfect Mirrors, we receive direction and also His Spiritual Power through which this progress can be accomplished.

In *The Seven Valleys*, Bahá'u'lláh explains the different stages of the progress of the soul of each of us. He brings out what we can look forward to, and by doing this, He draws us closer to the desire to progress because we gain some knowledge of what is in store for us.

A guide to studying The Seven Valleys

Part Two

The fundamental knowledge of Bahá'u'lláh is not limited to His written Words. The revealing power of His infallible guidance inspires and stimulates the mind to further investigation and guides humankind to a new vista of knowledge.

Bahá'u'lláh states: "All that is created is preceded by a cause." (*Gleanings*, page162)

A list of terms and their opposites will help to grasp the paramount significance of the above quotation:

pre-existence	-	existence
cause	-	effect
abstract	-	tangible
absolute	-	relative
eternal	-	temporal
independent	-	dependent
immortal	-	mortal
oneness	-	multiplicity
the whole	-	the part
the first	-	the last
knowledge	-	ignorance
perfection	-	imperfection
the hidden	-	the seen
creator	-	creation
the alpha	-	the omega

This list could be much longer, but it is long enough to show that the relationship between each pair of terms is always the same.

That which is true for "pre-existence" in relation to "existence" is equally true for "cause" in relation to "effect". This unique relationship is easy to understand: it is a relationship of higher to lower, of abstract to tangible.

Therefore, if the relation between any term and its opposite is understood, the whole scheme becomes clear. There is only one universal concept: the relationship between the left and the right column, and vice versa.

Because knowledge is one, the same concept may be applied to every level of existence.

Therefore, before examining "pre-existence" on the spiritual level, let us define "pre-existence" on the material level.

Pre-existence is the idea, and existence is the tangible proof of that idea. Before building a house, the architect has the pre-existence of that house in their mind. First comes the idea, then the house is brought into existence. Without the former, the latter cannot materialize. The existence of the house depends on its pre-existence. Pre-existence without existence remains hidden, and is not realized.

Thus the things in the right column cannot exist without the things in the left column; and those in the left column cannot be realized without those the right.

By this example, we may conclude that a tangible effect is always preceded by an abstract cause.

Although the words in the right and the left column seem very different, in reality they all apply to the same concept. They all designate the same single power, which is one, whether in the realm of human achievement, or in the realm of creation.

Just as the pre-existence of the house came from one single mind before the multiple elements of the house were assembled and brought into existence, the pre-existence of the multiple creation came from one single source; one single power. This power is what we can call the Spirit of God.

Therefore, to define "pre-existence" or any other term in the left column, it could be said that on the material level (the human level) the human spirit (the soul, the mind) is the motive power (the cause) that brings human achievements and civilization into existence.

When we apply the same concept to the spiritual level of God (the Divine Spirit), it is the Holy Spirit that is the motive power (the cause) that brings living beings and forms (creation) into existence.

Since the Divine Power is on a higher level, it is beyond the grasp of the human mind. Therefore, to us this power is "supernatural". In the same manner, the animal is unable to understand the creative power of humankind. To the animal, we have supernatural power.

The difference of levels of existence is an obstacle of comprehension. The lower level cannot comprehend the higher. The right column cannot comprehend the left.

The human spirit, in relation to the house is pre-existence (cause, the abstract, the absolute) and cannot be comprehended by it (the house). And the house in relation to the human spirit is existence (effect, the tangible, the relative) and can be comprehended by it (the human spirit).

The same scheme may be applied to the spiritual world of God: The Creator in relation to His Creation is Eternal, Independent, the Hidden, and One. Whereas the creation in relation to its Creator is temporal, dependent, the seen, multiple.

These are the two aspects of the one universal concept: the relationship between the words on the left and on right columns demonstrates the concept of relativity. Although well known, the concept of relativity was never completely understandable until explained by Bahá'u'lláh.

Therefore, if we accept this visible world as "existence" we must also accept its "pre-existence". The proof of the existence of the Creator is His Creation. The link between the visible and the invisible is the link of unity.

The same is true on the material level (the human level). There is an unbreakable link between the pre-existence of the house and its existence. The existence of the house proves there was an architect of the house.

In summary, the concept of two levels of existence has been presented through the presentation of two lists of words and their antonyms with an explanation of how these apparent opposite conditions, things, or states are interdependent and cannot exist without each other.

This concept demonstrates the unity of these two levels and the uniqueness of their relationship. The lower level cannot exist without the higher; and the higher cannot be realized without the lower.

The process of this study also indicates that words are only tools of communication by humankind, and that knowledge is independent of words.

A guide to studying The Seven Valleys

Part Three

Let us try to bring out the full impact of this quotation and try to discover a glimpse of the deep wisdom that lies hidden in these words: "Thou art first in relation to thy son, and last in relation to thy father." (*The Seven Valleys*, page 27)

In one short sentence Bahá'u'lláh explains the fundamental concept of relativity (as we explored in part one). He shows that a parent in relation to their child exists on a higher level, for the parent is independent of their child. The child in relation to their parent exists on a lower level, for they are dependent on their parent. Yet to be a parent, one needs a child, for without a child they are not a parent. Through this logic, we can better understand our relationship to God.

Moreover, it is obvious that the parents can never become their child; pre-existence can never become existence; the higher level can never become the lower level.

It is equally obvious that the child can become a parent and thus, we may assume that existence can become pre-existence, the lower level can become the higher, the (right-column can become the left column).

The following example will show how this process is accomplished: Electricity in relation to the telegraph is the cause (left column). The telegraph in relation to electricity is the effect (right column). However, in relation to the telephone, the telegraph becomes a cause (right column) for without the telegraph, there would be no telephone.

When the telegraph was invented, it belonged to the right column. After it gave birth to the telephone, it underwent a transformation and became a part of the left, serving as a stepping-stone

in the ever-advancing civilization. (When in the right column it was "mortal. By "giving birth", it became part of the process of creation so became "immortal".)

The same pattern involves and unifies the whole of creation on every level of existence, within every created form and being. (This is the answer to the "Unifying Field Theory" never solved by Einstein in 40 years of effort.)

It is evident that this universal law underlies the whole structure of civilization and is the motive power of its evolutionary process, as demonstrated in the example of the telegraph being a cause of the invention of the telephone.

It is evident that the parents are the cause of the existence of their child. Therefore, we can understand that the preceding generation is the cause of the generation of today, which in turn will become the cause of the next generation.

This transformation (which in reality is a change of levels from the lower to the higher) is generally called "progress". Progress can only be one way.

Once this universal law is understood, the concept of immortality becomes more clear and simple to comprehend. See how the mineral sacrifices its life so that the plant may live. It dies on its own mineral level (atoms) and is resurrected in the plant. It looks like death, but in reality it is resurrection into a higher level. Thus, so-called "death" is completely unreal. In reality, it is progress (a change of condition).

Creation as a whole, as well as in its multiplicity, contains both the higher and the lower levels of existence simultaneously.

The journey of the soul through the Seven Valleys represents the conflict between those two levels. The conquest is won when the spiritual level dominates the material level. Only then is war resolved into peace, and the unity between the two levels is achieved. We can see the unity between humankind and God when we ponder on this.

Through our struggles to reflect the Teachings of the Manifestation, we are transformed into the higher level of the Spirit of Faith (to know and to do) and thereby become the "cause". Through following His Teachings and Laws, we become the cause of the forwarding of the civilization here on this planet while at the same time becoming, the kind of spiritual beings necessary for whatever our future holds when we ascend.

We should keep in mind that although the progress of the soul through the Seven Valleys is an individual journey, at the same time it is a journey of the whole of humankind, of which we are each a part.

So now we can see that the two quotations: "All that is created is preceded by a cause", and "Thou art first in relation to thy son, and last in relation to thy father." are identical in meaning.

The first states the law; the second confirms the first while going a step further to show that the process is ever repeating. Thus, the spiritual significance of the law of progress has been shown to apply whether in the realm of creation, in the realm of human achievement, or in the journey of the soul in the realm of the spirit. This law is ONE.

So we can understand when Bahá'u'lláh tells us that our purpose is to love God and to carry forward an ever-advancing civilization.

When we follow His Teachings, we love God and progress to the higher level spirituality, and at the same time "carry forward an ever-advancing civilization" and see clearly the "essential harmony of science and religion".

SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE IS REQUIRED TO TURN OUR ACTIONS TOWARDS TRUE AND POSITIVE PROGRESS. SCIENTIFIC OR MATERIAL ACHIEVEMENT IS REQUIRED TO MAKE THIS PROGRESS VISIBLE.

Without proper balance, neither science nor religion can help humankind achieve true progress; yet with a balance of proper spiritual guidance and scientific achievement, humankind can progress and become the cause of true civilization.

When religious truth is obscured, the material civilization loses its guidelines. Instead of advancing the welfare of humankind, the material civilization moves in the wrong direction and becomes the instrument of destruction. (The same applies the individual person.)

Whenever the disruption of the balance between religion and science (material civilization) reaches its culminating point, the Manifestation re-appears. The purpose of the Manifestation is to return the spiritual to its true perspective by teaching us to love God, according to our current capacity to understand and to accept the word of God. Then human virtue will be resurrected and the balance between the spiritual and the material will be restored.

So from what we have learned so far, we can now add the following terms to the two columns chart in Part Two:

Spiritual progress	-	material progress
Religion	-	science
God	-	man

Summary of the letter in reply
to Shaykh Muhyi'd-Din Judge of Khanigin
and Student of Sufi Philosophy:

Bahá'u'lláh praises God and tells Him that He is the origin of all creation.

That God is unknowable and His mysteries of pre-existence are mirrored forth through the temple of man. The Manifestation, who is given innate knowledge and the power to change those who believe in Him.

Through this change, the new creation comes into being. He speaks forth so that we can see through the eyes of the Manifestation, that there is no God save Him, which causes the believers to make efforts to grow spiritually until they see the signs of God in all of creation.

The believer praises the Manifestation (the revelation of God in the perfect mirrors) and brings out their oneness: progressive revelation.

Bahá'u'lláh recognizes the purity of the Shaykh's heart that has become detached from self and the material world and understand progressive revelation. Because of this, He tells him that He is going to reveal the knowledge of the growth of the soul, which will draw him into higher realms of the spiritual world.

When the Shaykh realizes this new knowledge, he will long to serve God and to serve humankind, be drawn even higher into the spiritual realm, and find peace, certitude, wisdom, knowledge, and union with God.

Bahá'u'lláh discloses the Seven Valleys, and ends with the word: "Salám!" and then continues on to comments particular to the Shaykh, and then ends with "Peace be upon him who followeth the Right Path!".

Author's Notes:

- 1) The quotation on the front cover is from Bahá'u'lláh's reply to Shaykh Muhyi'd-Din.
- 2) *The Seven Valleys* reveal the knowledge of the growth of the soul.

“I therefore reveal unto thee sacred and resplendent tokens from the planes of glory, to attract thee into the court of holiness...” (*The Seven Valleys*, page 3)

- 3) If you read the Tablet of a True Seeker, you will better understand the Valley of Search (*Kitáb-i-Íqán*, pars. 92-195).
- 4) Important: all the **notes*** throughout this guide are the author's personal comments about the revealed text humbly offered to the reader as a possible guide to learning and are not meant to be interpretations of the sacred writings.
- 5) Gender neutrality: If the words "man" or “mankind” appear in this book they are understood to refer to "humankind" in the universal sense. Likewise the words “he”, “his”, “him” should be understood to include people of all genders.

Key to Formatting:

- The quotations from *The Seven Valleys* are printed in large bold type within quotation marks.
- Page and paragraph numbers (underlined) are included as a guide to the reader (these may vary slightly in different printed editions).
- *My comments are printed in plain text and are always preceded by the word "note" in this format: “**Note:**”
- Quotations from the Qur'an are printed indented in *plain italic text*.

THE VALLEY OF SEARCH

1st paragraph, page 5

“The steed of this Valley is patience; without patience the wayfarer on this journey will reach nowhere and attain no goal. Nor should he ever be downhearted; if he strive for hundred thousand years and yet fail to behold the beauty of the Friend, he should not falter.”

Note: We must practice patience (which is a spiritual quality) to reach the goal of Truth. Otherwise, we will not progress in gaining the knowledge sought. We should never feel despondent if we cannot comprehend the reality of God. Countless generations have passed away trying in vain to comprehend God; for God is an unknowable Essence and beyond the understanding of humankind. We should also know that even if it is impossible to comprehend the mystery of God, our Creator, and His creation, we must not stop seeking according to the requirements of a True Seeker, because He promises to “draw” us “from the earthly homeland to the first heavenly abode” and “win” our “way to the summit of realities”. (Quotations from Bahá’u’lláh’s reply in the letter to Shaykh Muhyi’d-Din)

“For those who seek the Ka‘bih of 'for Us' rejoice in the tidings:”

Note: Because when we seek our goal we are very happy in the good news the Manifestation has brought us. “For Us”: This is His desire, therefore with our desire and the help of God we will reach our goal (“Ka‘bih”).

“Ka‘bih: a Cube-like, stone building at Mecca, containing the Black Stone. Traditionally built by Adam and reconstructed after the Flood by Abraham and Ishmael, it is the Qiblih and holiest spot in the Muslim world. *“The first temple that was founded for mankind, was that in Becca, [place of crowding, i.e., Mecca] Blessed, and a guidance for all creatures.”* Qur’an 3:90. (*Bahá’í Glossary*, 1955 Edition)

“Qiblih: Point of Adoration; prayer-direction, toward which the faithful turn in prayer.” (*Bahá’í Glossary*, 1955 Edition, different spelling)

“In Our ways will We guide them.”

Full quote: *“And whosoever maketh efforts for us, in our ways will we guide them: for God is assuredly with those who do righteous deeds.”* (Qur’an 29:69)

“In their search, they have stoutly girded up the loins of service, and seek at every moment to journey from the plane of heedlessness into the realm of being.”

Note: We make a conscious effort to serve God. Knowing and being very certain of the promise of the Manifestation, we will joyfully, at every moment, be aware of this and so make efforts to serve Him. These efforts draw us from the heedless kind of living into the meaningful kind of life.

“O OFFSPRING OF DUST! Be not content with the ease of a passing day, and deprive not thyself of everlasting rest. Barter not the garden of eternal delight for the dust-heap of a mortal world. Up from thy prison ascend unto the glorious meads above, and from thy mortal cage wing thy flight unto the paradise of the Placeless.” (*The Hidden Words*, Persian, No. 36)

“Having created the world and all that liveth and moveth therein, He, through the direct operation of His unconstrained and sovereign Will, chose to confer upon man the unique distinction and capacity to know Him and to love Him--a capacity that must needs be regarded as the generating impulse and the primary purpose underlying the whole of creation.” (*Gleanings*, section XXVII, page 65)

“No bond shall hold them back, and no counsel shall deter them.”

Note: We will not let anybody influence us in a way that will stop or deter us from making the proper spiritual and material efforts to reach our goal. We will be patient, trust and perform good deeds.

“O SON OF MAN! Be thou content with Me and seek no other helper. For none but Me can ever suffice thee.” (*The Hidden Words*, Arabic, No. 17)

“O SON OF MAN! Upon the tree of effulgent glory I have hung for thee the choicest fruits, wherefore hast thou turned away and contented thyself with that which is less good? Return then unto that which is better for thee in the realm on high.” (*The Hidden Words*, Arabic, No. 21)

2nd paragraph, page 5

“It is incumbent on these servants that they cleanse the heart—which is the wellspring of divine treasures—from every marking, and that they turn away from imitation, which is following the traces of their forefathers and sires,”

Note: We must become free from ancestral belief and blind imitation. When we cleanse our hearts the pearls and gems of His mysteries and knowledge will appear.

“Earth and heaven cannot contain Me; what can alone contain Me is the heart of him that believeth in Me, and is faithful to My Cause.” (*Gleanings*, section XCIII, page 186).

The heart is the recipient of the light of God and the seat of the revelation of the All-Merciful but only if the heart is cleansed will this become manifest.

“and shut the door of friendliness and enmity upon all the people of the earth”

Note: We should become free from personal likes and dislikes in order to be impartial in our judgment:

“Lest that love blindly incline him to error, or that hate repel him away from the truth.”
(*Kitáb-i-Íqán*, para. 213, page 192).

3rd paragraph, beginning page 5 - ending page 6

“In this journey the seeker reacheth a stage wherein he seeth all created things wandering distracted in search of the Friend. How many a Jacob will he see, hunting after his Joseph; he will behold many a lover, hasting to seek the Beloved, he will witness a world of desiring ones searching after the One Desired.”

Note: While progressing toward and upward to our goal, we will begin to notice things that we have not really noticed before. One of these things is that “all created things” some people are unable to recognize and follow the Divine Teachings because of some have obscured vision, so are moving in the wrong direction.

“Rely upon God, thy God and the Lord of thy fathers. For the people are wandering in the paths of delusion, bereft of discernment to see God with their own eyes, or hear His Melody with their own ears. Thus have We found them, as thou also dost witness. Thus have their superstitions become veils between them in their own hearts and kept them from the path of God, the Exalted the Great.” (*Bahá’í Prayers*, Tablet of Ahmad)

Note: He uses the words “Jacob” “hunting after his Joseph” to bring out the longing desire of many souls to find our Beloved. (Refer to the *Bible*, Genesis chapters 37-50, and the *Qur’an*, chapter 12, Joseph).

“Such a condition as this is witnessed in this day when the reins of every community have fallen into the grasp of foolish leaders, who lead after their own whims and desire. On their tongue the mention of God hath become an empty name; in their midst His holy Word a dead letter. Such is the sway of their desires, that the lamp of conscience and reason hath been quenched in their hearts, and this although the fingers of divine power have unlocked the portals of the knowledge of God, and the light of divine knowledge and heavenly grace hath illumined and inspired the essence of all created things, in such wise that in each and every thing a door of knowledge hath been opened, and within every atom traces of the sun have been made manifest. And yet, in spite of all these manifold revelations of divine knowledge, which have encompassed the world, they still

vainly imagine the door of knowledge to be closed, and the showers of mercy to be stilled.” (*Kitáb-i-Íqán*, para. 28, pages 29-30)

“What ‘oppression’ is greater than that which hath been recounted? What ‘oppression’ is more grievous than that a soul seeking the truth, and wishing to attain unto the knowledge of God, should know not where to go for it and from whom to seek it?” (*Kitáb-i-Íqán*, para. 29, page 31)

“At every moment he findeth a weighty matter, in every hour he becometh aware of a mystery;”

Note: Another thing we will notice while progressing to our goal is that the efforts we are making have eternal value in this material world and in our spiritual reality, as we progress, our hearts become cleansed more and more and we become increasingly aware of the Divine mysteries. Because our efforts endure, we certainly feel this is a weighty matter. We become aware of this more and more as time goes on.

“for he hath taken his heart away from both worlds, and set out for the Ka‘bih of the Beloved.”

Note: (Ka‘bih = Goal). We have taken ourselves away from the material world, and the world of “vain imaginings”. We have become free from these two worlds, our hearts are now turned to the Manifestation and His Teachings, making efforts to follow Them to move toward Their Goal. We are now living in the spiritual world while still living on earth, serving God by serving His creatures by making our prayers become visible in action.

“the veils of human learning and false imaginings have prevented their eyes from beholding the splendor of the light of His countenance.” (*Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh*, Excerpts from Other Tablets, sect. 17, pages 240-241)

“At every step, aid from the Invisible Realm will attend him and the heat of his search will grow.”

Note: As our efforts are sustained by the aid from the divine world, the ardor of our search will increase step-by-step:

“Only when the lamp of search, of earnest striving, of longing desire, of passionate devotion, of fervid love, of rapture, and ecstasy, is kindled with the seeker’s heart” (*Kitáb-i-Íqán*, para. 216, page 195).

4th paragraph, page 6

“One must judge of search by the standard of the Majnún of Love. It is related that one day they came upon Majnún sifting the dust, and his tears flowing down. They said, ‘What doest thou?’ He said, ‘I seek for Laylí.’ They cried, ‘Alas for thee! Laylí is of pure spirit, and thou seekest her in the dust!’ He said, ‘I seek her everywhere; haply somewhere I shall find her.’”

Note: *The Seven Valleys* footnote 11: “Literally, Majnún means 'insane'. This is the title of the celebrated lover of ancient Persian and Arabian lore, whose beloved was Laylí, daughter of an Arabian prince. Symbolizing true human love bordering on the divine, the story has been made the theme of many a Persian romantic poem, particularly that of Nizámí, written in 1188–1189 A.D.” Bahá’u’lláh uses the example of this kind of seeking of our Beloved. There are many signs of God in this material world that we can see with our outer eyes which help us understand His Love in the spiritual world. We must independently investigate according to His Teachings, and not according to what other people think is the right way or the wrong way, the sane way or the insane way. If you look with your inner eyes, you can see God in a blade of grass and everything else with ever-increasing clarity.

5th paragraph end page 6 to top page 7

“Yea, although to the wise it be shameful to seek the Lord of Lords in the dust, yet this betokeneth intense ardor in searching. ‘Whoso seeketh out a thing with zeal shall find it.’ ”

Note: From an Arabian proverb.

6th paragraph, page 7

“The true seeker hunted naught but the object of his quest, and the lover had no desire save union with his beloved.”

Note: He brings out clearly that we hunt for nothing but the object we seek, and that we desire nothing but to be with our beloved, and that we must feel this way if we wish to attain our goal. God helps us do this, usually little by little.

“Arise, therefore, and, with the whole enthusiasm of your hearts, with all the eagerness of your souls, the full fervor of your will, and the concentrated efforts of your entire being, strive to attain the paradise of His presence” (*Gleanings*, section CLI, page 321)

“Nor shall the seeker reach his goal unless he sacrifice all things. That is, whatever he hath seen, and heard, and understood, all must he set at naught, that he may enter the realm of the spirit, which is the City of God.”

Note: We must sacrifice, must disregard all our acquired knowledge, which might prevent us from being objective and stop us from becoming aware of true spiritual knowledge, which is from the realm of the spirit. The City of God is the Word of God through the Manifestation.

“When the channel of the human soul is cleansed of all worldly and impeding attachments, it will unfailingly perceive the breath of the Beloved across immeasurable distances, and will, led by its perfume, attain and enter the City of Certitude. Therein he will discern the wonders of His ancient wisdom, and will perceive all the hidden teachings from the rustling leaves of the Tree—which flourisheth in that City. With both his inner and his outer ear he will hear from its dust the hymns of glory and praise ascending unto the Lord of Lords, and with his inner eye will he discover the mysteries of ‘return’ and ‘revival.’ How unspeakably glorious are the signs, the tokens, the revelations, and splendours which He Who is the King of names and attributes hath destined for that City! The attainment of this City quencheth thirst without water, and kindleth the love of God without fire. Within every blade of grass are enshrined the mysteries of an inscrutable wisdom, and upon every rose-bush a myriad nightingales pour out, in blissful rapture, their melody. Its wondrous tulips unfold the mystery of the undying Fire in the Burning Bush, and its sweet savours of holiness breathe the perfume of the Messianic Spirit. It bestoweth wealth without gold, and conferreth immortality without death. In every leaf ineffable delights are treasured, and within every chamber unnumbered mysteries lie hidden. They that valiantly labour in quest of God’s will, when once we have renounced all else but Him, will be so attached and wedded to that City that a moment’s separation from it would to them be unthinkable. They will hearken unto infallible proofs from the Hyacinth of that assembly, and receive the surest testimonies from the beauty of its Rose and the melody of its Nightingale. Once in about a thousand years shall this City be renewed and re-adorned.” (*Kitáb-i-Íqán*, page 197-8)

“Labor is needed, if we are to seek Him; ardor is needed, if we are to drink of the honey of reunion with Him;”

Note: If we want to reach our Beloved, and The City of God, we must make continuous efforts in the right direction, willingly, and joyfully with love. Where we will find ourselves with a new eye, a new ear, and a new mind to receive the manifold favors and outpouring grace of the holy and everlasting Spirit.

“and if we taste of this cup, we shall cast away the world.”

Note: When we experience this kind of life of service to humankind, we will cease to be preoccupied with our own selves, and with the material world. We will see and understand reality in a new light.

“Render thanks unto Him Who is the Desire of all worlds for having invested thee with such high honor. Ere long the world and all that is therein shall be as a thing forgotten, and all honor shall belong to the loved ones of thy Lord, the All-Glorious, the Most Bountiful.” (*Gleanings*, section CXL, page 306).

“Thou hast gained admittance into the Paradise of God’s Remembrance, through thy recognition of Him Who is the Embodiment of that Remembrance amongst men.” (*Gleanings*, section CXXXIX, page 303).

7th paragraph, page 7

“On this journey the traveler abideth in every land and dwelleth in every region. In every face, he seeketh the beauty of the Friend; in every country he looketh for the Beloved. He joineth every company, and seeketh fellowship with every soul, that haply in some mind he may uncover the secret of the Friend, or in some face he may behold the beauty of the Loved One.”

Note: In our search, we must observe the principle of Independent Investigation, the Signs of God are within all creation. We will look for Them everywhere; perhaps they are hidden in some mind or visible in some face, or in some deed. In nature the signs of God are everywhere. Just look and remember God created all things.

8th paragraph, page 7 and 8

“And if, by the help of God, he findeth on this journey a trace of the traceless Friend, and inhaleth the fragrance of the long-lost Joseph from the heavenly messenger, he shall straightway step into...”

Note: (Sometimes Bahá’u’lláh refers to Himself as “Joseph”.) When we find the visible signs of the invisible God in the actions of humankind and in nature, we will progress to the next Valley with the help of God: The Valley of Love.

SUMMARY OF

THE VALLEY OF SEARCH

We must make constant efforts with patience, zeal, ardor, and the knowledge and joy of the tidings: “In Our ways We will guide them.”

We must cleanse our hearts of every marking, and turn away from acquired knowledge that keeps us from seeing Truth and turn away from the love and hate which brings prejudice, and make constant efforts to serve humankind through the teachings (“For Us”).

We will reach a stage where we will see some people wandering around looking for something, but not knowing really what, because they have turned away from God. We will become aware of our own reality and that what we are doing is for eternity. We will become increasingly aware of the Divine mysteries and be guided from the Invisible Realm. Our feeling to search will grow stronger and stronger as we progress toward our goal.

Through the help of the Beloved, our desire will become so strong that all we will want is to reach the Beloved. We will look for the signs of God in the material world and turn away from selfish desires and more and more and learn that this is the way to enter the City of God. We will look for the signs of God in the actions and deeds of humankind, and when finding a trace of the Spiritual Love, we will step into, with the help of God: the Valley of Love.

THE VALLEY OF LOVE

1st paragraph, page 8

“...and be dissolved in the fire of love!”

Note: The fire of our love melts away our reasoning power.

“In this city the heaven of ecstasy is upraised and the world-illuming sun of yearning shineth, and the fire of love is ablaze;”

Note: We are in a state of overwhelming emotion, we feel a tender or urgent longing to do something good in this world, and our love begins to show in our actions.

“and when the fire of love is ablaze, it burneth to ashes the harvest of reason.”

Note: This stage of exaltation is achieved only via emotion, but the strength of emotion makes us lose reasoning power and become ruled by our emotions, not realizing that emotions alone cannot guide us. In this state mistakes in judgement can easily be made.

2nd paragraph, pages 8 and 9 (top)

“Now is the traveler unaware of himself and of aught besides himself.”

Note: We are in a state where our realization and perception is overpowered by our emotions. There are many levels, each one of us will feel this differently.

“He seeth neither ignorance nor knowledge, neither doubt nor certitude; he knoweth not the morn of guidance from the night of error.”

Note: Because of our loss of reason, we are not able to judge ourselves or anyone else and are not able to distinguish between knowledge and ignorance or between right and wrong. Being swept by emotions, we have no guidance.

“He fleeth at both from unbelief and faith, and a deadly poison is a balm to him.”

Note: The deadly poison of the loss of reasoning power puts us in a state turned away from unbelief and faith; a state that is good for us and the Beloved.

“Wherefore ‘Attár saith:

**For the infidel, error—for the faithful, faith;
For ‘Attár’s heart, an atom of Thy pain.”**

Note: This quotation from the great Persian Sufi poet Faridu'd-Din 'Attár clearly brings out the necessity of gaining reasoning power through pain so we can know the difference between guidance and error and between belief and unbelief. When we have regained our reasoning power, and this power is in control over our strong emotional love, then will we do something to prove our love. Because the lover yearns to sacrifice for the Beloved, we will progress.

“May my spirit be a sacrifice to the wrongs Thou didst suffer, and my soul be a ransom for the adversities Thou didst sustain.” (*Prayers and Meditations*, sec. CLXXX, page 312)

“The steed of this Valley is pain; and if there be no pain this journey will never end. In this station the lover hath no thought save the Beloved, and seeketh no refuge save the Friend. At every moment he offereth a hundred lives in the path of the Loved One, at every step he throweth a thousand heads at the feet of the Beloved.”

Note: We (the lover) are on fire with the love of the Beloved. Making mistakes in efforts to sacrifice for, and serve the Beloved. We suffer pain and through this process gain back more and more of our reasoning power. Through this process, we will progress to the next valley. If we do not suffer pain, we will remain ruled by our emotions, and will not progress. We do not forget our Beloved, and offer ourselves every moment and with every step. Example: Perhaps you hurt another's feelings and being told this you suffer regret and pain for doing so. This pain makes you use your reasoning power to realize that you need change and not do this again. There are many examples of this process we have each experienced if we reflect. Some big, some small. Each one of us learn through mistakes. When we realize them, we try to do better.

3rd paragraph, page 9

“O My Brother! Until thou enter the Egypt of love,”

Note: Unless we enter the place where we can feel love and yearning,

“thou shalt never come to the Joseph of the Beauty of the Friend;”

Note: We will never feel the desire to sacrifice ourselves for our Beloved. (Sometimes Bahá'u'lláh refers to Himself as “Joseph”.)

“and until, like Jacob, thou forsake thine outward eyes, thou shalt never open the eye of thine inward being;”

Note: If we do not turn away from the material meanings and interpretations, we will not be able to understand and be guided by the spiritual teachings.

“O MAN OF TWO VISIONS! Close one eye and open the other. Close one to the world and all that is therein, and open the other to the hallowed beauty of the Beloved.” (*The Hidden Words*, Persian, No. 12)

“and until thou burn with the fire of love, thou shalt never commune with a Lover of Longing.”

Note: And if we do not feel the strong emotional love even if it is not supported by reason, (this is essential to feel for the progress of the soul). This is the bond between us and the Lover of Longing: the Beloved.

“The love that flows from man to God, this is faith, attraction to the divine, enkindlement, progress, entrance into the Kingdom of God, receiving the bounties of God, illumination with the lights of the Kingdom. This love is the origin of all philanthropy; this love causes the hearts of men to reflect the rays of the Sun of Reality.” (*The Divine Art of Living*, page 98)

“O SON OF BEING! Love Me, that I may love thee. If thou lovest Me not, My love can in no wise reach thee. Know this, O servant.” (*The Hidden Words*, Arabic, No. 5)

4th paragraph, page 9

“A lover feareth nothing and no harm can come nigh him: Thou seest him chill in the fire and dry in the sea.

**A lover is he who is chill in hell fire;
A knower is he who is dry in the sea.”**

Note: (This quotation is from a Persian mystic poem.) We are in such ecstasy, and because we are not using our reason, we cannot perceive pain, therefore we have no fear. Through this kind of love, the lover will become detached to the material world and will come to know that true reality is of the spirit. An example is how a mother would go into fire to save her child without thinking of herself.

5th paragraph, page 9 to top of page 10

“Love accepteth no existence and wisheth no life:”

Note: We reached the point where we cannot accept our lives as they were before. On the material plane, we yearn to die to ourselves and to live in God by reflecting the names and attributes emanating from God, our Creator.

“He seeth life in death, and in shame seeketh glory.”

“And if thou overtaken by affliction in My path, or degradation for My Sake, be not thou troubled thereby. Rely upon God, thy God and the Lord of thy Fathers.” (*Bahá’í Prayers*, Tablet of Aḥmad)

We know that if we die to ourselves (the material side: ego, self-pride, etc.) and live by God’s teachings, we will reflect positive attributes. Knowing that what may seem in this material world (to the outer eye) as shame, is actually in this spiritual world: glory.

“To merit the madness of love, man must abound in sanity; to merit the bonds of the Friend, he must be full of spirit.”

Note: To earn the bounties from this kind of love, we must regain our reasoning power, to earn the bond between us and the Friend, we must feel exalted in our love for our Beloved. So we must feel very strongly the fire of love, and at the same time use our reasoning power. To do that is by gaining more knowledge.

“Blessed the neck that is caught His noose, happy the head that falleth on the dust in the pathway of His love.”

Note: We who follow His commandments and sacrifice our lives for Him are blessed. We are loving and living and progressing in the right direction with the guidance of Him.

“Have mercy, then, O Thou Who art the sovereign Lord of all, Who art the King of everlasting days, and Ruler of all nations, upon these Thy servants, who have clung to the cord of Thy commandments, who have bowed their necks to the revelations of Thy laws which have been sent down from the heaven of Thy Will.” (*Gleanings*, sec. CXXXVIII, page 300)

“Wherefore, O friend, give up thy self that thou mayest find the Peerless One, pass by this mortal earth that thou mayest seek a home in the nest of heaven. Be as naught, if thou wouldst kindle the fire of being and be fit for the pathway of love.

**Love seizeth not upon a living soul,
The falcon preyeth not on a dead mouse.”**

Note: (This quotation is from a Persian mystic poem.) We must give up our personal will for the Will of the Beloved. The final verse explains that when a soul lives only in the material world for the material benefits, it is as dead to the spiritual, and love will not seize it.

6th paragraph, page 10 and top of page 11

Note: Until now, Bahá'u'lláh has spoken of love whose object is God. (Spiritual in its aspect) thus He says: “Blessed the neck that is caught in His Noose...”. This kind of love is in the right direction, because its motive is pure. At this point, Bahá'u'lláh begins speaking of a love which has lost sight of God, (an earthly love which brings no reward and leaves no traces in the civilization). Thus He says: “Wherefore must the veils of the satanic self be burned away at the fire of (pure) love.”

“Love setteth a world aflame at every turn, and he wasteth every land where he carrieth his banner.”

Note: Material love causes destruction and waste because it is selfish, we can spend our whole lives with the love of material things and it will not help us to find what we are really looking for and will not be living for the purpose we were created for and our lives will be a waste. (See *The Seven Valleys*, “burneth to ashes the harvest of reason”).

“Being hath no existence in his kingdom; the wise wield no command within his realm.”

Note: Spiritual Being does not exist in the negative, material kind of love, and wisdom has no power in this kind of material love.

“The leviathan of love swalloweth the master of reason and destroyeth the lord of knowledge.”

Note: This monster of material love swallows reasoning power and destroys true knowledge. Through this kind of love, we become dominated by passions and passions make the us lose our reason. When deprived of true knowledge:

“...he becomes the manifestation of satanic qualities, the sum of animal vices, and the source of all dark conditions.” (*The Divine Art of Living*, page 24, end para. 13)

“He drinketh the seven seas, but his heart’s thirst is still unquenched, and he saith, ‘Is there yet any more?’”

Note: The full quotation is from the *Qur’an* 50:29:

“And he who is at the side shall say: ‘This is what I have prepared against thee.’ And God will say: ‘Cast into hell you twain, every infidel, every hardened one, the hindering of the God, the transgressor, the doubter sets up the other gods with God.’ He who is at this side shall say: ‘Oh our Lord! I led him not to astray, yet was he in an error wide of truth.’ God will say: ‘Wrangle not in my presence. I have plied you beforehand with

menaces. My doom changes not and I am not unjust to man.' On that day will we cry to hell: 'Art thou full?' And he shall say: 'Is there yet any more?'

(Footnote: Hell may be full, but an addition can always be added; there are no limits.) This quotation shows that we are all “sinners”; the only difference is that some repent, and some do not. When we are dominated by passions, we are never filled up and never feel satisfied and always want more earthly comforts etc.

“He shunneth himself and draweth away from all on earth.”

**Love’s a stranger to earth and heaven too;
In him are lunacies seventy-and-two.”**

Note: This quotation from Jalalu’d-Din Rumi is speaking of material love, passions, which may be very powerful, yet we have no real existence, because the results of passions are negative, therefore temporal. This kind of love brings no true happiness in heaven or on earth. This kind of love causes us to become more and more selfish, which draws us away from all on earth, including avoiding our own true selves.

“He hath bound a myriad victims in his fetters, wounded a myriad wise men with his arrow. ”

Note: This monster of material love led by passions has destroyed many wise among us, and has led many away from God, into the “hell” of being far from God.

“Know that every redness in this world is from his anger, and every paleness in men’s cheeks is from his poison.”

Note: Anger and fear comes from this kind of selfish love.

6th paragraph top page 11, continued

“He yieldeth no remedy but death, he walketh not save in the valley of the shadow;”

Note: The monster of this kind of love causes one to be as dead, with one’s soul turned to selfish desires; to feed ego and passions, one walks in the state of darkness.

“yet sweeter than honey is his venom on the lover’s lips, and fairer his destruction in the seeker’s eyes than a hundred thousand lives.”

Note: To people who love in this kind of material way, at first it seems to be sweet, yet, deep-down, they know that it is not what they really want and would like to destroy this kind of passion and material love as it only brings sorrow and pain.

7th paragraph, page 11

“Wherefore must the veils of the satanic self be burned away at the fire of love, that the spirit may be purified and cleansed and thus may know the station of the Lord of the Worlds.”

Note: Bahá’u’lláh brings out that only if we turn away from our satanic self can our selfishness be burned away by the fire of the love of our true Desire and find true happiness and progress. Each of us must, through our own free will, choose to turn away from passions and selfishness, and make effort, so with the help of God, our spirit will become purified and cleansed and more and more become free from ego and attain our true desire.

**“Kindle the fire of love and burn away all things,
Then set thy foot into the land of the lovers.”**

Note: (Quotation is from an ode by Bahá’u’lláh.) Through constant efforts to dominate material passions, we shall be reborn and attain the Knowledge of God.

8th paragraph, page 11

“And if, confirmed by the Creator, the lover escapes from the claws of the eagle of love, he will enter The Valley of Knowledge...”

Note: The “eagle of love”, here means the power of the emotions over the reasoning power. It means also the monster of the material kind of love. So if confirmed by the Creator, we are freed from the kind of love which is destructive, and will progress in the right direction and “mounteth into the heaven of knowledge” (Quotation from Bahá’u’lláh’s reply in the letter to Shaykh Muhyi'd-Din)

SUMMARY OF
THE VALLEY OF LOVE

In the Valley of search, we have found God; and now, overwhelmed by emotions, unable to reason; we become aware only of our longing to serve in love for God.

This state of exultation is essential for the progress of the soul, however the we should remain mentally stable in order to come out of the Valley of Love unharmed by fanaticism.

We regain our reason-power by making mistakes and becoming aware of those mistakes by suffering resulting from making them. Through this pain, we learn more about our true selves and God, and thereby come to love strongly and at the same time come to use our minds (reasoning power) along with our hearts (emotions) in balance. We want to gain more knowledge.

The original message of the existence of God (our Creator) came via God's Manifestations.

“O people, if ye deny these verses, by what proof have ye believed in God? Produce it, O assemblage of false ones.” (*Bahá'í Prayers*, Tablet of Aḥmad)

THE VALLEY OF KNOWLEDGE

1st paragraph, page 11 and 12

“..and come out of doubt into certitude”

Note: We have progressed through our efforts and with the help of God, and out of feeling uncertain and hesitant about making judgments into the feeling of believing and accepting.

“and turn from the darkness of illusion to the guiding light of the fear of God.”

Note: (“fear of God” means profound reverence and awe [see Appendix A].) Through recognizing our own weaknesses by suffering pain through our mistakes, we gain reason and maturity, we come out of our dark negative thoughts, which were not real, into the guiding light of the teachings of the Manifestation. The fear of God means the desire to follow His teachings and the fear **of not** following His teachings. We now know that what is written is true, and that is where our inner happiness is:

“In the treasuries of the knowledge of God there lieth concealed a knowledge which, when applied, will largely, though not wholly, eliminate fear.” (*Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, page 32)

“O SON OF MAN! Sorrow not save that thou art far from Us. Rejoice not say that thou art drawing near and returning unto Us.” (*The Hidden Words*, Arabic, No. 35)

“His inner eyes will open and he will privily converse with his Beloved; he will set ajar the gate of truth and piety, and shut the doors of vain imaginings.”

Note: (“privily” means private or joint knowledge of the private matter.) Now we follow His teachings and with new knowledge are able to know right from wrong and follow right direction, which is the direction of Truth. Via prayer and meditation we deny vain imaginings which is where prejudice and learning obscures our true understanding of humankind.

“O SON OF MAN! Be thou content with Me and seek no other helper. For none but Me can ever suffice thee.” (*The Hidden Words*, Arabic, No. 17)

“He in this station is content with the decree of God,”

Note: We now limit our desires and actions to the freedom of submitting to His Will:

“O SON OF MAN! Wert thou to speed through the immensity of space and traverse the expanse of heaven, yet thou wouldst find no rest save in submission to Our command and humbleness before Our Face.” (*The Hidden Words*, Arabic, No. 40)

“O SON OF SPIRIT! Ask not of Me that which We desire not for thee, then be content with what We have ordained for thy sake, for this is that which profiteth thee, if therewith thou dost content thyself.” (*The Hidden Words*, Arabic, No. 18)

“And seeth war as peace, and findeth in death the secrets of everlasting life.”

Note: We now see the big picture: the end in the beginning; in war we see peace; in death, the beginning of everlasting life; because this is death from self or ego. We become conscious of the eternal and the temporal, and conscious of the abstract and the tangible. War within a person can mean the struggle within them.

Like a war, this struggle is the beginning of the peace we will progress into. (This struggle is between the two natures of humankind which we went into detail about in Part One).

Also the wars which we struggle through eventually ends in peace. Through the pain and suffering caused by these wars we will eventually learn to desire and find the road to peace, and understand the meaning of:

“O SON OF MAN! My calamity is My providence, outwardly it is fire and vengeance, but inwardly it is light and mercy. Hasten thereunto that thou mayest become an eternal light and an immortal spirit. This is My command unto thee, do thou observe it.” (*The Hidden Words*, Arabic, No. 51)

(See Selections From The Writings of `Abdu'l-Bahá, pages 191-195).

“With inward and outward eyes he witnesseth the mysteries of resurrection in the realms of creation and the souls of men.”

Note: Now we understand the mysteries of resurrection...that with the coming of the Manifestation a generating power is released (or our capacity is increased) throughout the world, bringing a new stimulus to the human spirit. Because of the renewed impulse of the human spirit – signs appear.

With both our minds and our sight, we can grasp the significance of “resurrection” in the creation, and also in the souls of humankind. In the creation it is through the explosion of new achievement, discovery, and invention, that that which was hidden in nature is resurrected: civilization.

For civilization is the outcome of inspiration; acquired knowledge serving only as a tool. We see this change in civilization with our outward eyes in the world of creation and with our inward eyes we know that this change comes from our Creator when the Manifestation appears.

1st paragraph, page 11 and 12 (cont.)

“And with a pure heart apprehendeth the divine wisdom in the endless Manifestations of God.”

“Let us give another illustration: Last year’s seed was sown, branches and leaves appeared, blossoms and fruit came forth, and in the end a new seed was produced. When this second seed is planted, it will grow into a tree, and once more those leaves, blossoms, branches, and fruit will return, and the former tree will once again appear. As the beginning was a seed and the end likewise a seed, we say that the seed has returned. When we consider the material substance of the tree, it is different, but when we consider the blossoms, leaves, and fruit, the same fragrance, taste, and delicacy are produced. Hence the perfection of the tree has returned anew. In the same way, if we consider the individual, it is a different one, but if we consider the attributes and perfections, the same have returned.” (*Some Answered Questions*, pages 150-151)

“Purge thy sight, therefore, from all earthly limitations, that thou mayest behold them all as the bearers of one Name, the exponents of one Cause, the manifestations of one Self, and the revealers of one Truth, and that thou mayest apprehend the mystic ‘return’ of the Words of God as unfolded by these utterances.” (*Kitáb-i-Íqán*, page 159)

“In the ocean findeth a drop, and in a drop he beholdeth the secrets of the sea.

**‘Split the atom’s heart, and lo!
Within it thou will find a sun.’”**

Note: (Quotation is from a Persian mystic poem.) The drop has the same properties as the sea; yet how much greater the power of the sea. (This is like the relation between Manifestation and humankind, the sea and the drop). Both have the same body, both are composed from the same substance; yet the Manifestation is the collective center of divine virtue, while each person is but a drop. Yet even though this “drop” can never reach the station of the Manifestation, potentially it is able to progress because every elemental atom contains all the virtues of the universe. All of the qualities of the Manifestation are latent within every human being. (None of us can develop all of those qualities, but there is no quality that any of us cannot develop).

2nd paragraph, page 12 and 13

“The wayfarer in this Valley seeth in the fashionings of the True One nothing save clear providence, and at every moment saith: ‘No defect canst thou see in the creation of the God of Mercy: Repeat the gaze: Seest thou a single flaw?’”

Note: The full quotation is:

“He is the Mighty, the Forgiving! Who hath created seven heavens, one
above another: No defect canst thou see in the creation of the God of mercy: Repeat
the gaze: Seeth thou a single flaw?” (Qur’an 67:3)

We have progressed into the knowledge that the creation of God is perfect. In trial, we find providence because we see the end in the beginning, and the results of trials would be spiritual growth.

“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.” (*Gleanings*, sec. LXXIII. page 141)

“He beholdeth justice and injustice, and in justice, grace.”

Note: We can understand and see the end in the beginning, injustice is a means of bringing forth justice, (when a person, a community, or a nation, is treated unjustly, it causes others to notice and to defend, or try to correct this injustice, therefore, a new awareness comes and improvement comes). We see that in justice, there is grace.

“O SON OF SPIRIT! The best beloved of all things in My sight is Justice; turn not away therefrom if thou desirest Me, and neglect it not that I may confide in thee. By its aid thou shalt see with thine own eyes and not through the eyes of others, and shalt know of thine own knowledge and not through the knowledge of thy neighbor. Ponder this in thy heart; how it behooveth thee to be. Verily justice is My gift to thee and the sign of My loving-kindness. Set it then before thine eyes.” (*The Hidden Words*, Arabic, No. 2)

“O people of God! That which traineth the world is Justice, for it is upheld by two pillars, reward and punishment.” (*Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh*, The thirteenth Glad-Tidings, page 27)

“The light of men is Justice. Quench it not with the contrary winds of oppression and tyranny. The purpose of justice is the appearance of unity among men.” (*Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh*, Sixth Leaf of the Exalted Paradise, pages 66-67).

“In ignorance he findeth many a knowledge hidden, and in knowledge a myriad wisdoms manifest.”

Note: Through mistakes based on ignorance, humankind gains knowledge, and this, in turn, becomes a stepping-stone for greater knowledge to come. Although we may seem ignorant, it is only because of our lack of knowledge that is gained step by step. Through our new knowledge, we gain the ability to discern inner qualities and relationships. We gain insight, good sense, and good judgment, becoming wiser following a course of action reflecting this new attitude.

Another meaning can be that we see the signs of the knowledge of God on every level of existence; for example, seeing the sign of knowledge in an ignorant plant; the sun loving plant knows that it should turn towards the sun; and the shade loving plant knows that it should turn toward the shade. Another meaning is we can see the wisdom in one who is uneducated. A

person who has never gone to school may have much spiritual knowledge and be living a very wise life.

“It behooveth thee to exert thine utmost to attain unto this Elixir which, in one fleeting breath, causeth the west of ignorance to reach the east of knowledge” (*Kitáb-i-Íqán*, page 158)

“He breaketh the cage of the body and the passions, and consorteth with the people of the immortal realm. He mounteth on the ladders of inner truth and hasteneth to the heaven of inner significance.”

Note: When we are on this level of understanding, we can see very clearly the difference between physical passions and desires and spiritual desires. We have begun to detach ourselves from our egos, and know more about our inner mysteries. Therefore, we travel increasingly in the direction of the spiritual world, and find more in harmony in common with the others who also are on our level and above. Our knowledge of inner truths and meanings is ever increasing.

“He rideth in the ark of ‘we shall show them our signs in the regions and in themselves,’ and journeyeth over the sea of ‘until it become plain to them that (this Book) is the truth.’”

Note: The whole quotation is:

“When We are gracious to man, he withdraws and turns aside; but when evil touches him, he is a man of long prayers. Say: what think you, if this book be from God and you believe it not? Who will have gone further astray than him who is at a distance from it. We shall show them our signs in different countries and among themselves; until it becomes plain to them that it (this book) is the truth.” (Qur’an 41:53)

“Riding in the ark” means being of those who believe, being on the spiritual realm of understanding (Ark means Covenant).

In the *Kitáb-i-Íqán* pages 100-101 Bahá’u’lláh speaks of this quotation and explains the kind of knowledge we can attain:

“The traditions and sayings that bear direct reference to Our theme are divers and manifold; We have refrained from quoting them for the sake of brevity. Nay, whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on earth is a direct evidence of the revelation within it of the attributes and names of God, inasmuch as within every atom are enshrined the signs that bear eloquent testimony to the revelation of that most great Light. Methinks, but for the potency of that revelation, no being could ever exist. How resplendent the luminaries of knowledge that shine in an atom, and how vast the oceans of wisdom that surge within a drop! To a supreme degree is this true of man, who, among all created things, hath been invested with the robe of such gifts, and hath been singled out for the glory of such distinction for in him are potentially all the attributes of God to a degree that no other created being hath excelled or surpassed. All these names and attributes

are applicable to him. Even as He hath said: *‘Man is my mystery, and I am his mystery.’* Manifest are the verses that have been repeatedly revealed in all the heavenly Books and the Holy Scriptures, expressive of this most subtle and lofty theme.

“And if he meeteth with injustice he shall have patience, and if he cometh upon wrath he shall manifest love.”

Note: Because we are on this level of understanding, we will have patience and love because we see true reality, our attitude towards injustice and wrath and whatever seems negative is a positive attitude. We know that if there is no darkness, we would not realize what light is; and know that virtues are hidden in every person’s nature and will be made manifest. (Spiritual civilization) and that more discoveries of the earth’s resources, which are lying hidden in nature, will be made manifest in the material civilization.

3rd paragraph, page 13, also 4th, 5th and 6th paragraph, pages 14 and 15

Note: Bahá’u’lláh explains about seeing the end in the beginning by telling a story:

“There was once a lover who had sighed for long years in separation from his beloved, and wasted in the fire of remoteness. From the rule of love, his heart was empty of patience, and his body weary of his spirit; he reckoned life without her as a mockery, and time consumed him away. How many a day he found no rest in longing for her; how many a night the pain of her kept him from sleep; his body was worn to a sigh, his heart’s wound had turned him to a cry of sorrow. He had given a thousand lives for one taste of the cup of her presence, but it availed him not. The doctors knew no cure for him, and companions avoided his company; yea, physicians have no medicine for one sick of love, unless the favor of the beloved one deliver him.

At last, the tree of his longing yielded the fruit of despair, and the fire of his hope fell to ashes. Then one night he could live no more, and he went out of his house and made for the marketplace. On a sudden, a watchman followed after him. He broke into a run, with the watchman following; then other watchmen came together, and barred every passage to the weary one. And the wretched one cried from his heart, and ran here and there, and moaned to himself: ‘Surely this watchman is ‘Izrá’íl, my angel of death, following so fast upon me; or he is a tyrant of men, seeking to harm me.’ His feet carried him on, the one bleeding with the arrow of love, and his heart lamented. Then he came to a garden wall, and with untold pain he scaled it, for it proved very high; and forgetting his life, he threw himself down to the garden.

And there he beheld his beloved with a lamp in her hand, searching for a ring she had lost. When the heart-surrendered lover looked on his ravishing love, he drew a great breath and raised up his hands in prayer, crying: ‘O God! Give Thou glory to the watchman, and riches and long life. For the watchman was Gabriel, guiding this poor one; or he was Isráfíl, bringing life to this wretched one!’”

Note: This is the end of the story. In the next paragraph Bahá’u’lláh explains about the story.

“Indeed, his words were true, for he had found many a secret justice in this seeming tyranny of the watchman, and seen how many a mercy lay hid behind the veil. Out of wrath, the guard had led him who was athirst in love’s desert to the sea of his loved one, and lit up the dark night of absence with the light of reunion. He had driven one who was afar, into the garden of nearness, had guided an ailing soul to the heart’s physician.”

7th paragraph, page 15

“Now if the lover could have looked ahead, he would have blessed the watchman at the start, and prayed on his behalf, and he would have seen that tyranny as justice; but since the end was veiled to him, he moaned and made his plaint in the beginning. Yet those who journey in the garden-land of knowledge, because they see the end in the beginning, see peace in war and friendliness in anger.”

Note: When we reach this level of understanding, we can see the end in the beginning, realize that trials are a blessing in disguise, and become radiant in adversity.

“O SON OF MAN! My calamity is My providence, outwardly it is fire and vengeance, but inwardly it is light and mercy. Hasten thereunto that thou mayest become an eternal light and an immortal spirit. This is My command unto thee, do thou observe it.” (*The Hidden Words*, Arabic, No. 51)

8th paragraph, page 15

“Such is the state of the wayfarers in this Valley; but the people of the Valleys above this see the end and the beginning as one; nay, they see neither beginning nor end, and witness neither ‘first’ nor ‘last.’ Nay rather, the denizens of the undying city, who dwell in the green garden land, see not even ‘neither first nor last’; they fly from all that is first, and repulse all that is last. For these have passed over the worlds of names, and fled beyond the worlds of attributes as swift as lightning. Thus is it said: ‘Absolute Unity excludeth all attributes.’ And they have made their dwelling place in the shadow of the Essence.”

Note: The above paragraph concerns “people of the Valleys above.” We are above relativity. We realize the Oneness of God, not as the visible power in creation (which is relative) but as the One Power behind creation (which is Absolute). We are conscious of the pre-existence of the existence, and we will see the first and the last as the same, because the first and the last have meaning only in the contingent world. Names and attributes are of this world of relativity, and there is light and dark. In the worlds beyond, the power is One Reality, Absolute Unity, we who have progressed to this level of understanding are dwelling in the shadow of the Essence, which is One. If it be the will of God we will reach the valleys above and become aware of new knowledge.

“From that which hath been said it becometh evident that all things, in their inmost reality, testify to the revelation of the names and attributes of God within them. Each according to its capacity, indicateth, and is expressive of, the knowledge of God. So potent and universal is this revelation, that it hath encompassed all things, visible and invisible. Thus hath He revealed: ‘Hath aught else save Thee a power of revelation which is not possessed by Thee, that it could have manifested Thee? Blind is the eye which doth not perceive Thee.’ Likewise, hath the eternal King spoken: ‘No thing have I perceived, except that I perceived God within it, God before it, or God after it.’”
(*Kitáb-i-Íqán*, pages 102-103)

9th paragraph, page 16

“Wherefore, relevant to this, Khájih ‘Abdu’lláh—may God the Most High sanctify his beloved spirit—hath made a subtle point and spoken an eloquent word as to the meaning of ‘*Guide Thou us on the straight path,*’ which is: ‘Show us the right way, that is, honor us with the love of Thine Essence, that we may be freed from turning toward ourselves and toward all else save Thee, and may become wholly Thine, and know only Thee, and see only Thee, and think of none save Thee.’”

Note: The first quotation is from (*Qur'an* 1:5).

“Khájih” was Shaykh Abu Isma’il ‘Abdu’llah Ansari of Hirat. A Sufi leader, descended from Muhammad’s companion Abu Ayyub chiefly known for his Munajat (Supplications) and Ruba’iyyat (Quatrains). “Ansar” means the “Helpers” or companions of Muhammad in Medina.

Within the quotation by “Khájih” which begins with the words written in the above paragraph, “Show us the right way...” there are seven exhortations: they could mean the progress of the soul through the Seven Valleys. They could also mean the progress of a speck of dust – from mineral level upwards.

The full quotation in the above paragraph is:

“Guide Thou us on the straight path of those to whom Thou has been gracious; with whom Thou are not angry, and who go not astray.” (Qur’an 1:5)

We have reached the level of understanding where we know that the only way to progress spiritually is through the guidance of the Manifestation, and we pray for this. Bahá’u’lláh writes:

“The first Tajallí which hath dawned from the Daystar of Truth is the knowledge of God—exalted be His glory. And the knowledge of the King of everlasting days can in no wise be attained save by recognizing Him Who is the Bearer of the Most Great Name. He is, in truth, the Speaker on Sinai Who is now seated upon the throne of Revelation. He is the Hidden Mystery and the Treasured Symbol. All the former and latter Books of God are adorned with His praise and extol His glory. Through Him the standard of knowledge hath been planted in the world and the ensign of the oneness of God hath been unfurled amidst all peoples. Attainment unto the Divine Presence can be realized solely by attaining His presence. Through His potency everything that hath, from time immemorial, been veiled and hidden, is now revealed. He is made manifest through the power of Truth and hath uttered a Word whereby all that are in the heavens and on the earth have been dumbfounded, except those whom the Almighty was pleased to exempt. True belief in God and recognition of Him cannot be complete save by acceptance of that which He hath revealed and by observance of whatsoever hath been decreed by Him and set down in the Book by the Pen of Glory.

They that immerse themselves in the ocean of His utterances should at all times have the utmost regard for the divinely-revealed ordinances and prohibitions. Indeed His ordinances constitute the mightiest stronghold for the protection of the world and the safeguarding of its peoples—a light upon those who acknowledge and recognize the truth, and a fire unto such as turn away and deny.” (*Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh*, page 50)

10th paragraph, page 16

“Nay, these even mount above this station, wherefore it is said:

**Love is a veil betwixt the lover and the loved one;
More than this I am not permitted to tell.”**

Note: Here again Bahá'u'lláh speaks of those who “mount above this station” of understanding, and forsake all emotions connected with the animal side of humankind, and follow the reasoning power of the mind. (Verse is from the Persian Sufi poet Mawlana – Jalalu'd Din, founder of the Whirling dervish order called Malava).

11th paragraph, page 16

“At this hour the morn of knowledge hath arisen and the lamps of wayfaring and wandering are quenched.”

Note: This sentence refers to the mystic wandering and search for truth guided by the ‘Lights’ or Sufi leaders. Bahá'u'lláh here warns the mystics that the coming of the Divine Manifestation in His Day makes further search unnecessary, as it was said by Ali: ‘Quench the lamp when the sun hath risen’ – the sun referring to the Manifestation of God in the new day. Therefore, in this age the search is over. To be able to find God we must recognize the Manifestation for this day: Bahá'u'lláh.

12th paragraph, page 17 (verse)

**“Veiled from this was Moses
Though all strength and light;
Then thou who hast no wings at all,
Attempt not flight.”**

Note: Even Moses could not know the human appearance of the next Manifestation, therefore how can we know, as He did not disclose this knowledge. (Verse is from Jalalu'd-Din Rumi called Malana).

13th paragraph, page 17

“If thou be a man of communion and prayer, soar up on the wings of assistance from Holy Souls, that thou mayest behold the mysteries of the Friend and attain to the lights of the Beloved. ‘Verily, we are from God and to Him shall we return.’”

Note: The quotation is from (*Qur’an* 2:151). Bahá’u’lláh tells us to seek assistance from the Holy Ones so we can become aware of the mysteries of the Spirit and receive light and guidance so we can reach the level of understanding where we will know that “Verily, we are from God and to Him shall we return.” The full quotation is:

“Oh, you who believe! Seek help with patience and with prayer, for God is with the patient. And say not of these who are slain in God’s path, that they are dead; nay, they are living! But you understand not. With somewhat of fear and hunger, and loss of wealth, and loss of lives, and fruits, will We surely prove you! But bear God’s tidings to the patient, who when a malchance chances them, say: Verily, we are from God and to Him shall we return.” (*Qur’an* 2:151)

Note: This quotation from the Qur’an shows the essential necessity of sacrificing for the progress of the soul and civilization at large. No matter what hardships and trials come to us, we are but temporal so we should be patient, because “*We are from God and to Him shall we return*”. We come from a higher (spiritual) level of existence and although in this world we exist on a lower (material) level, this earthly life is but temporal; eventually we return to the higher level, – the spiritual level of eternity.

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

Note: The Valley of Unity!

SUMMARY OF

THE VALLEY OF KNOWLEDGE

Before entering the Valley of Unity, we realize the principle of relativity in all creation; in other words the limitation of the temporal in relation to the eternal; each created form, each created being reflects the perfection of God: (1. According to every level of our existence, and 2. according to its own capacity. This capacity is relative, not absolute.)

From our mistakes in the Valley of Love, we regain reason and are able to recognize our weaknesses. Now our emotions are supported by reason – – the beginning of maturity. With this new maturity we step into the Valley of Knowledge and begin to perceive the perfection behind the creation. From our experience, we begin to see meanings that were hidden from us before. We are able to see war as peace because we are able to see the end in the beginning, able to see the limitations of this relative world. Because of this knowledge and understanding, our attitude is positive and it shows in our actions and reactions when we meet with injustice and wrath.

Bahá'u'lláh speaks a little about the level of understanding that we will come to in the higher planes or Valleys... That Reality is One.

We realize that the only way to know God and to progress spiritually is through believing in the Manifestation of this day, and accepting His guidance.

The Valley of Knowledge is the last plane of limitation and the road to spiritual growth is open to us. With God's help we progress to the Valley of Unity.

“what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.” (*The Bible*, 2 Corinthians 4:18)

Appendix A

“FEAR OF GOD”

or extreme reverence or awe toward the Supreme Power

(Quotations compiled by Hand of the Cause Harold Collis Featherstone)

“O thou who hast fixed thy gaze upon My countenance! Admonish men to fear God. By God! This fear is the chief commander of the army of thy Lord. Its hosts are a praiseworthy character and goodly deeds. Through it have the cities of men’s hearts been opened throughout the ages and centuries, and the standards of ascendancy and triumph raised above all other standards.” (*Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, page 136)

“We have admonished Our loved ones to fear God, a fear which is the fountain-head of all goodly deeds and virtues. It is the commander of the hosts of justice in the city of Bahá. Happy the man that hath entered the shadow of its luminous standard, and laid fast hold thereon. He, verily, is of the Companions of the Crimson Ark, which hath been mentioned in the Qayyúm-i-Asmá.” (*Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, page 135)

“The fear of God is the real guardian and the ideal protector. Men must adhere and hold fast unto that which is conducive to the appearance of this great gift. Blessed is he who hearkens unto what My Supreme Pen hath uttered, and acts in accord with that which is commanded on the part of the ancient commander.” (*Bahá’í World Faith*, page 179)

“Say: O people! Fear ye God, and turn not away disdainfully from His Revelation. Fall prostrate on your faces before God, and celebrate His praise in the daytime and in the night season.” (*Gleanings*, page 38, sec. XV)

”Verily I say: The fear of God hath ever been a sure defence and a safe stronghold for all the peoples of the world. It is the chief cause of the protection of mankind, and the supreme instrument for its preservation. Indeed, there existeth in man a faculty which deterreth him from, and guardeth him against, whatever is unworthy and unseemly, and which is known as his sense of shame. This, however, is confined to but a few; all have not possessed, and do not possess, it. It is incumbent upon the kings and the spiritual leaders of the world to lay fast hold on religion, inasmuch as through it the fear of God is instilled in all else but Him.” (*Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, pages 27-28)

“Fear God, and follow not your idle fancies. Nay, rather follow the bidding of your Lord, the Almighty, the All-Wise.” .” (*Gleanings*, page 346, sec. CLXVI)

“Lay not aside the fear of God, O ye the learned of the world, and judge fairly the Cause of this unlettered One to Whom all the Books of God, the Protector, the Self-Subsisting, have testified.” (*Gleanings*, page 98, sec. XLIV)

“He should cleanse his heart from all evil passions and corrupt desires, for the fear of God is the weapon that can render him victorious, the primary instrument whereby he can achieve his purpose. The fear of God is the shield that defendeth His Cause, the buckler that enableth His people to attain to victory. It is a standard that no man can abase, a force that no power can rival. By its aid, and by the leave of Him Who is the Lord of Hosts, they that have drawn nigh unto God have been able to subdue and conquer the citadels of the hearts of men.” (*Gleanings*, page 272, sec. CXXXVI)

“Cleanse from your hearts the love of worldly things, from your tongues every remembrance except His remembrance, from your entire being whatsoever may deter you from beholding His face, or may tempt you to follow the promptings of your evil and corrupt inclinations. Let God be your fear, O people, and be ye of them that tread the path of righteousness.” (*Gleanings*, page 275, sec. CXXXVIII)

“The spirit that animateth the human heart is the knowledge of God, and its truest adorning is the recognition of the truth that “He doeth whatsoever He willeth, and ordaineth that which He pleaseth.” Its raiment is the fear of God, and its perfection steadfastness in His Faith. Thus God instructeth whosoever seeketh Him. He, verily, loveth the one that turneth towards Him.” (*Gleanings*, page 291, sec. CXXXIV)

“Purify thou, first, thy soul with the waters of renunciation, and adorn thine head with the crown of the fear of God, and thy temple with the ornament of reliance upon Him.” (*Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, page 2)

“It is incumbent upon thee to summon the people, under all conditions, to whatever will cause them to show forth spiritual characteristics and goodly deeds, so that all may become aware of that which is the cause of human upliftment, and may, with the utmost endeavor, direct themselves towards the most sublime Station and the Pinnacle of Glory. The fear of God hath ever been the prime factor in the education of His creatures. Well is it with them that have attained thereunto!” (*Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, page 27)

“Every cause needeth a helper. In this Revelation the hosts which can render it victorious are the hosts of praiseworthy deeds and upright character. The leader and commander of these hosts hath ever been the fear of God, a fear that encompasseth all things, and reigneth over all things.” (*Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, page 26)

“The days of your life are far spent, O people, and your end is fast approaching. Put away, therefore, the things ye have devised and to which ye cleave, and take firm hold on the precepts of God, that haply ye may attain that which He hath purposed for you, and be of them that pursue a right course. Delight not yourselves in the things of the world and its vain ornaments, neither set your hopes on them. Let your reliance be on the remembrance of God, the Most Exalted, the Most Great. He will, ere long, bring to naught all the things ye possess. Let Him be your fear, and forget not His covenant with you, and be not of them that are shut out as by a veil from Him.” .” (*Gleanings*, pages 127-8, sec. LXVI)

“NOW 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.” (*Gleanings*, pages 175, sec. LXXXVIII)

THE VALLEY OF UNITY

1st paragraph, page 17 and 18

“...and drinketh from the cup of the Absolute,”

Note: The cup of the Absolute is the Word of God through the Manifestation, and we are now on the level where we drink in this Divine Knowledge and Understanding.

“be of them that have quaffed the cup of divine knowledge and understanding.” Drinking of this cup means to read, study, pray, meditate, and live by His Teachings. (*Kitáb-i-Íqán*, page 33)

“and gazeth on the Manifestation of Oneness.”

Note: We know that the Manifestations appear out of the realm of the spirit, in the noble form of the human body, so we may impart unto the world the mysteries of the unchangeable Being.

“These sanctified Mirrors, these Day-springs of ancient glory are one and all the Exponents on earth of Him who is the central Orb of the universe, its Essence and ultimate Purpose.” (*Kitáb-i-Íqán*, page 99)

“In this station he pierceth the veils of plurality”

Note: On this level of understanding we can see the spiritual single power behind the creation. We understand that there is One Source, One Knowledge.

“Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth is a direct evidence of the revelation within it and the attributes and names of God.” (*Kitáb-i-Íqán*, page 100)

“fleeth from the worlds of the flesh, and ascendeth into the heaven of singleness.”

Note: We know that all the Manifestations that appear in different ages and in different bodies reflect the same spirit, cause, power of God, and are not concerned with the human appearance of the Manifestations of God, and do not see the plurality of the Prophets, but see the oneness and singleness of God reflected as One Power.

“The Bearers of the Trust of God are made manifest unto the peoples of the earth as the Exponents of a new Cause and the Revealers of a new Message. Inasmuch as these Birds of the celestial Throne are all sent down from the heaven of the Will of God, and as they all arise to proclaim His irresistible Faith, they, therefore, are regarded as one soul and the same person. For they all drink from the one Cup of the love of God, and all partake of the fruit of the same Tree of Oneness.” (*Gleanings*, sec. XXII page 50)

“With the ear of God he heareth, and with the eye of God he beholdeth the mysteries of divine creation.”

Note: Through this point of view, we on this level of understanding see through the eye of oneness.

“He steppeth into the sanctuary of the Friend, and shareth as an intimate the pavilion of the Loved One.”

Note: We become aware that we are in the eternal realm of Bahá'u'lláh's protection, guidance, love and feel a very close association through our knowledge of His teachings; we privately feel that we are in a place where we can feel the warmth of the Love of their Beloved.

“O SON OF THE THRONE! Thy hearing is My hearing, hear thou therewith. Thy sight is My sight, do thou see therewith, that in thine inmost soul thou mayest testify unto My exalted sanctity, and I within Myself may bear witness unto an exalted station for thee.” (*The Hidden Words*, Arabic, No. 44)

“He stretcheth out the hand of truth from the sleeve of the Absolute; he revealeth the secrets of power.”

Note: Stretching out the hand of truth from the sleeve of the Absolute can mean that because it is written in the first part of the first sentence of this Valley, that we “drinketh from the cup of the Absolute” and now show this truth in our attitude, actions and way of life, revealing the secrets of His Power to the world as well as to ourselves. Day by day, our willpower increases, and the signs of God (virtues) become more apparent.

“Therefore I say unto you that ye should strive to follow the counsels of these Blessed Books, and so order your lives that ye may, following the examples set before you, become yourselves the saints of the Most High!” (‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Paris Talks*, page 62)

Sleeve = Manifestation

Hand or Truth = Teachings and Power

1st paragraph, page 17 and 18 continued

“He seeth in himself neither name nor fame nor rank, but findeth his own praise in praising God. He beholdeth in his own name the name of God; to him, ‘all songs are from the King,’ and every melody from Him.”

Note: While developing virtues and trying to become better, we are humble because we realize that this increased power is from God and not from ourselves; we are only the reflection by which the spirit of God becomes apparent. (The quote is from Persian Súfí poet Rumi–Mawlana).

“O SON OF SPIRIT! There is no peace for thee save by renouncing thyself and turning unto Me; for it behooveth thee to glory in My name, not in thine own; to put thy trust in Me and not in thyself, since I desire to be loved alone and above all that is.” (*The Hidden Words*, Arabic, No. 8)

“He sitteth on the throne of ‘Say, all is from God,’ and taketh his rest on the carpet of ‘There is no power or might but in God.’”

Note: We know that the essential cause is God; all things depend on Him. Good fortune and trials are from God. (From trials we learn and progress. However, some trials may be brought by our own actions – those are not from God but from ourselves).

The full quotation from the *Qur’an* 4:80 is: “*Say, all is from God. If good fortune betide them, they say, ‘This is from thee.’ And if evil betide them, they say ‘this is from thee.’ Say: All is from God: but what hath come to these people that they are not near to understanding what is told them. Whatever good betides thee is from God and whatever betides thee of evil is from thyself.*”

The full quotation from the *Qur’an* 18:37 is: “*There is no power but in God though thou seest that I have less than thou of wealth and children.*”

“He looketh on all things with the eye of oneness, and seeth the brilliant rays of the divine sun shining from the dawning-point of Essence alike on all created things, and the lights of singleness reflected over all creation.”

Note: We see the oneness of God reflected in the Manifestations:

“These holy realities are as reflectors, and the reality of divinity is as the sun which although it is reflected from the mirrors, and its virtues and perfections become resplendent therein, does not stoop from its own station of majesty and glory and seek abode in the mirrors; it remains in its heaven of sanctity. At most it is this, that its lights become manifest and evident in its mirrors or manifestations. Therefore its bounty proceeding from them is one bounty but the recipients of that bounty are many. This is the unity of God; this is oneness;—unity of divinity, holy above ascent or descent, embodiment, comprehension or idealization;—divine unity—the prophets are its mirrors; its lights are revealed through them; its virtues become resplendent in them, but the Sun of Reality never descends from its own highest point and station. This is unity, oneness, sanctity; this is glorification whereby we praise and adore God.” (*Foundations of World Unity*, page 68)

2nd paragraph, page 18 and 19

“It is clear to thine Eminence that all the variations which the wayfarer in the stages of his journey beholdeth in the realms of being, proceed from his own vision.”

Note: Bahá'u'lláh brings out to the person He is writing this tablet to (Shay Muhyi'd-Din), that He knows that whatever each of us understands during our spiritual progress is according to our own capacity.

Although the Spirit of God shines from the Manifestation over all of creation, the reflection from each is relative to the capacity of each created being. Therefore, each being is trained according to its own capacity.

“No vision taketh in Him, but He taketh in all vision;” (Qur'an 6:103).

Likewise, when the Manifestations appear, We reveal the Word according to the capacity and receptivity of humankind as a whole, thus: “Progressive Revelation” is relative to the capacity of each individual being and civilization as a whole.

“We shall give an example of this, that its meaning may become fully clear: Consider the visible sun; although it shineth with one radiance upon all things, and at the behest of the King of Manifestation bestoweth light on all creation, yet in each place it becometh manifest and sheddeth its bounty according to the potentialities of that place. For instance, in a mirror it reflecteth its own disk and shape, and this is due to the sensitivity of the mirror; in a crystal it maketh fire to appear, and in other things it showeth only the effect of its shining, but not its full disk. And yet, through that effect, by the command of the Creator, it traineth each thing according to the quality of that thing, as thou observest.”

Note: This example makes clear that although the radiance of the Manifestation shines on all creation, yet His light is reflected according to the possibilities of expression of each creature.

In *Bahá'í World Faith*, page 318, 'Abdu'l-Bahá says: "With regard to the innate character, although the divine creation is purely good, yet the varieties of natural qualities in man come from the difference of degree. So all mankind possess intelligence and capacities, but the intelligence, the capacity, and the worthiness of men differ. This is evident." And on page 319 He adds: "It is evident that in existence there are differences of degree."

3rd paragraph, page 19

"In like manner, colors become visible in every object according to the nature of that object. For instance, in a yellow globe, the rays shine yellow; in a white the rays are white; and in a red, the red rays are manifest. Then these variations are from the object, not from the shining light. And if a place be shut away from the light, as by walls or a roof, it will be entirely bereft of the splendor of the light, nor will the sun shine thereon."

Note: So now He gives another example to bring out that when the soul is on this level of understanding, and we see the oneness of God reflected in the Mirrors of Manifestation onto creation and creation reflects back according to its nature.

In *Bahá'í World Faith*, page 397-398 'Abdu'l-Bahá says: "No matter how much the shell is educated, it can never become the radiant pearl. The black stone will not become the world illumining gem. The calocynth and the thorny cactus can never by training and development become the blessed tree. That is to say, training doth not change the human gem, but it produceth a marvelous effect. By this effective power all that is registered latent of virtues and capacities in the human reality will be revealed."

In the last sentence of this paragraph He speaks of those of us who shut ourselves from the light, and so are entirely bereft of the splendor of the light, therefore are bereft of the grace and bounty of God. He speaks of these kind of people again in the next paragraph.

4th paragraph, page 19 and 20

"Thus it is that certain invalid souls have confined the lands of knowledge within the wall of self and passion, and clouded them with ignorance and blindness, and have been veiled from the light of the mystic sun and the mysteries of the Eternal Beloved;"

Note: Because of our egotism and ignorance, some souls do not recognize the Manifestation and so have been deprived of new knowledge.

“they have strayed afar from the jewelled wisdom of the lucid Faith of the Lord of Messengers, have been shut out of the sanctuary of the All-Beauteous One, and banished from the Ka‘bih of splendor. Such is the worth of the people of this age!”

Note: (Ka‘bih = Goal). We who have shut ourselves out from the Light have turned from the Wisdom and Knowledge and are going in the wrong direction, which is away from what we truly desire. We do not have the knowledge of God so are not able to have this knowledge show in our actions, so we cannot progress to the place where we would feel the love, protection and guidance of God. We do not recognize Bahá’u’lláh and so will not reach our goal... Such is the condition of the people of this age.

5th paragraph, page 20

“And if a nightingale soar upward from the clay of self and dwell in the rose bower of the heart, and in Arabian melodies and sweet Íránian songs recount the mysteries of God—“

Note: The “nightingale” refers to Bahá’u’lláh’s Manifestation. Bahá’u’lláh submitted to the Will of God, and brought forth His new teachings and Laws for this day in Arabic and in Persian.

“a single word of which quickeneth to fresh, new life the bodies of the dead, and bestoweth the Holy Spirit upon the moldering bones of this existence— “

Note: Through only a single word, such as the sovereignty of the Manifestation’s new spiritual life is infused into the spiritually dead and the moldering bones of this existence, which could mean the crumbling civilization in this day in this world is strengthened with the new measure of life through the Holy Spirit.

In *Kitáb-i-Íqán* pages 111-113, Bahá’u’lláh explains: “The following is an evidence of the sovereignty exercised by Muḥammad, the Day-star of Truth. Hast thou not heard how with one single verse He hath sundered light from darkness, the righteous from the ungodly, and the believing from the infidel? All the signs and allusions concerning the Day of Judgment, which thou hast heard, such as the raising of the dead, the Day of Reckoning, the Last Judgment, and others have been made manifest through the revelation of that verse. These revealed words were a blessing to the righteous who on hearing them exclaimed: ‘O God our Lord, we have heard, and obeyed.’ They were a curse to the people of iniquity who, on hearing them affirmed: ‘We have heard and rebelled.’ Those words, sharp as the sword of God, have separated the faithful from the infidel, and severed father from son. Thou hast surely witnessed how they that have confessed their faith in Him and they that rejected Him have warred against each other, and sought one another’s property. How many fathers have turned away from their

sons; how many lovers have shunned their beloved! So mercilessly trenchant was this wondrous sword of God that it cleft asunder every relationship! On the other hand, consider the welding power of His Word. Observe, how those in whose midst the Satan of self had for years sown the seeds of malice and hate became so fused and blended through their allegiance to this wondrous and transcendent Revelation that it seemed as if they had sprung from the same loins. Such is the binding force of the Word of God, which uniteth the hearts of them that have renounced all else but Him, who have believed in His signs, and quaffed from the Hand of glory the Kawthar of God's holy grace. Furthermore, how numerous are those peoples of divers beliefs, of conflicting creeds, and opposing temperaments, who, through the reviving fragrance of the Divine springtime, breathing from the Ridván of God, have been arrayed with the new robe of divine Unity, and have drunk from the cup of His singleness!"

("Kawthar" means abundance.)

"thou wilt behold a thousand claws of envy, a myriad beaks of rancor hunting after Him and with all their power intent upon His death."

Note: Those who are in power when the Manifestation appears, become intent on trying to destroy Him.

6th paragraph, page 20

"Yea, to the beetle a sweet fragrance seemeth foul, and to the man sick of a rheum a pleasant perfume is as naught. Wherefore, it hath been said for the guidance of the ignorant:

**'Cleanse thou the rheum from out thine head
And breathe the breath of God instead.'**

Note: He tells us that we were made to know Him and to Love Him, and to cleanse ourselves from the acquired knowledge and prejudice ("rheum") which is preventing us from seeing the truth. (The quote is from Persian Súfí poet Rumi–Mawlana).

In *Bahá'í World Faith*, page 320, 'Abdu'l-Bahá says: "...capacity is of two kinds, natural capacity and acquired capacity. The first, which is the creation of God, is purely good—in the creation of God there is no evil; but the acquired capacity has become the cause of the appearance of evil. For example, God has created all men in such a manner, and has given them such a constitution and such capacities, that they are benefited by sugar and honey, and harmed and destroyed by poison. This nature and constitution is innate, and God has given it equally to all mankind. But man begins little by little to accustom himself to poison, by taking a small quantity each day, and gradually increasing it, until he reaches such a point that he cannot live without a gram of opium every day. The natural capacities are thus completely perverted. Observe how much the natural capacity

and constitution can be changed, until by different habits and training they become entirely perverted. One does not criticize vicious people because of their innate capacities and nature, but rather for their acquired capacities and nature.”

7th paragraph, page 20 and 21

“In sum, the differences in objects hath now been made plain.”

Note: Bahá’u’lláh tells us that He has explained and made plain that God and the Manifestations reflecting God are one and shine on all creation, however, the objects reflect this Light in different ways depending on the capacity. Therefore, when we look at the objects, we will see the reflection from the object. If we look at the source, will find oneness.

“Thus when the wayfarer gazeth only upon the place of appearance—that is, when he seeth only the many-colored globes—he beholdeth yellow and red and white; hence it is that conflict hath prevailed among the creatures, and a darksome dust from limited souls hath hid the world.”

Note: When we just look at the object, in this case, the body of the Manifestation from age to age, we will see from a limited point of view and conflict will become strong among those who look through dusty point of view. We will be looking at the place of appearance of the Manifestation, not realizing that the body is but the vehicle.

“And some do gaze upon the if effulgence of the light:”

Note: The second point of view is those who look and see the Divine Spirit of One Manifestation only.

“and some have drunk of the wine of oneness in the see nothing but the sun itself.”

Note: The third point of view is belief in One Divine Spirit, emanating via the Manifestations.

“Were any of the all-embracing Manifestations of God to declare: ‘I am God!’ He, verily, speaketh the truth, and no doubt attacheth thereto. For it hath been repeatedly demonstrated that through their Revelation, their attributes and names, the Revelation of God, His name and His attributes, are made manifest in the world. Thus, He hath revealed: *‘Those shafts were God’s, not Thine!’* (Qur’an 8:17). And also He saith: *‘In truth, they who plighted fealty unto thee, really plighted that fealty unto God.’* (Qur’an 48:10) And were any of them to voice the utterance: “I am the Messenger of God,” He also speaketh the truth, the indubitable truth. Even as He saith: *‘Muhammad is not the father of any man among you, but He is the Messenger of God.’* (Qur’an 33:40) Viewed in this light, they are all but Messengers of that ideal King, that unchangeable Essence. And were they all to proclaim: ‘I am the Seal of the Prophets,’ they verily utter but the truth, beyond the faintest shadow of doubt. For they are all but one person, one soul, one spirit, one being, one revelation. They are all the manifestation of the ‘Beginning’ and the

‘End,’ the ‘First’ and the ‘Last,’ the ‘Seen’ and ‘Hidden’—all of which pertain to Him Who is the innermost Spirit of Spirits and eternal Essence of Essences. And were they to say: ‘We are the servants of God,’ this also is a manifest and indisputable fact. For they have been made manifest in the uttermost state of servitude, a servitude the like of which no man can possibly attain.” (*Kitáb-i-Íqán*, page 178)

8th paragraph, page 21

“Thus, for that they move on these three differing planes, the understanding and the words of the wayfarers have differed; and hence the sign of conflict doth continually appear on earth.”

Note: Because of these three points of view among the creatures, there is always conflict among us. There are three different types of believing:

“For some there our who dwell among the plane of oneness and speak of that world,”

Note: Type One: Some of us believe in Progressive Revelation and the Oneness of all of the Manifestations reflecting One Holy Spirit and share that knowledge with others.

“and some inhabit the realms of limitation,”

Note: Type Two: Some of us believe that only one of the Manifestations truly reflect the Holy Spirit, and limit their understanding and sharing accordingly.

“and some the grades of self,”

Note: Type Three: Some of us cloud our belief with a self-oriented view, or have a preoccupation with a particular place, time, and human body of a particular Manifestation, not realizing that bodies are but the vehicle of the Holy Spirit.

“while others are completely veiled.”

Note: Type Four: Some of us have closed our minds and do not believe in God or in any of His Manifestations, and are not receptive to searching for the Truth.

“Thus do the ignorant people of the day, who have no portion of the radiance of Divine Beauty, make certain claims, and in every age and cycle inflict on the people of the sea of oneness what they themselves deserve.

‘Should God punish men for their perverse doings, He would not leave on earth a moving thing! But to an appointed term doth He respite them...’”

Note: Not believing in the new Manifestation, so not being able to benefit from the Divine Wisdom, some of us mislead others, and through their lives, some of us remain ignorant, and are misled, and the Manifestation and His followers are persecuted. This happens whenever the Manifestation appears.

The full quotation is: *“Should God punish men for their perverse doings, he would not leave on earth the moving thing! But to an appointed term doth He respite them; and when their term is come, they shall not delay or advance it an hour.”* (Qur’an, 16:63)

“Leaders of religion, in every age, that hindered their people from attaining the shores of eternal salvation, inasmuch as they held the reins of authority in their mighty grasp. Some for the lust of leadership, others through want of knowledge and understanding, have been the cause of deprivation of the people. By their sanction and authority, every Prophet of God hath drunk from the chalice of sacrifice, in winged His flight unto the heights of glory. What unspeakable cruelties they that have occupied the seats of authority and learning have inflicted upon the true Monarchs of the world, those Gems of divine virtue! Content with a transitory dominion, they have deprived themselves of an everlasting sovereignty. Thus, their eyes beheld not the light of the countenance of the Well-Beloved nor did their ears hearken unto the sweet melodies of the Bird of Desire.” (Kitáb-i-Íqán, page 15)

“We have a fixed time for you, O people. If ye fail, at the appointed hour, to turn towards God, He, verily, will lay violent hold on you, and will cause grievous afflictions to assail you from every direction. How severe, indeed, is the chastisement with which your Lord will then chastise you!” (Gleanings, sec. CVIII page 214)

9th paragraph, page 21 and 22

“O My Brother! A pure heart is as a mirror; cleanse it with the burnish of love and severance from all save God, that the true sun may shine within it and the eternal morning dawn. Then wilt thou clearly see the meaning of ‘Neither doth My earth nor My heaven contain Me, but the heart of My faithful servant containeth Me.’”

Note: Bahá’u’lláh here asks us to cleanse our heart, because it is like a mirror and cannot reflect much unless clean. We do this through our love, not mere words, but deeds, actions, detachment of the things of this world, of our own personal desires, and attachment to His Teachings and His Will. When we do this, we will more and more become aware of the meaning of the quotation above from the Qur’an. (The quotation is “Hadith”, i.e., utterance traditionally attributed to the Prophet Muhammad or to one of the holy Imams).

“O SON OF DUST! All that is in heaven and earth I have ordained for thee, except the human heart, which I have made the habitation of My beauty and glory;...” (The Hidden Words, Persian, No. 27)

“Unlock, O people, the gates of the hearts of men with the keys of the remembrance of Him Who is the Remembrance of God and the Source of wisdom amongst you. He hath chosen out of the whole world the hearts of His servants, and made them each a seat for the revelation of His glory. Wherefore, sanctify them from every defilement, that the things for which they were created may be engraven upon them. This indeed is a token of God’s bountiful favor.” (*Gleanings*, sec. CXXXVI pages 296-297)

Remembering Him is being conscious of Him, and that our hearts are as mirrors, reflecting His names, attributes, and perfections.

In *Bahá’í World Faith*, page 310-311 ‘Abdu’l-Bahá explains: “Without doubt each being is the center of the shining forth of the glory of God: that is to say, the perfections of God appear from it and are resplendent in it. It is like the sun, which is resplendent in the desert, upon the sea, in the trees, in the fruits and blossoms, and in all earthly things. The world, indeed each existing being, proclaims to us one of the names of God, but the reality of man is the collective reality, the general reality, and is the center where the glory of all the perfections of God shine forth. That is to say, for each name, each attribute, each perfection which we affirm of God, there exists a sign in man; if it were otherwise, man could not imagine these perfections, and could not understand them. So we say that God is the seer, and the eye is the sign of His vision; if this sight were not in man, how could we imagine the vision of God? for the blind, that is one born blind, cannot imagine sight; and the deaf, that is one deaf from birth, cannot imagine hearing; and the dead cannot realize life. Consequently the Divinity of God, which is the sum of all perfections, reflects itself in the reality of man; that is to say, the Essence of Oneness is the gathering of all perfections, and from this unity He casts a reflection upon the human reality. Man then is the perfect mirror facing the Sun of Truth, and is the center of radiation: the Sun of Truth shines in this mirror. The reflection of the divine perfections appears in the reality of man, so he is the representative of God, the messenger of God. If man did not exist, the universe would be without result, for the object of existence is the appearance of the perfections of God.”

In *Bahá’í World Faith*, page 362 ‘Abdu’l-Bahá says: “if thou seekest to be intoxicated with the cup of the Most Mighty Gift, cut thyself in the world and be quit of self and desire. Exert thyself night and day until spiritual powers may penetrate the heart and soul. Abandon the body and the material, until the merciful powers may become manifest; because not only until the soul is become pure will it develop through the heavenly bounty; not until the heart is purified, will the radiance of the Sun of Truth shine therein. I beg of God that thou wilt day by day increase the purity of thy heart the cheerfulness of thy soul, the light of thy insight and the search for Truth.”

“And thou wilt take up thy life in thine hand, and with infinite longing cast it before the new Beloved One.”

Note: Now we, with new knowledge and understanding, long to give up our lives to the Beloved One. This is new to us because before this, we were not conscious of the Beloved in reality. Now detached from self we long to dedicate our lives, time, energies and possessions for the one

single purpose: service to humankind, through love of the Beloved. Having achieved the level of “forget thyself”, our personal lives will become secondary. We long to fulfill the purpose for which we were created: to acquire virtues, know and love God, and carry forth the ever-advancing civilization.

10th paragraph, page 22

“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.”

Note: When we reach this level of understanding, it becomes visible in our actions and deeds and through this civilization progresses in the visible world.

In *Bahá’í World Faith*, page 272 of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá says: “When a movement fundamentally religious makes a weak nation strong, changes a nondescript tribal people into a mighty and powerful civilization, rescues them from captivity and elevates them to sovereignty, transforms their ignorance into knowledge and endows them with an impetus of advancement in all degrees of development—(this is not theory, but historical fact)—it becomes evident that religion is the cause of man’s attainment to honor and sublimity.”

“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....’”

Note: At this time, we who have the light of the Manifestation reflecting in the mirror of our hearts know that we are His servants, and that our lives must be as a prayer if we wish to reflect our Beloved and fulfill the purpose for which we were created, and know that this is done through His power.

The following five quotations are by Bahá’u’lláh from the book *Du'a-On Wings of Prayer* by Ruth Mofett, as approved by the Guardian, Shoghi Effendi:

“Know that nothing will benefit thee in this life save supplication and invocation unto God, service in His vineyard, and, with the heart a full love, to be in constant servitude unto Him.”

“Prayer and supplication our two wings whereby Man soars toward the heavenly mansion of the True One. However, verbal repetition of prayer does not suffice. One must live in a continual attitude of prayer. When Man is spiritually free his mind becomes the altar of prayer and his heart the sanctuary of prayer. Then the meaning of the verse will lift up from before his eyes the veil, become fulfilled in him. ‘lift up from before his eyes the veil,’ will become fulfilled in him.”

”Know thou, verily, it is becoming of a weak one to supplicate to the strong One and it behooveth a seeker of bounty to beseech the Glorious, the Bountiful one. When one supplicates to his Lord, turns to Him and seeks bounty from His Ocean, the supplication by itself a light to his heart, an illumination to his sight, a life to a soul and exultation to his being.”

“Divine spirit, in sincere prayer, enters through the unobstructed channels of the soul, permeating more and more the cells of the being until they become radiant with light and power, truly a temple of God!”

“Turn thy site unto thyself, that thou mayest find Me abiding in the Mighty, Powerful and Self – Subsisting”.

“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.”

Note: So the light shining within us is from God, – the Cause, our actions are but the effect of that light. God is the Cause. We are the instrument through which the effects become visible (in the person, and then in civilization). Thus, those effects, those achievements are realized through the Will of God.

“O BEFRIENDED STRANGER! The candle of thine heart is lighted by the hand of My power, quench it not with the contrary winds of self and passion. The healer of all thine ills is remembrance of Me, forget it not. Make My love thy treasure and cherish it even as thy very sight and life.” (*The Hidden Words*, Persian, No. 32)

“O SON OF HIM THAT STOOD BY HIS OWN ENTITY IN THE KINGDOM OF HIS SELF! Know thou, that I have wafted unto thee all the fragrances of holiness, have fully revealed to thee My word, have perfected through thee My bounty and have desired for thee that which I have desired for My Self. Be then content with My pleasure and thankful unto Me.” (*The Hidden Words*, Arabic, No. 70)

“...Turn thy sight unto thyself, that thou mayest find Me standing within thee, mighty, powerful and self-subsisting.” (*The Hidden Words*, Arabic, end of No. 13)

In Bahá'í World Faith, page 367 ‘Abdu’l-Bahá says: “Souls are like unto mirrors, and the bounty of God is like unto the sun. When the mirrors pass beyond all coloring and attain purity and polish, and are confronted with the sun, they will reflect in full perfection its light and glory. In this condition one should not consider the mirror, but the power of the light of the sun, which hath penetrated the mirror, making it a reflector of the heavenly glory.”

“And this is the that spring whereof the near ones drink, as it is said: ‘a fount whereof the near unto God shall drink...’”

Note: This “*fount whereof the near unto God shall drink*” (*Qur’an* 83:28). is the vivifying power of God, sustaining the true believer at all times.

“The second Tajallí is to remain steadfast in the Cause of God—exalted be His glory—and to be unswerving in His love. And this can in no wise be attained except through full recognition of Him; and full recognition cannot be obtained save by faith in the blessed words: ‘He doeth whatsoever He willeth.’ Whoso tenaciously cleaveth unto this sublime word and drinketh deep from the living waters of utterance which are inherent therein, will be imbued with such a constancy that all the books of the world will be powerless to deter him from the Mother Book. O how glorious is this sublime station, this exalted rank, this ultimate purpose!” (*Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh*, page 51)

11th paragraph, page 22 and 23

“However, let none construe these utterances to be anthropomorphism, nor see in them the descent of the worlds of God into the grades of the creatures; nor should they lead thine Eminence to such assumptions.”

Note: Bahá’u’lláh wants to be sure that his eminence, Shaykh Muhyid-Din, does not misunderstand what He has explained and cast his belief in a physical, anthropomorphic vision of what the Manifestations are.

“For God is, in His Essence, holy above ascent and descent, entrance and exit; He hath through all eternity been free of the attributes of human creatures, and ever will remain so. No man hath ever known Him; no soul hath ever found the pathway to His Being. Every mystic knower hath wandered far astray in the valley of the knowledge of Him; every saint hath lost his way in seeking to comprehend His Essence.”

Note: Because God is unknowable, those who try to know Him in His Essence, no matter how pious we are will be lost because the only way to know His Essence is through the Manifestations, and by knowing the Manifestations, we reach the Presence of God:

“To every discerning and illuminated heart it is evident that God, the unknowable Essence, the Divine Being, is immensely exalted beyond every human attribute, such as corporeal existence, ascent and descent, egress and regress. Far be it from His glory that human tongue should adequately recount His praise, or that human heart comprehend His fathomless mystery. He is, and hath ever been, veiled in the ancient eternity of His Essence, and will remain in His Reality everlastingly hidden from the sight of men. ‘No vision taketh in Him, but He taketh in all vision; He is the Subtle, the All-

Perceiving.’ ...The door of the knowledge of the Ancient of Days being thus closed in the face of all beings, the Source of infinite grace, according to His saying, ‘His grace hath transcended all things; My grace hath encompassed them all,’ hath caused those luminous Gems of Holiness to appear out of the realm of the spirit, in the noble form of the human temple, and be made manifest unto all men, that they may impart unto the world the mysteries of the unchangeable Being, and tell of the subtleties of His imperishable Essence.” (*Gleanings*, sec. XIX pages 46-47)

“By attaining, therefore, to the presence of these holy Luminaries, the ‘Presence of God’ Himself is attained.” (*Kitáb-i-Íqán*, page 142)

“Sanctified is He above the understanding of the wise; exalted is He above the knowledge of the knowing! The way is barred and to seek it is impiety; His proof is His signs; His being is His evidence.”

Note: Humankind cannot understand the reality of God because God exists on a higher level. To seek to understand the reality of God is a sign of immaturity unless we seek the Manifestation of God, Whose signs provide proof of the Unknowable Essence.

Bahá’í World Faith, page 310: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá says: “We have many times demonstrated and established that Man is the noblest of beings, the sum of all perfections, and that all beings and all existences are the centers from which the glory of God is reflected, that is to say, the signs of the Divinity of God are apparent in the realities of things and of creatures.”

We can see the signs of God in all creation, especially in humankind.

12 paragraph, page 23

“Wherefore, the lovers of the face of the Beloved have said: ‘O Thou, the One Whose Essence alone showeth the way to His Essence, and Who is sanctified above any likeness to His creatures.’”

Note: So on this level of understanding we know that it is through the Manifestation that we will be shown the way to the Divine Essence and also that the Manifestation is on such a higher plane that we, His servants, cannot comprehend Him. (The quotation is “Hadith”, i.e., utterance traditionally attributed to the Prophet Muhammad or to one of the holy Imams).

“O SON OF MAN! My majesty is My gift to thee, and My grandeur the token of My mercy unto thee. That which beseemeth Me none shall understand, nor can anyone recount. Verily, I have preserved it in My hidden storehouses and in the treasures of My command, as a sign of My loving-kindness unto My servants and My mercy unto My people.” (*The Hidden Words*, Arabic, No. 65)

Note: The manifestations are on a higher level so we cannot comprehend with our limited capacity.

“How can utter nothingness gallop its steed in the field of preexistence, or a fleeting shadow reach to the everlasting sun?”

Note: How can we, the created, understand our creator?

“Gracious God! How could there be conceived any existing relationship or possible connection between His Word and they that are created of it?” (*Kitáb-i-Íqán*, page 98)

In *Bahá'í World Faith*, page 298 ‘Abdu’l-Bahá says: “This composition and arrangement through the wisdom of God and His pre-existent might, were produced from one natural organization, which was composed and combined with the greatest strength, conformably to wisdom, and according to a universal law. This is the creation of God. This is why from every natural composition a being can come into existence. For example, if a man of his own mind and intelligence collects some elements and combines them, a living being cannot be brought into existence, since the system is unnatural. This is the answer to the implied question, that, since beings are made by the composition and the combination of elements, why is it not possible for us to gather elements and mingle them together, and so create a living being. This is a false supposition, for the origin of this composition is from God; it is God who makes the combination, and as it is done according to the natural system, from each composition one being is produced, and existence is realized. A composition made by Man produces nothing.”

“The Friend hath said, ‘But for Thee, we had not known Thee,’ and the beloved hath said ‘Nor attained Thy presence.’”

Note: ("The Friend" refers to The Prophet Muhammad.) These quotations explain it is because of God that we were created and it is through His power that we can become conscious of Him. And the presence of God is attained through accepting the Manifestation, because it is through the Manifestation that we can know God, He is the intermediary through whom the unity between us and God can be achieved; otherwise we cannot reach His Presence.

13th paragraph, page 23 and 24, cont.

“Yea, these mentionings that have been made of the grades of knowledge relate to the knowledge of the Manifestations of that Sun of Reality, which casteth Its light upon the Mirrors.”

Note: Bahá'u'lláh says that what He has been mentioning about the grades of knowledge is the knowledge that the Mirrors of the Manifestations are reflections from God's light.

Bahá'í World Faith page 21 Bahá'u'lláh says: “He hath manifested unto men the Day Stars of His Divine guidance, the Symbols of His divine unity, and hath ordained the knowledge of these sanctified Beings to be identical with the knowledge of His own self. Whoso recognizeth them hath recognized God.”

13th paragraph, page 23 and 24

“And the splendor of that light is in the hearts, yet it is hidden under the veilings of sense and the conditions of this earth, even as a candle within a lantern of iron, and only when the lantern is removed doth the light of the candle shine out.”

Note: And so the splendor of the light, the knowledge of God shining from the Mirrors of the Manifestations is in the hearts, yet in some this light is hidden because some of us are ruled by our senses and by material things.

Bahá'í World Faith, page 390 ‘Abdu’l-Bahá says: “The Sun of Reality hath appeared to all the world. This luminous appearance is salvation and life; but only he who hath opened the eyes of reality and who hath seen these lights will be saved.”

14th paragraph, page 24

“In like manner, when thou strippest the wrappings of illusion from off thine heart, the lights of oneness will be made manifest.”

Note: When we take away from our hearts and minds all the acquired knowledge, and whatever we thought was truth, and trusts God, the True Reality of Oneness will appear in our hearts and we will become aware of Truth.

“Dear friend! Now when the light of God’s everlasting Morn is breaking; when the radiance of His holy words: ‘*God is the light of the heavens and of the earth*’ is shedding illumination upon all mankind; when the inviolability of His tabernacle is being proclaimed by His sacred utterance: ‘*God hath willed to perfect His light;*’ and the Hand of omnipotence, bearing His testimony: “In His grasp He holdeth the kingdom of all things,” is being outstretched unto all the peoples and kindreds of the earth; it behooveth us to gird up the loins of endeavour, that haply, by the grace and bounty of God, we may enter the celestial City: ‘Verily, we are God’s,’ and abide within the exalted habitation: ‘And unto Him we do return.’ It is incumbent upon thee, by the permission of God, to cleanse the eye of thine heart from the things of the world, that thou mayest realize the infinitude of divine knowledge, and mayest behold Truth so clearly that thou wilt need no proof to demonstrate His reality, nor any evidence to bear witness unto His testimony.”
(*Kitáb-i-Íqán*, pages 90-91)

Note: Quotations are from *Qur’an* 24:35 and 9:33.

15th paragraph, page 24

“Then it is clear that even for the rays there is neither entrance nor exit—how much less for that Essence of Being and that longed-for Mystery.”

Note: So now it is clear that the light of God has neither entrance nor exit; it is always present, the light of God from the Mirrors of Manifestations. This being clear and evident now, how much less is it possible for the Essence of Being to be anything but Oneness.

Bahá'í World Faith page 99 Bahá'u'lláh says: “Gracious God! He, verily, is one and indivisible; one in His essence, one in His attributes.” And on page 101: “Consider, in like manner, the revelation of the light of the Name of God, the Incomparable. Behold, how the light hath enveloped the entire creation, how each and every thing manifesteth the sign of His Unity, testifieth to the reality of Him who is the Eternal Truth, proclaimeth His sovereignty, His oneness and His power. This revelation is a token of His mercy that hath encompassed all created things.”

“O My Brother, journey upon these planes in the spirit of search, not in blind imitation. A true wayfarer will not be kept back by the bludgeon of words nor debarred by the warning of allusions.”

Note: Bahá'u'lláh explains that to find Truth, we must really travel in the “spirit of search”. In short, this “spirit of search” is to have a purified heart, trust in God and follow His teachings and laws. Bahá'u'lláh does not want us to follow the advice of others or to be influenced by anyone, but to be independent.

**“How shall a curtain part the lover and the loved one?
Not Alexander's wall can separate them!”**

Note: Bahá'u'lláh brings out that a we will not be kept back from searching for Truth in the way that He wants us to search. The words and warnings of others are as nothing to us. Nothing will stop us, there is no curtain of vain imaginings separating us from the journey toward our Beloved. There is no wall that can stop us because we know we are being guided to the Truth. (This quotation is from Hafiz: Shamsu'd-Din Mohammad, of Shiraz, died in 1389, one of the greatest Persian poets).

“Only when the lamp of search, of earnest striving, of longing desire, of passionate devotion, of fervid love, of rapture, and ecstasy, is kindled within the seeker's heart, and the breeze of His loving-kindness is wafted upon his soul, will the darkness of error be dispelled, the mists of doubts and misgivings be dissipated, and the lights of knowledge and certitude envelop his being. At that hour will the mystic Herald, bearing the joyful tidings of the Spirit, shine forth from the City of God resplendent as the morn, and, through the trumpet-blast of knowledge, will awaken the heart, the soul, and the spirit from the slumber of negligence. Then will the manifold favors and outpouring grace of

the holy and everlasting Spirit confer such new life upon the seeker that he will find himself endowed with a new eye, a new ear, a new heart, and a new mind. He will contemplate the manifest signs of the universe, and will penetrate the hidden mysteries of the soul. Gazing with the eye of God, he will perceive within every atom a door that leadeth him to the stations of absolute certitude. He will discover in all things the mysteries of divine Revelation and the evidences of an everlasting manifestation.”
(*Kitáb-i-Íqán* pages 195-6)

16th paragraph, pages 24-25

“Secrets are many, but strangers are myriad. Volumes will not suffice to hold the mystery of the Beloved One, nor can it be exhausted in these pages, although it be no more than a word, no more than a sign. ‘Knowledge is a single point, but the ignorant have multiplied it.’”

Note: The quotation is from the Ḥadīth, (i.e. report of an action or utterance traditionally attributed to the Prophet Muhammad or to one of the holy Imáms). The Mysteries of God are many, but those who are not aware have made innumerable aspects out of what is in reality, oneness. There cannot be enough books to hold these Mysteries – and these pages about the Seven Valleys will not explain all the Mysteries, however these Mysteries are no more than a word, no more than a sign, Mysteries are the Knowledge of God and God is one so Knowledge is a single point, but those were not aware of this have multiplied this Knowledge and so have made many countless knowledges from the one point of knowledge.

“O SON OF MAN! Veiled in My immemorial being and in the ancient eternity of My essence, I knew My love for thee; therefore I created thee, have engraved on thee Mine image and revealed to thee My beauty.” (*The Hidden Words*, Arabic, No. 3)

Bahá’í World Faith, page 396 ‘Abdu’l-Bahá says: “The light hath a center and if one desire to seek it otherwise but from the center, he can never attain to it. In this solar system the source of light is the sun and every light is acquired from it; even the lamps of the night are ignited through the sun, for if there were no sun the trees would not grow nor the mines develop, so that the oil be extracted from those trees and mines, and the lamps of the night be lit by it. Is it possible that one attain to the light in this globular sphere without the mediation of the sun? No, by the life of God! To suppose it, is pure imagination. But the truth is this: The main source of the lights is the sun and the rays are shed from it upon all the regions.”

17th paragraph, page 25

“On this same basis, ponder likewise the differences among the worlds. Although the divine worlds be never ending, yet some refer to them as four:”

“The world of time (zamán), which is the one that hath both a beginning and an end;”

Note: This world of time has a beginning and an end: the composition of our bodies have a beginning (birth) and an end (death). This is a cycle of composition and decomposition, in this point of view we can see a beginning and end in the bodies.

“the world of duration (dahr), which hath a beginning, but whose end is not revealed;”

Note: Bodies are composed of atoms. When the body decomposes, the atoms are not destroyed but simply go into another level of existence, the mineral kingdom. So in this point of view, there is a beginning of a form, but what the form is made up of has no end. Also there is the beginning of the consciousness of the our rational souls: to “Know and to Love God”. The rational soul, human spirit, is enriched by the experiences of its life through the body and brain. When the body is decomposed the soul (spirit) does not end but goes into the spiritual world.

“the world of perpetuity (sarmad), whose beginning is not to be seen but which is known to have an end;”

Note: It has no visible beginning because this is the Power which is always present, changeless, continuous, eternal, the Spirit of God. The power was in existence before the formation of the body of humankind, thus in relation to humankind, the Spirit of God has no beginning. The creation (us) is a composition of matter, animated by the universal Spirit of God. The creature, (us) reflects the spirit during its lifetime. When the creature (us) decomposes, the reflection of the spirit of God through this creature comes to an end.

“and the world of eternity (azal), neither a beginning nor an end of which is visible.”

Note: It is the Spirit of God in relation to its reflection in the creation.

“the love of God towards the Self or Identity of God. This is the transfiguration of His Beauty, the reflection of Himself in the mirror of His Creation. This is the reality of love, the Ancient Love, the Eternal Love. Through one ray of this Love all other love exists.”
(*The Divine Art of Living*, page 98)

“Although there are many differing statements as to these points, to recount them in detail would result in weariness. Thus, some have said that the world

of perpetuity hath neither beginning nor end, and have named the world of eternity as the invisible, impregnable, Empyrean.”

Note: The reflection of the Holy Spirit on the creature is reflecting until the creature decomposes and continues to reflect because the elements (atoms) which made up the body are still in existence in another form, the mineral level. So the reflection is always there, with no beginning and no end. (Empyrean = Invisible and impregnable.)

“Others have called these the worlds of the Heavenly Court (Láhút), of the Empyrean Heaven (Jabarút), of the Kingdom of the Angels (Malakút), and of the mortal world (Násút).”

Note: Here Bahá’u’lláh lists these same four worlds under alternative names.

18th paragraph, page 25

“The journeys in the pathway of love are reckoned as four: from the creatures to the True One; from the True One to the creatures; from the creatures to the creatures; from the True One to the True One.”

Note: He tells us here that the four worlds correspond to the four journeys in the pathway of love as was previously mentioned – the four loves.

“Love is only of the four kinds that I have explained. (a) The love of God towards the identity of God. Christ has said God is Love. (b) The love of God for His children—for His servants. (c) The love of man for God and (d) the love of man for man. These four kinds of love originate from God. These are rays from the Sun of Reality; these are the Breathings of the Holy Spirit; these are the Signs of the Reality. (‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Paris Talks*, page 181)

From the creatures to the True One	>	The love of humankind for God
From the True One to the creatures	>	The love of God for his children
From the creatures to the creatures	>	The love of us for each other
From the True One to the True One	>	The love of God towards the identity of God

“The third is the love of God towards the Self or Identity of God. This is the transfiguration of His Beauty, the reflection of Himself in the mirror of His Creation. This is the reality of love, the Ancient Love, the Eternal Love. Through one ray of this Love all other love exists.” (‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Paris Talks*, page 180)

19th paragraph, page 26

“There is many an utterance of the mystic seers and doctors of former times which I have not mentioned here, since I dislike the copious citation from sayings of the past; for quotation from the words of others proveth acquired learning, not the divine bestowal.”

“Since the Sanctified Realities, the supreme Manifestations of God, surround the essence and qualities of the creatures, transcend and contain existing realities and understand all things, therefore, Their knowledge is divine knowledge, and not acquired—that is to say, it is a holy bounty; it is a divine revelation.” (*Some Answered Questions*, page 181)

“Even so much as We have quoted here is out of deference to the wont of men and after the manner of the friends. Further, such matters beyond the scope of this epistle. Our unwillingness to recount their sayings is not from pride, rather is it a manifestation of wisdom and a demonstration of grace.”

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

Note: The acquired knowledge being limited, is unable to see the end in the beginning; unable to see in the wreckage of the vessel is a blessing in disguise. (The quote is from Persian Sūfī poet Rumi–Mawlana).

“The knowledge of things which men universally have is gained by reflection or by evidence—that is to say, either by the power of the mind the conception of an object is formed, or from beholding an object the form is produced in the mirror of the heart. The circle of this knowledge is very limited because it depends upon effort and attainment.” (*Some Answered Questions*, page 180)

Note: So it is obvious that He should teach us through His Perfect knowledge, not through the limited imperfect knowledge of others. In the introduction of *The Seven Valleys* (1954) page XVI this verse is explained:

“...the verses from Rūmī about Khidr refer to the story in the *Qur’ān* (Sura 18:71) about the Divine Messenger whom Moses accompanied in pursuit of guidance. They embarked in a ship which the Messenger proceeded to wreck. This action astonished Moses. ‘What!’ said Moses, ‘hast Thou staved it in so that Thou mayest drown its crew?’ Later, the Messenger explained that the vessel ‘belonged to poor men who toiled the sea, and I was minded to damage it, for in their rear was a king who seized every ship by force.’”

Note: The incident has a twofold meaning. The first is that we should not weigh in our defective scales the actions of our Creator; the second, that a heaven–sent calamity maybe provincial and merciful.

“Otherwise, this Servant regardeth Himself as utterly lost and as nothing, even beside one of the beloved of God, how much less in the presence of His holy ones. Exalted be My Lord, the Supreme!”

Note: Speaking of Himself as a human being, Bahá'u'lláh considers Himself “less than anyone else.”

“Moreover, our aim is to recount the stages of the wayfarer’s journey, not to set forth the conflicting utterances of the mystics.”

Note: And He reminds us that His aim is to tell us about the stages of the journey of the soul, not to quote what other people say and write, which is limiting and conflicting.

20th paragraph, page 26 and 27

“Although a brief example hath been given concerning the beginning and ending of the relative world, the world of attributes, yet a second illustration is now added, that the full meaning may be manifest.”

Note: Bahá'u'lláh has given us an example about the four worlds, the four loves using relativity and attributes to illustrate and tell us that He will give us another illustration to explain, so we can understand fully.

In *Bahá'í World Faith*, page 97, He says: “Know thou that every created thing is a sign of the revelation of God. Each, according to its capacities is, and will ever remain, a token of the Almighty. Inasmuch as He, the sovereign Lord of all, Hath willed to reveal His sovereignty in the kingdom of names and attributes, each and every created thing hath, through the act of his Divine will, been made a sign of His glory.”

Each created thing is a sign of His glory, when we ponder on this through His Words explaining the four Divine Worlds which are revealed in creation as names and attributes, we will come to understand more fully Divine Unity.

“For instance, let thy Eminence consider his own self;”

Note: Bahá'u'lláh asks the receiver of this letter to think about his own self and by doing this, we will be able to understand His explanation.

“thou art first in relation to thy son,”

Note: In relation to your son you were born first.

“last in relation to thy father.”

Note: In relation to your parent you were born last, so you are both first and last.

“In thine outward appearance, thou tellest of the appearance of power in the realms of divine creation;”

Note: Our outward appearance, is our bodies and actions. Through our bodies and actions, we reveal the spiritual love of God. Through our bodies we see the actions with outward eyes.

“in thine inward being thou revealest the hidden mysteries which are the divine trust deposited within thee.”

Note: Referring to the soul, which is hidden to the outer world. As far as seeing this spirit in the outer world, we cannot (we only see the expression of it) this divine trust deposited within is our true reality. The outer eye of the body does not see the hidden mysteries; this divine trust is hidden from the outer world.

“And thus firstness and lastness, outwardness and inwardness are, in the sense referred to, true of thyself,”

Note: So when we look at our own selves, we can see and understand that we are first in relation to our child, last in relation to our parent, and we are seen in relation to our body, and hidden in relation to our spirit. So these four states are within us: first, last, seen and hidden (One).

“that in these four states conferred upon thee thou shouldst comprehend the four divine states,”

Note: He wants us to compare these four states within ourselves define states so we can understand ourselves. Four worlds; four loves = (One)

“and that the nightingale of thine heart on all the branches of the rose tree of existence, whether visible or concealed, should cry out: ‘*He is the first and the last, the Seen and the Hidden*’”

Note: (Quote from *Qur’an* 57:3) When we understand, the truth will cry out from our hearts that everything whether it be seen or hidden the Divine Unity of God. Thus, the material world, is simply the expression of the Divine Unity of the unseen, the spiritual world, the Knowledge of God, expressed according to its endowed capacity to a fixed degree.

“It should be borne in mind, however, that when the light of My Name, the All-Pervading, hath shed its radiance upon the universe, each and every created thing hath, according to a fixed decree, been endowed with the capacity to exercise a particular influence, and been made to possess a distinct virtue.” (*Gleanings*, sec. XCIII page 189)

“They are all the manifestation of the ‘Beginning and the End’ and ‘First and the Last’ the Seen and Hidden.” (*Kitáb-i-Íqán*, page 179)

Note: So God who is unknowable to us except through the Manifestation, is “First, Last, Seen and Hidden”. On this level of understanding is UNITY=ONENESS!

21st paragraph, pages 27-28

“These statements are made in the sphere of that which is relative, because of the limitations of men.”

Note: Bahá’u’lláh explains that these statements about first, last, seen and hidden, have been explained in the viewpoint of relativity, because we are living in this world of creation, which is a world of relativity. We are limited to reasoning in this way, but through this way, we can see the same universal pattern, and the same unifying principle, and all of creation and so can see unity in all of creation.

“Otherwise, those personages who in a single step have passed over the world of the relative and the limited, and dwelt on the fair plan of the Absolute and pitched their tent in the worlds of authority and command”

Note: We can rise above the world of relativity through our inner eyes, ears, and minds, and so are aware of the unlimited world, the world of the Absolute, the world of Oneness, and view unity from this point of view, influenced and strengthened by submission to His Will: the point of view of Oneness.

“O SON OF LOVE! Thou art but one step away from the glorious heights above and from the celestial tree of love. Take thou one pace and with the next advance into the immortal realm and enter the pavilion of eternity. Give ear then to that which hath been revealed by the Pen of Glory.” (*The Hidden Words*, Persian, No. 7)

“– have burned away these relativities with a single spark,”

Note: He spoke of a single step and now He says a single spark, single means one. There is only one way a soul can rise above relativity while still live in the world of names and attributes, the relative world (sometimes quickly).

Bahá’í World Faith, page 100 Bahá’u’lláh says: “The potency infused into all created things is the direct consequence of the revelation of this most blessed Name. Glorified be He, Who is the Creator of all names and attributes! Cast into the fire the tree that hath rot and dried up, and abide under the shadow of the green in goodly Tree, and partake of the fruit thereof.”

“and blotted out these words with a single drop of dew.”

Note: Again He speaks of one, (single) drop of dew. Dew is something we see in the early morning – morn. Through the Morn of Guidance, we are educated, influenced and guided to a new knowledge, new meaning, and new life. With this new awareness and point of view, we blot out the limitations of relativity. In this high level of understanding there is no relativity, and therefore no opposites.

“And they swim in the sea of the spirit, and soar in the holy air of light”

Note: Sea, air, light, if we think about them shows us a oneness. One sea, one air, one light, the same way, one spirit. When we reach this level of understanding, we know and see only unity and oneness.

Bahá'í World Faith, page 100 Bahá'u'lláh says: “He is really a believer in the Unity of God who recognizeth in each and every created thing the sign of the revelation of Him who is the Eternal Truth.”

“Then what life have words, on such a plane, that, ‘first’ and ‘last’ or other than these be seen or mentioned!”

Note: So on this level of understanding, words have no meaning. What life does a word have?

“In this realm, the first is the last itself, and the last is but the first”

Note: On this level of understanding, first is last and last is first. So what appear to be opposites in a world of words is in the higher realm, or world, the farthest point from opposite, which is oneness. The negative is just the absence of the positive.

**“In thy soul of love built thou a fire
And burn all thoughts and words entire.”**

Note: The fire is the fire of Love of God. (This quote is from Persian Súfi poet Rumi–Mawlana).

“Ignite, then, O my God, within my breast the fire of Thy love, that its flame may burn up all else except my remembrance of Thee, that every trace of corrupt desire may be entirely mortified within me, and that naught may remain except the glorification of Thy transcendent and all-glorious Being. This is my highest aspiration, mine ardent desire, O Thou Who rulest all things, and in Whose hand is the kingdom of the entire creation. Thou, verily, doest what Thou chooseth. No God is there beside Thee, the Almighty, the All-Glorious, the Ever-Forgiving.” (*Prayers and Meditations*, sec. XCVI page 161)

This fire is a power which will burn away our idle fancies and acquired knowledge, which is keeping us from our Beloved, our spiritual journey. Through this power, we are lifted from the limited world to the unlimited world, we are lifted up from the limited thoughts and words to the unlimited realm.

“At another time He revealeth Himself as the Fire which Thou didst kindle in the tree of Thy unity, whose heat melted the hearts of Thine ardent lovers when He Who is the Day-Star of the world shone forth above the horizon of ‘Irâq.” (*Prayers and Meditations*, sec. XXXVIII page 52)

22nd paragraph, page 28

“O my friend, look upon thyself: Hadst thou not become a father nor begotten a son, neither wouldst thou have heard these sayings.”

Note: The rational soul and human spirit must become aware of relativity before it can grasp Divine Unity and move to a higher understanding of Oneness.

In Bahá’í World Faith, page 34 Bahá’u’lláh says: “Now as to the power that knoweth no limitations; limitation itself proveth the existence of the unlimited, for the limited is known through the unlimited, just as weakness itself proveth the existence of power. Without wealth there would be no poverty, without knowledge no ignorance without light no darkness. Darkness itself is proof of the existence of light for darkness is the absence of light.”

In Bahá’í World Faith, page 311 ‘Abdu’l-Bahá says: “For each name, each attribute, each perfection which we affirm of God, there exists a sign in man; if it were otherwise, Man could not imagine these perfections, and could not understand them.

In Bahá’í World Faith, page 313 ‘Abdu’l-Bahá says: “The wisdom of the appearance of the spirit in body is this: the human spirit is a Divine Trust, and it must traverse all conditions; for its passage and movement through the conditions of existence will be the means of its acquiring perfections.”

“Now forget them all, that thou mayest learn from the Master of Love in the schoolhouse of oneness, and return unto God,”

Note: Now that we have traveled to the level of understanding through the conditions of relativity. He wants us to forget this point of view so He can reveal to us the knowledge of the next point of view, the point of view of oneness and by doing this, we will continue our journey “unto God.”

“and forsake the inner land of unreality for thy true station, and dwell within the shadow of the tree of knowledge.”

Note: He uses the words “inner land of unreality” because of the Sufi idea of the inner plane, which compared to Revealed Truth but unreal. He wants us to give up what we think is real so we can receive the knowledge of True Reality.

“O My servants! Deprive not yourselves of the unfading and resplendent Light that shineth within the Lamp of Divine glory. Let the flame of the love of God burn brightly within your radiant hearts. Feed it with the oil of Divine guidance, and protect it within the shelter of your constancy. Guard it within the globe of trust and detachment from all else but God, so that the evil whisperings of the ungodly may not extinguish its light.”
(*Gleanings*, sec. CLIII pages 325-6)

In the creation God manifests Himself in two aspects: spirit and matter. The following quotation of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá (as quoted in *The Life and Teachings of Abbas Effendi* by Myron Phelps, 1912 ed. page 153-5) will explain the true meaning of “The reflection of the Spirit of God”:

“...the first principle of God, Love, is the creative principle. Love is an outpour from God, and is pure spirit. It is the immediate cause of the laws which govern nature, the endless verities of nature which science has uncovered. In short, it is Divine Law and a Manifestation of God. This Manifestation of God is active, creative, spiritual. It reflects the positive aspect of God.

There is another Manifestation of God which is characterized by passivity, quiescence, inactivity. In itself it is without creative power. It reflects the negative aspect of God. This manifestation is matter.

Matter, reflecting the negative aspect of God, is self-existent, eternal, and fills all space. Spirit, flowing out from God, permeates all matter. This spirit, Love, reflecting the positive and active aspect of God, impresses its nature upon the atoms and elements. By its power they are attracted to each other under certain ordered relations, and thus, uniting and continuing to unite, give birth to worlds and systems of worlds. The same laws working under developed conditions bring into existence living beings. Spirit is the life of the form, and the form is shaped by the spirit. The evolution of life and form proceeds hand in hand. The powers of spirit are evolved by the experiences of the form, and the plasticity of the matter of the form is developed by the activity of the spirit Working up through the mineral and vegetable kingdoms, sense-perception is reached in the animal, and the perfection of form is attained in man.

The forms or bodies of component parts, infinite in variety, which in the course of evolution spirit builds as the vehicles of its expression, are, because of the instability of matter, subject to dissolution. As they disappear, others are built following the same patterns, carrying on the characteristics of each.”

23rd paragraph, page 28

“O thou dear one! Impoverish thyself, that thou mayest enter the high court of riches; and humble thy body, that thou mayest drink from the river of glory, and attain to the full meaning of the poems whereof thou hadst asked.”

Note: Bahá’u’lláh wants us to detach and empty ourselves and to trust and turn to God, the All Powerful.

In Bahá'í World Faith, page 369 ‘Abdu’l-Bahá says: “I now assure thee, O servant of God, that, if thy mind become empty and pure from every mention and thought and thy heart attracted wholly to the Kingdom of God, forget all else besides God and come in communion with the Kingdom of God, then the Holy Spirit will assist thee with a power which will enable thee to penetrate all things, and a Dazzling Spark which enlightens all sides, a Brilliant Flame in the zenith of the heart will teach thee that which thou dost not know the facts of the universe and of the divine doctrine.”

24th paragraph age 28 and 29

“Thus it hath been made clear that these stages depend on the vision of the wayfarer. In every city he will behold a world, in every Valley reach a spring, in every meadow hear a song.”

Note: The different stages of understanding is not because the Teacher is teaching different things to different beings, Knowledge is one. But even though the source is one, the vision and capacity of each of us is different, not absolute, they are relative, and progress upwards. Each of us may hear different song and grasp a new meaning, but each of us may be inspired by the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh in our own way.

“But the falcon of the mystic heaven hath many a wondrous carol of the spirit in His breast, and the Persian bird keepeth in His soul many a sweet Arab melody; yet these are hidden, and hidden shall remain.”

Note: Bahá'u'lláh speaks about His Knowledge and that He could say more but He will not.

“O SON OF BEAUTY! By My spirit and by My favor! By My mercy and by My beauty! All that I have revealed unto thee with the tongue of power, and have written for thee with the pen of might, hath been in accordance with thy capacity and understanding, not with My state and the melody of My voice.” (*The Hidden Words*, Arabic, No. 67)

**“If I speak forth, many a mind will shatter,
And if I write, many a pen will break.”**

Note: This refers to Bahá'u'lláh Himself, Who had not yet declared his mission. (The quote is from Persian Súfi poet Rumi–Mawlana).

25th paragraph, page 29

“Peace be upon him who concludeth this exalted journey and followeth the True One by the lights of guidance.”

Note: Peace will be upon we who travel through this valley of unity and follow Him through His guidance. God’s creation is perfect. When we see it as imperfect we only see the lack of

perfection through our own lack of knowledge and are seeing with our outer eyes, in the sphere of relativity.

“O My servants! Could ye apprehend with what wonders of My munificence and bounty I have willed to entrust your souls, ye would, of a truth, rid yourselves of attachment to all created things, and would gain a true knowledge of your own selves—a knowledge which is the same as the comprehension of Mine own Being. Ye would find yourselves independent of all else but Me, and would perceive, with your inner and outer eye, and as manifest as the revelation of My effulgent Name, the seas of My loving-kindness and bounty moving within you. Suffer not your idle fancies, your evil passions, your insincerity and blindness of heart to dim the luster, or stain the sanctity, of so lofty a station..” (*Gleanings*, sec. CLIII pages 326-7)

“And the wayfarer, after traversing the high planes of this supernal journey, entereth...”

Note: And when we travel the high plains of this heavenly journey, we will enter into the next valley: The Valley of Contentment.

SUMMARY OF

THE VALLEY OF UNITY

The concept of unity (which is the same fundamental concept of oneness), is outlined and developed in the Valley of Unity. This is the unity of the Creator with His creation, unity of cause and effect; of the abstract in the tangible, the unity of the higher and the lower levels of His existence.

The concept of unity applies, to every level of existence, to every created form and being, yet humankind alone is able to achieve conscious union with God, while we are living on this earth; humankind alone is able to acquire virtues and are able to improve because we have consciousness and free will. In this Valley we should achieve unity and see through the eyes of Oneness.

1. Within ourselves – Unity between the spiritual (hidden) in the material (seen) aspect of humankind, or unity between the human level of existence (the intellectual power of the mind) and the animal level of existence (emotions, brought to the power of sense – perception).
2. Within the universe – Unity of the part of the whole; the part and the whole reflect the same power, the same Spirit of God. The united drop shares the power of the sea.
3. Unity with God – by our own actions, we begin to realize the reflection of the Spirit of God within us. Through constant effort to develop will power in the right direction, we are able to unite with God.

Bahá'u'lláh gives proof of the existence of God – the Divine Teachings of the prophet reflected in the life and action of His followers.

We in the Valley of Unity are aware and follow the Teachings and are aware that all the Manifestations are one, because They reflect the mysteries of the unchangeable Being. We can see the one power behind all of creation, and have gained the point of view of oneness. The Holy Spirit emanates from God just as the rays emanate from the sun.

We feel the bounty of His loving-kindness with our hearts, and feel the warmth of His love. This knowledge and feeling shows up in our actions and deeds, and we strive to improve and to be a good example for others. Humbly knowing that all is from God, we do not want to praise ourselves, only wanting to praise God. In this valley, we know that Knowledge is One and that the variations perceive are just a result of our current levels of understanding. We know we are being trained, according to our capacity, just as everyone else is. The differences are in the objects, not in the source.

We realize that there are different ways of seeing, different viewpoints in seeing the Manifestations of God. Some see only the body, some see only one spirit through one body, some see Their oneness, and some are veiled completely. Because of this, there is much conflict. We can understand that we are the reflection of the names and attributes of God, and long to devote our lives to Him, so we make efforts that can be seen in our actions and deeds.

This brings us further up in spiritual progress so we can feel the Light of our Beloved in our hearts and know that all is from Him, and all move through Him and all arise by His Will. This does not mean that God descends into the grades of the creatures, and we know this. We know that God is sanctified above any likeness to His creatures. God's light shines from Mirrors of the Manifestations to the mirrors of our hearts, but for some of us it is hidden because we are being ruled by our senses and by material desires (dust on our heart's mirror).

But for others, with pure hearts the lights of Oneness are revealed. The rays shine with no entrance or exit. We are not kept back by the opinions of other people; nothing can hold us back from our Beloved. There are many opinions about Spiritual Knowledge, but the truth comes only from the Manifestation.

Bahá'u'lláh explains the Four Divine Worlds through relativity and then states that we can rise above this level up into the level of Oneness. If we impoverish ourselves we will enter the very high court into the level of understanding, and enter the next valley: **The Valley of Contentment.**

THE VALLEY OF CONTENTMENT

1st paragraph, page 29

“In this Valley he feeleth the winds of divine contentment blowing from the plane of the spirit.”

Note: On this level of understanding and awareness, we are conscious of the world of the spirit (the invisible power behind the visible creation — — oneness — — unity — — etc.).

“You are well aware, praised be the Lord, that both interaction and co-operation are evident and proven amongst all beings, whether large or small. In the case of large bodies interaction is as manifest as the sun, whilst in the case of small bodies, though interaction be unknown, yet the part is an indication of the whole. All these interactions therefore are connected with that all-embracing power which is their pivot, their centre, their source and their motive power.” (‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Tablet to Dr. Auguste Forel, *Bahá’í World*, Vol. 15 [1968-1973], pages pp. 37-43)

“He burneth away the veils of want, and”

Note: We now have no personal desire, we only desire to do God’s bidding

“O SON OF MAN! Wert thou to speed through the immensity of space and traverse the expanse of heaven, yet thou wouldst find no rest save in submission to Our command and humbleness before Our Face.”
(*The Hidden Words*, Arabic, No. 40)

“with inward and outward eye, perceiveth within and without all things the day of: ‘God will compensate each one out of His abundance.’”

Note: Through our outer eyes (sight) we see the visible; with our inner eyes (sight) we know and realize the invisible (the spirit), that God will compensate each one according to the sacrifices, thoughts, deeds, etc. is something we know in our hearts. (Quotation from *Qur’an* 4:129)

“This is the powerful Spirit, the dazzling light, the brilliant star and the overwhelming and universal abundance. And, from its traces, spread and divulged everywhere, thou wilt know and realize its influence and comprehend its radiance. I ask God to expose thee to its fragrance, move thee by its breeze, enkindle thee by its coals of fire and illuminate thee by its brightness. Turn thyself wholly to it—thus thou shalt be enabled to ascertain its influence and power, the strength of its life and the greatness of its confirmation. Verily, I say unto thee, that if for the appearance of that Divine Essence thou desirest to have a definite proof, an indisputable testimony and a strong, convincing evidence, thou must prepare thyself to make thy heart empty and thine eye ready to look only toward the

Kingdom of God. Then, at that time, the radiance of that widespread effulgence will descend upon thee successively, and that motion rendered thee by the Holy Spirit will make thee dispense with any other strong evidence that leadeth to the appearance of this Light, because the greatest and strongest proof for showing the abundance of the Spirit to the bodies is the very appearance of its power and influence in those bodies.” (From a Tablet of `Abdu'l-Bahá from *Bahá'í World Faith*, pages 368-9, originally from 1909 edition of *Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá Abbas*, page 705)

Note: When we open our hearts to the Holy Spirit we feel it; we experience it. This is evidence; proof. We are positive it is the Holy Spirit.

“From sorrow he turneth to bliss, from anguish to joy. His grief and mourning yield to delight and rapture.”

Note: From this new realization, our hearts are filled with joy, we know that our efforts, difficulties, etc. are not in vain, and that our sacrifices are for short duration in this world. We know that we are part of a whole, that our efforts and deeds are for eternal purposes. (Example, each brick in the wall is important for without each brick in its place, the wall could not be perfect, and it could not be built, it would not exist, – each brick is as important as the other, whether it is on the bottom, side, top, or in the middle...)

“O YE illumined loved ones and ye handmaids of the Merciful! At a time when the somber night of ignorance, of neglect of the divine world, of being veiled from God, had overspread the earth, a bright morning dawned and a rising light lit up the eastern sky. Then rose the Sun of Truth and the splendors of the Kingdom were shed over east and west. Those who had eyes to see rejoiced at the glad tidings and cried out: ‘O blessed, blessed are we!,’ and they witnessed the inner reality of all things, and uncovered the mysteries of the Kingdom. Delivered then from their fancies and their doubts, they beheld the light of truth, and so exhilarated did they become from draining the chalice of God’s love, that they utterly forgot the world and their own selves. Dancing for joy they hastened to the place of their own martyrdom and there, where men die for love, they flung away their heads and hearts.” (*Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, No. 16)

[And became] “establishers of the world's supreme foundation.” (*Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, No. 204)

2nd paragraph, page 30:

“Although to outward view, the wayfarers in this Valley may dwell upon the dust, yet inwardly they are throned in the heights of mystic meaning; they eat of the endless bounties of inner significances, and drink of the delicate wines of the spirit.”

Note: We on this level of consciousness may seem to be living only here on earth, and others cannot know that while we are living here on earth, we are aware of the world of the spirit, and are living our earthly lives through the spiritual point of view.

“Hasten, hasten, O ye firm believers! Hasten, hasten, O ye steadfast! Abandon the heedless, set aside every ignorant, take hold of the strong rope, be firm in this Great Cause, draw light from this Evident Light, be patient and be steadfast in this wise Religion! Ye shall see the hosts of inspiration descending successively from the Supreme World, the procession of attraction falling incessantly from the heights of heaven, the abundance of the Kingdom of El-Abha outpouring continually and the teachings of God penetrating with the utmost power, while the heedless are indeed in evident loss.” (From a Tablet of `Abdu'l-Bahá from *Bahá'í World Faith*, page 357, originally from 1909 edition of *Tablets of `Abdu'l-Bahá Abbas*, page 443)

“O SON OF SPIRIT! My claim on thee is great, it cannot be forgotten. My grace to thee is plenteous, it cannot be veiled. My love has made in thee its home, it cannot be concealed. My light is manifest to thee, it cannot be obscured.” (*The Hidden Words*, Arabic, No. 20)

O SON OF MAN! Thou art My dominion and My dominion perisheth not; wherefore fearest thou thy perishing? Thou art My light and My light shall never be extinguished; why dost thou dread extinction? Thou art My glory and My glory fadeth not; thou art My robe and My robe shall never be outworn. Abide then in thy love for Me, that thou mayest find Me in the realm of glory. (*The Hidden Words*, Arabic, No. 14)

3rd paragraph, page 30:

“The tongue faileth in describing these three Valleys, and speech falleth short. The pen steppeth not into this region, the ink leaveth only a blot. In these planes, the nightingale of the heart hath other songs and secrets, which make the heart to stir and the soul to clamor, but this mystery of inner meaning may be whispered only from heart to heart, confided only from breast to breast.

**“Only heart to heart can speak the bliss of mystic knowers;
No messenger can tell it and no missive bear it.”**

Note: Quotation from Ḥáfiẓ: Shamsu'd-Dín Muḥammad, of Shíráz one of the greatest of Persian poets.

“I am silent from weakness on many a matter, For my words could not reckon them and my speech would fall short.”

Note: Quotation from an Arabian poem. Bahá'u'lláh explains that in these three Valleys, meaning the Valley of Contentment, the Valley of Wonderment and the Valley of True Poverty and Utter Nothingness – – – words cannot be used to explain, because words, whether written or spoken are limited. In these three valleys, He speaks of the unlimited. So the meanings are communicated from heart to heart (inspiration). There are many mysteries which will make the heart stir and the soul clamor, and these mysteries will become known by us through inspiration.

“O SON OF MAN! Magnify My cause that I may reveal unto thee the mysteries of My greatness and shine upon thee with the light of eternity.” (*The Hidden Words*, Arabic, No. 41)

Note: In the Writings, there are countless advices about what we must do so that the mysteries can be revealed to us.

“O SON OF BEING! Love Me, that I may love thee. If thou lovest Me not, My love can in no wise reach thee. Know this, O servant.” (*The Hidden Words*, Arabic, No. 5)

“It is incumbent upon thee to turn wholly unto the Kingdom of God, to enter entirely into this wonderful Cause, and to make thy thought, remembrance and effort confined to the education of thy character, the enlightenment through the light of Abha, and to guide the people to the source of the mercy of thy Lord, the Clement, the Merciful.” (From a Tablet of `Abdu'l-Bahá from *Bahá'í World Faith*, pages 361, originally from 1909 edition of *Tablets of `Abdu'l-Bahá Abbas*, pages 73-74)

4th paragraph, pages 30-31:

“O friend, till thou enter the garden of such mysteries, thou shalt never set lip to the undying wine of this Valley.”

Note: Should we attain to this high spiritual level of awareness, we will become intoxicated with the desire to serve God, to dedicate our lives to the service of humankind through the guidance of God, which is done through the Teachings of the Manifestation.

“He Who is your Lord, the All-Merciful, cherisheth in His heart the desire of beholding the entire human race as one soul and one body. Haste ye to win your share of God's good grace and mercy in this Day that eclipseth all other created Days. How great the felicity that awaiteth the man that forsaketh all he hath in a desire to obtain the things of God! Such a man, We testify, is among God's blessed ones.” (*Gleanings*, page 214, sec. CVII)

“And shouldst thou taste of it, thou wilt shield thine eyes from all things else, and drink of the wine of contentment;”

Note: When we reach this level of understanding, we see with our inner and outer eyes nothing but the Love and Protection and Guidance of God, through the Manifestation.

“Haste ye to enter into Paradise, as a token of Our mercy unto you, and drink ye from the hands of the All-Merciful the Wine that is life indeed. Drink with healthy relish, O people of Bahá. Ye are indeed they with whom it shall be well.” (*Gleanings*, pages 45-6, sec. XVIII)

“O SON OF BEING! With the hands of power I made thee and with the fingers of strength I created thee; and within thee have I placed the essence of My light. Be thou content with it and seek naught else, for My work is perfect and My command is binding. Question it not, nor have a doubt thereof.” (*The Hidden Words*, Arabic, No. 12)

“Think not that We have revealed unto you a mere code of laws. Nay, rather, We have unsealed the choice Wine with the fingers of might and power. To this beareth witness that which the Pen of Revelation hath revealed. Meditate upon this, O men of insight!” *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* No 5.

“and thou wilt loose thyself from all things else, and bind thyself to Him, and throw thy life down in His path, and cast thy soul away.”

Note: “wine of contentment”. All intoxicants are prohibited, but like wine intoxication, on this level of understanding we forget ourselves and detach ourselves from what we thought was real, and binds instead to True Reality, and devotes life and soul in service of our Beloved.

“O thou that hast fixed thine eyes upon My countenance! The Dayspring of Glory hath, in this Day, manifested its radiance, and the Voice of the Most High is calling. We have formerly uttered these words: ‘This is not the day for any man to question his Lord. It behooveth whosoever hath hearkened to the Call of God, as voiced by Him Who is the Dayspring of Glory, to arise and cry out: ‘Here am I, here am I, O Lord of all Names; here am I, here am I, O Maker of the heavens! I testify that, through Thy Revelation, the things hidden in the Books of God have been revealed, and that whatsoever hath been recorded by Thy Messengers in the sacred Scriptures hath been fulfilled.’” (*Gleanings*, page 163, sec. LXXXII)

“Say: Deliver your souls, O people, from the bondage of self, and purify them from all attachment to anything besides Me. Remembrance of Me cleanseth all things from defilement, could ye but perceive it. Say: Were all created things to be entirely divested of the veil of worldly vanity and desire, the Hand of God would in this Day clothe them, one and all, with the robe “He doeth whatsoever He willeth in the kingdom of creation,” that thereby the sign of His sovereignty might be manifested in all things.” (*Gleanings*, page 294, sec. CXXXVI)

Note: The words “cast thy soul away” is puzzling to some of us because it is been understood that the body is only important while living in this world, but the soul is eternal and all that is left after the body has died that by casting one’s soul away, there would be nothing left... meaning nothingness – – so this subject should be meditated upon as we all know that the 7th Valley is the Valley of True Poverty and Utter Nothingness. However our individuality is us.

“However, there is no other in this region that thou need forget: ‘There was God and there was naught beside Him.’ For on this plane the traveler witnesseth the beauty of the Friend in everything. Even in fire, he seeth the face of the Beloved.”

Note: We see everything as a sign of God, as a reflection of God’s Names and Attributes. Even in fire:

“the pure gold shineth radiantly in the fire of test.” (From a Tablet of `Abdu'l-Bahá from *Bahá’í World Faith*, page 371 originally from 1909 edition of *Tablets of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá Abbas*, page 722)

“He beholdeth an illusion the secret of reality, and”

Note: We realize that this world of creation, this material world, in relation to the world the Spirit, is illusory.

“O beloved of God! Know ye that the world is like unto a mirage which the thirsty one thinks to be water; its water is a vapor; its mercy a difficulty; its repose hardship and ordeal; leave it to its people and turn unto the Kingdom of your Lord the Merciful. Thus the lights of mercy and beneficence may shine upon you, the heavenly table descend for you, your Lord may bestow upon you the greatest gifts and favors, whereby your breasts may become dilated, your hearts gladdened, your souls purified, and your eyes enlightened. O beloved of God! Is there any giver save God? He chooseth for His mercy whomsoever He desireth. He shall open unto you the doors of His knowledge, fill your hearts with His love, rejoice your spirits by the wafting of His holy fragrances, illumine your faces by the Manifest Light and elevate your names among the people.” (From a Tablet of `Abdu'l-Bahá from *Bahá’í World Faith*, page 386 originally from 1909 edition of *Tablets of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá Abbas*, pages 407-8)

“Verily I say, the world is like the vapor in a desert, which the thirsty dreameth to be water and striveth after it with all his might, until when he cometh unto it, he findeth it to be mere illusion. It may, moreover, be likened unto the lifeless image of the beloved whom the lover hath sought and found, in the end, after long search and to his utmost regret, to be such as cannot ‘fatten nor appease his hunger.’” (*Gleanings*, page 328, sec. CLIII)

“readeth from the attributes the riddle of the Essence.”

Note: Realizing that all is the reflection of the Names and attributes of God, including human virtues, we become conscious of the Essence – – the source – – oneness – – etc. And we are content.

“Know thou that every created thing is a sign of the revelation of God. Each, according to its capacity, is, and will ever remain, a token of the Almighty. Inasmuch as He, the sovereign Lord of all, hath willed to reveal His sovereignty in the Kingdom of names and attributes, each and every created thing hath, through the act of the Divine Will, been made a sign of His glory. So pervasive and general is this revelation that nothing whatsoever in the whole universe can be discovered that doth not reflect His splendor. Under such conditions every consideration of proximity and remoteness is obliterated – – Were the Hand of Divine power to divest of this high endowment all created things, the entire universe would become desolate and void. Behold how immeasurably exalted is the Lord your God above all created things! Witness the majestically of His sovereignty, His ascendancy, and supreme power. If the things which have been created by Him – – magnified by His glory – – and ordained to be the manifestations of His names and attributes, stand, by proximity and remoteness, how much loftier must that Divine Essence that hath called them into being” (*Gleanings*, page 184, sec. LXXXII)

“The heart is a throne, in which the Revelation of God the All–Merciful is centered.” (*Gleanings*, page 186, sec. LXXXII)

“For he hath burnt away the veils with his sighing, and unwrapped the shroudings with a single glance; with piercing sight he gazeth on the new creation; with lucid heart he graspeth subtle verities. This is sufficiently attested by: “*And we have made thy sight sharp in this day.*”

Note: The full quotation from the *Qur’an* 50:21 is the following:

“Of this day didst thou live in heedlessness, but we have taken away thy veil from thee, and thy eyesight is becoming sharp this day”

“If it be your wish, O people, to know God and to discover the greatness of His might, look, then, upon Me with Mine own eyes, and not with the eyes of any one besides Me. Ye will, otherwise, be never capable of recognizing Me, though ye ponder My Cause as long as My Kingdom endureth...” (*Gleanings*, page 272, sec. CXXVII)

Through the recognition of the Manifestation of God, and through following His Teachings, we progress and gain knowledge, insight and spiritual growth... our sight becomes “sharp.”

“I now assure thee, O servant of God, that, if thy mind become empty and pure from every mention and thought and thy heart attracted wholly to the Kingdom of God, forget all else besides God and come in communion with the Spirit of God, then the Holy Spirit will assist thee with a power which will enable thee to penetrate all things, and a Dazzling Spark which enlightens all sides, a Brilliant Flame in the zenith of the heavens, will teach thee that which thou dost not know of the facts of the universe and of the divine doctrine. Verily, I say unto thee, every soul which ariseth today to guide others to the path of safety and infuse in them the Spirit of Life, the Holy Spirit will inspire that soul with evidences, proofs and facts and the lights will shine upon it from the Kingdom of God. Do not forget what I have conveyed unto thee from the breath of the Spirit. Verily, it is the shining morning and the rosy dawn which will impart unto thee the lights, reveal the mysteries and make thee competent in science, and through it the pictures of the Supreme World will be printed in thy heart and the facts of the secrets of the Kingdom of God will shine before thee.” (From a Tablet of `Abdu'l-Bahá from *Bahá'í World Faith*, page 369 originally from 1909 edition of *Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá Abbas*, pages 706-7)

5th paragraph, page 31

“After journeying through the planes of pure contentment, the traveler cometh to...”

Note: The Valley of Wonderment

SUMMARY OF
THE VALLEY OF CONTENTMENT

We achieve a state of detachment and serenity; being able to forget ourselves. Our greatest need is now to serve God.

Although walking and living on this earth, we are really living in the spiritual world. There are no words that can express this stage of development. We gain more and more knowledge of the inner mysteries and devote our lives, souls, and minds to serve our Beloved, content in the knowledge that “We are reflections of ‘all is from God.’”

Our deeds and actions inspire others as we realize the unreality of this visible world in relation to the spiritual world. We know that human virtues, as well as all the virtues in the universe, are motivated by the Spirit of God. After reaching this stage of understanding, we travel into the next Valley: The Valley of Wonderment.

THE VALLEY OF WONDERMENT

1st paragraph, page 31 and 32

“and is tossed in the oceans of grandeur, and at every moment his wonder groweth. Now he seeth the shape of wealth as poverty itself,”

Note:

“How unspeakably glorious are the signs, the tokens, the revelations, and splendors which He, Who is the King of Names and Attributes, hath destined for that City! The attainment unto this City quencheth thirst without water, and kindleth the love of God without fire...It bestoweth wealth without gold, and conferreth immortality without death...That city is none other than the Word of God revealed in every dispensation.”
(*Gleanings*, pages 269-70, sec. CXXV)

“and the essence of freedom as sheer impotence.”

Note: We see that true freedom is submission to the Will of God:

“Regard men as a flock of sheep that need a shepherd for their protection... The liberty that profiteth you is to be found nowhere except in complete servitude unto God, the Eternal Truth. Whoso hath tasted of its sweetness will refuse to barter it for all the dominion of earth and heaven.” (*Gleanings*, sec. CLIX, page 336)

“Now is he struck dumb with the beauty of the All-Glorious; again is he wearied out with his own life. How many a mystic tree hath this whirlwind of wonderment snatched by the roots, how many a soul hath it exhausted. For in this Valley the traveler is flung into confusion, albeit, in the eye of him who hath attained, such marvels are esteemed and well beloved. At every moment he beholdeth a wondrous world, a new creation, and goeth from astonishment to astonishment, and is lost in awe at the works of the Lord of Oneness.”

Note: We are gaining knowledge of so many new mysteries in the inner world and in the outer world, with our inner eyes and with our outer eyes. We cannot explain all these new things we have become aware of with words and our own lives seems to be so unworthy in comparison to what our new awareness has brought to us. Our souls become exhausted from all this new and wondrous knowledge, we become confused with it all, and yet, this stage is part of our spiritual growth and we are well loved. We are bewildered by the diversity of God’s creation. The colors, shapes and cycles of life on every level of existence; no two leaves alike, no two drops alike, yet in each are manifested all the properties of the ocean. We realize that “All is from God” the Unknowable.

“O SON OF MAN! Veiled in My immemorial being and in the ancient eternity of My essence, I knew My love for thee; therefore I created thee, have engraved on thee Mine image and revealed to thee My beauty.” (*The Hidden Words*, Arabic, No. 3)

“O SON OF BEAUTY! By My spirit and by My favor! By My mercy and by My beauty! All that I have revealed unto thee with the tongue of power, and have written for thee with the pen of might, hath been in accordance with thy capacity and understanding, not with My state and the melody of My voice.” (*The Hidden Words*, Arabic, No. 67)

2nd paragraph, page 32

“Indeed, O Brother, if we ponder each created thing, we shall witness a myriad perfect wisdoms and learn a myriad new and wondrous truths.”

Note: We find truth in pondering the creation for: “every created thing contains all the virtues of the universe.”

“it is clear that this terrestrial globe in its present form did not come into existence all at once, but that this universal existence gradually passed through different phases until it became adorned with its present perfection. Universal beings resemble and can be compared to particular beings, for both are subjected to one natural system, one universal law and divine organization. So you will find the smallest atoms in the universal system are similar to the greatest beings of the universe. It is clear that they come into existence from one laboratory of might under one natural system and one universal law; therefore, they may be compared to one another. Thus the embryo of man in the womb of the mother gradually grows and develops, and appears in different forms and conditions, until in the degree of perfect beauty it reaches maturity and appears in a perfect form with the utmost grace...That is to say, the embryo passes through different states and traverses numerous degrees, until it reaches the form in which it manifests the words ‘Praise be to God, the best of Creators,’ and until the signs of reason and maturity appear.” (*Some Answered Questions*, sec. XLVII, pages 182-184)

“This composition and arrangement, through the wisdom of God and His preexistent might, were produced from one natural organization, which was composed and combined with the greatest strength, conformable to wisdom, and according to a universal law.” (*Some Answered Questions*, sec. XLVII, page 181)

“One of the created phenomena is the dream. Behold how many secrets are deposited therein, how many wisdoms treasured up, how many worlds concealed. Observe, how thou art asleep in a dwelling, and its doors are barred; on a sudden thou findest thyself in a far-off city, which thou enterest without moving thy feet or wearying thy body; without using thine eyes, thou seest; without taxing thine ears, thou hearest; without a tongue, thou speakest. And perchance when ten years are gone, thou wilt witness in the outer world the very things thou hast dreamed tonight.”

Note:

“When man’s soul is rarified and cleansed, spiritual links are established, and from these bonds sensations felt by the heart are produced. The human heart resembleth a mirror. When this is purified human hearts are attuned and reflect one another, and thus spiritual emotions are generated. This is like the world of dreams when man is detached from things which are tangible and experienceth those of the spirit. What amazing laws operate, and what remarkable discoveries are made! And it may even be that detailed communications are registered.” (*Selections From the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, sec. 70, page 108)

3rd paragraph, page 32 and 33

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

Note:

“Furthermore, man sees in the world of dreams. He travels in the East; he travels in the West; although his body is stationary, his body is here. It is that reality in him which makes the journey while the body sleeps.” (*Foundations of World Unity*, page 109)

“First, what is this world, where without eye and ear and hand and tongue a man puts all of these to use? Second, how is it that in the outer world thou seest today the effect of a dream, when thou didst vision it in the world of sleep some ten years past? Consider the difference between these two worlds and the mysteries which they conceal, that thou mayest attain to divine confirmations and heavenly discoveries and enter the regions of holiness. God, the Exalted, hath placed these signs in men, to the end that philosophers may not deny the mysteries of the life beyond nor belittle that which hath been promised them. For some hold to reason and deny whatever the reason comprehendeth not, and yet weak minds can never grasp the matters which

we have related, but only the Supreme, Divine Intelligence can comprehend them:

**‘How can feeble reason encompass the Qur’án,
Or the spider snare a phoenix in her web?’”.**

Note: Bahá’u’lláh explains that God, has placed the sign of the dream to help those who deny that there is anything beyond this world of creation, or who make fun of the promises made to us by the Manifestations. Because many of us refuse to believe anything we cannot see or touch or reason. Even with the sign from God, weak minds cannot really grasp the fullness of this mystery, and are unable to know the mystery of the life beyond completely; neither can we deny the reality of that mystery. The Phoenix is used to convey immortality and arises from destruction. (Quotation from a Persian mystic poem).

“As to thy question concerning the worlds of God. Know thou of a truth that the worlds of God are countless in their number, and infinite in their range. None can reckon or comprehend them except God, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise. Consider thy state when asleep. Verily, I say, this phenomenon is the most mysterious of the signs of God amongst men, were they to ponder it in their hearts. Behold how the thing which thou hast seen in thy dream is, after a considerable lapse of time, fully realized. Had the world in which thou didst find thyself in thy dream been identical with the world in which thou livest, it would have been necessary for the event occurring in that dream to have transpired in this world at the very moment of its occurrence. Were it so, you yourself would have borne witness unto it. This being not the case, however, it must necessarily follow that the world in which thou livest is different and apart from that which thou hast experienced in thy dream. This latter world hath neither beginning nor end. It would be true if thou wert to contend that this same world is, as decreed by the All-Glorious and Almighty God, within thy proper self and is wrapped up within thee. It would equally be true to maintain that thy spirit, having transcended the limitations of sleep and having stripped itself of all earthly attachment, hath, by the act of God, been made to traverse a realm which lieth hidden in the innermost reality of this world. Verily I say, the creation of God embraceth worlds besides this world, and creatures apart from these creatures. In each of these worlds He hath ordained things which none can search except Himself, the All-Searching, the All-Wise. Do thou meditate on that which We have revealed unto thee, that thou mayest discover the purpose of God, thy Lord, and the Lord of all worlds. In these words the mysteries of Divine Wisdom have been treasured. We have refrained from dwelling upon this theme owing to the sorrow that hath encompassed Us from the actions of them that have been created through Our words, if ye be of them that will hearken unto Our Voice.” (*Gleanings*, pages 151-3, sec. LXXIX)

“Know that the power and the comprehension of the human spirit are of two kinds—that is to say, they perceive and act in two different modes. One way is through instruments and organs: thus with this eye it sees; with this ear it hears; with this tongue it talks. Such is the action of the spirit, and the perception of the reality of man, by means of organs—that is to say, that the spirit is the seer, through the eyes; the spirit is the hearer, through

the ear; the spirit is the speaker, through the tongue. The other manifestation of the powers and actions of the spirit is without instruments and organs. For example, in the state of sleep without eyes it sees; without an ear it hears; without a tongue it speaks; without feet it runs. (*Some Answered Questions*, Part 61, pages 227)

Note: A “farsakh” is an archaic Byzantine measure of distance, the equivalent of about four miles.

5th paragraph, page 33 and 34

“All these states are to be witnessed in the Valley of Wonderment, and the traveler at every moment seeketh for more, and is not wearied. Thus the Lord of the First and the Last in setting forth the grades of contemplation, and expressing wonderment hath said: ‘O Lord, increase my astonishment at Thee!’”

Note: The more that is revealed to us, the more we long to learn; we long to increase our astonishment at the perfection of the Creator. “First and the Last” is a title denoting ‘Alí, the Successor of Muhammad.

6th paragraph, page 34

“Likewise, reflect upon the perfection of man’s creation, and that all these planes and states are folded up and hidden away within him.

**‘Dost thou reckon thyself only a puny form
When within thee the universe is folded?’”**

Note: All the progressive stages of spiritual material growth are potentially hidden in every person. The material body needs only food and water to grow; spiritual growth depends upon recognizing the Manifestation and following His Teachings which is spiritual food. The quotation explains that within each individual is the whole universe. As in the drop is contained the same as the sea, as in an atom is contained the same as the sun. (Quote attributed to the Imam ‘Alí, the Prophet Muhammad’s appointed successor.)

“In several of Our Tablets We have referred to this theme, and have set forth the various stages in the development of the soul. Verily I say, the human soul is exalted above all egress and regress. It is still, and yet it soareth; it moveth, and yet it is still. It is, in itself, a testimony that beareth witness to the existence of a world that is contingent, as well as to the reality of a world that hath neither beginning nor end. Behold how the dream thou hast dreamed is, after the lapse of many years, re-enacted before thine eyes. Consider how strange is the mystery of the world that appeareth to thee in thy dream. Ponder in thine heart upon the unsearchable wisdom of God, and meditate on its manifold

revelations. . . . Witness the wondrous evidences of God's handiwork, and reflect upon its range and character. He Who is the Seal of the Prophets hath said: 'Increase my wonder and amazement at Thee, O God!' As to thy question whether the physical world is subject to any limitations, know thou that the comprehension of this matter dependeth upon the observer himself. In one sense, it is limited; in another, it is exalted beyond all limitations. The one true God hath everlastingly existed, and will everlastingly continue to exist. His creation, likewise, hath had no beginning, and will have no end. All that is created, however, is preceded by a cause. This fact, in itself, establisheth, beyond the shadow of a doubt, the unity of the Creator." (*Gleanings*, pages 161-2, sec. LXXXII)

"Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth is a direct evidence of the revelation within it of the attributes and names of God, inasmuch as within every atom are enshrined the signs that bear eloquent testimony to the revelation of that Most Great Light. Methinks, but for the potency of that revelation, no being could ever exist. How resplendent the luminaries of knowledge that shine in an atom, and how vast the oceans of wisdom that surge within a drop! To a supreme degree is this true of man, who, among all created things, hath been invested with the robe of such gifts, and hath been singled out for the glory of such distinction. For in him are potentially revealed all the attributes and names of God to a degree that no other created being hath excelled or surpassed. All these names and attributes are applicable to him. Even as He hath said: 'Man is My mystery, and I am his mystery.' Manifold are the verses that have been repeatedly revealed in all the Heavenly Books and the Holy Scriptures, expressive of this most subtle and lofty theme. Even as He hath revealed: 'We will surely show them Our signs in the world and within themselves.' Again He saith: 'And also in your own selves: will ye not, then, behold the signs of God?' And yet again He revealeth: 'And be ye not like those who forget God, and whom He hath therefore caused to forget their own selves.' In this connection, He Who is the eternal King—may the souls of all that dwell within the mystic Tabernacle be a sacrifice unto Him—hath spoken: 'He hath known God who hath known himself.' . . . From that which hath been said it becometh evident that all things, in their inmost reality, testify to the revelation of the names and attributes of God within them. Each according to its capacity, indicateth, and is expressive of, the knowledge of God." (*Gleanings*, pages 177-8, sec. XC)

"O SON OF SPIRIT! I created thee rich, why dost thou bring thyself down to poverty? Noble I made thee, wherewith dost thou abase thyself? Out of the essence of knowledge I gave thee being, why seekest thou enlightenment from anyone beside Me? Out of the clay of love I molded thee, how dost thou busy thyself with another? Turn thy sight unto thyself, that thou mayest find Me standing within thee, mighty, powerful and self-subsisting." (*The Hidden Words*, Arabic, No. 13)

"O MY SERVANT! Thou art even as a finely tempered sword concealed in the darkness of its sheath and its value hidden from the artificer's knowledge. Wherefore come forth from the sheath of self and desire that thy worth may be made resplendent and manifest unto all the world." (*The Hidden Words*, Persian, No. 72)

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

“Man...has the animal side as well as the angelic side; and the aim of an educator is to so train human souls, that their angelic aspect may overcome their animal side.” (*Some Answered Questions*, sec. LXIV, page 235)

“Let us endeavor to attain capacity, susceptibility and worthiness that we may hear the call of the glad tidings of the Kingdom, become revived by the breaths of the Holy Spirit, hoist the standard of the oneness of humanity, establish human brotherhood, and under the protection of divine grace attain the everlasting and eternal life.” (*The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, page 149)

“Man is said to be the greatest representative of God, and he is the Book of Creation because all the mysteries of beings exist in him. If he comes under the shadow of the True Educator and is rightly trained, he becomes the essence of essences, the light of lights, the spirit of spirits; he becomes the center of the divine appearances, the source of spiritual qualities, the rising-place of heavenly lights, and the receptacle of divine inspirations. If he is deprived of this education, he becomes the manifestation of satanic qualities, the sum of animal vices, and the source of all dark conditions.” (*Some Answered Questions*, sec. LXIV, page 236)

7th paragraph, page 34

“Thus, too, Luqmán, who had drunk from the wellspring of wisdom and tasted of the waters of mercy, in proving to his son Nathan the planes of resurrection and death, advanced the dream as an evidence and an example.”

Note: Bahá’u’lláh speaks of Luqmán as having progressed to high levels of understanding and of having received blessings from the Spiritual, unlimited realm, in proving to his son Nathan about resurrection and death, using the dream for an example. (Luqmán was a sage from whom *Qur’an* Surah 31 was named; identified with Aesop, the Ethiopian fabulist and storyteller.)

“We relate it here, that through this evanescent Servant a memory may endure of that youth of the school of Divine Unity, that elder of the art of instruction and the Absolute.”

Note: Bahá’u’lláh says that He is using this example so the much esteemed teacher Luqmán will be remembered.

“He said: ‘O Son, if thou art able not to sleep, then thou art able not to die. And if thou art able not to waken after sleep, then thou shalt be able not to rise after death.’”

Note: There again, the dream is shown as an example of the relationship between the physical and the spirit: the spirit does not sleep and it does not die, the body does. (Of course our physical body is able to sleep and, someday, to die.) But if we are not aware (awake) that there is life after the death of our body, we shall not be able to “rise” (progress through all the worlds of God).

“In the time of sleep this body is as though dead; it does not see nor hear; it does not feel; it has no consciousness, no perception—that is to say, the powers of man have become inactive, but the spirit lives and subsists. Nay, its penetration is increased, its flight is higher, and its intelligence is greater. To consider that after the death of the body the spirit perishes is like imagining that a bird in a cage will be destroyed if the cage is broken, though the bird has nothing to fear from the destruction of the cage. Our body is like the cage, and the spirit is like the bird. We see that without the cage this bird flies in the world of sleep; therefore, if the cage becomes broken, the bird will continue and exist. Its feelings will be even more powerful, its perceptions greater, and its happiness increased. In truth, from hell it reaches a paradise of delights because for the thankful birds there is no paradise greater than freedom from the cage. That is why with utmost joy and happiness the martyrs hasten to the plain of sacrifice.

In wakefulness the eye of man sees at the utmost as far as one hour of distance because through the instrumentality of the body the power of the spirit is thus determined; but with the inner sight and the mental eye it sees America, and it can perceive that which is there, and discover the conditions of things and organize affairs. If, then, the spirit were the same as the body, it would be necessary that the power of the inner sight should also be in the same proportion. Therefore, it is evident that this spirit is different from the body, and that the bird is different from the cage, and that the power and penetration of the spirit is stronger without the intermediary of the body. Now, if the instrument is abandoned, the possessor of the instrument continues to act.” (*Some Answered Questions*, sec. LXI, page 228)

Note: Re. “one hour of distance”: it is a Persian custom to reckon distance by time.

8th paragraph, page 35

“O friend, the heart is the dwelling of eternal mysteries, make it not the home of fleeting fancies; waste not the treasure of thy precious life in employment with this swiftly passing world. Thou comest from the world of holiness—bind not thine heart to the earth; thou art a dweller in the court of nearness—choose not the homeland of the dust.”

Note: Bahá’u’lláh tells us that our hearts are much more than we think.

“O SON OF BEING! Thy heart is My home; sanctify it for My descent. Thy spirit is My place of revelation; cleanse it for My manifestation.” (*The Hidden Words*, Arabic, No. 59)

Note: He does not want us to tie ourselves down to the limited.

“But, 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, before all else, cleanse and purify his heart, which is the seat of the revelation of the inner mysteries of God, from the obscuring dust of all acquired knowledge, and the allusions of the embodiments of satanic fancy.” (*Kitáb-i-Íqán*, page 192)

“O SON OF BEING! If thine heart be set upon this eternal, imperishable dominion, and this ancient, everlasting life, forsake this mortal and fleeting sovereignty” (*The Hidden Words*, Arabic, No. 54)

“O SON OF MAN! Veiled in My immemorial being and in the ancient eternity of My essence, I knew My love for thee; therefore I created thee, have engraved on thee Mine image and revealed to thee My beauty. (*The Hidden Words*, Arabic, No. 3)

“O YE PEOPLE THAT HAVE MINDS TO KNOW AND EARS TO HEAR! The first call of the Beloved is this: O mystic nightingale! Abide not but in the rose garden of the spirit. O messenger of the Solomon of love! Seek thou no shelter except in the Sheba of the well-beloved, and O immortal phoenix! dwell not save on the mount of faithfulness. Therein is thy habitation, if on the wings of thy soul thou soarest to the realm of the infinite and seekest to attain thy goal.” (*The Hidden Words*, Persian, No. 1)

“O BEFRIENDED STRANGER! The candle of thine heart is lighted by the hand of My power, quench it not with the contrary winds of self and passion. The healer of all thine ills is remembrance of Me, forget it not. Make My love thy treasure and cherish it even as thy very sight and life.”
(*The Hidden Words*, Persian, No. 32)

“O MY BROTHER! Harken to the delightful words of My honeyed tongue, and quaff the stream of mystic holiness from My sugar-shedding lips. Sow the seeds of My divine wisdom in the pure soil of thy heart, and water them with the water of certitude, that the hyacinths of My knowledge and wisdom may spring up fresh and green in the sacred city of thy heart.”
(*The Hidden Words*, Persian, No. 33)

9th paragraph, page 35

“In sum, there is no end to the description of these stages, but because of the wrongs inflicted by the peoples of the earth, this Servant is in no mood to continue:

**‘The tale is still unfinished and I have no heart for it—
Then pray forgive me.’”**

Note: Quotation is from Jalálu'd-Dín Rúmí the greatest of all Persian Şúfí poets, and founder of the Mawlaví (“whirling dervish”) order.

“The pen groaneth and the ink sheddeth tears, and the river of the heart moveth in waves of blood. ‘Nothing can befall us but what God hath destined for us.’ Peace be upon him who followeth the Right Path!”

Note: “river” refers literally to the Jayhún (or Oxus), the longest river in Southwest Asia. The quotation is from (*Qur’an* 9:51). Bahá’u’lláh says that although the descriptions of the stages are endless, He interrupts His writings because of His sufferings which are caused from the people of the earth: However, He acknowledges that His sufferings are the Will of God. The right path is the Path of the Will of God and those who follow the Will of God are at peace.

10th paragraph, page 35

“After scaling the high summits of wonderment the wayfarer cometh to...”

Note: The Valley of True Poverty and Absolute Nothingness.

SUMMARY OF THE VALLEY OF WONDERMENT

In this Valley, which is beyond the limited and this means that limited words cannot truly express it, we are bewildered by the complexity of the creation. We understand what true freedom is and what true wealth is. We feel like our own lives are so unworthy in comparison to what our new awareness has created. We ponder about all created things, and find more and more new knowledge of the unity, the oneness, the worlds, and the love of God.

We ponder on the created phenomenon (the dream) and understand more mysteries through thinking about the world of dreams, where we can see, move, here, etc. without using outer senses and limbs; and also where we can have a dream of a happening, and realize the effects sometime later, meaning that the spirit transcends the limits of time and space. Our new awareness becomes important to us.

The more that is revealed, the more we long to learn and increase our astonishment at the perfection of the creation. Realizing it is impossible know everything because human capacity to understand is limited, we nonetheless try more and more to destroy our lower condition and detach from the material and to attach ourselves to our Beloved. The more we do, the more the true meanings become clear.

The we understand that the body will decompose, but the spirit will continue throughout eternity and will progress to the higher levels in the many worlds of God. We know that we have the potential to be able to elevate ourselves above the material and transcend it.

We each have a free will which is a gift from God and which we can use to accept the Manifestation and to follow His Teachings and progress, or use this gift of the free will to turn away from the Teachings of the Manifestation and therefore choose the “homeland of the dust.” On this level of understanding, we know we are from the world of holiness and when we travel through this Valley, we then will come to **The Valley of True Poverty and Absolute Nothingness.**

THE VALLEY OF TRUE POVERTY

AND ABSOLUTE NOTHINGNESS

1st paragraph, page 36

“This station is the dying from self and the living in God,”

Note: In this Valley, we have achieved the conquest of our nature and the struggle between our material selves, ego, etc. and our spiritual beings have come into harmony. Having become detached from the world we have set off towards the Kingdom.

“Deliver your souls, O people, from the bondage of self, and purify them from all attachment to anything besides Me. Remembrance of Me cleanseth all things from defilement, could ye but perceive it.” (*Gleanings*, sec. CXXXVI, pages 294-295)

“Happy is the man who hath recognized Thee, and discovered the sweetness of Thy fragrance, and set himself towards Thy kingdom, and tasted of the things that have been perfected therein by Thy grace and favor. Great is the blessedness of him who hath acknowledged Thy most excellent majesty, and whom the veils that have shut out the nations from Thee have not hindered from directing his eyes towards Thee, O Thou Who art the King of eternity and the Quickener of every moldering bone! Blessed, also, is he that hath inhaled Thy sweet savors, and been carried away by Thine utterances in Thy days. Blessed, moreover, be the man that hath turned unto Thee, and woe betide him that hath turned his back upon Thee.” (*Prayers and Meditations*, sec. XXXVIII, page 54)

“the being poor in self and rich in the Desired One.”

Note: We have become aware of our nothingness in comparison to His Glory and Power, and has submitted, surrendered our will to God, with love.

“The essence of wealth is love for Me; whoso loveth Me is the possessor of all things, and he that loveth Me not is indeed of the poor and needy. This is that which the Finger of Glory and Splendor hath revealed.” (*Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, sec. 10, page 156, Words of Wisdom)

“O thou who hast surrendered thy will to God! By self-surrender and perpetual union with God is meant that men should merge their will wholly in the Will of God, and regard their desires as utter nothingness beside His Purpose.” (*Gleanings*, sec. CLX, page 337)

“Poverty as here referred to signifieth being poor in the things of the created world, rich in the things of God’s world.”

“Joy unto him who, in this Day, casts away that which is possessed by the people, and holds fast to that which is commanded on the part of God, the King of Names and the Creator of things” (*Bahá’í World Faith*, page 187, Bahá’u’lláh)

“My servants! Were ye to discover the hidden, the shoreless oceans of My incorruptible wealth, ye would, of a certainty, esteem as nothing the world, nay, the entire creation.” (*Gleanings*, sec. CLIII, page 323)

“For when the true lover and devoted friend reacheth to the presence of the Beloved,”

In *Bahá’í World Faith*, page 353 ‘Abdu’l-Bahá says: “Consequently, O ye friends of God, be ye thankful that in the day of the Effulgence ye have turned your faces to the Orb of the regions and beheld the Lights! Ye have received a portion from the rays of Truth and are endowed with a share from the Everlasting Outpouring. therefore, ye must not rest one minute, but thank Him for this bestowal.”

“the sparkling beauty of the Loved One and the fire of the lover’s heart will kindle a blaze and burn away all veils and wrappings.”

Note: When we attain to the presence of God, our purified spirit will be on fire with the love of God and in this condition, through His Grace, the last traces of limitations will burn away.

In *Bahá’í World Faith*, page 391 ‘Abdu’l-Bahá says: “Shouldst thou come with the whole of thy being to God and be attracted to the Lights of the Kingdom of God and be enkindled by the fire of the love of God, then wilt thou see that which thou canst not see today, wilt comprehend the inner significance of the Word of God and thoroughly understand the Mysteries contained in the holy Books.”

“Yea, all he hath, from heart to skin, will be set aflame, so that nothing will remain save the Friend.”

Note: Now, our whole being, thought, spirit, and actions, and body is conscious of God. Our faith becomes “conscious knowledge and practice of good deeds.” We have the knowledge of God and love God, proving our love through deeds. “Thou hast been created to know and love God.”

“man must become evanescent in God. Must forget his own selfish conditions that he may thus arise to the station of sacrifice. It should be to such a degree that if he sleep, it should not be for pleasure, but to rest the body in order to do better, to speak better, to explain more beautifully, to serve the servants of God and to prove the truths. When he

remains awake, he should seek to be attentive, serve the Cause of God and sacrifice his own stations for those of God. When he attains to this station, the confirmations of the Holy Spirit will surely reach him, and man with this power can withstand all who inhabit the earth.” (*Bahá’í World Faith*, Abdu’l-Bahá, page 384)

**“When the qualities of the Ancient of Days stood revealed,
Then the qualities of earthly things did Moses burn away.”**

Note: The first line of this verse explains when we become aware of the qualities of God and the Cause of God. (Quotation is from Jalálu’d-Dín Rúmi the greatest of all Persian Şúfi poets, and founder of the Mawlaví [“whirling dervish”] order.)

In *Bahá’í World Faith*, page 393 ‘Abdu’l-Bahá says: “O my friend, verily the Cause is great and great, and the penetration of the Word of God in the temple of all the regions is similar to the pervasion of the soul in a sound body.”

In *Bahá’í World Faith*, page 380 ‘Abdu’l-Bahá says: “such knowledge and sciences will be brought into light that man will see that the potentialities of the ‘Open Tablet’ of existence are infinite; will realize that all the created things are as letters and words; will be instructed in the lessons of the degrees of significances; will perceive the signs of oneness in the primordial atoms of the earth; will hear the voice of the Lord of the Kingdom; will behold the confirmations of the Holy Spirit and will find such ecstasy and joy that, being unable to contain himself in the vast area of existence, he will prepare himself for the journey toward the Kingdom and will hasten to the immensity of the Realm of Might. As soon as a bird is fledged, it cannot keep itself on the ground; nay, rather it soareth up toward the Supreme Apex.”

Note: The second line of this verse explains that through the flame of the undying Fire; (Moses) which is the power of sovereignty and unfailing guidance of the Manifestations, the earthly qualities become as nothing.

In *Bahá’í World Faith*, page 118 Bahá’u’lláh says: “Burn away, wholly for the sake of the Well – Beloved the veil of self with the flame of the undying Fire.”

In *Bahá’í World Faith*, page 104 Bahá’u’lláh says: Led by the light of unfailing guidance, and invested with supreme sovereignty, they (the Manifestations) are commissioned to use the inspiration of their words, the effusions of their infallible grace and the sanctifying breeze of their Revelation for the cleansing of every longing heart and receptive spirit from the dross and dust of earthly cares and limitations. Then and only then, will the Trust of God, latent in the reality of man, emerge, as resplendent as the rising Orb of Divine Revelation, from behind the veil of concealment, and implant the ensign of its revealed glory upon the summits of men’s hearts.”

In *Bahá’í World Faith*, page 68 Bahá’u’lláh says: “With firm determination, with the whole affection of your heart, and with the full force of your words, turn ye unto Him,

and walk not in the ways of the foolish. The world is but a show, vain and empty, a mere nothing, bearing the semblance of reality. Set not your affections upon it. Break not the bond that uniteth you with your Creator, and be not of those that have erred and strayed from His ways. Verily I say, the world is like the vapor in a desert, which the thirsty dreameth to be water and striveth after it with all his might, until when he cometh unto it, he findeth it to be mere illusion. It may, moreover, be likened unto the lifeless image of the beloved whom the lover hath sought and found, in the end, after long search and to his utmost regret, to be such as cannot 'fatten nor appease his hunger.'”

“He who hath attained this station is sanctified from all that pertaineth to the world.”

Note: Material things have lost their meaning to us on this level of understanding.

In *Bahá'í World Faith*, page 90 Bahá'u'lláh says: “the conscious eye of the soul of man remain veiled and darkened, he will be led to deny these universal signs and remain deprived of these manifestations of divine bounty. Therefore, we must endeavor with heart and soul in order that the veil covering the eye of inner vision may be removed, that we may behold the manifestations of the signs of God, discern His mysterious graces and realize that material blessings as compared with spiritual bounties are as nothing. The spiritual blessings of God are greatest. When we were in the mineral kingdom, although we were endowed with certain gifts and powers, they were not to be compared with the blessings of the human kingdom. In the matrix of the mother we were the recipients of endowments and blessings of God, yet these were as nothing compared to the powers and graces bestowed upon us after birth into this human world. Likewise, if we are born from the matrix of this physical and phenomenal environment into the freedom and loftiness of the spiritual life and vision”

“Wherefore, if those who have come to the sea of His presence are found to possess none of the limited things of this perishable world, whether it be outer wealth or personal opinions, it mattereth not.”

Note:

In *Bahá'í World Faith*, page 134 Bahá'u'lláh says: “Whatsoever the Creator commandeth His creatures to observe, the same must they diligently, and with the utmost joy and eagerness, arise and fulfil. We should in no wise allow their fancy to obscure their judgment, neither should they regard their own imaginings as the voice of the Eternal. In the Prayer of Fasting We have revealed: "Should Thy Will decree that out of Thy mouth these words proceed and be addressed unto them, 'Observe, for My Beauty's sake, the fast, O people, and set no limit to its duration,' I swear by the majesty of Thy glory, that every one of them will faithfully observe it, will abstain from whatsoever will violate Thy law, and will continue to do so until they yield up their souls unto Thee." In this consisteth the complete surrender of one's will to the Will of God. Meditate on this, that thou mayest drink in the waters of everlasting life which flow

through the words of the Lord of all mankind, and mayest testify that the one true God hath ever been immeasurably exalted above His creatures. He, verily, is the Incomparable, the Ever-Abiding, the Omniscient, the All-Wise.”

In *Bahá’í World Faith*, page 85 Bahá’u’lláh says: “How marvelous, then, are the manifold tokens of Thy might and how great are the diverse evidences of Thy power! The learned have, without exception, admitted their ignorance when confronted with the radiance of the Luminary of Thy knowledge; and the mighty have all confessed their impotence in the face of the billowing Ocean of Thy power; and the rich have one and all acknowledged their poverty before the effusions of the Treasuries of Thy wealth; and the worldly wise have each recognized their nothingness beside the splendors of the Light of Thy beauty; and the exalted have all witnessed unto their abasement when face to face with the effulgence of the Day Star of Thy glory; and they who are in authority have borne witness to their own evanescence and to the evanescence of others, and discovered the eternity of Thy majesty, and of Thy sovereignty, and of Thy sublimity, and of Thy power”

“For whatever the creatures have is limited by their own limits,”

Note: We are limited in our ability to comprehend. We never understand our Creator but can understand His Manifestations. We all can follow God’s Will according to our capacity. We do not know what our capacity is, and it is not absolute.

In *Bahá’í World Faith*, page 322 ‘Abdu’l-Bahá says: “The phenomenal reality can comprehend the Pre-existent attributes only to the extent of the human capacity. The mystery of Divinity is sanctified and purified from the comprehension of the beings, for all that comes the imagination is that which man understands, and the power of the understanding of man does not embrace the Reality of the Divine Essence. All that man is able to understand are the attributes of Divinity, the radiance of which appears and is visible in the world and souls.”

“and whatever the True One hath is sanctified therefrom;”

Note: The knowledge of the Manifestations is absolute, not limited. “It is then ascertained and approved that the Holy Manifestations are the center of the bounty, signs, and perfections of God. Blessed are those who receive the light of the divine bounties from the enlightened Dawning-points.”

“This utterance must be deeply pondered that it’s purport may be clear.”

Note: Bahá’u’lláh wants us to ponder deeply our limitations and progress to the unlimited, we must through our own free will, rejoice in trusting Him and surrendering our all to Him, and in “doing his bidding.”

“And now, concerning thy question regarding the creation of man. Know thou that all men have been created in the nature made by God, the Guardian, the Self-Subsisting. Unto each one hath been prescribed a pre-ordained measure, as decreed in God’s mighty and guarded Tablets. All that which ye potentially possess can, however, be manifested only as a result of your own volition. Your own acts testify to this truth.” (*Gleanings*, sec. LXXVII, page 149)

“O SON OF MAN! Sorrow not save that thou art far from Us. Rejoice not save that thou art drawing near and returning unto Us.” (*The Hidden Words*, Arabic, No. 35)

“O SON OF SPIRIT! There is no peace for thee save by renouncing thyself and turning unto Me; for it behooveth thee to glory in My name, not in thine own; to put thy trust in Me and not in thyself, since I desire to be loved alone and above all that is.” (*The Hidden Words*, Arabic, No. 8)

“*Verily the righteous shall drink of a winecup tempered at the camphor fountain.*’ If the interpretation of ‘camphor’ become known, the true intention will be evident.”

Note: (Quotation is from *Qur’an* 76:5) Camphor (or, Kafur), a river in paradise; its refreshing waters are fragrant. Here Camphor means the Manifestation, whose teachings are the refreshing waters, the source of all enlightenment.

In *Bahá’í World Faith*, page 323 ‘Abdu’l-Bahá says: “We hope that the friends of God, like an attractive force, will draw these bounties from the source itself, and that they will arise with such illumination and signs that they will be evident proofs of the Sun of Reality.”

In *Bahá’í World Faith*, page 227 ‘Abdu’l-Bahá says: “Spiritual progress is through the breaths of the Holy Spirit and is the awakening of the conscious soul of man to perceive the Reality of Divinity.”

“I swear by God! Were he that treadeth the path of guidance and seeketh to scale the heights of righteousness to attain unto this glorious and supreme station, he would inhale at a distance of a thousand leagues the fragrance of God, and would perceive the resplendent morn of a divine Guidance rising above the dayspring of all things. Each and every thing, however small, would be to him a revelation, leading him to his Beloved, the Object of his quest. So great shall be the discernment of this seeker that he will discriminate between truth and falsehood even as he doth distinguish the sun from shadow. If in the uttermost corners of the East the sweet savors of God be wafted, he will assuredly recognize and inhale their fragrance, even though he be dwelling in the uttermost ends of the West. He will likewise clearly distinguish all the signs of God—His wondrous utterances, His great works, and mighty deeds—from the doings, words and ways of men, even as the jeweller who knoweth the gem from the stone, or the man who distinguisheth the spring from autumn and heat from cold. When the channel of the

human soul is cleansed of all worldly and impeding attachments, it will unfailingly perceive the breath of the Beloved across immeasurable distances, and will, led by its perfume, attain and enter the City of Certitude. Therein he will discern the wonders of His ancient wisdom, and will perceive all the hidden teachings from the rustling leaves of the Tree—which flourisheth in that City. With both his inner and his outer ear he will hear from its dust the hymns of glory and praise ascending unto the Lord of Lords, and with his inner eye will he discover the mysteries of ‘return’ and ‘revival.’ How unspeakably glorious are the signs, the tokens, the revelations, and splendours which He Who is the King of names and attributes hath destined for that City! The attainment of this City quencheth thirst without water, and kindleth the love of God without fire. Within every blade of grass are enshrined the mysteries of an inscrutable wisdom, and upon every rose-bush a myriad nightingales pour out, in blissful rapture, their melody. Its wondrous tulips unfold the mystery of the undying Fire in the Burning Bush, and its sweet savours of holiness breathe the perfume of the Messianic Spirit. It bestoweth wealth without gold, and conferreth immortality without death. In every leaf ineffable delights are treasured, and within every chamber unnumbered mysteries lie hidden. They that valiantly labour in quest of God’s will, when once they have renounced all else but Him, will be so attached and wedded to that City that a moment’s separation from it would to them be unthinkable. They will hearken unto infallible proofs from the Hyacinth of that assembly, and receive the surest testimonies from the beauty of its Rose and the melody of its Nightingale. Once in about a thousand years shall this City be renewed and re-adorned. Wherefore, O my friend, it behooveth Us to exert the highest endeavour to attain unto that City, and, by the grace of God and His loving-kindness, rend asunder the ‘veils of glory’; so that, with inflexible steadfastness, we may sacrifice our drooping souls in the path of the New Beloved. We should with tearful eyes, fervently and repeatedly, implore Him to grant us the favour of that grace. That city is none other than the Word of God revealed in every age and dispensation. In the days of Moses it was the Pentateuch; in the days of Jesus the Gospel; in the days of Muḥammad the Messenger of God the Qur’án; in this day the Bayán; and in the dispensation of Him Whom God will make manifest His own Book—the Book unto which all the Books of former Dispensations must needs be referred, the Book which standeth amongst them all transcendent and supreme. In these cities spiritual sustenance is bountifully provided, and incorruptible delights have been ordained. The food they bestow is the bread of heaven, and the Spirit they impart is God’s imperishable blessing. Upon detached souls they bestow the gift of Unity, enrich the destitute, and offer the cup of knowledge unto them who wander in the wilderness of ignorance. All the guidance, the blessings, the learning, the understanding, the faith, and certitude, conferred upon all that is in heaven and on earth, are hidden and treasured within these Cities.” (*Kitáb-i-Íqán*, pages 196-200)

“Thus We instruct thee in the interpretation of the traditions, and reveal unto thee the mysteries of divine wisdom, that haply thou mayest comprehend the meaning thereof, and be of them that have quaffed the cup of divine knowledge and understanding.” (*Kitáb-i-Íqán*, page 32-3)

“This state is that poverty of which it is said, ‘*Poverty is My glory.*’ And of inward and outward poverty there is many a stage and many a meaning which I have not thought pertinent to mention here; hence I have reserved these for another time, dependent on what God may desire and fate may seal.”

Note: Bahá’u’lláh says that we, in this state, this level of awareness, will understand the meaning of ‘Poverty is my Glory’ (a quote from the Prophet Muhammad) and also that on, or in, this state if it will be God’s Will, we will receive a deeper awareness of His mysteries. In this state we are void of personal desires and passions and personal opinions etc. and we are filled with what God has ordained.

“The source of all glory is acceptance of whatsoever the Lord hath bestowed, and contentment with that which God hath ordained.” (*Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh*, Words of Wisdom, sec. 10, page 155)

“LAUDED be Thy name, O my God and the God of all things, my Glory and the Glory of all things, my Desire and the Desire of all things, my Strength and the Strength of all things, my King and the King of all things, my Possessor and the Possessor of all things, my Aim and the Aim of all things, my Mover and the Mover of all things! Suffer me not, I implore Thee, to be kept back from the ocean of Thy tender mercies, nor to be far removed from the shores of nearness to Thee.” (*Prayers and Meditations*, sec. XLII page 59)

“O SON OF PASSION! Cleanse thyself from the defilement of riches and in perfect peace advance into the realm of poverty; that from the wellspring of detachment thou mayest quaff the wine of immortal life.” (*The Hidden Words*, Persian, No. 55)

In *Bahá’í World Faith*, page 367 ‘Abdu’l-Bahá says: “Souls are like unto mirrors, and the bounty of God is like unto the sun. When the mirrors pass beyond all coloring and attain purity and polish, and are confronted with the sun, they will reflect in full perfection its light and glory. In this condition one should not consider the mirror, but the power of the light of the sun, which hath penetrated the mirror, making it a reflector of the heavenly glory.”

“Blessed is the soul which, at the hour of his separation from the body, is sanctified from the vain imaginings of the peoples of the world. Such a soul liveth and move it in accordance with the Will of its Creator, and entereth the all-highest Paradise. The maids of Heaven, inmates of the loftiest mansions, will circle around it, and the Prophets of God and His chosen ones will seek its companionship. If any man be told that which hath been ordained for such a soul in the world of God, the Lord of the throne on high and of earth below, his whole being will instantly blaze out in his great longing to attain that most exalted, that sanctified and resplendent station...” (*Gleanings*, sec. LXXXI, page 156)

2nd paragraph, page 37

“This is the plane whereon the vestiges of all things (Kullu Shay’) are destroyed in the traveler, and on the horizon of eternity the Divine Face riseth out of the darkness, and the meaning of ‘*All on the earth shall pass away, but the face of thy Lord...*’ is made manifest.”

Note: “Kullu Shay’ means “all things”. (Quotation is from *Qur’an* 55:26, 27.) Now we do not see the multiplicity of the creation: we see the creation as one creation, of which we are a part; and the Cause of the creation as one Cause – one Creator. In relation to the eternal God, all created things are temporal (on the material, physical, level). We see all of creation as a mirror which is reflecting His Beauty, His Knowledge, according to our capacity and from the eternal spirit emanating from the reality of divinity.

In *Bahá’í World Faith*, pages 261-262 ‘Abdu’l-Bahá says: “the individual realities of mankind when spiritually born are emanations from the reality of divinity, just as the flame, heat and light of the sun are the effulgence of the sun and not a part of the sun itself. Therefore a spirit has emanated from the reality of divinity, and its effulgences have become visible in human entities or realities. This ray and this heat are permanent. There is no cessation in the effulgence. As long as the sun exists the heat and light will exist, and inasmuch as eternity is a property of divinity, this emanation is everlasting. There is no cessation in its outpouring. The more the world of humanity develops, the more the effulgences or emanations of divinity will become revealed, just as the stone when it becomes polished and pure as a mirror will reflect in fuller degree the glory and splendor of the sun.”

In *Bahá’í World Faith*, page 94 Bahá’u’lláh says: “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 the all created things! He hath from everlasting, dwelt in His inaccessible habitation of holiness and glory, and will unto everlasting, continue to be enthroned upon the height 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 remain above the praise of all the inhabitants of heaven and the earth!... From the exalted source, and out of the essence of His favor and bounty He hath entrusted every created thing with the 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.”

In *Bahá'í World Faith*, page 205 Bahá'u'lláh says: “Say: Verily a word hath gone forth in favor, from the great Tablet and God has adorned It with the mantle of Himself, and made it sovereign over all in the earth and a sign of His grandeur and omnipotence among the creatures; in order that, through it, the people shall praise their Lord, the mighty, the powerful, the wise; and that, through it, they shall glorify their creator and sanctify the self of God which standeth within all things. Verily, this is naught but a Revelation upon the part of the wise, the ancient One.”

3rd paragraph, pages 37-38

“O My friend, listen with heart and soul to the songs of the spirit, and treasure them as thine own eyes. For the heavenly wisdoms, like the clouds of spring, will not rain down on the earth of men’s hearts forever; and though the grace of the All-Bounteous One is never stilled and never ceasing, yet to each time and era a portion is allotted and a bounty set apart, this in a given measure. *‘And no one thing is there, but with Us are its storehouses; and We send it not down but in settled measure.’*”

Note: (Quotation is from *Qur’an* 15:21) Bahá'u'lláh explains that through the light of the Divine Spirit is never ending, yet the power of this revelation is greater during the lifetime of the Manifestation. Those of us who had the privilege of approaching Him and listening to His teachings should realize what great bounty was theirs.

In *Bahá'í World Faith*, page 94-95 Bahá'u'lláh says: “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 defilements 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 everything 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!”

“The cloud of the Loved One’s mercy raineth only on the garden of the spirit, and bestoweth this bounty only in the season of spring. The other seasons have no share in this greatest grace, and barren lands no portion of this favor.”

Note: His revelation will endure; but its power is greater during or close to the time of His appearance on earth. This is the springtime, the birth of His Faith, before His teachings are gradually distorted by the limited minds of men.

In *Bahá'í World Faith*, page 255 'Abdu'l-Bahá says: "Just as the solar cycle has its four seasons the cycle of the Sun of Reality has its distinct and successive periods. Each brings its vernal season or springtime. When the Sun of Reality returns to quicken the world of mankind a divine bounty descends from the heaven of generosity. The realm of thoughts and ideals is set in motion and blessed with new life. Minds are developed, hopes brightened, aspirations become spiritual, the virtues of the human world appear with freshened power of growth and the image and likeness of God become visible in man. It is the springtime of the inner world. After the spring, summer comes with its fullness and fruitage spiritual; autumn follows with its withering winds which chill the soul; the Sun seems to be going away until at last the mantle of winter overspreads and only faint traces of the effulgences of that divine Sun remain. Just as the surface of the material world becomes dark and dreary, the soil dormant, the trees naked and bare and no beauty or freshness remain to cheer the darkness and desolation, so the winter of the spiritual cycle witnesses the death and disappearance of divine growth and extinction of the light and love of God. But again the cycle begins in a new springtime appears."

In *Bahá'í World Faith*, page 380 'Abdu'l-Bahá says: "O thou seeker of Truth! The realm of the Kingdom is a unit. The only difference lies in this: That when the season of spring dawneth, a new and wonderful motion and rejuvenation is witnessed in all the existing things; the mountain and the meadows are revived; the trees find freshness and delicacy and are clothed with radiant and bright leaves, blossoms and fruits. In like manner the preceding Manifestations from an inseparable link with two subsequent dispensations; nay, rather they are identical with each other. Since the world is constantly developing itself, the rays become stronger, the outpouring becometh greater and the sun appeareth in meridian orbit..."

4th paragraph, page 38

“O Brother! Not every sea hath pearls; not every branch will flower, nor will the nightingale sing thereon.”

Note: Bahá'u'lláh explains that not every soul will respond to His Call through their conscious efforts.

In *Bahá'í World Faith*, page 364-365 'Abdu'l-Bahá says: "Know that faith is of two kinds. The first is objective faith that is expressed by the outer man, obedience of the limbs and senses. The other faith is subjective, and unconscious obedience to the will of God. There is no doubt that, in the day of a Manifestation such as Christ, all contingent beings possessed subjective faith and had unconscious obedience to His Holiness Christ. For all parts of the creational world are of one whole. Christ the Manifestor reflecting the

divine Sun represented the whole. All the parts are subordinate and obedient to the whole. The contingent beings are the branches of the tree of life while the Messenger of God is the root of that tree. The branches, leaves and fruit are dependent for their existence upon the root of the tree of life. This condition of unconscious obedience constitutes subjective faith. But the discerning faith that consists of true knowledge of God and the comprehension of divine words, of such faith there is very little in any age. That is why His Holiness Christ said to His followers, ‘Many are called but few are chosen.’...Those souls who have the capacity and ability to receive the outpourings of the Kingdom and the confirmation of the Holy Spirit, they become attracted through one word.”

“Then, ere the nightingale of the mystic paradise repair to the garden of God, and the rays of the heavenly morning return to the Sun of Truth—”

Note: Bahá’u’lláh admonishes the believers living in His time, to benefit from His Teachings, from the radiance of His presence before He passes away.

“O SON OF SPIRIT! The time cometh, when the nightingale of holiness will no longer unfold the inner mysteries and ye will all be bereft of the celestial melody and of the voice from on high” (*The Hidden Words*, Persian, No. 15)

“make thou an effort, that haply in this dust-heap of the mortal world thou mayest catch a fragrance from the everlasting garden, and live forever in the shadow of the peoples of this city.”

Note: Bahá’u’lláh wants the people to make the effort necessary to know Him. This City is the Will of God through the Manifestation:

In *Bahá’í World Faith*, page 116 Bahá’u’lláh says: “The everlasting Candle shineth in its naked glory. Behold how it hath consumed every mortal veil. O ye moth-like lovers of His light! Brave every danger, and consecrate your souls to its consuming flame. Oh ye that thirst after him! Strip yourselves of every earthly affection, and hasten to embrace your Beloved. With a zest that none can equal make haste to attain unto him. The flower, thus far hidden from the sight of men, is unveiled to your eyes. In the open radiance of His glory He standeth before you. His voice summoneth all the holy and sanctified beings to come and be united with him. Happy is he that turneth thereunto; well is it with him that hath attained, and gazed on the light of so wondrous a countenance.”

“And when thou hast attained this highest station and come to this mightiest plane, then shalt thou gaze on the Beloved, and forget all else.”

Note: When we reach this high station, we become aware of the Love of God and all else is as nothing.

In *Bahá'í World Faith*, page 74 Bahá'u'lláh says: “I beg of thee, O my God, by Thy most exalted Word which Thou hast ordained as a Divine Elixir unto all who are in Thy realm, the Elixir through whose potency the crude metal of human life hath been transmuted into purest gold. O Thou in whose hands are both the visible and invisible kingdoms, to ordain that my choice be confirmed to Thy choice and my wish to Thy wish, that I may be entirely content with that which thou didest desire, and be wholly satisfied with what Thou didest destine for me by Thy bounteousness and favor. Potent art Thou to do as Thou wilt. Thou in truth, art the all-glorious, the All-Wise.”

**“The Beloved shineth on gate and wall
Without a veil, O men of vision.”**

Note: The signs of God are visible everywhere if our vision is not clouded. The regenerating power of Bahá'u'lláh is visible in His followers, because of His radiant influence we are reborn and reflect His light. (Quotation from Farídu'd-Dín 'Attár, the great Persian Šúfí poet.)

In *Bahá'í World Faith*, page 266 ‘Abdu'l-Bahá says: “The retina of outer vision though sensitive and delicate may nevertheless be a hindrance to the inner eye which alone can perceive. The bestowals of God which are manifest in all phenomenal life are sometimes hidden by intervening veils of mental and mortal vision which render man spiritually blind and incapable but when those scales are removed and the veils rent asunder, then the great signs of God will become visible and he will witness the eternal light filling the world. The bestowals of God are all and always manifest. The promises of heaven are ever present. The favors of God are all-surrounding.”

In *Bahá'í World Faith*, page 363 “Abdu'l-Bahá says: “O thou who warmest thyself by the fire of the love of God, spreading from the Tree of the Covenant! Let thy soul be at ease and thy heart in peace concerning the perfect success and progress which the pen is not able to express, for in a short time thou shalt see the flag of the Kingdom waving in those far and wide regions, and the lights of the Truth shining brilliantly in its dawn above those horizons, and thou shalt know that thou art the center of the circle of the love of God, the axis around which souls revolve in their way and supplication to God. Therefore, thou must widen thy heart, dilate thy breast, have patience in plenty, calmness of soul and cut thyself from everything but God! By God, the truth is, if thou goest according to the teachings of El-Abd and followest the steps of Him who is annihilated in God, thou shalt see that the cohorts of the Kingdom of God will come to thy help, one after another, and that the hosts of the Might of God will

be in thy presence in steady succession, the gates of the great victory opened and the rays of the brilliant morning diffused! By thy life, O my beloved! if thou didst know what God had ordained for thee, thou wouldst fly with delight and thy happiness, gladness and Joy would increase every hour. El-Baha be upon thee!”

5th paragraph, pages 38-39

“Now hast thou abandoned the drop of life and come to the sea of the Life-Bestower.”

Note: Now that we have sacrificed our own limited lives (the drop), in order to become a part of the sea (the whole) .

“He Who is your Lord, the All-Merciful, cherisheth in His heart the desire of beholding the entire human race as one soul and one body. Haste ye to win your share of God’s good grace and mercy in this Day that eclipseth all other created Days. How great the felicity that awaiteth the man that forsaketh all he hath in a desire to obtain the things of God! Such a man, We testify, is among God’s blessed ones.” (*Gleanings*, sec. CVII, page 214)

In *Bahá’í World Faith*, page 99 Bahá’u’lláh says: “How puny and insignificant is the evanescent drop when compared with the waves and billows of God’s limitless and everlasting Ocean.”

“This is the goal thou didst ask for; ”

In *Bahá’í World Faith*, page 67 Bahá’u’lláh says: “This most great, this fathomless and surging Ocean is near, astonishingly near, unto you. Behold it is closer to you and your life–vein! Swift as a twinkling of an eye ye can, if ye but wish it, reach and partake of His imperishable favor, this God-given grace, this incorruptible gift, this most potent and unspeakably glorious bounty.”

“if it be God’s will, thou wilt gain it.”

In *Bahá’í World Faith*, page 104 Bahá’u’lláh says: “Neither the candle nor lamp can be lighted through their own unaided efforts, nor can it ever be possible for the mirror to free itself from its dross.”

6th paragraph, page 39

“In this city, even the veils of light are split asunder and vanish away. ‘His beauty hath no veiling save light, His face no covering save revelation.’”

Note: (Quotation is from the Ḥadīth). In this Valley the intensity of the light of the Divine Spirit does not blind one who has attained. There is nothing else but God and His Holy Spirit emanating from God.

In *Bahá'í World Faith*, page 117 Bahá'u'lláh says: “it becometh evident that all things, in their inmost reality, testify to the revelation of the names and attributes of God within them. Each according to its capacity, indicateth, and is expressive of, the knowledge of God. So potent and universal is this revelation, that it hath encompassed all things visible and invisible. Thus hath He revealed: ‘Hath aught else save Thee a power of revelation which is not possessed by Thee, that it could have manifested Thee? Blind is the eye which doth not perceive Thee.’ Likewise hath the eternal King spoken: ‘No thing have I perceived, except that I perceived God within it, God before it, or God after it.’ Also in the tradition of Kumayl it is written: ‘Behold, a light hath shone forth out of the morn of eternity, and lo, its waves have penetrated the inmost reality of all men.’ Man, the noblest and most perfect of all created things, excelleth them all in the intensity of this revelation, and is a fuller expression of its glory. And of all men, the most accomplished, the most distinguished, and the most excellent are the Manifestations of the Sun of Truth. Nay, all else besides these Manifestations, live by the operation of Their Will, and move and have their being through the outpourings of Their grace.”

“How strange that while the Beloved is visible as the sun, yet the heedless still hunt after tinsel and base metal. Yea, the intensity of His revelation hath covered Him, and the fullness of His shining forth hath hidden Him.”

Note: The Beloved is visible to the souls which are pure, but to those of us who do not recognize Him, He is invisible, so they spend their energy seeking only material things or to hold fast to the letter of certain traditions.

In *Bahá'í World Faith*, page 138 Bahá'u'lláh says: “Shake off, O heedless ones, the slumber of negligence, that ye may behold the radiance which His glory hath spread through the world. How foolish are those who murmur against the premature birth of His light. O ye who are inly blind! Whether too soon or too late, the evidences of His effulgent glory are now actually manifest. It behoveth you to ascertain whether or not such a light hath appeared. It is neither within your power nor mine to set the time at which it should be made manifest. God's inscrutable Wisdom hath fixed its hour beforehand. Be content, O people, with that which God hath desired for you and predestined unto you.”

“They that have hearts to understand, they that have quaffed the Wine of love, who have not for one moment gratified their selfish desires, will behold, resplendent as the sun in its noontide glory, those tokens, testimonies, and evidences that attest the truth of this wondrous Revelation, this transcendent and divine Faith. Reflect, how the people have rejected the Beauty of God, and have clung unto their covetous desires. Notwithstanding all these consummate verses, these unmistakable allusions, which have been revealed in the “Most weighty Revelation,” the Trust of God amongst men, and despite these

evident traditions, each more manifest than the most explicit utterance, the people have ignored and repudiated their truth, and have held fast to the letter of certain traditions which, according to their understanding, they have found inconsistent with their expectations, and the meaning of which they have failed to grasp. They have thus shattered every hope, and deprived themselves of the pure wine of the All-Glorious, and the clear and incorruptible waters of the immortal Beauty.” (*Kitáb-i-Íqán* pages 252-253)

**“Even as the sun, bright hath He shined,
But alas, He hath come to the town of the blind!”**

Note: The Spirit of God appeared on earth in the human temple, but most of us are spiritually blind and do not see who He really is. (Quotation is from Jalálu’d-Dín Rúmí the greatest of all Persian Şúfi poets, and founder of the Mawlaví [“whirling dervish”] order.)

In *Bahá’í World Faith*, page 166 Bahá’u’lláh says: “Praise and glory belong unto the King of Names and the Creator of heavens, the waves of the sea of Whose appearance are manifest and evident before the faces of all in the world. The sun of His command is submitted to no covering, and His word of affirmation is beyond the reach of negation. Neither the restriction of tyrants nor the oppression wrought by Pharaohs could withhold Him from His Will. Glorified is His Power and great is His Grandeur! Praise be unto God! Although Signs have encompassed the world, and proofs and arguments are shining forth and manifest from all directions like unto the light, yet ignorant servants are found heedless, nay, even contradictory. O that they were content with mere contradicting! Nay, but they are all the time plotting to cut down the Blessed Tree. From the beginning of this Dispensation the manifestors of selfishness have exerted themselves with all tyranny and injustice to extinguish the light of God; but, verily, God prevented them therefrom, and through His power caused the light to appear and protected it through His might, until the heaven and earth were illuminated with its radiance and brightness! Praise be unto Him under all circumstances!”

7th paragraph, page 39

“In this Valley, the wayfarer leaveth behind him the stages of the ‘oneness of Being and Manifestation’ and reacheth a oneness that is sanctified above these two stations. Ecstasy alone can encompass this theme, not utterance nor argument; and whosoever hath dwelt at this stage of the journey, or caught a breath from this garden land, knoweth whereof We speak.”

Note: (The quotation “oneness of Being...” references Pantheism, a Şúfi doctrine derived from the formula: ‘Only God exists; He is in all things, and all things are in Him.’) In this stage, words cannot explain, and we will know when we catch a breath from the garden-land. The concept of the oneness of God in this world is the oneness of different levels of existence – – the higher and the lower, the Creator and His creation, the Absolute and the relative, cause and effect. Every created being reflects the oneness of God according to its capacity. This reflection is relative. But

in this level of awareness, in this seventh Valley, we come to a new understanding and realize that in the spiritual world there is no reflection because there is no world of material existence. Therefore there is no relativity, and the oneness of God is absolute.

In *Bahá'í World Faith*, page 267 'Abdu'l-Bahá says: "In the spiritual world, the divine bestowals are infinite, for in that realm there is neither separation nor disintegration which characterize the world of material existence. Spiritual existence is absolute immortality, completeness and unchangeable being."

In *Bahá'í World Faith*, page 69 Bahá'u'lláh says: "Praised be Thou, O Lord my God! Every time I am reminded of Thee and muse on Thy virtues, I am seized with such ecstasies and am so enraptured by Thee that I find myself unable to make mention of Thy name and to extol Thee. I am carried back to such heights that I recognize my self to be the same as the remembrance of Thee in Thy realm, and the essence of Thy praise among Thy servants. As long as that self endureth, so long will Thy praise continue to be shed abroad among Thy creatures and Thy remembrance glorified by Thy people.

Every man endued with insight among Thy servants is persuaded that my self liveth eternally and can never perish, inasmuch as remembrance of Thee is eternal and will endure so long as Thine own Self endureth, and Thy praise is everlasting and will last as long as Thine own sovereignty will last. By its means Thou art glorified by such of Thy chosen ones as call upon Thee and by the sincere among Thy servants. Nay, the praise wherewith any one, in the entire creation, praiseth Thee proceedeth from this exalted self and returneth unto it, even as the sun which, while it shineth, sheddeth its splendor upon whatsoever may be exposed to its rays. From this sun is generated, and unto it must return, the light which is shed over all things."

8th paragraph, pages 39-40

“In all these journeys the traveler must stray not a breadth of a hair from the ‘Law’”

“Think not that We have revealed unto you a mere code of laws. Nay, rather, We have unsealed the choice Wine with the fingers of might and power. To this beareth witness that which the Pen of Revelation hath revealed. Meditate upon this, O men of insight!”
(*Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, page 21, No. 5)

“for this is indeed the secret of the ‘Path’”

In *Bahá'í World Faith*, page 361 'Abdu'l-Bahá says: "Thank God for guiding thee unto the Straight Path, manifesting unto thee the Evident Light. He shall give thee a draught of the cup whereby thy spiritual power will be increased. Thou shalt advance unto the Lofty Station, acquire heavenly qualities and attain knowledge of the significances of the words of God in this glorious day."

“and the fruit of the Tree of ‘Truth;’”

Note: The “Law”, the “Path” and the “Truth” refer to the three stages of Ṣūfī life:

1. Shari‘at, or Religious Laws;
2. Ṭarīqat, or the Path on which the mystic wayfarer journeys in search of the True One; this stage also includes anchoretism.
3. Ḥaqīqat, or the Truth which, to the Ṣūfī, is the goal of the journey through all three stages.

Here Bahá’u’lláh teaches that, contrary to the belief of certain Ṣūfīs who in their search for the Truth consider themselves above all law. Obedience to the Laws of Religion is essential. (“anchoretism” means to be a hermit). Remember that Bahá’u’lláh is answering as a student of Sufi philosophy.

“Verily this is that Most Great Beauty, foretold in the Books of the Messengers, through Whom truth shall be distinguished from error and the wisdom of every command shall be tested. Verily He is the Tree of Life that bringeth forth the fruits of God, the Exalted, the Powerful, the Great.” (*Bahá’í Prayers*, The Tablet of Aḥmad)

“and in all these stages he must cling to the robe of obedience to the commandments, and hold fast to the cord of shunning all forbidden things,”

“The ordinances of God have been sent down from the heaven of His most august Revelation. All must diligently observe them. Man’s supreme distinction, his real advancement, his final victory, have always depended and will continue to depend upon them. Whoso keepeth the commandments of God shall attain everlasting felicity.” (*Gleanings*, sec. CXXXIII, page 289)

In *Bahá’í World Faith*, page 85-86 Bahá’u’lláh says: “Praised be Thou, O Lord my God! I implore Thee by Them Who are the Tabernacles of Thy Divine holiness, Who are the Manifestations of Thy transcendent unity and the Day Springs of Thine inspiration and revelation, to grant that Thy servants may not be kept back from this Divine Law which, at Thy will and according to Thy pleasure, hath branched out from Thy most great Ocean. Do Thou, then, ordain for them that which Thou didst ordain for Thy chosen ones and for the righteous among Thy creatures, whose constancy in Thy Cause the tempests of trials have failed to shake, and whom the tumults of tests have been powerless to hinder from magnifying Thy most exalted Word--the Word through Which the heavens of men's idle fancies and vain imaginations have been split asunder. Thou art, verily, the Almighty, the All-Glorious, the All-Knowing.”

“that he may be nourished from the cup of the Law and informed of the mysteries of Truth.”

In *Bahá'í World Faith*, page 362-363 Abdu'l-Bahá says: “Arise with every power to assist the Covenant of God and serve in His vineyard. Be confident that a confirmation will be granted unto you and a success on His part is given unto you. Verily, He shall support you by the angels of His holiness and reinforce you with the breaths of the Spirit that ye may mount the Ark of Safety, set forth the evident signs, impart the spirit of life, declare the essence of His commands and precepts, guide the sheep who are straying from the fold in all directions, and give the blessings. Ye have to use every effort in your power and strive earnestly and wisely in this new century. By God, verily the Lord of Hosts is your support, the angels of heaven your assistance, the Holy Spirit your companion and the Center of the Covenant your helper. Be not idle, but active and fear not. Look unto those who have been in the former ages--how they have resisted all nations and suffered all persecutions and afflictions, and how their stars shone, their attacks proved successful, their teachings established, their regions expanded, their hearts gladdened, their ideas cleared and their motives effective. Ye are now in a great station and noble rank and ye shall find yourselves in evident success and prosperity, the like of which the eye of existence never saw in former ages.”

9th paragraph, page 40

“If any of the utterances of this Servant may not be comprehended, or may lead to perturbation, the same must be inquired of again, that no doubt may linger, and the meaning be clear as the Face of the Beloved One shining from the ‘Glorious Station.’”

Note: (Quotation is from Qur'an 17:81 “Maqám-i-Mahmúd”) If the we cannot understand clearly what Bahá'u'lláh has explained, we must ask Him for more clarification – – until there is no doubt within us.

In *Bahá'í World Faith*, page 382 Abdu'l-Bahá says: “That Essence of the Divine Entity and the Unseen of the unseen is holy above imagination and is beyond thought. Consciousness doth not reach It. Within the capacity of comprehension of a produced reality that Ancient Reality cannot be contained. It is a different world; from it there is no information; arrival thereat is impossible; attainment thereto is prohibited and inaccessible. This much is known: It exists and Its existence is certain and proven--but the condition is unknown.

All the philosophers and the doctors knew that It is, but they were perplexed in the comprehension of its existence and were at last discouraged, and in great despair they left this world. For the comprehension of the condition and mysteries of that Reality of realities and Mystery of mysteries there is need for another power and another sense. That power and sense is not possessed by mankind, therefore they have not found any information. For example: If a man possess the power of hearing, the power of tasting,

the power of smelling and the power of feeling, but no power of seeing, he cannot see. Hence, through the powers and senses present in man the realization of the Unseen Reality, which is pure and holy above the reach of doubts, is impossible. Other powers are needed and other senses required. If those powers and senses are obtained, then information can be had; otherwise, not.”

10th paragraph, pages 41-40

“These journeys have no visible ending in the world of time,”

Note: There is no end in sight for our progress.

In *Bahá'í World Faith*, page 328 ‘Abdu’l-Bahá says: “As the divine bounties are endless, so human perfections are endless. If it were possible to reach a limit of perfection, then one of the realities of the beings might reach the condition of being independent of God, and the contingent might attain to the condition of the absolute.”

“it hath been made indubitably clear that in the kingdoms of earth and heaven there must needs be manifested a Being, an Essence Who shall act as a Manifestation and Vehicle for the transmission of the grace of the Divinity Itself, the Sovereign Lord of all. Through the Teachings of this Daystar of Truth every man will advance and develop until he attaineth the station at which he can manifest all the potential forces with which his inmost true self hath been endowed. It is for this very purpose that in every age and dispensation the Prophets of God and His chosen Ones have appeared amongst men, and have evinced such power as is born of God and such might as only the Eternal can reveal.” (*Gleanings*, XXVII, page 67)

“but the severed wayfarer—if invisible confirmation descend upon him and the Guardian of the Cause assist him—may cross these seven stages in seven steps, nay rather in seven breaths, nay rather in a single breath, if God will and desire it. And this is of “*His grace on such of His servants as He pleaseth*””

Note: (Quotation is from Qur’an 2:84.)

“How many of the ignorant who, by reason of their acceptance to the Faith, have soared aloft and attained the high summit of knowledge, and whose names have been inscribed by the Pen of Power upon the Tablet of divine Knowledge. Thus, ‘*What He pleaseth will God abrogate or confirm: for with Him is a Source of Revelation.*’ (*Qur’an* 13:4)” (*Kitáb-i-Íqán* page 146)

“Souls, through the potency of the Divine Elixir, traverse, in the twinkling of an eye, the world of dust and advance into the realm of holiness; and with one step cover the earth of limitations and reach the domain of the Placeless. It behooveth thee to exert thine utmost to attain this Elixir which, in one fleeting breath, causeth the west of ignorance to reach the east of knowledge, illuminates the darkness of night with the resplendence of the

morn, guideth the wanderer in the wilderness of doubt to the well-spring of the Divine Presence and Fount of certitude, and conferreth upon mortal souls the honor of acceptance into the Ridvan of immortality.” (*Kitáb-i-Íqán* pages 157-158)

“Inasmuch as a return of the Prophets of God, as attested by verses and traditions, hath been conclusively demonstrated, the return of their chosen ones also is therefore definitely proven.” (*Kitáb-i-Íqán* page 154)

11 paragraph, page 41

“They who soar in the heaven of singleness and reach to the sea of the Absolute, reckon this city—which is the station of life in God—as the furthestmost state of mystic knowers, and the farthest homeland of the lovers. But to this evanescent One of the mystic ocean, this station is the first gate of the heart’s citadel, that is, man’s first entrance to the city of the heart; and the heart is endowed with four stages, which would be recounted should a kindred soul be found.”

Note: We may consider this station as the culminating point we can ever achieve, but in the eyes of the Manifestation Bahá’u’lláh this is but our first step into the inner dwelling place of God – the citadel of the heart, and the heart is endowed with four stages, and He will explain them if He finds a soul ‘ready.’ (Kindred means related)

“Verily I say, the human soul is, in its essence, one of the signs of God, a mystery among His mysteries. It is one of the mighty signs of the Almighty. The harbinger that proclaimeth the reality of all the worlds of God. Within it lieth concealed that which the world is now utterly incapable of apprehending.” (*Gleanings*, sec. LXXXII page 160)

In *Bahá’í World Faith*, page 365 ‘Abdu’l-Bahá says: “The spiritual love of God maketh man pure and holy and clotheth him with the garment of virtue and purity. And when man attacheth his heart wholly to God and becometh related to the Blessed Perfection, the divine bounty will dawn. This love is not physical, nay, rather, it is absolutely spiritual. The souls whose consciences are enlightened through the light of the love of God, they are like unto shining lights and resemble stars of holiness in the heaven of purity. The real and great love is the love of God. That is holy above the imaginations and thoughts of men.”

“O SON OF BEAUTY! By My spirit and by My favor! By My mercy and by My beauty! All that I have revealed unto thee with the tongue of power, and have written for thee with the pen of might, hath been in accordance with thy capacity and understanding, not with My state and the melody of My voice.” (*The Hidden Words*, Arabic, No. 67)

“The confession of helplessness which mature, contemplation must eventually impel every mind to make is in itself the acme of human understanding, and markets the culmination of man’s development.” (*Gleanings*, sec. LXXXII, page 165-166)

“Blessed is the man that hath acknowledged his belief in God and in His signs, and recognized that “He shall not be asked of His doings.” Such a recognition hath been made by God the ornament of every belief, and its very foundation.” (*Gleanings*, sec. XXXVII, page 86)

**“When the pen set to picturing this station,
It broke in pieces and the page was torn.”**

Note: When Bahá’u’lláh began to write about this high station, there were no words to explain it. (Quotation from a Persian mystic poem.)

“The tongue faileth in describing these three Valleys, and speech falleth short. The pen steppeth not into this region, the ink leaveth only a blot.”(*The Seven Valleys* page 30)

Note: It is through His inspiration we will progress to the even higher stages than the Seventh Valley.

“Salám!”

Note: Meaning “Peace”. This word is used in concluding a thesis.

SUMMARY OF
THE VALLEY OF TRUE POVERTY
AND ABSOLUTE NOTHINGNESS

Limited words cannot express this station of awareness.

When we reach this high station we become detached from worldly and limited thoughts and opinions by obeying the ordinances of God and is “living in God”.

We understand that true spiritual wealth is what is important and in this way become rich in the things of God. “God is the all possessing.”

Our whole being reflects our love and praise of God through our thoughts, deeds and actions at all times. We are content and joyful with all that God has bestowed.

At the same time when the Manifestation is living on earth, the Spiritual powers are especially great. Not everyone will reach His physical presence, though, during this time.

We abide by the laws of God to the Manifestation’s teachings completely and so are nourished from the cup of Truth. There is no visible ending to the progress we can reach. When we think we have reached the highest summit, we will find we have only come to the first stage in the journey into the city of the heart.

This journey has four stages of the heart that Bahá’u’lláh will reveal if He finds a receptive heart. We know that our capacity is limited. These stages are beyond the words of humankind and will be revealed through inspiration. Our spiritual progress, if God wills and desires, can be done in a single breath. We know that our capacity is limited.

We have traveled through the world of relativity into the world of oneness. We see with our inner eye the true reality and our powerlessness and poverty is clear to us. All is from god. We are simply the reflections of the love of our unknowable Creator.

Alláh-u-Abhá.

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(1) *Bahá'í World Faith* was published by Bahá'í Publishing Trust from 1943 to 1976 and was intended to replace the earlier compilation *Bahá'í Scriptures* with newer translations. However, many of the translations in *Bahá'í World Faith* in the intervening years have since been superseded by more authoritative versions. The reader is thus advised that some of the translations included herein could be poor or even incorrect. *Bahá'í World Faith* has been classified as a "personal" compilation because it was not prepared by the Bahá'í World Centre. Therefore the author of this study guide has attempted to update as many quotations from *Bahá'í World Faith* as possible to the latest official translations as of June 2018. The reader is encouraged to keep abreast of the latest authoritative translations accordingly.

(2) BPT = Bahá'í Publishing Trust, National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the U.S. A.