BAHÁ'Í FAITH

The Seven Valleys

A mystical text outlining the journey of the soul through seven stages to reach its ultimate goal.

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The Valley of Search

[1] In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful!

[2] Praise be unto God, who caused existence to appear from non-existence, inscribed the mysteries of Pre-existence on the tablet of man, and taught him the explanation of that which he knoweth not; made him a manifest book to such as believed and obeyed, enabled him to witness the creation of all things during this gloomy, disastrous age, and caused him to give utterance on the apex of immortality to a wonderful melody in the "Most Excellent Temple" (i.e., the Manifestation of God); so that every one may testify in himself (i.e., in man), by himself, in the seat of the manifestation of his Lord, that — "verily, there is no God save Him"; and that all may thereby reach the summit of truth, until no one shall behold anything whatsoever, but that he may see God therein.

[3] And I bless and salute the First Sea, branched out from the sea of the Divine Essence, the First Morn dawned forth from the horizon of Unity, the First Sun risen in the heaven of Eternity, the First Fire ignited from the lamp of pre-existence in the niche of Oneness; the one who is Ahmad in the kingdom of the worlds, is Mohammed in the concourse of the Chosen, and is Mahmood (i.e., praised one) in the realm of the Sincere Ones. "By whichsoever name ye invoke Him, it is (the same); for He hath Names" in the hearts of the knowing! Abundant, everlasting and eternal peace be on his household and companions!

[4] After these premises, We have heard that which the nightingale of knowledge warbled on the twigs of the Sadrat of thy soul; and We have learned what the dove of assurance sang upon the branches of the tree of thy heart. It was as if I discovered sweet fragrances from the garment of thy love, and realized thy whole meeting, by perusing thy letter.

[5] And, since I read thy allusions to thy death in God and thy life through Him, and thy love for the beloved of God, for the manifestations of his names and dawning-places of his attributes, I, therefore, mention unto thee holy, brilliant allusions, from the stations of Glory; so that they may attract thee unto the court of holiness, nearness, and beauty, and draw thee unto a state wherein thou shalt see naught in existence but the countenance of His Highness, thy Beloved One, and shalt not behold the creatures except as in the day wherein no one had any mention! That is the station of which the nightingale of Unity hath sung in the garden of "Ghotheyeh" (the name of a sermon by Ali), viz: "And there shall appear upon the tablet of thy heart, the traces of the subtle mysteries of — 'fear God and God will instruct you;' and the bird of thy soul shall remember the enclosure of pre-existence, and shall soar on wings of longing in the open of — 'walk in the paths of thy Lord with submissiveness,' and partake of the fruits of harmony in the gardens of — 'then eat of every fruit,' " By my life, O friend, wert thou to taste these fruits from the verdure of these hyacinths which are planted in the grounds of knowledge, near the manifestation of the lights of the Essence in the mirrors of Names and Attributes, yearning will take the reins of patience and fortitude from thy grasp, thy soul will stir through the flashes of lights, will uplift thee out of the earthly abode unto the original, divine abode in the centre of significances; and will cause thee to ascend unto such a state that thou wilt fly away in the air just as thou wouldst walk on the earth, and run on the water even as thou wouldst on the ground. May it do good unto me, unto thee, unto whomsoever may ascend to the

heaven of knowledge, and to him whose heart is fascinated by the zephyr of assurance wafting upon the garden of his innate heart, from the Sheba of the Merciful!

[6] Peace be unto those who follow Guidance!

[7] Finis.

[8] After these premises, the stages of the journey of travelers from the earthly dwelling to the Divine Home have been designated to be seven; some have spoken of these as "Seven Valleys," and others as "Seven Cities." And they have said: "Not until the traveler migrates from self and accomplishes these journeys, will he arrive at the sea of nearness and union, or taste of the peerless Wine." The first is

[9] The steed upon which to journey through this valley is Patience.

[10] In this journey, the traveler will reach no destination without patience, nor will he attain to his aim. He must never become dejected. Were he to endeavor for a hundred thousand years and see not the beauty of the Friend, he must not be downhearted; for those who strive after the Ka'aba of — "for Us," will be rejoiced at the glad tidings of — "We will assuredly direct them into our ways. " And they, in their search, have girt up the loins of service with the utmost firmness, and, at every instant, they travel from the seat of heedlessness to the contingent world of search. No chain can withhold them and no advice can debar them!

[11] It is conditional upon these servants to purify their hearts — which are the source of the Divine Treasury — from every blemish, to turn away from blind imitation which is a trace of forefathers and ancestors; and to close the doors of friendship and of enmity with all the people of the earth. In this journey the seeker reaches such a station that he finds all the existent beings bewildered in search of the Friend. Many a Jacob he sees wandering in quest of Joseph. A world of friends he beholds, who are running in search of the desired, one, and a universe of lovers he finds, who are journeying after the beloved one. At every moment, he perceives a new matter, and at every hour he becomes informed of a mystery; for he has lifted his heart from both worlds and intended (to attain) the Ka'aba of the Beloved.

[12] At every step, the assistance of the Invisible surrounds him, and the ardor of his search increases!

[13] Search should be measured by the deed of the Majnoon of love. It is related that one day Majnoon was seen sifting the dust and shedding tears. They said: "What art thou doing?" He said: "I am searching for Laila." They said: "Woe unto thee! Laila is from the pure spirit, and thou art seeking her in the earth!" He said: "I exert myself in her search everywhere; perchance I may find her somewhere."

[14] Indeed, although seeking the Lord of Lords in the dust is contemptible to the wise, yet it is evidence of utmost endeavor and search. "Whoso seeks with diligence shall surely find."

[15] A sincere seeker finds naught save union with the desired one, and a lover has no aim but to attain to the beloved. A seeker cannot obtain this (spirit of) search, except by the sacrifice of all that exists; that is, he must annihilate all that he has seen, heard or understood, with the negation, "no," so that he may reach the city of the Spirit, which is the city of "but."

[16] An effort is needed that we may exert ourselves in search for Him, and an endeavor that we may taste of the honey of union with Him. If we drink of this cup, we will forget the whole world!

[17] In this journey, the traveler sits on every soil and dwells in every land, and seeks the beauty of the Friend in every face. He searches for the Beloved One in every country; he joins every multitude and associates with every head; perchance, he may discover the mystery of the Beloved One in some head, or behold the beauty of the Desired One in some visage.

[18] If, through the assistance of God, he find, in this journey, a trace of the Traceless Friend and inhale the smell of the lost Joseph from the Harbinger of Oneness, he will immediately step into

The Valley of Love

[1] and become melted with the fire of love. In this city (or valley) the heaven of attraction is lifted up, the world-illuminating sun of longing dawns forth and the fire of love becomes ablaze. And when the fire of love is become ablaze, the harvest of reason will be wholly consumed.

[2] At this time, the traveler is unconscious, both of himself and of aught else save himself. He knows neither knowledge nor ignorance, neither doubt nor certainty; neither does he recognize the morn of guidance, nor the eve of error. He avoids both infidelity and faith, and deadly poison is agreeable to him. Thus it is said by Attar: "(Leave) infidelity to the infidel and faith to the faithful; a single particle of pain (in thy love) is enough for the heart of Attar."

[3] The steed of this valley is Pain; and without pain this journey will never be accomplished. In this stage the lover has no thought but of the Beloved One, and seeks no shelter but the Desired One. At every moment he freely gives a hundred lives in the path of the Beloved, and at every step he throws a thousand heads at the feet of the Friend.

[4] O my brother! Not until thou enterest the Egypt of the Spirit, wilt thou attain to the Joseph of the beauty of the Friend; not until thou, like Jacob, give up thine outward eye, wilt thou open thine inward eye; and not until thou art ablaze with the fire of love, wilt thou associate with the Friend of Ecstasy! A lover fears nothing, and no loss can do him harm. Thou wilt see him cool in fire, and find him dry even in the sea. "The sign of a lover is to be cool even in the fire of hell; and the token of a knower (of divine secrets) is to be dry even in the sea!"

[5] Love accepts not any existence, nor wishes any life. He finds life in death and glory in shame. Much wit is needed to make one worthy of the ardor of love; and many a head is required to be fit for the noose of the Friend. Blessed is the neck which falleth into His noose, and happy is the head which is dropped on the dust in the path of His love!

[6] Therefore, O friend! be alien to the self, that thou may'st find thy way to the Incomparable One; abandon the mortal earth that thou mayst take residence in the Divine Nest. Nothingness is needed until thou mayst kindle the fire of existence and become acceptable in the path of love. "Love does not accept a soul alive (to material things); a falcon preys not on a dead mouse!"

[7] At every moment Love consumes a world, and in whatever land he hoists his banner, he makes it desolate. Existence has no being in his realm and men of reason have no foot-hold in his dominion. The whale of love swallows up the erudite in reason and destroys the prudent in knowledge. It quaffs the "Seven Seas" and yet the thirst of its heart is not allayed, and still it says: "Is there yet any more?" It becomes alien to self and shuns all that is in the world. "Love is alien to both worlds; in him are involved two-and-seventy insanities!" A hundred thousand oppressed ones are entangled in his noose

and a hundred thousand sages are pierced by his arrow. Whatever redness thou beholdest in the world, know the same to be from his wrath; and whatever paleness thou seest in cheeks — account the same to be from his poison. He confers no remedy but death, and he steps only in the valley of nothingness; but to the palate of the lover his poison is more agreeable than honey, and to the eye of the seeker his death is more beloved than a hundred thousand lives!

8 Therefore, the veils of the satanic ego must needs be consumed with the fire of love, so that the spirit may become clean and purified for comprehending the grades of the Lord of: "but for thee."

9 " Kindle thou a fire of love and consume all possessions (or self); then lift thy foot and step into the mountain of the lovers."

10 If, by the assistance of the Creator, the lover is released in safety from the claws of the falcon of love, he will then arrive at the realm of

The Valley of Knowledge

1 He will be led from doubt to certainty and directed from the darkness of the error of worldly desire to the light of guidance of piety. His inner eye will be opened, and he will engage in close communion with his Beloved. He will open the portal of truth and devotion and close the doors of superficiality. In this state he will yield to the Divine Decree, will see war as peace, find the significances of life in death, perceive the mysteries of the "other world" in the regions of creation and in the souls of the servants (i.e., creatures) with the outward and inward eye; and, with a spiritual heart, he will behold the Eternal Wisdom in the infinite manifestations of God. In an ocean he will see a drop, and in a drop he will detect the mysteries of an ocean! "The core of whatever mote thou mayest split, therein thou wilt find a sun."

2 In this valley, through absolute vision, a traveler does not see in God's creation any difference or contradiction; and at every moment he will say: "Thou canst not see, in the creation of the Most Merciful One, any difference. Turn thou thine eyes whether thou can see any flaws!" (Koran). He will see justice in injustice and witness grace in justice; he will find many a knowledge concealed in ignorance and realize a hundred thousand wisdoms, manifest and evident, in knowledges. He will break the cage of body and desire, and be attached to the spirit of the people of immortality.

3 He will ascend on ideal ladders and hasten to the heaven of Significances. He will abide in the ark of — "We will surely show them Our signs in the regions (of the earth), and in themselves" (Koran), and sail on the sea of — "until it becomes manifest unto them that, verily (this Book) is true" (Koran).

4 If he experiences any oppression he will endure it with patience, and if he sees any wrath he will show forth affection.

5 It is related that a lover was suffering for years in separation from his beloved and burning in the fire of absence from her. By the overwhelming strength of love his breast was void of patience and his body would fain shun the soul. He accounted life in separation as a sham and suffered intense burning on account of the world. Many were the days he found no rest in separation from her, and the nights that he slept not through grief for her. Through the languor of body he had become as a sigh, and by the heart's pain he was (in lament) as a woe. He would freely give a thousand lives for a

single draught of her nearness, and yet this were not feasible! Physicians despaired of healing him, and companions kept far from his fellowship. Yea, physicians know no healing for the one diseased of love, except the favor of the beloved one come to his succor!

6 At length, the tree of his hope brought the fruit of despair, and the fire of his expectancy was quenched; until, one night, he was wearied of life and abandoned home for the streets. Suddenly a patrol pursued him. He was urging on at the front while the patrol sped in his chase. Finally, the patrols formed into a gathering and barred the way of flight to that afflicted one. He, helpless, groaned with all his heart and ran hither and thither, soliloquizing in these words: "This patrol is my angel of death, for he is seeking after me in such haste. Or, is he a tyrant of countries who is intent on oppressing men!" Thus, that one, pierced with the arrow of love, was running with the feet and lamenting in heart, until he reached the wall of a garden and climbed it with a thousand difficulties and afflictions, for it was found to be a very lofty wall. Then, regardless of his life, he threw himself down into the garden. But behold, there he found his beloved, with a light in her hand, searching for a ring she had lost! When that heart-surrendered lover saw his heart-ravishing beloved-one, he heaved a sigh and stretched forth his hands in prayer: "O God! bestow honor on this patrol, bless him with wealth, and preserve him; for this patrol was Gabriel, who became the guide of this infirm one. He was a Seraph who imparted life to this humble one!"

7 All that he said was indeed right, for it was seen how this wicked injustice of the patrol was pregnant with many a justice, and concealed many a mercy within veils! By one blow of violence he caused the one athirst in the desert of love to reach the sea of the beloved, and illumined the darkness of separation with the light of meeting! He placed a remote one in the garden of nearness, and led an infirm one to the physician of the heart!

8 Now, could that lover foresee the end, he would in the beginning show mercy to the patrol and pray for him, and he would see that injustice as justice. Since he was veiled from seeing the end, he raised his voice in lamentation in the beginning, and loosened his tongue in complaint. But, as the travelers of the Garden of Knowledge see the end from the beginning, they therefore find peace in war and reconciliation in estrangement!

9 This is the condition of the people of this valley. But the people of the valley beyond this see the beginning and the end as one; nay, rather, they see no beginning and no end — "Without beginning, without end." Nay, the denizens of the City of Immortality, who abide in the Verdant Garden, see not even" Without beginning, without end;" they shun all beginnings, and wage war on all ends! For they have traveled through the worlds of Names, and passed over the worlds of Attributes with the swiftness of lightning. As it is said: "A perfect realization of 'Divine Unity' is to strip it from all attributes." And they have taken residence under the shadow of the (Divine) Essence. Hence, in this connection, Khaji Abd' Allah — may God sanctify his excellent innate heart! — has set forth a subtle point and consummate word in his interpretation of the verse, " Direct us in the Right Way" (Koran). And it is this: Point unto us the right way, that is — bless us with Love, Thine Essence; so that, becoming free from all regard for ourselves and for all else save Thee, we may be wholly captivated by Thee, so as to know none but Thee, to see naught save Thee, to think of naught beside Thee!

10 Nay, they pass even beyond this station, as it is said: "Love is a screen between the lover and the Beloved."

[11] To say more than this I have not permission. At this time, the Morn of Knowledge hath dawned, and the lamps of traveling and wayfaring are put out. "The mind of Moses, with all his light and genius, became veiled therefrom (i.e., from seeing God); now, be thou warned not to fly without wings!"

[12] If thou art a man of prayer and supplication, fly on the wings of saintly effort, so that thou may'st see the mysteries of the Friend, and attain to the lights of the Beloved. "We are God's and unto Him shall we surely return."

[13] After journeying through the Valley of Knowledge, which is the last station of limitation, the traveler reaches the first stage of

The Valley of Unity

[1] He drinks from the Cup of Abstraction and gazes on the Manifestations of Singleness. At this station he rends asunder the veils of plurality, flies away from the worlds of lust, and ascends to the Heaven of Oneness. He hears with Divine ears, and beholds the mysteries of the Creation of the Eternal One, with Godlike eyes. He steps into the retreat of the Friend, and becomes an intimate in the pavilion of the Beloved. He stretches forth the hand of the True One from the bosom of Omnipotence, and shows forth the mysteries of Power. He sees no commendation, name or dignity of himself; he sees his own commendation in the commendation of the True One, and beholds the Name of the True One in his own name. He will know "all voices to be from the King," and hear all the melodies from Him. He will be established on the throne of — "Say, all is from God," and rest on the carpet of — "There is no power nor might but through God alone." He will look upon things with the view of Oneness; he will find the splendor of the Divine Sun from the Invisible Day-spring equally upon all the contingent beings, and see the lights of unity manifest and present in all the existent things!

[2] It is known to thy honor that all the differences which the traveler sees in the world of Being, during the various stages of his journey, are due to the view (gaze or vision) of the traveler himself. For this case we bring an illustration in order that this fact may become thoroughly evident: Consider the phenomenal sun which shines forth on all existent and contingent beings with the same effulgence, and pours light upon all things by the command of the King of Manifestation. But its appearance in every place, and the light it sheds thereon, is in accord with the degree of the capacity of that place. For instance — in a mirror it reflects as forms and disks, and this is due to the clearness of the mirror itself. It creates fire in the crystal, while in other things only the effect of its reflection is manifest and not its disk; and, through that effect, it develops everything according to the capacity of that thing, by the command of the Causer of effects, even as you see. Likewise, colors also appear in accord with (the nature of) the place; even as in a yellow glass the splendor is yellow, in a white one the ray is white, and in a red one it is red. These differences are therefore due to the place and not to the effulgence of light, and if the place is confronted by an obstacle, such as walls or ceiling, that place is entirely bereft of the splendor of the sun, and the sun does not shine thereon.

[3] Thus, some of the weak souls, having enclosed the ground of Knowledge within the wall of self and desire and within the veil of heedlessness and blindness, are therefore screened from the

effulgence of the Sun of Significances and the mysteries of the Eternal, Beloved One — are kept afar from the gems of Wisdom of the Manifest Religion of the Lord of the Messengers, deprived of the Sacred House of Beauty, and separated from the Ka'aba (lit., sanctum) of Glory. This is the state of the people of the age!

[4] And if a nightingale abandons the clay of the ego, seeks an abode on the branches of the rose tree of the heart, and utters the mysteries of God in melodies of Hijaz (Arabic) and sweet songs of Irak (Persian), a single word of which confers new, fresh life on all dead bodies and bestows the Holy Spirit on the mouldering bones of contingent beings, thou wouldst find a thousand claws of jealousy and beaks of rancor, intent upon assailing him, exerting themselves with all effort in his destruction! Yea, an agreeable odor is unpleasant to the beetle, and a fragrant perfume has no effect upon one afflicted with a cold. Hence, for the guidance of the multitude, it has been said: " Remove the cold from thy head and brain, so that the Fragrance of God may fill thy nostrils."

[5] Consequently, the difference of place is now made clear and proven.

[6] When the gaze of the traveler is restricted (i) to a limited place, that is — when he looks through glasses (of different colors) he then sees yellow, red or white. It is due to such a view of things that conflict is stirred up among the servants (i.e., mankind), and a gloomy dust, rising from men of limitation, has enveloped the world.

[7] Some extend their gaze to (2) the effulgence of the light; and others drank from the wine of (3) Oneness, and therefore see nothing but the Sun itself. Thus, because of journeying in these three different stations, travelers differ in their understanding and explanation of things. That is why the sign of difference is manifest in the world; for some dwell on the plane of oneness and speak of the world of oneness; some stand in the worlds of limitation, others in the stages of the self, and still others are absolutely veiled. Therefore, the ignorant, of the age. who have gained no portion from the Splendor of the Beautiful One, speak in certain (unreasonable) words, and in every time and age they inflict upon the people of Unity that which only is worthy of and befits their own selves. "If God should punish men for their iniquity, He would not leave (on the earth) any moving thing; but He giveth them respite unto an appointed time" (Koran).

[8] O my brother! A pure heart is like unto a mirror: purify it with the polish of Love, and Severance from all else save God, until the Ideal Sun may reflect therein, and the Eternal Morn may dawn. Then wilt thou find clear and manifest the meaning of — " Neither doth My earth nor heaven occupy Me, but the heart of My faithful servant occupieth Me!" — and wilt take thy life in thy hand and sacrifice it, with a thousand longings, to the new Beloved.

[9] When the lights of the Splendor of the King of Oneness are seated on the throne of the heart and soul, His Light becomes manifest in all the parts and members. Then will the mystery of the well-known (following) tradition emerge from the veil of obscurity: "A servant always draws near unto Me with prayers, until I respond unto him. And when I have responded to him, then I become his ear wherewith he heareth," etc. For (in this case) the Owner of the house becomes manifest in His Own house (i.e., the heart), and the pillars of the house are all illuminated and radiative through His Light. The action and effect of the Light is from the Giver of Light: this is why all move through Him, and arise by His Desire. This is that Fountain where from drink those near unto God; as it is said: "A Fountain whereof those shall drink who are near (unto God)."

[10] Let no one suppose these explanations to be redolent of anthropomorphism, or indicative of a degrading or restricting of the worlds (or states) of the True One to the planes of the creatures; nor should thy honor imagine such a thing — for God, in His Essence, is sanctified above ascent or descent, entrance or exit. He has been, and will be everlastingly independent of (or free from) the attributes of the creatures: no one has known Him, and no soul has found out His Substance. All the sages are bewildered in the valley of His Knowledge, and all the saints are perplexed in (their endeavor to) comprehend His Essence. He is purified from being comprehended by all men of comprehension, and is exalted above the knowing of men of Knowledge. "The road (to His Essence) is barred, and search (therefor) is rejected. His evidence is His Signs, and His Being is His Proof."

[11] Thus the lovers of the Face of the Beloved One have said:- "O thou whose essence alone bears evidence of the Essence of Him who is sanctified beyond homogeneity with His creatures.' How can sheer nothingness run its steed in the arena of Pre-existence? How can a mortal shadow compare with the Immortal Sun? The Friend of — "Were it not for thee" — hath said: "We have not known Thee" (i.e., in Thine Essence), and the Beloved of "Ow-Adna" hath said: "We have not penetrated" (Thine Essence).

[12] Yea, such mentions as are made concerning the stages of Knowledge concern only the knowledge of the Splendors of that Sun of Truth, which become manifest in the Mirrors (i.e., prophets, manifestations). The reflection of that Light is within the hearts; but it is veiled through sensual coverings and accidental conditions, as is the case with a light enclosed within an iron lantern. When the lantern is removed the radiance of the light will appear. Likewise, when one rends asunder the illusive veils from the face of the heart the lights of Oneness will dawn therein. Wherefore it is known that even for the Splendors (of the Sun of Divine Essence) there is no entrance nor exit; how much less for that Essence of Beings and that Mystery of the Desired One.

[13] O my brother! Reflect upon these stations with verification, and not with blind imitation. The repellant "avaunt" of words cannot repulse the traveler (after Truth), nor can the terror of allusions impede him. "What veil can stand between the lover and the beloved? The Wall of Alexander itself can be no obstacle or screen."

[14] Mysteries are many, and strangers are countless. Books are not sufficient for the Mystery of the Beloved, nor can it (the Mystery) be exhausted in these Tablets, although it is no more than one word and but one allegory. " Knowledge is but one point, but the ignorant have multiplied it."

[15] From this same standpoint consider the differences of the worlds. Although the Divine Worlds are infinite, yet some have spoken of them under four classes: (1) The World of Zaman (i.e., time). This is a world which has a beginning and an end.

[16] (2) The World of Dahhr (lit., a time or period) which has a beginning, but its end is invisible.

[17] (3) The World of Sar'mad, of which no beginning is seen, but its end can be perceived.

[18] (4) The World of Azal (i.e., Eternity) which has neither beginning nor end.

[19] Though differences (of view) have been many in these explanations, yet if full particulars be given here, it would weary (the readers). Some have spoken of the World of Sar'mad as being without beginning or end, and of the World of Azal as the Invisible, Impregnable, Impenetrable. Others have called these four the World of Lahut (i.e., Heavenly court), the World of Jabarroot (i.e., the high

Empyrean Heaven, the residence of Omnipotence), the World of Malakoot (i.e., Kingdom, also the World of the Angels), and the World of Nasoot (i.e., the world of mortals, or this earthly world).

[20] The journeys in the Path of Love have been counted as four: (1) From the creatures to the True One.

[21] (2) From the True One to the creatures.

[22] (3) From the creatures to the creatures.

[23] (4) From the True One to the True One.

[24] There are, likewise, various explanations given by mystics and philosophers of the past of which this servant does not undertake to speak.

[25] I do not wish to mention much of the former sayings; for to speak of the sayings of others would be an evidence of acquired learning (i.e., mediate knowledge), and not of the Divine Gift (i.e., immediate knowledge). Even this much, which is spoken of here, is because of the custom of men, and as a favor to the companions. Moreover, such explanations are beyond the limits of this treatise. My forbearing to speak of their sayings is not due to pride, but because of a showing forth of Wisdom and a manifesting of the Gift. If Knezr (i.e., Elias) broke the ship while on the sea, there are a hundred soundnesses (i.e., wisdoms) in his breaking it. Otherwise, this servant accounts himself as nothing, even in the court of one of the beloved of God (i.e., believers); how much more so in the presence of the "Holy Ones." Praise be unto my Lord, the Supreme! Moreover, our purpose is to speak of the stages of the traveler's journey, and not to relate the sayings of the mystic Sufis.

[26] Although a short illustration has already been given as to the beginning and end of the relative or dependent (not absolute) world (or plane), yet again we set another example so that all of the meanings may become manifest in the garment of illustration. For instance, let your honor consider himself; how you are the first in relation to your son, and the last in relation to your father; how, outwardly (i.e., according to the soul), (you bear evidence) of the inward mysteries which, as a Divine Gift, are deposited within you. Consequently, being the first, the last, the manifest, the hidden, becomes true of you in the sense as set forth above, so that in these four grades bestowed on you, you may comprehend the (corresponding) grades of the Divine, and that the nightingale of the heart may call out on all the branches of the rose-garden of Existence, both invisible and visible, in this melody: "Verily, He is the First and the Last, the Manifest and the Hidden! " These sayings are mentioned in connection with the grades of the "worlds of relation;" otherwise, these men, who have with one step traversed the worlds of relation and limitation, and taken their seat on the blissful carpet of Abstraction, and have pitched their tents in the world of Independence (i.e., absoluteness) and Command, have consumed all these relations with a single flame, and obliterated all these words with a mere moisture. They swim in the sea of Spirit, and roam in the sacred atmosphere of Light. How then can words have any identity (or being) in this stage, so that any grades of the "First" or the "Last", or any other besides these, be distinguished? In this station the "First" is identical with the " Last ", and the "Last" is the same as the " First ". " Enkindle a fire with the Love of the Beloved One, and consume therewith every thought and pious work."

[27] O my friend, Consider thine own self; if thou hadst not become a father nor seen a son, thou wouldst not have heard even these words. Now, therefore, forget all these, so that thou mayest learn in the School of Unity, before the Instructor of Love, and come back from the stage - — " Verily, we

are (from God)" — unto — ("and to Him) we return.' Thus thou mayest abandon the abode of unreality, and attain unto thine own real station, and abide in the shade of the Tree of Knowledge.

28 O excellent One! Impoverish thyself so that thou mayest arrive at the court of Affluence; humiliate the body so that thou mayest drink from the river of Glory, and attain unto all the meanings of the poems which thou hast questioned.

29 It is evident then that these states depend upon the view of the traveler. In every city he sees a world, in every valley he comes upon a fountain, in every desert he hears a melody. But there are wonderful spiritual tones in the heart of the Royal Falcon of the Ideal Sky, and there is many a sweet Hejazi (Arabic) song in the head of the Iraki (Persian) Bird (i.e., Himself); but these have been and will be concealed. " If I utter (them) it would astound reasons; if I write them many a quill would break." Peace be on whomsoever accomplisheth this Supreme Journey, and followeth the True One through the Lights of Guidance.

30 After crossing the ascents (or stages) of this lofty, exalted journey, the traveler arrives at

The Valley of Contentment

1 In this valley he discovers the breezes of Divine Contentment, which waft from the desert of the Spirit, and consume the veils of poverty. There he witnesses the Day wherein — "God will make all independent out of His Abundance"— with his outward and inward eye in the visible and invisible parts of things; he passes from sorrow to happiness, returns from sadness to joy, and he changes depression and dejection into gladness and cheerfulness.

2 Though the travelers in this valley outwardly dwell on the earth, yet inwardly they recline on the high couch of significances, and they partake of ideal, imperishable benefits, and quaff pure, spiritual wines. The tongue is unable to give an account of these three valleys, and utterance falls exceedingly short. The pen cannot step into this court, and the ink gives no result but blackness.

3 Concerning these states the nightingale of the heart has other melodies and mysteries which set the heart in agitation and the spirit in uproar. But this enigma of significances must be only revealed from heart to heart, and confided from breast to breast. " Heart alone can communicate to heart the state of the knower (of divine secrets); this is not the work of a messenger, nor can this be contained in letters." "On many points I keep silent because of my inability; to state them is beyond speech, and if I say them my words would be insufficient."

4 O friend! Not until thou reachest the garden of these significances wilt thou taste of the immortal wine of this valley. If thou tastest thereof thou wilt close thine eyes to all strangers, and drink from the wine of contentment; thou wilt sever thyself from all, and become united with Him, give up thy life in His Way, and pour out thy soul freely — although there is no stranger in this station, that thou would'st close thine eye. "There was God, but there was nothing with Him." Because in this stage the traveler beholds the beauty of the Friend in everything. In fire he sees the face of the Beloved, in unreality perceives the sign of the Reality, and through the attributes he witnesses the mystery of the Divine Substance (or Essence), for he has consumed the veils with a mere sigh, and removed the coverings with a single gaze. He looks upon the New Creation with a discerning sight, and

comprehends subtle signs with a pure heart. "At that Day We will make thy sight discerning" — is an evidence of this saying, and is sufficient for this instance.

5 After traversing the valley of Pure Contentment the traveler reaches

The Valley of Astonishment

1 He plunges in the seas of Grandeur, and at every moment his amazement increases. Now he sees the body of affluence as indigence itself, and the essence of independence as impotence. Now he becomes astonished at the beauty of the All-Glorious, and now he loathes his own being. Many are the trees of significances uprooted by the blast of astonishment, and many are the souls it exhausted. For this valley sets the traveler in agitation. But such appearances are highly beloved and esteemed in the eye of one who has attained. At every moment he witnesses a wonderful world and a new creation, he adds astonishment upon astonishment, and he becomes dazed at the new creation of the King of Oneness.

2 Yes, O brother, if we reflect upon any of the creations we shall behold a hundred thousand consummate wisdoms and learn a hundred thousand knowledges. One of these worlds is that of sleep (or dreams): consider what mysteries are deposited therein, what wisdoms are stored therein! Consider: you sleep in a certain house, the doors of which are closed. All at once you find yourself in a remote city; you enter it without motion of the feet or exhaustion of the body; you see without troubling the eyes, you hear without distressing the ears, and you speak without the use of the tongue. There are times when it happens that — ten years afterwards — you will witness outwardly in the world of time identically what thou hast seen at this night in a dream.

3 Now, there are many wisdoms visible in this dream; but others than the people of this valley cannot comprehend them as they are. First, what is that world wherein, without eye, ear, hand or tongue, one realizes the purpose of these senses? Secondly, this day thou seest in the world of reality the effect of a dream which thou hast experienced ten years ago in the world of dreams. Reflect upon the differences between these two worlds, and the mysteries deposited therein, so that thou may'st attain unto the Confirmations and Revelations of the Glorified One, and enter into the world of Holiness.

4 God, the Exalted, has placed these signs within the creatures, so that philosophers may not deny the mysteries of the after life, and not make light of that whereunto they have been promised. For some have clung to reason, and deny whatever cannot be grasped by reason, although the feeble reason can never comprehend these same aforesaid conditions, but only the Universal, Supreme Reason (can do so). "How can finite reason comprehend the Koran? How can a spider hunt a Simurgh?"

5 All these worlds (i. e., conditions) will present themselves in the Valley of Astonishment, and, at every moment, the traveler seeks for an increase of such without becoming exhausted. Hence the — " Lord of those gone by, and those who are to come" — has said concerning the grades of reflection and the declaration of astonishment: "O Lord! Increase my astonishment in thee!"

6 Likewise, ponder over the completeness of the creation of man: all these worlds and all these grades are enveloped and concealed in him. " Dost thou think thy body a small thing, while in thee is

enfolded the universe(or macrocosm)?" Then an effort is needed that we annihilate the animal condition, in order that the meaning of the human may become manifest.

7 Likewise, Lokman, who drank from the fount of Wisdom and tasted of the sea of Mercy, in demonstrating the states of resurrection and death to his son Nathan, gave the dream (or sleep) as a proof, and applied it as an illustration. We speak of it in this place, so that this humble servant may leave here a mention of that youth of the school of Unity, who was aged in the stages of instruction and abstraction. He said: "O son! If thou be able to not sleep, thou wilt be able to not die; and if thou canst manage to not wake up from sleep, thou canst manage to not resurrect after death."

8 O friend! The heart is a store of divine mysteries; make it not a receptacle for mortal thoughts, and consume not the capital of the precious life by occupying thyself with this evanescent world. Thou art of the world of Holiness; attach not thy heart unto the earth. Thou art a denizen of the court of Nearness; choose not an earthly home.

9 In fine, there is no end to mentioning these grades, and this servant has no composure on account of the injuries done by the people of the world. "This speech remained unfinished and incomplete. I am disheartened and downcast — O forbear!" The pen laments and the ink weeps, and the Jeyhoun (a river) of the heart rolls with waves of blood. Naught shall befall us, save that which God hath decreed unto us!

10 Peace be upon those who follow Guidance!

11 After ascending to the lofty heights of Astonishment the traveler arrives at

The Valley of Absolute Poverty and Annihilation

1 This is the station of dying from self, and living through God, of being poor of one's self, and rich in the Desired One. In this station poverty is mentioned as meaning one's indigence in all that is of the world of creation, and one's affluence in all that is of the worlds of Truth.

2 For when a sincere lover and agreeable friend attains to the meeting of the beloved and desired one, a fire is enkindled from the radiance of the beauty of the beloved and the heat of the heart of the lover, which consumes all coverings and veils: nay, whatever is with him, even marrow and skin, will thereby be burnt, and naught remain except the friend. "When the attributes of the Ancient One became manifest, then the Interlocutor (Moses) consumed the attributes of all things accidental."

3 In this station the one who has attained is sanctified from all that pertaineth to the world. If, therefore, those who have attained to the sea of Union do not possess any of the limited things of this mortal world, be these things of material belongings or of selfish thoughts, there is no harm in that. For whatever is possessed by men is confined within its own limits, whereas that which is God's is sanctified (from all limitations).

4 Much reflection should be bestowed on this explanation in order that the end may become manifest. "Verily, the just shall drink of a cup mixed with Cafur (camphor)" (Koran). If the meaning of "Cafur" be understood the real aim will become evident. This station is of that poverty, of which it is said: "Poverty is my glory" (Mohammed). Many are the meanings and grades of the outward and inward Poverty, which I do not deem appropriate to be mentioned in this place, and which I therefore reserve for some other time, if God will, and the Divine Decree may ordain.

[5] It is in this stage that the traces of all things are destroyed in the traveler, and the Beauty of the Face unveils itself from the Orient of the Eternal World, and the meaning of — "Everything is mortal save the face of God" — becomes manifest.

[6] O my friend! Hearken to the melodies of the Spirit with all thy heart and soul, and preserve them as the sight of thine eyes; for the Divine Enlightenments will not always flow, like the vernal rain, upon the soil of human hearts. Although the bounty of the Bountiful One is continual and free from interruption, yet for every time and age a certain portion is determined and a certain benefit is ordained; and these are bestowed (on men) according to a certain quantity and measure. "There is no one thing but the store-houses thereof are in Our Hands, and we distribute not the same save in a determinate measure" (Koran).

[7] The cloud of Mercy of the Beloved One will pour down only on the garden of the soul, and it will not bestow this bounty except in times of spring. Other seasons have no portion of this mightiest Grace, and barren soils have no share in this Favor.

[8] O brother! Not every sea has pearls, not every branch brings forth flowers — nor doth the nightingale sing thereon. Therefore, so long as the Nightingale of the Spiritual Planting hath not returned to the Divine Rose-Garden, and the Lights of the Spiritual Dawn have not returned to the Sun of Reality, make an effort — perchance in this mortal land thou may'st inhale a fragrance from the Immortal Rose-Garden, and rest forever under the shade of the people of this City. When thou hast reached this lofty, exalted grade and attained to this great station, then wilt thou see the Friend, and forget strangers (i.e., all else save Him). "The Friend, unveiled, is manifest from every door and wall (everywhere), O ye possessors of sight!" Then thou hast abandoned the drop of life, and reached the ocean of the Beloved One! This is the goal which thou hast demanded; God willing, thou may'st attain thereto.

[9] In this City even the veils of Light are rent asunder, and vanish! "To His Beauty there are no veils but Light, and His face has no covering save manifestation." How wonderful that the Well-Beloved is manifest as the sun, while strangers are in search of vanities and riches (lit., coins)! Yea, He is concealed by the intensity of Manifestation, and He is hidden by the ardor of Emanation. "The True One hath become manifest, like unto the shining sun. Pity that He hath come in the city of the blind!"

[10] In this valley the traveler journeys through the stages of "Oneness of Existence" and of Appearance, and will attain to a Oneness which is sanctified above both these stations. (The condition of) Ecstasy can penetrate this saying, but not controversy nor conflict. He who hath chosen an abode in this meeting, or discovered a breeze from this Garden, knoweth what I say.

[11] In all these journeys the traveler must not deviate, even for a hair's breadth, from the "Shari-at" which is indeed the mystery of "Tari-kat," and the fruit of the tree of "Hakikat;" but in all the stages he must cling to the hem of obedience to the (Divine) Commandments, and lay firm hold of the rope of — shunning things forbidden by the Law, in order that he may drink from the cup of "Shari-at" and comprehend the mysteries of "Hakikat."

[12] Concerning these explanations made by this servant, whatever may not be understood, or lead to perplexity, should be questioned again, so that no doubts may remain, and the object may become manifest like unto the Countenance of the Beloved One, from the "Honorable Station."

[13] Although these journeys have no visible termination in the world of time, yet, if the Invisible Assistance vouchsafe a devoted traveler (lit., one severed from all else save God), and if the Guardian of the Command (i.e., the Manifestation of God) help him, he will traverse these seven stages in only seven steps, nay — in seven breaths, nay — even in one breath (or moment) if God will or desire. "This is through His Bounty to whomsoever He willeth."

[14] Those who soar in the sky of Oneness, and who have attained to the sea of Abstraction, have accounted this station, which is the station in this city of "Immortality in God," to be the ultimate destination of the Arif (one who is intimate with highest mystic thoughts) and the ultimate home of the Lovers. But, to this humble one of the sea of Significances, this station is only the first city-wall of the heart, that is — the first arrival of man at the City of the Heart.

[15] Four stages have been assigned to the heart, of which we will make mention, if there be found those who are intimate with such (mysteries). "When the pen reached the point of describing this state, the pen broke and the paper was torn." Finis.

[16] O my friend! This gazelle of the desert of Oneness is chased by many hounds, and this nightingale of the Garden of Eternity is followed by many beaks; the crow of oppression is lain in ambush for this bird of the Sky of Divinity, and this prey of the Wilderness of Love is pursued by the hunter of jealousy.

[17] O Sheik! Make an effort; perchance it may, as a globe, protect this lamp from contrary winds; although it is the hope of this lamp to shine in the Divine Glass, and to be ablaze in the Ideal Niche. For a neck which is lifted in the Love of God will certainly be severed by a sword, a head which is raised in Love will assuredly be blown by the winds, and a heart which is linked to the Commemoration of the Beloved will certainly be filled with blood. How well it is said (by the poet): "Live on free (from love), for the very repose of Love is distress: Its beginning is pain, and its end is death."

[18] Peace be upon those who follow Guidance!

[19] What you had mentioned from your excellent thoughts concerning the meaning of the (name of) the well known bird, called in Persian " Konjeshk" (sparrow), was noted and realized. It seems that you have become informed of the mysteries of significations. But, in every state for every letter, a sense is intended in accord with the requirements of that state. Yea, the traveler (in search of Truth) understands an allegory from every name and a mystery from every letter.

[20] In one sense, these letters (composing the word " Konjeshk," to-wit: K. N. J. Sh. K.) bear allusion to "Sanctity." "K" (refers to) "Kaffi," i.e., "Empty" thyself from that which is craved by thy desire (or lust); then advance toward thy Master. "N" (refers to) "Nazih," i.e., "Purify" thyself from all else save Him, so that thou may'st sacrifice thy soul in His Love. "J" (refers to) "Jamb," i.e., "Abstain from" the Presence of the True One, if the attributes of the world still remain in thee. "Sh" (refers to) "Ashkor," i.e., "Thank" thy Lord on His earth, so that He may thank (bless) thee in His Heaven; although, in the world of Oneness, Heaven is identical with His earth. "K" (refers to) "Kaffi," i.e., "Remove" from thyself the limited veils, so that thou may'st know that which thou hast not known of the Stations of Sanctity.

[21] If thou hearest the Melodies of this mortal bird, thou wilt seek after the Immortal, everlasting Chalice, and abandon the mortal and transient cups.

22 Peace be upon those who follow Guidance!