



# Seven Valleys

**Baha-O-Llah**

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by

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# Seven Valleys

In the name of God the Clement, the Merciful!

Praise be unto God who drew life out of chaos and engraved the mysteries of pre-existence on the tablet of man—giving him the explanation of that which he knew not, and making of him an irrefutable book for the seeing and the faithful. He has raised him to the condition of eternity in a most noble Temple wherein, during these dark and troublous days, He has played such ravishing melodies, that each and every one is enabled to recognize in him and through him, the glorious station of his Lord; proclaim that there is no other god, and so attain the summit of Truth where divinity is apparent in all things.

All hail to the first Sea that emanated from the Sea of Divinity; to the first

Morning that dawned on the horizon of Oneness; to the first Sun that arose on the eternal Sky; to the first fire that burned in the ancient Lamp, under the globe of Unity. All hail to him who is called Ahmad in the kingdom of the world, and Mohammad in the assembly of the Near Ones, and Mahmood in the realm of the Elect. "By whatsoever name He is invoked it is the same, for in the hearts of the knowing He is the Possessor of all Names!"

All hail to him and to his companions!

Verily I have heard the strains of the Nightingale of Wisdom singing on the branches of your soul, and have caught the notes of the Dove of Certainty cooing on the vines of your heart. I have recognized the perfume in the garment of your love and have encountered your very self in your letter.

Seeing your complete annihilation in God, who so renders you eternal, and your devotion to the Manifestations of His Names and Attributes and also to His

Chosen Ones, I come to offer a few holy and brilliant allusions so that you may be drawn unto the Court of Glory, Nearness and Beauty, and finally reach a condition in which nothing in the whole world is apparent but the countenance of your Beloved.

This is the state referred to by the Nightingale of Unity, in the Garden of Refuge, when He said, "The tablet of your heart shall be inscribed with the mysteries of — *'Be conscious of God and He will teach you'* and the bird of your soul, remembering the meadows of pre-existence, shall soar on wings of longing in the open of—*'Advance submissively in the ways of your Lord'* and gather the fruits of intimacy in the Gardens of — *'eat of every fruit.'*"

Oh, my friend, could you but taste of the vintage borne by the fresh hyacinths, growing in the Land of Knowledge in an atmosphere shot through and through with the glory of that Essence which has reflected Itself in the Mirrors of Names and Attributes, yearning would so snatch

the reins of patience from your grasp that your soul, stirring through flashes of light, would carry you far from the earthly abode unto the original Divine Abode at the apex of significances, where your state would be such, that you would fly in the air and run on the sea, even as you walk upon the ground.

Let us rejoice, you and I, and let all who have launched upon the heaven of awareness rejoice, for our hearts have stirred to the gale of Love which is blowing from the horizon of the Merciful.

Peace be upon those who follow guidance!

It has been stated that they who leave their earthly home and set out for the Celestial Country, have before them seven stages of the journey—these being sometimes termed Seven Valleys and sometimes Seven Cities; and it is said that “Not till they lose all trace of self, in the accomplishment of this journey, will they arrive at the Sea of Meeting and Union and drink of the Peerless Wine.”



The first stage is

## THE VALLEY OF SEARCH

in which the traveler mounts the steed of Patience. Without the service of this steed he will make no headway and cannot attain the goal. Here he must not be disheartened; were he to struggle for a hundred thousand years, never the while catching a glimpse of the Friend, he still must not yield to despair.

They who are determined to find Us are upheld by the glad tidings: "*We will guide them into Our path.*" Having girt up the loins of endeavor, they consistently step from the ways of heedlessness, advancing along the avenues of effort. No tie can detain them; no council can deflect them. With hearts, sources of divine treasure, liberated from all self-interest, and renouncing the customs of their ancestors, they rise above enmity and even above friendship for all the inhabitants of the earth.

In this valley the traveller will be encompassed by beings in a state of frenzied

search. How many a Jacob he meets, wandering in quest of Joseph! What crowds journeying toward the Adored One! What enamored hosts following the Desired One! His heart, detached from this world and the next, each moment discerns a new mystery, each hour a new law and so, guided by the Invisible, who at every step fans his ardor, he continues on his way toward the horizon of the Beloved.

Do you remember Majnoon\* and his passionate love? One day he was seen, passing earth through a sifter and weeping the while. "What are you doing?" he was asked. "I am searching for Laila." "Woe unto you, for Laila is pure spirit and you are seeking her in the dust." Majnoon answered, "I seek her everywhere. Perhaps I will find her somewhere."

The sage would consider it inappropriate to look for God in the dust, yet this incident is evidence of unusual intensity

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\* The love of Laila and Majnoon sung in the XV century by the Persian poet Djami.

of purpose. It is said in the Hadiths: "*He who seeks with diligence shall surely find.*"

The true seeker simply considers finding, and the true lover dwells only on the meeting with his Beloved. This is a condition arrived at through complete detachment from all that has been seen, heard and understood—that is: a sweeping negation is required of us before we can arrive at the holy state of Affirmation.

But what exertion is needed on this pilgrimage, what persistence, if at the end, we indeed are to taste of the honey of Divine Union, and drink the draught that obliterates all memory.

He who undertakes this journey will pause in every land, and rest on every soil; in every stranger he will seek contact with the Friend. Continuously he will ask for Him, neglecting no group and no assemblage, for at any moment he may divine a Holy Mystery or come face to face with the Beloved.

If, by the help of God, he finds a trace of the Traceless on the path or, through

the word of His Messengers, a clue to the lost Joseph along the road, he will, at that instant step into

## THE VALLEY OF LOVE

where his heart will be wholly melted.

Here, under the canopy of attraction, the gorgeous Sun of Desire blazes—shooting off rays that consume all reason. The traveller, at this time, knows himself no longer, nor any other. He is immune to knowledge, to ignorance, to doubt, to assurance. Recognizing neither the morn of guidance nor the night of error, he is unconscious of fidelity as of infidelity, and finds deadly poison agreeable to the taste. Even so said Attar:\* “Infidelity to the infidel, fidelity to the faithful, but to the heart of Attar, a little pain.”

Pain waits in this valley. No other steed knows the way.

Here the traveller has no thought but of his love; no longing but for his goal.

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\* The famous Sufi, poet and philosopher, Farid-Ed-Din Attar.

Each moment he flings away his life, and at every step, he lays his head at the feet of the Beloved.

Oh, my brother, it is necessary to penetrate into the very Egypt of Spirit if you would behold the beauty of Joseph. Even as Jacob, you must close the outer eye to open the inner eye, and recklessly cast yourself into the flames of Desire to become one with its heat.

A lover fears nothing, therefore nothing will affect him. In the fire he will be cool—in the sea he will be dry. *“You can know a lover by this token—that the fires of hell cannot consume him; and a sage—that the waters of the sea cannot drench him.”*

Love is impatient of existence and does not cling to life; for he sees life in death and glory in abasement. The average being will not be caught in the nets of the Friend; only the soul of capacity will be enmeshed. Ah, blessed the neck that is held in Love's noose and the head which has fallen on Love's path!

Therefore, my friend, be a stranger to yourself and become acquainted with the Incomparable; renounce your mortal abode to take possession of your place in the Divine Home, and court annihilation, that life may stir within you. *"Love does not accept a soul alive. The falcon does not prey upon a dead mouse."*

Love, at every instant, enkindles a world, and plants his banner on lands which he will devastate. In his kingdom life is of no account, and reason has no foothold in his domain. As a whale, he swallows up the prudent and the conservative, and would drink the seven seas without slaking his thirst. He knows not his own existence and is indifferent to all that exists. *"Love is alien to both worlds, and carries within him seventy - two follies."* Countless sages are pierced by his arrows and countless refugees are trapped by his floods. All the blood that drips upon the earth is sign of his wrath, and the blanched faces on every side are testimony to his poison. For his victims there is no remedy but death and no refuge save oblivion.

The lover, on the other hand, finds this poison sweeter far than honey, and holds this death preferable to a hundred thousand immortalities. Therefore let the fires of Love dissipate the veils of matter so that the liberated souls may understand the assertion of the Lord: "*But for thee.*"\*

*"Enkindle the fires of love and consume your all; then step into the Land of the Lovers."*

If, through the assistance of the Creator, the lover avoids the claws of the Falcon of Love, he will enter

## THE VALLEY OF WISDOM

and pass from doubt unto assurance, and from the obscurity of human desires into the ways of illumination.

Here he applies the eye of intelligence and, opening the door of utter devotion as he closes those of superficiality, begins to converse in secret with the Beloved. In

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\* From the Hadiths "But for thee I would not have created the spheres."

this state he will yield his will to the Divine Will, and thus will see Peace in War and Immortality in Death. With a purified heart, using both the eye of the flesh and the eye of the spirit, he will recognize Divine Intention operating in God's infinite manifestations. In an ocean, he will discern a drop; in a drop, the mysteries of an ocean. *"If you split whatsoever atom, you will find a sun in its center."*

In this valley the traveller, by means of independent investigation, will see no inconsistency and no contradiction in the works of God, and repeatedly will he exclaim, "There is no contradiction in divine creation. Who can find therein the slightest flaw?" In injustice, he will behold justice; and in justice, infinite mercy. In ignorance, he will discover knowledge, and in knowledge, boundless wisdom. He will break the bonds of self and desire, and lift his soul unto the Immortals. He will ascend the ladder of spirit toward the Heaven of Significance. He will pass under the arch of—*"We shall show them our signs in the world and in themselves"* and



embark on the sea of — “*Verily He is God.*” He will be patient under tyranny and gentle in the face of wrath.

It is related that a lover had for years suffered the pangs of separation from his Beloved and burned in the fires of loneliness. The repeated assaults of desire had so robbed his breast of patience that his body recoiled from his spirit. He counted life as an empty thing and carried his anguish wheresoever he went. Full many a day he passed without rest because of his deprivation; full many a night he lay without sleep because of his pain. He wasted, till there remained of him nothing but a sigh; and agonized till his body showed nothing but a wound. He would have given a hundred thousand lives to drink one drop of the wine of meeting. Alas, his malady could not be relieved by doctors, and his society was not craved by his friends. Heart-ache may be healed only by the hand of the Beloved. And now the tree of his expectancy carried the fruit of utter despair and the fire of his hope was extinguished.

One night as he wearily dragged himself to the street, he encountered a patrol which immediately faced about and began to follow him. He tried to escape, but the patrol was at his heels, calling the while for reinforcements, and presently he was encompassed on every side. Frenzied with fear, darting now this way, now that, he questioned in his mind: "Is this *Izrail*,\* who so desires to capture me, or is it merely a human enemy?"

In this manner running and lamenting, the victim of love found himself alongside of a garden wall and desperately began to clamor up its side. The wall was high and presented many difficulties, but he managed to scale it and then, regardless of life and limb, hurled himself over the top to the garden below. And oh, what did he see! His Beloved, searching for a lost ring, with a lamp in her hand.

When he whose heart had been ravished, found himself in the presence of the Ravisher, he raised his hands in prayer

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\* The Angel of Death.

crying aloud: "Oh, God, give honor and riches to this patrol, and safekeeping; for surely it was the Angel Gabriel that so directed me, or else it was the Angel Israfil\* who gave me back my life."

In truth, how much mercy and how great a blessing were reserved behind the harsh exterior of the patrol. By its violence, it had driven the wanderer, thirsting on the sands of love, unto the very ocean of the Beloved, and had dissipated the murkiness of separation with the light of meeting. Now if the lover had been far-sighted, he would at once have cherished the patrol and prayed for it, recognizing the kindness of its cruelty; but being distrustful of that which was in store for him, he could only burst into tears and raise his voice in complaint.

In the Gardens of Wisdom, the travelers distinguish the end at the beginning; finding calm in tumult, and reconciliation in estrangement. Such is the condition of those who are in this valley.

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\* The Angel who presides at birth.

Now they who have progressed to valleys beyond, make no distinction between the beginning and the end—seeing both as one; while the denizens of the Green Pastures and the Eternal Cities ignore all beginnings and deny all ends; for as lightning, they have passed through the kingdom of Names and Attributes unto the region enshadowed by the Divine Essence. As it is said in the Hadiths—“*The true formula of monotheism is to strip God of all attributes.*”

Khaji Abd’Allah has most subtly interpreted the verse in the Koran, “*Show us the straight path.*” He explains that the straight path leads to the Essence of God, which is Love. On this path we can dream of God simply through ignoring ourselves and others; and know Him by seeing only Him and thinking only of Him.

Yet beyond this there is an even more rarified consciousness in which Love itself becomes a veil between the lover and the Beloved.

And now I can say no more for the Day is breaking and the lamps of the journey have gone out!

*In spite of all his illumination and genius, Moses did not behold God. Therefore do not fly without wings.*

But if you know how to pray, mount on the virile wings of saint-ship unto the regions where the mysteries of the Friend are revealed in the sun-light of the Beloved. *We come from God and unto Him do we return.*

When the traveller has progressed to the far side of the Valley of Wisdom—this being the last limited station, he will find himself at the first station of

## THE VALLEY OF ONENESS

and, drinking deep from the cup of abstraction, will observe the manifestation of singleness. Then the veils, making boundary between one state and another, shall be rent and he will pass from the material world into the Heaven of Unity. He will hear with the hearing of God;

with Divine Vision, behold the secrets of Eternal art and penetrate to the retreat of the Friend.

He will be a favorite in and about His tents and will draw the Hand of God from the pocket of the Absolute — so exemplifying the mystery of power. Through it all he will claim not the least merit, seeing God in himself, and recognizing in his own name that of the True One.

Here, every voice will be the voice of the Lord and every song His song. He will sit on the footstool of: "*Say, all comes from God*" and rest on the carpet of: "*God controls every faculty and all force.*" He will view existence through Oneness; see the Radiance of the Infinite Orient playing impartially upon all things, and realize that it animates every creature.

It is known to you that the differences which the traveller observes during the various stages of the journey, pertain to himself; and here we will give illustration to clarify the point. Consider the sun: it shines with the same intensity upon all

phenomena, by order of the King of Manifestation; yet the objects receive its illumination in various ways and according to their own quality. Thus a crystal produces fire, a mirror repeats the shape of the disk, while other grades of matter catch the sun-light but cannot reflect the sun. This is the method of Providence whereby all things are developed according to their receptivity.

Likewise, the color of the light is modified by conditions. It appears yellow, white or red to individuals looking through glasses of these colors; but such differences are due to the glasses and not to the light. Again, an obstacle such as a wall or a roof can completely cut off the rays of the sun; so are weak souls screened from the Land of Wisdom by the barriers of passion and the veils of negligence — thus remaining deprived of the warmth of the spiritual Sun and the blessings of the eternal Beloved. They are separated from the gems of the pure Faith tendered by the Lord of the Prophets; from the threshold of the supreme House of Beauty and from the Sanctuary of

Glory. Such is the condition of the people of today.

And if a Nightingale should rise above the clay of desire and perch on the branches of the tree of your soul, singing the while the story of creation to the music of Persia and Araby (a single note of which music has potency to arouse the dead and inject spirit into the lifeless), one thousand claws of jealousy and one thousand beaks of hatred would assemble for his undoing. Yes, a fragrant perfume is unpleasant to the beetle and does not affect him who suffers from a cold. Hence it has been said: "*Cure the cold in your head and brain so that you may catch the scent of God.*"

All of which shows the implication of the point of view. So long as the traveller waits in the limited regions, that is while he is impeded by colored glasses, he sees yellow, white or red, and such differences in vision produce conflict — stirring up from human hearts impenetrable dust which spreads out and encircles the world. On the other hand, there are those who



perceive the effulgence of the Light and again those who, having tasted of the wine of Oneness, consider only the Sun.

According to the three states do the standards of the travellers differ, and consequently their attitude. This is the reason for the divergent opinions manifest on all sides. While some dwell on the plane of Oneness seeing all things through oneness, others function in limitation, and others yet, in complete deprivation. These last are the ignorant who, unaffected by the rays of Splendor, treat the sons of Unity even as they themselves deserve to be treated. *"If God punished men according to their faults no living thing would be left upon the earth; but He gives them respite unto a given time."*

Oh my brother, a sensitive heart is like unto a mirror; therefore polish your heart with love and detachment that it may reflect the Sun of Reality—then the Day will break, and you will understand the meaning of: *"Neither does My earth nor My heaven contain Me, but only the hearts of*

*My faithful ones*"\* and you will take your own heart in your hands and wistfully offer it to the New Beloved.

When the light of the King of Oneness is set in the heart and in the soul of man, then each part of his body will operate in that light and he will understand the mystery of "*A servant approaches Me in his prayers until he makes himself loved of Me. Then, when I have loved him, the hearing with which I have heard him shall be his hearing.*"\* In such case, the Master of the house has returned and the rooms are illumined by His presence. The action and the effect of light emanate from the Source of Light; so do all things move through Him — impelled by His desire. This, indeed, is the Fountain at which the near ones shall drink.

Yet do not imagine that by descending to man, God can be restricted to the plane of the creatures for He, inherently, is too high for descent and too far for coming or going. He has been and ever will be dis-

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\* Hadiths.

tinct from human qualifications; therefore man cannot understand Him, nor make estimate of Him. All the sages are baffled in the valley of His acquaintance, and all the saints are bewildered on the approach to His Essence. He is exalted above comprehension and rarified beyond perception. *"The way is barred, trespassing is forbidden; His signs are His evidence and His Being is His proof."*

Even so have the lovers of the Beloved Countenance exclaimed: *"Oh thou who in thyself bears evidence of the Essence of Him who cannot be confounded with His creatures!"* Indeed how can sheer nothingness run its steed in the arena of pre-existence, and how can mortal shadow compete with the Immortal Sun? Moham-mad said: *"We have not been able to know Thee"* and *"We have not penetrated unto Thee."*

These explanations concerning the degrees of Knowledge apply only to the effulgence of the Sun of Reality as it becomes manifest in the Mirrors. The same radiance is cast upon all hearts likewise,

but the veils of the senses, as well as local conditions tend ever to counteract it. Take as example a candle enclosed in an iron lantern: if the lantern is removed, the light will shine forth. By the same token: if the veils of negligence are lifted from before the face of the heart, the light of Oneness will stand revealed. The conclusion stands that, if there is no coming nor going for the reflections of the Light, then to a greater extent, is the Light Itself exempt from coming or going.

Oh my brother, study these conditions independently and do not rely on the findings of others. The traveller must not be impeded by axioms nor by implications. *"Of what importance is a curtain between the lover and the adored one? The wall of Alexander even cannot stand between them."*

The mysteries are countless; countless also are the unprepared. Volumes cannot comprise the explanations of the Beloved, nor can Tablets contain them. Nevertheless a single word and a single symbol

should suffice. "*Knowledge is but a point; the ignorant have multiplied it.*"\*

From the same standpoint, consider the variations in the worlds of God. Although infinite in number, they have been classed in four divisions.

The world of *Zaman* (time) which has beginning and end.

The world of *Dahr* (a period of time) which has beginning, but the end of which is not apparent.

The world of *Sarmad* the beginning of which is hidden, but the end of which is conceivable.

The world of *Azal* (eternity) which has neither beginning nor end.

There is much to be said on these divisions, but a complete explanation would be cumbersome. There are those who describe *Sarmad* as having neither beginning nor end, and *Azal* as the invisible, unknowable. Others have named these

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\* Koran.

four sections *Nasout* (the world of mortals) *Malakout* (the world of angels) *Lahout* (the Heavenly Court) and *Jabarout* (the Residence of Omnipotence).

Likewise the paths leading to Love have been designated as four.

The first stretches from the creature to God.

The second, from God to the creature.

The third, from creature to creature.

The fourth, from God to God.

Sages and philosophers have dwelt on these points, therefore I will not continue; for those who merely quote give proof of acquired learning rather than of innate knowledge. I have, in the limited confines of this epistle, used that which has gone before, simply for conformity's sake and as a concession. This forbearance is not by reason of pride, but is rather for the revealing of God's wisdom and for the manifesting of His gift. *"If Elias sank the ship, he had a hundred reasons for so*

*doing.*" Incidentally, I consider myself as nothing in my relations with the beloved of God; then how much more so in the presence of His elect. All praises to my Lord, the Most High! Moreover, my purpose here is to show the stages of the traveller's journey, rather than to comment on the sayings of mystics.

Yet, although illustration has been applied to the beginning and end of the relative plane, I will give still another example so that the totality of meaning may become manifest. Consider your own instance: you are first in regard to your son and last in regard to your father. Physically, you are a sign of the creative power of God; symbolically, you represent the divine mystery contained within you. Consequently you, being the first and the last, the manifest and the unmanifest, can comprehend, through these four conditions, the four divine conditions corresponding to them; and the Nightingale of your visible and invisible heart will sing on the rose-bushes of existence: "Verily He is the First and the Last, the Manifest and the Unmanifest."

These examples make reference to the grades of the relative worlds; however, there are some who, rising like a flash above relativity and limitation, pitch their tents on the plane of Independence and Law, and take their places on the marvelous carpet of Abstraction. They have consumed comparisons with a single flame, and obliterated words with a mere moisture. They swim in the sea of Spirit and fly in the atmosphere of Light. The grades "first" and "last", as well as all other grades, are no longer distinguishable to their eyes — each being worth any other. *"Light the fire of the love of God and consume every thought."*

Consider my friend, if you were not a son and father you would not even know these words; therefore forget all such things so that you may enter the school of Oneness, become a pupil of the Master of Love and graduate from the class *"We are from God"* to the class *"Unto Him do we return."*

Oh Excellency! Strip yourself, and so gain admittance to the Court of Affluence;



deny yourself, and so reach the banks of the River of Glory, the waters of which contain answer to your questions.

It is now evident that conditions vary according to the state of the traveller; yet each shall find a world in every city, a stream in every valley and a melody in every desert. Consequently, the Royal Falcon of the supernal sky knows many a harmonized tone, and the Bird of Iran is able to sing the sweet Arabic songs; yet he must, and he will hold them secret. *"If I spoke, reason would waver. If I wrote, the pen would break."*

Peace be upon him who has accomplished this supreme journey following Truth by the Light of Guidance.

Having attained this altitude the traveller reaches the

## VALLEY OF AFFLUENCE

Here the breezes of divine Contentment, blowing from the Sahara of the Spirit, inflame and consume the veils of want. In the visible and in the invisible, in the

without and in the within, he shall behold that Day in which "*God will make all things self-sufficing.*" He will have passed from sorrow unto joy; from agony unto beatitude; from languor unto exaltation. In this valley, although apparently dwelling upon the earth, the traveller, in truth, shall recline on the lofty terrace of Significances, tasting of the eternal Favors, drinking the exquisite Wine.

The tongue is unable to describe the splendors of these last three valleys. The pen also is impotent — in vain its ink blackens the sheet of paper.

Nevertheless, regarding these states, the Nightingale of the Heart can sing some melodies and impart some mysteries that will stir souls to the depths; but only the heart is able to hear the heart, and the spirit the spirit. "*Heart can share that which it knows only with heart. It cannot confide in a messenger nor rely on a letter.*" "*I keep silence because of my inability, for my insufficient explanation would but lessen the truth.*"

Oh my comrade, you must have entered the garden of significance if you would drink the Wine of this valley. Then once having tasted of it, you will renounce all the rest, for it, indeed, is the draught of Affluence. Then you will detach yourself from all save Him; you will sacrifice your life in His path and give even your soul.

After all, in this valley there is none save Him to attract your attention. *"God was and all else was not."*

So on every side, the traveller sees the Beauty of the Beloved. In fire, he catches His likeness; in symbols, the mystery of Reality; in qualities, the expression of the Divine. Having, simultaneously, surmounted all obstacles and, with a keen look, dissipated all veils, he contemplates a New Creation, weighing its subtleties with a young heart. Even so is it said in the Koran: *In that Day, We shall have steadied your sight.* This phrase is sufficient evidence to these explanations.

After gaining the peaks of unadulter-

ated Affluence the traveller arrives at the

## VALLEY OF ASTONISHMENT

and plunges into Seas of Grandeur.

Here he is completely mystified. Now he sees affluence as indigence, and independence, in its very essence, as impotence. Again, dazzled by the Beauty of the Most Beautiful, he yearns to lay aside the garment of life. Many are the trees of significances uprooted by the blasts of astonishment; many are the souls struck breathless.

In this valley, the traveller is disconcerted (this condition being one of merit to the eyes of those who have attained) and so amazement giving way to amazement he proceeds, marvelling at a marvelous world, until he is submerged and completely lost in the New Creation of the King of Oneness.

In truth, oh my brother, if we dwell on any of the worlds of existence, we can discover a hundred thousand consummate wisdoms and learn a hundred thousand

miraculous facts. One of these is the world of sleep. What wonders does it contain! What distances does it include! What revelations does it hold stored! Consider: you are sleeping in a certain house, the doors of which are closed. All of a sudden you find yourself transported to a remote city, and you enter it without using your feet; then without using your eyes and ears, you see and hear, and without using your tongue, you speak. Thereafter it often happens that—possibly ten years later — you will experience in the world of time that which you have seen in a dream.

What mysteries are here entailed! Only the people of this valley can grasp their significance. Firstly, what is this other world in which the purposes of the senses are accomplished without use of the senses? Again, how is it that you witness in the phenomenal world the fulfillment of that which was foreshadowed, ten years ago, in a dream? You should meditate upon the relativity of these two worlds, so that you may apply Divine Revelation and

enter the Land of Consciousness. God has given these signs to the end that thinkers may not look lightly upon His promises, denying the reality of the unseen. For there are those who compute with mere reason, refusing whatsoever eludes reason; and all the while finite reason can not measure such conditions, but only Infinite Reason. *"How can feeble intellect understand the Koran? How can the spider put the griffon to flight?"*

In the Valley of Astonishment all these worlds are apparent, yet the traveller continues unsatisfied. Concerning this state Mohammad said: *"Oh Lord increase my astonishment in Thee!"*

Consider, likewise, that God has included all these worlds in the perfect creation of man. *"Do you hold your body as a small thing, when it contains the Universe?"* Then let us make effort to suppress the physical within us so that the human may manifest itself.

For such reasons Lockman,\* who had

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\* Legendary sage of Arabia.

drunk at the fountain of Wisdom and tasted of the sea of Mercy, offered his son the example of sleep as proof of resurrection. I recall this so that these pages may carry mention of that youth at the threshold of Oneness who, through wisdom and detachment, had attained maturity. Lockman said: *"My son, if you cannot resist sleep, you cannot resist death; and if you cannot refrain from waking, you cannot escape resurrection."*

Oh my friend, your heart is a treasury for the divine mysteries, let it not be encumbered with worldly preoccupation; allow not the capital of your precious life to be squandered on mortal experience, nor compromise yourself with the earth—you who belong to the regions of Holiness! You are a favorite at the Court of God, therefore choose not a lesser dwelling as your home.

The subject is endless and I shall venture no further — I who have been so stricken by the men of this generation. *"These explanations are imperfect and incomplete. I suffer and I forbear."*

The pen laments and the ink sheds tears, and the river of my heart rolls with waves of blood. Naught but that which God has destined shall come to pass. Peace be upon those who follow His indications.

Having passed the limits of Astonishment, the traveller penetrates into the

### VALLEY OF ANNIHILATION

At this point his poverty is his wealth, for indigence in the created world is affluence in the divine worlds, and so, dying in self he enters immortal life.

Now, when the true lover comes in contact with his Beloved, the light of the Divine Beauty catches fire in the warmth of his own breast, and in the conflagration that ensues, all veils are consumed and all differences whatsoever — and God alone is left.

*"When the attributes of the Pre-existent illumined the Bush, Moses destroyed all that he knew."*

He who has attained this station is lib-



erated from the world. Consequently others must not seek in him material assets nor temporal thoughts, for these he has not. That which is of man is limited and that which is of God is limitless. Much reflection is needed to plumb the depths of this mystery.

*The just shall taste of a draught mixed with camphor.\** If you grasp the significance carried here by the word "camphor" you will know supreme Truth.

This valley is that of poverty. Mohamad said: "*My poverty is my glory.*" Now the aspects of poverty, material and spiritual, are many; therefore the development of this theme shall be set for another occasion, according to the will of God and the decree of Fate.

In this station, the plurality of things being no longer apparent, the traveller beholds the Beauty of His Face radiating unveiled upon the Eternal Horizon, and

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\* Kafour, river of Paradise which rolls perfumed waves. Koran.

he understands the meaning of the words  
*"All is mortal save the Face of God."*

Oh my friend, harken to the melody of the spirit which is sounding in your heart and soul, and treasure it as the light of your eyes; for divine realization, even as an April shower, does not fall irrespectively upon the soil of men's hearts. This is not owing to lack of generosity on the part of the Most Generous, but is because of the fact that for each cycle a certain amount of bounty is reserved and a certain measure destined; and this is allotted according to amount and measure. *"The storehouse of all that which exists is within Our reach, but We distribute only a specified quantity."*\*

The clouds of the Mercy of the Beloved hold rain only for the garden of the soul, and yield it only in the Spring. The other seasons have no share in this abundance, and sterile ground is never watered.

Oh my brother, pearls are not found in every sea, nor blossoms upon every branch,

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\* Koran.

and the bird sings where it wills. Therefore, while the Nightingale of the Soul yet tarries, before returning to the Divine Rose-Garden, while the Radiance of the Spiritual Dawn yet glitters, before merging into the Sun of Reality, make effort that, in this life, you may have breathed of the essence of the Immortal Flower Beds and entered the eternal domain of the people of this Valley.

When you shall have attained this lofty station, you will see the Friend and overlook the stranger; "*Past every wall and every door, He is manifest to the seeing.*" Renouncing the drop of life, you will have gained the Ocean of the Beloved. That is the goal which you have considered. May you reach thereunto!

At this point, the veils of the Light itself rend themselves and disappear. So is it said: "*The covering of His Beauty is none other than His Light; and the veil of His Face is none other than His Manifestation.*" Is it not astonishing that men ever seek the jewels of vanities while the Desired One is as obvious as the sun? It

is the intensity of His splendor that renders Him invisible. *"God has come, apparent as the sun. Alas, He came to the city of the blind!"*

In this valley, the traveller traverses the conditions of oneness in existence and in appearance, and attains a Oneness which is sanctified from either. This is felt, but cannot be expressed. He who dwells at that altitude, who once has been refreshed by the breezes of that Garden, he knows whereof I speak.

Now, the traveller must not deviate, by even a hair's breadth, from the "Law" which is the essence of the Way — the Fruit of the Tree of "Truth." He must cling to the hem of the Robe of Commandment, averting his eyes from that which is forbidden; and so will he drink from the Cup of the "Law" and know the mysteries of "Truth."

Do not hesitate to question me if you still are puzzled, for it would be well that your perplexity should vanish — the answer to your need becoming evident as the

## Beauty of the Beloved in the Realms of Glory.

The stages of this journey, which in the world of time appear limitless, can by Divine assistance, and through the guidance of the Manifestation, be made in seven steps; perhaps in seven breaths or, if God so desires, in a single one. *"He distributes His favors according to His Choice."*

Those who, soaring in the Sky of Oneness, have reached the shore of the Sea of Abstraction, consider this state of immortality in God as the goal — the ultimate home; yet to me, this station is but the first rampart, above which there are yet four, encircling the Citadel of the Heart. I would have continued — addressing any who could understand, but lo, on arriving at this point, my pen has broken and the paper is torn in two.