

CHAPTER FOUR

THE DEGREES OF DEVOTION

138. Read the Verses of God every morning and evening, and he who does not read will not be known by the Covenant of God and His Testament. And he who turns away from them in this Day, verily he is of those who have turned away from God since the eternity of eternities. O ye servants, fear God! Be not deluded by meaningless repetition of prayers, but worship by day and by night. Should any one read but one Verse of the Verses with fragrance and spirituality, it shall avail more unto him than to read with slothfulness all the Books of God, the Protector, the Self-existent.
139. Teach your children that which is caused to descend from the heaven of might and greatness that they, in the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár*, may read the Tablets of the Merciful in the sweetest of tones. Verily, he who is overtaken by the attraction of the love of My Name, the Merciful, will assuredly read the Verses of God in such wise as to charm the hearts of those who are asleep.
140. He who knoweth Me hath known the Intended, and he who turneth unto Me hath turned unto the Adored.
141. The Sun of Truth is the Word of God, upon which depends the training of the people of the country of thought. It is the Spirit of Reality and the Water of Life. All things owe their existence to it. Its manifestation is ever according to the capacity and coloring of the mirror through which it may reflect. For example: Its Light, when cast upon the mirrors of the wise, gives expression to wisdom; when reflected from the minds of artists, it produces manifestations of new and beautiful arts; and when it shines through the minds of students, it reveals knowledge and unfolds mysteries.
142. All things of the world arise through man and are manifest in him, through whom they find life and development; and man is dependent for his (spiritual) existence upon the Sun of the Word of God. All the good names and lofty qualities are of the Word. The Word is the fire of God which, glowing in the hearts of people, burns away all things that are not of God. The minds of the lovers are ever aflame with this fire. Outwardly, it is burning fire, while inwardly it is calm light. This is the Water which giveth life to all things.
143. We beg of God that we may partake of this life-giving Water of Heaven, and quaff from the spiritual chalice of rest, and thus be free from all that tends to withhold us from approaching His love.
- Glory be upon the people of glory!
144. O Son of Man! Wert thou to observe mercy, thou wouldst not regard thine own interest, but the interest of mankind. Wert thou to observe justice, choose thou for others what thou chooseth for thyself.
145. Verily, man is uplifted to the heaven of glory and power through meekness; again, through pride, is he degraded to the lowest station.
146. O ye discerning ones of the people: Verily, the Words which have descended from the heaven of the will of God are the source of unity and harmony for the world. Close your eyes to racial differences and welcome all with the light of oneness. Be the cause of comfort and the promotion of humanity. This handful of dust, the world, is one home: let

it be in unity. Forsake pride, it is a cause of discord. Follow that which tends to harmony.

147. Consort with all the people in love and fragrance. Fellowship is the cause of unity, and unity is the source of order in the world. Blessed are they who are kind and serve with love.
148. In this day he who seeks the light of the Sun of Truth must free his mind from the tales of the past, must adorn his head with the crown of severance, and his temple with the robe of virtue. Then shall he arrive at the ocean of Oneness and enter the presence of Singleness. The heart must become free from the fire of superstitions, that it may receive the light of assurance, and that it may perceive the Glory of God.
149. Oneness, in its true significance, means that God alone should be realized as the one power which animates and dominates all things, which are but manifestations of Its energy.
150. God, singly and alone, abideth in His place which is holy above space and time, mention and utterance, sign, description and definition, height and depth.
151. O my God! O my God! Adorn the heads of Thy chosen ones with the crown of love, and their temples with the robe of virtue.
152. The people of Bahá must serve the Lord with wisdom, teach others by their lives and manifest the light of God in their deeds. The effect of deeds is in truth more powerful than that of words.
153. The progress of man depends upon faithfulness, wisdom, chastity, intelligence and deeds. He is ever degraded by ignorance, lack of faith, untruth and selfishness. Verily, man is not called man until he be imbued with the attributes of the Merciful. He is not man because of wealth and adornment, learning and refinement. Blessed is he who is free from the names, seeking the shore of the sea of purity, and loving the melody of the dove of virtue.
154. In this day all must serve God with purity and virtue. The effect of the word spoken by the teacher depends upon his purity of purpose and his severance. Some are content with words, but the truth of words is tested by deeds and dependent upon life. Deeds reveal the station of the man. The words (of the teacher) must be according to what has proceeded from the mouth of the will of God and is recorded in Tablets.
155. The source of all good is trust in God, obedience to His command, and satisfaction in His will.
156. The principle of religion is to acknowledge what is revealed by God, and to obey the laws established in His Book.
157. The origin of glory is to be content with that which God has provided, and to be satisfied with what He has ordained.
158. The source of love is to advance to the Beloved and to abandon all else save Him, and to have no hope save His will.
159. The principle of faith is to lessen words and to increase deeds. He whose words exceed his acts, know verily that his nonbeing is better than his being, and death better than his life.
160. The root of all knowledge is the knowledge of God: Glory be to Him! And this knowledge is impossible save through His Manifestation.

161. The beginning of courage is effort to promote the Word of God and to remain firm in His love.
162. The cause of all benefit is to manifest the blessings of God and to be thankful under all conditions.
163. The source of all these utterances is justice. It is the freedom of man from superstition and imitation, that he may discern the Manifestations of God with the eye of oneness, and consider all affairs with keen vision.
164. In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful! Praise be unto God, who caused existence to appear from nonexistence, 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"; so that every one may testify in himself, 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.
165. 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 Muhammad in the Concourse of the Chosen, and is Muhammad in the realm of the sincere ones. "By whatsoever 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!
166. 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 light, will uplift thee out of the earthly abode unto the original, divine abode in the center 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 whosoever 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!
- Peace be unto those who follow guidance!
167. The stages of the journey of travelers from the earthly dwelling to the 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

THE VALLEY OF SEARCH

168. The steed upon which to journey through this valley is patience.

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!

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 enmity to 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. 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.

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 mind; perchance, he may discover the mystery of the Beloved One in some mind, or behold the beauty of the Desired in some countenance.

If, through the assistance of God, he find, in this journey, a trace of the traceless Friend and breathe the perfume of the lost Joseph from the harbinger of oneness, he will immediately step into

169.

THE VALLEY OF LOVE

and become melted with the fire of devotion. In this 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.

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.

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, and seeks no shelter but the Desired. 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.

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 outer eye, wilt thou open thine inner 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.

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!

Therefore, O friend! be alien to the self, that thou mayest find thy way to the Incomparable One; abandon the mortal earth that thou mayest take residence in the divine nest. Nothingness is needed until thou canst kindle the fire of existence and

become acceptable in the path of love. "Love does not accept a soul alive to its own desires: a falcon preys not on a dead mouse!"

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 in the realms of

THE VALLEY OF KNOWLEDGE

170. 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 significance of life in death, perceive the mysteries of the "other world" in the regions of creation and in the souls of the servants with the outward and inward eye; and, with the 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."

In this valley, through absolute vision, a traveler sees in God's creation neither difference nor contradiction; and at every moment he will say: "Thou canst not perceive any difference in the creation of the most Merciful. Turn thou thine eyes, whether thou canst behold any flaws!" 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 knowledge. He will break the cage of body and desire, and be attached to the spirit of the people of immortality.

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

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. 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."

Nay, they pass even beyond this station, as it is said: "Love is a screen between the lover and the Beloved." To say more than this, I have not permission. At this time, the morn of knowledge hath dawned, and the lamps of travelling and wayfaring are put out.

If thou art a man of prayer and supplication, fly on the wings of saintly effort, so that thou mayest 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."

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

171. He drinks from the cup of abstraction and gazes on the manifestations of singleness. In this station, he rends away 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 the eyes of God. 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 melodies as 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 Dayspring shining equally upon all the contingent beings, and see the lights of unity manifest and present in all existent things!

All the differences which the traveler sees in the world of Being, during the various stages of his journey, are due to the perception of the traveler himself.

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 capacity of the place itself. 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 its capacity, by the command of the Causer of effects, even as you see. Likewise, colors also appear with respect to the condition 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 shines not thereon.

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—are kept afar from the gems of wisdom of the manifest religion of the Lord of the Messengers, deprived of the sacred home of beauty, and separated from the Ka'aba of glory. This is the state of the people of the age!

When the gaze of the traveler is restricted to a limited place, that is, when he looks as through a colored glass, he then sees (the limitations of) yellow, red or white. It is due to such a view of things that conflict is stirred up among the servants, and a gloomy dust, rising from men of limitation, hath enveloped the world.

Some, however, extend their gaze to the effulgence of the light; and other have drunk from the wine of 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 in the plane of oneness and speak in the world of oneness; some stand in the worlds of limitation, others in the stages of the self, and still others are totally veiled. Therefore, the ignorant of the age, who have gained no portion from the splendor of the Beautiful One, speak in certain 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 the iniquity, He would not leave on earth any moving thing; but He giveth them respite unto an appointed time.”

O my brother! A pure heart is like unto a mirror; polish it with the purity 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 My heaven occupy Me, but the heart of My faithful servant occupieth Me”—and wilt take thy life in thy hands and sacrifice it, with a thousand longings, to the new Beloved.

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 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 unto him, then I become his ear wherewith he heareth. ...” For the Owner of the house becomes manifest in His house, and the pillars of the house are illumined and effulgent 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 whereof those shall drink who are near unto God.

Let no one suppose these explanations to be redolent of anthropomorphism, or indicative of a degrading or restricting of the worlds of the True One; for God, in His essence, is sanctified above ascent or descent, entrance or exit. He has been, and will be everlastingly independent of 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 is barred, and search therefore is rejected. His evidence is His signs, and His being is His proof.”

Yea, such mentions as are made concerning the stages of knowledge apply only to the knowledge of the splendors of that Sun of Truth, become manifest in the Mirrors. 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 there is no entrance nor exit; how much less for that Essence of Beings and that Mystery of the Desired One!

Mysteries are many, and strangers are countless. Books are not sufficient for the mystery of the Beloved, nor can it be exhausted in these Tablets, although the mystery is but one word and one allegory. “Knowledge is but one point, but the ignorant have multiplied it.”

The journeys in the path of Love have been counted 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 to the True One.

Consider how you are the first in relation to your son, and the last in relation to your father; how, outwardly, 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 (of the four classes of worlds), so that in these four grades bestowed upon you, you may comprehend the 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 traverse the worlds of relation and dependence, have taken their seat on the blissful carpet of abstraction, and pitched their tents in the world of independence 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 in this stage, so that any grades of the "First" or the "Last," or any other besides these, be distinguished? In this stage, 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."

Peace be on whosoever accomplisheth this supreme journey, and followeth the True One through the lights of guidance.

After crossing the stages of this lofty, exalted journey, the traveler arrives at

THE VALLEY OF CONTENTMENT

172. 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 outer and inner eye in the visible and invisible parts of things; he passes from sorrow to happiness, returns from sadness to joy, and changes depression and rejection into gladness and cheerfulness.

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 wine. The tongue is unable to give an account of these three valleys, and utterance falls exceeding short.

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 significance must be revealed only from heart to heart, and confided from breast to breast.

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 shouldst 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 reality, and through the attributes he witnesses the mystery of the divine substance, 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.

After traversing the valley of Pure Contentment the traveler reaches

THE VALLEY OF ASTONISHMENT

173. 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 significance uprooted by the blast of astonishment, and many are the souls it has 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.

Yea, 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. Consider what mysteries are deposited therein, what wisdoms are therein stored! 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 occasions when it will happen that, ten years afterwards, you will witness outwardly in the world of time that same thing you have seen this night in dream.

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 therein, 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 in the world of dreams ten years ago. Reflect upon the differences between these two worlds, and the mysteries deposited therein, so that thou mayest attain unto the confirmations and revelations of the Glorified One, and enter into the world of holiness.

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 conditions which have been mentioned, but only the Universal, Supreme Reason can do so.

All these worlds will present themselves in the Valley of Astonishment, and at every moment the traveler seeks for an increase of such worlds without becoming exhausted.

Likewise, ponder over the completeness of the creation of man: all these worlds and all these grades are enveloped and concealed within him. "Dost thou think thy body a small thing, while in thee is enfolded the universe?" Then an effort is needed that we annihilate the animal condition, in order that the meaning of the human may become manifest.

O friend! The heart is a store of divine mysteries; make it not a receptacle for mortal thoughts; and consume not the capital of this precious life by occupying thyself with the 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.

Naught shall befall us, save that which God hath decreed unto us! Peace be upon those who follow guidance!

After ascending the lofty heights of astonishment, the traveler arrives at

THE VALLEY OF ABSOLUTE POVERTY AND ANNIHILATION

174. 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.

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 became manifest, then the Interlocutor consumed the attributes of all contingent things."

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 every limitation.

Much reflection should be given this explanation is order that the end may become manifest. "Verily, the just shall drink of a cup mixed with camphor." If the meaning of "Camphor" be understood the real aim will become evident. This station is that of poverty, of which it is said, "Poverty is my glory." Many are the meanings and grades of the outward and inward poverty, which I do not deem appropriate to mention in this place, and which I therefore reserve for some other time, if God will and the divine decree ordain.

It is in this stage that the traces of all things are destroyed in the traveler, and the beauty of the Face reveals itself from the orient of the eternal world, and the meaning of "Everything is mortal save the face of God," becomes manifest.

O my friend! Harken 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 according to a certain quantity and measure. "There is no one thing but the storehouses thereof are in Our Hands, and we distribute not the same save in a determinate measure."

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 souls have no share in this favor.

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 mayest inhale a fragrance

from the immortal Rose Garden, and rest forever under the shade of the people of this City. 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 mayest attain thereto.

In this City even the veils of light are rent asunder, and vanish! "To His Beauty there are no veils of Light, and His Face hath no covering save Manifestation." How wonderful that the Well Beloved is manifest as the sun, while strangers are in search of vanities and riches. 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 to the city of the blind!"

The condition of Ecstasy can penetrate this saying, but not controversy nor conflict. He who hath chosen an abode in this meeting, or discovereth a breeze from this garden, knoweth what I say.

Although these journeys have no visible termination in the world of time, yet, if the Invisible Assistance vouchsafe a devoted traveler, and if the Guardian of the Command help him, he will traverse these seven stages in only seven steps, nay, even in a single breath, if God will or desire. "This is through His bounty to whomsoever He willeth."

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 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.

175. He is the Glory of The Most Glorious!

This is that which descended from the Source of Majesty, through the tongue of power and strength upon the Prophets of the past. We have taken its essences and clothed them with the garment of brevity, as a favor to the beloved, that they may fulfil the Covenant of God; that they may perform in themselves that which He has entrusted to them, and attain the victory by virtue of devotion in the land of the Spirit.

176. O Son of Spirit! The first counsel is: Possess a good, a pure, an enlightened heart, that thou mayest possess a Kingdom, eternal, immortal, ancient and without end.

177. O Son of Spirit! Justice is loved above all. Neglect it not, if thou desirest Me. By it thou wilt be strengthened to perceive things with thine own eyes and not by the eyes of men, to know them by thine own knowledge and not by the knowledge of any in the world. Meditate on this—how thou oughtest to be. Justice is of My Bounty to thee and of My Providence over thee; therefore, keep it every before thy sight.

178. O Son of Man! In My Ancient Entity and in My Eternal Being was I hidden. I knew My Love in thee, therefore I created thee; upon thee I laid My Image, and to thee revealed My Beauty.

179. O Son of Man! I loved thy creation, therefore I created thee. Wherefore love Me, that I may acknowledge thee and in the spirit of Life confirm thee.

180. O Son of Existence! Love Me, that I may love thee. If thou lovest Me not, My Love can never reach thee. Know this, O servant!

181. O Son of Spirit! No peace is ordained for thee save by departing from thyself and coming to Me. Verily, thy glory should be in My Name, not in thy name; thy trust be upon

My Countenance, not upon thine own; for I will to be loved above all that is.

182. O Son of Existence! My Love is My Fortress. Whoso enters therein is rescued and safe; whoso turns away from it is led astray and perishes.
183. O Son of Existence! By the Hands of Power I have made thee, and by the Fingers of Strength have I created thee. I have placed within thee the essence of My Light: therefore depend upon it and upon nothing else, for My Action is perfect and My Command has effect. Doubt this not, and have no uncertainty therein.
184. O Son of Spirit! I have created thee rich: why dost thou make thyself poor? Noble have I made thee: why dost thou degrade thyself? Of the Essence of Knowledge have I manifested thee: why searchest thou for another than Me? From the Clay of Love I have kneaded thee: why desirest thou another? Turn thy sight unto thyself, that thou mayest find Me standing within thee, Powerful, Mighty and Supreme.
185. O Son of Man! Thou art My Possession, and My Possession shall never be destroyed: why art thou in fear of thy destruction? Thou art My Light, and My Light shall never become extinct: why dost thou dread extinction? Thou art My Glory (Bahá), and My Glory shall not be veiled: thou art My Garment, and My Garment shall never be outworn. Therefore abide in thy love for Me, that thou mayest find Me in the Highest Horizon.
186. O Son of Light! Forget all else save Me, and be comforted by My Spirit. This is from the essence of My Command: therefore direct thyself to it.
187. O Son of Spirit! Boast not of thine own glory over the poor, for I walk before him, and I see thy miserable condition and ever grieve for thee.
188. O Son of Man! Breathe not the sins of any one as long as thou art a sinner. If thou doest contrary to this command, thou art not of Me: to this I bear witness.
189. O Son of Spirit! Know verily that he who exhorts men to equity and himself does injustice, is not of Me, even though he bear My Name.
190. O Son of Existence! Examine thy deeds each day, before thou art judged, for death will suddenly overtake thee, and then thy deeds shall judge thee.
191. O Son of the Supreme! I made death for thee as glad tidings: why art thou in despair at its approach? I made light for thee a splendor: why dost thou hide from it?
192. O Son of Spirit! The Gospel of Light I herald to thee: rejoice in it. And to the state of Holiness I call thee: abide in it, that thou mayest be in peace for ever and ever.
193. O Son of Spirit! The Holy Spirit heralds comfort to thee: why dost thou grieve? The Spirit of Command confirms thee in the Cause: why dost thou remain apart? The Light of the Face walks before thee: why dost thou seek darkness?
194. O Son of Man! Lift up thy heart with delight, that thou mayest be fitted to meet Me, and to mirror forth My Beauty.
195. O Son of Man! Clothe thyself with My Beautiful Garment and forfeit not thy portion from My Living Fountain, that thou mayest not thirst forever.
196. O Son of Existence! Remember Me in My earth that I may remember thee in My Heaven. Thus may our eyes delight therein.
197. O Son of the Throne! Thy hearing is My hearing: hear thou with it. Thy sight is My Sight: see thou with it. Thus mayest thou attest within thyself My Holiness, that I may

attest within Myself a place of exaltation for thee.

198. O Son of Man! For everything there is a sign. The sign of love is patience through My Ordeal and long-suffering for My Sake.
199. O Son of Man! The sincere lover longs for suffering as the rebel craves forgiveness, and the sinner prays for mercy.
200. O Son of Man! If calamity befall thee not in My path, how wilt thou tread in the way of those who are content in My will? If affliction overtake thee not in thy longing to meet Me, how canst thou attain the Light of the Love of My Beauty?
201. O Son of Man! My Calamity is My Providence. In appearance it is fire and vengeance; in reality it is Light and Mercy. Therefore approach it, that thou mayest become an Eternal Light and an Immortal Spirit. This is My Command; know thou it.
202. O Son of Humanity! Rejoice not if fortune smile upon thee, and if humiliation overtake thee mourn not because of it, for, in their time, they both shall cease and be no more.
203. O Son of Existence! If thou lovest the Immortal and Eternal Kingdom, the Ancient and Everlasting Life, then forsake this mortal and vanishing kingdom.
204. O Son of Man! Thou desirest gold, and We desire thy separation from it. Thou hast realized therein the riches of thyself, while I realize thy wealth to consist in thy freedom from it. By My Life! This is My Knowledge, while that is thine imagining: how can My Thought agree with thine?
205. O Son of Man! Distribute My possessions among My Poor, that in heaven thou mayest receive from the boundless treasures of Glory and from the stores of Eternal Bliss. But by My Life! The sacrifice of the spirit is more glorious, couldst thou see with My Vision.
206. O Son of Man! The Light has shone upon thee from the horizon of the Mount, and the Spirit of Purity has breathed in the Sinai of thy heart. Therefore empty thyself of doubts and fancies; then enter into this Mansion, that thou mayest be prepared for the Eternal Life, and ready to meet Me. Herein there is no death, no trouble nor burden.
207. O Son of Man! My Eternity is My creation. I have created it for thee; therefore make it the garment of thy temple. My Oneness is My design. I have designed it for thee; therefore clothe thyself with it. Thus thou mayest be a star of My Omnipresence forever.
208. O Son of Man! My Greatness is My Bounty to thee. My Majesty is My Mercy to thee, but that which is due to Me none can realize or comprehend: verily I have treasured it in the stores of My Secrets, in the treasury of My Command—as a favor to My servants and a mercy to My people.
209. O Son of Beauty! By My Spirit and by My Providence! By My Mercy and by My Beauty! All that I uttered for thee by the Tongue of Power and wrote with the Pen of Strength, verily, We revealed it according to thy capacity and perception, not according to My State and Reality.
210. O Children of Men! Do ye know why We have created you from one clay? That no one should glorify himself over the other. Be ye mindful of how you were created. Since We created you all from the same substance, ye must be as one soul, walking with the same feet, eating with one mouth and living in one land, that ye may manifest with your being, and by your deeds and actions, the signs of unity and the spirit of oneness. This is My Counsel to you, O people of Lights! Therefore follow it, that ye may attain the fruits of

holiness from the Tree of Might and Power.

211. O Children of the Spirit! Ye are My treasures, for in you I have treasured the pearls of My Mysteries and the Gems of My Knowledge. Guard them, lest the unbelievers among My people, the wicked ones among My creatures, should discover them.
212. O Son of Him Who Stood By His Own Entity in The Kingdom of Himself! Know that I have sent unto thee the fragrances of Holiness, have accomplished the Word in thee, have fulfilled the Bounty through thee, and have willed for thee what I have willed for Myself. Therefore be content in Me and thankful to Me.
213. O Son of Man! On the Tablet of the Spirit write all We have uttered to thee, with the ink of Light; and, if thou canst not do this, then make the ink of the essence of thy heart; and, if thou art still unable, then write with the red ink shed in My Path. Verily, this is more precious to Me than all else, for this radiance shall last forever.
214. In the Name of the Mighty Speaker! O ye possessors of intelligence and hearing, the first melody of the Beloved is: O nightingale of Significance, seek no refuge save in the rose garden of significances! O messenger of the Solomon of Love, dwell not save in the Sheba of the Beloved! O phoenix of Immortality, choose no abode except in the Mount of Faithfulness! This is thy station, if thou art soaring to the Placeless on the wings of Love.
215. O Son of Dust! Verily, I say, the most negligent of the servants is he who disputes and prefers himself to his brother. Say, O brethren! Adorn yourselves with deeds rather than with words.
216. O Sons of Earth! Know the truth that a heart wherein lingers the least trace of envy shall never attain unto My Immortal Dominion, nor feel the fragrances of purity from My Holy Kingdom.
217. O Son of Love! Only one step separates thee from the plain of nearness and the exalted Tree of Love. Plant the first foot and, with the other, step into the Kingdom of Eternity and enter the Pavilion of Immortality. Then hearken to what has descended from the Pen of Glory.
218. O Son of Desire! Listen truly: mortal eye shall never perceive the Everlasting Beauty, and the dead mind delights only in lifeless clay; for like seeks like and has affinity with its own kind.
219. O My Children! I fear that, without having enjoyed the melody of the Nightingale, ye may return to the region of mortality; and, without seeing the beauty of the Rose, ye may return to the water and clay.
220. O Son of Spirit! The time cometh when the Nightingale of Holiness will be prevented from unfolding the Inner Significances, and all shall be bereft of the Merciful Melody and Divine Call.
221. O Essence of Negligence! Alas, that a hundred thousand ideal languages are spoken by One Tongue, and that a hundred thousand hidden meanings are unfolded in One Melody, and there is no ear to hearken, nor any heart to perceive a single letter!
222. O Comrades! The doors of the Placeless are opened, and the City of the Beloved is adorned with the blood of the lovers, but all are bereft of this spiritual City except a few; and of this few have appeared but very few with pure hearts and holy souls.
223. O People of the Delectable Paradise! Let the people of certainty know that a new

Garden has appeared near the Ridván in the Open Court of Holiness, and that all the people of the Heights, and the temples of the Exalted Heaven, are around it. Therefore endeavor to reach that Station, and discover the truths of the mystery of Love from its red tulips, and unveil abundant knowledge of the Oneness from its eternal fruits. Radiant are the eyes of him who has entered therein with trust.

224. O My Friends! Have ye forgotten that true, bright morn when ye were all in My Presence on that blessed plain under the shade of the Tree of Life, planted in the Great Paradise, when I addressed to thee three Holy Words; ye heard them and were overwhelmed!

225. The Words are these: "O Friends, prefer not your will to Mine; desire not that which I have not desired for thee; approach Me not with dead minds stained with desire and hope." If ye purify your breasts, that condition, and the view of that Open Court, will appear to you, and My Explanation will become manifest.

226. O Dead Men on the Bed of Negligence! Centuries have passed, and ye have ended your precious lives; yet not a single breath of purity hath ever come from you to Our Holy Presence. Ye are drowned in the sea of polytheism while talking of Oneness. Ye have loved that which hateth Me, and ye have taken My foe to be your friend. Ye are walking with mirth and pleasure upon My earth, heedless that it detests you, and that the things of the earth are fleeing from you. Should ye open your eyes but a little ye shall know that a hundred thousand griefs are preferable to this pleasure, and ye will consider death to be preferred to this life.

227. O Son of Passion! The people of wisdom and insight struggled for years, and failed to attain the meeting of the Exalted One, hastened all their lives, and did not see the Most Beautiful; while thou hast arrived at home without hastening, and hast attained the goal without search. Yet, after gaining all these degrees and ranks, thou wert so veiled with thyself that thine eyes did not behold the Beauty of the Beloved, and thy hand did not reach to the Hem of the Friend. Therefore marvel at this, O possessors of insight!

228. O People of the Country of Love! The Eternal Candle is beset by mortal winds, and the beauty of the Spiritual Servants is shrouded by the darkness of dust. The King of kings of Love is oppressed under the hand of the subjects of tyranny, and the Dove of Holiness is clutched in the talons of owls. All the people of the Pavilion of Glory and of the Supreme Concourse are mourning and wailing, while ye are living at ease upon the earth of negligence, counting yourselves among the sincere lovers. Therefore that which ye have assumed is false.

229. O Ignorant Ones Who Have a Reputation for Knowledge! Why do ye outwardly claim to be shepherds while inwardly ye have become wolves of My sheep? Your example resembles the star preceding the dawn, which is apparently bright and luminous, but in reality leads the caravans of My City astray, and causes their destruction.

230. O Perfect in Appearance, and Inwardly Defective! Your example is like unto a clear but bitter water, which outwardly seems pure and clean, but when it falls into the hand of the Divine Assayer, not one drop of it is accepted. Yea, the radiance of the sun is cast upon the dust and upon the mirror, but the difference is great between the earth and the guiding stars; nay, that distance is vast.

231. O Son of Generosity! Thou wert in the deserts of nonbeing and, by means of the earth

of command, I made thee to appear in the world of possession. I charged all the atoms of dependence and the realities of creation with thy training, so that, before thou didst issue from the womb of thy mother, I ordained for thee two fountains of bright milk. I appointed eyes to guard thee, set thy love in all hearts, and with pure generosity I reared thee under the shadow of My Mercy, and protected thee with the essence of My Grace. The purpose of all this was to enable thee to arrive at Our Eternal Might and to deserve Our Invisible Favors. But thou, O heedless one, when thou didst reach maturity, neglected all My Bounties, and engaged thyself in thy fancy to such a degree that thou didst entirely forget Me and, leaving the house of the Beloved, went and dwelt in the porch of the enemy.

232. O Son of the Earth! If thou desirest Me, desire no other than Me. If thou seekest My Beauty, withdraw thy glance from the people of the world, for My Will and the will of another is like fire and water which cannot be contained in the same mind and heart.

233. O Stranger to the Friend! The candle of thy mind is lighted by the hand of My Power; extinguish it not with the contrary winds of desires and passions. The healer of all thy troubles is remembrance of Me; forget it not. Make My Love thy capital, and cherish it as the spirit of the eye.

234. O My Friends! Extinguish the lamp of ignorance and kindle the ever-burning torch of guidance in the heart and mind. For in a short while the Assayers of Being shall accept naught but pure virtue in the portico of the Presence of the Adored One, and will receive none but holy deeds.

235. O Son of Dust! The wise men of the people are those who speak not unless they find a listener; as the cup-bearer never offers a cup unless he find one who desires; nor does the lover cry out from the depth of his heart until he attains to the beauty of the beloved. Therefore sow the seeds of knowledge and wisdom in the fertile ground of the mind, and conceal them there until the hyacinth of Divine Wisdom springs up in the heart and not in the clay.

236. O Son of Spirit! Break the cage, and like unto the bird of love soar in the atmosphere of holiness; leave the self, and rest with heavenly souls upon the sacred Plain of God.

237. O My Servant! Free thyself from the worldly bond, and escape from the prison of self. Appreciate the value of the time, for thou shalt never see it again, nor shalt thou find a like opportunity.

238. O Son of My Maid-Servant! Wert thou to see the immortal Kingdom, verily thou wouldst abandon the mortal possessions of earth; yet there is a wisdom in the former being concealed and in the latter being manifest, and this is known only to hearts that are pure.

239. O Companion of My Throne! Hear no evil and see no evil; degrade not thyself, neither lament. That is—speak no evil, that thou mayest not hear it; think no the faults of others to be great, that thine own may not seem great; approve not the abasement of any soul, that thine own abasement may not be exposed. Then with stainless mind, holy heart, sanctified breast, and pure thoughts, thou mayest be free during all the days of thy life which are counted less than an instant, and with freedom may return from this mortal body to the paradise of Inner Significances, and abide in the Immortal Kingdom.

240. O Brothers of the Path! Why are ye heedless of the remembrance of the Beloved, and

why are ye far from the Presence of the Friend? The Absolute Beauty is established upon the Throne of Glory, under the Peerless Canopy, while ye are engaged in contention according to your own desire. The fragrances of holiness are wafted, and the breezes of generosity are blowing, but ye have lost the power of scent, and are bereft of them all. Alas for you, and for them who follow in your steps and walk after your ways.

241. O Children of Dust! Let the rich learn the midnight sighing of the poor, lest negligence destroy them and they be deprived of their portion of the tree of wealth. Giving and generosity are qualities of Mine. Happy is he who adorns himself with My virtues.

242. O Son of My Maid-Servant! Let not poverty trouble thee, nor rest assured in wealth. All poverty is succeeded by wealth, and all wealth is followed by poverty. But to be poor in all save God is a great blessing; make it not small, for in the end it will make thee rich in God. This condition is hidden in the verse of the Qur'án: "Ye are poor," but the blessed word, "God only is rich" shall appear, shine forth and illumine, like the true morn, from the horizon of the lover's mind, and shall be established upon the Throne of Wealth.

243. O Ye Who Boast Because of Mortal Possessions! Know ye that wealth is a strong barrier between the seeker and the Desired One, between the lover and the Beloved. Never shall the rich arrive at the abode of nearness, nor enter into the city of contentment and resignation, save only a few. Then good is the state of that wealthy one, whose wealth preventeth him not from the Everlasting Kingdom, and depriveth him not of the Eternal Possessions. Verily, I declare by the Greatest Name that the light of that wealthy one shall illumine the people of Heaven, as the sun shines upon the people of the earth.

244. O Ye Who are Wealthy on Earth! The poor among you are My trust. Therefore guard My trust, and be not wholly occupied with your own ease.

245. O My Son! The company of the wicked increaseth sorrow, and the fellowship of the righteous removeth the rust of the mind. He who desires to associate with God, let him associate with His beloved; and he who desires to hear the Word of God, let him hear the words of His Chosen Ones.

246. O Heedless Ones! Think not that the mysteries of hearts are concealed; nay, rather know with certainty that they are inscribed in clear type, and are openly manifest in the Presence.

247. O Son of Dust! Close not thine eye to the peerless Wine of the Eternal Beloved, and open not thine eye to the turbid and mortal wine. Take immortal Cups from the hand of the Cup Bearer of Oneness, and thou shalt become all consciousness, and hear the invisible Utterances of Reality. Say: O worthless ones –¹

¹ See 62 in the Persian Hidden Words.

248. O Ye Oppressors on Earth! Withdraw your hands from oppression, for I have vowed to pass not over any one's oppression. This is a Covenant which I have decreed in the Preserved Tablet, and sealed it with the seal of Power.

249. O Rebellious Ones! My forbearance hath made you bold and My patience hath made you negligent, so that ye fearlessly ride upon the steeds of the fire of passion in the pathways of destruction. Perchance ye have thought Me heedless, and considered Me to be ignorant.

250. O Plant of the Earth! How is it that thou wilt not touch thine own garment with hands

soiled with sugar, while with thy mind soiled with the filth of passion and lust, thou seekest companionship with Me, and desirest to be directed to the dominions of My Holiness. Alas! Alas! for that which thou hast desired!

251. O Sons of Adam! "The good word" and pure and holy deeds ascend to the glorious Heaven of Oneness. Strive that thy deeds may be cleansed from the dust of hypocrisy and from the turbidness of self and passion, and thus enter the glorious Presence of Acceptance. For soon the Assayers of Existence, in the portico of the Presence of the Worshipped One, shall accept naught but pure virtue, and shall admit none but pure deeds. This is the sun of Wisdom and Significances which has dawned from the horizon of the Mouth of the Divine Will. Blessed are they who advance.

252. O Son of Delight! The plain of being is a pleasant plain, if thou dost reach it; the home of immortality is a good home, if thou wilt step beyond the dominion of mortality; the ecstasy of wine is sweet, if thou drinkest it from the Chalice of Inner Significances passed by the hand of the Divine Servant. Shouldst thou attain to these degrees thou shalt become free from mortality, affliction and error.

253. O My Friends! Remember the Covenant ye entered into with Me upon the Mount of Parán, situated under the blessed Shrine of Teman. I took as witness to that Covenant the Supreme Concourse and the dwellers in the City of Life. Now I find none steadfast in that Covenant. Pride and disobedience have indeed effaced it from the minds to such a degree that not a trace of it has remained and, although knowing this, I have endured it patiently and have not divulged it.

254. O My Servant! Thou art like unto a jeweled sword concealed in a dark sheath, by reason of which its value is unknown to the jewelers. Then come forth from the sheath of self and desire, that thy jewels may become open and manifest to the people of the world.

255. O My Friend! Thou art the sun of the heaven of My Holiness; defile not thyself with the eclipse of the world. Tear asunder the veil of negligence, that thou mayest emerge from behind the veil, be uncovered from the cloud, and array all beings with the robe of Life.

256. O Child of My Maid Servant! Guidance hath ever been by words, but at this time it is by deeds. That is, all pure deeds must appear from the temple of man, because all are partners in words, but pure and holy deeds belong especially to Our friends. Then strive with your life to be distinguished among all people by deeds. Thus We exhort you in the holy and radiant Tablet.

257. O Son of Justice! In the eve of beauty, the Temple of Immortality returned to the Sadratu'l-Muntahá from the "emerald hill" of Faithfulness, and wept with such a wailing that the Supreme Concourse and the Cherubim wept because of His grief. When He was asked the cause of lamentation and grief, He answered: I was waiting, as commanded, upon the hill of Faithfulness, and found not the fragrance of fidelity from the dwellers of the earth. Therefore I returned and declared unto them that many doves of holiness are suffering under the claws of the dogs of the earth.

Thereupon the Divine Houris hastened, unveiled, from the Spiritual Palace, and questioned their names. All were mentioned save one of the names. And when they insisted, the first letter of that name flowed from the tongue, whereupon the people of the upper chambers hurried forth from their retreats of honor. When the second letter was mentioned, all dropped down upon the dust. Then came forth from the Retreat of

Nearness this Voice: More than this is not permissible. Verily, We were witness to that which they have done and are doing at this time!

258. O Child of My Maid Servant! Drink the wine of Significances from the Tongue of the Merciful, and behold the lights of the Sun of Explanation, without veil or cover, from the Dawning-place of the Word of God. Spread the seeds of My Immediate Wisdom in the fertile soil of the heart, and water it with the water of certainty: thus shall the hyacinths of My Knowledge and Wisdom spring up verdantly from the holy city.

259. O My Servants! Ye are the trees of My garden; ye must bear fresh and beautiful fruits, that ye and others may be profited by them. Therefore it is necessary for you to engage in arts and business. This is the means of attaining wealth, O ye possessors of intellect. Affairs depend upon means, and the blessing of God will appear therein and will enrich you. Fruitless trees have been and will be only fit for fire.

260. O My Servant! The lowest of men are those who bear no fruit upon the earth; they are indeed counted as dead. Nay, the dead are preferred in the Presence of God before those who are indolent and negligent.

261. O My Servant! The best of people are they who gain by work, and spend for themselves and their kindred in the Love of God, the Lord of the creatures.

262. The bride of wonderful Significances, who was concealed behind the veils of words, hath appeared through Divine Providence and Heavenly Bounties, like unto the radiance of the Beauty of the Beloved. I testify, O friends, that the Bounty has become complete, the Evidence is accomplished, the Argument manifested, and the Reason affirmed. Now what will your endeavors show forth from the degrees of devotion? Thus are the favors perfected unto all who are in the Heavens and earths. Praise be unto God, the Lord of all mankind!

PRAYERS AND SUPPLICATIONS

263. Praise be to Thee, O God of Names and Creator of Heaven! Praise be to Thee, for Thou hast made known unto Thy servants Thy Day, wherein the River of Life streamed forth from the finger of Thy Generosity, and the Fountain of Revelation and Unity became manifest by Thy Manifestation, to all who are in Thy earth and heaven.

O God! This is a Day the Light of which Thou hast sanctified above the sun and its effulgence. I testify that this Day is illumined by the Light of Thy Face and by the effulgence of the dawning Lights of Thy Manifestation.

O Thou, my God, and the Beloved of my heart! With the name of this Day Thou hast adorned Thy Tablet, which is known only to Thee. Thou hast called it The Day of God. Nothing is to be seen therein but Thy Supreme Self, and naught is to be remembered save Thy sweetest Name. Wherefore, when He appeared, the foundations of nations trembled, the learned were bewildered and the wise men were confounded, save those who came near unto Thee, took from the Hand of Favor the pure wine of Thy Inspiration, and drank

in Thy Name, saying: "Praise be unto Thee, O Desire of the Nations! Praise be to Thee, O Beloved of the hearts of the yearning!"

264. Glory be unto Thee, O God, for Thy Manifestation of Love to mankind! O Thou, who art our Life and Light, guide Thy servants to Thy Way, and make them rich in Thee and free from all save Thee.

O God, teach them Thy Oneness, and give unto them a realization of Thy Unity; that they may see no one save Thee. Thou art the Merciful and the Giver of Bounty!

O God, create in the hearts of Thy beloved the fire of Thy Love, that it may burn away the thought of everything save Thee.

Reveal unto them, O God, Thy Exalted Eternity; that Thou hast ever been and will always be, and that there is no God save Thee. Verily, in Thee will they find comfort and strength!

265. I testify, O my God, that Thou hast created me to know Thee and to adore Thee. I testify at this instant to my powerlessness and to Thy Power; to my poverty and to Thy Wealth. There is no God but Thee, the Protector, Self-Subsistent.

266. Thou art my God and my Beloved! Shower upon me, from the right side of Thy Mercy and Providence, the holy waves of Thy Beneficence, to lift me from myself and from the world, unto the shore of Thy Presence and Communion. For Thou art powerful to do whatsoever Thou wishest and Thou art ever pervading the universe!

267. I arise in Thy Shelter, and it behooveth him who seeketh Thy Protection to be under the shield of Thy Guard and in the fortress of Thy Defence. O my Lord, enlighten me inwardly by the lights of the daybreak of Thy Manifestation, as Thou hast enlightened me outwardly by the light of the dawn of Thy Favor.

268. Thou art the Praiser and the Praised One! O my God, and my Master, and my Desire! This, Thy servant, desireth to sleep in the shelter of Thy Mercy and to rest under the shadow of the dome of Thy Favor, assisted by Thy Protection and Thy Guard. O my Lord, I invoke Thee, by Thine Eye which sleepeth not, to protect my sight from beholding aught beside Thee: then increase its light by witnessing Thy Signs and by looking toward the horizon of Thy Manifestation. Thou art He before whose appearance of might the existence of power is subdued. There is no God but Thee, the Powerful, the Conquerer, the Unconstrained!

269. Praise be to Thee, O God my Lord! Every time I try to mention Thee my dreadful sins and awful crimes prevent me, and by them I find myself removed from Thee and prevented from calling upon Thee for help. But my assurance of Thy Generosity and my full trust in Thy Bounty enables me to mention Thee and ask of Thee what Thou hast to give.

O my God! I beg of Thee—by Thy Mercy, which was before all things existing, and to which all those who are in the depths of the seas of Names did bear witness—leave me not to myself, for it always desires to do what is wrong. Keep me in the stronghold of Thy Shelter and amid the surroundings of Thy Protection.

O my God! I do not want but what was appointed to me by Thy Power; and this is what I have chosen to myself—that Thy good Destiny and Judgment may confirm me, and that I may be exalted by what Thou hast written and ordained for me.

I beg of Thee, O Thou, Beloved of the hearts of Thy lovers—by the manifestation of Thy Commandments, by the depths of Thine Inspiration, by the heights of Thine Exaltation, and by the stores of Thy Wisdom—forbid me not from visiting Thy sacred house and holy abode. Permit me, O my God, the privilege to drink from the fountain of its holy place, to wander about its courts, and to stand beside its gates. For Thou art He who is, was and ever shall be Powerful and Mighty! Nothing can be hidden from Thy Knowledge! Thou art He who has all power, majesty and glory! Praise be to God, the Lord of all the worlds!

270. O Thou, by whose Name the sea of joy moveth and the fragrance of happiness is wafted! I ask Thee to show me, from the wonders of Thy Favor, that which shall brighten my eyes and gladden my heart.

271. In Thy Name, the Sufficer, the Healer, the Fulfiller, the Loftiest, the Supreme, the Bahá-El-Abhá!

I ask Thee by Thine Ancient Beauty, and I supplicate Thee by the manifestation of Thy Greatest Majesty, and Thy Name, around which the heavens of the Manifestations revolve; by which the waters of the oceans overflow, the full moons appear, the lights diffuse, and verily, the visible and the invisible, the mysterious and the celebrated; by which all sorrow will be turned into joy and all disease will be turned into health, and by which every sick, afflicted, unfortunate and constrained one may be healed, to suffice to heal this weary, sick-worn one of the seen and the unseen disease.

Verily, Thou art the Powerful, the Conqueror, the Mighty, the Living, the Forgiver!

272. O our God, we beg of Thee by the King of Names and Maker of heaven and earth, by the rustling of the leaves of the Tree of Life and by Thine utterances, through which the realities of things are drawn unto us, to grant that the unity in the Love of God may be speedily established throughout the world; that Thou wilt guide us always and unmistakably to whatever Thou wouldst have us to do, and that we may ever be strong and fully prepared to render instant, exact and complete obedience.

273. A pure heart create within me, O my Lord! A tranquil soul renew within me, O my Hope! Through the spirit of command make me firm in Thy Cause, O my Beloved! By the light of guidance show unto me Thy Path, O my Desire! By the might of loftiness cause me to ascend to the heaven of Thy Sanctity, O my Beginning! Through the worlds of immortality cause me to rejoice, O my Lord! By the melodies of eternity tranquilize me, O my Companion! By the riches of Thy Pre-existent Countenance deliver me from all else save Thee, O my Lord! And by the interpretation of Thy Everlasting Identity rejoice me! O Thou who art more apparent than my appearance, O Thou who art hidden in my inmost heart!

274. O my God! Make Thy Beauty to be my food and let Thy Presence be my drink. Let my truth be in Thy Will, and my deeds according to Thy Command. Let my service be acceptable to Thee, and my action a praise to Thee. Let my help come only from Thee, and ordain my home to be Thy Mansion, boundless and holy. Thou art the Precious, the Ever-present, the Loving.

275. O my God! O my God! Unite the hearts of Thy servants, and reveal to them Thy Great Purpose. May they follow Thy Commandments and abide in Thy Law. Help them, O God, in their endeavor, and grant them strength to serve Thee. O God, leave them not to themselves, but guide their steps by the light of Knowledge, and cheer their hearts by Thy

Love. Verily, Thou art their Helper and their Lord!

276. He is the Everlasting Being!

This is a message which We have appointed as Our meeting for those who advance toward God in this Day in which all countries are changed.

The one who reads that which is revealed in this Tablet from the direction of the Throne, and doubts the reality of meeting his Lord; verily, he is of those who deny God, who causeth the mornings to break forth!

O birds of Paradise! Hear the voice of the Beloved in these days wherein the feet of the people deviate.

On account of your advancement the Supreme Concourse hath rejoiced; but because of your not having attained the meeting, and being thirty while near the ocean, the cry of mourning and weeping has been raised by the inhabitants of the cities of eternity.

This is indeed good; that this rejoicing and sorrow seem to unite and to embrace one another in the Day of God, the Omnipresent, the Dear, the Chosen!

The bellies of the polytheists are burned by that which We have uttered aforetime, and for this reason they dissemble day and night against My soul.

Blessed are you, since ye have entered the city and attained that which your Lord, the Dear, the Giver, desireth.

It is incumbent upon you that gladness and exultation shall be manifest in your faces; so that every soul may find in you submission and forbearance. Thus it is preordained from the Pen of El-Abhá. Verily, your Lord the Merciful is the knower of that which is secret and manifest!

Ye are in the shadow of My providence and under the Dome of My mercy. Verily, the sight of God is directed toward you, O ye possessors of clear insight.

Blessed are ye; those who love you and those who advance toward you sincerely, for the sake of God, the Dear, the Almighty!

God beareth witness, and those who are encircling the Throne, that ye have victoriously attained His meeting, and have circulated around the Holy of Holies of His Cause, and were present before His Face. Verily, He is the powerful over all that He wisheth! There is no God but He, the Dear, the Bestower!

By Myself! We have accepted from you that which ye desired, and We will be with you in all times.

El-Bahá be upon you on the part of the Dear, the Helper!