

# Mathnaví of the Blessed One

REVEALED BY BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

PROVISIONAL TRANSLATION  
WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES BY  
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The “Mathnaví of the Blessed One” was written during Bahá'u'lláh's exile to Constantinople. Bahá'u'lláh remained in Constantinople only a brief time, 16 August through 1 December 1863, but this was a critical turning point in His ministry.

Importantly, this work of more than three hundred lines touches upon Bahá'u'lláh's imminent declaration to the world at large what He had revealed to His followers in April of the same year in a rented garden outside Bagdad: that He was Him Whom God shall make manifest, the Manifestation of God promised and prophesied by the Báb. Consequently, this poem is as complex and varied as would be the entirety of Bahá'u'lláh's revelation.

Among other themes, the Mathnaví foreshadows the forthcoming ordeals already presaged in the *Tablet of the Holy Mariner*, principally among them would be the rebellion of Mirzá Yahyá that would begin a year later in Adrianople. It also alludes to the need for Bahá'u'lláh to unveil His station and unleash the power of His command. Such unveiling refers both to the

gradual revelation of His unique station, as well as the myriad works that would soon pour from His tireless pen.

Adib Taherzadeh's chapter devoted to the Mathnaví does an excellent job of demonstrating how the various themes of this poem foreshadow both future events and the future works of Bahá'u'lláh, works that would expand the ideas and axioms introduced in this multi-layered work of art with its complex collection of symbol and allegory:

One of the most beautiful works which Bahá'u'lláh revealed in Constantinople is the Mathnaví. It is a masterpiece of Persian poetry, noted for the beauty and power of its composition, and acclaimed as one of the most soul-stirring among His poems. No pen can adequately describe the contents of this great work even in the original language. For every one of its three hundred lines is a book in itself with infinite depth and profound significances. Like a vast ocean which gushes out through a tiny outlet, Bahá'u'lláh reveals, with a potency that overwhelms the soul, a small measure of the glory and power of God and vouchsafes to mankind a glimmer of His divine Revelation. The knowledge He bestows upon the pure in heart, the mysteries He unravels for the sincere, the insight He confers upon the seeker, the wisdom He dispenses to the wise, and the counsels and exhortations He delivers to His loved ones, all

these stand out in this divine poem as the ultimate to which man can hope to attain. (*Revelation 29*).

Throughout the work, as the reader will note, Bahá'u'lláh compares this Day of Revelation and Resurrection to all those revelations that preceded it and demonstrates, through a series of allusions, how this new Day is the culmination of what previous Manifestations prophesied and longed to behold.

Among the most heartening assurances is the theme repeatedly cited by Bahá'u'lláh that this is the “Day of God”—an endless spring that, unlike the revelations of the past, will not be followed by night, thereby assuring humankind that its Covenant with God is eternal, that we are still living in the day of *alast*.<sup>1</sup> At the conclusion, however, Bahá'u'lláh, no longer speaking as a mere dervish, laments that He must endure the same sort of suffering inflicted on the Manifestations of the past, like Moses in the midst of the Egyptians or like Joseph in the well after having been betrayed by His own brothers. As the *Mathnaví* demonstrates, Bahá'u'lláh foreknew the trials that awaited Him—including, most grievously, a betrayal by His own

brother at least as perfidious as that which Joseph endured.

Finally, the reader needs to be aware that those words in parenthesis are added by us for clarity, even though they are not in the original text. Also, the words in italics are translated from the Arabic, whereas the rest of the text is translated from the Persian.

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1 “Am I not . . . ?” In the Qur’án (7:172) the Day of the Covenant or the Day of God is *Yawm-i-Alast*, the Day when God addressed Adam’s posterity-to-be and asked them, “Am I not your Lord?” (*a-lastu bi Rabbikum*) and they replied: “Yea! We do bear witness!” This represents the binding Covenant between God and humankind.

*He is the Most Glorious*

- 1 O Life of the Throne on High! O Sun of love!  
The world of existence hath never given birth to such light!
- 2 Were not everyone veiled from reunion,  
I would disclose a few words from the mysteries of eternity
- 3 that all souls would be indebted to Thee  
and all might become mad with love for Thee,
- 4 that Thou mayest behold everyone inebriated and crazy with love,  
their souls in hand ready to sacrifice
- 5 at the instant of Thy command, O Honored One of the Age,  
(souls which) they might readily cast at Thy feet.
- 6 Like the dawning sun, reveal Thy face from behind the mountain of the  
Holy Spirit  
that Thou mayest become manifest in every corner of this world!
- 7 Manifest Thy moonlike face!  
Through Thy benevolence, make this straw lush and green.
- 8 A drop seeketh abundance from Thy ocean.  
Grant this request in abundance because Thou art a Bountiful King!
- 9 A speck of dust supplicates Thee for a beam of light.  
Bestow this favor without question!
- 10 A seed hath opened its mouth heavenward  
that Thy generous bounty might be bestowed upon it.
- 11 Pour forth upon it the drops of Thy bounteousness,  
O King of the Celestial Throne and Ruler of the mortal realm!
- 12 Rend asunder this hundred-fold veil!  
Make manifest that beguiling countenance!
- 13 As there is no doubt about Thy generosity,  
provide us from Thy beneficence whatsoever we require.

- 14 For one and all, make now the West the dawning place!  
Confer the delight of wine upon this drink!
- 15 With beams of light, enkindle the lamp of the heart  
that all might behold in Thy face the light of *Túr*<sup>2</sup> itself!
- 16 Indeed, unsheathe Thy heavenly sword!  
Slay outright the enemies of Thy Faith!
- 17 Set ablaze the fire of Thy Lordship!  
Engulf in flames the heretic who wars against Thee!
- 18 O Sun of daylight, they are all like bats!  
Arise and set all darkness aflame with light!
- 19 Purify these sorrow-laden dregs!  
Enkindle this extinguished candle of the night.
- 20 Because Thou dost dwell in every soul, the whole world depends on Thee  
so that Thy command “*Be and it is!*” may become manifest!<sup>3</sup>
- 21 O Bahá of the Holy Spirit, through remembrance of Thy face,  
I will disclose (some) mysteries about Thy nature
- 22 that through (such) wisdom I might elevate the souls  
and discover those willing to pay the price for the pearl of Thy love.

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2 Quranic allusion to the mountain where Moses sees the light emanating from the burning bush, referred to in the Biblical account of Moses as Mount Horeb, also as Mt. Sinai, and as the Mountain of God. In the Bahá'í writings, it generally symbolizes the point—or source or intermediary—from which God speaks to the Manifestation. For Moses it was the fire, for Muhammad it was the Archangel Gabriel, for Bahá'u'lláh, the Veiled Maiden.

3 See numerous occasions in the Qur'án. For example, “To Him is due the primal origin of the heavens and the earth; when He decreeth a matter He saith to it: ‘Be;’ and it is” (2:117). “Shoghi Effendi, in letters written on his behalf, has explained the significance of the ‘letters B and E’. They constitute the word ‘Be’, which, he states, ‘means the creative Power of God Who through His command causes all things to come into being’ and ‘the power of the Manifestation of God, His great spiritual creative force’. The imperative ‘Be’ in the original Arabic is the word ‘kun’, consisting of the two letters ‘kaf’ and ‘nun’. They have been translated by Shoghi Effendi in the above manner. This word has been used in the Qur'án as God’s bidding calling creation into being” (in Bahá'u'lláh, *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* note 188).

- 23 Thus might I ignite in the universe such a fire  
that it could consume the veils of the holy ones!
- 24 Thus would I disclose the *húrí*<sup>4</sup> of inner meaning from behind her veil  
and cast aside the cloak of the concealed light!
- 25 Since Thou hast returned with the Holy Spirit, I will explain  
an allusion from among the eternal mysteries.
- 26 O Bird of Fire,<sup>5</sup> make utterances so sweet  
that no attribute of existence will remain in our midst.
- 27 Purify these hearts so full of jealousy!  
Bestow worth to these counterfeit and useless coins,
- 28 O Generous One, so that those intoxicated by Thy Covenant  
might be made conscious by this ancient goblet of Thy wine.
- 29 O Friend of ours, with holy melodies  
remove from us both consciousness and unconsciousness!
- 30 O *Isráfil*<sup>6</sup> of Bahá, O Monarch of the Holy Spirit,  
proffer life to the lifeless ones!
- 31 The Primal Tree sprouted from a branch of the Heart!  
Sever it now from air, water, and clay
- 32 that it may be rescued from both essence and attributes,  
and that from its candle many suns may become enkindled.
- 33 Plant this Tree of Thine in the soil of the heart,  
then guard its sanctity from both light and shadow.

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4 Also spelled “*houri*,” they are the “white ones” or “pure ones” mentioned in the Qur’án as abiding in paradise. Bahá’u’lláh in the *Kitáb-i-Íqán* refers to them as the inner meaning of formerly concealed verses: “How many the *huris* of inner meaning that are as yet concealed within the chambers of divine wisdom!” (70). The word could thus allude to the “mystery” of inner or concealed meaning.

5 This could also be translated as “Bird of Intellect.”

6 “Believed to be the angel appointed to sound the trumpet on the Day of Resurrection to raise the dead at the bidding of the Lord” (in ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Selections* 8:3 note 1). “*Isráfil*” is the Judeo-Christian archangel “Raphael.”

- 34 Shield It as well from winds of discord,  
and liberate it from the vain imaginings of the infidel.
- 35 Make its roots become anchored in the soil of the Heart!  
Make its branch rise beyond the heavens!
- 36 Make a new spring become manifest again  
so that from Thy resurrection these lifeless ones will become revived.
- 37 The vitality of the Sea of Love deriveth from Thy vitality!  
The wisdom of the birds of eternity deriveth from Thy wisdom!
- 38 Make the perfume of (Joseph's) coat waft from the Egypt of the Soul!  
Make the (burning) bush of Moses become manifest here!
- 39 O Beauteous One, from Thy countenance the Spring hath arrived,  
and from this Spring, countless verities have appeared.
- 40 Within each blossom resides a book about the beauty of the Friend.  
Each stream is a Kawthar<sup>7</sup> of His benevolence!
- 41 Such a Spring is not followed by a fall.  
All the flowers circumambulate this Spring.
- 42 Nor is this Spring a season the mind can grasp!  
This is a Spring that resurrects lives!
- 43 That spring season inspires passion for entrancing ones,  
but this Spring inspires the love of God.
- 44 That spring is succeeded by annihilation,  
but the epithet for this Spring is "the Immortal."
- 45 That spring derives from the succession of seasons,  
but this Spring derives from the light of the Heart-Ravisher's face.
- 46 That spring brings forth tulips;  
this Spring brings forth lamentation.

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7 Arabic term meaning "abundance." We are using the original term here and elsewhere when, according to the Islamic tradition, the term refers to a river or body of water Muḥammad saw on his night journey to Paradise.

- 47 By the splendor of the King, this eternal Spring  
hath established a tabernacle that doth extend to the throne of God.
- 48 Behold, O discerning one, all have entered this tabernacle,  
if thou dost possess eyes to see.
- 49 When our King casteth aside the veil from His face,  
this Spring will pitch its tent upon the universe.
- 50 When our Friend casteth aside the veil from His face,  
the bright Spring will become emblazoned.
- 51 We are in the springtime because of His face!  
We will not avert our gaze from His face to admire a rose garden.
- 52 Because we speak of Him, we need not speak of (earthly) treasures.  
Because of His sun, we (too) shine forth in the world.
- 53 If a breeze wafteth from this sweet Spring,  
Thou wilt behold many Josephs coming into view.
- 54 Should a breeze waft from this garden,  
Thou wilt will behold many Josephs of the soul in the world.
- 55 Thou wilt see bodies transformed into spirits!  
Every instant a hundred types of victories will reach the soul.
- 56 Every instant this unsullied Spring of the Beloved  
Hath a hundred utterances to disclose, but where is a confidant?
- 57 This utterance is sanctified beyond language;  
these base ones will be unable to detect its meaning.
- 58 This utterance is devoid of words, speech, or sound!  
This utterance is life itself—death will never touch it.
- 59 In this spring thou canst behold lovers  
who have brought their lives to cast away—a hundred thousand every  
moment.

- 60 This is the exalted Spring of the Spirit!  
This is the Divine, Sanctified Spring.
- 61 If Sabá wafts a breeze to thee from this (Spring),  
thy mortal soul will imbibe from the goblet of immortality.
- 62 If a breeze should reach thee from the quarter of the Friend,  
sacrifice thy life for it, since life doth emanate from Him alone.
- 63 Behold the tulip of Oneness in this Spring!  
Behold the hyacinth of Sanctity in the tresses of the Friend.
- 64 The blossoms of knowledge on the side of the brook  
all eagerly search for Him.
- 65 Its cypress trees portend the stature of the Beloved.  
Its grasses unfold volumes about the cheek of the Friend.
- 66 Its nightingales are drunk from the goblet of “*am I not?*”  
Its turtle doves are drunk from the beauty of the Friend.
- 67 The philomels<sup>8</sup> in their longing for reunion with Him  
are all intoxicated by the zephyr of His grace.
- 68 If the melody of this Philomel<sup>9</sup> is sounded,  
Every soul will become cleansed of envy.
- 69 From this utterance did the sea of mystery begin to stir.  
From this benevolence the ark of existence did embark..
- 70 With each anemone this Spring bringeth forth  
a hundred verities bloom from the mysteries of the Friend.
- 71 Musk-laden fragrances waft from the tresses of the Friend.  
Abundance is constantly bestowed on thee from His benevolent hands.
- 72 Behold, the curls of His locks are like the flaming Phoenix  
encircling the fire from the face of the Friend.

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8 Nightingales.

9 The Friend, the Beloved, the Manifestation.



- 73 The Nightingale of Holiness laments at separation from the Friend  
that scalds the skin and sings the heart!
- 74 If it doth sigh but once from the pain of its separation,  
it will inflame the souls of the pure ones.
- 75 O Friend, out of mercy, remove not this generosity  
that no one but the pure can partake of.
- 76 From Thy Holy Spirit, diffuse the divine musk  
so that the base ones may catch the scent of Thy perfume.
- 77 This Springtime of the Holy Spirit is eternal,  
not like a spring that is followed by autumn.
- 78 From this Holy Spring, the spirit issues forth,  
and from its atmosphere the glory of Noah is manifest.
- 79 He will seat the people of the Ark onboard the ship,  
then bestow to each a hundred kinds of grandeur.
- 80 O Countenance of God, emerge from behind the veil  
so that the sun will dawn from the West.
- 81 Open the musk of divine knowledge!  
Disclose the treasure of the hidden mysteries
- 82 That these lifeless ones may catch the scent of Thy musk,  
That these unconscious ones may become giddy from Thy wine!
- 83 O Benevolent One, bestow upon this abject one in the land of loneliness  
the robe of splendor through Thy beneficence.
- 84 Adorn this mortal one with the robe of immortality!  
Permit this pure downtrodden soul to taste the honey of true riches
- 85 that he might emerge euphoric from behind the cover  
and rend asunder the veil of existence from the world of being,

- 86 that he may emerge intoxicated, oblivious of self,  
like a candle in the lamp of “*Unto God we shall return!*”<sup>10</sup>
- 87 Since this thorn sprouted in Thy rose garden,  
make a hundred rose gardens spring from it!
- 88 Inscribe for each rose garden a new name,  
and let each leaf reveal the mysteries of eternity
- 89 that the rays from Thy face might shine forth  
and Thy light brighten both earth and heaven.
- 90 O Generous One, through Thy Beneficence, unloose a wind  
to blow away the veils of ignorance from this afflicted one!
- 91 O Exalted King, provide refuge for these pure souls  
beneath the shade of Thy Divine Tree!<sup>11</sup>
- 92 Open Thou a Gate to the paradise of Divine realities!  
For the sake of God, close not this portal
- 93 that I may appear in the world unveiled  
and disclose a portion of the mystery about Thy loving kindness.
- 94 He said, “What?! Reveal not the mystery of God  
to the ignorant, O Fair One!
- 95 “Oh, no! Rather unveil the truth by degrees and be patient with the people,  
O Tongue of the Mystery of God,
- 96 “that perhaps Thy kindness may lend a helping hand  
to make them fearless and free from everyone else.
- 97 “Spread the wings of Divine meaning! Take flight!  
Hover in the atmosphere of His nearness!”

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10 “All men have proceeded from God and unto Him shall all return” (The Báb, *Selections* 157). Bahá'u'lláh has ordained that on the Bahá'í burial ring be inscribed “I came forth from God, and return unto Him, detached from all save Him, holding fast to His Name, the Merciful, the Compassionate” (Kitáb-i-Aqdas ¶ 129).

11 *Sadrih*, a reference to *Sadratu'l-Muntahá*, an Arabic term designating literally the “tree beyond which there is no passing,” and figuratively a symbol of the Manifestation. Also sometimes called the Divine or Sacred Lote Tree.

- 98      Nearness to Him can be attained only by the spirit, not with an earthly  
            journey!  
            If thou seekest with thy heart, thou canst gain admittance to the eternal  
            realm.
- 99      It would not be hard to traverse the spheres of existence in an instant  
            if thou couldst be among those who prostrate themselves.
- 100     To explain this, I will disclose to thee a subtle point  
            that thou mayest receive a portion from the water of life,
- 101     that thou mayest become aware of the paradise of eternity,  
            that thou mayest discern the path to the abode of the Divine Presence,
- 102     that thou mayest understand ‘*treading the earth*’ of meaning,<sup>12</sup>  
            that like the Spirit,<sup>13</sup> thou wouldst also soar in His heavenly realm.
- 103     Since now thou art mired in the mud,  
            how canst thou detect any fragrance from the paradise of the heart?
- 104     Therefore, cast off the garments of whatever constrains thee,  
            then purify the soul from all limitations.
- 105     Illumine the heart’s darkness with His light  
            that thou mayest become a Monarch in the kingdom of hearts.
- 106     When the darkness vanishes, His light becometh manifest.  
            The rays shine from His Sinai and illumine thy heart.
- 107     When thy nighttime hath passed, the morning will dawn,  
            and the exalted breeze of the spirit will blow.
- 108     And thou art this darkness and this insistent self.  
            The water of life is God’s effulgence.

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12      This is similar to the idea of “treading” or “traversing the earth of meaning” which seems to be a symbol of acquiring understanding of Divine Mysteries. See Qur’án 67:14-15. “Should He not know—He that created? And He is the One that understands the finest mysteries (and) is well-acquainted (with them). It is He Who has made the earth manageable for you, so traverse ye through its tracts and enjoy of the Sustenance which He furnishes, but unto Him is the Resurrection”

13      Most often “the Spirit” is an allusion to Christ.

- 109 If thou canst overcome this darkness from thyself,  
thou couldst effortlessly imbibe from the water of life.
- 110 Therefore, enter beneath the shadow of the Khiḍr of the Holy Spirit<sup>14</sup>  
that thou mayest become freed from this dark abode.
- 111 That Khiḍr drank it and was saved from dying.  
This Khiḍr bestows a myriad such fountains of life!
- 112 He bestowed the water of life to everyone  
and cast away His life for the Incomparable King.
- 113 That Khiḍr searched and found the fountain of life.  
From this Khiḍr a hundred fountains have appeared in an instant.
- 114 That Khiḍr pursued that fountain.  
Countless fountains flow in pursuit of this Khiḍr!
- 115 O Bahá of the Holy Spirit, return from tracking prey  
that Thou mayest capture a hundred thousand mysteries.
- 116 Let Gúr pursue the hunting of zebras!<sup>15</sup>  
Thou shouldst bring forth prey of mystic truths from the Sinai desert!
- 117 Upon the plains Thou hast hunted the lives of lovers  
until every life passed beyond the realm of existence.
- 118 O King of Creation, there is not time enough for Thee to recount  
the mysteries of the blossom to the nightingale.
- 119 O Beloved, make a royal falcon fly from Thine arm,  
that it might retrieve divine mysteries from that Realm.
- 120 Hunt now the Phoenix of inner mysteries!  
With the key of “*Kun!*” unlock a treasure!

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14 Khiḍr, also transcribed as Khezr, is the name of a legendary immortal saint, as well as a well-known figure in Islamic myth tradition. Though he is not mentioned by name in the Qur’án, this line seems to be an allusion to the story of Khiḍr finding the Water of Life and drinking from it as mentioned in Qur’án 18:62. The Qur’án 18:65–80 tells the story of Moses and Khiḍr.

15 Bahram V (421–438), one of the most well-known Persian kings, is recounted in many myths and is said to have been a great hunter, particularly of the zebra.

- 121 O Thou by Whose light the earth and heaven are illumined,  
fulfill now all that Thou hast promised!
- 122 Make the world so verdant with Thy springtime  
that Thy Garden will become the envy of Paradise itself.
- 123 Make the anemones of truth bloom in abundance  
in the space of this lush garden of the Holy Spirit.
- 124 Then from each flower make manifest the mystery of the nightingale.  
Recount confidentially to the rulers the story of the wine.
- 125 Since now strangers abide in this place,  
no distinction exists between the stranger and the confidant.
- 126 O gentle breeze of the morning, from the locks of the Friend  
bring forth the musk of the spirit.
- 127 O Cloud of spiritual munificence, let Thy rain pour down  
so that every shell may yield a pearl.
- 128 The elucidation of the divine mysteries had been withheld!  
The mention of "*traverse the land*" of meaning was abandoned!
- 129 Thus, thou who art drunk from the wine of pride,  
transform the fire of self into light
- 130 that in an instant thou mayest traverse the universe itself  
and become freed from the bondage of this cage.
- 131 Until thou dost abide beneath the shade of the Friend,  
thou wilt be unaware of both the wheat and the chaff.
- 132 The feet of thine inner being are mired in the mud!  
Thou art heedless of the rays shining from that beauteous Face.
- 133 When thou dost make thy abode the shelter of the Monarch of the Holy Spirit,  
then canst thou detach thy heart from the universe itself.
- 134 Though in the beginning thou art enmeshed in the earth,  
in an instant thou canst blaze out beyond the sun!

- 135 O wayfarer, know that in a flash thou wilt have traversed  
the spiritual realm of the Beloved without taking a single step.
- 136 Suddenly a scent from the perfumed land of the Holy Spirit  
drifted by rendering the whole world fragrant!
- 137 The musk of the Holy Spirit wafted again from that paradise of benevolence  
and vanquished everything in existence.
- 138 No distinction remained between consciousness and unconsciousness.  
Both drunkenness and sobriety vanished completely.
- 139 All conscious ones became annihilated, but neither did unconscious ones  
endure.  
The drunken ones became sober, but neither did sobriety itself endure.
- 140 Whatever traces of the names and customs of this world that remained  
vanished as soon as my King appeared.
- 141 If the (kingdom of) names ascended for centuries,  
it could not detect the scent of His (lofty) station.
- 142 O courageous one, He is sanctified beyond all that —  
whatever thine eyes have seen or thine ears have heard.
- 143 Then, O blind one, with such ears and eyes,  
how couldst thou become aware of the mystery of the Beloved?
- 144 Open new eyes to view the new Friend!  
Open new ears that thou mayest hear!
- 145 The eyes of the ignorant perceive no more than one step ahead.  
The eyes of the mystic knower discern the mysteries of eternity!
- 146 The eyes of the mystic knower can foresee the path of a hundred thousand  
years.  
The eyes of the ignorant are unable to detect the open road ahead!
- 147 A seeker once asked a mystic knower,  
“O thou who hast discovered the divine mysteries

- 148 “and thou who art intoxicated with the wine of mercy,  
perchance, dost thou recall the Day of *alast*?”
- 149 “Yes,” he replied. “I recall that voice and those utterances  
as if it were yesterday, but do not be surprised by this!
- 150 “Even now doth His melody echo in my ears,  
that wondrous, invigorating voice!”
- 151 Another mystic knower, who had journeyed even farther  
and who had pierced the pearls of God’s mysteries
- 152 said, “That Day of God did not end!  
We are still in that Day, for it hath not been shortened.
- 153 “His Day will continue, for no night will conclude it.  
Yet do we abide in that Day, but be not surprised at this! <sup>16</sup>
- 154 “Were this age deprived of His animating powers,  
the heavens and the earth would vanish!
- 155 “For it is through His power that the Eternal Day<sup>17</sup>  
hath become everlasting as decreed by that Great Being!
- 156 “Therefore, O my beloved one, hearken to this enigma!  
Be attentive to the guidance within the divine mysteries
- 157 “so that thy soul may be nourished by His wisdom  
and thou mayest sacrifice thy life for His countenance,
- 158 “so that at every instant thou couldst hear His melodies,  
that thou couldst imbibe a cup of His loving kindness,
- 159 “that thou couldst become aware of the mysteries of love,  
that thou couldst savor the wine of eternity from the streams of love.”

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16 Bahá’u’lláh states in the Surah of the Temple, “For the Day of God is none other but His own Self, Who hath appeared with the power of truth. This is the Day that shall not be followed by night, nor shall it be bounded by any praise, would that ye might understand!” (*Summons* 1:63).

17 *Yawm-i-Alast*.

- 160 I will not turn my face away from the sword of these ignoble ones,  
even should these faithless ones slay me a hundred times.
- 161 At the beginning of *alast*, my soul tasted Thy wine!  
Even so shall I surrender my life for Thee at the end.”
- 162 O Bahá, ignite once again a fire!  
Consume the world of scrutiny and erudition!
- 163 Cleanse the heart from all earthly attributes!  
Disclose an allusion from among the hidden mysteries!
- 164 Cast off a wave from the fathomless sea of spiritual verities  
so that Thou mayest shatter to pieces the ark of words.
- 165 Grant me a cup that I might be released from mine own self!  
Like Safdar,<sup>18</sup> I would rip apart all the veils.
- 166 Thou through Whose name the Tree of Existence hath borne its fruit,  
and from Whose hand the power of God doth appear,<sup>19</sup>
- 167 Thou Whose palm holdeth the destiny of the world itself,  
by Thy design is the world at first in motion, then is it still.
- 168 O Most Resplendent King, ignite this candle,  
then shed its light in every corner (of the world),
- 169 this very same flame Thou hast ignited  
and hast sheltered in the globe of Thy protection
- 170 and hast fueled with the oil of Thy bounty,  
and hast set aglow with the wick of Thy command,
- 171 and hast safeguarded from the winds of oppression  
so that from it the beams of Thy light might appear!

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18 “Fighter,” an allusion to Imám ‘Alí who was fearless in battle and broke through the ranks of the enemy.

19 Allusion to Moses withdrawing His hand from His robe.



- 172 O Moon of command and Monarch of “*Indeed!*”<sup>20</sup>  
restrain the hands of enemies from harming its flame!
- 173 Behold how Thy Candle is being afflicted  
in the midst of a whirlwind of calamities!
- 174 Since it hath received its light from rays that shine from Thine elegant  
beauty,  
let it not be dampened in the eyes of the world.
- 175 Since Thou didst enkindled it, forbear from extinguishing it!  
Since Thou didst endow it with consciousness, refrain from rendering it  
senseless!
- 176 O Thou Whose beneficence canst transform an atom into a sun,  
and Thou Whose anger canst transmute a lion into a sparrow,
- 177 O Thou Creator, from every corner the wind is blowing,  
whilst this Thy Candle is left to stand in the midst alone.
- 178 If Thou dost desire it, water will become a wildfire,  
and if Thou dost desire it, a conflagration will become a dying ember!
- 179 O Thou through Whose command a devil can become angelic,  
and by Whose command light emanateth from flames,
- 180 If Thou dost wish it so, a contrary wind will become like oil  
to invigorate the spirit and become a light!
- 181 “O Bahá’u’lláh, when Thy fire ignited,  
it consumed the crops of the lovers’ existence.

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20 “Indeed” (*innamá*), has been in Islamic texts an allusion to Muḥammad and to his son-in-law ‘Alí since the two following verses of the Qur’án that include this phrase are, respectively, references to Muḥammad and ‘Alí: “And the Unbelievers say! ‘Why is not a Sign sent down to Him from His Lord? But Thou art truly a warner and to every people a guide (13:7); “Your (real) friends are (no less than) Allah, His Messenger, and the (fellowship of) believers, those who establish regular prayers and regular charity, and they bow down humbly (in worship).” (5:55) This verse was revealed in relation to ‘Alí when, while he was bowing down in his prayer, he bestowed his ring on a poor beggar (Bahá’u’lláh, *Athár-i-Qalam-i-A’lá* 243 ).

- 182 “Thou didst cast a spark of fire into the hearts  
and thereby inflamed a hundred thousand trees in Sinai.
- 183 “Thus, from every heart did appear a myriad trees.  
O Moses, Thou must come here at once
- 184 “so that all may behold within thy hearts the fire of God’s mystery  
and all become released from the Caphtorites.<sup>21</sup>
- 185 “O Thou Who wast chosen to be slain for the love of God,  
turn not away from the field of sacrifice for love, but give Thy life in that  
path!
- 186 “Come to the quarter of the Friend, having offered up Thy head, Thy life  
itself,  
that Thou mayest prove worthy of those who dwell in this realm.
- 187 “O Spirit of God, Come! This is the valley of love!  
Whether by Thy Path or a byway, come with a cross!
- 188 “Ascend beyond the heavens and beyond the ascension of the body,  
O Thou Sovereign of the soul and source of the body’s felicity!
- 189 “Thou art the Nightingale of the spirit in the garden of spirit!  
Thou art returning again as Host of the Spirit!<sup>22</sup>
- 190 “O Royal Falcon of the Holy Spirit, Thy perch is the arm of the King.  
Come! Here is Thy true abode!
- 191 “Then, O Noah, Thou too shouldst shatter the ark of the body  
and cast Thyself into the Ocean of Light.
- 192 “Have no thought of safeguarding Thyself! Rather drown the self  
that Thou mayest then lift Thy head from the bosom of the Beloved.

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21 The people of one part of Egypt where the Hebrews were captives. The contemporary word *Copt* derives from this term, though today Copts most usually refers to the Coptic Christians of Egypt.

22 “Host” here calls to mind Christ’s symbolism at the last supper regarding the bread representing His body, even as Bahá’u’lláh’s *Surah of the Temple* symbolically constructs the mortal frame through which the Holy Spirit will become available to humankind.

- 193 “Beseech protection from the Sovereign and not from the ark  
that Thou mayest abide within the protection of the Sovereign.
- 194 “O Moses, Thou too must come to the Sinai of the soul!  
Forget about sandals and clothes! Come naked
- 195 “that Thou canst understand the secrets of fire  
since these flames radiate from the tresses of the Friend!
- 196 “His locks are fires that singe the very heart and soul of love,  
(that) consume faith and faithlessness and the tranquility of love!
- 197 “His flowing locks are the fire that pranceth atop Parán!  
Indeed, the neck of the age will be bent by a single strand of that hair!
- 198 “O Dove, cease warbling about the mysteries of fire!  
Display not pearls of the Holy Spirit before these blind ones!
- 199 “This Rod is a sword with which the hand of God  
severeth the armies of existence as easily as tearing a page.
- 200 “That rod grew from a tree in the garden,  
but this Rod appeareth by the command of God.
- 201 “That rod appeared from water and clay,  
But this Rod appeareth now from the fire of the heart.
- 202 “This Rod is a fire whose flames  
consume the veils of malice and hate.
- 203 “This Rod is a wind which, among the tribe of Húd,  
distinguisheth between believers and infidels.
- 204 “This Rod became an ark in the Day of Noah.  
This Rod also became a spirit in the Day of Jesus.
- 205 “O Moses, Thy fire flamed out from the Holy Spirit  
so that all might approach the *Túr* of the Holy Spirit.

- 206 “Sandals? Leave behind Thy life and faith!<sup>23</sup>  
Like a breeze, fly above the realm of the living!
- 207 “O Bird of the Holy Spirit, soar beyond the mortal realm  
into the eternal festival of those blossoming faces.
- 208 “From His Bush, the fire of Moses was made manifest!  
The spirit of a hundred Christs wafted from His breath.
- 209 “The fire of that Moses appeared from *Túr*,  
whilst the flames of the fire of this Moses emanate from the Holy Spirit.
- 210 “There are as many differences between the mountain and the Holy Spirit  
as there are distinctions between the leaves and the fruit.
- 211 “Sinai is His breast! Its fire is the light of the Friend!  
The luminous palm is His palm! The *Túr* is His heart!<sup>24</sup>
- 212 “This luminescence is not that which hath appeared from Command;  
this is that luminescence that causeth Command itself to appear.”
- 213 At this time, the Parán of Love appeared  
because our Friend tore the veil from His face.
- 214 Suddenly my nostrils detected the scent of the Holy Spirit!  
I know not from whence it wafted so ceaselessly.
- 215 Only this much I know—that blowing from the flowing locks of the Friend  
a fragrance urgeth one to offer up his life.
- 216 The divine musk sac became unsealed!  
Our souls became intimate with remembrance of Him!

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23 This is an allusion to the command by the voice of the Holy Spirit emanating from the burning bush that Moses remove His sandals. See Exodus 3:5 and Qur’án 20:12. Also see Bahá’u’lláh’s note for line 8 of “Ode of the Dove” for an interpretation of the symbolic meaning of these verses in “Qaṣīdiy-i-Izz-i-Varqá’íyyih (Ode of the Dove),” *The Journal of Bahá’í Studies* vol. 29, no. 3, pp. 59–61.

24 This is a “sign” God ordains Moses to perform to demonstrate His power to Pharaoh. See Exodus 4:6-7 and most clearly in Qur’án 7:106-8: “(Pharaoh) said, ‘If indeed thou hast come with a sign, show it forth, if thou tellest the truth.’”

- 217 O wind of the supernal morn, blow!  
Blow from the Sabá of divine holiness
- 218 so that from thy fragrant ambergris, the intoxicated souls  
will take flight from earthly existence to the realm of *alast!*
- 219 When the immortal Phoenix flew from the Mountain of the Holy Spirit  
to the firmament of the realm of the placeless,
- 220 it traversed the four corners of the world in one flight  
through the grace of that Sovereign Soul.
- 221 From the throne of the Friend it hath now returned!  
Its melodies are beyond counting.
- 222 From the flower of His face, winter became like spring,  
and from His ruby lips the night became like midday.
- 223 The affairs of lovers became as entangled as His ringlets!  
Because of such separation, every loved one supplicated Him.
- 224 The lariat of His locks lassoed the necks of the heroes!  
Even the Warrior of God<sup>25</sup> was afflicted from being struck by His arrow.
- 225 Because of His lips, the lips of lovers grew pale and lifeless,  
and the lives of monarchs longed for reunion with Him.
- 226 If thou dost look carefully, thou wilt will discern how His face  
hath caused the eyes of the spirit to brighten.
- 227 If His eyes did not appear in the world,  
how could the springs of light begin to flow?
- 228 From His blossom countless gardens appeared,  
and from His countenance have sprung bouquets of inner meaning.
- 229 The fire of Moses seeketh light from His quarter!  
The soul of Jesus seeketh spirit from His face!

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25 An allusion to 'Alí, the cousin and son-in-law of Muḥammad.

- 230 If one night He should appear from behind the veil,  
He would make a hundred worlds as bright as the sun.
- 231 The night is naught but the tresses of that Beloved.  
Morning appeareth solely from the light of the face of the Friend.
- 232 All the monarchs in the city of Love  
are offering up their lives as a sacrifice for Love.
- 233 In His face, the face of God is seen,  
and from His lips the heart imbibed the wine of the spirit.
- 234 The whole world is entangled in His hair,  
and hearts are broken for Him.
- 235 When the Zuleykhá of Beauty beheld that face,  
she cut her heart instead of her hand.<sup>26</sup>
- 236 When He exhaled a single breath from His spirit,  
a hundred thousand spirits of Jesus came into being.
- 237 O thou who possesseth attributes, this is no description of Him,  
but merely a description of the Light from which thine own life  
doth emanate.
- 238 If thou couldst comprehend how to portray His beauty,  
thou wouldst surpass thousands of oceans of allusion.
- 239 O pious one, if it is such a task to describe a single ray of (His) light,  
how much more would be required to describe His Essence?
- 240 When the eyes of the lover beheld the beauty of His face,  
the lover became detached from both this world and the next.
- 241 The vibrations of the oceans of love doth derive from His wave.  
The soaring of the phoenixes of love doth derive from His flight.

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<sup>26</sup> Zuleykhá was the wife of Joseph's master (Potiphar in Genesis and "the Vizier" in the Qur'án) in Egypt. She tried to seduce the young prophet. See Qur'án for the complete story of how she arranged a banquet in which women cut their hands with knives out of their lust for Joseph (12:4-102).

- 242 Since thine eyes have found their light in His eyes,  
how unseemly it would be to glance at any other but Him!
- 243 Since the eyes of the soul received their light from Him,  
it would be pitiful for them to behold another.
- 244 Thine eyes emanated from the eyes of God  
so that thou wouldst behold in the world nothing except His face.
- 245 O friend, I have unfolded this counsel in veiled terms.  
Secretly did I pierce this pearl, O kind companion,
- 246 so that malicious eyes might not gaze upon His countenance,  
so that the stranger might not find the path to His quarter.
- 247 In like manner, know this about all thy limbs and members  
so that thou mayest be released from the captivity of such dark ones:
- 248 When thine ear caught the melody of His mystery,  
it hearkened to the cherished mysteries of His instrument.
- 249 Because the new Divine Creation hath now appeared,  
regard not the people of this world, but only Him.
- 250 If thou couldst behold the world through His eyes,  
thou wouldst discover thousands of kingdoms of understanding.
- 251 His eyes behold naught but His (own) face!  
His bird flieth nowhere except to His (own) quarter.
- 252 The hearts of the lovers were consumed with fire from reunion with Him,  
and the fire of hearts was ignited by separation from Him.
- 253 Thus, my son, doth the lover burn who hath lost both head and heart,  
whether from separation or from reunion with Him.
- 254 Wherefore shouldst thou consider God's love as thy companion  
that thou mayest take flight from the bondage of this world.
- 255 Love compelleth thee to annihilate thy life,  
to toss thy life and heart into the realm of the eternal.

- 256 Hearken, therefore, to the mystery of this verity, if thou canst but comprehend it,  
so that thou mayest soar to the Divine Summit,
- 257 so that the yield of thy date palm may be spiritual,  
so that its fruit may be holy and effulgent.
- 258 O breeze, bring forth the fragrance from His flowing locks!  
O cloud, shower but a drop of His bounteousness
- 259 so that the meadows of the souls of His lovers  
may blossom with resplendent tulips of love.
- 260 This lover's heart is the throne of God  
once it becometh sanctified from the limits of "*other than Him*."<sup>27</sup>
- 261 When His house became inhabited by His love,  
He entered in and the house became insignificant.<sup>28</sup>
- 262 Know this, that His house is not of stone or clay.  
O youth, His house is nothing other than the heart.<sup>29</sup>
- 263 Once thy heart is cleansed by His light,  
it becometh His mansion, because it becometh His *Túr*.
- 264 When the lover's *House of God* becomes perfected,  
it showeth forth perpetually the splendor of the Beloved.
- 265 Love arrived once more. It did set aflame the veil of logic,  
and the harvest of mystic understanding, knowledge, and erudition were  
burned.<sup>30</sup>

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27 A phrase used in the Qur'án in a number of verses to caution the believer not to rely on any god, protector, or refuge other than God. See Qur'án 7:3; 12:70; 13:16; 18: 14, 15, 26, and 27.

28 Possibly an allusion to the appearance of the Manifestation in the form of a human temple, as portrayed, for example, in Bahá'u'lláh's Surah of the Temple. His power comes from His essential reality, not from the physical apparatus or human temple in which He appears among humankind.

29 Compare Persian Hidden Word 27: "All that is in heaven and earth I have ordained for thee, except the human heart, which I have made the habitation of My beauty and glory."

30 Compare "In this city the heaven of ecstasy is upraised and the world-illuminating



- 266 O son, since none save Him abideth in the house,  
consider everything from corner to corner as His to command.
- 267 Once thou dost regard thine own eyes and ears and hands as His,  
it is He Who seeth and He Who graspeth.
- 268 The mystic's heart is His Most Remote Mosque.<sup>31</sup>  
It is the treasure-house of the mysteries of His "or even closer."<sup>32</sup>
- 269 A new resolution should now be devised  
to which thou shouldst hearken with heart and soul:
- 270 Pass beyond separation and reunion, both of them,  
so that thou wilt arrive at the loftiest heights of Truth, O son.
- 271 So long as thou art separated, thou art surely burning!  
If thou dost become reunited, thou wilt also become feverish and ill!
- 272 Step into the hallowed realm of eternity,  
that expanse where all else but Him is annihilated.
- 273 If thou hast read the *ḥadīth* of *There was God . . .*<sup>33</sup>  
and if thou hast seen the allusion "There is none except Him,"<sup>34</sup>

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sun of yearning shineth, and the fire of love is ablaze; and when the fire of love is ablaze, it burneth to ashes the harvest of reason" (Bahá'u'lláh, *Call of the Divine Beloved* 2:7).

31 Literally, the Al Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem that is constructed on the site from which, according to Moslem belief, Muhammad ascended to Paradise on His "Night Journey" or *Al Isrá*. Figuratively, the Qur'án portrays this as a spiritual condition: "Glory to (Allah) Who did take His Servant for Journey by night from the Sacred Mosque to the Farthest Mosque, whose precincts We did Bless—in order that We might show Him some of Our Signs: for He is the One Who heareth and seeth (all things)" (17:1).

32 A reference to Muḥammad's night journey from the Most Remote Mosque to the highest summits of the heavens, as close as he was permitted to get to God: "He was taught by one mighty in Power, endued with Wisdom, for he [Gabriel] appeared (in stately form) while he was in the highest part of the horizon. Then He approached and came closer, and was at a distance of but two bow-lengths or (even) closer. Thus did (Allah) convey inspiration to His Servant" (53:5–10).

33 According to a tradition, when Muḥammad was asked where God was before creation, He is said to have responded that "God was there. He is now just as He has always been." See Qur'án 57:3: "He is the First and the Last, the Evident and the Immanent, and He has full knowledge of all things."

34 "Say: He is Allah, the One and Only; Allah, the Eternal, Absolute. He begetteth

- 274 then set thy feet of earnestness on this path  
that thou mayest be relieved of “reunion with” and “separation from” the  
Friend.
- 275 When thou knowest for certain the secrets of the heart—  
that there is nothing in existence save God—
- 276 then with the water of the spirit, cleanse thy soul from impurities  
that thou mayest behold the splendor of that Pure One,
- 277 that thou mayest be able to discern reunion in the absolute reunion,  
that thou mayest behold the light of beauty within thine (own) heart.
- 278 This is a reunion for which there is no comparison!  
Nay, it will endure no separation afterward!
- 279 Son, thine understanding of reunion and separation is but idolatry.  
If only thou hadst ears to hear a father’s advice.
- 280 Like the phoenix, take flight from these two hills and ascend  
to the heavens of the oneness of the power of God.
- 281 But I fear lest thy feet should slip  
and idle fancies impair thy judgment.
- 282 Thus is it needful that I elucidate this theme  
to pull out by the roots any hesitation of thy heart
- 283 so that thou wilt not fall prey to pride because of this utterance  
and wilt be released from all selfishness, swagger, mischief, and rebellion.
- 284 Regard His reunion as the splendor of His Glory  
which hath become manifest in thee without questions or quibbling.
- 285 His light is His trust in thee!  
Strive that it might become manifest!
- 286 Wherefore, my beloved, search within thyself for union with Him  
that from this point forth thou wilt endure no separation from the Friend.

- 287 Indeed, thou thyself art the storehouse of divine treasures,  
but being oblivious, thou hast pursued these (earthly riches).
- 288 So long as His attributes are not manifest in thee,  
consider thyself as separated and lost.
- 289 O prudent one, through His benevolence, He deprived thee not  
of His names and attributes and signs.
- 290 Out of His munificence He opened wide the portals for thee.  
Close not these doors as did the Pharisees.
- 291 Since from love thou hast heard the lamentation of the flute,  
then through love must thou now recognize Him.
- 292 Since thou hast heard the sound of the flute, then observe the Flutist  
that thou mayest in no wise be heedless of the Sovereign Lord.
- 293 Because the Flutist observed strangers in the world,  
He chose the flute to conceal Himself.
- 294 Thus shouldst thou quickly rend this veil of thine  
that in this world thou mayest behold none other than the Player of the  
Flute.
- 295 Like the Valiant One,<sup>35</sup> tear asunder all the veils  
that thou mayest behold the resplendence of the All-Bounteous One.
- 296 Like a reed flute, sing out in separation  
so that the Player of the Flute might come nigh.
- 297 When the Flutist of the soul beginneth to cry out,  
the breasts of the lovers become agitated.
- 298 Indeed, with this flute, ignite a fire  
that will burn away any mention of “self” in this world.
- 299 When in this world the mention of self is consumed by fire,  
naught but the Flute itself remaineth in our midst.

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35 An adjective used as an allusion to ‘Ali’s prowess as a warrior.

- 300 O learned one, when by His light thine eyes are discerning,  
then wilt thou behold naught but the Player of the Flute.
- 301 Therefore, listen to the secrets disclosed by the Flutist  
so that thou canst detect the fragrance of these rose-gardens.
- 302 A single spark from the fire of His love became ignited.  
It consumed the crops of an entire kingdom.
- 303 When His countenance caused the curtains to be withdrawn from His face,  
the curtains of the glory of kings were torn asunder.
- 304 When an arrow from the lashes of the Beloved struck,  
it tore to pieces the heart of the king.
- 305 Instantly, it made the crown of the king tumble from his head!  
He became a thrall, then bound and fettered!
- 306 Like prey, he fell into the hands of a hunter,  
or like straw he was swept away by the force of a wind.
- 307 If a messenger were travelling towards Iraq,  
he would describe the pain of separation and remoteness,
- 308 how the souls of the yearning ones burned because of remoteness from Thee,  
how the arrows of separation from Thee sewed together the breasts of the kings.
- 309 O city of the heart, between thee and us  
there exist hundreds of thousands of lofty mountains.
- 310 There is no messenger except for sighs filled with sparks,  
nor is there a wind from *Sabá* to convey the news.
- 311 The (arm) is too short for the hand to reach the fruit of His tree.  
From His separation, the soul caused oceans to flow from the eyes.
- 312 O Sabá, from the presence of the Beloved,  
hasten joyfully to the quarter of the people of Zawr',<sup>36</sup>

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36 Baghdad, though Bahá'u'lláh says the following about the tradition of Zawrá':  
"In the 'Rawḍiy-i-Kafi' it is related of Mu'avíyih, son of Vahháb, that Abu-'Abdi'lláh hath

- 313 and ask, "O City of God,<sup>37</sup>  
how wert thou able to exist when thy friend departed from thy side?"
- 314 Thy friend is tormented, confined, and imprisoned,  
like Husayn in the land of Karbilá.
- 315 There is only one Husayn, but hundreds of thousands of Yazíds,<sup>38</sup>  
only one friend but hordes of detestable fiends.
- 316 Like Moses in the midst of the Egyptians,  
or like the Spirit of God<sup>39</sup> in the midst of Jews,
- 317 Like Joseph, he hath fallen in the well,  
but a bottomless well that hath no means of escape.
- 318 In the cage, thy nightingale hath become tormented,  
and because of this cage, it can no longer breathe.

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spoken: 'Knowest thou Zawrá'?' I said: 'May my life be a sacrifice unto thee! They say it is Baghdád.' 'Nay,' he answered. And then added: 'Hast thou entered the city of Rayy?', to which I made reply: 'Yea, I have entered it.' Whereupon, He enquired: 'Didst thou visit the cattle-market?' 'Yea,' I answered. He said: 'Hast thou seen the black mountain on the right-hand side of the road? The same is Zawrá'. There shall eighty men, of the children of certain ones, be slain, all of whom are worthy to be called caliphs.' 'Who will slay them?' I asked. He made reply: 'The children of Persia!' (Kitáb-i-Íqán ¶ 276)

37 Bahá'u'lláh's epithet for Baghdad and Tehran. Here, it is most probably meant as a reference to Baghdad during the time of Bahá'u'lláh's self-imposed exile from the Bahá'í community.

38 Yazíd was the Umayyad Caliph who, in the year 680, sent his soldiers to slaughter descendants of Muḥammad who refused to recognize Yazíd as calif. On the plains of Karbilá, Husayn and all his supporters were killed, a seminal event and sacred place for *Shí'ih* Islam.

39 Jesus.

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