

In Spring of 2017, I noticed that Frank Lewis’s provisional translation of The Blessed Mathnaví on bahai-library.com was unrhymed. Knowing how musical and lyrical the Persian language is, I wanted to see if this poem could be rendered in English in rhyming couplets, like the original. So I began to experiment with a few lines, found it fascinating, and soon became immersed in the ocean of magically resonating words and meanings, of divine light and spirit, that became the most engaging, enlightening, and amazing experience of my life. My initial work was posted on bahai-library.com April 4, 2024. This second edition reflects the changes that I have made to the translation since then, as I have, over the past two years, discovered many ways to improve the cadence, the accuracy, and the overall quality of what was my first attempt to translate a work of this scope and magnitude from Persian into English. I sincerely hope this provisional translation will help the English-speaking world to learn about this extraordinary work of art and come to love and cherish it as much as I do — this wonderfully illuminating and tenderly moving poem — this gem that glistens so beautifully amid the Sacred Writings of Bahá’u’lláh.
— K. L. M.

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Bahá’u’lláh’s Mathnaví

K. Morton / May 2026

Introduction

If you had a very important message to give to the world, how would you make it known? You’d probably use the internet and the English language — right? But what if it’s 1863, and you are in the Middle East? And there is no electricity in people’s homes. Candles and oil lamps are used at night. There are no cars, trains, or planes. People travel long distances in slow-moving caravans

and ships at sea. And there are no post offices, telegrams, or copy machines. Also no telephones, radio, T.V., news networks, computers, or internet. And there is no universally spoken language. What language would you use?

Perhaps you could start getting your message out by asking the local newspaper to print it. You are presently in Baghdad, a city that does not yet have a newspaper, but you'll be leaving that city soon, on a caravan, and in a few months you'll be in a city that has recently begun printing a paper. However, the city you are traveling to is Constantinople (today's Istanbul), the Seat of the Caliphate of the Ottoman Empire, and the newspaper there will probably not print your message, since its content will be considered highly controversial and unorthodox. Besides, it will be very difficult for you to communicate with the editors, because you don't speak the Turkish language. You speak only Persian and Arabic, and you will need an interpreter.

Even if the newspaper prints your message, its content will so upset the Islamic religious leaders of the city, that they will, in all likelihood, declare you a heretic and incite an angry mob to come and murder you. They will drag you into the street, yelling wildly and cursing you. And they will strip you naked, spit in your face, beat you, whip you, cut your hands off, cut your feet off, and finally behead you and throw your head and body parts into a ravine on the edge of the city for the wolves to eat.

Yes, dear reader, you will be in a city under strict Islamic rule, without freedom of speech or freedom of religion. And although many people will be happy and excited to receive your wonderful message and grateful to you for delivering it, some of the most powerful men in the region, characterized by their pompous arrogance and their selfish egotism, will want to kill you. They will vehemently denounce and reject the message you bring. And you.

Imagining the above scenario will, I hope, help us all to understand the situation of Bahá'u'lláh at the beginning of His Mission, in April 1863, when the authorities had issued an order for Him

to leave Baghdad and travel to Constantinople. He was a political prisoner in the grip of His enemies, but He knew that He was the long-awaited Promised One of All Religions, Whose coming had been foretold in all the Scriptures, and that He was to deliver a fresh outpouring of Divine Guidance that would transform human life on the planet. But how to announce this to the world? Knowing full well His important Station and Mission, and the need to communicate it, He penned a poem in the form of a Persian mathnaví, with His announcement embedded in it. And thus He wrote, for all the world, The Blessed Mathnaví.

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But why a mathnaví? And what is a mathnaví? A classical Persian mathnaví is a lengthy poem that has been recited before live audiences, over and over, again and again, down through the years in the Persian culture. And, like a national anthem, through repetition it has become rmly xed in all the people's hearts and minds, and is an integral part of their shared national identity. Since the rhythmic, rhyming verses of a Persian mathnaví are memorized so easily, its catchy couplets and memes become part of mainstream thought and vocabulary, and the verses serve as a unifying agent in society. From His Writings, we know that Bahá'u'lláh envisioned the future world with a universally spoken language. Surely He must have foreseen the time when His Mathnaví will have been translated into the one language that everyone speaks and understands. At that time, it will be recited all over the world, and it will unite the hearts of all peoples as it is listened to and loved, repeatedly, generation after generation, for centuries to come.

The mathnaví [pronounced: MASS nah VEE] consists of precisely rhymed and metered couplets,

80-100 couplets minimum, an aa/bb/cc/dd rhyme scheme, 22 syllables per couplet, and it has a distinctive opening section. The mathnaví has been traditionally used primarily for historic epic narratives and always conveys profound philosophical truths about human nature and life in general through: the skillful use of metaphors and figurative language; references to symbolic legendary figures; interwoven and echoing themes; illustrative stories, parables, and allegories; and other literary devices, including comical and sometimes very subtle satire; irony; paradoxes; hyperbole; twists and turns; koan-like riddles; and the playful use of multiple meanings of words. The mathnaví is entertaining, educational, thought-provoking, and soul-stirring.

It has been said that mathnavís are in the DNA of Persians. The masterful recital of them is a long-standing oral tradition in Persian culture. Much-loved mathnavís and epic poems — such as Rumi's Mathnaví Ma'naví and Ferdowsi's Shahnameh — as well as poetry in general, flow perpetually through Persia like streams of life-giving water, nourishing the soul of a nation. Two of Persia's greatest poets, Háfez and Saadi, who were both from Shiraz, are treated as saint-figures, as national heroes. They are honored with marble shrines that have been built over raised sarcophagi lovingly sculptured and engraved in memory of them. These shrines are set in large beautiful formal gardens with wide paved avenues for visitors to stroll amid tall cypresses, turquoise reflecting pools, singing nightingales, and the intoxicating scent of roses in bloom.

And mathnavís are recited everywhere — in coffee houses, on street corners, in parks, homes, picnics and private gatherings, and on television, radio, and YouTube. Each individual recitation is important and listened to most carefully, because each one is unique, as each person's voice gives the mathnaví his or her own particular pitch, tone, intensity, and subtle inflections as it is recited. Mathnavís are traditionally recited mainly in a monotone, so the slightest departure from the monotone is noticed immediately by the attentive listener and will raise the eyebrows, dimple

the cheeks, or cause a few teardrops to fall. The mathnaví is a type of performance art, of staged theatre and drama. I strongly urge all Western readers to learn more about the Persian mathnaví in order to appreciate the genius, the majesty, and the potency of Bahá'u'lláh's Mathnaví.

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Also, knowing some of the historical events in the life of Bahá'u'lláh that took place both before and during the time He wrote The Blessed Mathnaví will help in reading and understanding this work and many of the references and allusions that appear in it. Some events are described in the footnotes. Other events the reader should know about are summarized as follows:

Nineteen years before He wrote The Blessed Mathnaví, when Bahá'u'lláh was 26 and living in Tehran, in the north-central part of His native country of Persia (Iran), a new religion came into being in Shiraz, a city to the south of Tehran. It spread rather quickly and caused a great stir. Its Founder, a descendant of Prophet Muhammad, had declared that a New Age had begun, and that the Promised One of All Religions would soon come, with a Revelation far greater than His own. He made it abundantly clear that His own Revelation was to prepare people to recognize and accept the Promised One when He appeared, and He frequently referred to the Promised One as "Him Whom God shall make manifest".

The country's Islamic leaders were alarmed and angered by the rapid growth of

this new religion
and by its tenets. It promoted the equality of men and women. And it had no
clergy. It prescribed
universal education, so that all people can read and understand the Scriptures
for themselves. The
enraged clergy were threatened by this, labeled it heresy, and wanted to bring
it to an end. So
they influenced government officials to arrest, imprison, and finally, in 1850,
execute before a
firing squad this new religion's Founder, known as The Báb [pronounced: BOB, a
title meaning:
"The Gate."] Despite the martyrdom of The Báb, the religion continued to
grow. Hatred for it
also grew, fueled by the fiery sermons of the Islamic clergy in the mosques, and
in a short time,
over 20,000 followers of The Báb were killed by means of unspeakably cruel
methods of torture,
beheadings, and the wholesale slaughter of innocent men, women, and children .

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Bahá'u'lláh was a dignified nobleman from a distinguished family that
traced its ancestry back to
Persian kings, Prophet Zoroaster, Abraham, and the House of David. His manners
were refined
and gentle, His voice mild, and He was known for His warmth, generosity, and
upright moral
character. He was also recognized for His exceptionally brilliant mind. And He
was sympathetic
to The Báb's cause, associated with its supporters, and was well respected
for His profound
understanding of The Báb's writings and teachings. One summer day in 1852,
in the midst of the
genocidal fever sweeping the country, Bahá'u'lláh was arrested, paraded
in a most humiliating
manner through the streets, and then incarcerated in a foul-smelling
underground dungeon in
Tehran, infamously known as the "Síyáh Chál", or the "Black Pit" of
Tehran. He was bound in
chains to others, and a heavy steel collar was locked into place around His
neck, a collar that dug
into His skin and scarred Him for life. Years later, He related that, one night
in that prison, He
beheld a vision of an angel suspended in the air above Him, pointing toward His
Head and
calling out to all in heaven and earth, saying: "By God! This is the
Best-Beloved of the worlds...
[this is]...the Beauty of God amongst you, and the power of His sovereignty

within you, could ye
but understand. This is the Mystery of God and His Treasure, the Cause of God
and His Glory
unto all who are in the kingdoms of Revelation and creation, if ye be of them
that perceive”.

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Just as the Holy Spirit came to Jesus in the form of a beautiful Dove, to
Prophet Muhammad as
Gabriel's Voice in the cave, and to Moses as the Voice coming from the Fire
in the Burning Bush,
the Holy Spirit came before Bahá'u'lláh as a luminous Maiden of Heaven,
announcing Him to be
The Promised One of All Ages, All Religions, and All Nations.

Bahá'u'lláh spent four months in that pitch-black, vermin-infested hole,
on the cold, damp oor
in chains. He was on the list of prisoners to be executed by ring squad, and
was awaiting His
turn, when the Russian Consul in Tehran intervened and asked the government of
cials to spare
this nobleman's life, since He had committed no crime. The of cials
reluctantly agreed to this,
but only on condition that He leave Persia and never return. Thus,
Bahá'u'lláh was exiled from
His homeland. He chose to go to Iraq, but rst spent one month recovering from
the wounds and
infections and the debilitating experience of that imprisonment. In January of
1853, having partly
regained His strength, Bahá'u'lláh and His family undertook, under escort
and in extremely cold
temperatures, a very dif cult three-month journey from Tehran to Baghdad by
caravan over the
Zagros mountains. The caravan and its exhausted band of travelers arrived in
Baghdad April 8.

Bahá'u'lláh would live in Iraq for ten years.

Although Bahá'u'lláh was placed under house arrest in Baghdad, He was given considerable freedom of movement. In the late afternoons, He would go to the local coffeehouse, where He would engage in conversations with the men. He made more than one trip to the nearby City of Karbala, where He visited the Shrine of Imam Husayn. And He spent some time living among the Kurds in the mountainous Province of Sulaymaniyah, where He gained a reputation for being a kind, gentle-mannered, soft-spoken dervish who had deep knowledge of the Scriptures and of a wide range of topics. He beautifully explained the hidden meanings of the perplexing verses in both The Bible and Quran, and He showed masterful skills in calligraphy and in writing poetry in a variety of styles. In Baghdad, His advice was often sought in matters that were of great concern to individuals. His wisdom, compassion, fairness, and problem-solving ability were unmatched, and He became known as The Wonderful Counselor.

During the ten years that Bahá'u'lláh lived in Iraq, He came to love the people there, and they came to know and love Him. Baghdad began to feel like home to Him. He was naturally quite saddened when, in April of 1863, government officials ordered Him to leave Baghdad and go to Constantinople (today's Istanbul), which was, at the time, the Capital of Turkey and the Seat of the Ottoman Empire. He and His family spent twelve days preparing for the caravan journey.

During that time, He announced to a small number of trusted people closest to Him that He was the Promised One, the One whom The Báb had said would appear in the near future. This was The Great Announcement that scholars and all of the religious faithful in the world — Muslims, Christians, and others — had been eagerly anticipating and awaiting. Although made quietly and privately, Bahá'u'lláh's Declaration was an unparalleled and momentous event in human history. The Promised One of All Ages, All Religions, and All Nations had come at last.

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The preparations were made for Bahá'u'lláh's departure from Baghdad.

The caravan was ready.

At noon on the third day of May, 1863, a large number of people gathered around Him to bid

Him farewell. Many were seen openly weeping from the thought of being separated from Him.

No longer would they be able to hear His voice or see His radiant face, or behold His gracious

and loving manners, or ask Him for guidance or to explain the passages in the Quran. As the

caravan left, some of them accompanied it on foot and followed it for some time out of the City,

wanting to stay close to their Friend, their Beloved One, for as long as they could. We can only

guess at the mixed emotions Bahá'u'lláh must have been feeling. Surely, it was heart-breaking to

be forced to leave a land and a people He had grown to love. Yet He was excited and eager to

carry out His Mission, which had just begun. However, He was facing an unknown destiny now,

as He was traveling to Constantinople, heading into the hands of His most powerful enemies.

Bahá'u'lláh arrived in Constantinople on August 16, 1863, and He remained in that City for three

and a half months, a political prisoner under strict house arrest. Turkey was a country foreign to

Him. He did not speak Turkish and needed an interpreter to communicate with His captors, who

were trying to convince Bahá'u'lláh to give up His claim to be The Promised One, which He

refused to do. In Turkey He was surrounded by a culture that was dominated by the cult-like Su

fraternal orders and the plaintive, melancholy moaning of the pipe, the Persian ney. It was a dark

and depressing atmosphere. And it was fall. As the nights grew longer, He

became aware that His
heartless, evil-spirited half brother, Yahyá, out of jealousy and desire for
power and leadership,
wanted to kill Him. Baha’u’llah’s life was in grave peril, and His future
was uncertain. He knew
that He could suddenly be murdered, as He awaited further decision-making from
all the men
who had control over Him — both Persian and Turkish, both Shi’a and Sunni,
both government
officials and Islamic religious leaders — who were all trying to figure out what
to do with Him
and His unorthodox heretical claims and ever-growing popularity, and the very
real possibility of
a new religion coming into the world — a religion without any clergy.

It was during this dark stressful period in Turkey that Bahá’u’lláh
finished writing His Mathnaví.

Scholars are not completely certain of the date when Bahá’u’lláh
commenced writing this poem.

Some think that He may have begun it in Baghdad, in the Spring of 1863. (This
might not be

relevant, but in the first quarter of the poem, the word “spring” and its
plural “springs” appear 28

times, and in the last three quarters of the poem, the words “spring” and
“springs” are not used at

all.) Although it is not known exactly when Bahá’u’lláh began writing the
poem, it seems He

may have quickly concluded it on, or shortly after, December 1, 1863, because
on that day the

Ottoman government authorities suddenly ordered Him to leave Constantinople
within 24 hours.

This may explain the poem’s somewhat abrupt and extremely suspenseful ending.

What happened to Bahá’u’lláh after Constantinople — after He wrote The
Blessed Mathnaví?

And what has become of the Bahá’í Faith? Bahá’u’lláh was banished
from Constantinople and

sent under armed escort to Adrianople (today’s Edirne, Turkey), where He
lived under house

arrest for four and a half years. In Adrianople, more than one attempt was made
to murder Him.

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In one case, the poison that was used made Him gravely ill for some time and left Him with a

constant hand tremor that lasted the rest of His life, clearly visible from His shaky handwriting.

In Adrianople, once again, as had happened in Baghdad, many people came to love Him, word

got out about This Wonderful One, people traveled long distances to see Him and to join His

followers, and the Bahá'í community grew in number. And because of His growing popularity,

His enemies banished Him again. This time, in 1868, He was placed in solitary confinement in

the stone-walled ancient prison city of 'Akká, on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean (today's

Acre, Israel). Fortunately, by 1877, political conditions changed, and Bahá'u'lláh was allowed to

reside outside the city in a peaceful, rural setting. He died in 1892, at age 75, from an illness. In

His Will, He appointed His eldest son, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, to carry forward the work of overseeing

the development of the Bahá'í community in the world. And when 'Abdu'l-Bahá died, in 1921,

His grandson, Shoghi Effendi, in accordance with 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will, took over the role of the

appointed head of the Faith. Under Shoghi Effendi's guardianship, and until his death in 1957,

the Bahá'í Faith strengthened and grew at a steady pace throughout the world, and the Bahá'í

World Centre was established in Israel on Mount Carmel. By the 1970's, the Bahá'í Faith had

become the second most widespread religion in the world, and it was recognized as a Non-

Governmental Organization at the United Nations in New York. Today the Bahá'í Community

is well-organized and still growing and developing, aided by its elected administrative councils

that guide Bahá'ís at the local, national, and international levels. (This is a very brief summary of

the growth of the Bahá'í Faith since the death of Bahá'u'lláh. For more information visit

bahai.org.)

In the end, despite the many ordeals He suffered — including: torture, exile, banishments,

imprisonments, opposition from government and religious leaders, continual efforts to defame Him, and attempts to murder Him — Bahá'u'lláh faithfully and determinedly carried out His Mission and left over 100 volumes of Sacred Writings — a priceless wealth of Divine guidance and inspiration — for all humankind, for centuries to come:

In His Writings, all signed and sealed by Him, Bahá'u'lláh calls for: social and economic justice worldwide; the elimination of abusive behavior, which includes the abusive treatment of women as inferiors to — or as slaves or possessions of — men, and the cruel and abusive treatment of children and animals; ending all harmful addictions; entering into wedlock and creating united, loving families; occupying one's time engaged in work that benefits humanity; daily prayer and meditation; the elimination of extreme wealth and extreme poverty; one world currency; one language that everyone in the world can speak, in addition to their native tongue; no backbiting or defaming; no lying or cheating; the conscious effort, on everyone's part, to acquire virtues such as truthfulness and trustworthiness, courtesy, humility and selflessness, faithfulness, loving kindness, patience, and generosity; moderation in all things; no religious zealotry, fanaticism, or proselytizing; love and appreciation for all of God's Messengers; universal education and 100% literacy in the world; eliminating all racial, ethnic, and national prejudices and discriminatory practices and caste systems; ceasing all contention and conflict and refraining from all acts of force, oppression, tyranny, and warfare; and the creation of a peaceful world by forming a united

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commonwealth of nations in which all governments are headed by councils of mature, devoted,

trustworthy men and women who are democratically elected by secret ballot, with no parties or nominations or election campaigns — or poll-taking — and who collectively arrive at decisions in a nonpartisan manner, using a courteous, respectful, truthful, rational method of consultation, always striving for consensus in deciding what is in the best interests of both the individual and society as a whole. The wisdom and justice of all the unifying principles that are set forth in Bahá'u'lláh's Writings have attracted thoughtful people from all over the globe who are alarmed by the present state of affairs in the world, angered by the widespread corruption and injustices that are allowed to exist, deeply concerned about the future of human life, and all life on earth, and who see, in the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, the keys to resolving the world's problems.

One of the world's problems, perhaps its greatest problem, is hubris — man's ruinous pride — his dark, selfish, destructive egotism in all its forms, including: vanity, narcissism, jealousy, boasting, bragging and exaggerating, lying and cheating, posturing, haughtiness, and arrogance — all of which may easily lead to: lust for power, hatred, malice, cruelty, lawlessness, rebellion, violence and tyranny. Bahá'u'lláh calls attention to this problem in His Mathnaví. He says that we must free the world of egotism:

Keep on setting hearts on fire from This Pipe's rhythm,
till you burn — in the world — all signs of egotism. — Line
298

(The ego, or darkness of the ego, is mentioned in Lines 108-109, 129, 192, 281, and 298-299, and is referred to, indirectly, in several other places throughout the poem.)

Tips for Reciting The Poem

Recite Bahá'u'lláh's Mathnaví from beginning to end, continuously, without stopping to look at the footnotes. This takes about one hour, at a moderate pace. (The midpoint, between Lines 159 and 160, is a good place for a short break, if desired.) Persian mathnavís are recited in mostly a monotone, with all words enunciated clearly and given equal weight, in a most dignified way.

(You can listen to The Blessed Mathnaví, recited in Persian, online. Search:

“YouTube Masnavi

Mobarak”). Whether one recites it in the traditional Persian way or a more modern style, in

order for the words to have the greatest effect, there must always be a distinctive end stop, and

pause, at the end of the first line of every couplet. This is considered a requirement for reciting a

mathnaví. It’s very important to keep this in mind, from beginning to end.

This mandatory pause,

or caesura, guarantees the steady rhythm of the lines and makes the poem memorable.

Translation and Footnotes

On the following 52 pages is a provisional translation of The Blessed Mathnaví by Bahá’u’lláh.

The numbers 1-318 on the left side correspond to the 318 internally rhyming lines in Persian

(which are 318 couplets in English.) Numbers and footnotes have been added by the translator.

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Bahá’u’lláh’s Mathnaví

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He Mo Glo s.

1* O The Life of The Throne!

The Sun of Love

so kind and true!

The world and all therein

can never beget

a Light like You!

2** If only people weren’t veiled from seeing Your Face,

I’d say a word or two about Your Hidden Grace,

3 so all the souls become indebted to You,

so all the hearts fall madly in love with You,

4 so You’d see them all gone mad — intoxicated! —

with their hearts in both hands — ready, dedicated! —

5* so that, when You speak The Word, O Pride of the Time,

they’ll scatter their hearts freely at Your Feet sublime!

“He is the Most Glorious.” This brief exordium (formal opening) appears at

the very beginning of the poem. It is not a title, and not part of the poem's rhyme scheme, but serves as a short trumpet call that grabs the attention of the audience, sets the tone, and introduces the author's work with a respectful acknowledgement of the Divine. This statement, or one similar to it, is found at the beginning of many of Bahá'u'lláh's writings.

*1 - "Throne" (arsh) in Bahá'í literature can sometimes refer to "The Throne of God", which can be understood to mean: "The Messenger of God". Arabic in origin, the word arsh is usually translated as:

"The Empyrean" or "The Throne of God". The word arsh implies the zenith (highest point or place) in the firmament (the vast dome of sky as it appears over our heads), which is similar to the "keystone", or "capstone", at the top of a masonry arch — the final piece that is placed during construction, that locks the stones into position and keeps them all together, united, for one purpose. "O The Life of the Throne!"

is a way of addressing the Messenger of God, respectfully acknowledging His divine majestic station and His supreme unifying power in the world.

*2 - "Your Face" is not to be taken in the physical sense. It implies: "Your Reality" or "Who You are".

*2 - "Your Hidden Grace", more accurately translated, would be: "The Mystery of Eternity".

*5 - "Pride of the Time" is a title of The Messenger of God in His time (in His lifetime). Examples: In the time of Moses, Moses was The Pride of the Time. In the time of Jesus, Jesus was The Pride of the Time.

When Bahá'u'lláh wrote His Mathnaví, in 1863, He was The Pride of the Time. The word "Pride" in this context means: "the foremost or prime person; having qualities widely loved and admired; being the best or "the pick" of a society; a source of great joy." — Collins Dictionary

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6* Rise high above The Mount of the Soul, just like the Sun,
so You're clearly seen — from every side — by everyone!

7 Parade just like the Moon! — Show off That Beautiful Face!
Make green and fresh this hay, now, from Your Merciful Grace . . .

8** The drop is seeking — from Your Ocean — life eternal.
Since You're The Greatest King, do grant him life eternal.

9* The atom's begging for Your Light — O, how he cries.
Ful ll his wishes from Your Love — no how's and why's.

10 The sprouted seed, with opened mouth up toward the sky,
is waiting for Your Priceless Favors from on High.

11 The raindrops of Your Mercy — on him do bestow,
O King of Heaven above — and Lord of Earth below.

12* Burst open this curtain of hundreds of veils in place!
Beautiful! — Now give the world a sight to see — That Face!

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*6 - "The Mount of the Soul" implies this mortal world (see Lines 105, 206, 207, and 219). It is similar to "The Land of the Soul" in Lines 105, 206, and 207). These two expressions should not be confused with "The Sinai of the Soul" in Line 205, which can be taken, poetically, to mean "The Heart of the Soul" (see Line 211).

*8 - "life eternal" is a translation of kowsari [CO sar EE]. Its root is kowsar (or kawthar). Hayyim's New Persian English Dictionary says that kowsar, an Arabic term, means: "a river in paradise". But it is sometimes translated as: "river of life", "water of life", "fountain (or wellspring) of life", "abundant life", "immortal life", or "eternal life".

*8 - "King", "Friend", and "Beloved" are terms used in Su poetry, and also in Bahá'u'lláh's Mathnaví, which can refer to either God or the Messenger of God. It is not always clear which one of these two are being referenced. This creates an ambiguity that suggests the mystical, mysterious relationship between God and His Messenger — the apparent merging, or conation, of the two.

*9 - The phrase "no how's and why's" means "no questions asked" or "unconditionally".

*12 - "Beautiful!" is a translation of khosh, which means "Good!" or "Nice!"

? - marks the end of what may be regarded as the opening section of the mathnavi, which is somewhat like an overture to a symphony. One characteristic feature of a mathnaví is a distinctive opening section. (See p. iii, 2nd paragraph.)

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13 Since about Your Favors there is not a single doubt,
pack for us provisions from Your Grace, as we set out.

14** Make all The West now — The Place The Sun will rise.
And give This Globe now — The Joy Your Wine provides.

15** Light up the hearts with Light from The Lights of Núr,
so they will see, from Your Face, The Lights of Túr!

16 And — Draw That Saber! — Your Terrible Sword!
Then — Kill all these foes of Your Faith, O Lord!

17 Raise Your Fire Divine! — Let it blaze like hell!
And nicely burn the bloodthirsty in del!

18 All of them are bats of night, O Sun of Day!
Raise Your Head and all this darkness burn away.

19 Strain out all these dregs of sorrow-tainted pain.
Give Your Light to this dark night's low candle ame.

*14 - In Islam there is a belief that in “the time of the end” (in “the last days”) the sun will rise in the West. (See Line 80 and *80.)

*14 - “Globe” is a translation of sharb, which means “A drink”, which in English can mean “A glass”, which, here, in this Line implies a wine glass, or wine goblet. The spherical bowl of a wine glass is called “a globe”. And since the word “globe” implies “the whole world”, or the planet Earth, the word “Globe” in this Line has a double meaning. (NOTE: “Wine” is used symbolically throughout the poem to refer to the Word of God and its spiritually uplifting, intoxicating effect upon people's souls.)

*15 - “Núr” [rhymes with: POOR] means: “light”. Núr is the capital of Mázandarán Province in northern Iran, on the southern coast of the Caspian Sea. Bahá'u'lláh was born into nobility. His wealthy family had its roots in Núr and the surrounding area. As a young man, He often accompanied His father on horseback throughout the region, helping to care for the poor. After His father died, He continued this work Himself and became known as “Father of the Poor”. NOTE: Bahá'u'lláh's name was Mirzá Husayn ‘Ali-yi Núrí, which translates as: “Nobleman Husayn Ali of Núr”. The title “Mirzá” signified royal lineage and

distinguished nobility. (See p. iv of the Introduction and *105.)

*15 - “Túr” [sounds like: TOUR] means: 1. veil; 2. tulle [pronounced: TOOL], which is a soft, gauze-like fabric, like the netting used for bridal veils; 3. Mount Sinai. Here, in Line 15, “The Lights of Túr” brings to mind the White Light that shone from the hand of Moses on Mount Sinai. (See *211.)

NOTE: For various reasons, Bahá’í orthography is not rigidly adhered to in this translation. For example, there is no underdot below the letter “T” in the word “Túr”, although the proper diacritic (accent mark) is used above the “u” in “Túr”. (It is good to keep in mind that diacritics, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling are of no importance whatsoever to an audience listening to the poem while it is being recited.)

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Bahá’u’lláh’s Mathnaví

K. Morton / May 2026

20* A world abides in You, just as You abide in the Soul,
till it appears from Your Command “BE!”, and then it is so.

21 O Glory of the Soul! — In Remembrance of Your Face,
I will keep on mentioning the ne points of Your Grace,

22** so I will weigh the souls — assess the wisdom of —
so I will see who buys The Pearls of Your Love.

23*** I will light a Fire — so I’ll burn, in the world,
the many curtains of the “holies” in the world.

24* The Houri of Inner Meaning — I will unmask.
That Well-Hidden Light — I will uncover at last.

25 The Secret of the Mysteries of Everlasting Love
I will explain, for You’ve come again, to the Soul to love.

*20 - “ ‘BE!’, and then it is so” represents the expression kun fa-yakún (“Be”, and it is), which appears several times in the Quran, including Quran 6:73 and 36:82. It refers to The Creative Power of the Word of God.

*22 - “buys”, in this context, means: acquires, through effort or sacrifice.

*22 - “Pearls” (dorr) implies words that are pure, beautiful, rare and priceless, i.e., words of wisdom. (See Line 198.) In Persian, the word “pearl” appears in many different expressions. (See *151.)

*23 - “I will light a Fire” is not to be taken literally. This implies that

He will set in motion a divine transformation that involves both loss and the potential for renewal.

*23 - The word “curtains” suggests tabernacles, which are large tents or movable structures used as places for worship or other religious meetings. Tabernacles are also curtained boxes that are kept at or near altars in churches, cathedrals, etc. — boxes that hold items used in rituals. The word “curtains” may also imply “The Curtains of the Tabernacle,” a multi-paneled screen located at the entrance of The Holy of Holies. (The Holy of Holies is the inner court (sanctuary) of the temple that is believed to have been built by King Solomon on Temple Mount in Jerusalem, to serve as a place to keep The Ark of the Covenant (the box that contained The Tablets of The Ten Commandments revealed by Moses on Mount Sinai.) “Curtains” may also imply the curtains/screens used in confessional booths in some churches; the curtains that separate the women from the men in mosques; and other curtains, veils, cloth, drapes, screens, etc., that are used to cover, hide, divide, and/or separate people or things.

*23 - “holies” refers to high-ranking religious leaders, often referred to by Bahá’u’lláh as “divines”. The word “holies” in quotation marks refers to those so-called “holies” who are holy in name only, whose corrupt behavior (whether in public or in private) belies their “holiness”.

*24 - “Houri” [HOO ree] is an Arabic/Islamic term often translated as “a beautiful doe-eyed virgin in heaven (or in paradise)”. “The Houris of Inner Meaning” might suggest: The Beauty of Inner Meaning. (See Wikipedia for “Houri”.)

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Bahá’u’lláh’s Mathnaví

K. Morton / May 2026

26* Welcome, O Firebird! In Eloquent Words, explain!

So no mediocre descriptions of life remain!

27 Do cleanse those hearts so full of jealousy.

Do guide those minds without the sight to see,

28* so, O Kind One, those not knowing of Your Covenant will then — from The Ancient Cup — become intelligent.

29 (And yet, O Friend of Ours, with Songs of Sacred Love, take us well beyond “intelligence” and lack thereof.)

30** O Seraph of Bahá! — O King of the Soul!

Give the dead The Key to Life to make them whole!

31 The Primary Tree is of The Heart and Its Branches.

Free it from weather, water, clay, and other chances,

32* so — from “essence and accident” — it will be free,

so — from its brilliance, then — suns enlightened will be!

*26 - “Firebird” refers to the sacred majestic among bird — in Slavic,

Russian, and Chinese folklore and

the folklore of many other cultures of the world — that symbolizes The

Messenger of God. Firebird

comes, from time to time, in the spring, to bring God’s love and guidance.

Firebird suffers greatly in this

world, then dies or departs in a burst of flames, but returns again and again, in

an eternal cycle of death

and rebirth. Birds that are similar to Firebird include: Phoenix and Símorgh.

(See *37, *72, *120,

*195-197, 219, *219, *220, 241, and *280.)

*28 - “The Ancient Cup” suggests Ancient Divine Wisdom and also, possibly,

the amazing powers of the

legendary “Cup of Jamshid” [jam SHEED], found extensively in Persian

mythology and literature.

Possessed for centuries by rulers of the ancient Persian Empire, it was said to

be filled with an elixir of

immortality and was used like a crystal ball in foreseeing the future. It was

believed that, gazing into this

chalice, one could observe the seven heavens of the universe, see the whole

world reflected in it, and

become aware of deep truths. (See Wikipedia.)

*30 - “Seraph” [SERR uff] is the highest angel in heaven — who blows the

trumpet on Resurrection Day

(Judgment Day), which causes the dead to rise from their graves. In Islamic

tradition, Seraph corresponds

to Israfil [ess raw FEEL], who is mentioned in a hadith as being the archangel

nearest to God. In Christian

angelology, Seraph corresponds to archangel Raphael and belongs to the highest

order of the ninefold

celestial hierarchy, associated with light, ardor, and purity (source:

Wikipedia).

*30 - “Bahá” [bah HAW] means: “Glory”; “Light”; “Splendor”.

“Bahá’u’lláh” [bah HAW ol LA] means:

the “Glory of God”.

*32 - “essence and accident” refers to the age-old debate (“substance and

accident”) among philosophers

about what is essential vs. what is nonessential for something to exist. In

Islam, for example, there is the

ongoing debate over whether the Hadith is essential — or nonessential — for

the Faith of Islam to exist.

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Bahá'u'lláh's Mathnaví

K. Morton / May 2026

33* This young tree of yours — plant in the soil of the heart.

Then, from the bright lights and shadows, keep it apart.

34** And from all kinds of wayward winds protect it well.
And free it from the fancies of the in del.

35* Its root — do make it rm in the soil of the soul.
Its branches will pass beyond the sky, as they grow!

36* This New Spring You bring anew is bursting with new blooms,
so, from Your Resurrection, the dead spring from their tombs!

37* The Sparkle of The Seas of Love is from The Sparkle of You!
The Wisdom of Eternity's Birds is from The Wisdom of You!

38** The Garment brought from Egypt . . . waft its fragrance
here . . .

The Burning Bush of Moses . . . manifest it here . . .

*33 - "bright lights" refers to the celebrities and illuminati

("idols", "stars", and "icons") in society. And

"shadows" refers to the fans who idolize and worship celebrities and
closely follow them around, like

their shadows. (For an interesting discussion of this, see Frank Lewis's end
note #16.) NOTE: Another,

more interpretive, way of rendering this couplet might be: This tender sapling
of yours — plant in the soil

of the heart. / Then, from idols and their worshippers, do keep it apart.

*34 - "wayward" implies: con icting, contrary, immoral, deviant, perverse,
etc.

*34 - "fancies" refers to idle fancies, vain imaginings, delusions,
falsehoods, wrong ideas, etc.

*35 - Lines 30-35 address a matter of key, or vital, importance in life, i.e.,
keeping your personal faith

(your "Primary Tree", i.e., your knowledge of God and your love of God)
strong, healthy, and continually

growing.

*36 - "Resurrection" suggests: "Reappearance" or "Rising up again".

And it calls to mind the trumpet

blast on Resurrection Day (See *30), announcing the arrival of The Messenger of
God (His Return),

which causes people to come out of their coma-like state of lethargy (i .e., be spiritually uplifted and revived).

*37 - “Eternity’s Birds” refers to God’s Messengers, Who are symbolized by Phoenix, Firebird, Simorgh, and other majestic birds in folklore around the world. (See *26.)

*38 - “The Garment (of Joseph)” — For many years, Jacob, father of Joseph, grieved over his long-lost son, fearing that he would never see him again. From crying rivers of tears, Jacob became blind. When a garment of Joseph’s was delivered to Jacob from Egypt and placed on the old man’s face, he instantly recognized the scent of his beloved son, and his sight was miraculously restored. See The Story of Joseph in The Quran, Chapter 12. (See also *53.)

*38 - For an interesting discussion about “The Burning Bush of Moses”, see Frank Lewis’s end note #18.

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Bahá’u’lláh’s Mathnaví

K. Morton / May 2026

39* O Beloved! — From Your Face, The Spring has come!

And, from This Spring, unnumbered Truths have come!

40 Every ower of Him — a book of His Story!

Every heart of Him — a fount of His Glory!

41* This Spring won’t be followed by Fall, ever!

All its owers will circle Him forever!

42* This kind of spring the soul can’t understand.

This kind of spring harrows the soul of man.

43 Those Springs bring the strong desire for lovely mates.

And These Springs bring The Love of God that He creates.

44 Those Springs end, because of their mortality.

And These Springs would be titled “Eternity”!

*39 - In Persian poetry, the term “Beloved” can refer to God or to the Messenger of God. (See*8.)

*41 - “All its owers will circle Him forever!” evokes the image of throngs of Muslim pilgrims circumambulating the Kaaba during a pilgrimage to Mecca . . . or the stars revolving around the black center of the galaxy . . . or the millions of people on planet earth, revolving around the sun . . .

*42 - A “harrow” is a farming instrument, similar to a wide rake, that is

drawn over plowed land in order

to 1) uproot and destroy weeds, 2) cover the sown seeds, and 3) break apart the clods and level the land.

As a verb, “harrow” can mean: to afflict, agitate, distress, disturb, torment, and/or vex. We read in the

Bible (2 Samuel 12:31 and 1 Chronicles 20:3) that harrows were sometimes used to physically torture

people. In Yúsuf ‘Ali’s translation of the Quran [yoo SUFF, or “Joseph”], in the famous Sword Verse

(Quran 9:5), “harrows” (kanad) suggests “beleaguers”, which means: “tortures” or “torments”. But in

Shakespeare’s play Hamlet (Act 1, scene 5, lines 13-20), “harrow” is used in connection with fear:

But that I am forbid to tell the secrets of my prison house, I could a tale unfold

whose lightest word would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood, make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their spheres, thy knotted and combined locks

to part, and each particular hair to stand on end like quills upon the fretful porcupine.

And in Act 1, scene 1, line 44, Horatio, after having seen the apparition of a ghost, says: “It harrows me with fear and wonder.”

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Bahá’u’lláh’s Mathnaví

K. Morton / May 2026

45* That Spring rises in the world from seasons taking place,
and This Spring from the Light of His Heart-Capturing Face!

46* That Spring brings lots of tulips coming out,
and This Spring has a lot of groaning now!

47* This Eternal Spring from The King’s Great Light
has raised His Tent to Heaven’s Greatest Height!

48 All of the world’s people have entered His Tent!
(If you have eyes to see, behold This Event!)

49 Our King! — When He ing the veil away from His Face,
This Spring will pitch His Tent up over the stars in space!

50** Our Beloved! — When she ing away the niqab,
This Spring will get all red up — without the hijab!

*45 - From Frank Lewis’s end note #22: “Literally, this spring comes from

the light of the face of the heart-stealer, an epithet of the typical beloved, in Persian poetry, who carries...the hearts away.”

*46 - In the expression “and This Spring has a lot of groaning now”, the Persian word for “groaning” (nálehá) means: “(a lot of) groaning/complaining/lamenting”. This section of the poem (Lines 46-48)

suggests a lot of groaning taking place from the birth of a new religion — from This Spring — which has gathered all of the world’s different people together in one tent, gurgatively speaking. Not everyone is happy with this new arrangement — this “New World Order”. It’s pretty hot and crowded in the tent.

Close quarters. And not everyone is speaking the same language (yet). A lot of adjustments need to be made — sacrifices and effort. Hence, a lot of groaning and complaining.

*47 - “Heaven’s greatest Height” is a translation of arsh-e eláh (literally, “Throne of God”). In art and literature, the Throne of God has been portrayed as being at the highest point (the zenith) of heaven. In other words, “Heaven’s Greatest Height”.

*50 - “niqab” [nee COB]: an opaque face mask, usually black (with a horizontal opening or perforation to assist in seeing and breathing), worn in public by some Muslim women. These masks are traditionally worn with or as part of a full-length opaque black body-covering garment, such as a burqa.

*50 - “hijab” [hee JOB]: a veil made of light-weight fabric, in varying sizes and colors, worn in public by some Muslim women as a type of head scarf. A hijab may leave all or part of the face exposed. It usually hides the hair and ears, and may cover the shoulders and, to some extent, below the shoulders. In Iran, if it is a full-length, body-covering veil, it is called a chador [chuh DOOR]. (The chador is also the black tent used by the nomadic tribespeople (the Bakhtiari) of Iran. Prior to the 1979 regime change in Iran, the nomadic women did not wear veils, but brightly colored dresses, and their faces were exposed.)

NOTE: In September 2022, in Iran — in the Women, Life, Freedom movement — large mobs gathered in the streets to protest the Islamic regime’s strict rules requiring women to wear veils in public. In nightly demonstrations, women were seen dramatically tearing off their chadors (long black body-covering veils) and tossing them into bon res.

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Bahá'u'lláh's Mathnaví

K. Morton / May 2026

51* We will be within This Spring, then, looking at her face.

We will not be in a garden, searching for her face.

52* We will, in His Praise, be free from any other one.

We will, in this world, become enlightened from His Sun.

53* If a Breeze from This Beautiful Spring comes to you,
hundreds of Josephs you will see come into view.

54* If a Breeze comes to you from This Fragrance-Garden,
spiritual Josephs you will see in the world then —

55 you'll see their bodies become like spirits, and these
will achieve — each moment — manifold victories!

*51 - The second line of this couplet seems to allude to the lovesick Majnún [maj NOON] in search of his beloved Laylá (Leylí in Persian), an allegorical tale (that is also mentioned in Bahá'u'lláh's Four Valleys) that portrays the soul's deep yearning and constant searching for The Beloved. The popular story of the passionate, unrequited love of Majnún for Laylá, Arabic in origin, is portrayed in a narrative poem written in 1188 by the Persian poet Nizami Ganjavi. Prior to Nizami's work, the legend of these two lovers was told as a series of anecdotes. Nizami collected these anecdotes and organized them into one de nitive story. Once Nizami's work became popular, the number and variety of anecdotes increased quite a bit, with many mystics inventing stories about Majnún to illustrate mystical concepts such as sel essness, sacri ce, the madness of lovesickness, etc. Nizami's famous 9,200 lines mathnavi: "Laylá and Majnún" has been translated into many languages. Lord Byron referred to it as the "Romeo and Juliet of the East". (Source for this footnote: Wikipedia)

*52 - "His Praise" could be: "His Remembrance", "His Mention", or "His Prayers", because the Persian word zekrash could be translated into any one of these terms.

*53 - The term “Josephs,” in common everyday Persian conversation, refers to people who are physically very beautiful. Joseph was both physically and spiritually very beautiful — he was radiantly handsome as well as virtuous, upright, and noble. He was a godlike gure, with godlike qualities, and his importance in Islam should never be dismissed or underestimated: In Islam, Joseph is regarded as a Prophet, and in the Quran, the only Chapter that is devoted entirely to one person is Súrah 12 (Chapter 12), which tells The Story of Joseph. For other references to Joseph in the poem, see Line 38, *38, Line 54, Line 235, *235, Line 240, *240, and Line 317.

*54 - In the Persian culture, a “Fragrance-Garden”, bústán [boo STAAN], is a garden that is artfully designed to display an abundance of owers that, when in bloom, perfume the air with a high concentration of sweet-smelling fragrances. (See also *136.)

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Bahá'u'lláh's Mathnaví

K. Morton / May 2026

56 Each moment, This Spring of Holiness, The Well-Beloved,
has a hundred Utterances — but who are the trusted?

57* This Utterance is not at all like human tongues.
When will they ever grasp this, these nonhuman ones?

58 This Utterance is not from words and voice and breath.
This Utterance is Life Itself — and has no death.

59* Lovers! — Thousands of them you'll see in This Spring,
their lives — at every moment — sacri cing!

60* This Spring is The Glory of Spirit Sublime!
This Spring is The Holiness of the Divine!

61* If a Breeze wafts unto you from This Sheba, you will see
your mortal soul drinking from The Cup of Eternity.

62* If a Breeze comes unto you from The Abode of The Friend,
devote your life to Him, as this life, too, is from The Friend.

*57 - “these nonhuman ones” (ín nákasán), literally “these nonhumans”, refers to people who are not truly human, who are totally lacking in moral character (in virtues such as

kindness, humility,
respectfulness, courtesy, honesty, trustworthiness, fairness, generosity, etc.)
— those who, as Frank Lewis

says in the end notes to his provisional translation, fail "...to observe the standards expected of a just and noble human being". (See also Line 76.)

*59 - "Lovers!" brings to mind one of Táhiriḥ's poems, which begins with: "Lovers! Creation veils His face no more! Lovers, look! He himself is visible!" And the word "Lovers!" also appears in the first line of one of Rumi's famous poems (see Táhiriḥ: A Portrait in Poetry, p. 127, Kalimat Press, 2005).

Showcasing another poet's work by copying or imitating the words or style of that poet, which is called *tazmín* [taz MEEN] and *esteqbál* [ESS tek BALL], is a common feature in classical Persian/Su poetry —

a conventional literary device that honors and pays tribute to the new work of other poets. (See *297.) For the meaning of "Lovers" see *181.

*60 - "This Spring", in this couplet, does not seem to correspond with the definition of "Spring" as a time or a season, but rather with the definition of "Spring" as a wellspring or a fountain or fount — as a source of life-giving waters, or, in other words, God's Messenger, The Well-Beloved. (See Line 56.)

*61 - The word "Sheba" [SHEE buh], for many Westerners, may bring to mind the Queen of Sheba (King Solomon's Beloved). In Persian, however, the term "Sheba" does not refer to the Queen. Sheba (*sabá*) is the name of the kingdom in Arabia, where she lived and ruled. Sheba is her home, her abode. The name of the Queen was "Belghees", according to the Quran. (Her name is not mentioned in the Bible.) And so, in this Line, the foremost meaning of "Sheba" is "Kingdom", "Realm", "Home", or "Abode". (See also Lines 217 and 310, and their footnotes.)

*62 - The word "Friend" (like the word "King" and the word "Beloved") in Su poetry and in this poem can refer to God and/or the Messenger of God. (See *8.)

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Bahá'u'lláh's Mathnaví

K. Morton / May 2026

63* The Tulip of Oneness in This Spring! — See Him there!

The Hyacinth of Singleness! — See The Friend's Hair!

64* The Buds of Wisdom! — Look to the side and see:

The whole crowd's searching for Him eagerly!

65 Its cypress trees — His Stature and His Grace.

Its shoots of grass — the whiskers on His Face.

66* Its nightingales — from Reunion with Him —

Its turtle doves — from The Beauty of Him —

67* they're all drunk now, from The Friend, The Adored —
from His Words to them, "Am I not your Lord?"

68* If this gets out — This Nightingale's Melody —
people's souls will be cleansed of jealousy!

69 This Utterance caused the Ocean of Meaning to surge!

The Ship of Existence rocked from This Generous Word!

*63 - The tulip is a symbol of perfect love. The hyacinth has curled petals that look like locks of hair. In Persian poetry, the word for "hyacinth" (som-bol) may refer to: A curl or ringlet (of hair).

*64 - The phrase "Look to the side" represents a Persian idiom that means: "Look out of the corner of your eye."

*66 - The contents of Lines 66 and 67 have been combined and rearranged in this translation for clarity, so that some of the words in Line 66 in the original work, are in Line 67 in translation — and some of the words in Line 67 in the original work, are found in Line 66 in translation.

*67 - "Am I not your Lord?" are the words that are spoken, in some fashion, by every Messenger of God on His "First Day," when He declares His Divine Station (and His Cause, or Mission) quietly, to a small number of people (sometimes just one person). He asks if they recognize Him as their Lord (as God's New Messenger), and they reply, in effect, "Yes, we do." This exchange renews and reaffirms God's Ancient Covenant with Man, which is that God has promised Man that He will never leave him alone, but will continually, from time to time, send Divine Guidance through His Chosen Messengers — and Man has agreed to recognize God's Messengers when they appear and to follow their laws and teachings. That

Covenant, which was made on the “Day of Alast” [rhymes with: at LAST] — literally: “Day of the First” or “First Day” — was made between God and the children (the descendants) of Adam, i.e., between God and all mankind (Quran 7:172). For the “Day of Alast,” see Lines 148, 149, 218, and their footnotes.

*68 - “If this gets out” means: “If news of this becomes widely known”. And the word “this” refers to “This Nightingale’s Melody” in Line 68, which refers to the words in Line 67: “Am I not your Lord?”

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Bahá’u’lláh’s Mathnaví

K. Morton / May 2026

70* Every anemone that’s blooming from This Spring will be coming out with hundreds of Truths from The Friend’s Mystery . . .

71** The Scent of Musk keeps coming from The Beloved’s Hair . . . The Hand of His Grace confers on you this gift so fair . . .

72* His Hair — like Salamander that you see a re — circles round The Glowing Face of The Heart’s Desire.

73* The Nightingale of Holiness is moaning within. Remoteness from the friends is burning marrow and skin.

74 If, from the pain of separation, He draws a sigh, it will in a moment reach the hearts of The Favored Ones on High.

75* Those who are not The Favored don’t partake of this sigh. The favor of this grace — O Habib! — do not deny!

*70 - The word “anemone” [uh NEMM uh NEE] means “daughter of the wind”, and it refers to a type of brightly colored wild flower of the buttercup family that blooms in early spring throughout the world, both in the wild and in formal gardens. Its petals seem to dance in the wind. The anemone is also called “wind flower”; “thimbleweed”; and “smell fox” — from the musky smell of its leaves. (See also *123.)

*71 - “Musk” is the strong-smelling resinous fluid that is stored in the navel-bag on the underbelly of the male musk deer. The powerful, heavy scent of musk attracts the female deer in mating season. Musk was highly valued in perfumery until the late 1800’s. Today the various species of musk deer are dwindling in numbers due to over-poaching for their valuable musk (at times, musk is worth more than gold) and from habitat loss. Today, synthetic musk is used almost exclusively. (See also Line 76, Line 81, *81, and Lines 82, 126, 137, and 216.)

*71 - “The Beloved’s Hair” implies: “His Revelation”. (See Lines 126, 195-197, 258, and *195/196/197.)

*72 - “Salamander” is a term used to describe a rapidly spinning vortex of flame that you see, sometimes, in a hotly burning fire. It was called a “salamander”, because it reminded people of the way a hibernating salamander rushes out of a log, when the log is added to the fire. Flaming fire around His head (like a whirling salamander), may remind us of classical Persian miniature paintings in which The Prophet is portrayed with what appear to be flames around His head (and sometimes around His whole body). This fiery, halo-like aureole [OR see YOLE] depicts the aura and glow of holiness that emanates from and surrounds The Messenger of God. (See also *195/196/197.) NOTE: The term “Salamander” may have a double meaning — it may also refer to “Firebird”. (See *26.)

*73 - “marrow and skin” means: “both inside and outside”. (See *131.)

*75 - “Habib” [hab EEB] is a masculine name that means “Beloved” or “Friend”. The term “O Habib” is used in Persian literature, sometimes, when one is addressing God, as is the case here. (See also *8, Line 315, and *315.)

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Bahá’u’lláh’s Mathnaví

K. Morton / May 2026

76* Diffuse the Musk Divine from Your Perfume well,
so these nonhuman ones will catch the smell . . .

77 This Spring is Eternal — and not at all
the Spring that is always followed by Fall.

78 From This Spring of Holiness, The Spirit appears,

and from its atmosphere, The Light of Noah appears.

79* He seats The People of the Ark aboard the ship,
then gives to everyone a vast array of gifts!

80* O Beauty of God! Come out from the mask,
so The Sun will rise in The West at last!

81** Unlock The Science of Perfumery!
Unlock The Store of Hidden Mystery!

82 So — from Your Musk — the lifeless come alive!
So — from Your Wine — the languishing revive!

*76 - For “Musk” see *71. And for “these nonhuman ones” see *57.

*79 - See Frank Lewis’s end note #39 for his comments on “The People of the Ark” and Noah’s Ark.

*80 - One Islamic hadith says: The Hour will not be established till the sun rises from the West; and when it rises (from the West) and the people see it, they will all believe (from ‘Abú Húrayrá, Amíyáh al-Tafsír).

An insightful explanation of this concept, given by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, can be found in Shoghi Effendi’s God

Passes By, page 253: From the beginning of time until the present day, the light of Divine Revelation hath

risen in the East and shed its radiance upon the West. The illumination thus shed...acquired, in the West,

an extraordinary brilliancy. Consider the Faith proclaimed by Jesus. Though it first appeared in the East,

yet not until its light had been shed upon the West did the full measure of its potentialities become

manifest... (See the rest of this quote and also Line 14.)

*81 - “Perfumery” is used here as the translation of the word “ladani”

[LAD on ee]. What is meant by

“the Science of Ladani”? This translator was told (by another translator)

that “ladani” means: pertaining

to divine or inspired knowledge “which came into you without any effort on your part” and is perhaps

related to “respiration.” So this translator wonders if “ladani” is

related to “ladan”, which, according to

Hayyim’s New Persian English Dictionary, is the Persian word for labdanum

[LAB duh numm], a gum

resin obtained from two species of Southern European rock rose (cistus).

Labdanum’s heavy, intoxicating

scent resembles that of ambergris (see *218). Labdanum’s use in perfumery and medicine was developed

from the science of aromatics (olfaction), dating back to ancient Egypt.

Incense. Fragrances and scents.

Inhaling. Inner knowledge that enters into you effortlessly, related to

breathing . . .

(See also Lines: 38, 54, 71, 76, 82, 103, 126, 136, 137, 214-218, and 258.)

*81 - “Store”, here, means: “storehouse” or “repository” and implies a wine vault. (See Line 82.)

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Bahá'u'lláh's Mathnaví

K. Morton / May 2026

83* O Kind One! This Abased One — in The Land of Unity —
clothe with The Robe of Glory from Your Generosity!

84 Dress This Mortal in The Vesture of Eternity,
make Him taste The Honey-sweet Wealth of Utter Poverty,

85 so, bursting through The Veil of Mysteries,
tearing The Mask off Possibilities,

86** sel ess and all lit up — He will emerge and burn
— like a star — in The Lamp-Glass of “They who return...”

*83 - “The Land of Unity” refers to Turkey, where Bahá'u'lláh wrote this poem, under house arrest, in the capital city of Constantinople (Istanbul). For centuries, Turkey (Constantinople, in particular) had been a nexus of trade routes that brought merchants together from many different countries and continents, and for this reason Turkey was called “The Land of Unity”.

*86 - “— like a star — in The Lamp-Glass” alludes to what is considered to be the most beautiful metaphor in the Quran (24:35), called “The Verse of Light”:

God is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The Parable of His Light is like a niche within which there is a Lamp, the Lamp within Glass, [within] the Glass as if it were a pearly (white) star, lit from [the oil of] a Blessed olive tree, neither of the east, nor of the west, whose oil would almost glow even if untouched by re. Light upon Light. God guides to His Light whom He wills. And God presents Parables for the people, and God is knowing of all things.

*86 - “They who return...” refers to the company of close family members and early believers who, out of their love for Bahá'u'lláh, surrounded and protected Him at all times — as much as possible, and as best they could — just as the glass chimney (the lamp-glass) of an old-fashioned oil lamp surrounds and protects the flame of the wick, as it burns. But why are they referred to as “They who return...”? This is because, each time a Messenger of God comes, the early disciples and believers who are closest to Him

bear a striking resemblance to the early believers and closest companions of the previous Messenger, in terms of their personality traits, their spiritual qualities, and their behavioral characteristics. And so, it seems as if the early believers of the previous Messenger have returned. The phrase “They who return...” comes from the Writings of The Báb. (See A Summary of The Persian Bayán, Wahid 1, Chapter 1, by Edward Granville Browne. See also Line 169.)

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Bahá'u'lláh's Mathnaví

K. Morton / May 2026

87* When This Thorn Bush from Your Garden comes into bloom,
You'll propagate hundreds of gardens from it soon!

88 Enroll each garden in a registry.

Then teach each leaf about God's Mystery,

89 so The Brightness of Your Face becomes so clear,
that Your Light lls earth and heaven, far and near.

90 Blow The Wind of Your Mercy, O Generous One!

Tear the veils of negligence off this erring one!

91* Place in The Shelter of Your Lote-Tree, by and by,
the spirits of the pure in heart, O King on High!

*87 - “This Thorn Bush” seems to refer to Bahá'u'lláh. (Literally translated: “This Thorn”) There are large areas of desert plains in the Middle Eastern Region which abound in scraggly thorn bushes. Some of these grow to be rather large, and look more like trees than bushes. Thorn bushes are highly valued by the inhabitants of those regions and are used for many things, among which is: rewood. The branches of the thorn bush burn steadily, for long hours, without dying out. Some sources claim that the “Burning Bush” of Moses was a thorn bush. And we might also note that some species of thorn bushes over, in season, and become very beautiful (see photos online). Whether Bahá'u'lláh likens Himself to a thorn or a thorn bush is beside the point — when He “...comes into bloom...” (Line 87) and becomes a shining Light among all men, glowing “...like a star...” (Line 86), His Light will spread throughout the world (Lines 88 and 89).

*91 - “Lote-Tree” refers to the Messenger of God. And it alludes to “Sadratu’l-Muntahá”, which means: “the tree beyond which there is no passing” — translated also as: “the Lote-Tree of The Utmost Farthest Boundary”. This is because, in ancient times, in parts of the Middle Eastern Region, the outer limit of a city-state (or kingdom) was marked by a large lote tree growing there, next to the road that led out of the city. Reaching the sheltering shade of a lote tree was as far as people could go before leaving their city’s limits. Similarly, reaching the sheltering shade of the Messenger of God is as far as we humans can go before leaving this earthly state of existence, on the road we take to know God, draw near to Him, and attain His presence. (See Lines 110, 166, 192, 193, 270, and their footnotes, and also Quran 53:14 (islamawakened.com). See also Wikipedia for “Lote tree” and photos of Lote trees online.)

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Bahá’u’lláh’s Mathnaví

K. Morton / May 2026

92*** From The Garden of Spirit, open a gate!
For God’s sake! Don’t make a wall of this gate! —
93 so I’ll come and explain, with evidence,
The Mystery of Your Benevolence!
94 He said: “O God! O God! — No, O Good Man!
Don’t explain this to the ignorant man!
95* God, no! — O Tongue of God’s Mystery! — Be wise.
Softly, nicely talk — and so, form loving ties,
96* for if You take them gently by the hand,
they won’t fear ‘this and that’, do understand.”

*92 - “Garden” implies “Ridvan” or “Heavenly Paradise”. (For “Ridvan”, see *122.)

*92 - “Spirit” (ma’nee) could also be “True (or Inner) Meaning”.

*92 - “For God’s sake...!” could also be: “For the love of God!” or “For the sake of God!”

*95 - “God’s Mystery” (“The Mystery of God”) suggests

Bahá’u’lláh. See Introduction, p. iv, in the last

paragraph: His vision, when He was in The Black Pit of Tehran, of The Maiden of Heaven calling Him

“The Mystery of God”.

*96 - The expression “this and that” in this couplet seems to refer to people’s need to compare things, especially when confronted with something new and different vs. something familiar from the past. They may be fearful of the new thing, or what may happen because of the new thing’s presence in their lives. It may cause them, and their lives, to change. And change is not easy for many people. This new coach vs. that old coach. This year’s new teacher vs. that teacher we had last year. This New Messenger of God compared to That One Who came long ago. In several places in the poem, Bahá’u’lláh uses, or implies, the terms “this” and “that” in tandem, to make comparisons and point out distinctions. Some examples are: This Spring and That Spring (Lines 45-46); This Khez and That Khez (Lines 111-114); This Staff and That Staff (Lines 199-204); This Brilliance and That Brilliance (Line 212); This Great One (implied) and That Great One (Lines 237-239); and This Pipe and That Pipe (Lines 291-292).

Bahá’u’lláh’s Mathnaví

K. Morton / May 2026

97 Open up your spirit’s wings and, like a bird, homing be!
Near Him, in His Atmosphere — a wanderer, roaming be!

98 Nearness to God is with the soul — and not with steps in time.
When your soul deeply yearns for Him, you’ll step outside of time!

99* Then, instantly! — you’ll y through space with ease!
(Not hard — when you’re of those down on their knees.)

100 In saying this, I’m making a point to be fair,
so — from the Water of Life — you may take your share,

101* so — of Eternity’s Garden — you’ll become aware,
so — to The Land of His Presence — you’ll nd a way there,

102** so the meaning of “teleportation” you will know,
so — as spirit — ying up into His Realm you’ll go!

*99 - “when you’re of those down on their knees” implies: “when you are one of those who are sincerely faithful — who humble themselves before God and get down on their knees and prostrate themselves in prayer”. (A little poetic creativity was used in this Line, to serve the rhyme.)

*101 - “Garden” implies “Ridvan” (The Garden of Ridvan). See *122.

*102 - “teleportation” indicates that Bahá’u’lláh is speaking to a Su . In the 19th Century, among Su fraternal orders there was a belief in what we call, today, “teleportation” (tey yul-arz). Su s believed in

the instantaneous transfer of the human body from one location to another in the physical world. (Today, we know that “teleporting” occurs only in science fiction, movies, videos, etc.) Bahá’u’lláh tells the Story that physical teleportation of the body cannot happen, but says that the soul can fly swiftly — as spirit — in the spiritual realm of existence. Bahá’u’lláh has much more to say about “The True Meaning of Teleportation” in Lines 128-135, and He alludes to it in a few other Lines. For an informative discussion of *tey yul-arz*, see endnote #47 of Frank Lewis’s provisional translation of *The Blessed Mathnaví* on bahai-library.com.

*102 - “ying up into His Realm” to attain “His Presence” (see Line 101) suggests an ascent to Heaven, to be in the presence of God. This alludes to the story of Prophet Muhammad’s Divine Ascent (*Mi’raj*) — i.e., His rise up into The Seventh Heaven (the highest region or sphere of heaven), where, tradition says, He attained the presence of God and conversed with Him. This is briefly mentioned in the Quran (17:1) but it mainly comes from the Hadith. Attaining the presence of God is discussed in the *Kitáb-i-Íqán* and *The Seven Valleys*, and is alluded to in Lines 190, 205, 260-264, 268, 275-278, 284-288, and 294-297. “Flying up” or “ascending” to the Realm or Sphere of God is mentioned or alluded to, in Lines 97-99, 128-135, 256, 268, and 284-286 and hinted at, in a few other Lines. (For “*Mi’raj*” see *256 and *268.)

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Bahá’u’lláh’s *Mathnaví*

103 Since, right now, you're caught in the trap of clay,
how can you smell the heart's garden that way?
104 Remove those clothes that bind and constrict you.
Then cleanse your soul of things that restrict you.
105* Let the darkness of your heart be illumined from His Sun,
so in the land of souls, a noble man you will become.
106** As the darkness leaves, His Light is dawning in the sky.
On your heart, the bright light is The Light of His Sinai.
107 When your night is gone, and morning's light is clear,
and The Breeze of The Spirit's Glory blows near,
108* then — without this darkness and this ego of devastation —
you will drink The Water of Life from God's Manifestation!

*105 - "a noble man" is the translation of the Arabic/Persian term amir (emir), which means "prince", "ruler", "nobleman", "commander", or "chief/chieftain". The word amir comes from the Arabic root amr, which is associated with the concept of "command" or "authority". Centuries ago, amr was adopted into the Persian language and used for royal princes, as in the term "amirzadeh" and the title "mirza". "Mirza" came about from combining the Arabic word amir (monarch, ruler, commander-in-chief) with the Persian word zadeh (begotten of, son of, descendant of). Thus, mirza originally meant "son of a lord", "child of a nobleman", or "prince". (See *15.) NOTE: In today's world, Amir is a popular masculine name which carries connotations of moral strength, good character, responsible leadership, honor, and respect — the qualities of "a noble man".

*106 - The word "Light" (singular, plural, or implied) appears nearly 60 times in the poem, making "Light" a major theme, beginning in Line 1 with: "The world and all therein / can never beget / a Light like You!"

*106 - The word "Sinai" brings to mind Moses and Mount Sinai. (See Exodus 24:17 and 34:29-35.) For more about Moses, see *201. (For "His Sinai" see Line 211.)

*108 - "this ego of devastation" could also be: "this ego of destruction".

Bahá'u'lláh's Mathnaví

K. Morton / May 2026

109* If — from the darkness of your ego — you become free,
you'll be drinking The Wine of Life quite effortlessly!

110** Then come in the shadow of The Khez of the Soul,
so you'll be liberated from this dark abode.

111* That Khez took one drink and gave himself immortal life.
And This Khez is giving out hundreds of Founts of Life!

112 (The Water of Life — He gives away — to everyone.
His Own Life — He's given to The King, The Single One.)

113 That Khez struggled for months to get to one Fount.
From This Khez — all at once came hundreds of Founts!

114 That Khez, back then, went running after a Fountain.
And This Khez has Fountains running all around Him!

*109 - Both "Wine of Life" (Line 109) and "Water of Life" (Line 108)
are used to refer to the Word of
God spoken by the Messenger of God.

*110 - "The Khez of the Soul" refers to Bahá'u'lláh. ["Khez", in
this translation, is pronounced: KHEZZ,
the kh sound a blend of 'k' and 'h', similar to the sound of "ch"
in the Scottish pronunciation of "Loch
Ness". See also *111.]

*110 - Coming into "the shadow of The Khez of the Soul", i.e., "the
shadow of The Messenger of God,
Bahá'u'lláh", implies, among other things, coming under the
enlightening in uence of Him. The Persian
word for "shadow" (zell) can also mean "shelter", "shade",
"umbra", or "penumbra". An ancient title
given to Persian kings was "Zell'u'lláh" ("The Shadow of God").
See also Lines 91, 131, 133, 192, 193,
and 270 and their footnotes.

*111 - "That Khez" (in contrast to "The Khez of the Soul" in Line 110)
refers to a pre-Islamic prophet
gure, who is still very much loved and venerated by Muslims and Druze. This
ancient divinely illumined
soul is not named in the Quran, but alluded to, in 18:65-82. NOTE: His name is
usually spelled "Khezzr",
"Khizr", or "Khidr" (the translator has modi ed the spelling to make it
easier for readers to pronounce).
Khez is also known as "The Green One" and is sometimes identi ed with the
prophet Elijah. (See
Wikipedia.) In one of the many colorful myths about Khez, he makes a long,
arduous journey to the
Arctic Region (the "Land of Darkness") to nd and drink the "Water of
Life" from a spring (a fountain)
believed to be located there, in order to escape death and live forever (attain
immortal life). According to
online sources, "Khezzr" means: "rising", "springing up". NOTE: Khez
is referred to in Lines 111-114,

and Khez is directly addressed in Lines 115-116 and 119-120.

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Bahá'u'lláh's Mathnaví

K. Morton / May 2026

115* O Glory of the Soul! — Come back from That Dark Place,
so that a hundred thousand meanings you will chase!

116*** Hunting onagers — let that be for Gúr!
Hunt for meanings now — on The Plains of Túr!

117** You captured the lovers' souls on a plain:
now all those lives have left this earthly plane . . .

118 There's no more chance to tell the nightingale
about the rose, O King behind the veil . . .

119 Fly up a falcon — O My Beauty! — from the hand,
so that it comes back with The Meaning of That Land!

120* This time, hunt The Símorgh of Inner Mystery.
Open up a treasure — you! — with the keyword “BE”!

*115 - For “That Dark Place” see *111.

*116 - “onagers” [ON uh gurz]: are a species of wild asses native to Persia, noted for their superior running speed (40-43 mph). They are on the Endangered Species List — currently only 630 are left in the world.

*116 - “Gúr” refers to the 5th Century Persian King: Bahrám-i Gúr V [bah ROMM e GOOR], who was famous for hunting onagers. (A decorative metal plate with a Bahrám-i Gúr hunting scene is on display at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City.) See Wikipedia for more information about King Gúr.

*116 - “Túr” [sounds like: TOUR] here, means: “Sinai”, i.e., the region of Sinai, or the Sinai Peninsula, which includes the Plains of Sinai. (See *15 and also Line 209.)

*117 - “on a plain” suggests the Plain of Bedasht (which is located east of Tehran), where the Conference of Badasht (“Badasht” is the Romanized spelling of Bedasht) took place in summer of 1848. This secretly held Conference, organized by Bahá'u'lláh, was attended by Bábís who wanted to address their concerns

regarding The Báb, who was being held in a remote prison in the northwest region of Iran. In about two years, The Báb was executed by a ring squad, and all the Conference attendees, except Bahá'u'lláh, lost their lives. (Over 20,000 Bábís were ruthlessly killed within a short period of time.) The Conference of Badasht is famous for “The Incident” — Táhirih, the only woman attendee, appeared at one point in the Conference without a veil covering her face, causing chaos and consternation. One man was so upset, he slit his throat. Bahá'u'lláh wisely explained the significance of the event, restoring calm to the group. For a more detailed account of the Conference of Badasht, see *God Passes By*, by Shoghi Effendi. (NOTE: The word “dasht” means: “plain”; “desert”; “eld”; and “campaign”.)

*117 - For the meaning of “lovers” see *181.

*120 - “Símorgh” [SEE morg] is the mythical bird in Persian folklore which is, like Phoenix and Firebird, a symbol of The Messenger of God. (See *72.) See Wikipedia for a marvelous description of Símorgh.

(The translator wishes there were more space in these footnotes for descriptions of all these birds!)

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Bahá'u'lláh's Mathnaví

K. Morton / May 2026

121 That which you have promised! — Now do make it happen!

O! — From Your Light! — Illumine this earth and heaven!

122* From Your Ridván, make this world so lush and nice,
that it becomes The Envy of Paradise!

123** From Your Teachings, many anemones will unfold
in the spacious meadow of This Spring eld of the Soul.

124 Then tell each blossom Nightingale's Secret, as You must,
but Your Heart's Finest Wine share only with those You trust.

125 (Since strangers are here, one must guard the heart.
Here, it's hard to tell friend and foe apart.)

126* O Gentle Breeze of the Morning, come bring unto us,
from The Locks of The Friend, That Spiritual Musk . . .

127* O Cloud of Spiritual Favors, rain upon the world,
so this oyster will, again, bring forth a Pearl . . .

*122 - “Ridván” [REZZ von] is the name of the beautiful formal garden that

belonged to a wealthy citizen
of Baghdad who, when Bahá'u'lláh was banished to Turkey, offered the use
of his garden to Bahá'u'lláh
and His family and close friends, for the twelve days of their preparation to
leave Baghdad. It was during
that time that Bahá'u'lláh declared that He was the Promised One, and
this marked the beginning of His
Mission. (See Introduction, p. v.) Bahá'ís observe those twelve days
annually as a holy festival — “The
Festival of Ridván”, “The Most Great Festival”. (“Ridván” means
“Paradise”.)

*123 - “Teachings” could also be “Truths”.

*123 - “anemones” [uh NEMM uh NEEZ] are brightly colored members of the
buttercup family whose
petals unfold in the warmth of the sun and quiver, as if excited, with each
puff of wind, with each stiff
breeze. This is the reason they are often referred to as “wind owers”. For
more about anemones, see *70.

(See also videos online of anemones in bloom.)

*126 - For “Hair” and “Musk” see Line 71 and both of its footnotes.

*127 - Some of the ancient natural philosophers held the belief that pearls are
formed when a dewdrop, or
a drop of water, is placed inside an oyster’s shell. Scientific studies have
disproved that myth. However, it
is interesting to note that pearl-producing mollusks maintain an open
relationship with their environment
by constantly circulating water (either fresh water or salt water) through
their shell in order to support
their food supply. Occasionally an irritant will enter the shell and become
lodged inside. A sac is formed
around the irritant and begins to secrete a glossy substance that coats the
particle in order to protect the
oyster, and this is how pearls are formed. But, aside from scientific facts,
Bahá'u'lláh is drawing upon an
old myth to create a beautiful metaphor. (See *151 for “pearl”.)

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Bahá'u'lláh's Mathnaví

K. Morton / May 2026

128 To return to Inner Mystery's Explanation
and also to The Meaning of Teleportation:

129 Then, you! — O drunk from the cup of arrogance and might! —

the fire of your ego! — exchange it now for Light! —

130 so you'll traverse the universe in a single breath,
so you'll be free from confinement in this cage of death!

131** Before you come into the shadow of Him,
no news will you have — from either brain or skin!

132 The foot of your understanding is stuck down deep in clay,
with no news from the Light of His Beautiful Face that way.

133** When you dwell in the shadow of The King of the Soul,
you'll uproot your heart from the world's pomp and show.

*131 - For "the shadow of Him", see *110 and Lines 91, 133, 192, 193, and 270 and their footnotes.

*131 - If you have no news, i.e., no information, from the brain or the skin (from your inner self or the world outside of you), that means you're unaware of both inner and outer worlds — you're out of touch with reality. The expression "brain or skin" reflects the Persian idiom: *maghz o poost* (brain and skin).

The word *maghz* can mean: brain, pith, marrow, pulp, kernel, gist, nucleus, nut, etc. And *poost* can mean:

skin, peel, rind, shell, husk, hull, crust, bark, etc. Therefore, the expression *maghz o poost* suggests: both inside and outside (of something). (See also Line 73 and *73.)

*133 - Dwelling "in the shadow of The King of the Soul" implies living under the influence and rule of The Messenger of God, i.e., adhering to ("sticking to"), or following, His Wise Counsel; residing in His Domain (His Territory) under His Laws. (See Lines 131, 91, 110, 192, 193, and 270.)

*133 - Regarding "the world's pomp and show", it is worth remembering, here, the story of Bahá'u'lláh seeing a puppet show when He was a child. It was a show about war and intrigues in the court of a king, and the lavish lifestyle of the privileged and the powerful. It depicted their pomp and glory, and feasting and merriment, as well as their jealousy and scheming and vying for the top positions in the king's court, in order to prop up the appearance of their grandiosity. After the performance, Bahá'u'lláh saw the puppet master leaving the tent, carrying a box, and asked the man what was in the box. The man answered, in essence: "These elaborate action figures and devices — the king, the princes, and the ministers, and the pomp and glory, the might and power — everything you saw — is all now contained within this box."

Years later, Bahá'u'lláh wrote about this event: "Ever since that day,

all the trappings of the world have
seemed in the eyes of this Youth akin to that same spectacle. They have never
been, nor will they ever be,
of any weight and consequence, be it to the extent of a grain of mustard
seed... Erelong these outward
trappings, these visible treasures, these earthly vanities, these arrayed
armies, these adorned vestures,
these proud and overweening souls, all shall pass into the confines of the
grave, as though into that box.
In the eyes of those possessed of insight, all this conflict, contention and
vainglory hath ever been, and
will ever be, like unto the play and pastimes of children.” (Search online:
“Baha’u’llah puppet show.”)

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Bahá’u’lláh’s Mathnaví

K. Morton / May 2026

134 At the start of time, in dust you have begun.

At the end of time, you’ll fly right past the sun!

135 Then — in no time at all — through worlds of spirit you’ll

go

— without you taking a step — O mystic-in-the-know!

136** This time — A Scent from Soul’s Fragrance-Garden in bloom
has wafted through the world and filled it with Perfume.

137 Again! — The Soul’s Musk from That Garden of Giving
wafted through the world — and took away everything!

138 The knowing and unknowing — both of them are gone!

The drunken and the sober — one and all are gone!

139 Sobriety — erased! — And the eraser, too!

The drunken sobered up — and then they vanished, too!

140 What there was of Names and Traditions in the world
all disappeared, when My King appeared in the world!

*136 - People in the West plant “butterfly gardens” to attract butterflies.

In the Persian culture, people

plant “fragrance gardens” designed to have an abundance of flowers that, when
in bloom, fill the air with

a high concentration of sweet-smelling fragrances that provide a lovely
intoxicating experience for those

who are near enough to inhale the heavily perfumed air.

*136-139 - These four Lines suggest a “koan” [rhymes with: GO on]. Koans are puzzles that are used in Chinese, Japanese, and Korean Zen practice, by Zen teachers, to promote the development of insight, wisdom, humility, and intelligence in their students. A koan is a statement, story, dialogue, or question that seems, at first, nonsensical. Koans are often paradoxical, contain ambiguities, and convey profound truths about life.

~~ One well-known koan is: Two hands clapping make a sound. What is the sound of one hand?

~~ Another example is this: A monk asked Zhaozhou, “What is the meaning of the ancestral teacher’s (Bodhidharma’s) coming from the West?” Zhaozhou said, “The cypress tree in front of the hall.” (NOTE:

Bodhidharma is a 5th or 6th Century A.D. Buddhist monk who is credited with bringing Chan Buddhism to China. Accounts of him are laced with legendary myth. According to some Chinese sources,

Bodhidharma came from the Western Regions, which usually refers to Central Asia but can also include the Indian subcontinent, and he is sometimes described as “a Persian Central Asian”. See Wikipedia.)

~~ One more example of a koan: Two monks were arguing about the temple ag waving in the wind. One said, “The ag moves.” The other said, “The wind moves.” They argued back and forth but could not agree. An elder monk spoke up. He said, “Gentlemen! It is not the ag that moves. It is not the wind that moves. It is your mind that moves.” The two monks were dumbstruck.

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Bahá'u'lláh's Mathnaví

141 Even if His Names fly two hundred centuries,
that won't bring a clue to His Station's Mysteries.
142* What your eyes did see, and your ears did hear
— O leader! — of all of it, God stayed clear!
143* Then, you! —
O, with these ears and eyes — yet with no sight to see —
how will you get The News of The Beloved's Mystery?
144* Open the other eye — and see The New Friend!
Open the other ear — and hear His Voice then!
145* The eye of the foolish nothing except a footstep sees.
The eye of the mystic sees Eternity's Mysteries.
146* The eye of the mystic sees The Epic Reign of The King.
The eye of the foolish doesn't see The Face of The King.

*142-143 - These two couplets may call to mind Matthew 15:14 — “And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.”

*143 - “sight” means “insight”.

*144 - Regarding “sight” and “insight” — Bahá'u'lláh has written (in The Hidden Words, Persian #12):

O Man of Two Visions!

Close one eye and open the other. Close one to the world
and all that is therein, and open the other to the hallowed beauty of the
Beloved.

*145 - “foolish” in Lines 145 and 146 could be “ignorant”. And
“mystic” could be “wise”.

*146 - The first line of this couplet, if literally translated, would be:
“The eye of the mystic — one
hundred thousand years way”. “One hundred thousand years” has been
translated as “Epic”. The Persian
word for “way” (ráh, which can also mean: “road”; “path”; or
“pathway”), has been translated as:
“Reign”. And “of The King” was added for the rhyme.

Bahá'u'lláh's Mathnaví

K. Morton / May 2026

147 A questioner asked a mystic, one time:
“O you, who have grasped the Secrets Sublime
148* and get drunk on His Wine, do you recall
— about The Day of Alast — much at all?”
149 “I do recall That Day”, he says, and then replies:
“God's First Day it was — and it was no surprise.
150 It's always in my ear — the sound of Him —
that beautiful, soul-uplifting voice of Him.”

151* Another mystic, then — an elder more refined,
who had bored The Pearls of Mysteries Divine —
152 he said, “That Day of God has not come to an end.
We are still in That Day, and it will never end.
153 Upon His Promised Day, no night shall ever fall.
We’re in That Day — and this is no surprise at all.

*148-149 - “The Day of Alast” [rhymes with: at LAST], also called “The Day of Am I Not”, is that most important day, or time, long ago — before recorded history — when The Lord first said to all present and future descendants of Adam and Eve, “Am I not your Lord?”, and they responded, “Yea, verily, we bear witness that You are.” (See Quran 7:172 and also the footnotes for Lines 67 and 218.) This conversation occurs, in some way, between every Messenger of God Who comes and those who are the first to recognize Him. The well-known Persian poet Táhirih, who clearly recognized the divine station of The Báb, in a dream she had, shortly before He declared His Mission in 1844, wrote in a letter to Him:

The effulgence of Thy Face ashed forth, and the rays of Thy visage arose on High!
Then speak the Word, “Am I not your Lord?” and “Thou art, Thou art!” we will all reply!
— translated by E. G. Browne

*151 - “who had bored The Pearls of Mysteries Divine” — The boring (drilling) of pearls describes the process of discovering, over many long years, deep, hidden truths through intensive study of texts that contain divine knowledge and words of wisdom (“pearls of wisdom”). One who has “bored pearls” in this way usually has a deep grasp of inner knowledge (“Heart’s Knowledge”) and generously shares that wisdom with others. Pearls describe various things in Persian. For example, a pearl can refer to a single truth — or to beautiful eloquent speech: “words strung together like pearls in a necklace”. (See Line 245.) “A pearl” may also refer to a rare and precious being who has a pure soul — who is quiet, refined, modest, wise and virtuous. (See Line 127.)

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Bahá’u’lláh’s Mathnaví

K. Morton / May 2026

154* If His Relish of Life should ever leave, one fateful day,
you would see all of heaven and earth vanish right away.

155* That is why This Day has come, from His Majesty and Might,
as God's Everlasting Day — a day not followed by night."

156 Then listen, O dear one, to this puzzle
and heed The Divine Mystery's Counsel,

157 so, from His Wisdom, you'll take Sustenance,
so you'll give your life for His Countenance,

158 so you'll listen to His Every Melody,
so you'll quaff The Cup of His Generosity,

159* so you'll easily divine

The Mysteries of Love,

so you'll taste Eternity's Wine

from The Rivers of Love.

?

*154 - "Relish" (zowgh) means: "intense enjoyment"; "intense love".

*155 - "God's Everlasting Day" (Yawm) refers to what is called
Resurrection Day, or Judgment Day, in
the Scriptures. The word yawm, which appears in this Line, can simply mean
"day", a 24-hour period of
time, or it can mean a much longer period of time, such as an "Age". The
term yawm is often used in
conjunction with the idea of Judgment Day, Resurrection Day, or The Promised
Day (of God). The
expression yawm sarmadee, which appears in this Line, means "The Everlasting
Day (of God)" or "The
Eternal Day (of God)".

*159 - The word "divine" is used here in its verb form, and it means: "
discern"; "perceive"; "see".

? - marks the midpoint of the poem.

Bahá'u'lláh's Mathnaví

K. Morton / May 2026

160* I will NOT turn my face from the swords of the enemy lines —
even if these evil ones should kill me two hundred times!

161 From the beginning, my soul has quaffed Your Wine of Life.
And in the end — in Your Memory — I'll give my life!

162* O Bahá! — Kindle one raging conflagration! —
Burn the world of "knowledge and verification"!

163* Cleanse the Soul of worldly qualities!
Crack the Code of Hidden Mysteries!

164* Cast a Wave up from the depths of Meaning's Ocean,
so the hull of the literal word breaks open!

165* Pour a Cup of That Wine! — So freedom from self I'll find!

I'll break through all the veils — as Safdar broke through the lines!

*160 - “these evil ones” could also be “these infidels”.

*162 - “one raging conflagration” does not refer literally to an enormous destructive fire. Rather, it refers figuratively to a divine transformation that involves both loss and the potential for renewal. The loss, in this Line, is the loss of “the world of knowledge and verification”, which seems to suggest the Hadith, i.e., Islam’s “official” collection of thousands of supposedly “verified” hadiths (anecdotes about Prophet Muhammad and things He reportedly said that are not found in the Quran). There has long been, and continues to be, disagreement among Muslims concerning the truth and accuracy of many of these reported stories. (See *273 and *32.)

*163 - The “Code of Hidden Mysteries” implies metaphorical language that is used to symbolize, describe, imply, allude to, suggest, or refer to things, persons, or characteristics which are often spiritual in nature and difficult to describe otherwise. Metaphorical language, which includes allegories and parables and is frequently found in poetry, Holy Scriptures and religious literature and discourse, is often mystifying and may seem like a code that needs deciphering because, if it is taken literally, it doesn’t make sense.

*164 - The word “hull” generally refers to the rigid outer case or container of something. The hull (the main body) of a ship contains its cargo, hidden inside. Similarly, “the hull of the literal word” (the outer form of the word) contains its meaning, hidden inside. Words are therefore like ships, as they are vessels of transport carrying cargo inside.

*165 - “Safdar” [saff DAR; DAR rhymes with the first syllable of “Arrow”] refers to Ali, son-in-law of Prophet Muhammad and First Imam of Shia Islam. Ali, known as “The Commander of the Faithful”, was also called “Safdar”, which means “line breaker.” He was called this because he was known for his stunning ability to charge swiftly, on horseback, straight into the center of the enemy’s front line every time a tribal militia was approaching to kill Prophet Muhammad and His family and companions. Ali would break through the enemy lines with intense speed and strength, and scatter their forces. (Safdar also

means: “brave”; “warrior”.)

Bahá'u'lláh's Mathnaví

K. Morton / May 2026

166* O! — From Your Name The Tree of Life ripens with Fruit!

Likewise — From Your Hand appears The Power of Truth!

167* O! — This Man whose fate is in the palm of Your Hand

— upset this moment in time — yet calm from Your Plan —

168 Give Light to This Candle! — And then, from Him, That Light
will shine in different directions, O King of Might!

169* This — The Candle's Flame — is The Lamp You've lit,
and — in The Lamp-Glass — You've protected it,

170 and with Oil's help — from Your Generous Hand —

You've raised Him well — from The Wick of Command!

171 Then! — Protect Him from the wind of tyranny,
so Your Light will shine from Him most brilliantly!

172* Keep back from His Head the hand of the enemy!

O You, The Moon of Command and King of “Verily...”!

*166 - “The Tree of Life” (i.e., The Lote-Tree of Life) refers to The Messenger of God. (See *91.)

*167 - “Man” is a translation of the word jahání [JAH huh NEE]. According to Hayyim's New Persian

English Dictionary, jahání means: “1. (adjective) Worldly. 2. (noun) An inhabitant of the world; A mortal;

A man; A creature.” NOTE: Although others may translate jahání as “world,” this translator understands

jahání to mean: “a mortal man”. Bahá'u'lláh, it seems, is humbling Himself before God, referring to

Himself (in third person) as “This Man”, fully aware of His human mortality and pleading with His

Maker to protect Him from being killed by His enemies. (See also Line 84, in which Bahá'u'lláh refers to

Himself as “This Mortal”.)

*169 - For the meaning of “Lamp-Glass”, see *86.

*172 - In Lines 166-180, Bahá'u'lláh is in grave peril. This

tension-filled and highly dramatic section of

the poem recalls The Agony of Jesus, as He prayed fervently to God in The Garden of Gethsemane on the

eve of His crucifixion, entreating God: “Let this cup pass from me...” (KJV Matthew 26:39). In Line 172,

Bahá'u'lláh seems to be imploring protection from The Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali, who was

second in command in Islam (similar to the Moon, which is “second in command” in the sky). Ali, who

was also called “Safdar”, was known for his remarkable strength and fierce

bravery in fighting battles to
protect Prophet Muhammad and His family from being killed by their enemies.
(See *165.)

NOTE: “The Moon of Command” also describes ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, in relation
to his father, Bahá’u’lláh.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, eldest son of Bahá’u’lláh, served in many ways to
protect his father from His enemies. The
role of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in relation to his father was similar to the role of
Ali in relation to his father-in-law,
Prophet Muhammad. Both “Moons of Command” served as protectors of their
“Commanders in Chief”,
each one like a lamp-glass protecting the fire in a hurricane lamp. (See Line
169 above and *86.)

Bahá’u’lláh’s Mathnaví

K. Morton / May 2026

173* Look at Him! — This Candle of Yours — afflicted by foes!
— in the midst of a whirlwind of calamitous woes! —

174** Since, from The Light of Your Beauty, You’ve illumined Him,
then — in view of His Possibilities — don’t ruin Him!

175 Since You made His Flame so bright — don’t snuff it out!
Since You gave Him consciousness — don’t make Him black out!

176* O! — From Your Compassion — the atom a sun becomes!
And O! — From Your Wrath — the lion a sparrow becomes!

177 Attacked from every side by winds of tribulation,
Your Candle is hemmed in! — O Maker of Creation!

*173 - The word “Candle” in Lines 173 and 177 corresponds to the Persian
word sham’. On the internet

A.I. (Artificial Intelligence) says that sham’ is “...frequently used in
both everyday speech and classical

Persian poetry, where the candle often symbolizes spiritual illumination or a
devoted lover burning for the

object of their affection”. And A.I. elaborates: “...the candle, in Persian
poetry, represents the selfless

lover or the seeker...[burning]...slowly, sacrificing its physical form (the
wax) to emit light and guide

others in the dark”. (And it’s frequently “paired with the moth
(parvaneh), where the moth represents the

lover drawn irresistibly to the candle, ultimately annihilating its own ego in
the fire of Divine Love”.)

This definition fits the use of “This Candle of Yours” and “Your
Candle” in Lines 173 and 177. However,

the word “candle”, or sham’, in Line 32 has a different meaning. It
means: “brightness”, because in 1863

the words “candle” and sham’ were also used to refer to the measurement

of the brightness, or luminosity,
of light. The word “candle” evolved into today’s word “candela”.
There is a highly scientific definition
of candela on the website: nist.gov. What’s interesting to note is that, even
in our modern high-tech world,
“one candela” is the same as the brightness of one wax candle of
yesteryear.

*173 - A “whirlwind” of tribulations surrounded Bahá’u’lláh in 1863,
during the months that He wrote
The Blessed Mathnaví. (See Introduction, p. vi.) In April, He was ordered to
leave Baghdad and go to
Constantinople (Istanbul), which was the Seat of the Caliphate of the Ottoman
Empire. In Constantinople,
He was kept under house arrest, while waiting for His enemies to decide what
they should do with Him.
Bahá’u’lláh was expected to ingratiate Himself to the authorities,
renounce His claim to be The Promised
One, and bargain with them to be set free — all of which He refused to do.
And during that time, He was
also aware that His jealous half-brother was plotting to kill Him and was
spreading lies about Him, to ruin
His reputation. (For more historical information, visit bahai.org.)

*174 - “in view of” could be: “so near to”, “so close to”, in
sight of”, “in light of”, or “right next to”.

*174 - “don’t ruin Him” could be translated as: “don’t checkmate
Him”.

*176 - Regarding the “Wrath” of God, Wikipedia (under the heading:
“Matthew 3:7”) points out the
following: “Albright and Mann note that it is important not to read the word
wrath as a synonym for
anger. Rather, in Jewish and Christian thought, it refers to the necessary
meting out of final justice by an
all-loving God....”

Bahá’u’lláh’s Mathnaví

K. Morton / May 2026

178 If You want it to, then water turns into fire!

And if You want it out — at once! — it will expire!

179 The devil will become angelic, if You demand!

And O! —

How Light will bloom from Fire at Your Command!

180* If You want it to, then wind will be like oil this night
and make This Flame a blaze — and also be a Light!

181* O Glory of God! When Your Fire blazed away,
the lives of the lovers burned like a stack of hay!

182 One single Spark of Fire on the hearts You hit.

One hundred thousand bushes on Sinai You lit!

183* Then, from every heart, Burning Bushes did appear!
O, That Moses would have run headlong down from here,
184 till He saw The Real Fire of God — of the Soul —
is what delivered Him from Egyptian control.

*180 — “This Flame” refers to the “Flame” of “This Candle of Yours”. (See Lines 173 and 175.) If it were a literal translation, “This Flame” would simply be the word: “Spirit”.

*181 - The word “lover” in this poem — and throughout Bahá’í literature — refers to one who loves God and God’s Messengers, who is a faithful soul. This usage is very different from the way the term “lover” is commonly used in the English-speaking countries of the world. In the West, the definition of “lover” is generally understood to mean: a partner in a sexual or romantic relationship outside of marriage. “They think she has a secret lover” is an example of this usage. The word “lover” is used in a very different way in Bahá’í literature. The “lovers of Bahá’u’lláh” were those who loved Him in a purely spiritual sense, not in a physical or romantic way. His lovers were, and are, the followers, the devotees, and the enthusiasts of Bahá’u’lláh, who love Him sincerely and deeply, with heart and soul, and live their lives in accordance with His laws and teachings. In the Bahá’í Writings, lovers are sometimes mentioned as “the beloved of God.” They are also sometimes referred to as “the servants and maidservants of God.” (The word “lover” — in its singular, plural, and possessive forms — appears in Lines 117, 181, 223, 225, 240, 252, 253, 259, 260, and 264.)

*183 - The name of Moses appears more times than any other person’s name in this poem. See *201.

Bahá’u’lláh’s Mathnaví

K. Morton / May 2026

185* O Sacrifice of God! — From The Martyrs Field of Love,
do not turn back, but give your life in The Path of Love!
186* Without your head and life — to The Friend’s Place come!
You’ll be welcomed in This Land by everyone!
187* This is The Valley of Love! The Spirit of God — come!
With The Cross, from The Path, and even with no path — come!
188* “The firmament” and “body’s ascent” — let go of
these! —
O You! — The King of the Soul’s and Body’s Ecstasies!

189 Nightingale of Spirit — You, in The Garden of Spirit —
You will be coming again . . . You, The Host of the Spirit . . .
190** O Falcon of The Spirit,
The King's Wrist is Your Station!
Come here — freely — to this place
— Your Home — Your Destination!

*185 - "Sacrifice of God" (Zabíh'u'lláh) likely refers to Ishmael, son of Abraham. NOTE: The Bible's dramatic story of God telling Abraham to sacrifice his son differs from the Quran's version. In the Bible, it is Abraham's son Isaac who was to be sacrificed. In the Quran, it is Ishmael. There is a long-standing dispute over the identity of this son of Abraham. Interestingly, Bahá'u'lláh uses an Arabic title for him that can actually refer to either son — and, for that matter, can refer to any person who sacrifices their life in The Path of God.

*186 and 187 - These Lines pay tribute to the words and style of Rumi (See *291) in his famous work known as Mathnavi-yi Ma'navi, or Masnavi Ma'navi:

Come! Come! Whoever, whatever you may be, come! Heathen, idolatrous, or fire worshipper, come!
Even if you deny your oaths a hundred times, come! Our door is the door of hope, come!
Come as you are!

*187 - In Islam, Jesus (Christ) is referred to as: Rúh'u'lláh (Arabic, meaning: "The Spirit of God").

*188 - "The firmament" and "body's ascent" refer to: The belief in 1) a physical place called heaven up in the sky and 2) the human body's ability to physically ascend to it. (See *256 and *268.)

*190 - "Wrist" — or "Fist"? In falconry, in some places — the Middle East, for example — the bird perches on the wrist (or forearm). In other places, such as the United Kingdom, the bird perches on the fist. Whether wrist or fist, the place to perch or station yourself — or come home to — is the key thing here.

*190 - "Falcon" or the word "bird" (or a bird) in Sufi literature often symbolizes the human spirit, or soul.

Bahá'u'lláh's Mathnaví

K. Morton / May 2026

191* And then, You, O Noah! — Break through the hull of the ark!

Throw Yourself into The Sea of Lights — and leave the dark!
 192* Drown This Ego of Yours — and don't want self-protection!
 Peer out from The Pocket of God and change Your perception!
 193 Want protection from The King — and not the ark!
 So come in The King's Shelter — and rest Your Heart.
 194** And You, O Moses! — To The Soul's Sinai come!
 Remove Your sandals and mantle — naked come!
 195* So, from The Fire's Mysteries, You'll become aware
 that That Fire comes unceasingly from The Friend's Hair!
 196 His Hair is The Fire that burns away your life of love:
 unbelief and faith — and everything else arranged by love.
 197** His Hair is The Fire that sways over Párán.
 And just one single strand bends the neck of the strong.

*191 - "The Sea of Lights" (bahr-i núrání) may bring to mind "The Ocean of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation".

It may also remind one of an encyclopedia that was compiled by Persian Shia scholar Mohammad-Baqer Majlesi (1627-99), one of the most powerful and influential Shia ulema (erudite Islamic scholars) of all time. (See Wikipedia.) His writing was very popular, since he wrote in an easily understood style, summarizing the essential doctrines of Islam for the common people. His most important work, Bihar al-Anwar (The Seas of Lights), was written in 100 volumes, over 36 years.

*192 - "The Pocket of God" suggests "the breast pocket" or "the coat pocket" of God, so to speak, which implies being near God, or in the shadow or shelter of God. (See Lines 193, 133, and *133.)

*194 - For "Soul's Sinai" see *205.

*194 - "sandals and mantle" implies social standing or status, positions, responsibilities, title(s), etc. (See Lines 104 and 206.)

*195/196/197 - "His Hair" implies "His Revelation", for Bahá'u'lláh says (see Baha'i Prayers, p. 263):

I beseech Thee, O my God, by Thy hair that moveth across Thy face,
 even as Thy most exalted pen moveth across the pages of Thy Tablets...

This passage may call to mind the wispy, hairlike pen strokes on the pages of "Revelation handwriting".

(See photos online.) Bahá'u'lláh also writes, in His work titled Tablets of the Hair:

My hair is My Phoenix. Therefore hath it set itself upon the blazing re of My Face... (See *26, *72.)

*197 - Párán [paw RON] refers to the northern half of the west coast of the Arabian Peninsula, which

includes Mecca and Medina. Párán has seen the footsteps of Abraham, Ishmael, Moses, David, Jesus, and Prophet Muhammad, and is considered to be the “Heart of Islam”. (“Párán”, derived from Hebrew, means “Beauty”; “Glory”. See also Line 213.)

*197 - “the strong” means “the strongman”; “the hero”; “the mighty warrior”. (See Lines 99 and 224.)

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Bahá'u'lláh's Mathnaví

K. Morton / May 2026

198* Enough of The Fire's Secrets, O Dove Divine!

Don't cast The Pearls of the Spirit before the blind!

199 This Staff in The Hand of Truth is God's Own Saber,
cutting through lines in this world like sheets of paper!

200* That Staff came out of an ancient orchard's tree.

And This Staff — from The Cause of God came to be.

201* That Staff, long ago, came out of water and clay.

And This Staff — from The Fire of The Heart today.

202 This Staff is The Fire whose flames are burning away
the veils of lying and cheating and going astray.

203* This Staff is The Wind that in Húd's nation blew,
distinguishing the deniers from the true.

204 That Staff appeared as an ark, in Noah's time.

In Jesus' day, That Staff was Spirit Sublime.

*198 - This Line alludes to KJV Matthew 7:6 “...neither cast ye your pearls before swine...”

*200 - “That Staff” suggests the rod (the shepherd's staff) of Moses.

*201 - “water and clay” brings to mind the clay tablets of The Ten Commandments revealed by Moses,

which have strongly influenced human civilization for thousands of years. The importance of Moses is

suggested by the number of times His name appears in Sacred Text. In the Bible, the third most mentioned

name is Moses (803 times), with David being the second most mentioned (974 times), and Jesus the most

mentioned (1,310). In the Quran, the person most frequently mentioned is Moses (136 times, and the life

of Moses is narrated and recounted more than that of any other prophet).

Likewise, in Bahá'u'lláh's

Mathnaví, Moses is the most mentioned name— it appears nine times: in Lines 38, 183, 194, 205, 208,

209 (twice), 229, and 316. The frequent mention of Moses in all of these works testifies to the greatness

of Moses in human history.

*203 - Húd [rhymes with FOOD] is an ancient Arabian prophet, mentioned in the Quran, who lived around 2400 B.C., and is believed to be a descendant of Noah. He is also known as: Eber, Heber, and “Father of the Hebrew language.” Húd is in Quran’s Chapter 11 (the Surah of Húd), and Húd is also mentioned in Bahá’u’lláh’s Book of Certitude (Kitáb-i Íqán). Here, in Line 203, “Húd’s nation” refers to the ancient civilization known as “Ád” [ODD], which some historians think may have been situated in the windswept hills between present-day Oman and Yemen. According to the Quran, Prophet Húd was rejected and mocked by the wealthy, arrogant, idol-worshipping people of Ád, and when they refused to heed His warnings, a violent windstorm that lasted 8 days and 7 nights buried the city in sand, killing all of its inhabitants, except Húd and his followers, because, under his unerring divine guidance, they left the city in time to escape the storm. (Quran 69:6-8)

Bahá’u’lláh’s Mathnaví

K. Morton / May 2026

205** O Moses, Dear! — The Fire of Your Soul was set aflame!
Then, to The Sinai of the Soul one must always attain!
206* Sandals? What? No! — Of life and of beliefs let go!
Like the wind — fly away from The Land of the Soul!
207* Fly, O Bird of Spirit! — Up from these mortal places
to The Immortal Banquet of Those Flower Faces!
208* From His Lote-Tree appeared The Fire of Moses.
From His Breath came a hundred Spirits of Jesus.
209 The Fire of That Moses — from The Plains of Sinai
came.
The Fire of This Moses — from The Soul was set aflame.

*205 - Regarding the expression “The Sinai of the Soul” (not to be confused with “The Mount of the Soul” in Line 6): Bahá’u’lláh correlates “Mount Sinai” with the word “Heart” (in Line 211), and therefore, this expression may mean, among other things, “The Heart of the Soul”, i.e., the core, or essence, or fire, of the soul. (See Lines 184, 194, 195, and 209, and on the internet: “Lambden - The Sinaitic Mysteries - Writings of Bahá’u’lláh...”). Another way to view this expression, “The Sinai of the Soul”, is to think of “Sinai” as referring to a region (“The Sinai”): “The Region of the Soul”. Or think of

“Sinai” as “Holy Ground”: “The Holy Ground of the Soul”, etc.

*205 - The word “Soul” — which appears four times on this page — in Lines 205, 206 and 209 — is an

English translation of the word *ján* [sounds like the masculine name: JOHN].

When used as a noun, the

word *ján* can mean (at least) four things: “life”, “spirit”,

“soul”, and “heart”, and these meanings often

intermingle with each other. And when used as an adjective, *ján* means

“dear” or “beloved”. For example,

moddar jan means “mother dear”. But when *jan* is used informally, it is pronounced: JOON. For example:

to say “mamma dear” you say *mamman joon*. The word *ján* is important in Persian culture and is spoken

frequently. In this poem, *ján* appears over 50 times. (For a delightful discussion of this word online,

search: “8 Uses of the Persian word JOON”.)

*206 - The word “life” is a translation of the word *ján* (see footnote above). Here, “life” seems to imply

“your lifestyle” or “your way of life”.

*207 - “Flower Faces” suggests spirits that reveal beautiful spiritual qualities.

*208 - For “Lote-Tree” see *91.

Bahá'u'lláh's Mathnaví

K. Morton / May 2026

210* In The Mount of the Soul,
many distinctions one perceives.

Each of them is clear — like

the difference between fruit and leaves:

211** His Bosom — Sinai; His Fire — God's Light;

His Heart — Mount Sinai; His Hand — Brilliant White!

212 This is not That Brilliance that has come from The Cause of God.

This is That Very Brilliance that creates The Cause of God!

213* Now — This Age, This Time — The Párán of Love has arrived,
as Our Friend has cast the veil from The Face aside.

214 The Scent of Spirit . . . it comes to the nose . . .

I know not from where . . . it constantly flows . . .

215* This much I know . . . that from Her Hair somehow . . .

wafts a scent that makes the soul surrender now . . .

216* How sweet the release of The Musk Divine!

Our Soul with Her Remembrance intertwine . . .

*210 - For “The Mount of the Soul” see Line 6 and *6.

*211 - For “His Heart — Mount Sinai” see *205.

*211 - “His Hand” means: “The Palm of His Hand”. For the bright white light of the hand of Moses, see

Quran 20:22-23, and 28:33. (The Quran's story regarding "the white hand of Moses" differs from the story in the Bible. See Exodus 4:6-7.)

*213 - "Párán" [paw RON], Hebrew in origin, means: "Beauty"; "Glory"; "Splendor". (See *197.)

*215 - The word "surrender" is a translation of the Persian word nesár [ne SAAR]. According to Sulayman Hayyim's New Persian English Dictionary, nesár is a noun of Arabic origin that is used in the Persian language to refer to "Money scattered about in a marriage or feast. An offering or sacrifice. Powdered sugar, bits of almonds, etc. which a confectioner sprinkles on certain candies..." In Western societies, there has been a tradition of wedding guests throwing rice at the bride and groom as they step out of the church after the ceremony — whereas, in some parts of the Middle East they shower the bride with coins, which scatter all around her. This is an offering for the bride. The idea of the soul making an offering or a sacrifice, i.e., the idea of surrendering, or sacrificing, is conveyed in this Line. NOTE: The concept of nesár (a sacrifice, an offering, for the bride), also appears in Line 5 of the poem — with the image of all the world's people joyfully throwing and scattering (surrendering) their hearts at the feet of The Beloved.

*216 - "intertwine" here implies: "become intimate confidants".

Bahá'u'lláh's Mathnaví

K. Morton / May 2026

217* O The Breeze of The Spiritual Morning . . . gently blow . . .

from The Sheba of The Merciful . . . come, soft and slow . . .

218** till, drunken from the scent of Your Ambergris,

Our Souls fly up — from Earth to Eternity,

219* as Royal Phoenix rose up into space

from The Mount of the Soul to the placeless place

220* and, in one stroke of wing, departed earth

with That King's Promise of another birth.

221* This Time, from The Throne of God, She has come again!

Her Melodies are countless — there's no end to them!

222* From the Flower of Her Face, Winter's Month became like May!

And from Her Lips of Ruby Red, the night became like day!

*217 - "O The Breeze..." (from Sheba) recalls the words of King Solomon, in Persian literature, yearning to be reunited with his Beloved Queen of Sheba after her memorable visit with

him, asking the wind to
bring the scent of her to him from the Kingdom of Sheba (saba), that distant
kingdom where she lived.

(See *61.) NOTE: In classical Persian literature, King Solomon (Súlaymán)
speaks to the wind and trees

and birds, etc. Similarly, here, Bahá'u'lláh is speaking to the breeze.

(See also Lines 61, 126, 258, *310,
and 312-318.)

*218 - Ambergris [French pronunciation with a silent “s”: AM burr GREE] is
a strong-smelling waxy
substance that comes from the gut of the sperm whale. It is washed up on
beaches (a good source is on the
west coast of the Arabian Peninsula), and then collected and used in perfumery.
Its heavy scent is rich and
intoxicating.

*218 - NOTE: “Eternity” has been used (for the rhyme) instead of the word
“Alast” (For “Alast” see *67,
and *148.) Both words suggest a timeless place — a place “outside” of
time. “Alast” implies the end/
beginning of time — the edge/horizon of time . . . the dawn of (a new) time .

. .

*219 - For “Royal Phoenix” see *26 and *220. And for “The Mount of the
Soul” see Line 6 and *6.

*220 - “That King” refers to “Royal Phoenix” in Line 219.

*221-222 - “She”? Suddenly, the image of a gorgeous woman who is singing
endless melodies appears!

This image represents the Messenger of God — coming once again to the world
with many things to say

to us, in ringing tones, to revive our souls. In Lines 221-228,

Bahá'u'lláh uses this conventional Sufi trope

of portraying The Messenger of God (“The Beloved”) as a stunningly
beautiful, seductive woman with

long, wavy jet-black hair, glistening ruby red lips, and long black fluttering
eyelashes, who is so attractive

that she easily captivates the hearts and minds of men and brings them to their
knees! This representation

of The Messenger of God as a “Femme Fatale” may take most Westerners by
surprise. But it’s a metaphor

that is commonly used in Sufi poetry — a trope that Bahá'u'lláh
skillfully uses to symbolize the Divine

Beauty and Power of God’s Messenger.

*222 - The expression “Winter’s Month” refers to “Dey”, which is the
first month of winter in the Persian
calendar.

Bahá'u'lláh’s Mathnaví

K. Morton / May 2026

223** The work of lovers, from Her Hair, is long, indeed!

All of the loved ones, from Her absence, are in need!

224** The necks of gallant men are lassoed by Her Hair!

The Warrior of God buckles under Her Stare!

225* From Her Lovely Lips, souls of lovers lose their breath.

And for Her Union, souls of kings will search till death.

226 From Her Beauty, the eye of the soul seeking meaning

is illumined (if — in all fairness — you see this thing).

227 If it weren't in this world — The Fount of The Knowing —
how on earth would the fountains of Light keep flowing?

228 From Her Flower, plenty of Gardens have bloomed.

And from Her Face, Flowers of Meaning have bloomed.

*223 - “The work of lovers, from Her Hair, is long, indeed...” (For the meaning of “Hair” see *258.) Her

Hair is long, i.e., Her Revelation is long (“Her Melodies are countless...”, Line 221). Therefore, the work

of lovers is long and arduous. (For the meaning of “lovers” see *181.)

There is much work to be done!

What work? — First, swiftly taking down with pen and ink, in shorthand,

Bahá'u'lláh's utterances. Then

rewriting, proofreading, and producing the authorized tablets and manuscripts,
and sometimes making

translations of them, or hand copying them (copy machines had not been invented
yet), and then secretly

sending them with couriers, who often traveled on foot for great distances at
the risk of being tortured and

killed, if caught with the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh. Also, there was the
responsibility of carefully and

secretly storing all of the original manuscripts, to protect them from being
stolen, damaged, lost, or

destroyed. Much work needs to be done, when God's Messenger comes!

*223 - “Her absence” refers to the long lapse of time since she last came.

*224 - “The Warrior of God” suggests Timur [TEE moor], also known as
Tamerlane (1336-1405).

Through a series of strategically planned massacres conducted by his hordes of
armies, city after city,

Timur led military campaigns across Western, South, and Central Asia, the
Caucasus, and Southern

Russia, and after also conquering Egypt, Syria, the developing Ottoman Empire,
and part of India, Timur

emerged — undefeated — as the most powerful ruler in the Muslim world
(1370-1405). Timur referred to

himself as “The Sword of Islam” and “The Warrior of Islam”.

*224 and 225 - These lines illustrate, in a metaphorical way, the captivating,
conquering, entrancing, and

intoxicating beauty of the Messenger of God. (See also *221.) One glance from
This Beauty, and you're
under her spell. She'll humble you, bring you to your knees, uplift you, and
make you devote your whole
life to Her! Although Sufi poetry was written almost exclusively by men and for
men, the female spirit
and power in the world was often acknowledged. The poet Rumi wrote: "Woman is
the Light of God."

*225 - "Her Lovely Lips" implies "Her Eloquent Words".

Bahá'u'lláh's Mathnaví

K. Morton / May 2026

229 The Fire of Moses — find as Light in His Place.

The Soul of Jesus — find as Spirit from His Face.

230 If He comes out from behind the veil one night,

He will light up a hundred worlds like sunlight!

231 Night is naught, save The Beloved's Hair curling through
space.

Morning comes not, save from the Light of That Beauty's Face.

232 All of The Kings in The City of Love

offered their lives for The Sake of His Love.

233 From His Beauty, The Beauty of God came to shine,

and from His Lips, the hearts are quaffing Spirit's Wine.

234* All of the world is fastened to His Hair,

and for His Sake, great pain the hearts will bear.

*234 - "All of the world is fastened to His Hair..." calls to mind the
dream that the father of Bahá'u'lláh
had, when Bahá'u'lláh was about five years old. In the dream,

Bahá'u'lláh appeared...swimming in a vast, limitless ocean, and His body
shone upon the waters with a

radiance that illumined the sea. Around His head, which could distinctly be
seen above the waters, there

radiated, in all directions, His long, jet-black locks, floating in great
profusion above the waves. As he

dreamed, a multitude of fishes gathered around...each holding fast to the
extremity of one hair.

Fascinated by the effulgence of His face, they followed Him in whatever
direction He swam. Great as was

their number, and however firmly they clung to His locks, not one single hair
seems to have been

detached from His head, nor did the least injury affect His person. Free and
unrestrained, He moved

above the waters and they all followed Him.

A well-respected dream interpreter told the Vazír that the vast ocean

represented the world of being; that
his son, single-handed and alone, would achieve supreme ascendancy over it; and
the fishes signified all
the peoples of the world who would follow his radiant light.

— Source: Nabíl's Narrative, translated by Shoghí Effendí, in the volume
titled The Dawnbreakers

NOTE: Bahá'u'lláh's father held a high ministerial position in the
government of Persia, as the Vazir in
the court of the king. (Vazír means: "Minister; Secretary of State.") When
Bahá'u'lláh was 22, His father
died, and Bahá'u'lláh was offered the opportunity to assume the important
office that His father had held.

Bahá'u'lláh chose not to accept the offer.

Bahá'u'lláh's Mathnaví

K. Morton / May 2026

235** When Zulaikha saw The Beauty of That Man,
she cut her heart at once, instead of her hand!

236 One single breath from His Spirit — when it appeared,
one hundred thousand Spirits of Jesus appeared!

237 This — O man of attributes — does not portray His Light.
This portrays The Light that's from The One Who Gives You Life.

238* If one trait of His Beauty is discovered by you,
thousands from the Sea of Meanings you'll go passing through.

239 But that one trait is just one ray that, in this way, has
come.

What, then, O man of faith, must be the traits of That Great One?

240* When the eye of the lover saw where His Beauty came from,
she cut her heart from both this world and the world to come.

241* The Surging of The Seas of Love

is from His Surging Might . . .

The Soaring Height of Birds of Love

is from His Soaring Height . . .

*235 - Who is Zulaikha? [zoo LAY khuh — see *110 for how to pronounce kh]
(There are a few different
ways to spell her name in English.) The Story of Joseph (Yusuf) and Zulaikha is
a well-known legendary
tale in Muslim culture. And part of The Story goes like this: When Joseph was
sold into slavery, a high
Egyptian official, Potiphar, bought him and made him steward of his household
(See Genesis 39:1-6).

Potiphar's wife Zulaikha fell in love with Joseph, and her friends mocked her
for being infatuated with a
Hebrew slave. To prove how easy it is to fall in love with Joseph, Zulaikha

invited them to her home, so
they could see him. When they arrived, she invited them in and served them some
oranges. As the women
were peeling the oranges, Joseph entered the room. And when the women looked up
and beheld his
radiant beauty, they immediately lost control of their paring knives and
accidentally cut their hands. (See
Quran 12:30-31.) This story is not in The Bible. It is a medieval Islamic
version of the Story of Joseph
and Zulaikha. In the most famous Sufi mystic interpretation of this story, in
the 1483 A.D. poetry of Jami,
Zulaikha's intense attraction to, and fervent pursuit of, Joseph represents
the soul's deep yearning to be
connected, or united, with God. The inspiration for this version of the story,
Jami said, came from love.

(See Wikipedia.)

*235 - "That Man" refers to Joseph, son of Jacob. See *53.

*238 - "trait" means "attribute".

*240 - For the proper meaning of the word "lover", see *181.

*241 - "Birds of Love" refers to the "Phoenixes of Love", i.e.,
Messengers of God. (See *26).

Bahá'u'lláh's Mathnaví

K. Morton / May 2026

242** Since the eyes of you get their light from The Eye of Him,
it's a crime — if they see anything other than Him.

243 And since the eye of your soul obtains its Light from Him,
it's a shame — if it's fixed on others, and not on Him.

244** The eye of you, from The Eye of Truth, has become clear,
so you don't see anything — except His Beauty — here.

245* This Secret I've spoken softly . . . O fine one . . .
This Pearl I've bored under cover . . . O kind one . . .

246 so the evil eye won't fall upon His Face . . .
so the stranger won't see the way to His Place . . .

*242 - "The Eye of Him" is a translation of cheshmash, which means: "His
Eye" or "The Eye of God",
which poetically suggests the Sun, which gives light to our eyes). The word
cheshm-e can mean: "eye"

(or an opening; a hole; the eye of a needle; the mesh of a net). But it can
also mean: a spring; a fountain

— or fount — an opening through which water, or something, flows.

'Abdu'l-Baha once said that ". . . the
pupil of the eye, which is dark in color . . . is the fount of light and the
revealer of the contingent world."

(The word cheshm is used in many Persian idioms. See "10 Persian Idioms and

Phrases Related to the
Eye” online.)

*242-243 - These Lines serve to illustrate that man is a creature that has been given two kinds of sight.

And both depend upon the two kinds of light that come from God. See *144.

NOTE: Sight (both eyesight and insight — i.e., the ability to see, or perceive, both physical reality and spiritual reality) and the relationship of sight to Light (especially the Light of Knowledge, News and Truth about The Messenger of God) — is a central theme in Bahá’u’lláh’s Mathnavi. This theme is introduced in the opening — Lines 2, 4, 6, and 12 — and it springs up again and again throughout the poem. Some other Lines that highlight this theme are: 27, 48, 63, 64, 142-146, 226-227, 238, 240, 242-251, 276-277, 284-286, 291-295, and 300. (See also *38 — how Jacob’s sight was restored.)

*244 - “The eye of you” refers to the eye of your soul (line 243), or your insight. “The Eye of Truth” (cheshm-e hagh) implies “The Eye of God”, which implies “The Fount of God” or “The Spring of God”, which, in turn, implies The Messenger of God, or “The Sun of Truth”. (The word cheshm-e can mean: “eye”, “fount” or “spring” (and in Line 242 it implies the Sun).

*244 - The word “here” represents the Persian phrase dar jahan, which means: “in the world”.

*245 - “This Pearl” refers to the statement of truth, or the “Words of Wisdom”, in Line 244. See *151 for the boring or drilling of pearls.

NOTE: Complex metaphorical language, like that found in Lines 242-244, is beautifully explained in Adib Taherzadeh’s marvelous work: *The Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh: Volume 2* (Adrianople, 1863-1868), pp. 29-54. His spiritually enlightening description of Bahá’ulláh’s Mathnavi is a wonderful compliment to this translation.

Bahá’u’lláh’s Mathnaví

K. Morton / May 2026

247* And, as with your eyes, with all of your senses mark this,
so you’re free from ties to all these people of darkness.

248 When The Melody of His Mystery your ear has heard,
The Mysteries of Life — from His Instrument — it has heard.

249* When The Handiwork of God is perfectly clear,
focus your eyes on Him, and not on people here.

250 If only you could behold the world with His Eye,
over a thousand kingdoms of spirit you would spy!
251 The eye with love for Him sees nothing but His Face . . .
The bird that yearns for Him flies nowhere but His Place . . .
252 Lovers' lives burned away from union with Him,
and from His departure, hearts have burned within.
253* Either way, the lover burns — this mindless, love-struck one
—
whether from separation or from union, O son!

*247 - “mark this” means “know this”.

*249 - This Line echoes Lines 243 and 244.

*253 - For “separation” and “union” (or “separation” and “reunion”), see Lines 270 and 271 and *270.

NOTE: The word for “union” (vasl) can also mean “reunion”, since a reunion is a type of union. For this reason, “union” and “reunion” are often used interchangeably in this translation.

Bahá'u'lláh's Mathnaví

K. Morton / May 2026

254* Then know The Love of God as Your True Friend and be
— from all the shackles of this world — completely free.
255 That Love is what you'll give your life for, willingly —
you'll throw your heart and soul into Eternity.
256 To grasp This Mystery, pay attention,
so you'll fly up in divine ascension,
257* so your date palm offers spiritual fruit —
fruits of Holiness, illumined with Truth.
258* O Breeze! — From His Curls of Hair, The Perfume bring.
O Cloud! — From His Grace, rain gentle rains of spring,
259* so the garden of His lovers' hearts will be
blooming with tulips of love most beautifully . . .

*254 - “The Love of God” is a translation of eshgh-i hagh. This expression, if it were translated literally, would be: “The Love of Truth”, since hagh means “truth”. But the expression in Persian literature means:
“The Love of God.

*257 - The human being has often been compared to a tree. The human being and the tree are similar, since both of them grow and develop over their lifetime, and both can be very fruitful. They can offer protection and shelter, and can benefit the world in many other ways. Here, the life of the person being addressed is likened to a date palm. The image of man as a tree is seen often

in the Baha'i Writings. For example, in Bahá'u'lláh's Hidden Words (Persian #80) it is written:

O My Servants!

Ye are the trees of My garden; ye must give forth goodly and wondrous fruits, that ye yourselves and others may profit therefrom. Thus it is incumbent on every one to engage in crafts and professions, for therein lies the secret of wealth, O men of understanding! For results depend upon means, and the grace of God shall be all-sufficient unto you. Trees that yield no fruit have been and will ever be for the fire.

*258 - "His Curls of Hair" alludes to the soft, curving nature of the graceful Persian script flowing across the pages of His manuscripts. Therefore "His Curls of Hair" alludes to His Revelations. See Lines

195-197, *195/196/197, *223. And also Lines 231 and 234. (The elegant, calligraphic, Nasta'liq Style of Persian script was often used.)

*259 - For the proper understanding of the term "lovers's hearts" see *181.

Bahá'u'lláh's Mathnaví

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260** This — the heart of the lover — is The Throne of God, since it was cleansed from all ties, but The Love of God.

261* When, from His Love, God's House became His Home in there, God's House — and God, inside — became a hidden pair!

262 God's House, you know, is not of stone and mason's art. God's House, O lad, is nothing but the human heart!

263* When your heart is purified by The Light of Him, it's His Home, since it's become The Sinai of Him!

264 When the lover's House of God became perfectly clean, The Splendor of The Beloved stayed there permanently!

265* Again, Love has returned! — The veil of intellect — burned!

A heap of knowledge and science and accolades — burned!

*260 - This Line, paraphrased, says that the heart of the faithful one who deeply and sincerely loves God — above all else in life—is the Seat of God's Divine Authority and the Dwelling Place of His Glory and Splendor. This Line compliments what was revealed by Bahá'u'lláh in The Hidden Words, Persian 27:

O Son of Dust! All that is in heaven and earth I have ordained for thee, except the human heart, which I

have made the habitation of My beauty and glory...

*260 - For the proper meaning of “lover”, see *181.

*261 - If you think of God as being “at home” inside His House (the human heart), and if you think of these two things, i.e., the human heart and God inside it, both hidden inside the human body, you might think of God and the human heart as “a hidden pair”. You might also be reminded of a set of Russian nesting dolls (Matryoshka dolls), wooden dolls in graduated sizes that t, or nest, inside one another — the smallest one hidden inside of a slightly larger one, which, in turn, nests inside of another, slightly larger doll, etc. In this poem, there are several “hidden pairs” — a hidden pair being: two things, one inside the other, that are both hidden inside something else. (The translator has noticed nine “hidden pairs” throughout the poem.)

*263 - For “The Sinai of Him” see *205 and Line 211.

*265 - “intellect” describes the ability to reason (to think rationally and logically) so that we may know the truth about the world we live in. “knowledge” describes information we have learned about the world we live in, which we believe to be true. “science” describes man’s efforts to give us factual information so that we may increase our knowledge about the world we live in. “accolades” implies awards, favors, recognition, praises, prizes (including Nobel Prizes), titles, honors, certificates, academic degrees, etc., that are given to those whose intellect and efforts appear to have increased our knowledge about the world we live in. These four aspects of life are seen in a new light when The Messenger of God comes.

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Bahá'u'lláh's Mathnaví

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266 When no one else is in the house but Him, O son,
you will know all His Orders — head to toe, each one.

267 Then you will know as His: your eye and ear and hand.
At that time: He will see — and He will take command.

268* The soul of the mystic knower is his Mosque Afar.
The nadir of that store is where God's Mysteries are.

269 And now! — A New Remedy must be given!
This Counsel you must take to heart, so listen:

270** “Separation” and “Reunion” — Let go of each one,
so that you’ll reach your true height in His Shadow, O son!
271 In “separation” — you burn from yearning.
And from “reunion” — your fever’s burning!
272 Step into the spacious Field of Eternity,
outside this limited Square of Mortality!

*268 - “Mosque Afar” is a poetic term for Masjid al-Aqsa (literally, “the furthest mosque”), which is located in Jerusalem on Temple Mount, where, according to Islamic traditions, Prophet Muhammad’s Ascent to Heaven (Mi‘raj) occurred on His Night Journey (Isra’) around 621 A.D. His Ascent occurred before the Masjid al-Aqsa was built. But, according to some beliefs, He rose up, step by step, through different spheres to the zenith [ZEE nith] of Heaven (the highest point of Heaven — frequently referred to as the “Seventh Heaven”). And this is where, according to the Islamic tradition, He conversed with God. Line 268 suggests that, paradoxically, deep down inside the soul — down at the nadir [NAY dur], or lowest point, of the soul (nadir is the polar opposite of zenith) — is where man’s “Ascension to Heaven” occurs. This is where the wise mystic “converses” (communes) with God. Therefore, the soul of the mystic is his “Mosque Afar”, his Masjid al-Aqsa (Place of Ascension”). Therefore, no need to travel very far. NOTE: The word “store” (makhzan) means: “repository” or “storehouse”. It refers to the soul, where “God’s Mysteries are”. (See also Line 81.) This Line may also allude to a work of 12th Century Persian Poet Nizam Ganjavi, which is titled: Makhzan-ol-Asrár (English translation: “The Treasury or Storehouse of Mysteries”). This is one of a set of five long narrative poems (mathnavis), known collectively as the Khamsa, which is considered one of the most important poetic and written works in Persian literature. (See Wikipedia.)

*270 - “...you will reach your true height in His shadow...” implies that you will reach, or attain, your highest potential and most mature and well-developed self in the shadow of The Messenger of God, i.e., being spiritually close to Him, influenced by Him, and enlightened by His Teachings. See *91, *110, Lines 133, 266-67, and 288.

*270 and 271 - For “separation” and “reunion” see Lines 252-253, *274

and *275, and also *279.

Bahá'u'lláh's Mathnaví

K. Morton / May 2026

273* If the hadith: “There was God...” you’ve taken in,
and you’ve read the code: “There was naught besides Him...”,
274* then strive to free yourself from — and bring to an end —
this “separation and reunion of The Friend”.
275 When, from The Soul’s Mysteries, you’re sure that it’s
true
— that there is nothing but God, between God and you —
276 then, from the mirror of the soul, clear away the debris,
so The Beautiful Splendor of That Pure One you will see,
277 so union into union you will see,
so, in your heart, His Beauty’s Light you’ll see.
278 This union has nothing that opposes its creation!
Not only that, but afterwards, there’s no separation!

*273 - Hadiths [had EETHS] are anecdotal stories that contain sayings of Prophet Muhammad which are not found in the Quran, but which have been verified, evaluated, and approved as valid guidance for all Muslims (although there are ongoing disputes concerning their accuracy, as is mentioned in *32). There are thousands of hadiths, and the entire collection of them is called “The Hadith”. In Islam, it is common for the learned to refer to a single hadith by quoting only the first few words of it. These truncated quotes are sometimes referred to as “codes”. It seems that the two codes in Line 273 refer to: (1) the singleness of God and (2) the omnipresence of God, respectively.

*274-278 - Bahá'u'lláh counsels the Sufi to free himself from the false notion of “the separation and reunion of The Friend” (see also Lines 270 and 271, and Lines 279 and 280). Then, in Lines 275-278, He explains that, once you realize the truth that God is never far from you — that God is ever-present — and you cleanse your heart and soul (so that your soul reflects the Light of God), you will realize what true union with God is. This theme — the omnipresence of God — appears elsewhere in His Writings, as we can see in these passages on p. 185 in Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh:

God hath revealed, that “We are closer to man than his life-vein.” (from Quran 50:16)

and

Meditate on what the poet hath written: “Wonder not, if my Best-Beloved be closer to me than mine own self; wonder at this, that I, despite such nearness, should still be so far from Him.”

Bahá'u'lláh's Mathnaví

K. Morton / May 2026

279* Your “union and separation” is duality!
Listen to Father's counsel, O son — it's blasphemy!
280* Fly far from these two! Like Homa! — Go! Make progress,
so you'll soar in the heights of The King of Oneness!
281 But your foot may slip, I'm afraid to say,
and ego's bad thoughts may get in your way,
282 so I need to explain the meaning of “union”,
to uproot from your heart the weed of temptation,
283 so you won't fall from these words into haughtiness,
boasting, posturing, sedition and lawlessness.

*279 - The terms “duality” and “dualism”, in general, refer to the belief in two separate (usually opposed) concepts, such as Good and Evil, or Life and Death. Here, the duality is “separation and reunion”. This is the Sufi belief that the self is, at all times, in one of two states: either 1) far apart from God, yearning to be united (or reunited) with Him, or 2) united (or reunited) with God. Bahá'u'lláh dismisses this belief and calls it blasphemous. He calls it this because, first, He explains in Line 275 that God is omnipresent in the universe (“there is nothing but God, between God and you”). Therefore, God is always near you, never separated from you, and “separation from God” is an illusion. And second, regarding “union” with God (i.e., becoming one with God, fused or joined with God, or becoming “partners with God”), one should consider the following: the idea of a human being becoming united with God, or in partnership with God, as God's equal, is absurd, since we understand from the Scriptures that God is alone and above all that is, with no peer or likeness. NOTE: In Lines 284-288, Bahá'u'lláh explains what “union with God” really means. (See also *274 and *275.)

*280 - Homa (Arabic: Huma), also called “Bird of Paradise”, is a mythical bird with its origins in Persian folklore, fables, and legends and is a common motif in Sufi poetry. Brightly colored, from crest to tail, it is long-necked, like the Japanese crane, and has a long, glorious train of tail

feathers that trail behind it.

Legends vary, but they all have one thing in common: Homa remains in flight always — continually in the air, never coming down to earth. Similar to Phoenix and the Chinese Fenghuang, Homa is found in Turkish and Sindhi literature. Homa symbolizes unreachable heights, never dies, and is auspicious — a “Good Luck Bird” that brings good fortune. Interestingly, the Persian word hom, from the word homa, refers to “a stylized tree pattern originating in Mesopotamia as a symbol of the ‘Tree of Life’ and used especially in Persian textiles” (Merriam Webster Dictionary). Also, “Homa” is a popular female name in Persian, and the word “Homa” is a meaningful word in both Hinduism and Zoroastrianism. This is just the tip of the “Homa” iceberg! The word “Homa” is also used in Nigeria and in the Chickasaw Nation in Oklahoma. [NOTE: Oklahoma!] And Homa appears elsewhere . . . There is simply not enough space here to cover all the various ways this word is used throughout the world!

Bahá'u'lláh's Mathnaví

K. Morton / May 2026

284 Know that His Union with you is His Light in you
that, without doubt or question, is clearly in view.
285 This Light of His is His Trust in you.
Strive hard, so it becomes bright in you!
286 Then you'll find your union with Him within yourself, O
friend,
so you'll never again see “separation” from The Friend!
287 And you, in yourself, are a storehouse of God's Treasure.
But, from negligence, you're just running after pleasure.
288 Until, in you, are clearly seen the attributes of God,
you'll know yourself as lost and in separation from God.
289 He has conferred on you a generous measure
of Names and Attributes and Customs to treasure.
290* He, from His Kindness, has opened the doors for you.
O wise one, do not close these doors, as did the Jew.

*290 - Doors are symbols of opportunities. If we stay in the same room or place for a long time and never leave it, things become stale. We stare at the same place or the same walls over and over, again and again, and become numbed by them. If a door opens for us to leave that place, we then have the opportunity to experience new things in a stimulating and refreshing new space, adding to our

life experiences and our
 knowledge of the world, and this increases our wisdom. When a Messenger of God
 comes, He opens the
 door for us to enter into the Light of a New Day and benefit from the New
 Revelation He brings for all of
 humanity. When Prophet Muhammad opened the door for the Jews to accept His
 Revelation, they rejected
 Him, claiming that “God’s hand is chained.” (Quran 5:64).
 Bahá’u’lláh, in the Kitáb-i-Íqán, says: “How
 false is that which the Jews have imagined! How can the hand of Him Who is the
 King in Truth [God],
 Who caused the countenance of Moses to be made manifest, and conferred upon Him
 the robe of
 Prophethood...be chained and fettered? How can He [God] be conceived as
 powerless to raise up yet
 another Messenger after Moses? Behold the absurdity of their saying...”
 Muslims, He says, are saying
 the same thing in This Day: “Observe how...[for] over a thousand years they
 have been reciting this
 verse and unwittingly pronouncing their censure against the Jews, utterly
 unaware that they, themselves,
 openly and privily, are voicing the sentiments and belief of the Jewish people!
 Thou art surely aware of
 their idle contention, that all Revelation is ended, that the portals of Divine
 Mercy are closed, that from
 the daysprings of eternal holiness no sun shall rise again...” So, like the
 Jews who rejected Muhammad,
 many Muslims reject Bahá’u’lláh, because they claim that Muhammad is
 “The Seal of the Prophets”, i.e.,
 the last prophet to come. Bahá’u’lláh explained that Muhammad is the last
 prophet of the Age, because:

With the coming of The Báb and Bahá’u’lláh, The Age of Prophethood (the
 Adamic Cycle) came to an
 end, and a New Age began — The Age of Fulfillment. The Báb and
 Bahá’u’lláh are not prophets. They
 are The Long-Awaited Promised Ones Who have come in fulfillment of the
 prophecies of the prophets of
 the previous age.

fi

Bahá’u’lláh’s Mathnaví

K. Morton / May 2026

291*** Since you have heard the lament of That Pipe for love,
 now, this time, recognize This One — also for love.

292** And since you’ve heard The Sound of This Pipe, The Piper see.
 (Otherwise, you’ll miss The News of The King’s Mystery.)

293* The Piper saw some strangers plotting to assail,
and that is why He chose This Pipe to be His Veil.

294 Then, you! — Remove your veils at once, so He
— The Piper in the world — is all you see!

295* Like Safdar! — Rend asunder the veils — all of them! —
so you'll see The Splendor of The All-Bountiful then!

*291 - "the lament of That Pipe" refers to the lament in "That Mathnavi" (Rumi's Masnavi — see *299.

"Mathnavi" can be spelled: "Masnavi".)

*291 - "This One" refers to the lament in "This Mathnavi"

(Bahá'u'lláh's Mathnavi). See remarks in

footnote below.

*291 - In this Line, the Sufi is being invited to compare the lament that he has heard in "That Mathnavi"

(Rumi's Masnavi) with the lament in "This Mathnavi". Bahá'u'lláh is inviting not only the young man

whom He has been counseling, off and on ("O son", "O lad", etc.), to make this comparison, but also the

audience, present or future, that may be reading or listening to This Mathnavi.

This translator thinks that

volumes could be written— and will be written — comparing and contrasting these two Mathnavis, and

this small footnote can only touch on a few aspects: These works are alike, in that they are both mathnavis

written in Persian by gifted poets. And both of them discuss the soul's "separation and reunion" with God.

They are quite different, however — most obviously in length. Rumi's Masnavi is about 25,000 lines and

Bahá'u'lláh's is 318. But there are more important differences: In

Rumi's work, Rumi is "the lover"

lamenting his separation from "The Beloved", but in Bahá'u'lláh's

work, Bahá'u'lláh is "The Beloved"

lamenting the lover's separation from Him because the lover is unable to see and recognize The Presence

of "The Beloved" right in front of him. Rumi is a gifted Sufi poet and philosopher. (Bahá'u'lláh admired

Rumi's poetry.) But Bahá'u'lláh is neither a Sufi nor a philosopher. He

is The Promised One, foretold in

the Scriptures — and not just a gifted poet, but gifted with powers beyond human comprehension — far

beyond the powers of any wise philosopher. Also — Rumi's work is said to be "a version of the Quran",

however, Bahá'u'lláh's work cannot be considered a version of anything.

It is a seminal work of its own,

in a genre of its own.

*292 - “This Pipe” refers to “This Mathnaví” (Bahá’u’lláh’s Mathnavi), in contrast with “That Pipe” in Line 291, which refers to Rumi’s Mathnaví. Thus, the implication: “And since you’ve heard the sound of This Mathnaví...”

*292 - “The Piper” may bring to mind the pipe-playing image of Kokopelli, a legendary figure in Native American culture for over 3,000 years.

*293 - “This Pipe” refers to “This Mathnaví” (Bahá’u’lláh’s Mathnaví), as it does in Line 292.

*295 - For “Safdar” see *165.

Bahá’u’lláh’s Mathnaví

K. Morton / May 2026

296* Like the pipe, you cry in your “separation”,
hoping your piper comes in for a “union”,

297* as The Piper of the Soul comes in, crowing,
and the hearts of lovers are overflowing!

298 Keep on setting hearts on fire from This Pipe’s rhythm,
till you burn — in the world — all signs of egotism.

299** Man’s a hollow reed, when ego’s burned away —
like manee: when meem is gone, what’s left is ney!

*296 - “the pipe” implies the whining, moaning, complaining pipe, or reed, in the opening of Rumi’s Mathnavi . (See *299.)

*297 - The surprising, almost stunning, appearance of the word “crowing” suddenly brings to mind —and compares The Piper to — a rooster waking up the world at dawn. This is a beautiful salute to the imagery in Táhirih’s poem “Start Shouting”: At daybreak nightingales don’t sing. The cock / struts out and birds of Glory start praising. The marvelous striking image of a cock crowing at dawn is a radical and refreshing departure from the tired old trope, common in Sufi poetry, of the nightingale singing all through the night of his love for the rose (as Banani points out, in Táhirih: A Portrait in Poetry, pp.115-116). See *59.

*299 - Line 299 contains an amazing “triple analogy”:

1) When the selfish narcissistic ego is removed (“burned away”) from Man (“Man” is gender neutral here — it means: “the human being”), he becomes selfless — like a hollow ney [NAY] (see *299), i.e., a pipe, a flute, a hollow reed — a beautiful musical instrument;
2) When the pith (inner pulp) is removed (“burned away”) from the cane reed, it becomes a ney,

i.e., a pipe, a flute, a hollow reed — a beautiful musical instrument;

3) When the Persian letter M, the letter which is called: meem [MEEM], is “burned away”

(removed) from the Persian word manee [man EE], a word that refers to the self-centered ego (“I” and

ME!”) and is written with three consonants: M N Y — in other words, when M is removed from MNY —

what remains are the letters N and Y, which spell ney, i.e., a pipe, a flute, a hollow reed — a beautiful musical instrument.

*299 - The ney (the pipe, or flute) plays an important role in Sufi culture.

Neys are made from cane reeds

that are cut from their beds (separated from their source). In fashioning the ney, the pipe-maker slowly

burns away the pith of the reed using fire (older method) or heat (modern method). The hollow reed is

then, with holes and mouthpiece added, crafted into the finished pipe. The ney is the signature instrument

of Sufi music. Its low moaning sound evokes the mournful tone of the opening lines of Rumi’s famous

“Song of the Reed” (the first 18 lines of Rumi’s Masnavi Ma’navi), in which the poet likens himself to a

ney (a pipe, or reed) as he laments his separation from his Beloved (translation by Nicholson):

1) Listen to this reed, how it complains: it is telling a tale of separations,

2) saying, “Ever since I was parted from the reed-bed, man and woman have moaned in (unison with) my lament.

3) I want a bosom torn by severance, that I may unfold (to such a one) the pain of love-desire.”

4) Every one who is left far from his source wishes back the time when he was united with it.

Bahá’u’lláh’s Mathnaví

K. Morton / May 2026

300* When your eyesight is clear, from The Light of His Sun,
you’ll see nothing but The Piper, O learned one.

301* Then listen closely to The Piper’s Mysteries,
so you will take, from This Bouquet, the scent of these:

302* One spark from The Fire of His Love lit a blaze.
The heap of His kingly existence burned away.

303 When His Beauty tore the curtain from the face aside,
the curtain of The Glory of Kings was opened wide.

304 When That Beauty’s eyelash struck like a dart,
it wounded the chest of the sovereign’s heart.

305* At once! His kingly crown was snatched and thrown down,

and He became a slave — in chains — underground,
306 like prey — that's fallen into the hunter's hand . .
. .
or hay — caught in the wind and blown off the land . . .

*300 - “your eyesight” implies “your insight”.

*301 - “bouquet” [boo KAY, British pronunciation] 1. a bunch of flowers that are picked and often tied together, presented as a gift or carried on formal occasions, such as the bunch of flowers carried by the bride at a wedding ceremony; a nosegay 2. A characteristic smell of something, such as a wine or liqueur.

Interesting note: boo (a noun) in Persian, means: “a smell”.

*302-306 - These five couplets, in poetic language, allude to some momentous events that befell

Bahá'u'lláh in Persia, before He was exiled at the end of 1852. These included the death of His father (when Bahá'u'lláh was 22 years old); the loss of His wealthy privileged lifestyle; recognizing in 1844 the greatness of the Báb and supporting and promoting the Báb's Teachings; organizing the Conference of Badasht, in 1848, during which the sole female attendee appeared without a veil covering her face, causing a great upheaval at the Conference (see *117); and, two years later, the martyrdom of the Báb — His execution by a firing squad — which caused great anguish among the followers of the Báb — and, as a result, two heart-broken young men, devotees of the Báb, in their grief, foolishly fired at the king of Persia as he was riding by them, in public, mounted on a horse, one day. The shot they used was not capable of killing the king, but it injured him, and as a result of their actions, Bahá'u'lláh, although He had nothing to do with that incident, was arrested, paraded in public, chained, imprisoned, and then exiled from His homeland (see pp. iv-v).

*305 - “His kingly crown” refers to the táj (round, tapered, dignified cap) that Bahá'u'lláh wore in public, that signified His noble lineage. (The word “táj”, Arabic in origin, means: “crown.” The táj and the turban are distinctive headdresses worn by Muslim men in Persia and in India.) Genealogical charts show that Bahá'u'lláh was a descendant of the Persian king, King Yazdigird III, and also Prophet Zoroaster, as well as Abraham and the House of David, through King David's father Jesse, mentioned in The Bible.

307** If only a messenger to Iraq could be sent
to explain the pain of remoteness and this lament:
308* that, from Your parting, hearts burn with no relief . . .
chests of kings are pierced by the arrow of grief . . .
309** Between Us and You — O City of the Soul —
are now a hundred thousand Qáfs capped in snow.
310* There is no messenger, save for a tearful sigh,
unless the wind of Sheba goes and tells them why
311* the hand remains far short of the dates on the tree . . .
the soul, from afar, has cried from the eyes a sea . . .

*307 - "Iraq" is pronounced: [er ROCK; it rhymes with "their rock"].

*307 - Bahá'u'lláh lived in Iraq for ten years (1853-1863). Although under house arrest, He had freedom to move about in society, and He became well-known, well-loved, and well-respected for His wisdom, warmth, and kind and generous nature. But in April 1863, He was ordered to leave Iraq and go to Turkey. This broke the hearts of those who had come to love Him. As He departed the City of Baghdad, many people openly wept over losing their Wonderful Counselor and Friend. Lines 307 and 308 reflect the deep sense of loss and remoteness that Bahá'u'lláh was feeling in Turkey, as well as the grief that was being felt by the women and men in Baghdad who were suffering a great loss from His absence and were sorely missing Him. (See Introduction p. vi.)

*308 - The term "kings", with a lower case 'k', refers to noble, upright, and virtuous men (noble men).

*309 - Bahá'u'lláh addresses Baghdad [bag DODD, the Iraqi pronunciation] as: "O City of the Soul".

This City was once referred to as "Dar es Salaam", meaning: "The Abode of Peace". Founded in "the cradle of civilization" over 5,000 years ago, Baghdad was once the greatest city on earth. In 762 A.D., it became known as "The Round City", famous for its circular urban design and its radiating avenues, gates, and waterways. (See citiesofpeace.org.)

*309 - Regarding "Qafs" [GOFFS or KOFFS]: "Qaf" is the name of a mythological mountain whose summit is so high, that its mountain range encompasses the whole world! (Qaf is featured in Attar's Conference of the Birds.) Hyperbole aside, this Line suggests the Taurus Mountain Range that lies

between Istanbul and Baghdad. The phrase “capped in snow” has been added to serve the rhyme.

*310 - “the wind of Sheba” recalls the legendary story, in Persian literature, of King Solomon requesting the wind to bring, from the Kingdom of Sheba (Saba), the scent of the Queen to him, because he was sorely missing her. In Line 312, Bahá’u’lláh puts a twist on this legendary tale. He requests the zephyr (the gentle breeze), to bring the scent (i.e., the sense, or the news) of Himself in Turkey to all the loved ones in Iraq, because they are sorely missing Him. (See Line 308, *61 and *217.)

*311 - The expression “the hand remains far short of the dates on the tree” implies that one is still a long way from reaching a goal.

Bahá’u’lláh’s Mathnaví

K. Morton / May 2026

312* O Zephyr! — At once, from The Beloved of God,
kindly drive away, to The Abode of Baghdad!

313 Then say to Her:

“O City of God!

Where is Your pride?

Why have You remained here

with The Friend gone from Your side?

314* Your Friend is detained — Your Beloved Bahá! —
Like Husayn — on The Plain of Karbala!

315** One Husayn and a hundred thousand Yazids!
One Habib and all these demonic enemies!

316* Like Moses — in the midst of Egyptians!

Or Jesus — in the midst of the Romans!

317 And just like Joseph, fallen into a well
— that well that has no end and no way to leave —

318** Your Nightingale is afflicted in a cell!
Closed, also, in this cell — His airway to breathe.”

*312 - The word “zephyr” means “gentle breeze”. And “Baghdad”, here, is pronounced: [bag DODD].

See *309.

*314 - Approaching the City of Karbala, “on the Plain of Karbala”, Imam Husayn, who was traveling with members of his family and close companions, was suddenly ambushed and brutally and savagely slaughtered by the army of the cruel, power-hungry Caliph Yazíd [yaz EED]. Learn online about the tragic and horrifying story of The Martyrdom of Imam Husayn. It has been said

that Imam Husayn's
martyrdom is the defining tragedy of Islam.

*315 - For "Yazids" see *314.

*315 - "Habib" [hab BEEB], as it is used here, means: "Friend" or
"Beloved". See *75.

*316 - "in the midst of" implies: "in the court of" (the court of
law).

*318 - The word "Nightingale" (bol-bol) is often used in classical Persian
poetry to mean: "poet".

*318 - "His airway to breathe" implies His windpipe. He is closed (trapped,
locked) inside a cell, and

"Closed, also, in this cell" is His airway to breathe. (He and His windpipe
have become "a hidden pair".

See *261.) Saying that "His airway to breathe" is closed also inside this
cell does not mean that He cannot

breathe. It is simply saying that He cannot speak freely. He cannot, in
captivity, effectively communicate

the Divine Revelation that He needs to deliver to the world. These final Lines
of Bahá'u'lláh's Mathnaví

convey His state of extreme suspense and anxiety. His life is in peril, and He
has no way of escaping His

situation. And we are left with the disturbing reality that Humanity's Truest
and Most Beloved Friend is a

prisoner in a foreign land, in the grip of enemies who want to isolate,
confine, and silence Him.

Bahá'u'lláh's Mathnaví

K. Morton / May 2026

Translator's Closing Comments

This project was a labor of love. And an individual initiative that was begun
joyfully in the hope

of providing a tentative English translation of Bahá'u'lláh's Mathnavi
in rhyming couplets for

people to enjoy, while waiting for a translation to be approved by the
Universal House of Justice.

(In response to my query, a few years ago, the Secretariat at the Baha'i
World Centre indicated

that an English translation of this work has not yet begun, and therefore it is
not clear when such

a translation will be available.) In the meantime, I sincerely hope that what I
have been able to

offer in the introduction, translation, and footnotes herein will help people
in the Western world

to become acquainted with this magnificent work.

PLEASE NOTE: In an email letter sent to me dated October 26, 2020, the
Secretariat of the

Universal House of Justice stated this: “The friends are of course free to translate Baha’i texts and to informally circulate their translations among themselves.” They have also let me know that I should feel free to post my translation as a provisional translation on the internet.

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— Kay Lynn Morton

About the Translator

Born and raised in New England, Kay has been an active member of the Bahá’í Faith for over 50 years. In 1971, she married a Bahá’í from Iran and subsequently lived in Shiraz for three years (1971-74). She has studied English Literature and Writing at the University of Massachusetts and George Mason University, attended poetry workshops, and recited her poetry in public venues.

Blessed with three children and six grandchildren, Kay presently resides in Northern Virginia.

— Mathnavi-yi Mubarak (Used by permission of the curator)

