

poets... poetic... poetry

"He was a gifted poet, and his tongue most eloquent; a man of mettle, and on fire with passionate love."



As a Persian **Poet** has written: -- "The Celestial Universe is so formed that the under world reflects the upper world." That is to say whatever exists in heaven is reflected in this phenomenal world. Now, praise be to God, this meeting of ours is a reflection of the heavenly concourse; it is as though we had taken a mirror and had gazed into it. This reflection from the heavenly concourse we know as love.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, 'Abdu'l-Bahá in London, p. 46

O thou maid-servant of God!

Thy **poetry** was received. The context was elegant. The words were eloquent and the theme, the Manifest Light. Consequently, it was highly appreciated. Endeavor, so far as it is possible for thee, that day by day thou mayest string the pearls of poesy with sweeter rhythm and more eloquent contents, in order that it may become conducive to the perpetuity of thy name in the spiritual meetings. Upon thee be greeting and praise!

'Abdu'l-Bahá, Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá v3, p. 545

The people of universal mind recognize in this plan the symbol of assurance that we are at the beginning of the golden age that prophets and **poets** have depicted in song and fable. The people who have come in contact with this spirit of the age hold that the time has come when the highest concepts of man are to be realized and become part and parcel of every nation's fabric. With glowing faces these people tell of future ideals based on justice. They speak of international laws as yet untranslated into our language which are to govern the world after wars have ceased.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, Divine Philosophy, p. 12

The East has begun to educate its women. Some there are in Persia who have become liberated through this cause, whose cleverness and eloquence the ulema cannot refute. Many of them are **poets**. They are absolutely fearless.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, Divine Philosophy, p. 87

This station is the greatest of all stations, for this connection of the spirit of man with God is like unto a mirror and the sun of reality is reflected in it. Thus it becomes the collective center of all the virtues; its emanation is the bestowal of the king of bestowers; its radiations are the manifold splendors of the infinite luminary; its sanctity is from the highest summit of divine essence. This station is the station of heavenly inspiration and is called the station of the divine grace. It signifies that the rays of the sun of reality are resplendent in the mirror and the attributes of the sun of reality are reflected therein. This is the ultimate degree of human perfection, for the attainment of which the thinkers and philosophers of all time have longed and **poets** have dreamed; it

is the mystery of mysteries and the light of lights wherein the spirit become eternal, self-subsistent, age-abiding.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Divine Philosophy*, p. 166

At that time there was boundless joy; every believer in the country sprang to life; among them was Nabil, who hastened to the presence of Bahá'u'lláh, and became the recipient of great bestowals. He spent his days in gladness now, writing odes to celebrate the praises of his Lord. He was a gifted poet, and his tongue most eloquent; a man of mettle, and on fire with passionate love.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Memorials of the Faithful*, p. 32

He was held fast as by a magnet; he fell hopelessly, madly in love with the tender Companion, with Him Who is the Well-Beloved of both worlds. He was known everywhere for the ecstasy he was in, and experienced strange states of being; sometimes, with utmost eloquence, he would teach the Faith, adducing as proofs many a sacred verse and holy tradition, and bringing sound and reasonable arguments to bear. Then his hearers would comment on the power of his mind, on his wisdom and his self-possession. But there were other times when love suddenly flamed within him, and then he could not remain still for an instant. At those times he would skip, and dance, or again in a loud voice he would cry out a verse from the poets, or a song. Toward the end of his days he became a close friend of Jinab-i-Munib; the two exchanged many a recondite confidence, and each carried many a melody in his breast.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Memorials of the Faithful*, p. 123

On the friends' final journey he went to Adhirbayjan, and there, throwing caution to the winds, he roared out the Greatest Name: "Ya Baha'u'l-Abha!" The unbelievers there joined forces with his relatives, and they lured that innocent, that man in his ecstasy, away to a garden. Here, they first put questions to him and listened to his answers. He spoke out; he expounded the secret verities of the Faith, and set forth conclusive proofs that the Advent had indeed come to pass. He recited verses from the Qur'án, and traditions handed down from the Prophet Muhammad and the Holy Imams. Following that, in a frenzy of love and longing rapture, he began to sing. It was a shahnaz melody he sang; the words were from the poets, to say that the Lord had come. And they killed him; they shed his blood. They wrenched and hacked his limbs apart and hid his body underneath the dust.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Memorials of the Faithful*, p. 123

His name was Mirza Aqa and he was spirit itself. He came from Kashan. In the days of the Báb, he was drawn to the sweet savors of God; it was then he caught fire. He was a fine youth, handsome, full of charm and grace. He was a calligrapher second to none, a poet, and he had as well a remarkable singing voice. He was wise and perceptive; staunch in the Faith of God; a flame of God's love, severed from all but God

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Memorials of the Faithful*, p. 145

History records the appearance in the world of women who have been signs of guidance, power and accomplishment. Some were notable poets, some philosophers and scientists, others courageous upon the field of battle. Qurratu'l-'Ayn, a Bahá'í, was a poetess. She discomfited the learned men of Persia by her brilliancy and fervor. When she entered a meeting, even the learned were silent. She was so well versed in philosophy and science that those in her presence always considered and consulted her first. Her courage was unparalleled; she faced her enemies fearlessly until she was killed. She withstood a despotic king, the Shah of Persia, who had the power to decree the death of any of his subjects. There was not a day during which he did not command

the execution of some. This woman singly and alone withstood such a despot until her last breath, then gave her life for her faith.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 74

Today among the Bahá'ís of Persia there are many women who are the very pride and envy of the men. They are imbued with all the virtues and excellences of humanity. They are eloquent; they are poets and scholars and embody the quintessence of humility. In political ability and acumen they have been able to cope and compete with representative men. They have consecrated their lives and forfeited their possessions in martyrdom for the sake of humanity, and the traces of their glory will last forever. The pages of the history of Persia are illumined by the lives and records of these women.

The purpose, in brief, is this: that if woman be fully educated and granted her rights, she will attain the capacity for wonderful accomplishments and prove herself the equal of man. She is the coadjutor of man, his complement and helpmeet. Both are human; both are endowed with potentialities of intelligence and embody the virtues of humanity. In all human powers and functions they are partners and coequals. At present in spheres of human activity woman does not manifest her natal prerogatives, owing to lack of education and opportunity. Without doubt education will establish her equality with men. Consider the animal kingdom, where no distinction is observed between male and female. They are equal in powers and privileges. Among birds of the air no distinction is evidenced. Their powers are equal; they dwell together in complete unity and mutual recognition of rights. Shall we not enjoy the same equality? Its absence is not befitting to mankind.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 136

The Holy Books have their special terminologies which must be known and understood. Physicians have their own peculiar terms; architects, philosophers have their characteristic expressions; poets have their phrases; and scientists, their nomenclature.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 246

If a man understands the real meaning of a poet's verses such as those of Shakespeare, he is pleased and rejoiced. How much greater his joy and pleasure when he perceives the reality of the Holy Scriptures and becomes informed of the mysteries of the Kingdom!

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 460

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." ... Considering what God hath revealed, that "We are closer to man than his life-vein," the poet hath, in allusion to this verse, stated that, though the revelation of my Best-Beloved hath so permeated my being that He is closer to me than my life-vein, yet, notwithstanding my certitude of its reality and my recognition of my station, I am still so far removed from Him. By this he meaneth that his heart, which is the seat of the All-Merciful and the throne wherein abideth the splendor of His revelation, is forgetful of its Creator, hath strayed from His path, hath shut out itself from His glory, and is stained with the defilement of earthly desires.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 184

Many mysterious things became revealed, and among them was this very subject. So that outside of Europe and America, even in the Orient today it is a well-known fact, if not well practised, that woman is equal to man. There have appeared women who have been verily the signs of guidance, might and power! Some have been notable poets. Some philosophic minds. Some brave and courageous. Among the brave were those

who exhibited their valor and courage on the battlefield. And the poetesses have left their poetical works, which are masterpieces of poetry. To the latter class belongs Qurratu'l-'Ayn, who was a Bahá'í. She was the one who discomfited all the learned men of Persia. In whatsoever meeting she entered, the learned were silent. She was so well versed in the philosophy and science of the times that the learned men always considered her first. And her courage was unparalleled, to the extent that she withstood her enemies until she was killed. She withstood a king and monarch, the Shah of Persia, who was a most despotic man, a despot who through his decree could kill a thousand men each day. There was not a day during which he did not kill many people. This woman, singly and alone, was capable of withstanding such a monarch until her last breath, and then she offered her life -- sacrificed it.

Compilations, *Bahá'í Scriptures*, p. 308

Then will the coming of age of the entire human race be proclaimed and celebrated by all the peoples and nations of the earth. Then will the banner of the Most Great Peace be hoisted. Then will the world wide sovereignty of Bahá'u'lláh -- the Establisher of the Kingdom of the Father foretold by the Son, and anticipated by the Prophets of God before Him and after Him -- be recognized, acclaimed, and firmly established. Then will a world civilization be born, flourish, and perpetuate itself, a civilization with a fullness of life such as the world has never seen nor can as yet conceive. Then will the Everlasting Covenant be fulfilled in its completeness. Then will the promise enshrined in all the Books of God be redeemed, and all the prophecies uttered by the Prophets of old come to pass, and the vision of seers and poets be realized. Then will the planet, galvanized through the universal belief of its dwellers in one God, and their allegiance to one common Revelation, mirror, within the limitations imposed upon it, the effulgent glories of the sovereignty of Bahá'u'lláh, shining in the plenitude of its splendour in the Abha Paradise, and be made the footstool of His Throne on high, and acclaimed as the earthly heaven, capable of fulfilling that ineffable destiny fixed for it, from time immemorial, by the love and wisdom of its Creator.

28 March 1941, published in "*The Promised Day Is Come*" pp. 122-124

Compilations, *The Compilation of Compilations vol II*, p. 187

The wine mentioned in the Tablets has undoubtedly a spiritual meaning for in the "Book of Aqdas" we are definitely forbidden to take not only wine, but everything that deranges the mind. In poetry as a whole wine is taken to have a different connotation than the ordinary intoxicating liquid. We see it thus used by the Persian poets such as Saadi and Umar Khayyam and Hafiz to mean that element which nears man to his divine beloved, which makes him forget his material self so as better to seek his spiritual desires. It is very necessary to tell the children what this wine means so that they may not confuse it with the ordinary wine.

4 November 1926 to an individual believer

Compilations, *The Compilation of Compilations vol II*, p. 247

Not only have They revealed all the directions required for the practical realization of those ideals which the Prophets of God have visualized, and which from time immemorial have inflamed the imagination of seers and poets in every age.

Compilations, *The Compilation of Compilations vol. I*, p. 334

'Abdu'l-Bahá said...: "All Art is a gift of the Holy Spirit. When this light shines through the mind of a musician, it manifests itself in beautiful harmonies. Again, shining through the mind of a poet, it is seen in fine poetry and poetic prose. When the Light of the Sun of Truth inspires the mind of a painter, he produces marvellous pictures. These gifts are fulfilling their highest purpose, when showing forth the praise of God."

Lady Blomfield, *"The Chosen Highway" Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1954, p. 167 [23]*

It is natural for the heart and spirit to take pleasure and enjoyment in all things that show forth symmetry, harmony, and perfection. For instance: a beautiful house, a well designed garden, a symmetrical line, a graceful motion, a well written book, pleasing garments -- in fact, all things that have in themselves grace or beauty are pleasing to the heart and spirit -- therefore, it is most certain that a true voice causes deep pleasure.

'Abdu'l-Bahá's words to Mrs. Mary L. Lucas, as quoted in *"A Brief Account of My Visit to Acca"* Chicago: Bahá'í Publishing Society, 1905, pp. 11-14 [24]

Compilations, The Importance of the Arts in Promoting the Faith

The Guardian sincerely hopes that by reading this book the friends will be stirred to greater activity and a higher measure of sacrifice, that they will obtain a deeper realization of this Cause whose spread and ultimate victory is entrusted to their care. As some who have read the book have remarked, no one can become familiar with those lives and not be inspired to follow in their way.

It is surely true that the spirit of those heroic souls will stir many artists to produce their best. It is such lives that in the past inspired poets and moved the brush of the painters. 20 June 1932, to an individual [29]

Compilations, The Importance of the Arts in Promoting the Faith

He wishes to start a new section in "The Bahá'í World" devoted wholly to poems written by Bahá'ís. Though it may be a humble beginning it is a start for great future achievements. Shoghi Effendi wishes thereby to encourage those who are talented to give expression to the wonderful spirit that animates them. We need poets and writers for the Cause and this is undoubtedly one good way to urge them on. Some of the poems are written by very youthful persons yet they ring so true and give expression to such thoughts that one should halt and admire. In Persia the Cause has given birth to poets that even non-Bahá'ís consider as great. We hope before long we will have similar persons arise in the West.

2 January 1932, to an individual [27]

Compilations, The Importance of the Arts in Promoting the Faith

congregated in the seminaries of Sulaymaniyyih and Karkuk, were now following His daily activities. Through His numerous discourses and epistles He disclosed new vistas to their eyes, resolved the perplexities that agitated their minds, unfolded the inner meaning of many hitherto obscure passages in the writings of various commentators, poets and theologians, of which they had remained unaware, and reconciled the seemingly contradictory assertions which abounded in these dissertations, poems and treatises. Such was the esteem and respect entertained for Him that some held Him as One of the "Men of the Unseen," others accounted Him an adept in alchemy and the science of divination, still others designated Him "a pivot of the universe," whilst a not inconsiderable number among His admirers went so far as to believe that His station was no less than that of a prophet. Kurds, Arabs, and Persians, learned and illiterate, both high and low, young and old, who had come to know Him, regarded Him with equal reverence, and not a few among them with genuine and profound affection, and

this despite certain assertions and allusions to His station He had made in public, which, had they fallen from the lips of any other member of His race, would have provoked such fury as to endanger His life. Small wonder that Bahá'u'lláh Himself should have, in the Lawh-i-Maryam, pronounced the period of His retirement as "the mightiest testimony" to, and "the most perfect and conclusive evidence" of, the truth of His Revelation. "In a short time," is 'Abdu'l-Bahá's own testimony, "Kurdistan was magnetized with His love. During this period Bahá'u'lláh lived in poverty. His garments were those of the poor and needy. His food was that of the indigent and lowly. An atmosphere of majesty haloed Him as the sun at midday. Everywhere He was greatly revered and loved."

Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 123

The unqualified recognition by these outstanding leaders of those traits that distinguished the character and conduct of Bahá'u'lláh stimulated the curiosity, and later evoked the unstinted praise, of a great many observers of less conspicuous position, among whom figured poets, mystics and notables, who either resided in, or visited, the city.

Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 129

Mulla Muhammad-i-Zarandi, surnamed Nabil-i-Azam, who may well rank as His Poet-Laureate, His chronicler and His indefatigable disciple, had already joined the exiles, and had launched out on his long and arduous series of journeys to Persia in furtherance of the Cause of his Beloved.

Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 130

No less significant are the words addressed separately by Him to the "people of the Bayan," to the wise men of the world, to its poets, to its men of letters, to its mystics and even to its tradesmen, in which He exhorts them to be attentive to His voice, to recognize His Day, and to follow His bidding.

Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 211

For a full week a vast number of mourners, rich and poor alike, tarried to grieve with the bereaved family, partaking day and night of the food that was lavishly dispensed by its members. Notables, among whom were numbered Shí'ahs, Sunnis, Christians, Jews and Druzes, as well as poets, ulamas and government officials, all joined in lamenting the loss, and in magnifying the virtues and greatness of Bahá'u'lláh, many of them paying to Him their written tributes, in verse and in prose, in both Arabic and Turkish. From cities as far afield as Damascus, Aleppo, Beirut and Cairo similar tributes were received. These glowing testimonials were, without exception, submitted to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Who now represented the Cause of the departed Leader, and Whose praises were often mingled in these eulogies with the homage paid to His Father.

Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 222

"Its inception," the architect of the Temple has himself testified, "was not from man, for, as musicians, artists, poets receive their inspiration from another realm, so the Temple's architect, through all his years of labor, was ever conscious that Bahá'u'lláh was the creator of this building to be erected to His glory." "Into this new design," he, furthermore, has written, "...is woven, in symbolic form, the great Bahá'í teaching of unity -- the unity of all religions and of all mankind. There are combinations of mathematical lines, symbolizing those of the universe, and in their intricate merging of circle into circle, and circle within circle, we visualize the merging of all the religions into one." And again: "A circle of steps, eighteen in all, will surround the structure on the outside, and lead to the auditorium floor. These eighteen steps represent the eighteen first disciples of the Báb, and the door to which they lead stands for the Báb Himself."

"As the essence of the pure original teachings of the historic religions was the same ... in the Bahá'í Temple is used a composite architecture, expressing the essence in the line of each of the great architectural styles, harmonizing them into one whole."

Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 351

One day, as the Báb, in the company of Mulla Husayn, was looking out over the landscape of the surrounding country from the roof of the castle, He gazed towards the west and, as He saw the Araxes winding its course far away below Him, turned to Mulla Husayn and said: "That is the river, and this is the bank thereof, of which the poet Hafiz has thus written: 'O zephyr, shouldst thou pass by the banks of the Araxes, implant a kiss on the earth of that valley and make fragrant thy breath. Hail, a thousand times hail, to thee, O abode of Salma! How dear is the voice of thy camel-drivers, how sweet the jingling of thy bells!'[1] The days of your stay in this country are approaching their end. But for the shortness of your stay, we would have shown you the 'abode of Salma,' even as we have revealed to your eyes the 'banks of the Araxes.'" By the "abode of Salma" the Báb meant the town of Salmas, which is situated in the neighbourhood of Chihriq and which the Turks designate as Salmas. Continuing His remarks, the Báb said: "It is the immediate influence of the Holy Spirit that causes words such as these to stream from the tongue of poets, the significance of which they themselves are oftentimes unable to apprehend. The following verse is also divinely inspired: 'Shiraz will be thrown into a tumult; a Youth of sugar-tongue will appear. I fear lest the breath of His mouth should agitate and upset Baghdad.' The mystery enshrined within this verse is now concealed; it will be revealed in the year after Hin." [2] The Báb subsequently quoted this well-known tradition: "Treasures lie hidden beneath the throne of God; the key to those treasures is the tongue of poets." He then, one after the other, related to Mulla Husayn those events which must needs transpire in the future, and bade him not to mention them to anyone. [3] "A few days after your departure from this place," the Báb informed him, "they will transfer Us to another mountain. Ere you arrive at your destination, the news of Our departure from Mah-Ku will have reached you."

[1 According to Haji Mu'inu's-Saltanih's narrative pp. 67-8, Mirza Habib-i-Shirazi better known by the name of Qa'ini, one of the most eminent poets of Persia, was the first to sing the praise of the Báb and to extol the loftiness of His station. A manuscript copy of Qa'ini's poems, containing these verses, was shown to the author of the narrative. The following words, he says, were written at the head of the eulogy: 'In praise of the manifestation of the Siyyid-i-Bab.]

Shoghi Effendi, *The Dawn-Breakers*, p. 257

The welding of the communities of East and West into the world-wide Brotherhood of which poets and dreamers have sung, and the promise of which lies at the very core of the Revelation conceived by Bahá'u'lláh; the recognition of His law as the indissoluble bond uniting the peoples and nations of the earth; and the proclamation of the reign of the Most Great Peace, are but a few among the chapters of the glorious tale which the consummation of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh will unfold.

Shoghi Effendi, *The Dawn-Breakers*, p. 667

Then will the coming of age of the entire human race be proclaimed and celebrated by all the peoples and nations of the earth. Then will the banner of the Most Great Peace be hoisted. Then will the worldwide sovereignty of Bahá'u'lláh -- the Establisher of the Kingdom of the Father foretold by the Son, and anticipated by the Prophets of God before Him and after Him -- be recognized, acclaimed, and firmly established. Then will a world civilization be born, flourish, and perpetuate itself, a civilization with a fullness of life such as the world has never seen nor can as yet conceive. Then will the Everlasting Covenant be fulfilled in its completeness. Then will the promise enshrined in all the Books of God be redeemed, and all the prophecies uttered by the Prophets of old come

to pass, and the vision of seers and poets be realized. Then will the planet, galvanized through the universal belief of its dwellers in one God, and their allegiance to one common Revelation, mirror, within the limitations imposed upon it, the effulgent glories of the sovereignty of Bahá'u'lláh, shining in the plenitude of its splendor in the Abha Paradise, and be made the footstool of His Throne on high, and acclaimed as the earthly heaven, capable of fulfilling that ineffable destiny fixed for it, from time immemorial, by the love and wisdom of its Creator.

Not ours, puny mortals that we are, to attempt, at so critical a stage in the long and checkered history of mankind, to arrive at a precise and satisfactory understanding of the steps which must successively lead a bleeding humanity, wretchedly oblivious of its God, and careless of Bahá'u'lláh, from its calvary to its ultimate resurrection. Not ours, the living witnesses of the all-subduing potency of His Faith, to question, for a moment, and however dark the misery that enshrouds the world, the ability of Bahá'u'lláh to forge, with the hammer of His Will, and through the fire of tribulation, upon the anvil of this travailing age, and in the particular shape His mind has envisioned, these scattered and mutually destructive fragments into which a perverse world has fallen, into one single unit, solid and indivisible, able to execute His design for the children of men.

Ours rather the duty, however confused the scene, however dismal the present outlook, however circumscribed the resources we dispose of, to labor serenely, confidently, and unremittingly to lend our share of assistance, in whichever way circumstances may enable us, to the operation of the forces which, as marshaled and directed by Bahá'u'lláh, are leading humanity out of the valley of misery and shame to the loftiest summits of power and glory.

Shoghi Effendi, *The Promised Day is Come*, p. 123

...Shoghi Effendi wishes ... to encourage those who are talented to give expression to the wonderful spirit that animates them. We need poets and writers for the Cause.... Some of the poems are written by very youthful persons yet they ring so true and give expression to such thoughts that one should halt and admire. In Persia the Cause has given birth to poets that even non-Bahá'ís consider them as great. We hope before long we will have similar persons arise in the West.

Shoghi Effendi, *The Unfolding Destiny of the British Bahá'í Community*, p. 429

Upon the consummation of this colossal, this unspeakably glorious enterprise -- an enterprise that baffled the resources of Roman statesmanship and which Napoleon's desperate efforts failed to achieve -- will depend the ultimate realization of that millennium of which poets of all ages have sung and seers have long dreamed. Upon it will depend the fulfillment of the prophecies uttered by the Prophets of old when swords shall be beaten into ploughshares and the lion and the lamb lie down together. It alone can usher in the Kingdom of the Heavenly Father as anticipated by the Faith of Jesus Christ. It alone can lay the foundation for the New World Order visualized by Bahá'u'lláh -- a World Order that shall reflect, however dimly, upon this earthly plane, the ineffable splendors of the Abha Kingdom.

Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 46

Mawlavi, the greatest of all the mystic poets of the East, whose poems are known for their elucidations of the spiritual journey of man and his attainments in the realms of God, has stated, "We have found Baha and we hasten to offer our life as a sacrifice to Him. He is our ransom." [1]

[1 'Nabil's Narrative', p. 72, "whoso seeketh Me, shall find Me..." a Tradition.]

Hafiz, the most renowned of all lyric poets of the East, addressed Persia, saying, "May this land remain forever prosperous. From its sacred soil at every breath the breezes of the Merciful are wafted. Glad tidings to the glorious Kings of Persia! Glad tidings for a blissful ending! The power of the Greatest Name has stayed away the hand of evil from that country."

Abu'l-Qasim Faizi, *An Explanation of the Greatest Name*, p. 7

When the beauty of the Desired One had vanished from this world, Ali-Akbar remained loyal to the Covenant and prospered under the grace of God. By disposition and because of the intense love in his heart, he yearned to write poetry, to fashion odes and ghazals, but he lacked both meter and rhyme:

I planned a poem, but my Beloved told me,
"Plan only this, that thine eyes should behold Me."

With rapturous longing, his heart desired the realms of his compassionate Lord; consumed by burning love, he left this world at last, and pitched his tent in the world above. May God send down upon his grave, from the Kingdom of His forgiveness, a heavy rain [1] of blessings, bestow a great victory upon him, and grant him mercies, pressed down and running over, in the retreats of Heaven.

[1 Qur'án 2:266, 267.]

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Memorials of the Faithful*, p. 105

Thy letter was received. It was written in Persian. I was very much pleased. I hope thou wilt memorize all the poetry of the Blessed Perfection and chant with wonderful melody in the assemblages and gatherings. These verses will soon be translated into English poetical form and then this Divine Song will rise from those lands and reach the ABHA Kingdom in utmost joy and happiness.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá v1*, p. 212

Every word of thy poetry is indeed like unto a mirror in which the evidences of the devotion and love thou cherishest for God and His chosen ones are reflected. Well is it with thee who hast quaffed the choice wine of utterance and partaken of the soft flowing stream of true knowledge. Happy is he who hath drunk his fill and attained unto Him and woe betide the heedless. Its perusal hath truly proved highly impressive, for it was indicative of both the light of reunion and the fire of separation.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 175

Many mysterious things became revealed, and among them was this very subject. So that outside of Europe and America, even in the Orient today it is a well-known fact, if not well practised, that woman is equal to man. There have appeared women who have been verily the signs of guidance, might and power! Some have been notable poets. Some philosophic minds. Some brave and courageous. Among the brave were those who exhibited their valor and courage on the battlefield. And the poetesses have left their poetical works, which are masterpieces of poetry. To the latter class belongs Qurratu'l-'Ayn, who was a Bahá'í. She was the one who discomfited all the learned men of Persia. In whatsoever meeting she entered, the learned were silent. She was so well versed in the philosophy and science of the times that the learned men always considered her first. And her courage was unparalleled, to the extent that she withstood her enemies until she was killed. She withstood a king and monarch, the Shah of Persia, who was a most despotic man, a despot who through his decree could kill a thousand men each day. There was not a day during which he did not kill many people. This woman, singly and alone, was capable of withstanding such a monarch until her last breath, and then she offered her life -- sacrificed it.

Compilations, *Bahá'í Scriptures*, p. 308

Voice is the vibration of the air, and is like the waves of the sea. The voice is produced through the instrumentality of the lips, throat, teeth, tongue, etc. These cause a wave in the air, and this wave reaches the nerve of the ear, which is thereby affected. This is the voice.

There are two kinds of voices. One when the complete instrument is perfect, then the emission of sound is perfect. The second is when the instrument is imperfect, it affects the voice in such a way that it is far from pleasing. What we have just said refers to the voice itself.

It is natural for the heart and spirit to take pleasure and enjoyment in all things that show forth symmetry, harmony, and perfection. For instance: a beautiful house, a well designed garden, a symmetrical line, a graceful motion, a well written book, pleasing garments -- in fact, all things that have in themselves grace or beauty are pleasing to the heart and spirit -- therefore, it is most certain that a true voice causes deep pleasure.

What is music? It is a combination of harmonious sounds. What is poetry? It is a symmetrical collection of words. Therefore, they are pleasing through harmony and rhythm. Poetry is much more effective and complete than prose. It stirs more deeply, for it is of a finer composition.

A fine voice when joined to beautiful music causes a great effect, for both are desirable and pleasing. All these have in themselves an organization, and are constructed on natural law. Therefore, they correspond to the order of existence like something which would fit into a mold. A true voice fits into the mold of nature. When it is so, this affects the nerves, and they affect the heart and spirit.

In the world of existence physical things have a connection with spiritual realities. One of these things is the voice, which connects itself with the spirit; and the spirit can be uplifted by this means -- for though it is a physical thing, it is one of the material, natural organizations -- therefore, it is effective.

All forms when understood aright gladden the spirit. Melodies are like water. The voice is like a goblet. The pure water in a pure glass is pleasing. Therefore, it is acceptable. But even though the water be pure, if it be in a goblet which is not so, this receptacle

will make it unacceptable. Therefore, a faulty voice even though the music be good, is displeasing.

In short: melodies, though they are material, are connected with the spiritual, therefore, they produce a great effect. A certain kind of melody makes the spirit happy, another kind makes it sad, another excites it to action.

All these feelings can be caused by voice and music, for through the nerves it moves and stirs the spirit. Even over animals, music has an effect. For example: When they wish to take a camel over a desert road, they attach to him some bells, or they play upon a flute, and this sound prevents him from realizing the fatigue of the journey; his nerves are affected, but he does not have an increase of thought, he feels nothing but physical sensation.

Whatever is in the heart of man, melody moves and awakens. If a heart full of good feelings and a pure voice are joined together, a great effect is produced. For instance: if there be love in the heart, through melody, it will increase until its intensity can scarcely be borne; but if bad thoughts are in the heart, such as hatred, it will increase and multiply. For instance: the music used in war awakens the desire for bloodshed. The meaning is that melody causes whatever feeling is in the heart to increase.

Some feelings occur accidentally and some have a foundation. For example: some people are naturally kind, but they may be accidentally upset by a wave of anger. But if they hear music, the true nature will reassert itself. Music really awakens the real, natural nature, the individual essence.

With whatever purpose you listen to music, that purpose will be increased. For instance: there will be a concert given for the poor and unfortunate, and if you go there thinking of the aim, the music will increase your compassion and generosity. This is the reason why music is used in war. And so it is with all the things that cause the excitation of the nerves.

'Abdu'l-Bahá's words to Mrs. Mary L. Lucas, as quoted in "*A Brief Account of My Visit to Acca*" Chicago: Bahá'í Publishing Society, 1905, pp. 11-14

Compilations, The Compilation of Compilations vol II, p. 78

'Abdu'l-Bahá's supreme joy is in observing that a number of leaves from among the handmaidens of the Blessed Beauty have been educated, that they are the essence of detachment, and are well-informed of the mysteries of the world of being; that they raise such a call in their glorification and praise of the Greatest Name as to cause the inmates of the Fanes of the Kingdom to become attracted and overjoyed, and that they recite prayers in prose and poetry, and melodiously chant the divine verses. I cherish the hope that thou wilt be one of them, wilt cast forth pearls, wilt be constantly engaged in singing His praise and wilt intone celestial strains in glorification of His attributes....

From a Tablet - translated from the Persian

Compilations, The Compilation of Compilations vol II, p. 373

Every word of thy poetry is indeed like unto a mirror in which the evidences of the devotion and love thou cherishest for God and His chosen ones are reflected. Well is it with thee who hast quaffed the choice wine of utterance and partaken of the soft flowing stream of true knowledge. Happy is he who hath drunk his fill and attained unto Him and woe betide the heedless. Its perusal hath truly proved highly impressive, for it was indicative of both the light of reunion and the fire of separation.

From the Lawh-i-Maqsud, published in "*Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh Revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, pp. 175-76

Compilations, The Compilation of Compilations vol II, p. 409

This distinguished man was erudite, wise, and eloquent of speech. His native genius was pure inspiration, his poetic gift like a crystal stream. In particular his ode "Baha, Baha!" was written in sheer ecstasy. Throughout all his life, from earliest youth till he was feeble and old, he spent his time serving and worshiping the Lord. He bore hardships, he lived through misfortunes, he suffered afflictions. From the lips of the Manifestation he heard marvelous things. He was shown the lights of Paradise; he won his dearest wish. And at the end, when the Daystar of the world had set, he could endure no more, and flung himself into the sea. The waters of sacrifice closed over him; he was drowned, and he came, at last, to the Most High.

Upon him be abundant blessings; upon him be tender mercies. May he win a great victory, and a manifest grace in the Kingdom of God.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Memorials of the Faithful*, p. 35

Aqa Muhammad had a fine poetic gift, and he would create verses like stringed pearls.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Memorials of the Faithful*, p. 81

Many of the Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá are in exalted and highly poetic language in the original Persian and Arabic and you will see, for example, that when translating Bahá'u'lláh's Writings into English the beloved Guardian did not use present-day colloquial English but evolved a highly poetic and beautiful style, using numbers of archaic expressions reminiscent of the translations of the Bible."

From a letter dated 7 October 1973, written by the Universal House of Justice to a National Spiritual Assembly

Compilations, Lights of Guidance, p. 108

'Abdu'l-Bahá said...: "All Art is a gift of the Holy Spirit. When this light shines through the mind of a musician, it manifests itself in beautiful harmonies. Again, shining through the mind of a poet, it is seen in fine poetry and poetic prose. When the Light of the Sun of Truth inspires the mind of a painter, he produces marvellous pictures. These gifts are fulfilling their highest purpose, when showing forth the praise of God."

Lady Blomfield, "*The Chosen Highway*" Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1954, p. 167 [23]

Compilations, The Importance of the Arts in Promoting the Faith

...we feel that it will be helpful to you to know that songs whose words are the primary Writings of the Báb, Bahá'u'lláh or 'Abdu'l-Bahá are all quite fitting for the devotional portion of the Feast. Indeed, the Persian chants are such songs, out of a different tradition; they are a way of giving music to the holy Word, and each person who chants does it in a way which mirrors his feeling and expression of the Words he is uttering. As for songs whose words are poetic and the composition of persons other than the Figures of the Faith, these may be desirable but in their proper place....

Inasmuch as the spirit of our gatherings is so much affected by the tone and quality of our worship, of our feeling and appreciation of the Word of God for this day, we would hope that you would encourage the most beautiful possible expression of the human spirits in your communities, through music among other modes of feeling.

22 February 1971, by the Universal House of Justice to a National Spiritual Assembly [44]

Compilations, The Importance of the Arts in Promoting the Faith

Among the best known of Bahá'u'lláh's mystical writings is a small work entitled *The Seven Valleys*. In poetic language, it traces the stages of the soul's journey to union with its Creator.

Bahá'í International Community, 1992, *Magazine - The Bahá'ís*

You should be aware that the system adopted by the Guardian is such that anyone familiar with the original languages e.g., Arabic or Persian can immediately tell exactly which word has been transliterated. Moreover, by adopting a style somewhat removed from everyday discourse, it was possible for Shoghi Effendi to capture something of the allusive, poetic, and highly metaphorical nature of the original languages without its seeming ridiculous. In any case, although the language may appear archaic at first glance -- because of the word endings, obsolete contractions and other incidental features -- in actuality the language of the Bahá'í Writings is indeed far closer to everyday English than the authorized version of the Bible which millions of English-speaking Christians are able to read with understanding even though many of the English words in the Bible have disappeared from the language or have taken on completely different meanings.

The Universal House of Justice, 1993 Jan 21, *Translations of the Guardian*

Persia's poetic genius captures the irony: "I searched the wide world over for my Beloved, while my Beloved was waiting for me in my own home."

The Universal House of Justice, 2003 Nov 26, *To the Followers of Bahá'u'lláh in the Cradle of the Faith*, p. 2

At this point I would like to illustrate still another of the spiritual virtues of Shoghi Effendi, which I had noticed before but which, during that vital conversation, became evident in all its strength and delicacy; namely, the capacity to separate himself as a man from Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian of the Cause of God. When he spoke of the labours, duties, plans, present and future, the inspiration, the decisions of the Guardian, he was so impersonal that one could have believed he was speaking of another person. This endeared him even more, because to find such a balance of humility and greatness, of objectivity and selflessness coupled with a fertile, creative and poetic mind is one of the rare happenings in thousands of years. I have used the word delicacy, because in all his thought and action there was no affectation or remote trace of pride or vainglory. An illuminating example of this is to be found in one of his masterly letters, *The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh*, in the section on the Administrative Order wherein is described the station of the Guardian...

Adib Taherzadeh, *The Child of the Covenant*, p. 314

In some of His Writings the way of holiness is pointed out in such simple terms that "the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein" Isaiah xxv, 8. In others there is a wealth of poetic imagery, profound philosophy and allusions to Muhammadan, Zoroastrian and other scriptures, or to Persian and Arabic literature and legends, such as only the poet, the philosopher or the scholar can adequately appreciate. Still others deal with advanced stages of the spiritual life and are to be understood only by those who have already passed through the earlier stages. His works are like a bountiful table

provided with foods and delicacies suited to the needs and tastes of all who are genuine truth seekers.

It is because of this that His Cause had effect among the learned and culture, spiritual poets and well-known writers. Even some of the leaders of the Sufis and of other sets, and some of the political ministers who were writers, were attracted by His words, for they exceeded those of all other writers in sweetness and depth of spiritual meaning.

Dr. J.E. Esslemont, *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*, p. 49

Prince Abu'l-Hasan Mirza, the Shaykhu'r-Ra'is, bore proudly a title which had belonged to one of the greatest savants of all time. By his indirect method and his most effective use of the pulpit he guided many a soul to the truth of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh.

His poetic talent produced a long and wondrous ode on the Advent Of Bahá'u'lláh, with its refrain, 'tamashshi kun, tamasha kun' -- 'walk on and witness'. Here are two of its lines:

The One, by all beloved, stepped out of the Realm Unseen,
On His visage, indeed, the Light of Truth can be seen.
Captivated is the world by His beauty rare!
Walk on and witness.

Lo, by bounty and grace is the Earth replete,
Lo, the Effulgent Light of the Godhead
From a Human Temple shines!
Walk on and witness.

H.M. Balyuzi, *Eminent Bahá'ís in the Time of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 154

"All Art is a gift of the Holy Spirit. When this light shines through the mind of a musician, it manifests itself in beautiful harmonies. Again, shining through the mind of a poet, it is seen in fine poetry and poetic prose. When the Light of the Sun of Truth inspires the mind of a painter, he produces marvellous pictures. These gifts are fulfilling their highest purpose, when showing forth the praise of God."

Lady Blomfield, *The Chosen Highway*, p. 167

This process of revelation is the gift only of the Prophet of God. It is different in kind from poetic inspiration and from academic and other types of thinking. It is the great contribution of the Bahá'í Faith to present-day problems -- the supplementing of human thought with the thought of a Prophet of God. The writings of Bahá'u'lláh are available and you can study them and evaluate what this means.

Marzieh Gail, *Dawn Over Mount Hira*, p. 171

When Shoghi Effendi's first messages appeared, followed soon by his translations of some of the Sacred Writings, it was clear that a new style came into bloom, a new standard was set, and a perfect balance was achieved between the poetic and flowery Eastern languages of the original texts and the rationalistic Western idioms.

Ugo Giachery, *Shoghi Effendi - Recollections*, p. 5

As the long shadow of war descended on Europe I remember well the almost tangible feeling of catastrophe that enveloped me when Shoghi Effendi wrote, from the very heart of that continent, the poetic and powerful words that opened his cable of August 30, 1939: "shades night descending imperilled humanity inexorably deepening..."

Ruhiyyih Khanum, *The Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith*, p. 71

Many times the language of the Guardian soared to great poetic heights. Witness such passages as these that shine with the brilliance of cathedral glass: "We behold, as we survey the episodes of this first act of a sublime drama, the figure of its Master Hero, the Báb, arise meteor-like above the horizon of Shiraz, traverse the sombre sky of Persia from South to North, decline with tragic swiftness, and perish in a blaze of glory. We see His satellites, a galaxy of God-intoxicated heroes, mount above that same horizon radiate that same incandescent light, burn themselves out with that selfsame swiftness, and impart in their turn an added impetus to the steadily gathering momentum of God's nascent Faith." He called the Báb "that youthful Prince of Glory" and describes the scene of His entombment on Mt. Carmel: "when all was finished, and the earthly remains of the Martyr-Prophet of Shiraz were, at long last, safely deposited for their everlasting rest in the bosom of God's holy mountain, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Who had cast aside His turban, removed His shoes and thrown off His cloak, bent low over the still open sarcophagus, His silver hair waving about His head and His face transfigured and luminous, rested His forehead on the border of the wooden casket, and, sobbing aloud, wept with such a weeping that all those who were present wept with Him." "The second period ... derives its inspiration from the august figure of Bahá'u'lláh, pre-eminent in holiness, awesome in the majesty of His strength and power, unapproachable in the transcendent brightness of His glory. " "Amidst the shadows that are increasingly gathering about us we can discern the glimmerings of Bahá'u'lláh's unearthly sovereignty appearing fitfully on the horizon of history." Or these words addressed to the Greatest Holy Leaf: "In the innermost recesses of our hearts, O Thou exalted Leaf of the Abha Paradise, we have reared for thee a shining mansion that the hand of time can never undermine, a shrine which shall frame eternally the matchless beauty of thy countenance, an altar whereon the fire of thy consuming love shall burn forever. " Or these words painting a picture of the punishment of God in this day: "On the high seas, in the air, on land, in the forefront of battle, in the palaces of kings and the cottages of peasants, in the most hallowed sanctuaries, whether secular or religious, the evidences of God's retributive act and mysterious discipline are manifest. Its heavy toll is steadily mounting -- a holocaust sparing neither prince nor peasant, neither man nor woman, neither young nor old." Or these words concerning the attitude of the true servants of the Cause: "Of such men and women it may be truly said that to them 'every foreign land is a fatherland, and every fatherland a foreign land'. or their citizenship ... is in the Kingdom of Bahá'u'lláh. Though willing to share to the utmost the temporal benefits and the fleeting joys which this earthly life can confer, though eager to participate in whatever activity that conduces to the richness, the happiness and peace of that life, they can at no time forget that it constitutes no more than a transient, a very brief stage of their existence, that they who live it are but pilgrims and wayfarers whose goal is the Celestial City, and whose home the Country of never-failing joy and brightness."

Ruhiyyih Khanum, *The Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith*, p. 84



Excerpt from <http://bahai-library.com/books/msbr/msbr12.tahirihnabil.html>
http://bahai-library.com/file.php5?file=browne_tahirih_nabil_poems&language=All

Selected Poems by Qurratu'l-`Ayn, Nabíl, and other Babis

Translated by E.G. Browne.
Published in *Materials for the Study of the Babi Religion*
Original written" in Persian.

This poem is presumably addressed to the Báb

The thralls of yearning love constrain in the bonds of
 pain and calamity
These broken-hearted lovers of thine to yield their lives in
 their zeal for thee
Though with sword in hand my Darling stand with intent
 to slay, though I sinless be,
If it pleases him, this tyrant's whim, I am well content with
 his tyranny.
As in sleep I lay at the break of day that cruel charmer
 came to me,
And in the grace of his form and face the dawn of the morn
 I seemed to see.
The musk of Cathay might perfume gain from the scent
 those fragrant tresses rain,

While his eyes demolish a faith in vain attacked by the
pagans of Tartary¹.
With you, who contemn both love and wine² for the hermit's
cell and the zealot's shrine,
What can I do, for our Faith divine you hold as a thing of
infamy?
The tangled curls of thy darling's hair, and thy saddle and
teed are thy only care;
In thy heart the Absolute hath no share, nor the thought of
the poor man's poverty.
Sikandar's³ pomp and display be thine, the *Qalandar's*⁴
habit and way be mine;
That, if it please thee, I resign, while this, though bad, is
enough for me.
Pass from the station of "I" and "We," and choose for
thy home Nonentity,
For when thou has done the like of this, thou shalt reach
the supreme Felicity.

The second of these two odes or *ghazals* is as follows:

The effulgence of thy face flashed 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 reply¹.
Thy trumpet-call "*Am I not?*" to greet how loud the drums
of affliction² beat!
At the gates of my heart there tramp the feet and camp the
hosts of calamity.
That fair moon's love is enough, I trow, for me, for he
laughed at the hail³ of woe,
And triumphant cried, as he sunk below, "The Martyr of
Karbala am I⁴!"

When he heard my death-dirge drear, for me he prepared,
and arranged my gear for me;
He advanced to mourn at my bier for me, and o'er me wept
right bitterly.
What harm if thou with the fire of amaze should'st set my
Sinai- heart ablaze,
Which thou first mad'st fast in a hundred ways but to shake
and shatter so ruthlessly?
To convene the guests to his feast of love all night from the
angel host above
Peals forth this summons ineffable, "Hail, sorrow-stricken
fraternity!"
Can a scale of the fish of amaze like thee aspire to enquire
of Being's Sea?
Sit mute like Táhira, hearkening to the whale of "No" and
its ceaseless sigh¹.

If anyone walks in my path I will cry to him that he may be
warned
That whoever becomes my lover shall not escape from sorrow
and affliction.
If anyone obeys me not and does not grasp the cord of my
protection¹
I will drive him far from my sanctuary, I will cast him in
wrath to the winds of "No"².
I am Eternal from the Everlasting World; I am the One
from the Realms of the Limitless;
I am come [to seek for] the people of the Spirit, and towards
me indeed do they advance³.

See <http://www.kalimat.com/MorePoems.html> for a book of Tahirih's poetry.

Angels! Saints! All you holy ones above!
My true lover just walked in. Start shouting!

Night turned to day, dark into light. He's here
without a veil to hide his face. Start singing!

Numerous links to Tahirih's life and poetry:

http://www.google.com/search?q=tahirih+poetry&sourceid=navclient-ff&ie=UTF-8&rlz=1B3GGGL_enUS245US245

A brief overview of Tahirih's life including references:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/T%C3%A1hirih>

SELECTED POEM of NABÍL MUHAMMAD-IZURANDI, SURNAMED NABIL-I-A'ZAM

Though the Night of Parting endless seem as thy nigh-black hair,
Bahá, Bahá,
Yet we meet at last, and the gloom is past in thy lightning's
glare, Bahá, Bahá!
To my heart from thee was a signal shown that I to all
men should make known
That they, as the ball to the goal doth fly, should to thee
repair, Bahá, Bahá!
At this my call from the quarters four men's hearts and
souls to thy quarters pour:
What, forsooth, could attract them more than that region
fair, Bahá, Bahá?
The World hath attained to Heaven's worth, and a Paradise
is the face of earth
Since at length thereon a breeze hath blown from thy nature
rare, Bahá, Bahá!
Bountiful art thou, as all men know: at a glance two
Worlds thou would'st e'en bestow
On the suppliant hands of thy direst foe, if he makes his
prayer, Bahá, Bahá!

This document was compiled by Cary Enoch Reinstein
<http://www.enochsvision.com/>