



## The Mathnaví of Rúḥu'lláh, the martyr<sup>1</sup>

Fill up the wine-cup, O Cupbearer, to the brim;  
By Thy liquor, set the Sinai of the heart on fire.

Hand me the goblet of the wine of *Alast*,<sup>2</sup>  
That from the fumes of drunkenness I may be aroused.

I'll rend veils, fancies and doubts;  
I'll fly towards the peaks of the Seventh Heaven.

I'll go beyond the muddy snare of the flesh;  
I'll make for the chaste realm of the soul.

5 From the rose-garden of the spirit, I'll inhale the scent of the Loved One;  
From the abode of the Beloved, I'll come back like a breeze,

With soul-stirring scented breaths,  
With blessed and cheerful glad-tidings.

I proclaim to my travelling companions: Hasten,  
O my friends! The Day of the Covenant hath come!

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<sup>1</sup> The Persian text is published in Afnan, "Taḍmín Mathnaví Jináb-i-Rúḥu'lláh Varqá" 225-226.

<sup>2</sup> A reference to Koran 7:172. According to Koranic spiritual exegesis, this verse alludes to a primal metahistorical event, when human souls enjoyed a mysterious existence in God before time was created. In that station before time, God put the question, 'Am I not (*Alast*) your Lord?', and received from the souls the immediate and joyful answer: 'Yes, we testify'. In that moment humankind undersigned, so to say, an eternal Covenant with its Lord, Whom it promised to recognize however and wherever He would manifest Himself, ready to accept the consequences of any eventual disloyalty.

Hasten, O lovers of the Face of the Beloved!  
Turn your hearts to the abode of the Adored One!

O companions! Seize the moment!  
Assist and help the Cause of God!

10 Strive, O friends, that this brilliant sun  
may shine above all the regions of the earth!

Struggle, that the signs of the almighty Lord  
May be spread throughout this globe.

Make an effort, O my friends! The time to serve hath come!  
It is now the day to earn bestowals! It is the hour of success!

Hoisting the flags of guidance, march  
Towards the world, O lovers of Bahá,

That these intoxicated creatures may awaken  
And move away from fancies and doubts,

15 And the light of God may enlighten their eyes,  
And the thorns of their hearts may become roses.

The ancient Ruler hath thus decreed  
For all the peoples, in His Kitáb-i-Aqdas.

Whosoever will arise for the Cause of God,  
The Lord of Creation will come to his rescue.

Whosoever will lay down his life in this age of God,  
To him the Lord will turn His Face.

O Cupbearer! Kindly proffer the cup of Thy gifts,  
That I may be cleansed from crimes and faults.

20 Even with my countless transgressions,  
I hopefully expect the favor of my God.

Hail, O Cupbearer at the eternal banquet,  
Graciously pour a wine drop on this dust,

That these patterns may be brightened by Thy bounty,  
That we may be sacrificed for the One Beloved.

When shall I offer this life, O my Lord,  
In Thy pathway in my love for Thy Face?

Happy the day, when in the field of love I shall tender  
My life on the way of the Sovereign of love!

25 Blessed the hour, when on the gallows  
The King of Glory I shall exalt!

O God! May soon come the day  
When of this withered body I shall get rid;

When, blooming and happy for His Presence grace,  
Towards the everlasting Heaven I shall direct my steps!

I'm on fire in the desert of exclusion;  
I burn in the flames of separation.

O King of life, lift up the veil hiding Thy Face,  
That the skies may resplend with Thy light.

30 O Lord of the Testament! O King of the Covenant!  
O Thou by Whose fire the Sinai of the Pledge hath been lit!

O Thou Whose name is 'Abdu'l-Bahá! For Thee  
The flags of Guidance have been unfurled:

Thou art the Dayspring of the Divine mysteries;  
Thou art the Wellspring of the Divine signs.

O mighty King of Kings, as an *Alif*,<sup>3</sup>  
Thou risest above the Cause of God,

In Thy servitude, submissive as a *Bih*,<sup>4</sup>  
At the gate of the garden of the Lord of Bahá.

35 O Most Great Branch of the Tree of the Cause!  
O Twig sprouted from the Ancient Essence!

Thou art the spring of God's inspiration! Thou  
Illuminest the eyes of the people of Bahá!

Bestow a drop of kindness on this puny bird,  
Restless and impatient in his remoteness from Thee!

In this Day, O King of the Kingdom of the heart,  
My breast burneth in its separation from Thee.

I'm ablaze, O my King, with the fire of exclusion,  
In this wilderness of yearning and seclusion.

40 Set free this bird from the snare of anguish,  
O King of grace and Sovereign of bounty!

Look not at my merits or worth,  
Look at Thy grace, O bountiful Lord.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> *Alif* is the first letter of the Persian alphabet and it has the form a vertical straight line ا.

<sup>4</sup> *Bih* is the second letter of the Persian alphabet and it has the form of an horizontal curved line ب.

<sup>5</sup> This verse is by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, see *Majmú'iy-i-Makátib-i-Haḍrat-i-'Abdu'l-Bahá* 13:411-2, verse 7. The Iran National Bahá'í Archives (INBA), 132 BE. <http://www.h-net.org/~bahai/diglib/INBA/INBA013.pdf> (accessed on 26 November 2015).