

The Valley of True Poverty and Absolute Nothingness

Bahá'u'lláh

Songs of Seven valleys

John Thomas Higgins

♩ = 90

SOPRANO

Af - ter scal-ing the high sum-mits of won-der-ment the way-far-er com-eth to the

ALTO

Af - ter scal-ing the high sum-mits of won-der-ment the way-far-er com-eth to the

4

S.

Val-ley of True Pov-er-ty—and Ab-sol-ute Noth-ing - ness. This sta - tion is the dy-ing

A.

Val-ley of True Pov-er-ty—and Ab-sol-ute Noth-ing - ness. This sta - tion is the dy-ing

9

S.

from self and the liv-ing in God, the be-ing poor in self and rich in the De-sired One.

A.

from self and the liv-ing in God, the be-ing poor in self and rich in the De-sired One.

13

♩ = 170

T.


Ver - i - ly the right - eous shall drink_ of a wine_ cup


B.

Ver - i - ly the right - eous shall drink_ of a wine_ cup


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17

T. 
 tem - pered at the cam - phor_ foun - - tain.

B. 
 tem - pered at the cam - phor_ foun - - tain.

21 $\text{♩} = 110$

S. 
 This_ is the plane where-on the ves - ti - ges of all_ things are des - troyed_


A. 
 This_ is the plane where-on the ves - ti - ges of all_ things are des - troyed_


26


S. 
 _ in the tra - ve - ler. of e - ter - ni - ty

A. 
 _ in the tra - ve - ler. And on the hor - i - zon_ of e - ter - ni - ty

33

S. 
 the Di - vine Face ri - seth

A. 
 the Di vine Face ri - seth out_ of the dark - ness

T. 
 the Di - vine Face ri - seth Out of the dark - ness_

39

S. and the mean - ing of "All on the earth, all on the

A. and the mean - ing of "All on the earth, all on the

T. - - - - -

43

S. earth, all on the earth shall pass a - way but

A. earth, all on the earth shall pass a - way but

T. all on the earth shall pass a - way but

48

S. the face but the face of thy Lord..." Lord!

A. the face but the face of thy Lord..." Lord!

T. the face but the face of thy Lord" is made man-i- fest. Lord! Lord!

B. But the face, but the face of thy Lord..." is made man-i- fest. Lord!

for rehearsal only

The Valley of True Poverty and Absolute Nothingness

55 $\text{♩} = 90$

S. — For when the true lo - ver and de - vo - ted friend reach-eth to the

A. — For when the true lo - ver and de - vo - ted friend reach-eth to the

T. — For when the true lo - ver and de - vo - ted friend reach-eth to the

B. — For when the true lo - ver and de - vo - ted friend reach-eth to the

for rehearsal and performance

61

S. pre-sence of the Be - lo - ved, — the spark-ling beau-ty of the Lo-ved One

A. pre-sence of the Be - lo - ved, — Ah

T. pre-sence of the Be - lo - ved, — Ah

B. pre-sence of the Be - lo - ved, — Ah

66

S. and the fire of the lo-ver's heart will kin-dle a blaze and burn a - way, burn a-way all veils and

A. and the fire Ah kin-dle and burn burn a-way all veils and

T. and the fire Ah kin-dle and burn burn veils and

B. and the fire Ah kin-dle and burn, burn veils and

71

S. wrap - pings. Yea, all he hath from heart to skin will be set a - flame so that

A. wrap - pings. Yea, all he hath from heart to skin will be set a - flame

T. wrap - pings. Yea, all he hath from heart to skin_ will be_ set a - flame

B. wrap - pings. All he hath from heart to skin will be set_ a - flame

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76

S. no - no - no - thing will re - main
(Sopr. split) thing thing no - thing will re - main,

A. (Alto split) no - thing no - thing will re - main,

T.

B.

78

S. no - thing will re - main save the Friend.

A. no - thing will re - main save Friend!

T. no - thing will re - main save Friend!

B. no - thing will re - main save Friend!

save

81

B.

Now hast thou a-ban-doned the drop of life and come to the sea of the Life-Bes-tow-er.

for rehearsal only

84

B.

This is the goal thou didst ask for if it be God's will, thou wilt gain it.

87

A.

In this ci - ty e-ven the veils of light are split a-sun-der and van-ish a-

90

mf $\text{♩} = 60$

S.

His beau-ty hath no veil-ing save light, His light, His face no co-ver-ing but

mp

A.

way. Oo Ah

mp

T.

Oo Ah

mp

B.

Oo Ah

for rehearsal and performance

95

1. 2.

S. rev - e - la - tion. His rev - e - la - tion... Ec - sta - sy a - lone can en - com - pass this theme.

A. Ec - sta - sy a - lone can en - com - pass this theme.

T. Ec - sta - sy a - lone can en - com - pass this theme.

B. Ec - sta - sy a - lone can en - com - pass this theme.

99

S. Ec - sta - sy a - lone can en - com - pass this theme.

A. Ec - sta - sy a - lone can en - com - pass this theme.

T. Ec - sta - sy a - lone can en - com - pass this theme.

B. Ec - sta - sy a - lone Ec - sta - sy a - lone

101

S. ec - sta - sy... ec - sta - sy a - lone.

A. ec - sta - sy... ec - sta - sy a - lone.

T. ec - sta - sy... ec - sta - sy a - lone.

B. ec - sta - sy... ec - sta - sy a - lone.

104 $\text{♩} = 80$

S. In all these jour neys the trav el-ler must stray not the breadth of a hair from the "law".... for

A. for

108

S. this is in-deed the sec-ret of the "path"and the fruit of the Tree of "Truth";

A. this is in-deed the sec-ret of the "path"and the fruit_ of the Tree of "Truth";

112

rall.

S. cling to the robe of o - bed - i - ence to the com - mand - ments. Hold fast the cord of

A. cling to the robe of o - bed - i - ence to the com - mand - ments. Hold fast the cord of

T. cling to the robe of o - bed - i - ence to the com - mand - ments. Hold fast the cord of

B. Hold fast the cord of

for rehearsal only

116

S. shun - ning all for - bid - den things,.. be nour - ished from the cup of the

A. shun - ning all for - bid - den things,.. be nour - ished from the cup of the

T. shun - ning all for - bid - den things,.. be nour - ished from the cup of the

B. shun - ning all for - bid - den things,.. be nour - ished from the cup of the

118

S. Law and in-formed of the mys-ter-ies of truth.

A. Law and in-formed of the mys-ter-ies of truth.

T. Law and in-formed of the mys-ter-ies of truth.

B. Law and in-formed of the mys-ter-ies of truth.

121 $\text{♩} = 90$ This section is spoken, not sung. In the MP3 it sounds as a 'triangle' in order to hear the timing of the notes.

Tri. These jour-neys have no vis-i-ble end-ing in the world of time but the sev-ered way-far-er -

124

Tri. if in-vis-i-ble con-firm-a-tion des-cend u-pon him and the Guard-i-an of the


127

Tri. Cause_ as-sist him - may cross these sta-ges in sev-en steps, nay rath-er in sev-en

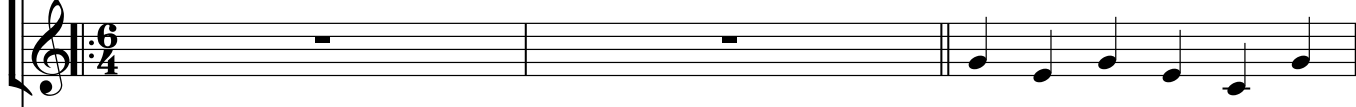
130

Tri. breaths, nay rath-er in a sin-gle breath, if God will and de-sire it...

133 $\text{♩} = 180$


S. 

Sa - lám, sa - lám sa - lám sa - lám sa - lám sa - lám sa - lám sa - lám

A. 

Sa - lám sa - lám sa - lám

for rehearsal only



136

S. 

sa - lám sa - lám sa - lám sa - lám sa - lám sa - lám

A. 

sa - lám sa - lám sa - lám sa - lám sa - lám sa - lám

T. 

Sa - lám sa - lám sa - lám sa - lám sa - lám sa - lám

B. 



139

S. sa - lám sa - lám sa - lám Sa - lám, sa - lám sa - lám

A. sa - lám sa - lám Peace!

T. sa - lám sa - lám sa - lám sa - lám Peace!

B. Sa - lám sa - lám sa - lám sa - lám sa - lám sa - lám Peace!

142

S. sa - lám sa - lám sa - lám Sa - lám sa - lám sa - lám sa - lám

A. Sa - lám sa - lám sa - lám sa - lám sa - lám sa - lám

T. Sa - lám sa - lám sa - lám sa - lám

B. Sa - lám

145

S. Sa - lám sa - lám

A. sa - lám sa - lám sa - lám sa - lám sa - lám

T. Sa - lám sa - lám sa - lám sa - lám sa - lám sa - lám sa - lám sa - lám

B. Sa - lám sa - lám sa - lám sa - lám sa - lám

148

S. sa - lám sa - lám sa - lám sa - lám sa - lám

A. sa - - - lám sa - lám sa - lám

T. sa - - - lám sa - lám

B. sa - lám sa - lám sa - - - - - lám

on repeat go to bar 151

1.

On repeat "lám" is tied over to bar 151

150

2. *molto rit.*

S. Peace! sa - lám sa - lám sa - lám Peace!

A. Peace! sa - lám sa - lám Peace!

T. ⁸ Peace! (lám) sa - lám Peace!

B. Peace! sa - - lám Peace!

tied over from bar 148

Appendix A

Performance Notes

Songs of Seven Valleys contains music of varying levels of difficulty. Songs are presented for unison, SA, TB, SATB, duet, solo and spoken voices.

Most of the music is written to give emphasis to syllables of words in the text. A notable exception is my setting of two phrases of text into a fugue by J.S. Bach that is found in the Valley of Unity, and less notably a small fugue of my own at the end.

The music was not composed sequentially. The Camphor Fountain was written first in the mid 1990's. It was performed as part of a larger work, "Vocalise", by the Edmonton Kiwanis Singers (aka EkoSingers) in June 2000 at the Francis Winspear Centre for Music in Edmonton, Alberta.

Next came the middle section of the music for the Seventh Valley. After this was done, I decided to try and make a full series of songs that represented all of the Seven Valleys.

It was challenging to decide what text to include in the music. Eventually, I included text that was based on themes that could be used to represent ideas:

1. Specific things for a seeker to do, such as attitudes to practice and and concepts to ponder.
2. Descriptions of the Manifestation of God, specifically allusions to Bahá'u'lláh. I also included a process that I saw as 'the removing of veils' from human perception in order to bring the Manifestation into focus.
3. Statements about the nature of spiritual reality that could be abridged enough to be included in a song.
4. Quotations from the Qur'án: Bahá'u'lláh quotes this book frequently and His authoritative interpretation could be a bridge for western Muslims to perceive Him and His Faith. In The Seven Valleys He states unequivocally that people must search independently for God. "It is incumbent these servants that they cleanse the heart ... from every marking, and that they turn away from imitation, which is following the traces of their forefathers and sires, ..." This text is included in the song The Valley of Search.

The text in a song is not always sequential in the book (see Appendix C). I have allied sections of the original text for brevity and to try and create a sense of narrative in the music. For example, if Bahá'u'lláh gave many examples on a certain theme, I used only one or two. I found, however, as I moved beyond the Valley of Knowledge in the book that there was a lot of text that I felt needed a voice in the musical story.

Metronome marks are written to give a general idea of the tempo and for use by my scoring software for playback. Some dynamics are included, but mostly are left to the discretion of the choral director.

The style of music in Songs of Seven Valleys quotes from many styles - folk, jazz, popular or classical. I hope that the musical modes in this music will catch the attention of different cultures in our world-wide community. There is a flamenco motif in one song that represents the blend of east and west that was achieved in Spain in the middle ages. Other Bahá'ís may rework this music to their own tastes.

I hope at some point that some accomplished choir will perform Songs of Seven Valleys as a complete work. It would be challenging - right now it runs at 54 minutes, as played back by my scoring software.

But individual songs or parts of songs can be used. For example, The Valley of Search, with its unison or simple two part singing followed by triadic chordal harmony can be sung easily.

Some of these songs could be sung a cappella in a House of Worship, but other songs require the piano accompaniment in performance. All parts could be played on the piano in all the songs to support singers at community events.

PDF and MP3 files of individual songs are available on my website and on Score Exchange, a music archive started by Sibelius music software in England.

My website can be found in an online search for *John Thomas Higgins composer*.

I give permission for people to copy Songs of Seven Valleys as needed for any event that supports Bahá'í aims and ideals.

Please write or email me if you do use the music, as it is a composer's dream to have his or her music performed. Any comments that you may have will be instructive.

A note about the text in the new edition of the Seven Valleys and the Four Valleys:

Once I purchased *The Call of The Divine Beloved*, I compared the new edition of the Seven Valleys to what I had on hand during composition of Songs of Seven Valleys - my old copy from when I was a young Bahá'í in the 1970's.

During this review I noted that there were substantial changes to some of the text that I had used. I tried to insert the new translation into the music without success. In some places, the new version replaced a few words with many words which didn't fit at all into the music. I would have had to recompose those sections and couldn't see how to do that without disrupting significantly the style and pace of the composition. And the word "Salam", for which I composed a fugue to finish the work, was missing entirely in the new edition. The fugue is essential to complete the composition.

So I left the text of Songs of Seven Valleys "as is" when I prepared this 2022 edition.

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To find my page on Score Exchange:

1. Search for Score Exchange on Google, Bing etc
2. Click the link for Score Exchange - this will open Score Exchange
3. Search for John Thomas Higgins. - this will bring up a list of all 'Higgins' scores, not just me, plus advertising. At left I'm identified as the Search Term.
4. Add John Thomas Higgins to the Composer/Arranger window at left and press return - this will refine the song list to exclude other composers and advertising.

Appendix B

Notes on The Camphor Fountain

The lyrics of The Camphor Fountain are a prosaic linking of several words or phrases taken from the Valley of Love. The texts I used are provided below in full context. The specific words used in the song are identified in an italic font.

“In this city, the heaven of ecstasy is upraised and the world-illuming sun of yearning shineth, and the fire of love is ablaze; and when the *fire of love* is ablaze, it *burneth to ashes the harvest of reason*.” p.8, paragraph 2

The steed of this Valley is *pain*; and if there be no *pain* this journey will never end.”
p. 8, paragraph 2

“A lover feareth nothing and no harm can come nigh him: Thou seest him *chill in the fire and dry in the sea*.” p. 9, paragraph 3

“Love setteth a world aflame at every turn, and he wasteth every land where he carrieth his banner. ... He drinketh the *seven seas*, but his heart’s *thirst* is still *unquenched*, and he saith “Is there yet any more?” .. Know that every redness in the world is from his anger, and every paleness in men’s cheeks is from his *poison*. He yieldeth no remedy but death, and he walks not save in the valley of the shadow; yet *sweeter* than *honey* is his venom on the lover’s *lips*, and fairer his destruction in the seeker’s eyes than a hundred thousand lives.” p. 10 paragraph 2

“Yá Bahá’ul’Abhá” is an Arabic phrase which means “O Thou Glory of the All-Glorious”, an invocation of the Glory of God. “Ya Bahá’u’lláh” means “O Thou Glory of God”.

The theme of a moth attracted to a candle flame is used in the Bahá’í Writings as a metaphor for self-sacrifice

The camphor fountain is mentioned in the seventh Valley, quoted from the Qur’an:

“Verily the righteous shall drink of a wine cup tempered at the camphor fountain.”

To which Bahá’u’lláh adds “If the true interpretation of ‘camphor’ become known, the true intention will be evident”. p. 37, paragraph 1

The song concludes with “...*this new love hath broken all the old rules and ways. Tell us not the tale of Layli or of Majnún’s woe - Thy love hath made the world forget the loves of long ago.*” It is quoted from the Four Valleys p. 45, paragraph 3

I use the passage out of context in the song to imply that Bahá’u’lláh is the One who makes “the world forget the loves of long ago”.

I intend the use of the word ‘Chalice’ to evoke an image of God’s ‘Holy Grail’.

This song is part of a longer work, the first part of which is entitled ‘Vocalise’. The intention of this first section is to present the musical phrases that are heard in The Camphor Fountain with no words, only sounds. Hopefully this allows the listener’s ear to attune to the melodies before the lyrics are added. ‘Vocalise’ is not included in this manuscript.

The Camphor Fountain

The fire of love burns to ashes the harvest of reason,
The lover is chill in the fire and dry in the sea.
Taste love’s honey’d poison, sweet balm on each lover’s lips.
Make haste to the camphor fountain, a draught from his chalice to sip.
Light draws the moth to the flame, heedless of pain.
In seven seas drenched, still love thirsts, unquenched.
This new love hath broken all the old rules and ways.
Tell us not the tale of Laylí or of Majnun’s woe,
Thy love hath made the world forget the loves of long ago.

APPENDIX C	Song Page	Book Page	Paragraph
SOURCES OF TEXT for Songs of Seven Valleys			
Song Title			
In the Name of God, the Clement, the Merciful	1	1	all
		2	1
He Hath Most Excellent Names	10	2	2
Stages of the Journey	12	4	3
The Valley of Search	13	5	1 and 3
		6	1
		6	end of 1
		5	2
		7	2
The Labor Is Needed	20	7	2
And If By The Help of God	21	7	4
		8	2
If There Be No Pain	23	8	4
The Camphor Fountain	24	*see B	
Blessed	34	9	4
		11	2
The Valley of Knowledge	36	11	3
		12	1
		12	2
		13	1
		15	2
		16	3
		17	1
The Valley of Unity			
Part 1: All Songs Are From The King	43	17	2
		18	1
		18	1

APPENDIX C	Song Page	Book Page	Paragraph
Part 2: Conflict Hath Prevailed	53	18	2
		19	2
		19	3
		20	1
		20	4
		21	1
		21	2
Part 3: Behold A Thousand Claws Of Envy	60	20	2
Part 4: His being Is His Evidence	65	24	3
		21	3
		21	3
		22	1
		22	2
		22	3
		23	1
		23	2
The Valley of Contentment	75	29	3
		31	1
		30	3
		31	1
The Valley of Wonderment	84	31	2
		32	1
		32	2
		32	3
		33	2
		34	1
		34	1
		35	2
		35	3

APPENDIX C	Song Page	Book Page	Paragraph
The Valley of True Poverty and Absolute Nothingness	103	35	4
		36	1
		37	1
		37	2
		36	1
		38	3
		39	1
		39	2
		39	3
		39	4
		40	1
		40	3
		41	2