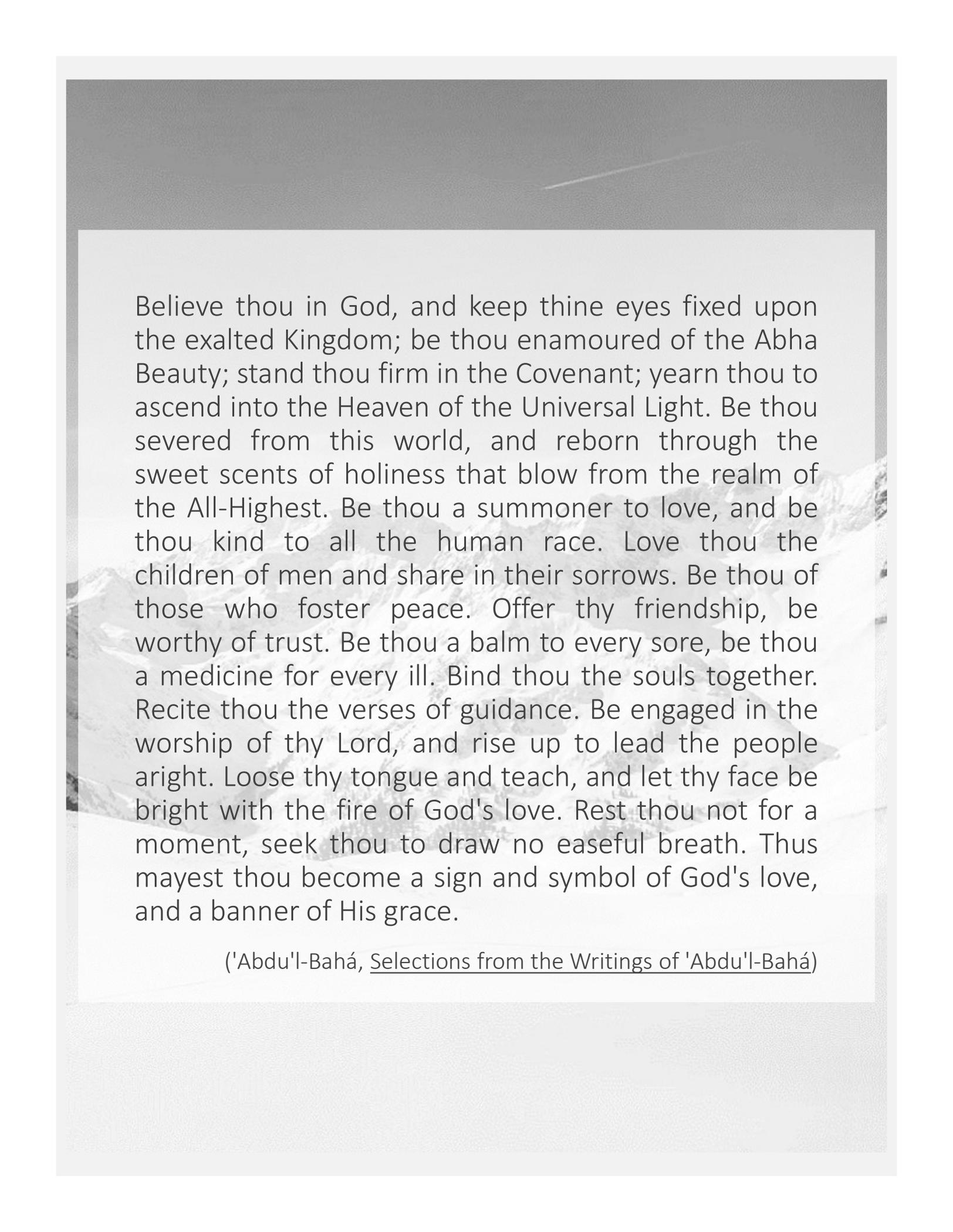
An aerial photograph of a dense forest of evergreen trees covered in a thick layer of snow. The trees are scattered across a light-colored, snow-covered ground, creating a textured, monochromatic scene. The perspective is from directly above, looking down on the forest canopy.

The Ascension of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

November 28, 2019
Bahá'í Center of Minneapolis

Perhaps it was His remarkable understanding and grasp of human suffering and misery and discord and hatred, His patience, long and enduring, His most lucid and penetrating insight, the depth of His knowledge and wisdom rivalled only by His own spiritual way of life, and His humility so compelling and so mighty-perhaps these were some of the attributes that made of 'Abdu'l-Bahá the perfect Exemplar of the quintessence of creation-Man.

(SOW - Star of the West - 10)



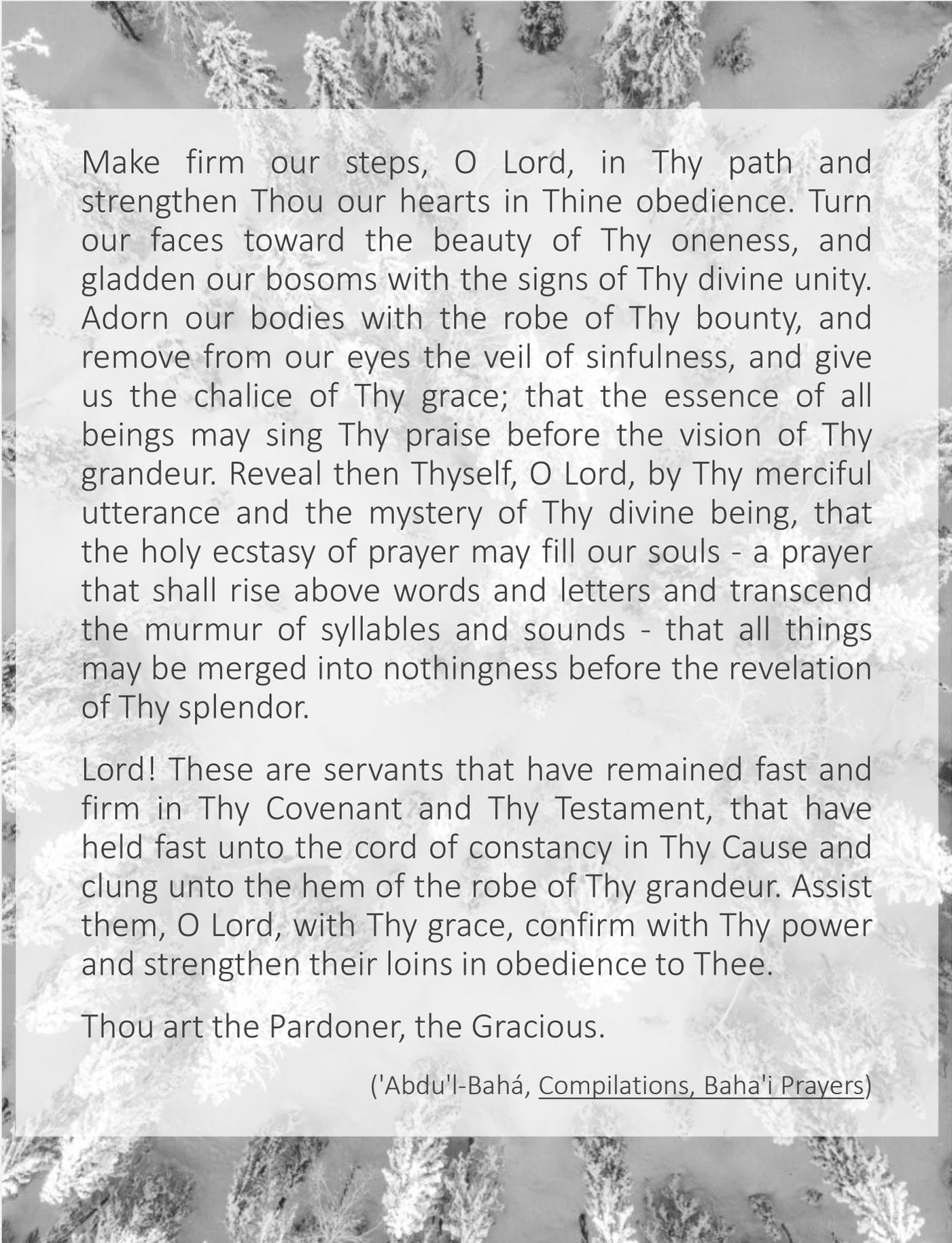
Believe thou in God, and keep thine eyes fixed upon the exalted Kingdom; be thou enamoured of the Abha Beauty; stand thou firm in the Covenant; yearn thou to ascend into the Heaven of the Universal Light. Be thou severed from this world, and reborn through the sweet scents of holiness that blow from the realm of the All-Highest. Be thou a summoner to love, and be thou kind to all the human race. Love thou the children of men and share in their sorrows. Be thou of those who foster peace. Offer thy friendship, be worthy of trust. Be thou a balm to every sore, be thou a medicine for every ill. Bind thou the souls together. Recite thou the verses of guidance. Be engaged in the worship of thy Lord, and rise up to lead the people aright. Loose thy tongue and teach, and let thy face be bright with the fire of God's love. Rest thou not for a moment, seek thou to draw no easeful breath. Thus mayest thou become a sign and symbol of God's love, and a banner of His grace.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá)



Never is it the wish of 'Abdu'l-Bahá to see any being hurt, nor will He make anyone to grieve; for man can receive no greater gift than this, that he rejoice another's heart. I beg of God that ye will be bringers of joy, even as are the angels in Heaven.

('Abdu'l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá)

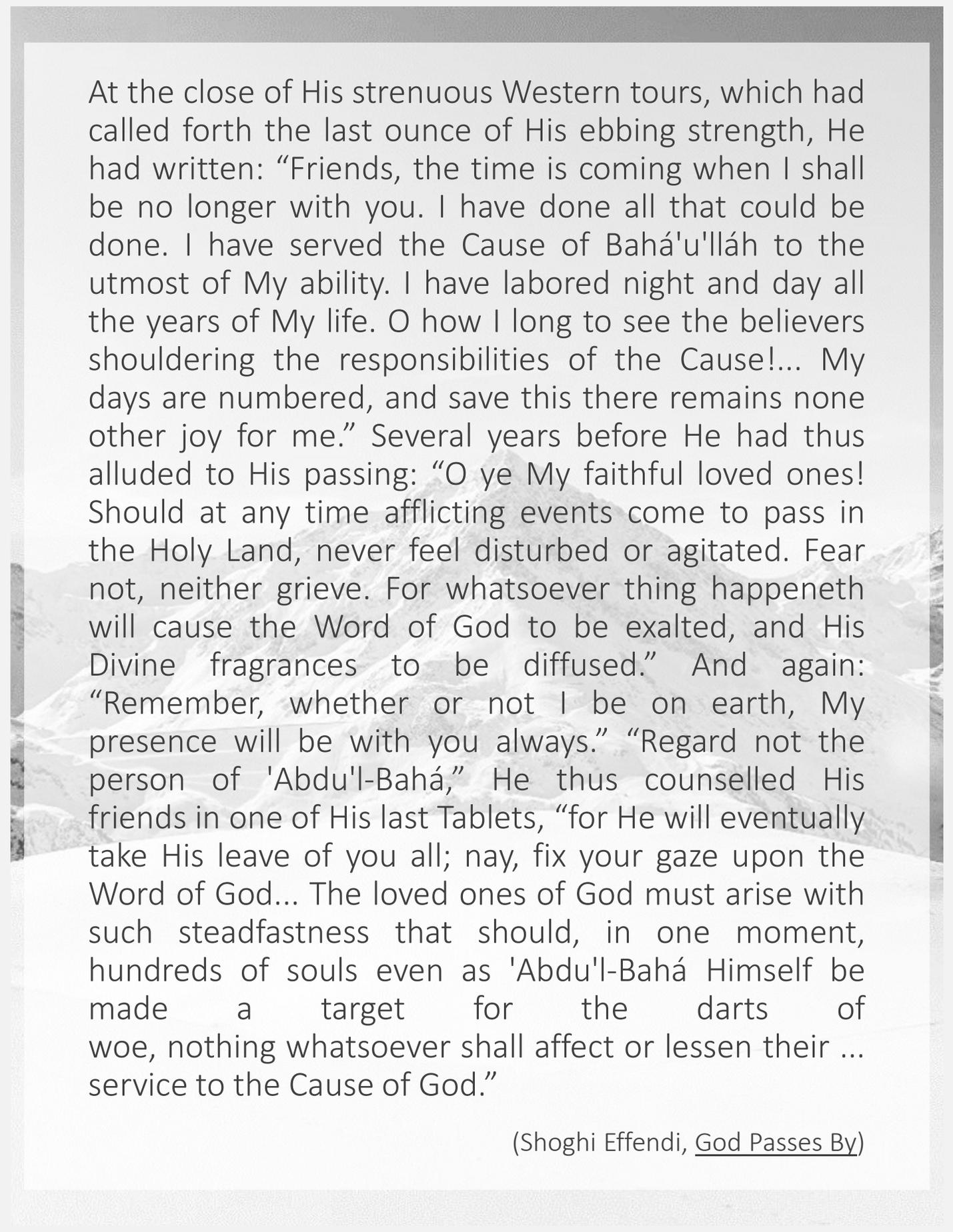


Make firm our steps, O Lord, in Thy path and strengthen Thou our hearts in Thine obedience. Turn our faces toward the beauty of Thy oneness, and gladden our bosoms with the signs of Thy divine unity. Adorn our bodies with the robe of Thy bounty, and remove from our eyes the veil of sinfulness, and give us the chalice of Thy grace; that the essence of all beings may sing Thy praise before the vision of Thy grandeur. Reveal then Thyself, O Lord, by Thy merciful utterance and the mystery of Thy divine being, that the holy ecstasy of prayer may fill our souls - a prayer that shall rise above words and letters and transcend the murmur of syllables and sounds - that all things may be merged into nothingness before the revelation of Thy splendor.

Lord! These are servants that have remained fast and firm in Thy Covenant and Thy Testament, that have held fast unto the cord of constancy in Thy Cause and clung unto the hem of the robe of Thy grandeur. Assist them, O Lord, with Thy grace, confirm with Thy power and strengthen their loins in obedience to Thee.

Thou art the Pardoner, the Gracious.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Compilations, Baha’i Prayers)



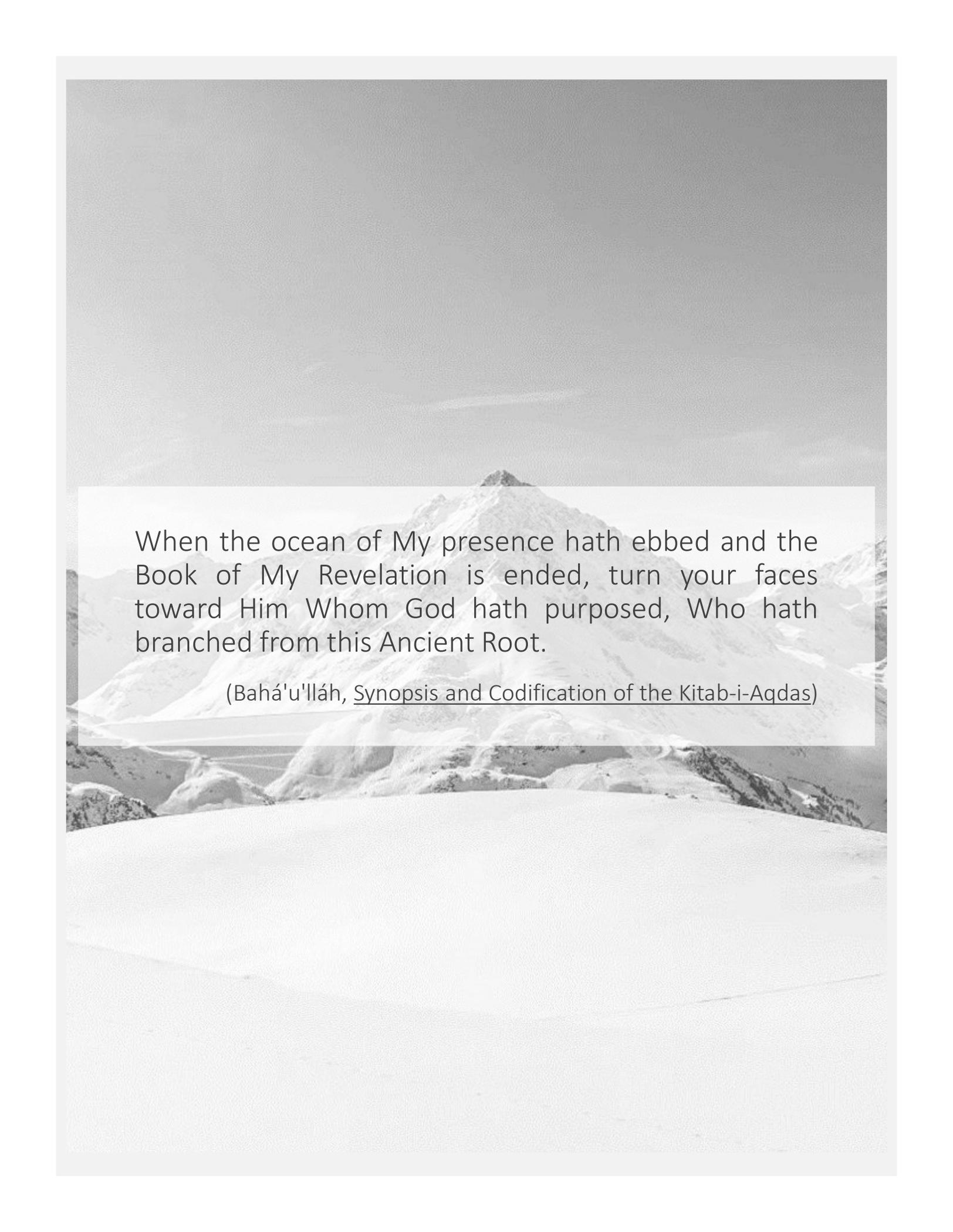
At the close of His strenuous Western tours, which had called forth the last ounce of His ebbing strength, He had written: "Friends, the time is coming when I shall be no longer with you. I have done all that could be done. I have served the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh to the utmost of My ability. I have labored night and day all the years of My life. O how I long to see the believers shouldering the responsibilities of the Cause!... My days are numbered, and save this there remains none other joy for me." Several years before He had thus alluded to His passing: "O ye My faithful loved ones! Should at any time afflicting events come to pass in the Holy Land, never feel disturbed or agitated. Fear not, neither grieve. For whatsoever thing happeneth will cause the Word of God to be exalted, and His Divine fragrances to be diffused." And again: "Remember, whether or not I be on earth, My presence will be with you always." "Regard not the person of 'Abdu'l-Bahá," He thus counselled His friends in one of His last Tablets, "for He will eventually take His leave of you all; nay, fix your gaze upon the Word of God... The loved ones of God must arise with such steadfastness that should, in one moment, hundreds of souls even as 'Abdu'l-Bahá Himself be made a target for the darts of woe, nothing whatsoever shall affect or lessen their ... service to the Cause of God."

(Shoghi Effendi, God Passes By)

An aerial, black and white photograph of a dense forest of evergreen trees covered in snow. The trees are scattered across a light-colored, snow-covered ground, creating a textured, high-contrast scene. The perspective is from directly above, looking down on the canopy.

Remember, whether or not I be on earth, My presence will be with you always.

('Abdu'l-Bahá as quoted by Shoghi Effendi, God Passes By)



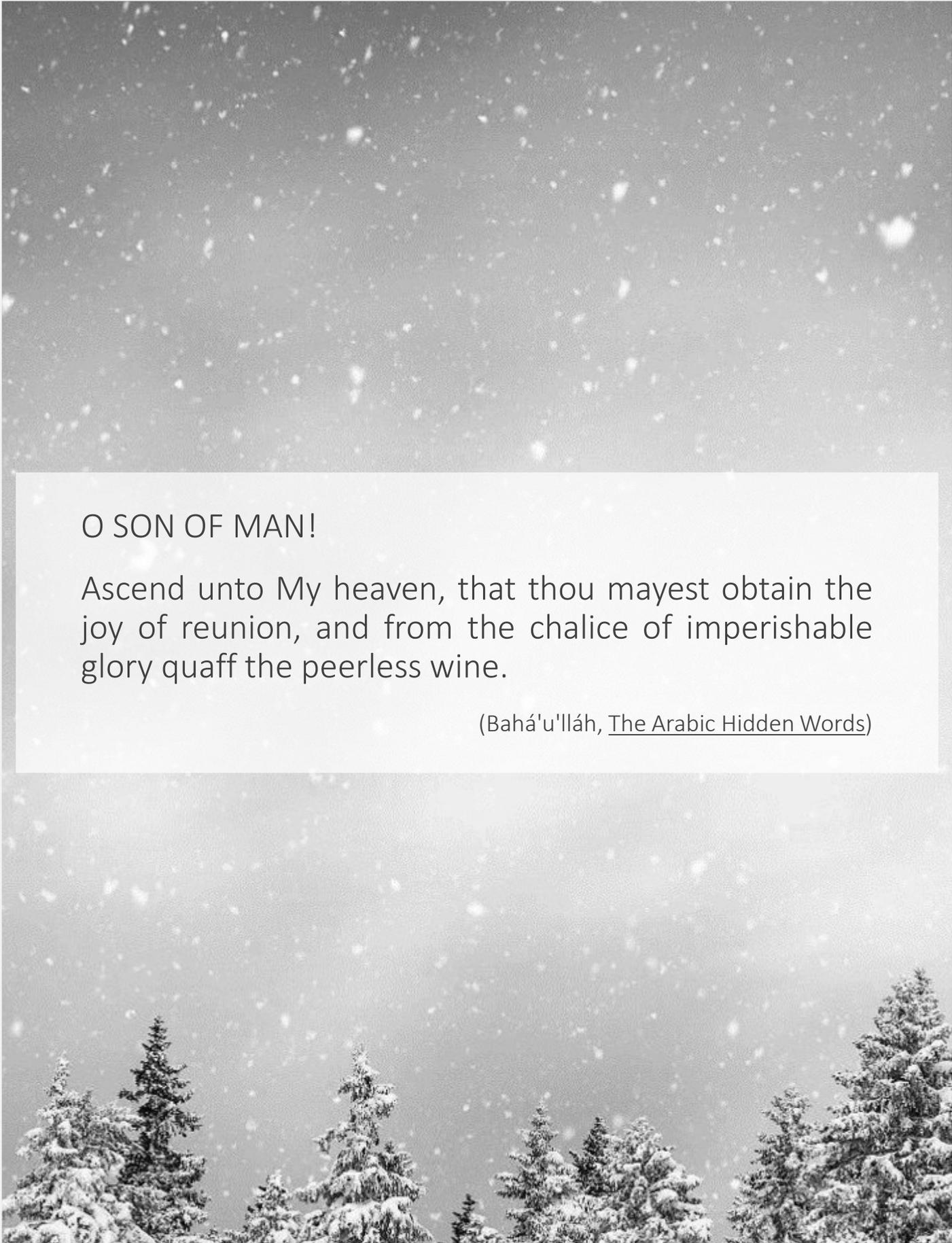
When the ocean of My presence hath ebbed and the Book of My Revelation is ended, turn your faces toward Him Whom God hath purposed, Who hath branched from this Ancient Root.

(Bahá'u'lláh, Synopsis and Codification of the Kitab-i-Aqdas)

Till the very last day of His earthly life 'Abdu'l-Bahá continued to shower that same love upon high and low alike, to extend that same assistance to the poor and the down-trodden, and to carry out those same duties in the service of His Father's Faith, as had been His wont from the days of His boyhood... At 1:15 A.M. He arose, and, walking to a table in His room, drank some water, and returned to bed. Later on, He asked one of His two daughters who had remained awake to care for Him, to lift up the net curtains, complaining that He had difficulty in breathing. Some rose-water was brought to Him, of which He drank, after which He again lay down, and when offered food, distinctly remarked: "You wish Me to take some food, and I am going?" A minute later His spirit had winged its flight to its eternal abode, to be gathered, at long last, to the glory of His beloved Father, and taste the joy of everlasting reunion with Him....

Thus was brought to a close the ministry of One Who was the incarnation, by virtue of the rank bestowed upon Him by His Father, of an institution that has no parallel in the entire field of religious history, a ministry that marks the final stage in the Apostolic, the Heroic and most glorious Age of the Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh.

(Shoghi Effendi, God Passes By)



O SON OF MAN!

Ascend unto My heaven, that thou mayest obtain the joy of reunion, and from the chalice of imperishable glory quaff the peerless wine.

(Bahá'u'lláh, The Arabic Hidden Words)

Tablet of Visitation for 'Abdu'l-Bahá

He is the All-Glorious!

O God, my God! Lowly and tearful, I raise my suppliant hands to Thee and cover my face in the dust of that Threshold of Thine, exalted above the knowledge of the learned, and the praise of all that glorify Thee. Graciously look upon Thy servant, humble and lowly at Thy door, with the glances of the eye of Thy mercy, and immerse him in the Ocean of Thine eternal grace.

Lord! He is a poor and lowly servant of Thine, enthralled and imploring Thee, captive in Thy hand, praying fervently to Thee, trusting in Thee, in tears before Thy face, calling to Thee and beseeching Thee, saying:

O Lord, my God! Give me Thy grace to serve Thy loved ones, strengthen me in my servitude to Thee, illumine my brow with the light of adoration in Thy court of holiness, and of prayer to Thy Kingdom of grandeur. Help 320 me to be selfless at the heavenly entrance of Thy gate, and aid me to be detached from all things within Thy holy precincts. Lord! Give me to drink from the chalice of selflessness; with its robe clothe me, and in its ocean immerse me. Make me as dust in the pathway of Thy loved ones, and grant that I may offer up my soul for the earth ennobled by the footsteps of Thy chosen ones in Thy path, O Lord of Glory in the Highest.

With this prayer doth Thy servant call Thee, at dawntide and in the night-season. Fulfil his heart's desire, O Lord! Illumine his heart, gladden his bosom, kindle his light, that he may serve Thy Cause and Thy servants.

Thou art the Bestower, the Pitiful, the Most Bountiful, the Gracious, the Merciful, the Compassionate.

('Abdu'l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá)

