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## chapter 10 - bahai sufi enneagram



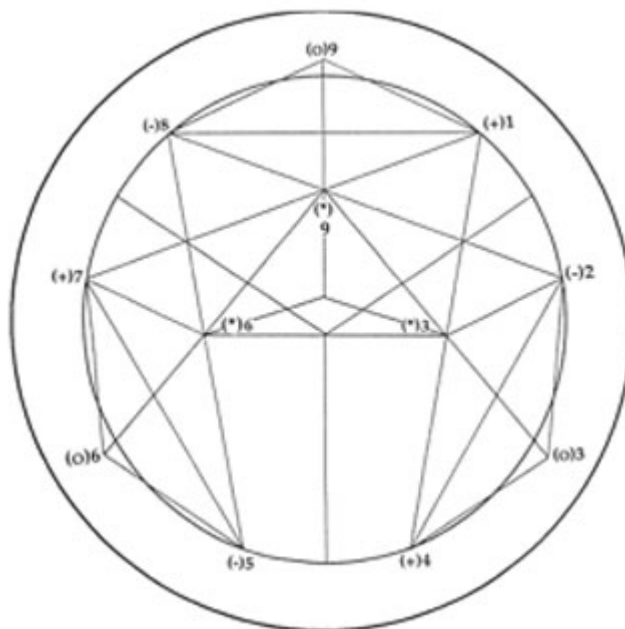
'Abbas Effendi 'Abdu'l-Baha, Mystery of God (Sirru'lláh)

### Chapter 10 - Baha' Allah's "Four Valleys" as Sufi Enneagram Types

by Michael McCarron

Abstract:

"Baha' Allah's Four Valleys is a mystic treatise on the paths of the various mystic wayfarers (sufis). Some have contended it is a treatise on the four paths of the heart. While having similarities to this Sufi genre in actuality it belongs to another genre that of the Sufi Enneagram, a system of 9 personality typologies symbolized by a 9 pointed star. It is discovered that the 3 main paths of the wayfarer correlates to the three main divisions of personalities in the Enneagram of the Sufis. With the 4th Valley corresponding to the Perfect Man (insan al-kamil) of the Sufis.



In regards to the different types associated with adherents and seekers Mirza Husayn-`Ali Nuri (Baha' Allah) has written in the mid 19th Century CE (circa 1857) a treatise entitled the "*Four Valleys*" (Chahar Vadi). In the following I will summarize the treatise while looking to some of the Sufi content that the treatise has contained within it.

To begin this study we will briefly touch on each of the Four Valleys. Each valley has at the center a type of seeker and the organ of the body by which they seek as Dr. Julio Savi posits:

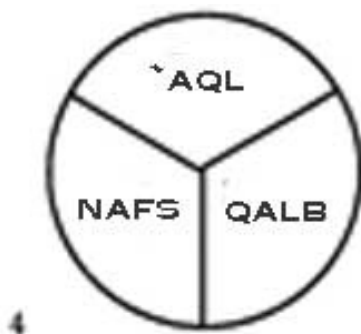
"In reality these goals are but one and the same: God Himself, as manifested in four of His infinite attributes. But for the wayfarers, their aiming at different attributes of God implies different attitudes. In fact each of these stations "appertaineth" to a different spiritual reality: "the self" (*nafs*) or more exactly "the Self of God" (*nafsu'lláh*), "the primal reason" (*`aql*) and "the beauty of love" (*tal'at-i-`ishq*) in the first three Valleys, "the apex of consciousness" (*`arsh-i-faw'ád*) and the secret of divine guidance" (*sirr-i-rashad*) in the Fourth. Apart from the Fourth Valley, which seems precluded to any human being, the others seem not to be mutually exclusive." ([http://bahai-library.com/?file=savi\\_will\\_knowledge\\_4valleys](http://bahai-library.com/?file=savi_will_knowledge_4valleys), accessed 3/13/2009)

A schema of the Four Valleys gives us a pairing of Divine Name with a spiritual organ or *lata'if* for each of the valleys:

#### 4 Valleys Schema:

1. Guided by the divine name, Maqsd; spiritual center is the Self (Nafs)
2. Guided by the divine name, Mahmud; spiritual center is the Mind (`Aql)
3. Guided by the divine name, Majdhub; spiritual center is the Heart (Qalb)
4. Guided by the divine name, Mahbub; spiritual center is all three previous combined in the Insan al-Kamil (Perfect Man).

The content of each valley addresses the attributes of each of the types for each valley. We shall now look at how each valley bares this out



see sufi psychology at [https://secure.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/wiki/Sufi\\_psychology](https://secure.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/wiki/Sufi_psychology).

for taoist version of the same see, <http://www.goldenelixir.com/jindan/dantian.html>

#### The 1st Valley - Self (Nafs)

Baha' Allah writes in the first valley:

If the travelers seek after the goal of the Intended One (maqşúd), this station appertaineth to the self—but that self which is "The Self of God standing within Him with laws." [1](#)

On this plane, the self is not rejected but beloved; it is well-pleasing and not to be shunned. Although at the beginning, this plane is the realm of conflict, yet it endeth in attainment to the throne of splendor. As they have said: "O Abraham of this day, O Friend Abraham of the Spirit! Kill these four birds of prey," [2](#) that after death the riddle of life may be unraveled.

This is the plane of the soul who is pleasing unto God. Refer to the verse:

O thou soul who art well assured,

Return to thy Lord, well-pleased, and pleasing unto Him.

Here we see the pairing of Maqsud with the Nafs or Universal Soul. It is interesting here that there is a pairing with the higher universal aspect of Self (nafs) with the individual selves of the seekers. Nafs (Self) is an integral part of the Sufi transformative philosophy. Nafs is a important term:

"The word nafs is usually translated as self or psyche. Its etymology is rooted in "breath" (similar to [Biblical](#) or [Kabbalistic](#) nefesh) and is common to virtually all archaic psychologies where the act of breathing was connected with life, animating otherwise lifeless object. In this respect, ancient notions of "Atman" in [Hinduism](#) (cf. German noun "Atem", breath, respiration) or Greek "pneuma" (as well as Latin "spiritus") -all equate the basic visible process of breathing with energizing principle that confers existence to an individual human being. Some Sufis consider under the term "Nafs" the entirety of psychological processes, encompassing whole mental, emotional and volitional life; however, the majority of Quranic-based Sufis are of the opinion that Nafs is a "lower", egotistical and passionate human nature which, along with Tab (literally, physical nature), comprises vegetative and animal aspects of human life. Synonyms for Nafs are devil, passion, greed, avarice, ego-centeredness etc. The central aim of the Sufi path is transformation of Nafs (technical term is "**Tazkiya-l-Nafs**" or "*purgation of the soul*") from its deplorable state of ego-centredness through various psycho-spiritual stages to the purity and submission to the will of God. Although the majority of the Sufi orders have adopted convenient 7 maqams (maqams are permanent stages on the voyage towards spiritual transformation), and some still operate with 3 stages, the picture is clear: the Sufi's journey begins with Nafs-e-Ammara (commanding soul), Nafs-e-lawwama (self-accusing soul), and ends in Nafs-e-Mutma'inna (satisfied soul) -although some Sufis's final stage is, in their technical vocabulary, Nafs-l-Safiya wa Kamila (soul restful and perfected in God's presence). In essence, this is almost identical to Christian paradigm of "vita purgativa" and various stages the spiritual aspirant traverses in the journey towards God." (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lataif-e-sitta> accessed 3/13/2009)

Nafs appear in the Shi'a tradition traced back to a saying of Imam `Ali:

Amir al Momenin Ali replied, "Of which *nafs* are you eager to become aware?"

"Is there more than one *nafs*?" asked Komeil.

"Yes, explained Amir al Momenin Ali, there are four: *nafs* of growth; *nafs* of sensibility (animal spirit); *nafs* of pure intellect; and *nafs* of wholeness and Divinity. Each one of the *nufus* (plural of *nafs*) has powers and qualities of its own. ( <http://www.sufismjournal.org/psychology/psychology.html> Hazrat Mir Ghotbeddin Mohammad, accessed 3/13/2009)

While the sufi philosopher al-Ghazali provides a tertiary meaning of nafs:

"The second meaning of nafs is the soul, the human being in reality, his self and his person. However, it is described differently according to its different states. If it assumes calmness under command and has removed from itself the disturbance caused by the onslaught of passion, it is called "the satisfied soul" (al-nafs al-mutma'inna)... In its first meaning the nafs does not envisage its return to God because it has kept itself far from Him: such a nafs is from the party of shaytan. However, when it does not achieve calmness, yet sets itself against the love of passions and objects to it, it is called "the self-accusing soul" (al-nafs al-lawwama), because it rebukes its owner for his neglect in the worship of his master... If it gives up all protest and surrenders itself in total obedience to the call of passions and shaytan, it is named "the soul that enjoins evil" (al-nafs al-ammara bi al-su')... which could be taken to refer to the ego in its first meaning." (<http://www.sunnah.org/tasawwuf/jihad002.html>, accessed 3/13/2009)

It is interesting that Imam `Ali provides a quaternary definition of Nafs. This may correlate to Baha' Allah's quote of Rumi regarding four birds of prey:

"O Abraham of this day, O Friend Abraham of the Spirit! Kill these four birds of prey." -Rumi

It has been argued by Savi that the Four Valleys is a treatise, as mentioned in the Seven Valleys of Baha' Allah, as a treatise on the Four Paths of the Heart. The Four Paths of the Heart is a sufi exposition that goes into the levels of the heart and the Nafs associated with it, it is much like Imam Ali's version. Here we have al-Hakim al-Tirmidhi's version:

4 Paths of the Heart according to al-Hakim al-Tirmidhi:

1. the Breast (sadr); dominated by nafs al-ammarah (self that exhorts to evil); exemplified by the Muslim; gives us knowledge of Shari'a, the outer law (zahir), effulgence of the light of Islam.
2. the Heart (qalb); dominated by nafs al-mulhamah (self that inspires); exemplified by the Mu'min; gives us knowledge of Esoteric, the inner path (batin) effulgence of the light of Faith.
3. the Inner Heart (fu'ad); dominated by nafs al-lawwamah (self that blames; holds accountable); exemplified by the `Arif; gives us knowledge of Vision (ru'ya), effulgence of the light of Gnosis.
4. the Intellect (lubb); dominated by nafs al-mutma'innah (self that is at peace), exemplified by the Muwahhid; gives us knowledge of God's Grace and Bounty, effulgence of the light of Unification. (Nicholas Heer, "[The Stations of the Heart](http://faculty.washington.edu/heer/stations.pdf)." <http://faculty.washington.edu/heer/stations.pdf>, 3/10/2009)

This is an interesting look at Nafs. However, it reveals that the 4 paths is in regards to the Nafs and is in fact relevant to the 1st Valley, not all 4 Valleys. Additional textual affirmation of this is by Baha' Allah's pen. He writes "This is the plane (maqam) of the soul who is pleasing (nafs-i-mardiyya) to God". Then goes on to quote Qur'an 89:37-30 which relates to nafs al-mutma'inna, the soul at rest, the fourth stage of the 4 Paths of the Heart. Thereby suggesting that the 1st Valley the traveller traverse the the 4 Paths of the Heart rather than each valley being representative of each separate Path of the Heart. It is additionally interesting to note that naf-i-mardiyya (pleasing self) appears in a sufi work, "Shuhud wa'l-Wujud" (19th Century CE Persian) as the second to last stage of 7 stages of Purification of the Nafs, the final stage is reserved for only the Prophets and Friends of God (insan al-kamil). Again we see this as a correlation to a completion of a process occurring for the 1st Valley typology.

## 2nd Valley - Mind (`Aql)

The second valley is in regard to the Mind (`aql). The treatise of Baha' Allah writes:

If the wayfarer's goal be the dwelling of the Praiseworthy One (Mahmúd), this is the station of primal reason which is known as the Prophet and the Most Great Pillar. Here reason signifieth the divine, universal mind, whose sovereignty enlighteneth all created things—nor doth it refer to every feeble brain; for it is as the wise Saná'í hath written:

How can feeble reason encompass the Qur'án,  
Or the spider snare a phoenix in his web?  
Wouldst thou that the mind should not entrap thee?  
Teach it the science of the love of God!

Again we see a correlation to the Universal Mind, which is also known as the Muhammadan Reality (Maqam Mahmud), also the Barzakh (intermediary) separating Creator from creation, to the individualized minds of the seekers. Mind in the Sufi tradition has a specific meaning:

"The first book of the third part of the 'Ihya' is called 'Sharh 'ajab'ib al-qalb', 'A commentary on the wonders of the heart'. The preliminary definitions where al-Ghazali analyses the four concepts qalb, ruh, nafs and 'aql are well known. For each concept al-Ghazali distinguishes a 'physical' and a spiritual meaning. In the first sense qalb is a bodily organ: ruh the 'vital spirits' in the blood (cf. contemporaneous ideas of physiology); nafs is the sum of man's passions, the root of his 'blameworthy qualities'; and 'aql the faculty of knowing which 'has its seat in the qalb. In the second sense qalb is a subtle, divine and spiritual' principle which is 'the reality of man' (haqiqat al-insan); ruh is the spiritual substance in man that acts and understands; nafs is man in his reality but capable of being qualified by different attributes according to how his soul controls his carnal desires (ammara, cf. Qur'an 12:53) or chastises his passions and struggles to reform itself (lawwama, Qur'an, 75:2), or is 'at peace' (mutma'inna, Qur'an 79:27), 'pleased by and pleasing to' the Lord; nafs in that case corresponds to the 'rational soul', the nafs natiqa of the philosophers. Finally 'aql in the second sense is 'that which understands knowledge', in short 'the heart itself'. In their [Sufis] spiritual interpretation, these four terms designate man's reality, but under four different aspects." (pg. 487, Encyclopedia of Islam, Vol. V)

However it is very interesting that Baha' Allah places the heart at the center of purification for the Mind:

Wherefore, a man should make ready his heart that it be worthy of the descent of heavenly grace, and that the bounteous Cup-Bearer may give him to drink of the wine of bestowal from the merciful vessel. "For the like of this let the travellers travail!"

It is important to point out that for the Sufis 'aql did not sit in the brain rather was associated directly with the heart:

"...for al-Ghazali and Sufi tradition as a whole, the bodily organ of the heart (and not the brain) is the seat of 'aql, the faculty of knowledge. 'Aql, in the meaning of the understanding of knowledge, is 'in short the heart itself', and the heart is the home and source of ma'rifa [gnosis]." (pg. 487, Encyclopedia of Islam, Vol. V)

### 3rd Valley - Heart (qalb)

The third valley regards the typology identified with the heart. Baha' Allah reveals with his pen:

"If the loving seekers wish to live within the precincts of the Attracting One (Majdhúb), [1](#) no soul may dwell on this Kingly Throne save the beauty of love. This realm is not to be pictured in words.

Love shunneth this world and that world too,  
In him are lunacies seventy-and-two.  
The minstrel of love harpeth this lay:  
Servitude enslaveth, kingship doth betray."

There is an interesting note on the Divine Name Majdhub by the Baha'i scholar Muin Afnani:

"*Majdhub* ("Attracting One") is used in reference to Sufis for whom the path toward God is to be traversed with the faculty of heart (rather than reason or Laws). The word "Majdhub" also means "one who is attracted." In Sufi terminology, Majdhub is a Sufi who is in such a love with his Beloved (God) that is attracted and drawn to God without most of the pains and hardships that other seekers have to go through. Such a person gets attracted to the Attracting One without having to spend long periods of times in stages of the path; they go through them in less than twinkling of an eye." (<http://bahai-library.com/resources/tablets-notes/chahar-vadi/notes.html> , accessed 03/06/2009)

Obviously the heart is a powerful vehicle for the seeker. It is also of importance to be attracted to a sufi master on the path. The following reveals as much, as well as the importance of heart and Majdhub:

"As for the master (*murad*), in the sense of one who is initiated and followed, he is one whose initiatic power (*walaya*) in influencing others has reached the degree of perfecting those who are imperfect and who has seen [initiatially] the different kinds of capabilities and ways of guiding and training disciples. Such a person is either a traveller attracted by Divine Grace (*salik-i majdhub*) who has first traversed all the deserts and precipices of the qualities of the carnal soul through travelling upon the Path, and then with the help of Divine attraction has returned from the stations of the heart and ascensions of the spirit, and has reached the world of vision and certainty and joined the state of contemplation and examination. Or he is one attracted by Divine Grace who travels on the Path (*majdhub-i salik*), who first through the help of Divine attraction has traversed the extent of the stations and has reached the world of vision and unveiling of the Divine realities and then has crossed again the stations and stages of the Path through travelling (*suluk*) and has rediscovered the truth of contemplation in the form of knowledge. (pg. 38, "The Sufi Master as Exemplified in Persian Sufi Literature", Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Iran, Vol. 5, (1967), pp. 35-40, British Institute of Persian Studies Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4299586>)

#### 4th Valley - Convergence

The final valley is one that correlates all three typologies into one master type. Savi has written regarding the 4th Valley:

"The opening words of the description of this Valley announce that it is different from the others. In those Valleys Bahá'u'lláh spoke of goals to be searched for, or of precincts within which "the loving seekers wish(ed) to live," but here He describes "mystic knowers" (*arifán*) "who have [already] reached to the beauty of the Beloved One ..." Their "station is the apex of consciousness and the secret of divine guidance." (*Valleys* 54, 57) Beyond this no one can go.

Bahá'u'lláh says very clearly that no human being can fully understand this condition. It is a "bottomless" and fathomless sea; "it is the blackest of nights ..." (*Valleys* 58). And even those who know its secrets will explain them only if they will meet true seekers, albeit they are conscious that by so doing they will be persecuted even to death. But in this stage there is no fear, neither of pain nor of death: there are only "full awareness," "utter self-effacement" and complete detachment (*Valleys* 60)." ([http://bahai-library.com/?file=savi\\_will\\_knowledge\\_4valleys](http://bahai-library.com/?file=savi_will_knowledge_4valleys), accessed 3/13/2009)

Baha' Allah writes in his treatise about this valley:

If the mystic knowers be of those who have reached to the beauty of the Beloved One (Mahbúb), this station is the apex of consciousness and the secret of divine guidance. This is the center of the mystery: "He doth what He willeth, ordaineth what He pleaseth." Baha' Allah

It should be pointed out that the apex of consciousness is identified with a part of the heart again, the fu'ad, the inner heart and the secret of divine guidance may be the *lata'if sirr* which is an innermost region of one's soul in the terminology of the



Sufis. It is seen here that the travellers in this station are identified with the "Most Great Infallibility (ismat)". That is they are perfectly guided and have achieved purity within themselves. Guidance is an important viewpoint in Baha'i mysticism for the crux of being guided is recognition of the Manifestation of God, the perfect Master or what is known in Sufism as the *Insan al-Kamil*. This is the level of the *Insan al-Kamil* (the Perfect Human). The doctrine of the *Insan al-Kamil* is traced by to Ibn 'Arabi, Chittick writes:

"Ibn al-'Arabi makes the clearest connection between the full manifestation of wujud and the human role in the cosmos in his famous doctrine of the "perfect man" (*al-insan al-kamil*), the complete and total human being who has actualized all the potentialities latent in the form of God. In one respect, perfect human beings-- who are contrasted with 'animal human beings' (*al-insan al-hayawan*)-- embody every praiseworthy human quality. They are exemplars of human wisdom, compassion, and all moral and spiritual good. They guide individuals and society to optimum equilibrium with the ultimate Good. They act as the Real's representatives in society, leading people to supreme happiness in the next world. In their human manifestations they are found as the prophets and the great friends of God." pg. 23 "(Imaginal Worlds: Iban al-'Arabi and the Problem of Religious Diversity", by William C. Chittick, SUNY Press, 1994)

This is the level of "No Station (*maqamat*)" as written by Baha' Allah in the *Jawahir al-Asrar* (Secret Jewels), it is the level of the Manifestation of God. The *Insan al-Kamil* is also related to the Muhammadan Reality as a mediator. It is interesting to read about the correlation of the recognition of the Manifestation in Baha' Allah's writings to the sufi doctrine of *fana al-Rasul* (Annihilation in the Prophet). *Fana'* is an important concept by those instructed by the works of Ibn 'Arabi:

Muhammad's comprehensive realization of all the divine names makes him the perfect link between God and humanity. Ibn 'Arabi's encouragement to his reader to "place him before you like the mirror in which you see your form" may imply the kind of visualization practices that are associated with *fana fi'l-rasul*. Ibn 'Arabi, like many other Sufis, takes comfort in the assurance given by Muhammad in hadith that Satan cannot assume his form, so whoever sees him in a vision sees him in truth. pg. 353 (Annihilation in the Messenger of God: The Development of a Sufi Practice Author(s): Valerie J. Hoffman Source: International Journal of Middle East Studies, Vol. 31, No. 3 (Aug., 1999), pp. 351-369 Published by: Cambridge University Press Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/176216> Accessed: 12/03/2009 16:31)

The Sufi al-Jili writes regarding the Prophetic mediation as object of annihilation:

Anyone who thinks that he [Muhammad] is ascending without his mediation will find that his ascent is a fall into his own prison and scum (*sijnihi wa huththalatihi*). You must attach yourself to his exalted presence, and cling to "the firmest handle" (*al-'urwa 'l-wuthqi*)<sup>24</sup> from his unap- proachable rank, all the while calling forth this perfect image which contains all of the meanings and forms of existence. Do this until the secrets flow onto your spirit, and your spirit onto your heart, and your heart onto your soul, and your soul onto your body, from his love, a spiritual drink that refreshes both spirit and form, extinguishing all traces of yourself. You go with the Messenger of God in you as a substitute for you. Then you can obtain the capacity of his exalted Reality in your being to know what no other creature has known of the One you worship. Because God the Exalted has set apart Muhammad, God's blessings and peace be upon him, for the greatest and most perfect divine manifestations which no other capacity can accept in this world or the next. If the earth of your existence is illuminated with the light of his sun, and the olefactory sense of your spirit is perfumed with the fragrance of these radiant gardens, your body will become balanced with its proportion of his mold and capacity to receive some of these divine manifestations, and you will come to be "looking at their Lord." pg. 356 (Annihilation in the Messenger of God: The Development of a Sufi Practice Author(s): Valerie J. Hoffman Source: International Journal of Middle East Studies, Vol. 31, No. 3 (Aug., 1999), pp. 351-369 Published by: Cambridge University Press Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/176216> Accessed: 12/03/2009 16:31)

And Baha' Allah confirms this same mode of annihilation in the *Jawahir al-Asrar*:

" Had these souls but clung steadfastly to the Handle of God manifested in the Person of Muhammad, had they turned wholly unto God and cast aside all that they had learned from their divines, He would assuredly have guided them through His grace and acquainted them with the sacred truths that are enshrined within His imperishable utterances. For far be it from His greatness and His glory that He should turn away a seeker at His door, cast aside from His Threshold one who hath set his hopes on Him, reject one who hath sought the shelter of His shade, deprive one who hath held fast to the hem of His mercy, or condemn to remoteness the poor one who hath found the river of His riches. But as these people failed to turn wholly unto God, and to hold fast to the hem of His all-pervading mercy at the appearance of the Daystar of Truth, they passed out from under the shadow of guidance and entered the city of error. Thus did they become corrupt and corrupt the people. Thus did they err and lead the people into error. And thus were they recorded among the oppressors in the books of heaven." (Baha' Allah, Para #55, Jawahir al-Asrar, <http://omv.op.het.net/gems/gemsofdivinemysteries.html> accessed 3/16/2009)

We can see how the doctrine of recognition of the Manifestation is held in common between the Baha'i mystic path and that of much of popular sufism as influenced by Ibn Arabi.

### Enneagram of the Four Valleys

In the beginning I mentioned that the Four Valleys was not a Baha'i rendition of the 4 Paths of the Heart, although elements of it are found in the First Valley. Rather, it was a typology of personalities that travel the path. This work, the Four Valleys, was written to a sufi shaykh that is from a lineage (silsilah) that practices the Enneagram. The sufi enneagram is:

"The enneagram is an ancient sufi system, which has recently been used to describe nine personality types. This 'Enneagram of the personality' maps psychological aspects and traits of the ego, exemplifying its emotional, habitual and character fixations." (Sufi Centre of Australia, <http://www.australiansuficentre.org/enneagram.htm>, 3/10/2009)

We can see a correlation of the valleys to the enneagram three major types, the Sufi enneagram is comprised of three major types guided by an esoteric organ, with 3 sub-types to each major type thus equating 9, and is represented, like the Baha'i Faith's symbol, a nine-pointed star. What is not revealed in most modern western Enneagrams is the hidden center dimension of the enneagram where a triangle represents the perfect tritype (3,6,9) relationship of the major types together which represents the completed person or the Insan al-Kamil. It should be pointed out there are differences between the Sufi Enneagram and the popularized version as communicated by Gurdjieff. The Sufi enneagram is about moral healing rather than atomized personality types, one transitions through the enneagram through the three major lata'if of Sufi psychology: heart (qalb), mind ('aql) and self (nafs). The following is a correlation of valleys to enneagram types:

1. The first Enneagram type is dominated by the heart (qalb), sub-types are: 2,3,4, The 3rd Valley of Baha' Allah
2. The second Enneagram type is dominated by the Mind ('aql), sub-types are 5,6,7; The 2nd Valley of Baha' Allah
3. The third Enneagram type is dominated by the Body/Self (nafs), sub-types are 8,9,1; The 1st Valley of Baha' Allah
4. The perfect man (insan al-kamil) is the combination of all three major Enneagram Types and thus correlates to the 4th Valley of Baha' Allah. (source: "The Enneagram, Sufi Wisdom by Viki Markham, <http://www.practicalaliveness.com/pdfs/TheEnneagram.pdf> 3/10/2009)

It should also be noted that these common typologies to major enneagram types to elements of the esoteric organs is not just found in the Baha'i writings here, but also in the [Gurdjieff](#) inspired 4th Way with its prototypes: way of the monk (heart); yogi (mind); fakir (self); the fourth being comprehensive of the first three; it should also be noted that this typology is also found in the Hindu yogic system of Natya Yoga, which Wikipedia writes about as:

"According to the Karma Yoga principles, the practitioner of Natya Yoga learns to do everything with a certain attitude



that leads to the complete detachment from and control of one's physical, emotional and mental activities. One is expected to devote all one's actions to the Supreme as a sacrifice. The stage performances are an opportunity for the dancer to remain indifferent to the spectators' reactions, which require a great deal of self-control. The dancer strives to learn to be guided in every smallest move by the various [devas](#) that are supposed to be established in various [chakras](#)." ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Natya\\_Yoga](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Natya_Yoga), accessed 3/13/2009)

The enneagram was also spoken of as the 'Philosophers stone' (al-hajar). It was Gurdjieff that popularized the Enneagram to the outside world, claiming to have learned it from Sufis, the same Naqshbandi Sufis that Baha'u'llah encountered in Kurdistan. Gurdjieff wrote of the equivalence of the Philosophers Stone to the Enneagram. If this is true then it is possible that Baha'u'llah also wrote of the Enneagram but using figurative speech instead of literal guidance. Baha'u'llah wrote a tablet in response to a query regarding the philosophers stone, which we now know this is likely a reference to the Sufi Enneagram, Baha'u'llah writes regarding the Philosophers Stone:

[1] Then know that it is the [philosophers'] Stone alone that brings the [alchemical] "Work" (*al-amal*) to realization. [2] Nothing external (*khārij*) enters into it and nothing internal (*dākhil*) emerges from it. [3] God, verily, created it a sign of His Power between the worlds. [4] The "Foundation" (*aṣl*) is that about which the [alchemical initiates] sages (*al-hukamā'*) discoursed and the "mercury" (*al-zaibaq*) is a "water" [liquid] (*mā*) which trickles [is distilled] from it. [5] This "water" (*al-mā'*), if you art of those that are informed, is the "key" of the affair (*miftāḥ al-amr*). [6] Should the "key" (*al-miftāḥ*) become available to thee then open therewith the "Gates" (*abwāb*) of the treasures of Thy Lord in this "Stone" (*al-ḥajar*) from which "rivers" (*anḥār*) gush forth from before One Wise, Well-Informed. (S. Lambden, "AN ALCHEMICAL EPISTLE OF MĪRZĀ ḤUSAYN `ALĪ NŪRĪ, BAHĀ'-ALLĀH" <http://www.hurqalya.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/BAHA'-ALLAH/TB-PHILOSOPHER'S%20STONE.htm>, 6/6/2011)

We see the Sufi precedent to this interpretation of Alchemy and it's correlation to the Enneagram in the Naqshbandi sufi scholar Laleh Bakhtiar's work, "God's Will Be Done" which is a clear elucidation of the concepts of the enneagram in the Sufi tradition, she writes:

"One aspect of nature that receives particular emphasis by spiritual warriors [rainbow warriors, arabic: fata] is that of spiritual alchemy or the science of balance or correspondence. In this science each of the seven visible planets symbolize a corresponding metal. The operative processes of this science for spiritual warriors symbolize the struggle to realize the Presence of Reality through transforming the self.

....The method of spiritual alchemy is based in cosmology rather than metaphysical or theology. The aspects of self which are made receptive to change by nature is the substance of the work. Change takes place through corresponding the external body (seen as a metal) with internal psychological states.

(Bakhtiar, 1994(b), pg. 115)

Hence, it is not difficult referencing traditional sufi gnosis on alchemy and spiritual progress to see how the soteriology of sufism is expressed by Baha'u'llah in the Seven Valleys, the Four Valleys and through Alchemical references in his other works.



Alchemical diagram showing 7 points with the 3 major areas of Mind (anime, `aql), Soul (spiritus, ruh) and Body (corpus, nafs)

[more on this later]

## In Conclusion

The Four Valleys is an important work on the stations of seekers on the Sufi Path. It talks of those guided by the heart, mind, self and finally a master type that is comprehensive. This is not a treatise on the four paths of the heart rather it is an expository writing that is related to the three main types of the Sufi Enneagram.

notes:

Shoghi Effendi relates that Baha'u'llah was known as an alchemist to some during his sojourn in Kurdistan with the Naqshbandi sufis, which we know held that the enneagram was the Alchemical Philosopher's stone. See *God Passes By*, pg. 164.

Heart, Mind, Body (latin: anime, spiritus corpus). When spiritus or in Arabic 'ruh' is viewed as being the same as the position of the heart in the traditional psychology of sufism, we see that we have the same tri-partite division of the self, although one word is used at different times.

In modern western Psychology descended from the Freudian school we may look to the work of Karen Horney as similiar to observing the tri-partite division in psychology.