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III



THE ARABIC BAYĀN

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IN PROGRESS 2009-10

The al-Bayān al-`Arabī (The Arabic Bayān)

The al-Bayān al-`Arabī (The Arabic Bayān) or 'The Arabic Exposition' of Sayyid `Ali Muhammad Shirazi, the Bāb (1819-1850 CE) is an innovative, post-Islamic doctrinal-legal work expressive of the mid-late Bābī religion dating to the period of its author's imprisonment in Persian Adhirbayjan (NE Persia) in 1264/1848-9 CE. Like the Persian Bayān it is incomplete consisting of eleven seemingly complete wāḥids ("Unities") though the first wāḥid ("Unity") is not divided up into abwāb ("gates"). Wāḥids ("Unities") two until eleven (II-XI) each have nineteen abwāb ("gates"). It is thus incomplete by eight Wāḥids ("Unity") each of which should have nineteen abwāb ("gates"). The Arabic Bayān is more succinct than the Persian Bayān even though it extends for a further few Wāḥids ("Unities") by including all the early sections as well as those from VIII: 11-19 then the complete ninth tenth and eleventh Wāḥids ("Unities") which are not included in the Persian Bayān at all.

The translation below and spanning successive web pages remains very much a *beta* version in progress. It is being made from various mss. including the Iraqi Baha'i supplied mss. utilized in making the semi-critical text printed in al-Ḥasanī, al-Bābiyyūn... (Sidon, 1953). Critical readings aside from this latter text will gradually be registered and assessed including one in the handwriting of the Bab himself. Parts of the translation below were last updated and corrected 16-09-09

The al-Bayān al-`Arabī (The Arabic Bayān)

Trans. Stephen Lambden 2009-10

III

The Third Unity (al-wāḥid al-thālīth)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الْأَمْنَعِ الْقُدْسِ

In the Name of God, the Most Inaccessible (al-amna`), the Most Holy (al-aqdas).

Bāb 1.

III:I	اياي فاتقون . وانما الاول في الواحد الثالث ما انتم به توقنون . ما يذكر به اسم شيء ملك لي وما تملك ذلك ما . امك قل ان يا خلقي في الظهور الآخرة عن ملكي اياي فاملكون
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I, verily, I am God, no God is there besides Me. Aught else besides Me, if they guides unto My Guidance, are even as "mirrors" in which the "Sun" might be seen. If this other elevates thee, the same is indeed My creation! Say: 'O My creation! Be ye God-fearing before Me!

[Now] As for the First section [Gate] of the Third Wāḥid (Unity):

Be thou befittingly assured that there is no mention therein (Wahid III : 1 of the Bayan) of a name (ism) of any single thing [such as] a Sovereign Ruler [King] (malik) [ruling] aside from Me. Such [a person] shall in no wise rule over that which I do rule! Say: `O my creation! In the [era of] the Ultimate theophany (al-zuhūr al-ākḥira) My dominion (mulkī) is solely of Me! Wherefore be ye among the ruled!

Bāb 2.

III:II	ثم الثاني ما انطق به حق يخلق به ما اشاء ان حق فحق وان دون حق فدون ذلك . ذلك ما ينطق اذ كل نفي واثبات قد كون ثم ظهر بما تنطق قل ان يا عبادي فاتقون
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Now for the Second [Gate].

Whatsoever I cry out through Him is the Truth (al-ḥaqq). He creates through Him whatsoever He Willeth for such is the Truth (haqq), the very Truth (haqq). What is aside from the Truth (dun al-ḥaqq) the same can be ransomed. Wherefore does He cry out with respect to every [mode of] negation and affirmation (kull nafy wa ithbāt) with the [creative imperative expression] "Indeed Let it Be!" (qad kun) (cf. Q, 2:117; 3:42, etc). Then is indeed manifested the like of what was invoked! Say: `O My creatures! [Of this] Be ye absolutely assured!

Note of translator.

Like Persian Bayan III:2 this section of the Arabic Bayan concerns the creative power of the Divine word as cried out (n-t-q) or uttered by His representative. The Arabic synopsis prefacing Persian Bayan III:2 reads, "Though His Utterance (bi-qawlihi) He is able to create something (al-shay') through Him if, that is, He should cry out through Him (ينطق به) because His Speech (al-qawl) is the Truth (al-ḥaqq)."

Bāb 3.

III:III	ثم الثالث اذ يظهر لك يوم القيامة بما ابغثت من قبل ترفع ما نزلت من قبل حين ما نادى وانا كنا صابرين
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Now for the Third [Gate].

Whenever [?? a نك of] the Day of Resurrection is made manifest whatsoever previously existed is raised up [resurrected]. Then [also] is elevated whatsoever was previously revealed [sent down] at the very moment We authorize it. And We indeed are numbered among the patient ones (al-sābirīn).

Bāb 4

III:IV	ثم الرابع ما ينزل عليك في آخريك اعظم عما انزلنا عليك في اوليك . فكن من الشاكرين . وان فضل ما نزلنا عليك على ما نزلنا عليك من قبل كفضل القرآن على الانجيل ذلك فضل محمد على عبي قل ان يا عبادي ظهوري في اخراي تنتظرون
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Now for the Fourth [Gate].

Whatsoever is sent down unto thee in thy eschatological [latter] days (ākḥirika) [the time of the Bab] is supremely greater (a`zam) than that which We sent down unto thee in thy earlier times. So be then [numbered] among the thankful! The Bounty (fadl) which We sent down unto thee is greater than what was sent down unto thee in the past. This even as the magnificence (faḍl) of the Qur`ān transcends that of the Injīl (Gospel[s]) or the fact that the bounty (faḍl) of Muhammad is superior to that of Jesus (faḍl Muhammad `alā `Isā).

Say: `O My servants! My [eschatological] Theophany [Manifestation] (zuhūrī) is at My Zenith [on My Ultimate Level of disclosure] (fi ukhrāī) So be ye then among those in expectation thereof !

Bāb 5

III:V	ثم الخامس قبور الواحد ترفع اذا تأذن في يوم ظهوري اذ بقولي قد رفع من قبل ان يعبادي الي فترجعون
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Now for the Fifth [Gate].

The graves of the [past] Wāḥid (Unity) (qubūr al-wāḥid) are uplifted when so authorized on the Day of My Theophany (zuhūrī), when, through My Utterance (bi-qawfī), such of the past was indeed lifted up. This [thou would know] if, O My servants!, thou should return unto Me.

Bāb 6

III:VI	ثم السادس ما يذكر به اسم من دون الله خلق له ولم يكن بينهما ثالثا قل اني لحق وان ما دوني قد خلق بي ثم لي ان يا عبادي ظهوري في اخراي تدركون
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Now for the Sixth [Gate].

This concerns what He mentions about Him, a Name distinct from Allāh (ism min dun Allāh) which He created for Him. And there is not thereby a "third" (entity) betwixt these two. Say: 'I am indeed the True One (al-haqq)! What is aside from Me He indeed created through Me (bihi) then before Me (li). Say: 'O My servants! My [eschatological] Theophany [Manifestation] (zuhūrī) is indeed at My Zenith (fi ukhrāī). So be ye among those who are so aware.

Bāb 7

III:VII	ثم السابع لن يدركني خلقي لبراني وكلما نزلت من ذكر لقاءي ذلك اياي في أخريك و اوليك قل ذلك اعظم الجنات ان انتم بعد العرفان تدركون . قل ما تنظرن الى شيء في حبي الا وان تدركن ما في ذلك من رضافي ان يا عشاقى الى من نظهره بالحي تنظرون
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Now for the Seventh [Gate].

[This indicates that] My creation can never comprehend Me lest it behold Me! And everything which was revealed with respect to the [eschatological] Encounter [Meeting] with Me (liqa'ī) [in the Qur'ān] the same is indeed [realized in] Myself in thy eschatological situation (ākhirika) as in thy Initial circumstance (awlaika). Say: 'This [eschatological encounter with God through the Bab] is supremely greater than [entrance into] the [realms of] Paradise (a`ẓam al-jannāt) [as thou would know] if, after the receipt of deep knowledge [gnosis] (al-'irfān), thou were able to comprehend. Say: 'Thou shall not envision a single expression of My love (shay' fi ḥubbī) save thou [first] comprehend what is indicated in this respect about My good-pleasure (riḍā'ī). This unless, O my lovers! ('ushshāqī), you are able to envision [the messianic] He whom We shall make manifest as the Living One [One alive as a living messianic figure] (bi'l-hayy).

Bāb 8

III:VIII	ثم الثامن ما قد خلقنا من كل شيء في البيان انتم اليه تنظرون
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Now for the Eighth [Gate].

[This indicates that] whatsoever We created of everything (min kull shay') is within the Bayān [as thou would realize] should thou gaze therein.

Bāb 9

III:IX	ثم التاسع ما في البيان قد نزل في الهياكل الواحد ثم ذلك الآية لتقرأون شهد الله انه لا إله الا هو الرحمان رب الكرسي المنيع الله لا إله الا هو المهيمن القيوم الله الذي لا إله الا هو الملك السلطان القاهر الظاهر الفرد الممتنع
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له الاسماء الحسنی يسبح له من في السموات والارض وما بينهما قل سبحان الله عما انتم تشيرون الله الذي لا
 إله الا هو الحق العالم القادر له الاسماء الحسنی يسجد له من في السموات والارض و ما بينهما وهو
 العزيز المحبوب

Now for the Ninth [Gate].

[This indicates that] Whatsoever is in the Bayān was assuredly sent down in the hayākil al-Wāḥid [abjad19] ('Talismans constituting the Unity'). Additionally (thumma), thou (pl.) should recite this verse/ these verses (al-āyat):

"God beareth witness that He, verily, no God is there except Him, the All-Merciful, the Elevated Lord of the Throne [Celestial] (rabb al-kursī al-manī). God, no God is there except Him. the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting (al-muḥaymin al-qayyūm).

"God Who, no God is there except Him, the King (al-malik), the Sovereign (al-sultān), the Victorious [Wrathful] (al-qāhir), the Evident (al-zāhir), the Unique (al-fard), the Transcendent (al-mumtana). Unto Him belong the Most Beautiful Names (al-asmā' al-ḥusnā). Whomsoever is in the heavens or upon the earth or whatsoever lieth between them render Him glory. Say: 'Glory be to God, above that which they falsely ascribe.'

"God Who, no God is there except Him, the True One (al-haqq), the All-Knowing (al-'alam), the Upright (al-qā'im), the Powerful (al-qādir). Unto Him belong the Most Beautiful Names (al-asmā' al-ḥusnā). Whomsoever is in the heavens or upon the earth or whatsoever lieth between them do bow down before Him for He is the Mighty (al-'azīz), the Beloved One (al-maḥbūb)."

Note of the Translator

The exact sense of الهياكل الواحد al-hayākil al-wāḥid (translated 'the Talismans constituting the Unity') or more literally 'The Haykals / Scriptural Loci/ Embodiments / Temples/ Persona of the Unity') is uncertain. The Arabic term واحد wāḥid has (without the definite article) an abjad numerical value of nineteen. The meaning might thus be the 'fullness' or pleroma of the nineteen persons or haykals of the Bab and his eighteen letters of the living who form a Unity. This basic sense seems to have been the perspective of Gobineau and/or his assistant translators. The 1865 Les Religiones... translation (in the Appendix) has the reasonable, though perhaps over-simplified and interpretive rendering "dans les (dix-neuf) personnes de l'Unité" ("in the [nineteen] persons of the Unity") (ed. Les Religiones, 1928 ed. page 412). This may be on the right lines though the context perhaps suggests something more profound to the effect that the Bayan is a revelatory completeness of great numerological magnitude in the light of its talismanic potency as a sign of the numerology of oneness incorporating the numbers 19 and 361. The word hayākil ('temples', 'embodiments', etc) may indicate "talismans" conceived as non-personified revelatory potencies which embody the power of revelation. They can be viewed as loci or 'personified', 'embodied' revelatory potencies of the Bāb subsumed into that "Unity" (al-wāḥid) that engendered and sustains all existence. Haykals may be thought of as revelatory, hypostatic loci configured as a unity according to a Bayan-centered scriptural universe of wāḥids ("Unities"). In their nineteen- fold schemata of fullness, they express a complete revelatory *pleroma*, (Gk. "fulness"), a totality or kull shay' embracing "all things", absolutely "everything" as befits the final outpouring of God through his messianic Bab on on the Day of God.

Having stated that the Bayan was sent down or revealed as a single completeness the Bab immediately counseled his reader to further recite some Qur'anic-type verses. The phrase ثم ذلك الآية لتقرأون which I have rendered "Additionally (thumma) thou (pl.) should recite this verse (al-āyat)" would seem to indicate that the reader should supplement the Bayānic perfection with some Qur'anic style verses spelled out or re-revealed by the Bab. The Arabic verses forming the second segment of Arabic Bayan III: 9 are introduced by the singular (and plural?) الآية

"the verse" (not the plural, الآيات "the verses" as one might expect) to introduce several quite lengthy Qur'ān rooted citations.

ADD HERE

Bāb 10

X:III	ثم العاشر ما فيها في تلك الآية انتم عدد كل شيء اذا تجدن الروح والريحان تقرأون والا انتم تصمتون ثم تتفكرون . شهد الله انه لا اله الا هو له الخلق والامر يحيي ويميت ثم يميت ويحيي وانه هو حي لا يموت في قبضته ملكوت كل شيء يخلق ما يشاء بأمره انه كان على كل شيء قديرا
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Now for the Tenth [Gate].

This concerns what is therein [see above, the Bayān] of these verse[s]. Thou should recite them according to the number of 361 (kull shay' = abjad 361 times) if thou experience the spirit (al-rūh) and the breeze [of life] (rayhān), otherwise thou should keep silent and then engage in contemplation. God beareth witness that He, verily, no God is there except Him. Unto Him belongs the creation and the command (lahu al-khalq wa'l-amr) . He causes life and makes to die then He causes death and brings to life. He indeed is the Living One (al-ḥayy) Who does not die for in His grasp is the Kingdom of all things (malakūt kull shay'). He creates whatsoever He wills through His Command. He, verily, is Powerful over all things (kull shay').

Bāb 11

III:XI	ثم الواحد من بعد العشر ما نزل فيها في الآية الاولى بسم الله الامنع الاقدس ، انتم الى حروف الواحد تنظرون
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Now for the Eleventh [Gate].

This [section concerns] what was revealed therein [the Bayān] as the initial verse [of the Bayān] (al-āyat al-awwalī) namely, بسم الله الامنع الاقدس Bism Allāh al-amna` al-aqdas ("In the Name of God, the Most Inaccessible, the Most Holy"). Thou should thus direct thy gaze towards the 'Letters of the Unity' (ḥurūf al-wāḥid).

Note of the Translator

What is meant by the حروف الواحد the 'Letters of the Unity' (ḥurūf al-wāḥid) is again, not immediately obvious. It may simply be the persons who make up the nineteen strong Bābī Wāḥid (Unity), namely the Bāb and the eighteen 'Letters of the Living'. Alternatively, if the ḥurūf al-wāḥid, 'Letters of the Unity' are in some sense those implied in the new, doubly apophatic, nineteen letter basmala spelled out in Arabic Bayān III:11 (= بسم الله الامنع الاقدس) then the matter is rather more complicated.

Bāb 12

III:XII	ثم الثا في من بعد العشر ما فيها في النقطة حروف الاول تدركون . ذلك من يظهره الله حروف الحي عنده كمرآت عند الشمس بمثل ذلك انتم في كل الاسماء والصفات تستدلون . ذلك جوهر البيان يذكر نفسه من عند ربه ما انتم اياه تدركون . انني انا الله لا اله الا انا الظاهر السلطان قل ما دوني خلقي كل اياي يعبدون . قل الله الله ربي وانتم ان يا كل شيء لا تشركن بالله ربكم احدا . ولا تدعون مع الله ربكم الرحمن شيئاً
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Now for the Twelfth [Gate].

This [section] concerns what is stipulated concerning the Point (al-nuqṭa) for thou should strive to comprehend the [mystery of the] initial letters (ḥurūf al-awwal) [of the new basmala?]. They indicate Man yuẓhiru-hu Allāh (Him Whom God shall make manifest) [and] the 'Letters of the Living' (huruf al-hayy) who are nigh unto Him. They are even as "Mirrors" (mirat) before the "Sun" (al-shams). This thou should strive to establish relative to all of the Names

and Attributes (al-asmā' wa'l-ṣifāt) [of God] for it is the very Essence of the Bayan (jawhar al-bayān). He Himself mentions it on the part of His Lord that thou might be moved to comprehend it. I, verily, I am God, no God is there except Me, the Manifest (al-zāhir), the Sovereign (al-sultān). Say : 'What is other than Me is My creation. Wherefore should all serve Me'. Say God is indeed God! thy Lord! And thou, O kull shay' ([Babi] 'Everything'-Pleroma), no one among you should subscribe to polytheistic ways about God, thy Lord! Thou shall not instigate any faction (shī'a^{an}) against God, thy Lord, the All-Merciful.

Bāb 13

III:XIII	ثُمَّ الثَّالِثُ مِنْ بَعْدِ الْعَشْرِ لَا تَسْئَلُنَ فِي أَوْلَايَ وَلَا فِي الْآخِرَايَ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ وَلِتَعْمَلْنَ كُلَّ وَاحِدٍ فِي مَسَالِكِكُمْ لِعَلَّكُمْ تَتَأَدَّبُونَ
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Now for the Thirteenth [Gate].

[This section concerns the directive that] Thou shall in no wise enquire about either My origins-beginnings (awwālī) or My ultimate destiny (al-ukhraṭ) except by means of a letter (fi'l-kitāb). This to the end that everyone might operate according to Thy directives [courses of action] (masālik) perchance thou might be accounted among the cultured.

Bāb 14

VIII:XI	ثُمَّ الرَّابِعُ مِنْ بَعْدِ الْعَشْرِ أَنْ تَحْفَظْنَ كُلَّمَا نَزَلَ فِي الْبَيَانِ كَطَلْعَةِ طُرُزٍ فِي أَلْوَاحٍ مَقْطُوعَةٍ لَا تَكْتَبِينَ مَا يَغْيِرُ طُرُوزَهُ ثُمَّ فِي أَعْلَى الْجِلْدِ تَحْفَظُونَ . وَ مَنْ يَكُنْ عِنْدَهُ دُونَ مَا يَنْبَغِي لِعِزَّتِهِ يَحْجُبْ عَمَلَهُ فَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمُحْتَجِّبِينَ
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Now for the Fourteenth [Gate].

This [section directs:] Preserve ye indeed! everything that hath been sent down in the Bayān. This as if it were a dawn-breaking ornament amongst the Scriptural Tablets (ṭal'at ṭaraz fi al-alwāḥ). Not something written as detached (muqatta`at) [aside from other Divine revelations] such that one besmirches its ornamented status (ṭaraz). Thou should also preserve it [all the revealed words] in the most elevated of tomes [volumes] ('a'lā al-jild). Whoso operates in a manner other than as directed, by His very Might! such an one shall have his efforts veiled away though he shall not be numbered among the veiled ones.

Bāb 15

VIII:X	ثُمَّ الْخَامِسُ مِنْ بَعْدِ الْعَشْرِ أَنْ تُؤْمِنَنَّ بِمَنْ نَظَهَرَنَاهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فَإِنَّكُمْ أَنْتُمْ بِي وَالْآيَاتِي فِي كُلِّ الْعَوَالِمِ أَنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ . وَالْأَسْتَغْفِرُوهُ ثُمَّ كُنْتُمْ إِلَيْهِ لِتَانِبِينَ
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Now for the Fifteenth [Gate].

This section declares] Believe ye in [the messianic] Him Whom We shall indeed make manifest (= Man yuzhīru-hu Allāh) on the Day of Resurrection (yawm al-qiyāma)! This in such wise that in all the worlds thou be numbered among the believers in Me and in My verses (ayat). Otherwise seek ye forgiveness of Him then be contrite before Him.

Bāb 16

III:XVI	ثُمَّ السَّمَاعُ مِنْ بَعْدِ الْعَشْرِ لَا تَعْمَلْنَ إِلَّا بِمَا زَلَّنَاهُ عَلَيْكَ وَلَا تَأْمُرْنَ إِلَّا بِهِ . قُلْ أَنَّهُ لَشَمْسٌ أَنْ نَجْعَلَنَّكُمْ وَأَثَارَكُمْ مَرَاتًا تَرُونَ فِيهَا مَا أَنْتُمْ تَحْبُونَ إِذَا أَنْتُمْ بِالْحَقِّ تَقَابِلُونَ
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Now for the Sixteenth [Gate].

[This section declares that] Thou shalt not act save in accordance with what We have sent down unto thee. Neither shalt thou stipulate [command] anything except [it be] through I Myself. Say: 'He, verily, is indeed the

"Sun" (al-shams)'. We have indeed made thyself and thy writings (āthār) even as "mirrors" in which one might envision whatsoever thou consider beloved. This since thou, in very truth, have been counted among the receptive.

Bāb 17

III:XVII	ثم السامع من بعد العشر لا تكتب آثارى الا احسن خط على ما انتم عليه لمقتدرون. وان يكن عند احد دون اعظم خط يحبط علمه الا الصبايا حين ما يتأدبون
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Now for the Seventeenth [Gate].

This [section commands] that Thou shall not write out My [revealed] writings (āthārī) save in the most comely [beautiful] of scripts (aḥsan al-khaṭṭ) as befits that which thou consider to be powerfully preordained [sacred writ]. If this should occur on anybody's part in other than the supremely great script (dun a`ẓam al-khaṭṭ), He would nullify his knowledge. This unless, that is, such [penmanship] be [the work] of young girls (al-ṣabayā') at the time of their being educated.

Bāb 18

III:XVIII	ثم الثامن من بعد العشر من ينشئ كلمات الله قل خذ لنفسك على اجذب خط ثم تهب من تشاء فان ذلك قسطاس حق مبين .
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Now for the Eighteenth [Gate].

Regarding that one [the scribe] who generates words for God (yansha` kalimāt li'lāh). Say: [Let him] Set himself the [task of operating with] the most-captivating of scripts (ajdhab al-khaṭṭ)'. Then thou shalt proceed as thou will for this indeed is a Balance (qustas), manifest and evident.

Bāb 19

IXIII:X	ثم التاسع من بعد العشر ان يا عبادي فاصرفوا في ملكي فيما نزل علي على ما انتم عليه لمقتدرون ان تجدن من يكن بهاء خطه الارض وما عليها فلتاتوه حتى يكتب اسمي المهيمن القيوم . وكل ما امرتم على اعلى الخط لم يكن الا لتحسن بأرواح الحروف ذلك ذرياتكم فلتجمعن بين الحسنين ثم اياي فاشكرون
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Now for the Nineteenth [Gate].

This [section declares] O My servants! Be ye of the utmost sanctity in My dominion [earthly kingdom] (mulkī)! for there was sent down unto Me that which thou can assuredly view as something powerfully ordained. Wherefore shall thou seek out the one who has the most beautiful of scripts on earth (bahā' al-khaṭṭa al-arḍ); among, that is, such as exist thereon. Then thou shalt bestow upon him what will induce him to inscribe My Name, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting (al-muḥaymīn al-qayyūm). And everything that He commanded thee [though my revelations] He shall execute in the most elevated of scripts (a'lā al-khaṭṭ). This should not come to pass save in the utmost loveliness evident in the very spirits of the letters (bi'l-arwāḥ al-ḥurūf)! This task is [in accord with] thy quintessential propensities (dhariyyāt). So gather together then judge among those of preeminently beautiful [penmanship] thereafter render ye thanks unto Me!