THE ARABIC BAYÂN 02

In Progress 2009-10

The Bayân al-'Arabî (The Arabic Bayân)

The Bayân al-'Arabî (The Arabic Bayân) or 'The Arabic Exposition' of Sayyid 'Ali Muhammad Shirazi, the Báb (1819-1850 CE) is an innovative, post-Islamic doctrinal-legal work expressive of the mid-late Bábî religion dating to the period of its author's imprisonment in Persian Adhîrbayjân (NE Persia) in 1264/1848-9 CE. Like the Persian Bayân it is incomplete consisting of eleven seemingly complete wâhidîs ('Units') though the first wâhid ('Unity') is not divided up into abwâb (‘gates’). Wâhidîs ('Units') two until eleven (II-XI) each have nineteen abwâb (‘gates’). It is thus incomplete by eight Wâhidîs (‘Unity’) each of which should have nineteen abwâb (‘gates’). The Arabic Bayân is more succinct than the Persian Bayân even though it extends for a further few Wâhidîs (‘Units’) by including all the early sections as well as from VII: 11-19 then the complete ninth tenth and eleventh Wâhidîs (‘Units’) which are not included in the Persian Bayân at all.

Translation of the Arabic Bayân, Stephen Lambden UC-Merced 2009-10

The translation below and spanning successive web pages remains very much a beta version in progress. It is being made from various ms. including the Iraqi Bahâ‘î supplemented ms. utilized in making the semi-critical text printed in 'Abd al-Razzâq al-Hasâ‘î (ed.), al-Bâbîyyûn wâl-Bâhâ‘îyyûn fî ṭadârîhîm wa madâhihîm (Sidôn: Matbâ‘at al-Irfânî, 1962), pp. 81-107. Critical readings aside from this latter text will gradually be registered and assessed including one in the handwriting of the Báb himself. Parts of the translation below were last updated and corrected 20-09-09.

The Bayân al-'Arabî (The Arabic Bayân)

II

The Second Unity (al-wâhid al-thânî)

Basmallah (In the Name of God, the Most Inaccessible (al-amman'), the Most Holy (al-aqdas).

Báb 1.

ان ياء حرف الراء والباء
فلنذن على انه لا انا اننا قد نزلت في الباب الاول من الوحد الثانية ان يعرف قدرة ربك في الآيات ثم اشهد
ذكر الآتىة في كل شيء ثم عجز الناس عما نزل في البيان فان به يثبت ما تريد
O Letter "R" and "B" (ḥarf al-rāʾ wa-l-bāʾ)! Bear Thou witness that that there is no God except I, Myself. I indeed sent down what is in the first Gate (bāb) of the second Unity (al-wāḥid al-thānī). Know then the Power (qudrat) of Thy Lord in the verses (al-ḥikāyāt). Then witness the Dhikr (messianic Remembrance) of the Finality [Eschaton] (dhikr al-linḥiya) in all things (kull shay'). Then [witness] the impotency of the people [to replicate, comprehend] ('aż al-nāš) what was sent down in the Bayān. By means of it / Him [the Bayān/ the Bab] He confirms what Thou do intend.

Note of translator.

O Letter "R" and "B" (ḥarf al-rāʾ wa-l-bāʾ). This indicates the Qur'ānic name of God Rabb or "Lord" and the Bab as the eschatological manifestation of the Deity. This because his personal, parentally bestowed name has the same abjad numerical value as "Lord" (Rabb = 202 ). The personal name of the Bab is 'Ali Muhammad (= abjad 'Ali = 70+30+10 = 110 + Muhammad = 40+8+40+4 = 92 Total = 110+92 = 202).

Bāb 2.

Now for the Second [Gate].

One cannot encompass the gnosis [knowledge] of the Bayān ('ilm al-bayān) unless thou be in thy ultimate stage [of maturity] (al-ākhirī). Then such persons, or whosoever testifies unto whatsoever is intended therein [i.e. the Bayan], are both considered such as have attained [the goal].

Bāb 3.

Now for the Third [Gate].

I have not given anyone permission to make commentary save in line with that which I have expounded. Say: 'All that is good (al-khayr) returns unto Me'. All else returns unto the letter of negation (ḥarf al-na'īf). Such is the gnosis [knowledge] ('ilm) of the Bayān (Exposition) [as thou would realize] if thou were to be among such as are informed. Then [furthermore] the good (al-khayr) is recollected through the quintessential human reality (muntahā al-dharr) though the gnosis [knowledge] of the God fearing [pious] (fi 'ilm al-mutaqīn). Then what is other than good [is similarly found] in the quintessential nature (fīl-muntahā) just as thou do witness relative to such as are insincere (dān al-mukhlūṣān).

So be sure to recite the primordial verse [of affirmation in the Qur'ān] (āyat al-awāli) [Q. 7:172 balā shahidnā "Yea! Verily we [humanity] do testify!"] if thou desire to be among those predetermined (taqdirūn). Wherefore is all of that [pre-eternal past] the similitude [prefiguration] (mithl) of this [eschatological present] [as thou would realize] if thou were to be numbered among such as are informed. All of that is [furthermore, an expression of] the Most Holy Name (ism al-aqdas) at the ultimacy of enumeration (akhir al-`adad = the last integer = nine? cf. 'In the year nine thou shall attain unto all al-khayr "good") [as thou would realize] if thou were to befittingly bear witness. The same
[expression of ultimate al-khayr = "Good"] is Man yuzhiru-hu Allāh (the messianic 'Him Whom God shall make manifest') as thou would indeed be assured if it conform to what God hath willed.

Bāb 4

II:4

Now for the Fourth [Gate].

We do not exaggerate in the Book about anything [as thou would realize] if thou were to be numbered among such as believe in Man yuzhiru-hu Allāh (the messianic 'Him Whom God shall make manifest').

Bāb 5

II:5

Now for the Fifth [Gate].

God did not send down of the letters (ḥurūf) incorporating the *ālā *except* bi-lim (the shahāda = "there is no God except God [without] His being the [their Ultimate] Spirit [Essence] (ruḥ). Wherefore should thou (pl.) [be moved to] weep at the [thought of the] knowledge of the remoteness (bi-lim al-bu'id) [implied by the negation]! Thereafter thou should rejoice in the knowledge of the [possibility of] proximity (bi-lim al-qurb) [through the theistic affirmation, of the shahāda]. Indeed, if thou should recite the [letters of] negation (al-nafi) [the first part of the shahāda = "There is no God"] forthwith thou should nullify them! Such is what bears fruit before God [as thou would realize] if thou should come to [truly] comprehend. And if thou should recite the [words of the] theistic affirmation (al-ithbāt) [the latter part of the shahāda] thou would indeed proffer [acceptable] confirmation [of God]. Such indeed is what bears fruit before God [as thou would realize] if thou should be so empowered.

Wherefore is it the case that what has priority (al-awwal) is the [whole] Syzygy (Duality) (al-dhālīn) of the shahāda [as thou should realize] if thou should be granted leave to draw nigh unto God. All the [twelve] letters (ḥurūf) of the shahāda return unto this Syzygy [Duality of the two aspects of the shahāda] [as thou would realize] if thou were truly insightful. Thou (pl.) shall in no wise recite la ilāha illā Allāh ("There is no God except God") without thereby making affirmative confirmation of the Throne of [Divine] Affirmation ("arāh al-ithbāt"). This [shahīda formula] is assuredly that [within which] God withdraws from you [in the negation of "There is no God"] and this is [also what He declares representative of the] theistic affirmation as the "but God" of the Riḍwān (the "Repose of Paradise") of God for those who are nigh unto God (al-muqarrabin).

Bāb 6

II:6VI

Now for the Sixth [Gate].
We did not send down the [messianic] Dhikr of the Good (dhikr al-khayr) in the Bayán save for the sake of Him whom We shall make manifest (man nuẓhiru-hu = the messianic ‘Him Whom God shall make manifest’) on the Day of Resurrection (yawm al-qiyāma) with My verses. This perchance thou might assist Him in victory. There is nobody aside from the Dhikr of the Good (dhikr al-khayr) except that One [Satan] who refused to prostrate before him [Adam/the Dhikr/ Man yuẓhiru-hu Allāh, the messianic ‘Him Whom God shall make manifest’ such that thou might assuredly be numbered among such as did prostrate [before Him] (al-sājīdīn). This is the like of what We sent down the Qur’ān aforetime although thou were veiled from My intention. It is that about which night and day do circumambulate to the number of eight wāḥids (unities) [8x19 = 1527]. And yet thou, in a state of servitude (al-ʾibādat) before Him, do [strive for] unity despite remaining ever veiled with respect to what He decreed respecting His mystery (al-sīr). Such is the Balance of Guidance (mīzāl al-huda) in the Bayān [as thou would realize] If thou were to [truly] believe in Him. This until the moment (tāʾā) [ajbād 68], that is, when the Sun of Exaltedness (shams al-ʾalā) shall radiate forth for this is [the time of the manifestation of] Man yuẓhiru-hu Allāh, ‘Him Whom God shall make manifest’ [as thou would realize] if thou were to [really] act in accordance with belief. If so thou would be [established] within the Rīwān of Immortality (the ‘Repose of Immortality’)! Otherwise thou wilt find thyself to be numbered among those obliterated [annihilated] (fālniyyūn).

Bāb 7

| II:VII |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ |

Now for the Seventh [Gate].

This concerns of Day of Resurrection (yawm al-qiyāma) according to thy level of comprehension. From the [very] commencement of the rising up [*Day* of the] of the Sun of Bahāʾ (Glory) until [the time of] its setting is [a period] better (khayr) in the Book of God (kitāb Allāh) than every “Night” (al-layl). God did not create any single thing (min shayʾ) save for this Day when all shall be capable of attaining the Meeting with God (liqāʾ Allāh) then [actualizing] His good pleasure (ridāʾ). And on the Day of Resurrection (yawm al-qiyāma) this shall come to pass outwardly (*zāhīr ān*). So be diligently observant! We are among the eagerly awaited although thou art [to be numbered] before God among those who prevaricate. The [time of the] setting [declension] of the Sun [of Truth] (al-zawāl) hath drawn nigh though art incapable of apprehending [the nature of] that [eschatological] Day (al-yawm). And whatsoever be counted the Encounter (liqāʾ) with Him is the very essence of the Meeting with Me (dhīḥ liqāʾ)! So be it not satisfied in contentment before Him that He should be dissatisfied with any person confronted by the [Divine] Logos-Self [of God]. So call thou to mind the Ultimate Letter [Letter of the Eschaton] (ḥarb al-ʾākhir) for then thou will have attained thy limit!

Bāb 8

| II:VIII |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ ﷺ |

Now for the Eighth [Gate].

It hath been ordained that death (al-mawt) overtakes all things [everything] (*alā kull shayʾ) nigh My Theophany [Manifestation] (*ʿind zuhūrī), things aside from My love (ḥubbī). And whatsoever is [subsequently] generated through
My Command (amr) benefits thee in that it withdraws thee from hellfire (al-nār) unto that light (al-nūr) which is the Supreme Horizon (al-qawq al-a'la) [as thou would realize] if thou should prove able to comprehend. That is a "death" (mawt) which occurs in "life" (al-ḥayāt) if thou be of such as truly comprehended the totality of these dual dimensions of reality during thy lifetime.

Bāb 9

Now for the Ninth [Gate].

The Letter س ("S", "Sin"; ḥār al-ṣān) is the "grave" (qabr) of all who have believed in Him on the Day of Resurrection (yawm al-qiyyāma); [the grave] of all who were raised up [resurrected]. Say: He, verily, is the True One! No doubt is there about that. It was on account of the [declarative] utterance of the Point (al-nuqṣa) that they were raised up through the foreordainment of the [One who is the] Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting (taqdis al-muhaymin al-qayyūm).

Note of translator

The Bāb here and elsewhere equated the nineteen letters of the Basmala (= Bismillah al-Rahman al-Rahim) with himself and his first disciples, the Ḥurūf al-Ḥayy or Letters of the Living (abjad numerical value of (Ar.) Ḥayy = 18+1=19). The second letter of the basmala is the Letter س ("S", "Sin"; ḥār al-ṣān) which represents the 'First letter of the Living' after the Bāb who is the letter "B". The other eighteen subsequent letters are the other successive eighteen letters of the basmala. Thus Mulla Ḥusayn Bushru'i (d. 1849), the first Letters of the Living', is the second letter س ("S", "Sin"; ḥār al-ṣān), the second letter of the nineteen letter Basmala. Because he was the first to come to faith in the Bāb or to be resurrected to new life he symbolizes the "grave" (al-qabr) of unbelief from which persons emerge into the life of faith. All humanity was spiritually "dead" just before the Bāb declared his prophetic mission; including Mulla Ḥusayn who was then in the "grave" of unbelief. When he came to faith he and all humanity symbolically arose from the "dead" on the Day of resurrection (yawm al-qiyyāma). This is reminiscent of some of the the New Testament texts in which "dying" with the resurrected Christ and coming to faith through his resurrection is directly or indirectly spoken about; especially in certain of the Pauline letters, "As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive". Having said this I am not suggesting New Testament influence upon the Bāb.

In a footnote to the 1865 Gobineau translation (fn. 5 pp. 406-7) it is pointed out that the threefold spelling out of the name of the letter س ("S", "Sin"; ḥār al-ṣān = s+y+ơ) has a numerical value of 361 though this should be 360.

Bāb 10

Now for the Tenth [Gate].

This concerns what the servant (al-'abd) asked about the [eschatological] manifestation [parousia] of that One who shall appear just as it was asked in the Qurʾān [as thou would know] if thou were to be numbered among those beloved. Such is the utterance of the Sovereign (qawl al-mulk) on the part of God [as thou would know] if thou were
to be among those assured regarding the verses of God (āyāt Allāh). They are [in fact] the verses of Ṭan yuṣhiru-hu Allāh ("Him whom God shall make manifest"). Then shall the shadow of the ninth (zill al-tāsi”) be even as the likeness of the shadow of the tenth (zill al-‘ashir) [as thou would know] should thou [be engaged in collecting] testimonial evidences.

Bāb 11

| 1:XI |

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\text{ثَمَّ الْوَاحِدَ مِنْ بَعْضِ الْعَشْرِ انَّ الْقُرْرَةَ رِقَّٰحُ حَقَّ بَعْثَتِ اللَّهُ مِنْ يَثْبِتَ عَنْ أَنفْسِ الْأَحْيَاءِ مِنْ خَلْقِهَا بِمَا يَحْكِمُ مَظْهِرَ}
\]

Now for the Eleventh [Gate].

This [section declares] that rising up [resurrection] (al-ba’ath) is the likeness of the grave (al-qabr). The Reality is that God raises up whomever He wills among the persons [souls] of the regenerated [enlivened, now living] (anfus al-ihyā’) among His creatures. This since He ordains the [moment of the theophany of His Logos-Self (mazhar nafsihi) [on earth on the Day of Resurrection]. Wherefore is it that thou, on the Day of Resurrection (yawm al-qiyāma), are raised up [to new life] on account of the crying out [initial declaration] of Ṭan yuṣhiru-hu Allāh ("Him whom God shall make manifest").

Bāb 12

| 1: XII |

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\text{ثَمَّ الْثَّانِيَ مِنْ بَعْضِ الْعَشْرِ ذَكَرَ الْصَّرَائِطَ حَقَّ وَا نَتِمَ مَعْلُومًا. ذَلِكَ أَمْرِ بِمَا يَظْهَرُهُ اللَّهُ اَنْتَ مُبْعَرَ الْظَّهُورِ بِهِ}
\]

Now for the Twelfth [Gate].

This [section concerns] that the status of the Şirāt ("Bridge", "Path"), which is indeed a Reality (haqq). Thou should indeed [strive to] pass over it! Such is the command of Ṭan yuṣhiru-hu Allāh ("Him whom God shall make manifest") if thou, on the Day of His theophany [Manifestation], be obedient to Him. Say: ‘All aforetime were expecting My Day (yawmī) yet when it was made manifest they remained affixed in their [own previous] religion. Therefore were they all at a standstill (wāqifūn) about the Şirāt ("Bridge", "Path")! Such is their silence before the Truth [as thou would know] if thou were to be numbered among such as understand.

Bāb 13

| 1: XIII |

\[
\text{ثَمَّ الْثَّالِثَ مِنْ بَعْضِ الْعَشْرِ ذَكَرَ الْمِيْزَانَ ذَلِكَ مِنْ يَظْهَرُهُ اللَّهُ يَتَكَلِّبُ الْحَقَّ مِثْلَ مَا يَتَكَلِّبُ الْظَّلَلَ مِثْلَ الْشَّمْسِ فَإِذَا}
\]

Now for the Thirteenth [Gate].

This [section] concerns that the status of the mīzān ("Balance") [for eschatological Judgment] which is Ṭan yuṣhiru-hu Allāh ("Him whom God shall make manifest"). In association with Him Reality-Truth-Deity (al-ḥaqq) is transformed just as shade (al-żill) is transformed by the sun (al-shams). And when thou art [established] in the Bayān and the witnesses are summoned (al-shuhadā’) then thou art subject to being weighed [in the mīzān or ‘Balance of judgment’].

Bāb 14

| VII: XI |

https://web.archive.org/web/20160409092143/http://www.hurqalya.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/
Now for the Fourteenth [Gate].

This [section concerns that the status of the hisāb ("Appraisal", "Reckoning") [during eschatological Judgment] which is after the likeness of the [explanation of the] mīzān ("Balance") [for eschatological Judgment] before the True One (li-haqq) when all that hath been sent down in the Bayān is that therewith God appraises humanity [the people] and every thing (kull shay') [else besides] [as thou would know] if, O My servants, thou were to be numbered among such as are assured.

Bāb 15

| VII:X | ثم الخمس من بعد العشر أن الكتاب لحق ذلك قول الله من لسانى أن اتتم بالحق لتوقنون |

Now for the Fifteenth [Gate].

This [section declares] that the Book (al-kitāb) is, assuredly the Truth (li-haqq), the Utterance-Speech of God (qawl Allāh) from My tongue (lisānī) [as thou would know] if thou, in very truth, were to be numbered among such as are assured.

Bāb 16

| H:XVI | ثم السادس من بعد العشر أن الجنة حب الله ثم رضالله وان ذلك حق لا عدل له أنا كننا فيها خالدين. ما ينسب إلى في الجنة ذلك ما ينسب إلى من يظهره الله ألا تدخلون وإنما النار قبل أن يبدل بالنار نار الله ذلك من يظهره الله قبل أن يعرفكم نفسه اتتم في نار الحب تدخلون فإنه لحق لا كفوه له ان دخلتم. فذا اتتم كل الخير تدركون |

Now for the Sixteenth [Gate].

This [section declares] that Paradise (al-jannat) is the love of God (ḥubb Allāh) then His good-pleasure (riḍā'). Such is the Truth. There is no expression of justice (ʿadl) that can be compared unto it. Thereby [in line with its truth] can we be numbered among such as may be accorded immortality (khālidin). Whatsoever has no relationship with Me in Paradise (al-jannat) the same has no relationship with Man yuzhiru-hu Allāh ("Him whom God shall make manifest"). How then could such [unconverted] persons possibly enter therein [Paradise]? Unless, that is, hellfire (al-nār) had previously been transformed into that Light (al-nūr) which is the Fire of God (nār Allāh) which is [also] Man yuzhiru-hu Allāh ("Him whom God shall make manifest"). Even before He acknowledges thee Himself thou may be within the Fire of love (nār al-hubb) [=Paradise] which others may [also] have entered. He indeed is assuredly the True One! There is no one equal (kufū') with Him! This much thou would know if thou were to be numbered among such as have entered [Paradise]. Then shall thou be [counted among] such as have comprehended [that which is] "all good" (kull al-khayr).

Bāb 17

| H:XVII | ثم السامع من بعد العشر ذكرالنار لمن احب ذكر من لم يؤمن بمن يظهره الله ذلك من لا أمن قبل من ينسب إليه ينسب الى النار أن يا عبادي فأذرون |

Now for the Seventeenth [Gate].
This [section declares] that the recollection of the Fire (al-nār) [of love = Paradise] is indeed more beloved (ḥabb) than the recollection of whomsoever does not believe in Man yuzhiru-hu Allāh ("Him whom God shall make manifest"). Such applies to whomsoever hath not previously believed, without having a relationship to Him [Man yuzhiru-hu Allāh] which is tantamount to a relationship to the Fire (al-nār) [of love = Paradise]. Wherefore, O My servants! Be ye exceedingly cautious!

Bāb 18

\[
\begin{array}{|c|}
\hline
\text{H:XXIII} \\
\hline
\text{تَمَّ الثَّامِنُ مِنْ بُعْدِ الْعَشْرِ السَّاعَةَ إِنَّمَا فَسَرَ اللَّهُ فِي الْكِلَمَةِ إِنِّي بَشَاءٌ اللَّهُ لِتَوْقَنُونَ} \\
\hline
\end{array}
\]

Now for the Eighteenth [Gate].

This [section concerns] the [eschatological] "Hour" (al-sa’at). Thou should indeed be assured, as God so wills, about that which God hath [in this respect] expounded within the Word (al-kalimat) [= the Bayan].

Bāb 19

\[
\begin{array}{|c|}
\hline
\text{XII:X} \\
\hline
\text{تَمَّ الْتَّاسِعُ مِنْ بُعْدِ الْعَشْرِ مَا نَزَّلَ اللَّهُ فِي الْبِيَانِ حَدِيثًا ذَاتَ غَرَّةً إِلَىٰ مِنْ يُظْهِرِهِ اللَّهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ بِيَادِيهِ تَوْقَنُونَ} \\
\hline
\end{array}
\]

Now for the Nineteenth [Gate].

This [section declares] that whatsoever God sent down in the Bayān is an Orchard [Garden] endowed with Beauty (ḥādiqat dhāt ghurra) (cf. Q. 78:32; 80: 30) offered before Man yuzhiru-hu Allāh ("Him whom God shall make manifest") perchance thou might believe in His verses (āyāt).

Note of translator.

The 1865 Gobineau translation ) for حدیقة ذات غرة (ḥādiqat dhāt ghurra) here has the paraphrastic and slightly inaccurate rendering "le jardin de la nature de la sublinité (le nature de Dieu)"...(see Les Religiones... [ed. 1928] page 409).