The al-Bayān al-ʿArabī (The Arabic Bayān)

The al-Bayān al-ʿArabī (The Arabic Bayān) or The Arabic Exposition of Sayyid ʿAli Muhammad Shirazi, the Báb (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 Aḏhirbayjān (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 (Il-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 from VIII: 11-19 then the complete tenth and eleventh Wāḥids ("Unities") which are not included in the Persian Bayān at all.

IV

The Fourth Unity (al-wāḥid al-rābī’)

In the Name of God, the Most Inaccessible (al-amma’), the Most Holy (al-aqdas).

Bāb 1.

I, verily, I indeed am God! No God is there except Me, the Most Great (al-a’zām)! the Most Great (al-a’zām)! I created Thee and I made for Thee two stations (maqālimayn). This is My station (maqālim). Naught is seen therein except I Myself (Me). From this [station of Divinity] Thou dost cry out on My behalf [saying] ‘I, verily, I indeed am God! the Lord of all the worlds (rabb al-ʿalāmīn). In such wise do Thou magnify Me, laud Me, confirm My Unity and serve Me such that Thou, before Me, are to be numbered among such as are moved to prostration. This is [of] the Wāḥid which is the first of the Fourth [Unity].

Note of translator.

Bāb 2.
Now for the Second [Gate].

Then Say: Whatsoever returns unto Me returns unto God, My Lord. And whatsoever does not return unto Me does not return unto God. It is the case then that the matter (al-amr) returns [to operate] according to His ways (shu'ūn).

Bāb 3.

Now for the Third [Gate].

Never have I [God] been served like unto thy service of Me [God] in the very beginning [of your existence, before birth] (bi-tābi‘a). That [servitude] was indeed the very essence of thy genesis (dhālīt baddā‘ika) and [is exemplified] in thy later [mature] state (aḥkīrijtā) as [it was in] thy first [embryonic] state (awwalījīla) at the very moment when thou upturned [in servitude / for birth] in the womb of thy mother (bātījumīla). If thou [the Bab] were not active [in service through] that upturning [at birth] then there would be no certainty about My [act of thy] origination (bi-baddā‘) [i.e. causing the birth of the Bāb!] Yet [this transpired since] thou [the Bab] were indeed One Matchless [Unique in servitude] (al-willīy) for I [God] did not create for Thee any equal (kufr) no one similar [to thee] (‘ād) or comparable (shibb), neither anyone to be associated [with Thee] nor considered like [unto Thee]. Wherefore did I create whatsoever I Willed. And I am indeed One Powerful (al-qādir), All-Knowing (al-‘allīm).

Note of translator.

The texts and ms. differ considerably at IV: 3.

This section opens with God's celebrating the remarkable level of servitude exemplified by the embryonic Bab from the time of, or indeed before, his birth into this world in Shiraz on October 20th 1819 CE. His mother was named

ADD HERE

Alternative text: "amongst thy brethren / family" اخواك and at the time of thy origin [birth] : و اخواك


Bāb 4

Now for the Fourth [Gate].

I indeed created the essence of everything (jawhar kull shay') in the Temple of Man [humankind] (haykal inšān). And I made the quintessence of the Temple of the [human] servant ('abd) to be utter servitude (riqq) before He Whom We shall indeed make manifest (= the messianic figure Man yughiru-hu Allāh 'He Whom God shall make manifest'). Say: 'I indeed am one foremost amidst thee, compared to thy selves [in servitude], as thou would realize if, [thou would consider] My servitude ('ubayyī) before thy Master (mawātī).
CORRECT THIS TRANS.

Báb 5

تم في الخامس كل الدواوين أليات نقية لي أن هن إياي يعدين كل آباءكم و آيكم ألي من نظرة تظرون ذلك
محبوكم كل بالي و الظهر أيا تريدون

Now for the Fifth [Gate].

All the circular talismanic directives [cyclic schemata] (al-dawālîr) should consist of refined (scriptural) verses
(Âyât raqîya) [when offered] before Me. This such that they [females] might render Me befitting service. Say: whether
thou be female or male thou should be attentive regarding [the messianic figure of] He Whom We shall make
manifest. That [expected] One is indeed thy Beloved (mahbûb). One and all should be expectantly desirous of Him
whether it be in the night season or during the daytime.

Báb 6

ثم في السادس أي لا اسئل عمّا فعل و كل عن توحيد و من نظرة يسنون و جعلت من نظرة من بعد نظرة
ذلك قد ان تسنّثه عمّا يفعل كيف إنتم بنؤمنون و إنه ليسنكم عن كل شيء فلا تكونن الا بالحق محبوبون

Now for the Sixth [Gate].

I, verily, shall not be questioned about that which I do! All may enquire, however, regarding My [theological]
tawhîd (Oneness) and about [the messianic figure of] He Whom We shall make manifest. I shall place [the messianic
figure of] He Whom We shall make manifest after the manifestation of this One. Say: Thou shall indeed be permitted
to question Him about whatsoever He doeth. Yet bear in mind how thou came to believe in Me. He, verily, shall
indeed question thee about everything (kull ashâ'). So be ye not save, in very truth, such as pose [legitimate]
questions!

Báb 7

ثم في السابع كل مني يبدينون و كل بك ألي ليرجعون

Now for the Seventh [Gate].

All are from Me yet originate through Thee! And all are through Thee yet unto Me do assuredly return!

Báb 8

ثم في الثامن كل بابتك و ما نزل من عندك يخلفون و يزرعون ثم يميتون و يحبون

Now for the Eighth [Gate].

All were indeed created through Thy verses (Âyât) and whatsoever was sent down from before Thee. They gave
provision, then they made to die and brought back to life again!

Báb 9

ثم في التاسع من يطبع من البين يملك ذلك مظهر قهري قل فأجعلني لهم من أظهر الفاهرين و لتکنوا اسمك و ما
تعمل لا جزيلتك في رجعي على أحسن ما كنت من العاملين و لتدرن ليوم الظهور تذرعوا لا يحزن الحق و قد أمرنا
أن يعملن بذلك المؤمنون

Now for the Ninth [Gate].

Whosoever establishes for the sake of the Bayîn (min al-bayîn) an earthly dominion [kingdom] (mulku) as a
Bābi king] that dominion [kingdom and/or king] is a manifestation of My Omnipotent Power (mazhar qahî! Say: O my
God! Make me [the Bábí king] to be the most victorious among victorious ones (aṣghar al-ğāhinīn) so that Thy Name (īlam) might be inscribed along with what Thou hast accomplished. Let there be no recompense [other than this for me] at [the time of] my return according to what is most excellent (aḥsan) among my accomplishments. Thou should Indeed suffer [my] taking charge (tadbit ۶۲۷) nigh the Day of the Theophany (yawn al-zuhur) [of the Manifestation of Man yūzhir-hu Allah] to be such as the True One (al-ḥaqq) might never be saddened. And We have indeed also decreed that all the believers should act in accordance therewith.

Note of translator

This texts and mss. of IV:9 appear corrupt at various points...

The correct reading at the beginning is most likely من بطبع من البيان Lit. He whom, He establishes (raises up) for the sake of the Bayān min al-bayān) ... The third person singular ي is apparently missing in the printed Hasani text of Arabic Bayān IV:9 (p.87). Add here...

Gobineau and his assistants in Les Religiones... (App. 'Le Livre des Preceptes' [sic = Arabic Bayān] French. trans. ed. 1928), page 418 evidently takes the (sixth) wordملك in IV: 9 to indicate a roi a "king" who is thought to be described in the Arabic phrase ذلك مظهر فحري which he translated "Il est le gardien de toute ma puissance" or ADD HERE.

Nicholas Le Bayan Arabe (1905), translating IV:9 also (indirectly) associates the opening words with a roi or "king" ADD HERE (p. 124).

Báb 10

Now for the Tenth [Gate].

Never should thou act save in accordance with what was revealed in the Bayān or what He Wills therein according to the 'ilm al-ṣūfī ("the Science-Gnoses of the Letters") as well as whatsoever He legislates about actions befitting the [religion of the] Bayān. Say: 'O My servants! Organize befittingly thy affairs! Do not devise falsehood. Yet be unburdened among thy selves for then thou shall be productive.'

Báb 11

Now for the Eleventh [Gate].

[This section declares that] Thou shalt not overstep [deviate from] the regulations of the Bayān (ḥudūd al-bayān) that thou be saddened thereby. Indeed! Thou should not sadden any soul for such is indeed the greatest (a'zam) directive (hadd) perchance thou be moved to sadden [the messianic] He Whom We shall make manifest (man nūzhiru-hu). And whose does deviate [in this way] shall never be allotted the guidance (al-huda). None shall be given the Guidance (al-hudā) except [the messianic] He Whom We shall make manifest (man nūzhiru-hu) with the Guidance (al-hudā) Say: O thou possessors of guidance (al-hudā) through My Guidance (bl-hudā') are ye rightly guided.
Now for the Twelfth [Gate].

"O My servants! Of a certainty let the sacred places [domes, sanctuaries] of the earth (biqā' al-ard) be leveled! Then whatever stands therein allot ye unto the [Bāb]l Wā'īd ("Unity")."

The French Translations and Notes of the Translator

Gobineau, 1865 [1900: 491 = ed. 1928: 418-9]:

"Ensuite le deuxième paragraphe après le commencement du dixième (dit) : En vérité, o mes serviteurs, délaissiez les sanctuaires de la terre, 1 et ce qu'ils ont (de gloire, d'honneurs), transportez-le à l'Unique 2.

Fn. 1. C'est-à-dire la Ka'ba de la Mecque [the Ka'ba of Mecca] et les tombeaux sacrés de Médine, de Karbala et de Mashhad [Mashad] ou de Goum [Qum].

Fn. 2. L'Unique étant composé de dix-neuf existences saintes, les tombeaux des dix-neuf personnages qui en ont été animés sont indiqués ici par le mot l'Unique, bien que ces tombeaux soient dispersés en des lieux différents, et que même il en manque un, le corps de Moulla Housseïn-Boushrewyéh, le premier des apôtres, ayant été brûlé après le martyre du saint, et les cendres jetées à la mer.

Gobineau and his assistants in Les Religiones… (App. 'Le Livre des Preceptes' [sic. for 'The Arabic Bayan'] French trans. ed. 1928), 418 for بقاع الأرض (biqā' al-ard) has "sanctuaries de la terre" ("sanctuaries of the earth"). They translated the jussive verbal instruction فلتزلزلن to indicate "délaissiez", meaning 'to lay aside'. In a footnote Gobineau et. al. understand this instruction in quite radical terms as the doing away with the Ka'ba at Mecca, the sacred tombs of Medina [Muhammad's tomb is in Medina as is that of Shaykh Ahmad al-Ahsa'i and many others] of Karbala [in Iraq where the shrine of Imam Ḥusayn stands] as well as those around Mashad (where are the tomb of the 8th Imam 'All al-Ridā', and other Shi'i worthies such as Baha' al-Din al-Amili, Shaykh Baha'i are located) and Qum where the shrine of Fāṭima the sister of Imam 'All al-Ridā' is located.

In fn.2 (see above) commenting on the implications of فلتزلزلن كي فيدها في الواحد التصرفون جوبينو expresses the opinion that by the Wā'īd is intended the nineteen persons within the existing, first Unity of the Bayān whose tombs are to replace the "sanctuaries de la terre" ("sanctuaries of the earth"). He makes specific mention of the deceased first disciple of the Bab and 'Letter of the Living' Mullā Ḥusayn Bushrūf (d. Tabarsi, 1849 CE).

Nicolas, 1905 :125-6:

"Le résumé de la douzième porte : Toutes les coupole qui sont élevées sur la surface de la terre, abrogez-les : et tous les ornement d'or qui y sont, usez-en dans les tombeaux des lettres de l'Unïtïe."

Nicholas in his Le Bayan Arabe (1905), translates the opening of IV:12 فلتزلزلن بقاع الأرض as "Toutes les coupole qui sont élevées sur la surface de la terre " (= Let all of the cupolas-domes which are raised up about [elevated upon] the surface of the earth be repealed [abrogated] then let all of the ornaments of gold be utilized for the tombs of the "Letters of the Unity" (see pp. 125-6). Nicolas adds here reference to "ornaments of gold" being made use of in the new tombs of the Babi 'Letters of the Unity'. The Arabic mss. I have seen contain no such reference to "les ornement d'or" ("the ornaments of gold"). This appears then to be his own personal gloss on "Then what is therein"; the "therein" (thā) understood to be within the sacred sites or copolas, domes further interpreted as golden ornaments.

Translators Notes

ان يا عبادي فلتزلزلن بقاع الأرض

The Arabic verbal, jussive form of address to the presumably Bābī servants of God فلتزلزلن is basically centered upon the triliteral root نزلـ = n-z-l the basic sense of which means "to dismount", "descend" "to send down", "move
down’, ‘put down’ etc., preceded by the jussive prefix فَلْ تَفَلْ (`fāl` (“Let it …”)) ADD HERE. The letter ﺇ ﺇ terminating this verbal directive is an emphatic “N” of the modus energicus (‘energetic forms’) which makes the jussive verbal sense more emphatic (Indeed! Certainly!). The third letter ﺇ probably implies the persons addressed who are to carry out the leveling or deconstructing of the subsequently mentioned بقاع الأرض (biqā’ al-ard) sanctified ‘buildings of the earth’. In its second form (ll) n-z-l can mean ‘to cause to come down’, ‘to take down’ while the well-known fourth form (IV) often indicates ‘to cause to descend’ or ‘to reveal’. The fifth form of the verb (V with the prefixed ‘t’) n-z-l can have the sense of ‘renounce’ though this is probably irrelevant to the intention of Ar. Bayan IV:12a.

Exactly what the بقاع الأرض (biqā’ al-ard) means is probably deliberately left a little unclear especially when simply taken in the context of IV:12 alone. The singular بقعة can mean any kind of dwelling such as ‘a place, a house, an edifice, a convent’ (Steingass, 194). According to the Arabic dictionaries (biqā’) can mean ‘upstanding buildings’. The possible translations of the plural بقاع as “sanctuaries” (Gobineau, 1865), cupoles (“cupolas”) (so Nicholas, 1905) are reasonable given the wider context of the next few closely related sections of the Arabic Bayan (IV:13-14).

The بقاع الأرض (biqā’ al-ard) obviously indicates various Islamic or Sunni-Shi’i “sacred sites” scattered around the middle east which are to be transformed into the locations of the resting places of the the first Babi Wāhid (the 19 persons within the first Unity of the Bayān or the Bāb and the ‘Letters of the Living’).

Further clarification of Arabic Bayan IV:12 can be had by consulting Persian Bayan IV:12 which begins as follows: في إرفاغ كل بقعة كانت فوق الأرض بقعة (biqā’ kanat faqw al-ard), presumably meanings ‘buildings upon the earth’. The Arabic verbal noun إرفاغ (irtifā’) here evidently means not “uplifting” but “taking away”, “removal” or “negation”; verbal senses which or the more or less synonymous مرفوع (murtafi’) can have in both Arabic and Persian. E. G. Browne understood the opening and later Persian lines having murtafi’ (= “removed” construed with migardad) of IV:12 to mean “removal”. He translated the opening words of IV:12 to mean, "Concerning the removal of all shrines [بقاع] upon the earth" (Selections, 356; see Bayān-i Farsi [Azali ed.], 135).

After the Arabic single line introductory preface Persian Bayan IV:12 continues as follows:

ملخص ابن بابا انکہ در حضرت عظیم میős بقائی کھی کا لکھا گیا بدعالم ثامن میوس میوس میوس میوس میوس میوس

“The substance of this gate (bāb) is this that in each [religious] theophany [dispensation] (zuhūr) which is instituted by God, the earlier sacred places of the earth (بقا) are removed (‘done away with’, ‘bypassed’, murtafi’ migardad). Thus, if today a person belonging to the religion of the Messenger of God (rasūl Allāh = Muhammad) observes the shrines of the chosen ones [disciples] of Jesus (biqā’i ʿawṣiyā’y-ī ʿisā) they would realize that even their names are unknown how much less the location of their tombs [graves] (maḥall-i qubur). Wherefore was it the case that after the [Christian religious] theophany [dispensation] (zuhūr) all of the tombs-graves that were upon the surface of the earth should have been demolished (murtafi’ast). Such demolition (murtafi’ migardad) should have been carried out from the time of the manifestation of prophethood (mazhar-i nubuwwat) [Muhammad] (d. 570 CE) until that of the culmination of the Shi’ite manifestation (mazhar-i shīʾa-yi muntahā) [through the twelve Imams] (terminated 260 AH /874 CE or 1260 AH/1844 CE).

Nay indeed, such graves-tombs (qubūr) as are allocated to the prophets of the past (anbiyā’-yi qabli) should also be so treated [demolished] (midhahad). Whether they be in Kufa [like the shrine of Imam ‘Ali] or other localities they ought to be demolished (murtafi’ shud). And likewise with the region of the House [of God = in Mecca] (maḥall-i bayt).
Observe also that they [the Jews] journey [on pilgrimage] to the Bayt al-Muqaddas ("Sanctified House") [Jerusalem] for the sake of [witnessing or testifying to] the miraculous signs of Moses (karāmāt-i mūsā) while the community of Jesus [Christian] (ummat-i 'īsā) go to a locality which Jesus himself stipulated for them. The community of the Messenger of God (ummat-i rasūl-Allāh), the blessings of God be upon Him and his family, go to the Ka'ba. [Despite this] there is nothing ennobling [for these pilgrims] in [visiting an earthly] persona of clay (nafs-i țīn)!

These paragraphs from the beginning of Persian Bayan IV: 12 make it clear that for the Bab true pilgrimage is now no longer fulfilled by travelling to earthly localities which harbour relics of past persona of clay. They are negated before the living representatives of the new theophany as the Wāhid ("Unity") of the Bayān in the eschatological age of God.

During his lifetime the Bab never tried to promote the carrying out of the radical directives of Persian or Arabic Bayan IV:12. Subsequently Baha'u'llah, the Baha'i Prophet figure, abrogated this directive and his son 'Abdu'l-Baha commented negatively upon it as the opposite of a Baha'i position suitable for promoting the unity of humankind:

"In the Day of the manifestation of His Holiness the Exalted One (yawm-i zuhr-i ḥadrat-i a'īla = the Báb), the striking of necks (darb-i a'naq Q: 8:12), the violation [rendering, burning] of books and treatises (kharq-i kutub va awrāq), the destruction of [sacred] places (hadm biqā', 'Abd al-Baha', Vol II: 266).

'Abd al-Baha' use of hadm biqā', "the destruction of places/sites" here is almost certainly rooted in Persian and Arabic Bayans IV:12 with their use of biqā' for existing sacred places. His use of the Arabic word hadm expresses his view that the Bab intended the 'tearing down', 'demolishing' or 'destruction' of the sacred places of the past because these are the explicit senses of this Arabic word.

Báb 13

\[\text{ثم الثالث من بعد العشر ان يا عبادي فلتفرعن مقاعد الواحد على ما اتمن عليه لمقتدرون} \]

Now for the Thirteenth [Gate].

[This section states:] O My servants! Elevate ye indeed! the resting places [seats] (al-maqa'i'd) of the Wāhid [the 19 persons within the first Unity of the Bayān] (maqa'i'd al-wāhid) such that thou might fulfill that which was in this respect ordained.

Note of translator

Gobineau, Les Religiones, 1865 [1900: 491 = ed. 1928: 419]:

"Ensuite le troisième paragraphe après le dixième (dit) : En vérité, o mes serviteurs, magnifiez les demeures de l'Unique en tant que vous le pourrez!" [trans. 'In truth O My servants! Magnify the abodes of the Letters of the Unity

Nicholas in his Le Beyan Arabe (1905), translated IV:12 as follows:

Nicolas, 1905 :126:
"Le résumé de la treizième porte: Ornez les coupoles des lettres de l'Unité autant que vous le pouvez.
(Trans. 'The summary of the Thirteenth Gate, 'Adorn the Domes of the 'Letters of the Unity' as much as you can."

Gobineau and his assistants (see Les Religions... App. 'Le Livre des Preceptes' [sic. for 'The Arabic Bayan'] French. trans. ed. 1928, page 419) understood IV:13 to indicate the material magnification of the abodes of the Letters of the Wâhid. Nicholas, translating on similar lines, thought that IV:13 indicated that the maqâlîd which he understood as cupolas or 'domes' of the 'Letters of the Unity' should be superlatively adorned.

Bâb 14

Now for the Fourteenth [Gate].

This [section commences] O My servants! Seek ye the protection of these [new] resting places (al-biqâ') [of the first nineteen fold Bâbî Wâhid] that the people might thereby find hope ADD HERE

Gobineau, Les Religions, 1865 [1900: 491 = ed. 1928: 419]:

"Le résumé de la quaotorzième porte : «0 mes esclaves! si vous vous réfugiez en ces coupoles de l'Unité, il faut que vous soyez en sécurité contre les hommes. Et ceux-là, dès lors, n'ont plus de pouvoir sur vous. Le fruit de cet ordre est que vous accordiez le refuge, au jour du jugement, à celui qui est suscite comme prophète. Qu'il en soit pas d'autre comme il en est aujourd'hui, où vous accordiez la protection aux autres hommes et vous faiat, contre l'arbre de la vérité de ces actes qui sont prêts à faire fendre le ciel et la terre, si ceux-ci entendaient ce que vous avez fait contre moi. Pourquoi donc ne comprenez-vous pas?"

Fn. 3. Ccci est destiné à transférer aux tombeaux des saints babys le droit d'asile aujourd'hui attaché li ceux des saints musulmans.

Fn.4 Au jour du jugement dernier, ceux qui auront respecté le droit d'asile aux tombeaux des saints auront acquis un droit à la protection de ceux-ci, et cette protection ne sera plus bornée et souvent précaire comme on la peut avoir en ces temps-ci : elle sera toute puissante et couvrira ceux qui seront autorisés à la réclamer. Comment donc pourriez-vous hésiter à remplir le devoir qui peut vous acquérir un tel bien?

Bâb 15

Now for the Fifteenth [Gate].

This [section declares]

Bâb 16

http://www.hurqalya.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/03-THE%20BAB/03A-The%20Bab/ARABIC... 1/19/2016
Now for the Sixteenth [Gate].

[This section declares] O My servants! Thou shalt ascend up unto My House! That is the House of [the messianic figure] Man yuzhiru-hu Allâh ('He Whom God shall make manifest'). That is My House. Thou shalt not buy commercially (from the verb sharâ' form VII) whatsoever may be in its [sacred] precincts (mâ fi hawlihi) according to a directive (qadar) that thou should be in a position to obey (î'â' form X) if thou should decide to ascend up [to My House].

Bâb 17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4:17</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Now for the Seventeenth [Gate].

This [section declares]

Bâb 18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4:18</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Now for the Eighteenth [Gate].

Thy waqf (befitting contribution, "legacy") is according to whatsoever thou do love [which is offered] while on pilgrimage unto My House (hajj baytî). So gift ye then unto the manifestations (ma'âhir) of the wâhid relative to their couches [resting places] ('âla sarâ'îr), four mithqâls of gold. ADD HERE

Bâb 19

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4:19</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Now for the Nineteenth [Gate].

This [section declares]

Note of translator.