

Qayyum al-Asma' Sura 93: Chapter of the Bees: A commentary on the Sura of Joseph, "The Best of Stories"

by [The Báb](#)

translated by [Todd Lawson](#).

originally written as "Qayyum al-Asma 93: Surat al-nahl".

Translator's note: Passages in caps are direct and exact quotations from the Quran. The Bab entitled this chapter of His work the Chapter of the Bees (surat al-nahl). Much of the Quranic material in this sura is from the Quranic sura of the same name (16). The main focus is to explain verse 93 of the Quranic Sura of Joseph (12), but by weaving material from Q.16 into his commentary the Bab also illuminates the other relevant verses from Quran. It is important to recognize that the Bab saw the religious act of interpretation as endless and that each verse, word or even letter of the holy scripture has infinite meaning. Suffice it too say here that the Qayyum al-asma is a beautifully complex and powerful composition. It is uniquely innovative in its construction, highly musical both phonically and in the way it intones symbols and themes familiar to its first readers. It was presented by the Bab, and recognized by His earliest followers, as a new Quran, an act whose explicitness and boldness is without precedent in Islamic history. The translation offered below is simply an attempt - doomed from the outset to fail - to make more widely known something of the luminous gift and virtuosity of the Author.

Translation

1. IN THE NAME OF GOD, THE MERCIFUL, THE COMPASSIONATE
2. GO, TAKE THIS SHIRT AND DO YOU CAST IT ON MY FATHER'S FACE, AND HE SHALL RECOVER HIS SIGHT; THEN BRING ME YOUR FAMILY ALL TOGETHER.
3. KAF HA' 'AYN
4. Indeed, WE REVEALED UNTO THE BEES, SAYING: "TAKE FROM THE MOUNTAINS citadels-the abode for affirming the sanctity of God-the sign of this luminous one, AND OF TREES, places for affirming that there is no god but God the sign of this Easterner AND OF WHAT THEY ARE BUILDING in the path of affirming the unity of God the threadbare garment of this Westerner belonging to God, the Exalted. And He is God, Witness over all things.[\[1\]](#)
5. THEN EAT OF ALL MANNER OF divine allusions MADE SMOOTH in the path of the Remembrance, this Gate. THERE COMES FORTH FROM THEIR BELLIES the water of the elixir which is one in terms of its blessings, although it is OF DIVERSE HUES WHEREIN IS HEALING FOR believers. Verily God is Powerful over all things.

6. God is the creator of everything through His power. And God, in very truth, is Apprised of everything which men do.

7. O believers! Fear God concerning this most great word protected in the divine fire. Indeed he is, in very truth, accounted by God the Exalted as a witness.

8. O people of the veils! Hearken to the call of God from the tongue of the most great Remembrance. VERILY, VERILY I AM GOD. THERE IS NO GOD BUT HIM! Indeed, the likeness of the Remembrance is as gold softened in fire which flows in rivulets to all the hidden places by the will of God, the Exalted. And he is God-Mighty, Ancient.

9. O people of the Throne! Hearken to my call from the precincts of the tomb from the tongue of this Tree that grows on the exalted Sinai, and which is covered with golden holy leaves: VERILY, VERILY I AM GOD, THERE IS NO GOD BUT HIM! There is no soul who has suffered anything in the path of the Remembrance, whether through warfare or loss of wealth, but that we have written down for him the Gardens of Eden and Ridwan in truth. Verily God is Powerful over all things.

10. Indeed, we have power to move the earth in this HOUR by the order of the Remembrance, and could, in truth, hold it aloft by means of the supplication from himself. Otherwise, the earth with its people would, in very truth, burn completely. And He is God, Powerful over all things.

11. And verily GOD HAS PREFERRED SOME OF YOU OVER OTHERS with knowledge of the Remembrance. WHAT, AND DO YOU DENY GOD'S BLESSING by lying? Indeed he is the truth from God which, in very truth, is now fulfilled.

12. GOD HAS APPOINTED FOR YOU OF YOURSELVES WIVES in truth. And GOD HAS ORDAINED that the women who are believers be as leaves on the lote- trees in the precincts of the Gate. And God is Knower of all things.

13. O believers! Fear God and never say anything but the truth concerning the glorious Mystery of God, the Unfastener, in the precincts of that which is (forever) unfastened. For God has imposed upon the people of the Cloud the veil of faithfulness. And God is Witness over all things.

14. O Solace of the Eye! Speak the melody of the beloved from the Throne and clothe the words with the shirt of divine breezes. Indeed, God desires that your proclamation concerning this Red Dove be not naked. And God is your Preserver.

15. O concourse of the lights! Hear my call from the precincts of the point of water at the center of the dust! God! There is no God but Him, the Lord of all worlds. And He is God, Mighty, Wise.

16. Verily, verily I am the fire from the precincts of Sinai, and I speak the truth, and am praiseworthy.

17. Verily, verily I am the light above Sinai - raised.
18. Verily, verily I am the crimson point revolving around God, its creator. And I am in truth beloved.
19. Verily, verily I am the sapling - the glory with the most great truth, and am the goal at the head of the source of the ruby stream that flows upon Sinai.
20. Verily, verily I am the splendour - the praise; none but the Praise itself, being single and unique, perceives the splendour.
21. O people of the earth! Praised be God, the Truth! Verily God HAS MADE the mystery of this Gate profound.
22. To describe him in Arabic: He is comely - as is witnessed.
23. Indeed, in these verses are SIMILITUDES for THOSE POSSESSED OF MINDS those who, in the precincts of the Gate, are in very truth, prostrating.
24. WHAT, DO YOU WORSHIP ONE BESIDES GOD WHO POSSESSES nothing, WHILE SOVEREIGNTY IS GOD'S, the Exalted both before and after; in the MOTHER BOOK, it is all written about the matter of the Gate.[\[2\]](#)
25. SO STRIKE NOT ANY SIMILITUDES FOR GOD. He is the truth. LIKE UNTO HIM THERE IS NAUGHT.. And He is God, Mighty, Wise.
26. GOD HAS STRUCK A SIMILITUDE concerning TWO MEN, ONE OF THEM standing upon the divine cause COMMANDING JUSTICE and good deeds; and the other standing over Hell, summoned by the Fire to the Fire. And both of these two are upon the truth, if you confess even one letter of the book. AND YOUR LORD IS THE MERCIFUL ONE AND AWARE OF WHAT YOU DO.
27. Today God has written for his servant a reward - indeed!--from a line of the leaf of the white scroll. God is Knower of all things.
28. And [has written for] THE SERVANT WHO DOES WELL TWO GARDENS according to the True Line. And for the bearer of the goblet of water--a goblet of the pure river of Kawthar. And God is Witness over all things.
29. And with GOD BELONGS THE UNSEEN. All unseen things are visible to the Truth. And God ordained ONLY THAT THE CAUSE of the Remembrance BE CLOSEST to the divine CAUSE. And He is God, Powerful over all things.
30. And we have BROUGHT YOU FORTH FROM THE WOMBS to aid the Truth during the day of the Remembrance. And we have GIVEN YOU HEARING, AND SIGHT, AND HEARTS

SO THAT YOU MIGHT BE GRATEFUL, FOR the truth of the Remembrance concerning the STRAIGHT BALANCE, straight.

31. And we have made THE BIRDS OBEDIENT IN THE AIR OF HEAVEN. Is there any but God who HOLDS THEM ALOFT in truth? Verily God is Witness over all things.

32. O PLACE WHERE THE DAWN APPEARS! Mention the name of your Lord, He other than whom there is no god. He is Exalted, Wise.

33. O Hour of the Dawn! Mention, BEFORE THE RISING OF THE SUN from the place where the Gate appears, that the day which belongs to God is CLOSER THAN A TWINKLING OF THE EYE. And the judgment has already been ordained in the MOTHER BOOK.

34. O people of the earth! Listen to the call of this upright soul in the AIR of the cloud: "Praised be God, He who has taught me in this Gate the path of those who affirm divine unity, a just word. And that is from the bounty of God to me. And He is Self-sufficient above all the worlds."

35. O people of `Arafat! Be firm in the precincts of the straight one and listen to my call concerning this blood-stained shirt that has been rent with 4,000 darts of the people of unbelief from among my servants. "Verily, verily I am the one slain at the two slaughterings/rivers. Verily, verily I am the one slaughtered by the two swords, and verily, verily, I have been flung down upon the two earths, and verily, verily, I speak in the two stations: "There is no god but God alone, there is no god but Him. Exalted is God, the Lofty, He other than whom there is no god." And He is God, Mighty, Wise.

36. Verily God has INSPIRED me through a single thread of that SHIRT stained with pure blood with: VERILY, VERILY, I AM GOD, THERE IS NONE OTHER GOD BUT ME.

37. "O people of Paradise! GO WITH MY SHIRT - the sign of this most great Remembrance - AND CAST IT UPON THE FACE OF the Proof, your Imam so that he might look to you through your EYES and that today, if God wills, your sight concerning this Gate who is upon the truth and with the truth will be sharp.

38. O Solace of the Eye! Say: "Verily, verily I AM THE HOUR. HOW IS IT THEN THAT YOU DO NOT KNOW THAT THE HOUR, IN VERY TRUTH, IS NEAR ACCORDING TO THE MOTHER BOOK.

39. O Solace of the Eye! Say: "Verily, verily I am the House and am with the truth, established."

40. AND VERILY, VERILY I AM THE LAMP IN THE NICHE and am, through God the Truth upon the truth, shining.

41. AND VERILY, VERILY I AM the Fire in the LIGHT UPON LIGHT of SINAI in the land of felicity and am hidden in the precincts of the Fire.

42. O Solace of the Eye! Say to the believers of all the people of the earth and the heavens: "Come to me with your people who are effaced completely by the permission of God, the Exalted." Verily God desires your reward in this Gate, upon the most great truth. And He is God, Knower of all things.

Preface

The Qur'an is both the center and the circumference of the life of Islam. It is indeed difficult to imagine a more intensely read text in the literary history of the human race. The intensity of such reading may be seen to have achieved something of an apogee in the experience of `Ali Muhammad Shirazi, the young man who was born in Iran in 1819 and executed by his fellow countrymen for heresy in 1850. His first public heretical act was to compose/reveal a new Qur'an -- "the true Qur'an". It was such a literary gesture that gave rise to a new religious movement that is best known in the West as Babism or "the Babi Movement" after one of the titles adopted by Shirazi, "al-Bab", an Arabic word meaning "the door" or "the gate." In the immediate context, this title means that the author esteemed himself to be the sole point of contact between the faithful Muslims and their absent and hidden leader, the Imam. It is important to point out that the Imam in Shi`ism is recognized as a living text, the so-called speaking Qur'an, while the actual Book is referred to as the silent Qur'an. [1] In previous publications, I have drawn attention to the way such a "motif" is present in the literary compositions and life of the Bab. [2] The translation and commentary below is of one of the sections (singular "sura") of the work by which the Bab made his involvement in this phenomenon known to others. One of the results of the following exploration is the suggestion that this highly distinctive literary work be thought of as an apocalypse of separation and reunion.

This composition is known by the title *Tafsir surat Yusuf* (Commentary on the Sura of Joseph). It is also known as *Ahsan al-Qisas* (The Best of Stories) and *Qayyum al-Asma'* (Maintainer of the Divine Names).[3] Given that it is thus titled, those familiar with the history of Arabic literature will be led to expect a work of scriptural exegesis that conforms more or less to a rather rigidly adhered to structure informed by a variety of traditionally held presuppositions and expectations.[4] Encountering this text by the Bab, however, will frustrate such expectations. It is no exaggeration to say that this purported exegesis has absolutely nothing in common with the formal representative works of scriptural exegesis in the Islamic tradition, apart from the nominal one found in the title. The deliberate use of the technical word *tafsir* (exegesis) to describe the work is a separate question unto itself. Employing it expresses the desire to maintain a link with the greater learned tradition. But it seems clear that one of the purposes for this is to break the very relationship it invokes.

This work by the Bab most certainly offers a distinctive reading -- which must be one of the functions of even the classical tradition -- of the Qur'an through its intense concern with the 12th chapter of the Qur'an, the Sura of Joseph. But how this reading is developed and presented could not really be more different and could not be imagined to deviate more from the classical tradition. In the first place, it is clear from the structure of the work that the author is introducing a new scripture or revelation by means of the Trojan horse of exegesis. So blatant is this assertion that one may well wonder why the literary fiction of *tafsir* had to be involved in the first place. In short, the work is structured like the Qur'an itself and divided into 111 *suwar*

(chapters) each with 42 *ayat* (literally "divine portents or signs" < "holy verses"). In addition, each sura or chapter (but four in the main manuscript consulted for this discussion) is headed by some combination of mysterious disconnected letters. None of these features had until this time occurred outside of the Qur'an in Islamic literature -- at least they had not been used together in a single work. To have done so would have indicated to the reader/audience that the author was claiming revelation, something Islamic religion holds cannot happen anymore because Muhammad was the last prophet and therefore the final revealer of God's word. There have been many instances, particularly within the Islamic mystical tradition, where this dogma has been teased and indeed violated. For example, Ibn Arabi's (d.1240) statement that his books are revelation.[5] But none of these earlier similar gestures have claimed quite so explicitly to be a new Qur'an.

Notes to Preface

1. See Mahmoud Ayoub, "The Speaking Quran and the Silent Quran: A Study of the Principles and the Development of Imami Shi'i tafsir," *Approaches to the History of the Interpretation of the Qur'an*, edited by Andrew Rippin, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988, pp.177-198. The pioneering and essential work on this topic is Henry Corbin, *En Islam iranien: Aspects spirituels et philosophiques* 4 vols. Paris: Gallimard, 1978, especially volume 1. For Babism see: H.M. Balyuzi, *The Bab: The Herald of the Days*, (Oxford: George Ronald, 1973); Abbas Amanat, *Resurrection and Renewal: The Making of the Babi Movement in Iran, 1844-1850*, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989); Denis MacEoin, *Sources for Early Babi History and Doctrine*, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1992); idem., *Rituals in Babism and Bahá'ism*, (London: British Academic Press of I.B. Tauris/University of Cambridge Centre of Middle Eastern Studies, 1994); and idem., "The Trial of the Bab: Shi'ite Orthodoxy Confronts its Mirror Image." With four appendices. *Occasional Papers in Shaykhi, Babi and Bahá'í Studies*, vol. 1, no. 1 (May, 1997)
2. See the references below, Section II, note 1, especially my "The Terms". See also the recent study of a cognate phenomenon in the Jewish tradition: Martin S. Jaffee "A Rabbinic Ontology of the Written and Spoken Word: On Discipleship, Transformative Knowledge, and the Living Texts of Oral Torah," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 65.3 (Fall 1997) 525-549.
3. *Ahsan al-Qisas* is probably a shortened version of *Tafsir ahsan al-qisas* (Commentary on "the Best of Stories" or "the Most Beautiful of Stories" as the epithet Best of Stories is an alternate title of the *Surat Yusuf*, the 12th chapter of the Qur'an and is taken from that chapter's 3rd verse: WE WILL RELATE TO THEE *THE FAIREST OF STORIES* IN THAT WE HAVE REVEALED TO THEE THIS QURAN, THOUGH BEFORE IT THOU WAST ONE OF THE HEEDLESS. As it happened, the change in sense brought about by the abbreviation suited the followers of the Bab, since his advent was for them the best possible story. As for the second alternate title of the work, it is somewhat more difficult to understand. *Qayyum*, a Quranic term meaning "the Everlasting" is one of the divine names. It is particularly pertinent to the concerns of Shi'i messianism inasmuch as one of the many ways the expected savior is referred to is by the Arabic word *al-Qa'im* ("the one who arises"). Linguistically, both words share the same trilateral root. Theologically, both God, the Everlasting, and the hidden Imam, who will "arise" share the same spiritual reality. *al-asma'* "names" might refer to the divine names that are already known implying, therefore in this title a reference to a reality heretofore unknown. On the other hand, "names" might be a way of referring simply to "the world of names" that is, this world below in contradistinction to the eternal immutable world of the Everlasting God. Finally, though, it is difficult to understand how this phrase can serve as a title of a text when it seems to refer to an actual being (unless this *is* the point). But in this instance I suspect that *Qayyum al-asma'* is also an abbreviation of some kind. The actual history of the epithet *Qayyum al-asma'* and therefore

clues to a proper understanding of the term are not known to me. Alessandro Bausani offered *Colui che s'ergera sugli Attributi* in his *Persia Religiosa, da Zaratustra a Baha'u'llah*, Milan: Il Saggiatore, 1959, p. 460. It is a matter of some comparative interest that the great Sunni Naqshbandi religious reformer, the so-called "Renewer of the Second Millennium" Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi (d.1624), writing in an atmosphere charged with competing claims to religious authority amongst the Sunnis, Sufis, and Shi'is ultimately relied upon his claim to *Qayyumiya*, to argue for the truth of his particular interpretation of Islam. See J.G.J ter Haar, *Follower and heir of the Prophet: Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi 1564- 1624) as mystic* Leiden : Het Oosters Instituut, 1992.

4. On the description of the genre, see the brilliant discussion by Norman Calder, "Tafsir from Tabari to Ibn Kathir: problems in the description of a genre, illustrated with reference to the story of Abraham," *Approaches to the Qur'an*, edited by G.R. Hawting and Abdul-Kader A. Shareef, London & New York: Routledge, 1993, pp.101-140.
5. Michel Chodkiewicz, "The Futahat Makkiyya and its Commentators: Some Unresolved Enigmas," *The Legacy of Mediaeval Persian Sufism*, edited by Leonard Lewisohn, foreword by Dr. Javad Nurbakhsh, introduction by S.H. Nasr, London & New York: Khaniqahi Nimatullahi Publications, 1992, pp.219-232.

2. Commentary on The Sura of the Bees, Chapter 93, Qayyum al-asma'

The Tafsir surat Yusuf, or Qayyum al-asma' is one of the more important of the Bab's works and this for a variety of reasons. In other publications I have described several features of the work and offered a few examples from the text itself.^[3] Out of context, these features give but a limited picture of the work as a whole. It was thought advisable, therefore, to present at least one full sura of the work as a more or less typical example (surat al-nahl, #93, QA, pp.189-91). In it are found most of the tafsir's distinguishing elements. This chapter is divided into two parts. The first is a presentation of the quranic, hadith and Shaykhi background of the two main symbols of the chapter: the BEES of Qur'an 16, and the SHIRT (qamis) of Joseph. The second part is an attempt to come to terms with the style and contents of the work through a verse by verse commentary. It is hoped that this translation and commentary will give an idea of the problems connected with the study of the work, and at the same time provide at least some of the reasons the work was so enthusiastically received.

The chapter chosen for this examination is written under Qur'an 12:93, which contains part of Joseph's address to his brothers immediately after their recognition of him in Egypt. The word qamis (Wehr: shirt, dress, gown; covering, cover, wrap, envelope, jacket; (Chr.) alb, surplice, rochet; incarnation. N.B. taqmis and taqammus = transmigration of souls, metempsychosis) appears in the Qur'an only in sura 12, where it is mentioned six times. First at 12:18, where Joseph's brothers are described as having put false blood on his shirt in an attempt to deceive Jacob, claiming that a wolf had eaten their brother. At 12:25-28, the qamis figures prominently in the well-known episode with "the 'Aziz's"/Potiphar's wife where the guilt or innocence of Joseph is determined by whether the shirt is torn from the front or the back.^[4] Finally, for the present discussion, the most important mention comes at 12:93 and the reference to it in 12:96. Joseph's brothers have finally recognized him as a highly- placed official in Egypt. After assuring his brothers that God will forgive their past misdeeds against him, Joseph exhorts them:

idhhabu bi-qamisi hadha f'alquhu 'ala wajhi abi ya'ti basiran wa'tuni bi-ahlikum ajma'ina: GO, TAKE THIS SHIRT, AND DO YOU CAST IT ON MY FATHER'S FACE, AND HE SHALL

RECOVER HIS SIGHT; THEN BRING ME YOUR FAMILY ALL TOGETHER. (Qur'an translations are either from or based upon Arberry.)

It will be recalled that Jacob, in the quranic story, lost his sight from weeping over the loss of Joseph, as the Qur'an says: AND HIS EYES BECAME WHITE FROM GRIEF (Qur'an 12:84). The brothers take the shirt with them on their return to Jacob and as they cross the border from Egypt into the Holy Land, the Qur'an, in an almost cinematic gesture, switches point of view dramatically with a single verb from the border of Egypt to the bedside of Jacob, languishing on his [?death] bed in his tent in the Holy Land. This gives us the scene of Jacob in his house exclaiming at this remote distance from the other narrative action: I DO INDEED SCENT THE PRESENCE OF JOSEPH: NAY THINK ME NOT A DOTARD (Qur'an 12:94). Those around him assume that Jacob is losing his mind to think that his long lost beloved son was present: he had become senile. The Qur'an continues: THEN WHEN THE BEARER OF THE GOOD NEWS CAME, HE CAST (THE SHIRT) OVER HIS FACE, AND HE FORTHWITH REGAINED CLEAR SIGHT. [JACOB] SAID: "DID I NOT SAY TO YOU , 'I KNOW FROM GOD THAT WHICH YE KNOW NOT?'" (Qur'an 12:96). This last reference is to Qur'an 12:85-6: THEY SAID: "BY GOD! (NEVER) WILT THOU CEASE TO REMEMBER JOSEPH UNTIL THOU REACH THE LAST EXTREMITY OF ILLNESS OR UNTIL THOU DIE!" [JACOB] SAID: "I ONLY COMPLAIN OF MY DISTRACTION AND ANGUISH TO GOD, AND I KNOW FROM GOD THAT WHICH YE KNOW NOT."

The symbol of the cloak may be seen to have developed out of the ancient practice of holy men and diviners, who kept the "exterior world at a distance" by wearing a special robe.^[5] Cognates of this symbol exist in shamanism, Judaism, Christianity, Buddhism and so-called primitive religions from the Amerindians to the South Pacific.. In the Acts of Thomas Jesus is clothed in a "robe of light". The shirt, robe, cloak, garment, remnant represents a cluster of images and symbols that are extremely rich in implications: civilisation, new body, protection, knowledge, and so on. Suras 73 & 74 al-Muzzammil "the Enwrapped", al-Muddaththir "the Shrouded", refer in their titles to the garments or textile (< "text") coverings either worn or used by Muhammad. His Yemeni robe later frequently plays a role in his life. We will see below how the fabric traditionally used to drape the Kaaba may be compared with the shirt of Joseph. In Sufism, the khirqa is an initiatic garment bestowed upon an aspirant at a given stage in the spiritual pedagogy. According to the venerable Sufi handbook 'Awarif al-ma'arif by 'Umar Suhrawardi (d.1234), this mantle or cloak is the antitype of the shirt of Joseph. He speaks also of its heavenly origin, and mentions the qamis of Joseph (with which the khirqa is compared) as that which protected Abraham from the fire. In wonderfully suggestive language, Suhrawardi speaks of the relationship thus symbolized between the Sufi master and the aspirant: "The Shaykh is a door which God, exalted be He, opens to the threshold of His generosity. By him [the Shaykh] he [the aspirant] enters and to Him he returns." ('Awarif, p.98) "The khirqa does for the aspirant what the qamis of Joseph did for Jacob, upon them both peace" ('Awarif, p .100). "And it is related that Abraham, the Friend, upon him peace, when he was thrown in the fire, he was stripped of his garments, and he was thrown into it naked. Then Gabriel, upon him peace, brought him a qamis made of the silk of paradise, and he clothed him with it. And it remained with Abraham, upon him peace, and when he died, he bequeathed it to Isaac, and when he died he bequeathed it to Jacob. Jacob, upon him peace, protected the qamis by putting it inside Joseph (fa-ja'alah fi 'unqi Yusuf) so that it would not be separated from him, and when he was cast into the well naked, Gabriel came to him while it was thus protected and he drew forth the qamis from him and

clothed him with it." ('Awarif, p.100). "Joseph, upon him peace, knew by God, exalted be He, . . . that one was the qamis of Abraham and he related what we have related, he said: Gabriel was commanded to carry your qamis, for in it is the scent of paradise, it is not placed on a sick one except that he become healed and and healthy, thus does the khirqa belonging to the sincere murid, bear the perfume (rih) of paradise." " In the same way," says Suhrawardi, "the khirqa transmits the perfume ('arf) of paradise to the aspirant." ('Awarif, p.101). It should be noted that the word for perfume, 'arf, is a derivative of the same Arabic root from which the words for knowledge, gnosis, and mystical insight also derive: 'irfan, ma'rifa. The verb, 'arafa "to know", occurs in the very influential hadith quoted by Bahá'u'lláh : "Who knows himself knows his Lord." Thus 'arif, "one who knows" means mystic, gnostic, seeker, and knower. In the case of Shi'ism, the immediate background here, this knowledge must be mediated by the Imam, hidden or otherwise, who is the source of all ma'rifa. [6] In Shi'i works, reference is often made to "the people of the cloak" (ahl al-kisa') who are specified as Muhammad, 'Ali, Fatima, o-asan and o-usayn. [7] This designation is used by Shi'i writers, whether Twelver or Isma'ili, to express the idea that Muhammad's special qualities were transmitted to his progeny through contact with his mantle. In the hadith literature, the qamis of Joseph is seen to fulfill the function of bearing the charisma of prophecy. This qamis is of course the quranic equivalent of the "robe with sleeves" mentioned in Genesis 37:3, which Jacob had given to Joseph because of his great love for him. It was this robe which provoked the jealousy of his brothers. Many of the traditions which compare Joseph to the Qa'im are ascribed to Ja'far al-- adiq (d.765). The sixth Imam was asked about the shirt of Joseph and responded, along the lines of the material quoted above, that when Abraham was burning in the fire (Q. 21:68-69), Gabriel came down with the shirt and clothed him with it so that he would not be harmed. Abraham gave this shirt to Isaac, who gave it to Jacob. When Joseph was born, Jacob gave the shirt to him. It was this shirt, originally sent from Heaven, by which Jacob detected the scent of Joseph [cf.12:93]. The distinctiveness of al-Sadiq's teaching comes with his response to the question. al-Sadiq was asked what became of this shirt, to which he responded that the shirt stayed with the descendants of Joseph and is now in the possession of "our Qa'im" because all the prophets inherit knowledge and other things from each other. [8]

In the article in Anwar on this word, Isfahani says only that its exoteric meaning is well known, but that its ta'wil is connected with the words thiyab and libas. The first word is defined as representing the knowledge with which the Imams have been endowed, and by extension refers to walaya proper. Walaya is the central doctrine in Shi'ism signifying at once authority, guardianship, allegiance, devotion, faithfulness, love and friendship. The second word carries a complex of meanings which includes, together with the idea of garment, "deception". For the former, Isfahani refers to several verses in the Qur'an, among which are 2:187, where it is stated that spouses are as a garment to each other. For the latter, he cites 2:42 in which those who disguise the truth with falsehood are condemned. Ultimately however, the word libas is seen as a symbol of the walaya of the Imams. [9]

In his commentary on the Qasida al-lamiya, Sayyid Kazim Rashti takes the opportunity to dilate on the implications of the word qamis which occurs in one of its verses. The poet has compared the curtain (sitr) of the tomb of the Prophet with the qamis of Joseph, indicating that the spiritual "fragrance" of the former is far greater than that of the latter. Rashti says that however powerful the fragrance of the shirt of Joseph might have been, it cannot compare with the much stronger power of the curtain of the Prophet's mausoleum. Interestingly, the power of the shirt comes

from Joseph's having worn it, rather than from the heavenly origin of the shirt. Jacob could detect its perfume from a great distance, because both he and Joseph together formed an "aspect" of the "seal of the prophets". Since Joseph's shirt acquired its "fragrance" (i.e. power) from physical contact, the "fragrance" acquired from physical closeness to the Prophet's tomb must be even stronger. Therefore, while it was the power of the fragrance of the shirt of Joseph which caused Jacob's physical sight to be restored, the perfume of this "shirt" (i.e., the satr of the tomb) is incomparably stronger and will give spiritual sight to those who regard it with the "eye of reality". [\[10\]](#)

In this sura, however, the Bab indicates that the qamis of Joseph represents a power equivalent to the satr of the tomb of the Prophet. The symbol of the shirt of Joseph is immediately associated with the BEES mentioned in Qur'an 16 (surat al-nahl). Such an apparently incongruous and abrupt association of the BEES with the SHIRT of Joseph is quite typical of the Bab's method throughout this commentary. [\[11\]](#) The Bab seems to take the BEES out of thin air. As will be seen, this air is actually the exceedingly rich atmosphere of the Shi'i exegetical tradition.

The following references to this exegetic history are intended to illustrate that while the concatenation of images, symbols and themes which the Tafsir surat Yusuf appears quite "unprofessional", it nevertheless has its roots in a tradition which goes back to the earliest tafsir literature. As such, the implications and resonances of the Bab's work would have been understood and felt by those young Shaykhis, as well as many others, who first read the commentary.

The third century traditionist and commentator, Furat ibn Ibrahim al-Kufi, whose Tafsir was recently published, was one of the earliest sources for later compilers like Majlisi and Isfahani. [\[12\]](#) He is regarded as one of the most important authorities for Shi'i tafsir and was one of the teachers of al-Qummi (ca.307/919). The work contains several comments regarding the word and the appropriate verses. The commentary on verse 16:68 quotes a transmission from one Muhammad ibn al-Fudayl, who had asked Abu al-o- asan (i.e. the tenth Imam, d. 254/868) about the verse. He said that the BEES are the trustees (awsiya', i.e. the Imams). Concerning the phrase TAKE FROM THE MOUNTAINS, HOUSES, he said that this refers to the Quraysh, implying that the rightful due of the Shi'a is to be taken from the so-called usurpers. The TREES are to be understood as "the suffering", which has befallen the Shi'a and by which the Shi'a will be strengthened. AND THAT WHICH THEY BUILD , refers to the clients of the Shi'a (al-mawali), suggesting that Shi'ism was destined to be preserved beyond the nation of the 'Arabs. FOLLOW THE WAY OF YOUR LORD means the way (sabil) which "we are on in the religion of God (dinihi)". IN WHICH IS HEALING FOR MANKIND refers to that WHICH COMES FORTH from the knowledge of 'Ali, inasmuch as it is the HEALING which God also mentioned in the verse: A HEALING FOR WHATEVER IS IN THE BREASTS [16:57]. [\[13\]](#) Whether or not one accepts the "orthodoxy" of the above report (which is bound to strike certain segments of the Shi'i population as "extremist") it seems that later Shi'i commentators and compilers saw a certain amount of merit in it. [\[14\]](#) It is this fact which is important in the present context. As mentioned above, the tafsir of Furat was used as a source by consecutive generations of Shi'i exegetes; it is not, therefore, necessary to make an exhaustive study of these. The essential point here is that BEES are understood as representing the Imams and the DRINK which they produce symbolizes the divine knowledge of which they are trustees. That this exegetical tendency

persisted as an important one in connection with this verse up to and including the time of the Bab, may be verified by referring to the appropriate literature. [15]

It is clear that Shaykh Ahmad subscribed to this reading of 16:68-9 from his commentary on it, which is found in his *Sharh al-ziyara*. This commentary is a good example of the way in which the Akhbari tafsir tradition was used by al-Ahsa'i and his successors, in conjunction with the philosophical developments which had occurred by his time, to present the distinctive Shaykhi synthesis. Shaykh Ahmad repeats the identification of the BEES with Imams and the DRINK with their knowledge, and characteristically divides the latter into several grades and levels. As mentioned, none of the "hierarchization" so characteristic of the Bab's tafsir on al-Baqara, is found in his commentary on the sura of Joseph. The Shaykhi influence on this work by the Bab is to be seen in the manner in which the Bab takes for granted the very old Akhbari Qur'an interpretations preserved by and elaborated on by Shaykh Ahmad or Sayyid Kazim. Further, this influence is present only insofar as the general tendency toward a total "imamization" of the Qur'an was a major feature of that tradition. There is not a single khabar or hadith cited in the commentary on the sura Joseph, except in the "meta" sense in which the entire work is transmitted by Sayyid 'Ali Muhammad as a single hadith on the authority of the hidden Imam. [16]

1) In the name of God the Merciful the Compassionate.

While the use of the basmala as an introductory formula is perhaps the least remarkable feature of this commentary, it will be of some interest to notice a few aspects of the phrase which could have been read into it in this context. The Bab and the whole tradition of Akhbari and mystical tafsir make much of the basmala. [17] Early Qur'an commentators considered an exegesis of the formula as part of their job. Several hadiths were adduced to support the special significance of this phrase, the most frequent being a variation of the following:

Sadiq said: The ba' [of the basmala] is the glory of God (baha' allah), the sin, is the splendour of God (sana' allah), and the mim is the sovereignty of God (mulk allah). Allah is the god of all things. al-Rahman pertains to creation in general while al-Rahim specifically applies to the believers. [18]

The basmala is also considered a prayer in its own right, a source of divine knowledge and healing. It is said to contain, in addition to all the knowledge in the Qur'an itself, all the knowledge of the previous scriptures. It has been seen as a means of salvation and protection. Opinion has been divided as to whether the basmala, which heads all but one suwar of the Qur'an, should be counted in the total number of verses, but Shi'i scholars have tended to treat it as an independent verse. al-Sadiq is also supposed to have said that the basmala is "the greatest verse in the Book of God". [19] It has also been identified as the "Greatest Name of God" (ism allah al-a'zam) [20] or as being "closer to the Greatest Name than the pupil of the eye is to the white". [21] For these reasons it has been counted as a separate verse of the chapters in the Bab's tafsir. [22]

Two other traditions, not mentioned by Ayoub in the article referred to above, appear to have particular bearing on the Bab's veneration of the basmala. The first has been mentioned as the

one referred to by Browne in his discussion of the Bab's claim to be a personification of the letter ba': "All existing things have appeared from the ba' of the basmala." [23] The other is the famous statement from 'Ali:

All that is in the world is in the Qur'an, and all that is in the Qur'an is condensed in the Fatiha of the Book, and all that is in the Fatiha is in the basmala, and all that is in the basmala is in the ba' and I am the point under the ba'. [24]

The number nineteen, which has such significance in the the Babi religion, is the number of letters in the basmala. The Bab instructed his first followers to remain silent about his claims until a total of eighteen persons had recognized his station of their own accord. [25] Each of these eighteen "letters of the Living" (huruf al-hayy or hurufat al-hayy) and the Bab, represent something like separate incarnations of one of the nineteen divine letters of the formula, just as each of the Imams were said to represent one of the twelve letters of the shahada. [26]

The huruf al-hayy are themselves regarded as identical with the sabiqun referred to in the early works of the Bab and his followers, both in the literal sense of their having preceded others in the recognition of the Bab and in the more esoteric sense of their identity with the first group of mankind to respond to God's pre-eternal covenant. This latter group is itself identified in Shi'i literature with Muhammad and the Imams, and it is clear that the Bab regarded the huruf al-hayy as the return of the Prophet, the twelve Imams, the original four abwab, and Fatima. [27]

These first disciples formed the first "unity" (wahid) of the movement, each successive "unity" of believers was to have also been composed of nineteen members. [28] In relation to the huruf al-hayy, the Bab occupied the rank of ba', which according to Rashti is a "cloak" for the point. In his discussion of the mysteries of the set of disconnected letters: kaf ha ya' 'ayn sad [19:1] (which he here refers to as al-ism al-akbar), he also calls it the "compriser of the two existents" (jami'at al-wujudayn): the 'ayn is absolute existence, while the sad represents contingent existence (al-wujud al-muqayyad). Thus it represents the station of complete integration (maqam al-jam'). He then says that all of its "stations" are condensed in the point, which is the maqam jam' al-jam'. "This point is the one under the ba', which represents the hidden dimension of the ba', and the ba' is its shell (qishr), exterior (zahir), and cloak ('aba)." [29] The Tafsir surat Yusuf is quite explicit in several places in its direct reference to the Bab as the "point", which in the context of tradition, automatically entails the ba'.

In relation to the eighteen huruf al-hayy, the Bab also occupied the rank of the nuqta concealed by the "cloak" of the ba'. This is clear from such of his titles as al-nuqtat al-ula, hadrat-i nuqta-yi bayan, and so forth. [30] This rank of nuqta, already appropriated by the Bab in this early work, is a good indication that the Bab actually claimed the equivalent of prophetic status at the time of its composition, a status which later became more frequently denoted by the term mazhar "manifestation". [31] However, the rank suggested by the word nuqta appears to go quite beyond other definitions of nuqta, being in fact analogous with the divine unity and simplicity itself.

The Bab's calendar, constructed much later, of nineteen months of nineteen days is another example of the function of the number "nineteen". [32] The importance of the number is also indicated by Rashti. In his discussion of the basmala, he quotes the Prophet: "The letters are

nineteen". Rashti says that this means that all the letters of the alphabet are actually only nineteen, rejecting the belief that there are twenty-eight. They appear to be twenty-eight, according to Rashti, only because of their various states and stations. [33]

The number nineteen is also mentioned in Qur'an 74:27-30:

AND WHAT WILL TEACH THEE WHAT IS SAKAR? IT SPARES NOT, NEITHER LEAVES ALONE SCORCHING THE FLESH; OVER IT ARE NINETEEN.

This verse was quoted by Rashti in his last testament ('ahd) and has been understood as a prophecy of the eventual zuhur of the Bab and his first followers. [34] It would serve no useful purpose to survey the venerable and extremely intricate tradition of the "science of letters" ('ilm al-huruf) in Muslim scholarship. The interested reader should see the masterful and suggestive study of Shaykh Ahmad al-Ahsa'i's letter interpretation by Juan Cole ("The World as Text: Cosmologies of Shaykh Ahmad al-Ahsa'i," *Studia Islamica* 80 (1994):1-23, also available at <http://www-personal.uich.edu/~jrcole/ahsai2.htm>). This article conveys the assumptions and more importantly the mental and spiritual outlook of a strong tradition in Islamic scholarship and letters which is one of the more important keys to the Bab's Writings. Suffice it for the present to quote Corbin, and mention a few of the more important works on this subject:

Les gnostiques en Islam ont amplifié une théorie de la gnose antique considérant que les lettres de l'alphabet, étant à la base de la création, représentent la matérialisation de la Parole divine. Pour Marcos le gnostique, le corps de l'Aletheia ("Truth") se composait des lettres de l'alphabet. Pour Moghira, le plus ancien gnostique shi'ite (ob. 119/737), les lettres sont les éléments dont est fait le corps même de Dieu. D'où ses spéculations sur le Nom suprême de Dieu (les dix-sept personnes ressuscitant à l'apparition de Mahdi, et à chacune desquelles sera donnée l'une des dix-sept lettres dont se compose le Nom suprême de Dieu. Le traité proto-ismaélien Omm al-Kitab considère les figures et l'ordre des lettres comme un indice certain de la hiérarchie des êtres célestes et des Imams. Aussi bien l'Imam Ja'far Sadiq est-il regardé comme l'initiateur de la science des lettres, dont il eut connaissance par la révélation d'un livre mystérieux, al-jafr. 'Depuis la seconde moitié du III^e siècle, les mystiques sunnites ont emprunté aux Shi'ites la science des lettres et lui ont accordé une place de plus en plus large dans leurs doctrines. Chez Ibn 'Arabi et ses successeurs, ces spéculations ont pris des proportions démesurées.' [35]

2) GO, TAKE THIS SHIRT OF MINE AND DO THOU CAST IT ON MY FATHERS FACE, AND HE SHALL RECOVER HIS SIGHT; THEN BRING ME YOUR FAMILY ALTOGETHER. [12:93]

The first explanation of its appearance here as not only a verse to be "commented upon", but as a verse of the Bab's surat al-nahl, is in keeping with the basic structure of the work as described elsewhere. It appears that by assigning an already existing quranic verse a new function, namely as one of forty-two which make up the exegetic unit (or sura), the Bab may be seen to claim a kind of authority which enables him to re-order and revalorize the Quranic revelation. Such is even more apparent in the following verses which paraphrase, without cue, whole passages of the Quranic text. Many of these direct quotations from the Quran are presented in capital letters, but there is much in the Bab's work that is originally from the Quran, for example, the divine

epithets, which I have not put in caps. Indeed, the Quran ungirds, both lexically and notionally so much of Islamicate culture that it is sometimes difficult to distinguish it. This is one of the important lessons of the Qayyum al-asma. It remains for an appropriate analog of Frye's The Great Code to be written. In any case, such a manipulation of the basic elements of scripture would not have been taken lightly by his Muslim audience. Moreover, and perhaps more importantly, such manipulation cannot have been taken lightly by the Bab either, who was unquestionably aware of the serious implications such an act would have.

3) kaf ha' 'ayn = 20 + 5 + 70 (95).

Almost every chapter contains as its third verse a set of disconnected mysterious letters. Precedent for counting it as a separate verse, is taken from the Qur'an. Some of these sets of disconnected letters are quranic, some are names, and others are neither. The manuscripts differ with regard to some of these sets, as is the case here. F11, f.162b reads kaf mim 'ayn with a fatha over each letter (20 + 40 + 70 =130). QA appears to be either kaf ha' mim 'ayn or simply ka ha' 'ayn. In any case, it bears a certain resemblance to the quranic kaf ha' 'ayn sad discussed by Rashti, and may be meant to suggest it.

4) Indeed we REVEALED UNTO THE BEES, SAYING: 'TAKE FROM THE MOUNTAINS, [16:68] citadels - the abode for affirming the sanctity of God - the sign of this luminous one, AND OF TREES, [16:68] places for affirming that there is no god but God (al-tahlil) the sign of this Easterner AND OF WHAT THEY ARE BUILDING [16:68] in the path of affirming the unity of God (al-tawhid) the threadbare garment of this Westerner belonging to God, the High. And He is God, Witness over all things.

As mentioned earlier, most of the chapters of this commentary have a reference to the act of revelation in their fourth verse. This chapter follows the same pattern. But as we have seen, the word nahl also has important meaning in Shi'i exegesis. In addition, there is also a semantic and syntactical correlation between the the verse to be commented upon and this one, namely the two imperatives "go with" or "take" (idhhabu) [12:93] and "take" or "choose" (ittakhidhi). This parallel is continued in the verse by the use of the three expressions al-barqi hadha, al-sharqi hadha, and al-gharbi hadha, which may be seen as exegetic equivalences for qamisi hadha [12:93]. The image of light here connected with "East" and "West" is of course an echo of the Light Verse [24:35], which is similarly alluded to several times in this chapter, as it is throughout the commentary. The Bab's claim to be both Eastern and Western represents a variation on the quranic NEITHER EASTERN OR WESTERN. "Citadels" (qusuran) parallels the quranic buyut, as does the singular "abode" (al- maskin). "This threadbare garment . . ." translates sahq al-gharbi hadha. The other possible reading is suhq "remoteness". The epithet al-'ali (found eight times in the Qur'an) in addition to continuing the rhyme, is undoubtedly intended to suggest the Bab's name, 'Ali Muhammad and the relationship/participation with that name and the name of 'Ali himself. The shirt itself is not only a divine remnant (viz, baqiyat allah), but the Bab as custodian of the symbol, is also the remnant by association. More radically (and probably more accurately) the Bab, 'Ali Muhammad Shirazi, is the qamis in the same way that the ba' was said by Sayyid Kazim Rashti to be the cloak for the point. But these symbols, it cannot be emphasised too strongly, are not univocal. They may and do mean several different things at once. This is the

source of their evocative and eventually doctrinal (if you will) power. The command to TAKE MY SHIRT AND CAST IT ON MY FATHER'S FACE is more fully explained in verse 40.

5) THEN EAT OF ALL MANNER OF [16:69] divine allusions (al- isharat) MADE SMOOTH [16:69] in the path of the Remembrance, this Gate. THERE COMES FORTH FROM THEIR BELLIES [12:69] the water of the elixir which is one in terms of its blessings, although it is OF DIVERSE HUES WHEREIN IS HEALING FOR [16:69] believers. Verily God is Powerful over all things.

Having established this semantic relationship between the two verses, the Bab merely extends the comparison by paraphrasing 16:69. Here, "divine allusions" may be considered as a synonym for the 'ulum al-a'imma "knowledge of the imams", which early exegesis saw as the meaning of the quranic thamarat/ FRUITS. Here also, reference could be made to the commentary on 16:69 by Shaykh Ahmad, who elaborated the significance of "the sciences of the Imams" by explaining thamarat as the perfection, or realization of those things which had been deposited in the Imams. [36] The Bab seems to be saying that by the appearance of the "Remembrance" (himself), these various divine teachings have become accessible (SMOOTH = dhululan) for the faithful. "Path" (sabil) is merely a substitute for the quranic PATHS = subul. As a singular noun, it emphasizes exclusivity. [37]

6) God is the creator of everything through His power. And God, in very truth, is Apprised of everything which men do.

This verse takes as its cue the first part 12:70: wa allahu khalaqakum. The second sentence of the verse introduces the very frequent phrase 'ala 'l- haqq bi'l-haqq, which is translated here as "in very truth". This translation is merely for convenience inasmuch as the meaning of the phrase, which occurs hundreds of times throughout the commentary, is dependent upon the various contexts in which it appears. It seems to be something of a short rhythmic and multi-vocal refrain (reminiscent of dhikr formulae), the function of which is to fill out the measure of a given verse. In many instances, it is clear that 'ala al-haqq bi'l-haqq directly refers to God, whereas in other cases it means that the Bab is "truly speaking the truth" or some variation of this. Elsewhere, it connotes inevitability. The plural verb ya'maluna, since it precedes the subject should technically be in the singular, and reflects, perhaps, Persian grammatical norms.

7) O believers! Fear God concerning this most great word protected in the divine fire. Indeed he is, in very truth , accounted by God the High as a witness.

The vocative address is used in varying forms, as will be seen below. The quranic ittaqu 'llaha, also frequently employed, shares the same root with another important word in Shi'ism, namely taqiya or pious dissimulation which became institutionalized because of Shi'ism's status as a minority and frequently despised religion. The ungrammatical dhalika kalimat al- akbar ("this is the most great Word") is quite characteristic of the language of this commentary. Dhalika here bears the same ambiguity of Qur'an 2:2: dhalika 'l-kitab, which is generally understood as "this is the Book". However, it has been the subject of much debate by mufasssirin, because of its obvious meaning of "that is the Book". [38] Shi'i exegesis has also seen the demonstrative as referring to the (presumably missing) "book of 'Ali". [39] This uncertainty is reflected in recent

English Qur'an translations: Arberry: THAT IS THE BOOK . . .; Pickthall: THIS IS THE SCRIPTURE . [40] It may be that the Bab is exploiting this ambiguity as a function of taqiya; alternatively, it could simply mean "THIS". Kalimat al-akbar may be thought to allude to his station specifically, in line with the previously mentioned hadith ascribed to al- Sadiq: nahnu kalimat allah, or the one ascribed to 'Ali: ana al-kalimat al- kubra which occurs in one of the many theopathic sermons ascribed to him. The text of this particular sermon is found in the Kitab al-Kashf. In it 'Ali declares from the pulpit: "I am the Christ who heals the blind and the leprous, creating birds and dispersing clouds." Meaning [says the commentator]: 'I am the second Christ (al-masih al-thani),- I am he and he is I.' At this a man stood up and asked: "O Commander of the Faithful, was the Torah written in a foreign language or in Arabic?" 'Ali said: "[In a] foreign language, but its meaning is Arabic, namely that the Christ is the Qa'im bi'l-haqq, and the king of this world and the next. The Qur'an itself confirms this in the verse: PEACE BE UPON ME THE DAY I WAS BORN, AND THE DAY THAT I DIE, AND THE DAY THAT I AM RAISED UP ALIVE [19:33] Thus 'Isa ibn Maryam is of me and I am of him, and he is the Most Great Word of God (kalimat allah al-kubra) and he is the testifier and I am the one testified to." [41]

The relative al-akbar is used elsewhere with masculine nouns, as in bab allah al-akbar, where the Bab himself appears to be intended. Such grammatical liberties are found, for example, in the Arabic translations of the New Testament, namely, John 1:1: fi'l-bad' kana al-kalima wa'l- kalima kana 'inda 'llah wa kana 'l-kalimatu allaha. They are explained by the rule that a feminine noun may sometimes represent a masculine subject, e.g. khalifatun, 'allamatun, and rawiyatun. [42] As can be seen in the reproduction of the manuscript, the Bab was capable of maintaining grammatical gender agreement. Here the phrase bi'l-haqq 'ala 'l-haqq refers to the veracity of the Bab as the kalimat allah al-akbar and "witness/martyr" (shahid) through God's incontrovertible will.

8) O people of the veils! Harken to the call of God from the tongue of the most great Remembrance: VERILY VERILY I AM GOD [28:30] THERE IS NO GOD BUT HIM [passim]. Indeed, the likeness of the Remembrance is as gold softened in fire which flows in rivulets to all the hidden places by the will of God, the High. And he is God - Mighty, Ancient.

The ahl al-hujub "People of the veils" may be taken as a general address to all those who have been veiled from recognizing the Bab; or, given the above equivalence hijab/bab, it may refer paradoxically to those who have recognized the Bab. The exhortation to "heed the call", isma'u nida' or some variation, is a frequent imperative in the commentary. In this instance, the Bab refers to himself as "the most great Remembrance of God" (dhikr allah al-akbar), which is also used many times in the work. "The Call" (al- nida') is a major topic in Shi'i eschatology being classified as one of "the five signs" announcing the appearance of the Mahdi. It is explained as follows:

"The Cry" (al-sayha/al-nida'); it appears as though there will actually be two "cries" of supernatural origin that will be heard before the coming of the Mahdi. One cry will come from the sky, calling men to defend the Cause of the imam, and the other will come from the depths of the earth (sometimes this is seen as the voice of Iblis), inviting people to join the ranks of the Enemy of the Imam; these cries will be heard during the month of Ramadan. [43]

The quotation of Qur'an 28:30, VERILY, VERILY, I AM GOD (inni ana 'llah) is also frequent throughout the commentary. It suggests that the Bab is claiming revelation by comparing his rank to that of Moses. [44] It is difficult to determine whether it is meant to be read as the direct speech of God, the hidden Imam, or the Bab. The result of the ambiguity, however, permits the Bab to "participate" in the declaration. By referring to the "likeness of the Remembrance", the Bab anticipates 16:74-6 in which the word SIMILITUDES occurs. The SIMILITUDE which the Bab "strikes" is original, and quite characteristic of his opulent imagery. "Gold softened" translates al-dhahab al-ma'ila, and is dhahab al-muma' in F11, f.162b. "Flowing to all the hidden places" translates sayyala ila kulli 'l-ghuyub and perhaps takes its cue from 13:17, a verse in which God "strikes a similitude" which employs the image of VALLEYS FLOWING ACCORDING TO THEIR MEASURE (fa-salat awdiyatin bi-qadari-ha; n.b. also the root dh h b in this verse), and THAT OVER WHICH THEY KINDLE FIRE (wa mimma yuqiduna 'alayhi fi'l- nar). The image continues the mention of sharab, BEVERAGE, in 16:69. Ghuyub ("hidden places") is also seen as echoing the measure of the quranic buyut (houses) in 16:68.

9) O people of the Throne! Harken to my call from the precincts of the tomb (al-darih) from the tongue of this Tree which grows on the exalted SINAI, and which is covered with golden holy leaves: VERILY VERILY I AM GOD, THERE IS NO GOD BUT HIM. There is no soul who has suffered anything in the path of the Remembrance, whether through warfare or loss of wealth, but that we have written down for him the Gardens of Eden and Ridwan in truth. Verily God is Powerful over all things.'

The ahl al-'arsh could have several implications, but the intention here may be simply "people of the world". That the "call" is being sent out from the "precincts of the tomb" (hawl al-darih), may be evidence that the Bab wrote portions of this work during his pilgrimage, as MacEoin has suggested. [45] "Tomb" may also have a purely symbolic meaning. "The tongue of this Tree which grows on the exalted MT. SINAI" translates lisan hadhihi al-shajara al-manbata al-tur. Again, the reference is to the revelatory experience of Moses on Sinai and may be seen to reflect the language of 23:20: wa shajaratan takhruju min tur sayna' tanbutu bi'l-duhn wa sibghin li'l-akilin. In this case, it is also possible to translate the Bab's words as "this Tree which produces" leaving the objects "oil" and "relish" understood. Al-mutawarraq bi'l-warqa' al-safra' al-mani' is distinctive imagery, which appears to modify Tur (MT. SINAI).

10) Indeed, we have power to move the earth in this hour [passim] by the order of the Remembrance, and could, in truth, hold it aloft [cf. 35:41, 22:65] by means of the summons from his self. Otherwise, the earth with its people would, in very truth burn completely (sakhina maskhunan). And He is God, Powerful over all things.

This verse continues the "call" initiated in verse 8, the speaker is either the hidden Imam or God; as has been explained, these two are functionally the same in the basic theology expressed in the Tafsir surat al-baqara. The phrase wa numsiuha 'ala 'l-haqq bi'l-du'a' min nafsihî offers another example of the 'ala'l-haqq bi'l-haqq formula. "Burn completely" translates sakhina maskhunan, which fills out the saj' rhyme used here and throughout the work.

11) And verily GOD HAS PREFERRED SOME OF YOU OVER OTHERS [16:71] with knowledge of the Remembrance. WHAT, AND DO YOU DENY GOD'S BLESSING

[16:71] by lying? Indeed he is the truth from God which, in very truth, is now fulfilled. This verse continues the paraphrase of sura 16. "Fulfilled" is the quranic mas'ulan [passim, cf. esp. 25:16: . . . kana 'ala rabbika wa'dan mas'ulan, and 33:15: . . . wa kan 'ahdu 'llah mas'ulan].

12) GOD HAS APPOINTED FOR YOU OF YOURSELVES WIVES [16:72] in truth. And GOD HAS ORDAINED [16:72] that the women who are believers be as leaves on the lote-trees in the precincts of the Gate. And God is Knower of all things.

Wa inna 'llah qad ja'ala nisa' al-mu'minat (both manuscripts) might be translated as "God has ordained women, that is believing women, . . .". The paraphrase continues with the Bab's own imagery of leaves and trees waraqat min al-shajara al-sidar. This usage was continued by Bahá'u'lláh, who referred to the females of his family as leaves and the males as branches (aghsan or afnan). [46]

13) O believers! Fear God and never say concerning the glorious Mystery of God, the Unfastener, in the precincts of that which is (forever) unfastened anything but the truth. For God has imposed upon the people of the Cloud the veil of faithfulness. And God is Witness over all things.

Sirr allah al-muhallil* hawl al-hall al-muhallal* (*---* portion is missing from F11, f.163a) without shadda over al-hall. This is very problematic. Both manuscripts provide dots under the ha' of al-muhallil, and QA places a dot under al-hall. It might also be read al-jall/jull with the meaning of "great" or "major portion"; al-jill could give the meaning of "carpet" or "garment", the latter would of course extend the "textile" metaphor of the qamis. It could also be read al-jul (perhaps for the Persian gul); al-muhallil would also give the meaning of "lawgiver" or "one who makes things right". Since there is no dot under al-muhallil, it was thought that the other dots served the function suggested at verse 5. In any case, the "Mystery of God" appears to refer to the Bab himself. The phrase fa-inna allah qad a'hada (sic) 'ala ahl al-'ama satra al-wafa' (F11, f.163a: fa-inna allah qad ashhada . . .) employs the frequent image of the "cloud" discussed above. This seems to be an exhortation to taqiya.

14) O Solace of the Eye! Speak the melody of the beloved from the Throne and clothe (uqmus) the words with the shirt (qamis) of divine breezes. Indeed, God desires that your proclamation concerning this Red Dove be not naked. And God is your Preserver.

Ya qurrata'l'ayn indicates that the Bab is now being addressed by the hidden Imam. It should not be seen as referring to the famous disciple of the Bab, the poetess, Tahireh. [47] The language is found in the Qur'an [19:26; 20:40; 25:74; 28:9 & 13; 32:17; 33: 51], with the meaning of general consolation or comfort. The epithet is also traceable to the hadith from the Prophet in which he speaks of prayer as being the "consolation of my eye" (qurrat 'ayni). [48] Its frequent use in this work by the Bab, also undoubtedly refers to the restoration of Jacob's sight by the qamis and the consolation of his heart which came from reunion with Joseph. "Red Dove" (al-warqa' al-hamra') is another title for the Bab. The exhortation to "clothe the words" refers to the allusive nature of the commentary in general. The implication being that those who have the capacity to understand the obscure language will do so because of their spiritual readiness for the advent of the Imam.

Others will simply fail to appreciate its significance. This theme is found also in a later work by Baha'ullah:

The purpose underlying all these symbolic terms and abstruse allusions, which emanate from the revealers of God's holy cause, has been to test and prove the peoples of the world; that thereby the earth of the pure and illuminated hearts may be known from the perishable and barren soil. From time immemorial such has been the way of God amidst His creatures. [\[49\]](#)

15) O concourse of lights! Hear my call from the precincts of the point of water at the center of the dust! 'God!, there is no god but Him, the Lord of all worlds.' And He is God, Mighty, Wise.

Min hawl nuqtat al-ma' 'ala markaz al-turab. Such phrases have been discussed above, as describing the Bab's station as the point from which proceeds antithetical terms. This is reminiscent of the distinctive imamology of such pieces as the Khutbat al-tatanjiya, though the Bab's imagery seems to be new.

16) Verily, verily I am the fire from the precincts of Tur, and I speak the truth, and am praiseworthy.

This is another reference to the quranic description of Moses' experience on Sinai. It would seem that God is continuing the address begun in verse 15, which was being transmitted through the "point of water at the center of the dust" (i.e. the Bab). But it should be remembered that by thus being a channel for revelation, the Bab is also touched by the "Fire", and is also in this way the fire itself.

17) Verily, verily I am the light above Tur - raised.

The use of the predicate marfu'an, which technically refers to God as the source of revelation, also alludes to the lineage of the Bab as a Sayyid, or descendant of the family of Hashim. For example, describing a hadith as marfu', indicates an authentic isnad which goes back to the Prophet. [\[50\]](#)

18) Verily, verily I am the reddened point which revolves around God, its creator. And I am in truth beloved. According to the hierarchies in the Tafsir surat al-baqara, red symbolizes corporeality. This usage may be meant to allude to the embodiment of the hidden Imam.

19) Verily, verily I am the sapling - the glory with the most great truth, and am the goal (maqsud) at the head of (fawq) the source of the ruby stream which flows upon Tur.

Ja'far al-Sadiq interpreted one of 'Ali's statements: "I have planted their trees" (ana gharastu ashjaraha) as meaning that the Imams from his progeny are the trees of repentance and the lote-tree beyond which there is no passing. [\[51\]](#) Either from this interpretation, or other similar ones, the word gharas seems to have acquired a life of its own, as a symbol for the zuhur of the Qa'im, e.g.:

In the year ghars [i.e.1260] the earth shall be illumined by His light, and in gharasa [1265] the world shall be suffused with its glory [?'al-baha']. If thou livest until the year gharasi [1270], thou shalt witness how the nations, the rulers, the peoples, and the Faith of God shall all have been renewed.[\[52\]](#) The oppositional wa inni ana al-ghars al-baha' is also conditioned by the previously-mentioned exegesis of the basmala, where the ba' is seen to stand for the divine attribute baha'. This is borne out in the following verse.

20) Verily, verily I am the splendour - the praise; none but the Praise itself, being single and unique, perceives the splendour.

In the two commentaries referred to above, as well as several others, the sin of the basmala is interpreted as the sana' allah - the splendour of God. The allusion to Sinai (sayna',sina' [23:20]) is obvious. Cf. also the "single soul" passages in the Qur'an [4:1, 6:98, 7:189, 31:28, 39:6].

21) O people of the earth! Praised be God, the Truth! verily God HAS MADE [16:72] the mystery of this Gate profound.

The use of the verb ja'ala need not, of course, be a reference to the Qur'an. However, in light of the foregoing, it would appear that the Bab intends a reference to 16:72 and a somewhat tenuous continuation of the paraphrase begun in verse 3.

22) To describe him in Arabic he is comely - as is witnessed.

This is a kind of enjambment with verse 21, aniqan rhyming with the above 'amiqan. (Cf. also line 1 of the Khutbat al-tatanjiya.) It may be read as a parenthesis, mashhudan "witnessed" referring to the sirr hadha 'l-bab "the secret of this Gate" in the above verse. This is an allusion to the proverbial physical beauty of Joseph, which the Bab is said to have shared. [\[53\]](#)

23) Indeed, in these verses are SIMILITUDES [16:74] for THOSE POSSESSED OF MINDS [passim], those who, in the precincts of the Gate, are in very truth, prostrating.

Prostrating at the gate is taken from 7:161: ENTER THE GATE PROSTRATING and also implies the "gate of forgiveness" [cf. hitta, 2:58] and the "city of knowledge" hadiths, along with all those other less immediate associations mentioned at length above.

24) What, do you worship [paraphrase of16:71] one BESIDE GOD WHO POSSESSES [16:73] nothing, while sovereignty is God's (wa 'l- mulk li-llah, [passim]), the High both before and after; in the mother of the Book [passim], it is all written about the matter of the Gate.

The "mother of the Book" is the repository of God's pre-eternal decree; that is, the Bab's mission has been ordained from before the beginning of time. It is also a reference to the Fatiha, which is referred to by several exegetes as the umm al-kitab, and thus continues the metaphor of the basmala. Umm al-kitab may also refer to the Imam himself, as such it becomes a symbol of the sirr or divine conscience mentioned in verse 12.[\[54\]](#) In short, umm al- kitab designates the Imams as the source for understanding the Book.

25) SO STRIKE NOT ANY SIMILITUDES FOR GOD [16:74]. He is the truth LIKE UNTO HIM THERE IS NAUGHT [42:11]. And He is God, Mighty, Wise.

This is a direct quotation from sura16 and continues the paraphrase.

26) GOD HAS STRUCK A SIMILITUDE concerning TWO MEN, ONE OF THEM [16:76] standing upon the divine cause (qa'im 'ala al-amr) COMMANDING JUSTICE [16:75] and good deeds; and the other standing over Hell, summoned by the Fire to the Fire. And both of these two are upon the truth, if you confess even one letter of the book. AND YOUR LORD IS THE MERCIFUL AND AWARE OF WHAT YOU DO [passim].

The thrust of the quranic verse, which means to distinguish between two men, one being good, the other bad, is transformed by the Bab. The implication appears to be that the two are actually one. As such, it may also be an allusion to the themes and language of the Khutbat al- tatanjiya.

27) Today God has written for his servant a reward - indeed! - from a line of the leaf of the white scroll. God is Knower of all things.

28) And [has written for] the servant who does well ('ala al- 'abd al-fa'il bi'l-istiwa',cf. 17:76) TWO GARDENS [18:32-3; 34:15-6; 55:54] in a true line ('ala khatt al-istiwa') and for the bearer of the goblet of water [He has written] a goblet of the pure river of Kawthar. And God is Witness over all things.

This may also be an allusion to Joseph's "two fellow-prisoners" [12:36- 42], one of whom was to "pour wine for his lord" [12:41]. The other, according to Joseph's interpretation of the dream, was to be crucified. The khatt al-istiwa' occurs many times throughout this work. The dictionary definition "equator" is helpful insofar as it connotes a dividing line which "orders" (cf. istiwa' in the Qur'an passim). The Imam, in this sense, may be regarded as the line between good and evil. The term figures in the Akhbar of al-Hallaj, in which along with several other distinctive terms, the editors detected "d'emprunts gnostique ismaelien", although they offer no definition. [55]The term figures prominently in Hurufi literature, where it refers primarily to the (center) part in the hair, which had symbolic value: "Elle est la ligne mediane regulatrice symbolisant ainsi l'harmonie, la justice, l'equite, la verite, etc., . . .".[56] al- Hallaj designated it the source of the alphabet [57] i.e., the alif.

29) And with GOD BELONGS THE UNSEEN [16:77]. All unseen things are visible to the Truth. And God ordained ONLY THAT THE CAUSE [16:77] of the Remembrance BE CLOSEST to the divine CAUSE [16:77]. And He is God, Powerful over all things.

The language here substitutes the quranic hour (al-sa'a) with dhikr, one of the titles of the Bab. This is in keeping with the hermeneutic equivalence HOUR/ walaya.[58]Similarly, cause may also represent the Imam.[59]

30) And we have BROUGHT YOU FORTH FROM THE WOMBS [16:78] to aid the Truth during the day of the Remembrance. And we have GIVEN YOU HEARING, AND

SIGHT, AND HEARTS SO THAT YOU MIGHT BE GRATEFUL FOR [16:78] the truth of the Remembrance concerning the STRAIGHT BALANCE, straight.

HEARING, SIGHT, AND HEARTS have been interpreted as standing for nuḥuwa, imama, and walaya, and while this interpretation need not be primary here, it undoubtedly operates on some level. [60] Fi 'l-qistas al-qayyim mustaqiman is a variant of 17:35 and 26:182, and perhaps a retroactive incorporation of more material from 16:76, e.g.: huwa 'ala siratin mustaqimin.

31) And we have made THE BIRDS OBEDIENT IN THE AIR OF HEAVEN [16:79]. Is there any but God who HOLDS THEM ALOFT [16:79] in truth? Verily God is Witness over all things.

In addition to continuing the paraphrase, this verse also reflects the image in verse 10 above.

32) O PLACE WHERE THE DAWN APPEARS [97:5]! Mention the name of your Lord, He who there is no god but Him. He is High, Wise.

Ya matla' al-fajr obviously addresses the Bab; matla' is a synonym for mazhar "manifestation," and in this connection alludes to a high spiritual rank. According to Isfahani, "In the akhbar the ta'wil of fajr is the Qa'im, and its appearance is qiyama, just as "morning" (subh) refers to the Imams and the lights of their knowledge." [61]

33) O Hour of the dawn! Mention, BEFORE THE RISING OF THE SUN [20:130, 50:39] from the place where the Gate appears, that the day which belongs to God is CLOSER THAN A TWINKLING OF THE EYE [16:77]. And the judgement has already been ordained in the Mother of the Book. [62]

Sa'at al-fajr does not occur in the Qur'an, but combines two quranic words, and may be thought to combine the above-mentioned interpretations of these words. It addresses the Bab. "Day" is an allusion the same word in 16:80, the use of which would continue the paraphrase, just as "sun" may be seen in connection with zilalan of 16:81. "Sun" has of course other implications. It may stand for rasul, 'Ali, or "each Imam, specifically the Qa'im". [63] It is undoubtedly the last which is intended. The sense is that the Qa'im has not yet fully arisen; that is, he has not yet been universally recognized. Alternatively, it may allude to another individual as Qa'im. However, min matla' al-bab seems to suggest otherwise.

34) O people of the earth! Listen to the call of this upright soul in the air [16:79] of the cloud: 'Praised be God, He who has taught me in this Gate the path of those who affirm divine unity, a just word. And that is from the bounty of God to me. And He is Self-sufficient above all the worlds.'

The speaker here is presented as the hidden Imam, who designates the Bab as al-nafs al-qa'im. As such, it is a good example of the manipulation by the author of such terminology to indicate his own claim to be the "promised one". This device here as elsewhere, resembles the "qul" verses of the Qur'an, enabling the Bab to speak on behalf of a higher authority while at the same time participating in this authority. As mentioned earlier, the variety of voices which speak

throughout the commentary should be thought of as representing separate aspects or "levels" of the soul of the Bab, which for the purposes of rhetorical effect, are separately emphasized in this or that passage. "Cloud" refers again to the divine source of the Bab's message. In his commentary on al-Baqara, we have seen that the Bab interpreted fadl "bounty" as the Qa'im.

35) O people of 'Arafat! Be firm in the precincts of the straight one and listen to my call about this blood-stained shirt which has been rent with 4,000 darts of the people of shirk from among my servants. 'Verily, verily I am the one slain at the two rivers. Verily, verily I am the one slaughtered by the two swords, and verily, verily I have been flung down (al-matruh) upon the two earths, and verily, verily I speak in the two stations: "There is no god but God alone, there is no god but Him. {Exalted is God, the High, He who there is no god but Him.}" And He is God, Mighty, Wise.'

Verses 35-42 represent the fourth section of the chapter, which as mentioned in the general description, returns to the aya of the Qur'an to be commented upon. The reference to 'Arafat could be another indication that the Bab wrote part of the work during his pilgrimage; it may also simply refer to the holiness of 'Arafat itself. The Bab returns to the qamis of 12:93 and presents it as a symbol of martyrdom, so essential to Shi'i religiosity. [64] He expands the theme by alluding to Husayn, who was killed near the Euphrates. The nahrayn of QA is nahrayn in F11, f.164a. The word matruh is a reference to 12:9: 'aw itrahuhu ardan, while the extended repetition of the dual is a reflex of the language of the Khutbat al-tatanjiya. The portion between brackets, {...}, is missing from F11.

35) O people of `Arafat! Be firm in the precincts of the straight one and listen to my call concerning this blood-stained shirt that has been rent with 4,000 darts of the people of unbelief from among my servants. "Verily, verily I am the one slain at the two rivers. Verily, verily I am the one slaughtered by the two swords, and verily, verily, I have been flung down upon the two earths, and verily, verily, I speak in the two stations: "There is no god but God alone, there is no god but Him. Exalted is God, the Lofty, He other than whom there is no god." And He is God, Mighty, Wise.

The question arises over the translations "I am the one slain at the two rivers" (anaa al-maqtuul bi'n-naHrayn). Now, it is manifestly wrong to translate naHrayn as "two rivers" as has been pointed out. naHr = slaughter, and its use here is in the dual number and therefore means "two slaughters" . It could also be shorthand for "the two days of slaughter". In Shi'ism the slaughter must always refer to the killing of Husayn, the third Imam, at Karbala. I chose to translate it as "nahrayn" = "two rivers" not only because this is attested to in other mss. of QA (see forthcoming commentary) but because the logic of the BAb's frequent use of the dual number seemed to allow it. But I am not insisting upon this as the better translation. Indeed "two slaughters" might be the correct one. I am hesitant, however, to ascribe the reliability of this translation to the mere fact that it reflects what is in what appears to be the oldest ms. of QA. It is frequently the case that older mss. are not the most reliable. I was quoted as having said that this particular ms. is the most reliable, but actually I said the following in comparing two mss. of QA: "The older of the two, and perhaps therefore the most reliable, was transcribed in 1861/1845 and differs from the later manuscript in many details." [Lawson, Interp. as Rev, Oxford, 1988, p.243]

Much of the use of the dual number in the Bab's work is, I think, inspired by such "gnostic" texts as the famous Khutbat al-tutunjiya/tatanjiya", which begins with 'Ali saying "I am the one who reigns over the two Gulfs". I chose rivers ultimately in this case because it represented another "body of water" image, and in any case, it may be thought that Husayn was slain "at the two rivers" (mesopotamia). Again, either translation seems fine to me.

36) Verily God has INSPIRED [16:68] me in a single thread of that SHIRT stained with pure blood with: 'Verily, verily I am God, He who there is no god but Me.'

This continues the allusion to the beginning of sura 12, thus the blood is pure, as opposed to the "false blood" of the wolf [12:18]. The Arabic is: al- qamis al-muhammara bi'l-dam al-mutahhara. Thus, the verse could read: "that pure bloodstained shirt". It is likely that both meanings are meant to be suggested.

37) 'O people of Paradise! GO WITH MY SHIRT [12:93] - the sign of this most great Remembrance - AND CAST IT ON THE FACE OF [12:93] the Hujja, your Imam so that he might look to you through your EYES, and that today, if God wills, your sight concerning this Gate which is on the truth and with truth will be sharp.

The Arabic is: bi-qamisi aya hadha 'al-dhikr al-akbar. The speaker is the hidden Imam. The variant "cast it on the face of your/my Imam" (F11, f.164a: Imami; QA: Imamukum, complicates the reading. "Look to you through your eyes" is an echo of the theme of "signs" discussed in the study of al-Baqara, where the important point is that individuals have been invested with ayat of the Imam or Prophet, without which they would be unable to recognize their stations.

38) O Solace of the Eye! Say: 'Verily, verily I AM THE HOUR. HOW IS IT THEN THAT YOU DO NOT KNOW THAT THE HOUR, IN VERY TRUTH, IS NEAR ACCORDING TO THE MOTHER OF THE BOOK.

39) {O Solace of the Eye! Say:} 'Verily, verily I am the house and am with the truth, established (marfu'an).

Verse 38 and 39 follow F11, f.164a. The underlined portion in verse 38 is missing from QA which skips to verse 39. {---} in verse 39 is missing from F11, 164a. The NEARNESS OF THE HOUR is found at Q.17:51. Bayt refers both to the Kaaba and the "house" or family of the Prophet, viz. the Imams and their walaya. [\[65\]](#)

40) And verily, verily (inni ana) I am the LAMP IN THE NICHE [24:35] and am, through God the Truth upon the truth, shining (mudi'an).

This is a combination of the above-mentioned theme of the revelatory experience of Moses (signaled by inni ana), and that of the "light verse" [24:35]. Misbah, according to Isfahani, refers to Hasan and Husayn, to the rasul, and to the light of nuwuwa and knowledge ('ilm), as well as to the 'ulama, and the shi'a. [\[66\]](#) Mishkat is understood as representing Fatima (thus Hasan and Husayn are misbah), and in another hadith from the eighth Imam Rida, we find the statement: "nahnu al-mishkat in which the misbah of Muhammad shines." Alternatively, the word is glossed

as the "breast of muhammad" (sadr Muhammad) "in which the light of knowledge, that is nubuwah, shines. [67] Here is another clue about the frequent refrain al-haqq 'ala 'l-haqq, which would appear in this instance to parallel the nur 'ala nurin LIGHT UPON LIGHT of 24:35. See also the following verse, where the reference is made explicit.

41) And verily, verily I am the Fire in the LIGHT UPON LIGHT [24:35] of SINAI in the land of felicity and am hidden in the precincts of the Fire [cf. 20:10-11].

It is not really possible to examine the images of fire and light in any detail. [68] The verse speaks for itself, and is quite typical of other verses in the work.

42) O Solace of the Eye! Say to the believers of all the people of the earth and the heavens: 'Come to me with your people who are effaced completely by the permission of God, the High. 'Verily God desires your reward in this Gate, upon the most great truth. And He is God, Knower of all things.

This concludes the paraphrase of 12:93: wa'tuni bi-ahlikum ajma'in. The Bab's words: atuni bi-ahlikum mimman kana fi ahl al-mahw 'ala 'l-jam' bi- idhni 'llah al-'ali, while paraphrasing the Qur'an ahlikum ajma'in, perhaps refer to the mystical idea of jam' al-jam' associated with the states of al-fana' (cf., the Bab's al-mahw) and al-baqa'. [69]

Notes

[1] Another way of reading it would be:

Indeed, we REVEALED UNTO THE BEES, SAYING:
"TAKE FROM THE MOUNTAINS citadels-
which are the abode for affirming the sanctity of God-
the sign of this luminous one,
AND [from] TREES,
which are places for affirming that there is no god but God-
the sign of this Easterner
AND OF WHAT THEY ARE BUILDING in the path of
affirming the unity of God
the threadbare garment of this Westerner
which belongs to God, the Exalted.
And He is God, Witness over all things.

This verse improvises, if you will, upon the following Quranic verses:

AND IT IS GOD WHO SENDS DOWNOUT OF HEAVEN WATER, AND
THEREWITH REVIVES THE DEAD. SURELY IN THAT IS A SIGN FOR A PEOPLE
WHO HAVE EARS. 16:65

AND SURELY IN THE CATTLE THERE IS A LESSON FOR YOU; WE GIVE YOU
TO DRINK OF WHAT IS IN THEIR BELLIES, BETWEEN FILTH AND BLOOD,
PURE MILK SWEET TO DRINKERS. 16:66

AND OF FRUITS OF THE PALMS AND THE VINES, YOU TAKE THEREFROM AN INTOXICANT AND A PROVISION FAIR. SURELY IN THAT IS A SIGN FOR A PEOPLE WHO UNDERSTAND. 16:67

AND THY LORD REVEALED UNTO THE BEES, SAYING: "TAKE UNTO YOURSELVES, OF THE MOUNTAINS, HOUSES, AND OF THE TREES, AND OF WHAT THEY ARE BUILDING. 16:68

THEN EAT OF ALL MANNER OF FRUIT, AND FOLLOW THE WAYS OF YOUR LORD- EASY TO GO UPON." THEN COMES FORTH OUT OF THEIR BELLIES A DRINK OF DIVERS HUES WHEREIN IS HEALING FOR MEN. SURELY IN THAT IS A SIGN FOR PEOPLE WHO REFLECT. 16:69

(Arberry translation)

The reader is being told to take/perceive the signs of this new revelation, as the bees had been "inspired" (awhayna) to make hives and produce honey. My apologies for the opaqueness of the translation.

"easterner" and "westerner" is a reference to the OLIVE THAT IS NEITHER EASTERN NOR WESTERN of Quran 24:35. The Bab seems to be saying that the new revelation is the same and that since it is neither eastern nor western it may also be considered therefore BOTH eastern or western.

The apparently neutral reference to God as "the Exalted" (al-'Ali) is actually a reference to (1) himself, Ali Muhammad Shirazi, (2) Ali, the first Imam and (3) God, perhaps, but not necessarily in that order -- perhaps in no order at all but rather a simultaneous reference to these three.

[2] not God who POSSESSES nothing; rather it is the one who is worshipped beside or instead of God who possesses nothing.

[3] "The Structure of Existence in the Bab's Tafsir and the Perfect Man Motif" in *Studia Iranica: Cahiers 11: Recurrent Patterns in Iranian Religions from Mazdaism to Sufism*. Proceedings of the Round Table held in Bamberg (30th September - 4th October 1991). Association pour l'avancement des Etudes iraniennes, 1992, pp.81-99. "The Terms Remembrance (dhikr) and Gate (bab) in the Bab's Commentary on the Sura of Joseph," *Babi and Bahá'í Studies in Honour of H.M. Balyuzi*, ed. M. Momen, Kalimat Press, Los Angeles, 1989, pp.1-63. "Interpretation as Revelation: The Qur'an Commentary of Sayyid 'Ali Muhammad Shirazi, the Bab," *Approaches to the History of the Interpretation of the Qur'an*, ed. A. Rippin. Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1988, pp. 223-253.

[4] In the early exegetical work *Kitab asas al-ta'wil*, (Introduction and edited by 'Arif Tamir. Beirut: Dar al-Thaqafa, 1960) by the Isma'ili da'i, Qadi al-Nu'man (363/974), the interesting comment is made to the effect that the "front" and "back" of the shirt refer to exoteric and esoteric knowledge respectively (p.144). (Cf. the early Sufi interpretation in Gerhard Bowering, *The Mystical Vision of Existence in Classical Islam*, Berlin & New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1980, p.256.) The qamis in verse 12:93 is seen as representing imama (Asas, p.163).

[5] Meier, Fritz, "Some Aspects of Inspiration by Demons in Islam," in *The Dream and Human Society*, edited by G. von Grunebaum, and Roger Caillois. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1966, (pp. 421-29) p.421.

[6] 'Umar Suhrawardi (632/1234), 'Awarif al-ma'arif, Beirut: Dar al-kitab al-'arabi, 1403/1982 (this edition wrongly gives the author as 'Abd al-Qahir Suhrawardi (d.1168) pp.95-102. The title of Suhrawardi's book, "The Fragrances of divine knowledge(s)" is a perfect example of the correlation between these two substances that was perceived to really exist (language is sacred and reflects reality, indeed composes reality) as opposed to being accidentally "punned" upon by clever writers. See also the many examples in the Bahá'í writings where the two are joined together, demonstrating that spiritual axiom: the more one loves, the more one knows and vice versa. One of the few places (if not the only one) in English where this identity of knowledge and love coexist in the same lexical "site" is in the discredited "slang" word from African American culture, to wit: "to dig".

[7] See the "hadith al-kisa'," Mafatih al-jinan, 'Abbas, al-Qummi, compiler). Beirut: Mu'assasat al-A'lami li'l-Matbu'at, n.d.appendix, pp.1-4; cf. also Momen, (=Moojan Momen, *An Introduction to Shi'i Islam: The History and Doctrines of Twelver Shi'ism*. Oxford: George Ronald, 1985), p.14. 'Umar Suhrawardi (632/1234), 'Awarif, pp.95-102.

[8] Nur, (=Abd 'Ali al-Huwayzi, *Kitab tafsir nur al- thaqalayn*, 5 vols. Qum, 1383/1963-1385/1965), v.2, p.462, #187. The compiler adds that a similar tradition is found in al-Kafi. (=Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. Ya'qub, al-Kulayni al-Razi, al-Usul min al-kafi. 2 vols. Tehran: Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiya, 1374 [1954]). This tradition from al-Kafi is found in Burhan, (=al-Sayyid Hashim al-Bahrani, *Kitab al-burhan fi tafsir al-Qur'an*. 4 vols. Tehran, 1375/1955) v.2, p.269 #1. Nur, 2, p.463, #191, quotes the *Ikmal al-din* of Ibn Babuya (Muhammad ibn 'Ali Ibn Babawayh or Babuyah (d.991), *Kitab ikmal al-din wa itmam al-ni'ma fi ithbat al-raj'a*, Najaf: Matba'at al-Haydariyya, 1389/1970.): "When the Qa'im comes forth the shirt of Joseph will be on him, and he will have the staff of Moses and the ring of Solomon." The heavenly origin of this shirt was also taught by the early exegete Kalbi (150/767) as what Wansbrough, *Quranic Studies*, Oxford, 1977, p.134 terms "a reflex of Rabbinic descriptions" of the robe in Genesis.

[9] Anwar (Abu al-Hasan al-Isfahani, *Tafsir mir'at al- anwar wa mishkat al-asrar*, Tehran: n.p., 1374/1954), p.271. *ibid.*, p.110.

Ibid., pp. 294-5. In discussing the connotations of "deception" which the word carries, Isfahani refers to 6:72 **THOSE WHO DO NOT CLOTHE THEIR FAITH IN DARKNESS**, and says that this refers to those who did not confuse the walaya with the walaya of "so-and-so and so-and-so". It might be asked whether *fulan wa fulan* is an editorial substitution for more derogatory appellations, such as Abu al-Dawahi and Abu al-Shurur used so frequently by the Bab in his earlier tafsir on al-Baqara (see Lawson, "Interpretation", p. 237).

[10] Qasida, (Sayyid Kazim Rashti, *Sharh al-qasida al- lamiya*. Tabriz, 1270/1853), p.68. The verse is: *a'taytu ma lam yahza Ya'qub bihi idh ja'ahu bi-shadha al-qamis al-shamal*. *ibid.*

[11] In some cases, however, several suras continue a running commentary on large sections of the Qur'an; in these instances, therefore, the introduction of what appears to be unlikely material in commenting on this or that verse of sura 12, is but the continuation of a theme begun much earlier in the work. This is not the case in the present context.

[12] Furat ibn Ibrahim b. Furat al-Kufi, *Tafsir Furat al-Kufi*, Najaf: al-Matba'at al-Haydariya, [1353/1934] ; see also Dhari'a, (=Agha Buzurg, Muhammad Muhsin al-Tihrani, *al-Dhari'a ila tasanif al-shi'a*. 25 vols. Tehran and Najaf, 1355/1936-1398/1978), v.4, pp.298-300; Sezgin, Fuat, *Geschichte des Arabischen Schriftums*. v.1. Leiden: Brill, 1968, p.539 gives a probable death date of 310/922.

[13] *Tafsir Furat*, p.84.
al-'adhab, cf. Anwar, p.230.

[14] Cf. the tafsir of this verse by al-Sharif al-Radi, *Talkhis al-bayan fi majazat al-Qur'an wa'l-hadith*, Cairo: Dar Ihya' al-Kutub al-'Arabiyya, 1374/1955, p. 193. Here the other glosses the bees as none other than the ulama themselves, symbolizing what may be called the second historical phase of Shi'i scriptural exegesis.

[15] See Muhsin Fayd Kashani, *al-Safi fi tafsir kalam Allah al-wafi.*, n.p., 1286/1869., p.250 which quotes traditions with other interpretations from al-Kafi, the *Kitab al-khisal* of Ibn Babawayh (381/991), the *Kitab majma' al-bayan* of Tabarsi (548/1153), in addition to the tradition in the *Tafsir* of al-Qummi ascribed to al-Sadiq: "We, by God, are the BEES whom God inspired to TAKE HOUSES FROM THE MOUNTAINS, that is to take a shi'a from the 'Arabs, and from THE TREES, that is [to take a shi'a] from the Persians, and THAT WHICH THEY BUILD, [means to take a shi'a] from among the mawali. and COMES FORTH FROM THEIR BELLIES A DRINK OF DIVERSE HUES means the knowledge ('ilm) which comes from us to you." al-Safi, also cites a similar hadith from the *Tafsir al-'Ayyashi*, the author of which (d. early 4th/10th cent.) was a contemporary of al-Qummi and had converted from Sunnism to Shi'ism, see Ayoub, "The Speaking Qur'an and the Silent Qur'an: A Study of the Principles and Development of Imami Shi'i Tafsir," p. 6. Later exegesis, while including similar hadiths, also cites a tradition which specifies that the inspiration intended here is *ilham*, as opposed to the *wahi* explicitly stated in the text. This reflects theological disputes about the nature and degrees of divine inspiration; one position being that *wahi* is a technical term which can only be used as descriptive of the inspiration which comes to a prophet. (Nur, v.3, pp.64-5 & Burhan, v.2, pp.375-6). The predominant tendency of the interpretation of this verse was seen by the author of *Anwar* to be the identification of the BEES with the Imams, and the DRINK with their knowledge. See the respective articles in this work on *nahl* (p.320) and *sharab* (pp.192-3). Cf. also the eighteenth century Isma'ili tafsir (referred to above), p.126, where allusions to imama are read into the verse. Shaykh Ahmad al-Ahsa'i, *Sharh al-ziyara al-jami'a*, Tehran, 1276/1859, pp. 69-70. Rashti also mentions the *Surat al-nahl* in his *Qasida* (pp.31-2), and says that *al-nahl* itself is another name for divine knowledge (*muntahal al-'ilm*), and that one may find in the sura an explanation of various states of the bees and the details of the blessings which God bestowed upon his servant (i.e., Muhammad).

[16] QA (Xerox of a ms. *Tafsir surat Yusuf*, Bahá'í World Centre Library, uncatalogued), p.1.

[17] An anecdote is told of how the Bab, while a student of Shaykh 'Abid, and therefore still a young child, gave an extemporaneous explanation of the *basmala* which greatly impressed his teacher, who was himself a student of Shaykhi theology. Nabil, p. 75. On the "wise child" motif in biographies of the Bab see Lambden, "An Episode in the Childhood of the Bab".

[18] Burhan, v.1, pp.43-4, #1 from Qummi who gave six separate isnads for this *matn*. In addition, Burhan lists six more variants. Similar material is found in Nur and Safi. This hadith

provides important background for the the title Baha' allah, assumed by Mirza Husayn 'Ali Nuri, the founder of the Bahá'í Faith.

[19] Mahmoud Ayoub, "The Prayer of Islam: A Presentation of Surat al-Fatiha in Muslim Exegesis." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, Thematic Issue: Studies in Qur'an and Tafsir, v.47 (1979) pp. 639-42. The basmala is also treated as a separate verse in the Ahmadi interlinear Qur'an: The Holy Qur'an, translated by Maulawi Sher 'Ali, Rabwah, Pakistan, 1979.

[20] Nur,1, pp. 6-7, #22.

[21] *ibid.*, #21 and #23. This tradition was cited by Rashti in his discussion of the Greatest Name (see Sayyid Kazim Rashti, "Risala fi sharh wa tafsir ism allah al-a'zam," *School of Oriental and African Studies Library*, Ar. 92308 (ff.271a-74a). It is suggested that since *aqrab min* ("closer than"), as applicable to both time and place, it might be construed as an allusion to the imminent appearance of an actual Qa'im.

[22] The numbering of the verses of this work is not always simple or straightforward; thus if the assumption here is correct, it would facilitate the task somewhat, inasmuch as all chapters are said to contain forty-two verses, the numerical equivalent to the Arabic word *bala* "Yea verily" which was the response of humanity (in potentia) to the question posed to them by God on the pre-eternal Day of the Covenant recounted in Qur'an 7:172. $ba' = 2 + lam = 30 + ya = 10 = 42$. (Dr. Muhammad Afnan, personal communication.) The work has elsewhere been described as containing forty verses per sura (E.G. Browne, "Some Remarks on the Babi Texts Edited by Baron Victor Rosen in Vols. I and VI of the 'Collections Scientifiques de l'Institut des Langues Orientales de Saint Petersburg'," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, v.24 (1892) pp. 261- 62), representing the abjad value of the quranic *li* "to me" or, "before me" ($lam = 30 + ya' = 10$). The prepositional phrase is an explicit allusion to the dream of Joseph: FATHER, I SAW ELEVEN STARS, AND THE SUN AND THE MOON: I SAW THEM BOWING DOWN BEFORE ME (*li*) [12:4] . Browne notes, however, that several chapters of the British Library ms. (probably Or. 3539, another ms. of the work there is Or. 6681) are described in the ms. itself as having forty-two verses (as is one chapter of ms. Cambridge University Library, Browne Manuscript Collection, F11.). In either case, the number of verses are taken to be symbolic of either the acceptance or assertion of spiritual authority (Browne, "Remarks," p.262). See chapters 1, 2, 52 and 95 in QA. Incidentally, there are many blank spaces at the heading of the chapters in F11. It appears that the scribe intended to insert rubrications in these blanks, which would carry such information as the number of verses, and so on.

[23] al-Kashani, *Tafsir "Ibn 'Arabi"* (= 'Abd al-Razzaq al-Kashani, *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-karim li'l-Shaykh al-Akbar al-'Arif bi'llah al-'allama Muhyi al-Din bin 'Arabi*. 2 vols. Beirut: Dar al-Yaqaza, 1387/1968, vol. 1, p.8, unascrbed (note, the Tafsir is erroneously ascribed to Ibn Arabi). See also *Qasida*, p.82 where the same hadith is ascribed to the Prophet. Rashti adds that the *ba'* is: *al-lawh al-mahfuz, al-kitab al-mastur, marja' al-haqa'iq al-ilahiya wa mahall al-asma' wa'l- sifat al-idafiya wa'l-khalqiya, wa'l-ba' mazhar al-jalil wa qalam, al- tafsil wa'l-mabda' wa'l-dalil wa'l-sabab wa'l-sabil wa'l-sirr wa'l-ta'lil...*, etc.

[24] *Qasida*, pp. 84-5 & 92; Rashti adds: "Ali did not make anything higher than the point." There follows an elaborate discussion of five levels of meaning of the basmala.

[25] Nabil, p.63.

[26] Baq. (= Xerox of ms. of Tafsir surat al-baqara, Tehran Bahá'í Archives, 6014.c), pp.11-12.

[27] Charismatic (= Denis MacEoin, "From Shaykhism to Babism: A Study in Charismatic Renewal in Shi'i Islam." Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Cambridge, 1979., p.146, available from University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, Michigan) Cf., e.g., the title of the 110th chapter of the Tafsir surat Yusuf: "Surat al-sabiqin," (QA, pp.229-31)

[28] On the identity and number of the first disciples of the Bab, see Amanat (=Abbas Amanat, Resurrection and Renewal: the Making of the Babi Movement, Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1989) pp.177-9.

[29] Qasida, pp.90-1.

[30] E. G. Browne, (ed. & trans.). A Traveller's Narrative Written to Illustrate the Episode of the Bab (by 'Abbas Effendi). 2 vols. in 1. Amsterdam: Philo Press, 1975 (reprint). p.229. Cf. also the passage from Amanat, p. 204, quoted above.

[31] Charismatic, p.174 where the author perceives a gradual evolution of the nature of the Bab's claims, as opposed to one claim which came to be expressed more and more openly (i.e., by the word mazhar) as time went by. In fact, the Bab refers to himself in numerous places in this early work as mazhar, e.g., QA, pp.113 (in the voice of the hidden Imam) and QA, p.170: "Praised be to God who sent down this Book with the truth upon his servant that he might be a mazhar in all the worlds."

[32] The months of this calendar, still used by Bahá'ís, take their names from key words found in a popular Shi'i prayer which is recited during the month of Ramadan. (Mafatih al-jinan, pp.184-6.) These key words appear to have no direct relationship with the letters of the basmala.<

[33] Qasida, p.93.

[34] Rafati (=Vahid Rafati, "The Development of Shaykhi Thought in Shi'i Islam." Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, U.C.L.A., 1979, available through University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, Michigan) p.175, see p.160 for the description of a manuscript copy of this document in the Near Eastern Collection of the UCLA Library.

[35] Corbin, Trilogie ismaelienne, Paris: Maisonneuve, 1961, p.30. The quotation is from Paul Kraus, Jabir ibn Hayyan, v.2, Cairo, 1942, p.263. Reference may also be made to Corbin, "Le Livre du Glorieux de Jabir ibn Hayyan", Eranos-Jahrbuch, v.18 (1950), pp.75-87. See also Mashariq, esp. pp.18-38. In addition, see Ibn 'Arabi, Futuhat, vol.1, pp.231- 361: "al-bab al-thani fi ma'rifa maratib al-huruf"; and the well-known manual on magic by al-Buni (622/1225), Shams al-ma'arif al-kubra. Thus, it is not necessary to ascribe to the Babi use of gematria, a Hurufi influence. In fact, the most recent study of the Hurufi's refers to other less superficial similarities, namely Fadil Allah's claim to be mahdi, the combining of teachings of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, and antipathy for both the mainstream of Shi'ism and Sufism. (Goelpinlari, Hurufilik metinleri katalogu, p.20. Thanks to Mr. R. Sezer for translating the appropriate passage for me; thanks also to Dr. A. Karamustafa for drawing my attention to this book.)

[36] Ziyara, p.69.

[37] A variation in the manuscripts occurs at "which is one in terms of its blessings". QA: mutawahhidan ala'ihī [=ala'uhū] (for mutawajjidān; the dot seems to be a designation for the ha', see below, v.13. The alternate reading would be "causing its blessings to exist"); F11, f.162b: mutawaqqidan: "causing the blessings to flame forth".

[38] Thus Abu 'Ubayda (d. 824-6) found it necessary to specify dhalika 'l-kitāb as hadha 'l-Qur'an and cite poetry to prove his point. Abu 'Ubayda, *Majaz al-Qur'an*. Cairo: al-Khanjī, 1373 /1954, pp. 28- 9.

[39] Burhan, v.1, p.53, #1, ad 2:2 and #1 ad 2:3.

[40] See also the discussion on this point in the translation by Maulvi Muhammad Ali (see bibliography), p.12 who cites Lane to suggest that the usage dhalika, in implying remoteness, indicates esteem.

[41] Ibn Mansur al-Yamani, Ja'far (al-Da'i), (ascribed). *Kitab al-kashf*. Dar al-Fikr al-'Arabi [Islamic Research Association Series, #13. Edited by R. Strothmann. Cairo, Bombay & Calcutta: Oxford University Press, 1952] p.8.

[42] Wright, *Grammar*, v.1, p.179.

[43] Amir-Moezzi, *The Divine Guide in Early Shi'ism: The Sources of Esotericism in Islam*, translated by David Streight, Albany, N.Y.: SUNY Press, 1994, p.118. The other four signs are: the revolt of the Sufyani, the counter-revolt of the Yemeni, the assassination of the Pure Soul, "the swallowing up of the army". On the historical development of this tradition, see Wilferd Madelung, "'Abd Allah b. Zubayr and the Mahdi," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, 40.4 (1981) 291-305.

[44] The voice from the burning bush is also a classic argument in Sufi literature to justify revelation through tajalli of various kinds, not necessarily "revelation" of a prophetic Book. See al-Kashani's letter to Simnani, in Hermann Landolt, "Der Briefwechsel zwischen Kasani und Simnani uber Wahdat al-Wugud," *Der Islam* 50 (1973) p.72 and the several references to Sufi and Shi'i literature pp.72-3, n.125.

[45] *Charismatic*, p.157-8.

[46] Qadimi, *Shash-hazar-i lughat*. Tehran: Mu'assasah-ye Milli-ye Matbu'at-i Amri, 131 Badi', pp.433 & 674.

[47] *Writings*, p.49, n.2 and Rosen, *Collections scientifiques*, v.1, p.187n.

[48] Cited in *Fusus*, v.1, p.325.

[49] *Idem*, *Kitab-i Iqan*, English translation (slightly adapted), p. 49, Persian text, p.38.

[50] I.e., *muttasil marfu'*; see Robson, "Hadith," E12, v.3, p.25.

[51] *Mashariq*, p.172.

[52] Ascribed to Mirza Muhammad Akhbari (1178/1764-1232/1816, on whom see Amanat, pp.25-8), translated in Nabil, pp.49-50 (see also the reference here to the predictions of none other than Ibn 'Arabi about the rise of the mahdi in Persia). I have not located the original for this hadith.

[53] Mentioned above, Part ii, Chapter 1; see also Nabil, p.27 and the hadith quoted by Rashti (Qasida, p.69): The Prophet said: "God created husn in a hundred parts and gave Joseph ninety-nine."

[54] For the Fatiha as umm al-kitab see Anwar, pp. 80-1. N.b. also the hadith cited in ibid., p.80, from 'Ali: "The family of Muhammad is the umm al-kitab and its seal (khatimatuhu)."

[55] al-Hallaj, Akhbar, (introduction) p.49.

[56] Reza Tevfiq in Huart, Textes Houroufis, p.293. See the following pages for the background of this belief, which is associated with Abraham. See also p.305.

[57] Akhbar, #32 &34.

[58] Cf. Anwar, pp.182-3, where the standard interpretation of this word, i.e. qiyama, is also given. In addition to standing for walaya proper, it also represents 'Ali himself.

[59] Anwar, p.73, quoting, among others, the Kitab al- wahida of Tariq bin Shihab, 'Ali said: "The Imam is a holy spirit (ruh qudsi) and a divine cause (amr ilahi).

[60] See Mashariq, p.63.

[61] See Anwar, p. 256 where the quranic matla' al- fajr is interpreted as the Qa'im in a hadith from al-Sadiq.

[62] Cf. the translation in Writings, p. 69.

[63] Anwar, p.200.

[64] On this: Ayoub, Redemptive Suffering. QA: al- qamis al-mughammas; F11, f.164a: al-qamis al-muqammas.

[65] Cf. Writings, p. 74 for this and the following two verses.

[66] Anwar, pp. 207-8.

[67] The usage here may also be derived from some ziyarat dedicated to 'Ali, in which the phrase: ya' mishkat al-diya'" occurs. Anwar, pp. 205-6.

[68] Of some interest here is the point made by the Bab elsewhere. The images of fire (nar) and light (nur) represent respectively, those who either accept or reject his claim. The numerical difference between the two (nar = 251; nur = 256) is represented by the numerical value of bab. Thus through recognition of the Bab, "fire" is transformed into "light". (Amanat, p.203).

[69] Similar terminology was noticed above in the work of Rashti. Cf. also Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, p.143