

١) مآخذ چند حدیث در کتاب بیان فارسی – وحید رافتی

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Terry

مآخذ چند حدیث در کتاب "بیان فارسی"

وحید رأفتی

آثار و الواحی که از اقلام طلعات مقدسه بهائی صادر شده مشحون از نقل مستقیم، اشارات، تلمیحات، و استعاراتی است که مآخذ و سوابق آنها را می‌توان در کتب مقدسه قبل و معارف فرهنگی و مذهبی گذشتگان جستجو نمود. آنچه در ذیل خواهد آمد مطالعه اجمالی مآخذ و مصادر چند حدیث اسلامی است که حضرت ربّ اعلیٰ در کتاب مستطاب بیان فارسی به نقل و استشهاد به آنها پرداخته‌اند. مطالعه دقیق همه مواضع و مواضیعی که در کتاب بیان فارسی به نحوی با احادیث اسلامی ارتباط دارد محتاج به تحقیقات بسیار عمیق در آینده ایام است.

مآخذ چند حدیث در کتاب "بیان فارسی"

اول - حضرت ربّ اعلیٰ در باب شانزدهم از واحد دوم کتاب بیان چنین می‌فرمایند: "... که ظهور حضرت ع ظهور حقیقت مسؤل عنها است که در حدیث کمیل مذکور است..."

حضرت ربّ اعلیٰ در اشاره به حدیث کمیل در دلایل سبعة (طهران: طبع بابیه، بی‌تاریخ، ص ۵۸) نیز چنین می‌فرمایند:

"... ظهور موعود منتظر همان ظهور حقیقت مسؤل عنه است که در حدیث کمیل دیده در سنه اول. کشف سبحات الجلال من غیر اشاره ببین. و در ثانی، محو الموهوم و صحو المعلوم. و در ثالث، هتک الستر لغلبة السر. و در رابع، جذب الاحدیه لصفة التوحید. ببین. و در خامس، نور اشراق من صبح الازل. علی هیاکل التوحید. ببین و نور مشرق از صبح ازل را. خواهی دید. اگر خود هارب نگردی و مضطرب نشوی..."

جمال قدم نیز در کتاب ایقان (لانگنهاین: لجنة نشر آثار، ۱۹۹۸م، صص ۶۶ و ۱۰۹) فقراتی از حدیث کمیل را نقل فرموده‌اند.

مقصود از کمیل که یکی از روایات او در آثار فوق نقل شده، کمیل بن زیاد نخعی است که از خواص یاران حضرت علی امیرالمؤمنین و از اصحاب سرّ آن حضرت بوده و به دست حجاج بن یوسف به شهادت رسیده است. از کمیل چند روایت و دعا که در غایت اشتهار می باشد در کتب اهل تشیع نقل گردیده است. از جمله حدیث حقیقت است که در آثار مبارکه بهائی به کرات مذکور شده و بعضی از آن آثار نقل گردید. دیگر حدیث مربوط به شناسائی و حقیقت نفس است که طریحی آن را در ذیل "نفس" در مجمع البحرین (طهران: المكتبة المرتضوية، ج ۴، صص ۱۱۶-۱۱۵) آورده است. دعای نیمه شعبان و شبهای جمعه از کمیل بن زیاد در کتاب کلیات مفاتیح الجنان (طهران: طبع کتاب، صص ۱۱۸-۱۱۹) اثر حاج شیخ عباس قمی مذکور شده، و بعضی از کلمات امیرالمؤمنین خطاب به کمیل در ذیل شماره ۱۴۷ و ۲۵۷ در بخش کلمات قصار آن حضرت در نهج البلاغه (طهران: انتشارات و آموزش انقلاب اسلامی، ۱۳۷۰ ه. ش. ترجمه دکتر سید جعفر شهیدی) مطبوع و منتشر است. شرح مفصل احوال کمیل بن زیاد نخعی از جمله در روضات الجنات میر سید محمدباقر خوانساری (ج ۶، صص ۴۰۱-۴۰۸) مندرج گشته و جناب اشراق خاوری نیز در ذیل "روایت کمیل" در کتاب قاموس ایقان (ج ۲، صص ۷۸۱-۷۸۵) مطالب لازمه را در باره شرح احوال و روایات او به رشته تحریر کشیده اند.

حدیث حقیقت و ترجمه و توضیح مختصر آن به نقل از روضات الجنات (ص ۴۰۳) به شرح ذیل است:

"... در رجال نیشابوری مینویسد کمیل از ویژگیان حضرت امیرالمؤمنین (ع) بوده. هنگامی در رکاب آن حضرت شرفیاب بود. در ضمن پرسشهایی به عرض رسانید ماءالحقیقه حقیقت چیست؟ فقال مالک و الحقیقه تو را با حقیقت چکار، فقال الکمیل اولست صاحب سرک؟ مگر من از اصحاب سر شما نیستم؟ فقال بلی ولكن یرشح علیک ما یطفح منی، فرمود آری، ولكن اگر ترشچی از من به تو بشود جام استعداد تو را لبریز می سازد بر اثر جوشش مقداری از دیگ کمالات من خواهد بود. فقال او مثلک تخب سائلا؟ آیا مانند شما که سراپا رحمتید سائل

را محروم می‌سازید؟ فقال الحقیقه کشف سبحات الجلال من غیر اشاره. فرمود حقیقت آن است که نقابهای جلال و عظمت او را بدون اشاره از چهره ذات بزدا کنید. قال زدنی بیانا. بیش از این بفرمائید. قال محوالموهوم و صحوالمعلوم. حقیقت آن است که آنچه موهوم و بی‌اساس است از ریشه برکنی و آنچه اصل و پابرجاست در مظاهر هستی به ظهور برسانی و حق را همه جا در چهره خلق مشاهده کنی. فقال زدنی بیانا. بیش از این بفرمائید. قال هتک السترلغلبه السر تا به آنجا که بر اثر چیرگی اسرار حقیقت پرده برداشته شود و باطنی که همه چشم انتظار او هستند هویدا گردد. قال زدنی بیانا. گفت ظرفم بیش از این کن مال مال. قال جذب الاحدیة لصفة التوحید. حقیقت آن است که جناب احدیت، باطن سالک را به صفت توحید خود مجذوب سازد و او را دیوانه یکتائی خود گرداند. قال زدنی بیانا. با بیان دیگر دم‌ساز کن. قال نور یشرق من صبح الازل فیلوح علی هیاکل التوحید آثاره. نوری است که از بامداد ازلیت می‌درخشد و هیاکل توحید و مظاهر ربّانی او را درخشان می‌سازد. فقال زدنی بیانا. باز عاشق‌وار گفتا کن بیان. قال اطف السراج فقد طلع الصبح. فرمود چراغ ظاهر را خاموش کن که صبح حقیقت دمید با آنچه گفته شد. چراغ حقیقت، نه بلکه خورشید حقیقت، در لباس مرتضائی آشکار شد. دیگر با ظهور مظهر حقیقی او نیازی به هیچ حقیقت و هیچ مرتبه‌ای نمی‌باشد. هوالحقّ..."

دوم - حضرت ربّ اعلیٰ در باب شانزدهم از واحد دوم کتاب بیان چنین می‌فرمایند: "... این است حقیقت جنّت در عالم حیات و بعد از موت لا یعلم الا الله هنالک ما لا عین رأّت و لا اذن سمعت و لا خطر علی قلب بشر قد خلق الله فیها من کل ما کل عنه من فضله سائلون..."

حدیثی که در عبارات فوق نقل شده از احادیث قدسیه‌ای است که به صورت ذیل در کتاب الاحادیث القدسیه (ص ۶۱) مذکور شده است:

"... قال الله: اعددت لعبادی الصالحین ما لا عین رأّت و لا اذن سمعت، و لا خطر علی قلب بشر." برای ملاحظه مآخذ این حدیث و شرح آن به صفحات ۶۱ تا ۶۴ کتاب فوق مراجعه فرمائید.

حدیث مزبور در فیض‌القدیر (ج ۲، ص ۴۶۷، حدیث شماره ۲۳۱۹) به این صورت نیز آمده است که "ان فی الجنة ما لا عین رأت و لا اذن سمعت، و لا خطر علی قلب احد."

حضرت عبدالبهاء در آثار خود به کرات به این حدیث استشهاد فرموده‌اند. از جمله در یکی از الواح آن حضرت چنین آمده است:

"... بلی در بیانات الهیه این ذکر موجود که جنت عرفان حق است و نار احتجاب از رب الارباب. از این بیان مقصود این نیست که دیگر عالم الهی نه و فیض نامتناهی نیست. استغفرالله عن ذلک. بلکه مقصد چنین است که عرفان و احتجاب به منزله شجر است و نعیم و جحیم در جمیع عوالم الهیه به منزله ثمر. در هر رتبه‌ای از مراتب نعمت و نعمت موجود. در عالم فواد عرفان نعمت و احتجاب نعمت است، زیرا اساس هر نعمت و نعمت در عوالم الهیه این دو است، ولی در جهان حق نفوس مقبله را مالا رأت عین و لا سمعت اذن و لا خطر بقلب بشر موجود، زیرا این عالم فانی مانند عالم رحیم است که کمالات و نقائص جسمانی انسان در عالم رحیم معلوم نه، چون از عالم رحیم به این عالم آید، نقائص و کمالات جسمانی ظاهر و آشکار گردد و انسان در عالم رحیم از هر دو بی‌خبر..." (من مکاتیب عبدالبهاء، ج ۱، صص ۲۸۳-۲۸۴)

سوم - حضرت ربّ اعلیٰ در باب چهارم از واحد سوّم کتاب بیان چنین می‌فرمایند: "... طوبی از برای نفسی که در نزد هر ظهور متقمّص قمیص حدیث عسکری صلوات‌الله علیه گردد که روح‌القدس فی جنان الصاقوره ذاق من حدائقنا الباکوره و مراد کلمات بدیعه از شجره حقیقت است..."

حدیث فوق در بحارالانوار مجلسی (ج ۲۶، ص ۲۶۵) مذکور شده و فقره‌ای از آن چنین است: "... فالکلیم اُلبس حلّة الاصطفاء لمّا عهدنا منه الوفاء، و روح‌القدس فی جنان الصاقوره ذاق من حدائقنا الباکوره و شیعتنا الفئه الناجیه و الفرقة الزاکیه..."

حضرت عبدالبهاء در نقل و استشهاد به حدیث فوق در یکی از الواح مبارکه چنین می‌فرمایند:

"تفلیس"

جناب آقا سید رضا علیه التّحیّة و الثّناء

یا ابن رسول اللّٰه. در روایت صحیحہ وارد کہ شخصی از حضرت امیر علیہ السلام سؤال نمود کہ خدا حافظ انسانست؟ فرمود بلی. گفت یقین داری؟ فرمود مطمئنم. عرض کرد پس خویش را از بام بینداز. فرمود مرا سزاوار نہ، مرا شایان نہ کہ حقّ را امتحان نمایم، بلکه حقّ را سزاوار کہ مرا آزمایش و امتحان فرماید، زیرا کفّہ میزان انسان تحمّل آن بار گران ننماید، بلکه کفّہ حتّی شاهین میزان پراکنده و متلاشی شود. این است حقیقت حال ہر طالبی حقّ امتحان ندارد. مطلوب باید طالب را امتحان نماید، استاد تلمیذ را امتحان نماید، نہ تلمیذ استاد را. با وجود این انا نتحمّل منک هذا الأمر العظیم فانظر الی الاشارة لأنّ فیہ البشارة و فی الحدیث الصّاقورہ ذاق من حدائقنا الباکورہ الشّجرۃ نامیہ و النعمۃ وافیہ و الرّحمة سابغہ و الموهبة لاحقہ و علیک التّحیة و الثّناء.

اگر انصاف باشد در این ظهور اعظم نفس ظهور بہ جمیع شئون معجزات است. حتی معجزات باہرہ نیز بہ حسب ظاہر اغیار شہادت می دهند و اہل عراق در بغداد حیران بودند، ولی ما اظہار چنین امور ننمائیم، زیرا از مسموعات است و برہان از برای دیگران نگردد، ولی کلّ منصفان شہادت می دهند کہ حضرت بہاء اللّٰه از جمیع شئون و اطوار و آثار اظہار معجزات می فرمود. چہ معجزہای اعظم از این کہ امرش را در سجن اعظم در زیر زنجیر بلند فرمود و شرق و غرب را بہ حرکت آورد. این یک معجزہ از معجزات بہاء اللّٰه. فاتوا بمثلها ان کنتم صادقین و علیک البہاء الأبی. ع ع"

حدیث مورد مطالعہ بہ کرات و مرّات در آثار شیخ احمد احسانی مورد نقل و توضیح قرار گرفته است. از جملہ در شرح الزیارة (ج ۱، ص ۱۲۶) می فرماید:
 "... قال أبو محمد العسكري عليه السلام: «و روح القدس فی جنان الصاقورة ذاق من حدائقنا الباکورة» و الباکورة أول الثمرة أي أول ثمرة الوجود و أول من ذاقها

أى قبلها روح القدس و هو العقلى الكلى و هو أول خلق من الروحانيين عن يمين العرش ...»

چهارم - حضرت ربّ اعلىٰ در باب دوازدهم از واحد سوّم کتاب بیان چنین می‌فرمایند: "... این است سرّ کلام امیرالمؤمنین (ع) انا النقطة تحت الباء ...» در کتاب شرح گلشن راز اثر شمس‌الدین محمد لاهیجی (صص ۴۷۵-۴۷۶) چنین آمده است:

"«مجازی نیست احوال حقیقت نه هر کس یابد اسرار طریقت»
یعنی احوال حقیقت که انبیاء و اولیاء - علیهم السّلام - از آن اخبار فرموده‌اند، مانند «رأیت ربّی فی احسن صورة» و «لی مع الله وقت» و «من رآنی فقد رأى الحق» و مثل قول علیّ بن ابی طالب - علیه السّلام - «انا نقطة باء بسم الله و انا جنب الله الذی فرطم فيه و انا القلم و انا اللّوح المحفوظ و انا العرش و انا الكرسيّ و انا السّموات السّبع و الارضون» و حکایت در این معنی از اولیاء بسیار است، مانند «سبحانی ما اعظم شأنی» و «لیس فی جبتی سوى الله» و «انا الحق» و «انا الفاعل فی هذا العالم» و «لیس بینی و بین ربّی فرق الا انّی تقدّمت بالعبودية» و «انا اقلّ [من] ربّی بسنتین» و غیر هذا کسی فکر باطل نکند که سخنان چند مجازی غیرواقعی بوده و حقیقتی نداشته است؛ چه این همه احوال آن کاملان است که در مراتب کشف و شهود برایشان ظاهر شده و ایشان به آن متحقّق گشته‌اند و بیان حالات واقعی خود فرموده‌اند و نه چنان است که هر کسی اسرار طریقت می‌تواند دریافت؛ چه آن معنی مشروط به شرایط بسیار است از قابلیت فطری و ارشاد پیر راهبر و سلوک و ریاضات و قطع منازل که ارباب طریقت تعیین نموده‌اند و تأییدات الهی و استقامت در احوال ...»
و در فصل تعلیقات همین کتاب (ص ۶۹۰) در باره عبارت «انا نقطة باء بسم الله ...» چنین مذکور است:

"... به صورت «انا النقطة التي تحت الباء المبسوطة» به حضرت علی (ع) نسبت داده شده است. مشارق انوارالیقین، ص ۲۱ و همچنین است «انا نقطة باء بسم

اللّه» ر.ک. رساله‌های شاه نعمت‌الله ولی، ج ۲، رساله هدايت، ص ۲۰۵ و ج ۳، رساله ذوقیات، ص ۱۷.

در تمهیدات، ص ۱۱۴ «انا نقطة باء بسم الله» منسوب به شبلی است و در الرسالة القشیریة، ص ۷۶، این عبارت از قول مردی خطاب به شبلی بیان شده است: «و جاءه رجل فقال له الشبلی: ما انت؟ فقال: يا سيدي النقطة التي تحت الباء. فقال: انت شاهدي ما لم تجعل لنفسك مقاماً.»

«انا جنب الله» که در عبارت متن موجود است، در مجمع البحرین، ج ۲، ص ۲۷ قول علی (ع) محسوب شده است و «انا اللوح و انا القلم و انا العرش و انا الكرسي و انا السموات السبع» نیز از حضرت علی (ع) نقل شده است. مشارق انوارالیقین، ص ۱۵۹.

کلام حضرت امیرالمؤمنین را حاجی زین العابدین شیروانی در ریاض السیاحه (ص ۳۶۰) به این نحو نقل نموده است که: "... از حضرت سرور اولیاء علی مرتضی مأثور است که: بالباء ظهر الوجود و بنقطة تمیز العابد عن المعبود و انا نقطة تحت باء بسم الله."

برای مطالعه شرح مباحث در این مقوله به کتاب جامع الاسرار و منبع الانوار شیخ سید حیدر آملی (صص ۷۰۰-۷۰۱)، و نیز به کتاب اسرار النقطة، اثر امیر سید علی همدانی با مقدمه و تصحیح و ترجمه و تعلیق محمد خواجهی مراجعه فرمائید. شیخ حافظ رجب بن محمد بررسی در کتاب مشارق انوار الیقین (ص ۱۲) در باره نقظه و باء چنین می نویسد:

"و اما الالف المبسوط و هو الباء ب فهي اول وحی نزل علی رسول الله (ص) و اول صحیفة آدم و نوح و ابرهیم و سرها من انبساط الالف فیها و سرّ القيامة بقیام طرفه و هو سرّ عالم الاختراع و الانوار و الاسرار الحقیقة مرتبطة بنقطة الباء و اليها الاشارة بقول امیر المؤمنین (ع) انا النقطة التي تحت الباء و سرّ الباء و المبسوطه یسیر الی الالف القائم المبسط فی ذاتها المحتجب فیها و کل قال محی الدین الطائی الباء حجاب الربوبية و لو ارتفعت الباء لشهد الناس ربهم."

و در صفحه ۳۵ کتاب مشارق انوار الیقین شیخ رجب بررسی چنین می نویسد:

"فعلم انّ الفيض الأوّل عن حضرة الاحدية هي نقطة الواحدة و عنها ظهر الف الغيب و امتدّ حتى صار خطّه و هو مركّب من ۳ نقط واحد و واحد و واحدة و واحدة فالواحدة لها العلم و العقل و روح القدس و حروفها الالف و منها يبتدى الموجودات و اليها ينتهى ۲ النقطة الواحدة و هي روح الله و نفخت فيه من روحى و حرفها الباء و هي الحجاب و هي ظاهر النقطة الواحدة و جسدها و لها الحكم الظاهر و حقيقتها النبوة و عنها ظهرت الموجودات و باطنها نقطة الواحدة قال ع عن الباء ظهر الوجود و بالنقطة تبين العابد عن المعبود و قال حكم بالباء عرفه العارفون و ما من شىء الاّ و الباء مكتوبه عليه..."

پنجم - حضرت ربّ اعلىٰ در باب چهارم از واحد چهارم کتاب بیان چنین می‌فرمایند:

"ملخص اين باب آنکه ارواح کلّ اشياء راجع می‌گردد بهیکل انسانی و جنّت کلّ اشياء در جنّت انسانی است که مثال آن این است که اگر قطعه الماس بلامثلی در نزد مؤمنی باشد اعزاز آن الماس باعزازى است که بواسطه آن در نزد مؤمن ظاهر می‌گردد و همچنین کلّ شىء و این هیکل راجع می‌گردد باسم و صفت اگر فوآد او مدّل على الله است در ظلّ له الاسماء الحسنی عندالله ذکر می‌گردد و اگر از صفت است در صفات او ذکر می‌گردد. این است علوّ معنى حدیث ليس الاّ الله و اسمائه و صفاته. و این هیکل حکم اسمیت و صفتیت بر او نمی‌گردد الاّ آنکه در نزد هر ظهوری در ظلّ آن ظهور داخل گردد والاّ مرتفع میشود حکم ایمان از او و چگونه حکم اسمیت و صفتیت..."

حضرت ربّ اعلىٰ حدیث فوق را در پنج شأن (صص ۴۴۴-۴۴۵) نیز نقل نموده چنین می‌فرمایند:

"... ادلاء اسماء و عبادى که به دلیل و حکمت در ظهورالله داخل می‌گردند ... آنها اعز و اجل قدرند از ذکر و وصف، زیرا کینونات آنها در مقام مرآتیت اسماء بوده و هست و ظواهر آنها در مقام دلالت بر شمس حقیقت بوده و خواهد بود و

در آنها نیست الا مثل شمسی که در مرآت است. در هر ظهور به آنها دین ظاهر می‌گردد و از برای آنها باهر می‌شود و این است معنی سرّ حدیث لیس الا الله و اسمائه و صفاته که در مقام ظاهر لم یکن الا شمس الحقیقه و ادلائها بیان آن می‌گردد..."

حدیث فوق را در کتب اصلی احادیث اهل تشیع نیافتیم، اما در قرآن است (سوره طه (۲۰)، آیه ۸) که: "اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ لَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَى"

شیخ احمد احسائی در شرح‌الزیاره (ج ۱، صص ۲۱۳-۲۱۴) می‌نویسد:

"... إن كل ما في الكون صفاته من الذوات و الصفات الجواهر و الأعراف لأنها آثاره. و الآثار صفات فمعنى توحيد الصفات أنه ليس إلا صفاته و آثاره و الآثار صفاته، كما قال عليه السلام: لا يرى فيه نور إلا نورك لأن الأشياء آثاره و صفات أفعاله و أفعاله صفاته و صفات الصفات صفات، فكما أنك إذا نظرت إلى الشمس لا تجد إلا الشمس و أشعتها و هي آثارها و صفاتها فكذلك في التمثيل آثار الله..."

و در رساله "بیان الاحسان لاهل العرفان" که در کتاب مصنفات فارسی اثر علاءالدوله سمنانی به طبع رسیده (ص ۱۹۱) سمنانی چنین نوشته است:

"... آنچه جنید - قدس الله سره - فرموده است که لیس شیء فی الوجود سوی الله تعالی، چنین فهم کنی که هیچ چیز وجود ندارد جز ذات حقّ و صفات او، که به ذات او قائم است و مصادر افعال اوست، و از آن افعال اشیا ظاهر می‌شود. پس هر چه موجود باشد یا اثر او باشد که به سبب فعل او ظاهر شده، یا فعل او باشد که از صفت او صادر گشته، یا صفت او بود که مر ذات او را ثابت است و به ذات او قائم، یا ذات او باشد که به خود قائم است و همه اشیا بدو قائم."

و در صفحات ۲۲۵-۲۲۶ کتاب مصنفات فارسی نوشته علاءالدوله سمنانی چنین آمده است:

"... وجود حقّ، ذات واجب الوجود است که به صفات کامله متصف است ازلا و ابدأ. و وجود مطلق فعل او که از صفت او صادر می‌شود. و وجود مقید آن اثری است که به سبب این فعل به ظهور می‌پیوندد. و چون در وجود غیر از ذات حقّ و صفات او و افعال او و آثار او هیچ چیز دیگر نیست، وحدت در کثرت محقق، و

حقیقت الا کل شیء ما خلا الله باطل نصب دیده، و سرّ لیس فی الوجود سوی الله روشن تر. و توحید در این مقام دست مرافقت در گردن موافقت انداخته بر سریر سر عارف متمکن نشسته. بحمدالله و منه، و از فوطه اتحاد و حلول و شبهه تشبیه و تعطیل خلاص یافته ..."

ششم - حضرت ربّ اعلیٰ در باب چهارم از واحد چهارم کتاب بیان چنین می فرماید: "... این است معنی حدیث فیه سنه من یوسف یباع و یشتی ..."

حدیث مورد اشاره دو بار در بحار الانوار (ج ۱۲، ص ۲۸۳، و ج ۵۱، ص ۱۴۲) آمده است. متن حدیث مزبور چنین است:

"... عن الحمیری، عن أحمد بن هلال، عن ابن أبي نجران، عن فضالة، عن سدیر قال: سمعت أبا عبد الله عليه السلام يقول: أن فی القائم سنّة من یوسف قلت: كأنک تذكر حیرة أوغیة قال لی: و ما تنکر من هذا هذه الأمة أشباه الخنازیر إن إخوة یوسف كانوا أسباطاً أولاد أنبیاء تاجروا یوسف و بايعوه و خاطبوه و هم إخوته و هو أخوهم، فلم یعرفوه حتّی قال لهم یوسف علیه السلام: أنا یوسف. فما تنکر هذه الأمة الملعونة أن یكون الله عزّ و جلّ فی وقت من الأوقات یرید أن یستر حجّته، لقد کان یوسف إلیه ملک مصر و کان بینه و بین والده مسیره ثمانية عشر يوماً فلو أراد الله عزّ و جلّ أن یعرف مکانه لقدر علی ذلك و الله لقد سار یعقوب و ولده عند البشارة تسعة آیام من بدوهم إلی مصر، و ما تنکر هذه الأمة أن یكون الله یفعل بحجّته ما فعل بیوسف أن یكون یرسیر فی أسواقهم و یطأ بسطهم و هم لا یعرفونه حتّی یأذن الله عزّ و جلّ أن یعرفهم نفسه كما أذن لیوسف حین قال: «هل علمتم ما فعلتم بیوسف و أخیه إذ أنتم جاهلون قالوا أئنک لأنت یوسف قال أنا یوسف و هذا أخی»."

شیخ صدوق نیز حدیث مزبور را در کمال الدین و تمام النعمة (ج ۲، صص ۱۰-۱۱، با ترجمه فارسی آیت الله کمره ای) آورده است. مضمون فارسی حدیث با توجه به مآخذ فوق آن است که سدیر می گوید که از امام ششم شنیدم که می فرمود براستی در قائم شباهتی (سنتی) به یوسف وجود دارد. گفتم گویا حیرت یا غیبت او را می فرماید. فرمود این امت همانند خنازیر منکر نباشند که برادران یوسف

پیغمبرزاده و اسباط بودند و با آن که برادر یوسف بودند و با او تجارت می‌کردند او را نشناختند تا خود یوسف به آنها گفت که من یوسفم. این امت چرا انکار می‌کنند که خدای عزّ و جلّ در یک وقتی از اوقات اراده کند که حجّت خود را پنهان نگهدارد. یوسف پادشاه مصر بود و فاصله او با پدرش هجده روز راه بود. اگر خدا می‌خواست جای او را به وی نشان می‌داد. به خدا وقتی مژده وی به یعقوب رسید نه‌روزه این راه را درنوردید و از بیابان به مصر آمد. این امت چرا منکرند که خدای عزّ و جلّ با حجّت خود آن کند که با یوسف کرد. حضرت حجّت در بازارهای آنان می‌گردد و بر فرش آنها گام می‌نهد، ولی مردم او را نمی‌شناسند تا خدا اجازه دهد که خود را به آنان معرفی نماید، چنانچه به یوسف اجازه داد و به آنها گفت آیا می‌دانید در نادانی با یوسف چه کردید؟ گفتند گویا تو خود یوسف باشی! گفت من یوسفم و این برادر من است.

مفهوم این مطلب که بین حضرت حجّت و یوسف این شباهت وجود دارد که خلق او را می‌بینند، ولی او را نمی‌شناسند در حدیث دیگری از امام جعفر صادق نیز آمده است که متن آن به نقل از بحار الانوار مجلسی (ج ۵۱، ص ۲۲۴) به شرح زیر است:

"... قال أبو عبد الله عليه السلام: إنَّ في صاحب هذا الأمر سنناً من الأنبياء: سنّة من موسى ابن عمران، و سنّة من عيسى، و سنّة من يوسف، و سنّة من محمد صلّى الله عليه و عليهم. فأما سنّته من موسى فخائف يترقب. و أما سنّته من عيسى فيقال فيه ما قيل في عيسى. و أما سنّته من يوسف فالستر جعل الله بينه و بين الخلق حجاباً يرونه و لا يعرفونه. و أما سنّته من محمد صلّى الله عليه و عليهم فيهدى بهداه و يسير بسيرته."

در شباهت بین حضرت حجّت و حضرت یوسف حدیث دیگری نیز غالباً مورد استشهاد قرار می‌گیرد که در آن وجه تشابه این دو نفس سجن و غیبت بیان شده است. متن حدیث مزبور به نقل از بحار الانوار (ج ۵۲، ص ۳۴۷) به شرح ذیل است:

"... سمعت أبا جعفر الباقر عليه السلام يقول: في صاحب هذا الأمر شبه من أربعة أنبياء: شبه من موسى، و شبه من عيسى، و شبه من يوسف، و شبه من محمد"

صلی الله علیه و آله. فقلت: [و] ما شبه موسی؟ قال: خائف یترقّب. قلت: و ما شبه عیسی؟ فقال: قیل فیہ ما قیل فی عیسی. قلت: فما شبه یوسف؟ قال السّجن و الغیبة. قلت: و ما شبه محمّد صلی الله علیه و آله؟ قال: إذا قام سار بسیرة رسول الله صلی الله علیه و آله إلاّ أنّه یبین آثار محمّد، و یضع السیف ثمانية أشهر هرجاً هرجاً حتّی یرضی الله. قلت: فكيف یعلم رضا الله؟ قال یلقى الله فی قلبه الرّحمة."

ترجمه حدیث به نقل از ترجمه فارسی جلد سیزدهم کتاب بحار الانوار (طبع سنگی، ۱۳۰۲ ه. ق.، ص ۳۲۷) به شرح ذیل است:

"... از باقر (ع) شنیدم میفرمود که در صاحب این امر شباهتی هست به چهار پیغمبر، شباهتی به موسی، و شباهتی به عیسی، و شباهتی به یوسف، و شباهتی به محمّد (ص). عرض کردم که شباهتش به موسی از چه راهست؟ فرمود که خَائِفٌ یتَرَقَّبُ، یعنی ترسان و منتظر است، چنانچه موسی در وقت گریختن از مصر به مداین شعیب ترسان و منتظر بود. عرض کردم که شباهتش به عیسی از چه راهست؟ فرمود که در حقّ او گفته میشود چیزی که در حقّ عیسی گفته شد، یعنی در حقّ او گفته میشود که او مرده است یا هلاک گردیده، چنانچه در حقّ عیسی گفته گردید. عرض کردم که شباهتش به یوسف از چه راهست؟ فرمود که زندان و غیبت است. عرض کردم که شباهتش به محمّد (ص) از چیست؟ فرمود از این راهست که آن حضرت در وقت خروجش با سیرت و طریقه رسول خدا (ص) رفتار میکند. آگاه شوید که او آثار محمّد (ص) را بیان میکند و ظاهر میگرداند و شمشیرش را هشت ماه میکشد و طوایف مختلفه را از خلاق به قتل میرساند تا به حدّی که خدا راضی شود. عرض کردم که آن حضرت چگونه میداند که خدا راضی شده؟ فرمود که خدا به دلش رحم می اندازد و به خلاق رحم میکند. آن وقت میداند که خدا راضی شده..."

هفتم - حضرت ربّ اعلیٰ در باب یازدهم از واحد چهارم کتاب بیان چنین می فرمایند: "... این همه بزرگی مجتهدین که می بینی که در دین اسلام می کنند بواسطه قول امام علیه السّلام است که فرموده در حدیث مطوّل که محل ثمره این

است که الرّاد علیه الرّاد علينا و الرّاد علينا الرّاد علی رسول الله و الرّاد علیه الرّاد علی الله ..."

حدیث فوق در بحار الانوار (ج ۱۰۰، ص ۱۲۲) به این صورت آمده است:
 "... عن عبدالرحمن بن مسلم قال: دخلت علی الكاظم علیه السلام فقلت له: أيما أفضل الزيارة لأمير المؤمنين صلوات الله عليه وأبوی عبدالله علیه السلام أو لفلان أو فلان و سمیت الائمة واحدا واحدا؟ فقال لی: یا عبدالرحمن بن مسلم من زار أولنا فقد زار آخرنا، و من زار آخرنا فقد زار أولنا و من تولی أولنا فقد تولی آخرنا و من تولی آخرنا فقد تولی أولنا، و من قضی حاجة لأحد من أولیائنا فكأنما قضایها لجمعینا. یا عبدالرحمن أحببنا و أحببنا فینا و أحبب لنا و تولنا و تول من يتولانا و أبغض من یبغضنا ألا و إن الرّاد علينا كالرّاد علی رسول الله صلی الله علیه و آله جدنا و من ردّ علی رسول الله صلی الله علیه و آله فقد ردّ علی الله. ألیا عبدالرحمن من أبغضنا فقد أبغض محمداً و من أبغض محمداً فقد أبغض الله جلّ و علا، و من أبغض الله جلّ و علا كان حقاً علی الله أن یصلیه النار و ما له من نصیر."

هشتم - حضرت ربّ اعلیٰ در باب یازدهم از واحد چهارم کتاب بیان چنین می فرماید: "... در حدیث تفسیر شرح بقره ذکر شده که جوهر ذکر این است من سرّ مؤمناً فقد سرّنی و من سرّنی فقد سرّ الله ..."

این حدیث در بحار الانوار (ج ۷۴، ص ۲۸۷) به این نحو آمده است: "... عن ابی حمزة الثمالی قال: سمعت ابا جعفر (ع) یقول: قال رسول الله (ص): من سرّ مؤمناً فقد سرّنی و من سرّنی فقد سرّ الله"

و در صفحه ۴۱۳ بحار الانوار (ج ۷۴) همین حدیث این چنین نقل شده است: "و نروی عن الصادق (ع) انه قال: من سرّ مؤمناً فقد سرّنی، و من سرّنی فقد سرّ رسول الله (ص) و من سرّ رسول الله فقد سرّ الله، و من سرّ الله ادخله جنته."
 حضرت ربّ اعلیٰ حدیث فوق را به صورت "من سرّ مؤمناً کمن سرّنی" در کتاب پنج شأن (ص ۴۴۱) نیز نقل فرموده اند.

نهم - حضرت ربّ اعلىٰ در باب دوّم از واحد هشتم كتاب بيان چنين مى فرمايند: "... اين است قول مرحوم شيخ در وقتى كه كسى از ايشان سؤال نموده بود از آن كلمه كه حضرت مي فرمايد و سيصد و سيزده نفر كه در آن روز اتقياي آن ظهورند متحمل نميشوند و حضرت صادق (ع) ذكر كاف در حق ايشان ميكند. بعد از نهي بسيار كه نميتوانى متحمل شوي فرموده بودند كه اگر حضرت ظاهر شود و بگويد كه دست از ولايت اميرالمؤمنين (ع) بردار تو برميدارى. فى الفور ابا و امتناع نموده بود كه حاشا و كلا. و ظاهر است نزد اهل حقيقت كه كلمه را از لسان حضرت به او شنودند و او چون متحمل نشد كافر شد ولى ملتفت نشد..."

متن حديث امام جعفر صادق كه در بيان فوق به آن اشاره شده به نقل از بحار الانوار (ج ۵۲، ص ۳۲۶) چنين است:

"... قال الصادق عليه السلام: كَأَنِّي انظر إلى القائم على منبر الكوفة و حوله أصحابه ثلاث مائة و ثلاثة عشر رجلاً عدّة أهل بدر، و هم أصحاب الألوية و هم حكّام الله فى أرضه على خلقه، حتى يستخرج من قبائه كتاباً مختوماً بخاتم من ذهب عهد معهود من رسول الله صلّى الله عليه و آله فيجفلون عنه أجفال الغنم، فلا يبقى منهم إلاّ الوزير و أحد عشر نقيباً كما بقوا مع موسى بن عمران عليه السلام. فيجولون فى الأرض فلا يجدون عنه مذهباً، فيرجعون إليه و الله إننى لأعرف الكلام الذى يقوله لهم فيكفرون به.

توضيح: أجفل القوم أى هربوا مسرعين."

ترجمه اين حديث به نقل از ترجمه فارسي بحار الانوار جلد سيزدهم (ص ۳۱۷) آن كه:

"... صادق آل محمد فرمود گویا قائم را در بالای منبر کوفه می بینم در حالتی که اصحاب او که سیصد و سیزده نفر مرد که به قدر اصحاب بدر اند در اطرافش می باشند و ايشانند صاحبان ولايت و دوستى ما و ايشانند حكّام خدا در روى زمين بر مخلوقاتش. پس آن حضرت از زير قبایش مکتوبی که با مهر طلا سر به مهر شده بیرون می آورد و آن عهدنامه ایست از رسول خدا. وقتى که اصحاب آن حضرت عهدنامه را می بینند مانند گوسفند از سر او متفرّق و پراکنده میشوند و از ايشان در خدمت آن حضرت كسى نمیماند مگر وزير و یازده نفر نقيب، چنانچه

این مقدار در نزد موسی بن عمران ماند. پس آنان که متفرق میشوند در اطراف زمین میگردند و چاره نمیجویند، باز به خدمت آن حضرت برمیگردند. به خدا سوگند یاد میکنم هر آینه من میدانم آن سخن را که قائم به ایشان میگوید و ایشان آن را انکار کرده از او میگیرند."

حدیث دیگری با مضامین فوق در بحار الانوار (ج ۵۲، ص ۳۵۲) آمده است که میگوید:

"... عن أبي عبد الله عليه السلام أنه قال: كَأَنِّي بِالْقَائِمِ عَلِ مَنبَرِ [الْكُوفَةِ] عَلَيْهِ قَبَاءٌ، فَيُخْرَجُ مِنْ وَرِيَانِ قَبَائِهِ كِتَابًا مَخْتُومًا بِخَاتَمِ [مَنْ] ذَهَبٍ فَيَفْكُهُ فَيَقْرَأُهُ عَلَى النَّاسِ فَيَجْفَلُونَ عَنْهُ إِجْفَالَ الْغَنَمِ، فَلَمْ يَبْقَ إِلَّا النِّقْبَاءُ، فَيَتَكَلَّمُ بِكَلَامٍ، فَلَا يَلْحَقُونَ مَلْجَأَ حَتَّى يَرْجِعُوا إِلَيْهِ وَ إِنِّي لِأَعْرِفُ الْكَلَامَ الَّذِي يَتَكَلَّمُ بِهِ ..."

جناب صدرالصدور در استدلالیه مختصر صدرالصدور (صص ۹۳-۹۴) حدیث فوق را نقل فرموده و در شرح و توضیح آن چنین مرقوم داشته‌اند:

"یعنی حضرت صادق علیه آلاف التحية و الثناء فرمود گویا مشاهده میکنم قائم جل کبریائیه را که بر مسند امر جالس گردیده و قبائی در بر دارد و از گوشه وی کتابی را مختوم بخاتم ذهب بیرون آورده می‌گشاید و بر خلق قرائت می‌فرماید و مردم چون گوسفندان از حضرتش گریخته متفرق می‌گردند و جز نقباء احدی باقی نمیماند. سپس به کلامی تکلم مینماید و اصحاب بهر جهت متوجه میشوند ملجأ و پناهی نمی‌یابند و عاقبت بازگشت نموده باستان مبارکش راجع می‌گردند. همانا من میدانم بچه کلام تکلم میفرماید که احباب از گردش می‌پاشند ..."

مقصود از قبائی که در حدیث شریف مذکور گردیده مستور بودن جمال قدم جل ذکره الاعظم است به حجاب نوریه، چه که اهل بیان در ابتدای ورود به دارالسلام ذات مقدس حق را از حروفات بیانیه تصور مینمودند، تا اینکه طلعت قدسیه نورا به ید باسطه کشف غطاء فرمود و به انامل قدرت ختام مسک را از کتاب الهی بگشود."

حضرت بهاء الله در اشاره به حدیث فوق در یکی از الواح مبارکه چنین می‌فرمایند:

"... چون ناس ضعیف و محتجب مشاهده میشوند لذا فَضْلاً لَهُمْ شمس حقیقت بذکر ذرّه مشغول و بحر قدم بوصف قطره ناطق، اینست که نقطهٔ اولیه باسم بایّت ظاهر شدند، و باین مقدار هم ناس راضی نشدند تا چه رسد بذکر ولایت و أمثال آن، و حال آنکه این مقامات کلّها و فوق آن بکلمه‌ای از بحر جودش ظاهر و موجود گشته و بأمری معدوم و مفقود خواهد شد. حضرت اعلیٰ در این مقام در بیان فارسی ذکری فرمود از قول شیخ أحمد أحسائی عَلَیْهِ بِهَاءُ اللَّهِ که نفسی از ایشان سؤال نمود از کلمه‌ای که قائم بآن تکلم می‌فرماید و سیصد و سیزده نفر که در آن روز از اُتقیاء و نقبای آن ظهورند متحمل نمیشوند. جناب شیخ از ذکر کلمه ابا و امتناع فرمودند وَ قَالَ أَنْكَ لَنْ تَقْدِرَ أَنْ تَحْمِلَهَا. بعد از اصرار فرمودند اگر قائم بتو بفرماید دست از ولایت امیر المؤمنین بردار بر میداری؟ فی الفور ابا و امتناع نموده بود که حاشا و کلاً. و نقطه در این مقام می‌فرماید: و ظاهر است نزد اهل حقیقت که حضرت شیخ کلمه را از لسان قائم باو شنوند و او چون متحمل نشد کافر شد ولی ملتفت نشد، انتهی ..."(لثالی الحکمة، ج ۲، صص ۶۰-۶۱)

و نیز حضرت بهاء الله در لوحی دیگر چنین می‌فرماید:

"... باید اهل بهاء از مالک اسماء در کلّ احیان سائل و آمل شوند که شاید اهل انشاء از فیوضات ایامش محروم نمانند. جمیع علماء به این کلمه ناطق بودند و مکرّر در زمان طفولیت نفس حقّ اصغا نموده میگفتند آیا آن کلمه قائم چه کلمه‌ایست که نقبا از آن فرار اختیار مینمایند. بگو آن کلمه حال ظاهر و شما قبل از استماع فرار نموده‌اید و ملتفت نیستید. و آن کلمه مبارکه مکنونه مخزونه مصونه اینست هو در قمیص انا ظاهر و مکنون بانا المشهود ناطق. اینست آن کلمه‌ای که فرائض مشرکین از آن مرتعد شده. سبحان الله در جمیع کتب قبل عظمت این یوم و عظمت ظهور و عظمت آیات و عظمت کلمه و عظمت استقامت و عظمت شأن و مقام ذکر شده. معذک خلق از او غافل و محتجب ..."

(مجموعه‌ای از الواح جمال اقدس ابهی، ص ۱۶۵) و نیز نگاه کنید به کتاب اسرار الآثار (ج ۵، ص ۲۳۷) تألیف جناب فاضل مازندرانی؛ و شرح الزیارة (ج ۳، ص ۷۷) اثر شیخ احمد احسائی.

دهم - حضرت ربّ اعلیٰ در باب چهاردهم از واحد هشتم کتاب بیان چنین می‌فرماید: "... این است سرّ کلام اهل بیت (ع) در ظهور که میگردد اسفل خلق، اعلای خلق؛ و اعلای خلق، اسفل خلق..."

حضرت بهاء الله نیز در کتاب *ایقان* (ص ۹۶) مطلب مزبور را به صورت "یجعل اعلاکم اسفلکم و اسفلکم اعلاکم" نقل فرموده‌اند. این بیان از حضرت علی امیرالمؤمنین است که در *نهج البلاغه* (ص ۱۷) چنین می‌فرماید:

"... أَلَا وَإِنَّ بَلِيَّتَكُمْ قَدْ عَادَتْ كَهَيْئَتِهَا يَوْمَ بَعَثَ اللَّهُ نَبِيَّكُمْ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ. وَ الَّذِي بَعَثَهُ بِالْحَقِّ لَتُبْلَبَنَّ بَلْبَلَةً. وَ لَتُعْرَبَلَنَّ عَرْبَلَةً. وَ لَتَسَاطَنَّ سَوَطَ الْقَدْرِ حَتَّى يَعُودَ أَسْفَلُكُمْ أَعْلَاكُمْ وَ أَعْلَاكُمْ أَسْفَلَكُمْ. وَ لَيْسَبَقَنَّ سَابِقُونَ كَانُوا قَصْرُوا. وَ لَيَقْصُرَنَّ سَبَاقُونَ كَانُوا سَبَقُوا. وَ اللَّهُ مَا كَتَمْتُ وَ شَمَّةً وَ لَا كَذَبْتُ كَذِبَةً. وَ لَقَدْ نُبِّتُ بِهَذَا الْمَقَامِ وَ هَذَا الْيَوْمِ..."

ترجمه فارسی بیان حضرت امیر به نقل از مرجع فوق آن که: "... بدانید که روزگار دگرباره شما را در بوته آزمایش ریخت، مانند روزی که خدا پیامبر شما را برانگیخت. به خدایی که او را به راستی مبعوث فرمود، به هم خواهید درآمیخت، و چون دانه که در غربال ریزند، یا دیگ‌افزار که در دیگ ریزند، روی هم خواهید ریخت، تا آن که در زیر است زبر شود، و آن که بر زبر است به زیر در شود؛ و آنان که واپس مانده‌اند، پیش برانند، و آنان که پیش افتاده‌اند، واپس مانند. به خدا سوگند، کلمه‌ای از حق را نپوشاندم، و دروغی بر زبان نراندم که از چنین حال و چنین روز، آگاهم کرده‌اند..."

A Thematic Analysis and Summary of The Persian Bayán

Peter Terry

1977 (revised 2015)

This study of the *Persian Bayán* was begun in September of 1977, when I was a graduate student at the University of Chicago, having read the entirety of four volumes (tomes) in French the previous summer. I shared the completed study with some interested friends, and promptly forgot about it for almost twenty years. A visit to the Baha'i shrines in 1993 brought me into contact with a member of the Universal House of Justice, who surprised me with a clearly heartfelt word of gratitude for this little monograph. I resolved that, some day, I would share it more widely. It will now find a home in the wonderful online collection of the Baha'I Library Online.

The contents of the *Persian Bayán* are as impossible to comprehensively describe as are the contents of the great oceans. Of course we may remark that the latter are full of water and that fishes of various kinds live in this water, but what really does this tell us about the contents of the oceans—very little indeed. The *Persian Bayán* is an ocean of words and meanings at least as vast as any of the water concavities which grace our fertile planet, and this for at least two reasons. Simplest among the reasons is the sheer size of this volume, composed of some 8000 verses in Persian manuscript, and 630 pages in single-spaced small print French translation by A.L.M. Nicolas. In comparison with other volumes of this genre, for example the *Gospel of Matthew* and the *Qur'án* of Muhammad ibn 'Abdullah, the former of which is 32 pages in English translation and the latter 4600 verses in Arabic and 480 pages in English translation, the *Persian Bayán* stands without peer in length. Second among the reasons for the Bayán to be considered as vast as an ocean is that it is a Scripture, and that all Scriptures have proven to be endlessly profound and eternally refreshing.

In introducing the *Persian Bayán* it must be affirmed that this Book was not revealed in the manner in which were revealed the Scriptures of Christians and Muslims. The Báb wrote most of His¹ writings with His own pen, in His own handwriting, and the rest He dictated to an amanuensis who wrote them down immediately. Also, whereas the *Gospels* are the only records of the utterances of Jesus Christ available to us, and while the *Qur'án* is the only completely reliable record of the utterances of Muhammad, the Báb revealed and wrote or dictated thousands of verses. In the *Persian Bayán*², the Báb indicates that by that time He had written 100,000 lines. Distinguished British Orientalist Professor Edward Granville Browne, in a note included in his translation of *A Traveler's Narrative* by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, wrote: "Indeed, if we may credit a statement made in the *Tarikh-i-Jadid* on the authority of Mirza 'Abdu'l-Vahhad, the various writings of the Báb current in Tabriz alone amounted in all to not less than a million verses."³ The time which this statement was referring to was the same as the period during which the Báb revealed the *Persian Bayán*. As 8000 verses are around 800 pages in length, one million verses would be the equivalent of about 100,000 pages or nearly 10 times the length of the **Old** and **New Testaments** combined.

Another difference between the Báb and other Prophets (or Manifestations of God as he referred to them) is that the *Persian Bayán* was not revealed until the closing years of His ministry, and when it was revealed it was all at once, not in segments over a period some 3 years as in the case of Jesus or 24 years in the case of Muhammad. Another Book of the Báb, entitled *Qayyumu'l-Asma*, is composed of 111 chapters, over 9300 verses in length and revealed immediately following the prophetic declaration by the Báb in the Persian city of Shíráz, was regarded by his followers as his *Qur'án* until the dissemination of the *Persian Bayán* a few years later, shortly before the martyrdom of its Author in the year 1850.

“Bayán” translates into English as “Exposition” and this Book was certainly an exposition of the teachings of the Báb, and from his point of view and that of his followers, the exposition of the renewed and restated eternal Religion of God. It is called the *Persian Bayán* because almost all of its verses are written in the Persian language; this distinguishes it from the shorter and less monumental Arabic Bayán revealed by the Báb during the same period as its companion volume and also translated into French by A.L.M.Nicolas⁴. In this paper the contents of this Book are identified as belonging to several distinct categories of concepts. Initially the teachings of the Báb will be summarized in these categories without citations being made from the text of the Bayán as evidence of the accuracy of conclusions draw. To cite a few such references would risk misleading and confusing the reader while citing all of them is simply beyond the purview of any article. Subsequent to this relatively brief description of the major themes of the Persian Bayán, the contents of each of its nine Vahíds will be described. These nine Vahíds are similar in function to chapters in a book, while each Vahíd is composed of nineteen abwáb (plural in Arabic of báb), except for the ninth Vahíd, which is composed of only eleven abwáb. These abwáb are similar to subheadings within a chapter. The word “Vahíd” means “Unity” —a key concept among the teachings of the Báb—and “báb” means “door” or “gate”.

THEMATIC ANALYSIS

Beginning with its Preface, which is sixteen pages in length including copious notes written by the editor and translator A.L.M. Nicolas and extending throughout its 630 pages, the French version of the Persian Bayán⁵ concentrates on the following themes: (1) The nature of God; (2) The nature of the Manifestations and Revelations and Dispensations of God; (3) The nature and behavior of human beings — Christians, Muslims and Bábís (followers of the Báb); (4) The requirements of true belief; (5) New laws for the Bábí Dispensation; (6) References to the succeeding Manifestations of God; (7) The Word of God. There are expositions of less important topics as well— (8) the significance of the science of numbers; (9) the insignificance of the science of grammar; (10) on the spiritual meanings of certain colors; (11) the spiritual equivalents and rankings of material substances; (12) several abwáb are given over to an explanation of various words used in the Qur'án, among them, “Paradise”, “Hell”, “Death”, “The Tomb”, “Resurrection”, “The Return”, “The Balance”, “The Last Judgment”, “The Count”, “Door”, “The Point”, and “Reunion”. In the course of explaining these Qur'anic symbolic terms, the Báb addresses (for the most part) the seven major themes cited earlier.

(1) **The nature of God**

There is only one God, and everything besides Him is His creature. He is infinitely exalted above His creatures; He does not beget nor is He begotten; He cannot be known by anyone but Himself and not one of His creatures can become Him by any means; He cannot be described with accuracy by anyone, for none can know Him and none can describe what they do not know; the only description of Him which is accurate is that which He gives of Himself through His Manifestations; He creates, sustains and destroys all existences and no existence can exist without Him; there have been creatures as long as the Creator has existed and as His existence has been eternal, there have always been creatures and creation is ancient, imperishable and everlasting; He does not create by His own Self but through the mediation of His creation, the Primal Will which is the Manifestation of God, a Kingdom in its own right, distinct alike from the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of His secondary creations. The Primal Will is described later in (2). Suffice it to say that God does not act directly on His creatures, but rather does He act through His Primal Will which is His first creation. He governs His secondary creations through the agency of this one Will which is entirely and unassailably submissive to His Will as it proceeds from His Unknowable Essence.

(2) **The nature of the Manifestations and Revelations and Dispensations of God**

Even as there is **one** God, there is **one** Religion of God for the guidance of humanity, **one** Intermediary between God and His secondary creations and **one** Truth revealed by this **one** Intermediary in this **one** Religion. This Religion is that Covenant which was established even before Adam, of which Adam is its first recognizable Exponent, and which was renewed with Noah, Abraham, Moses (and other Hebrew prophets), Jesus Christ, Muhammad and—according to the testimony of the Báb and of His followers—Haji Siyyid ‘Alí Muhammad Shírázi, the Báb. It is an eternal Covenant, eternal in the past, eternal in the future. The Intermediary between God and humanity is the Primal Will which created man and to which man returns at death. This Primal Will is manifested in the Manifestations of God—while a particular Manifestation is residing in a human temple, that is during the earthly lifespan of the Manifestation in human form—during which He is the Most Perfect of Men, and at the same time, the Perfect Mirror of the Attributes and Intentions of God, and thereafter until the apparition of the next Manifestation, no two of Them are made manifest at the same time, for They reveal the Unity of God, and in Spirit and Purpose these Manifestations are United in that They are the human forms of the Primal Will which admits of no plurality. The acceptance of one Manifestation of God accompanied by the rejection of another is therefore worth nothing, for it denies the essential nature of the Manifestations and of the Religion of God which is Unity and Continuity. The one Truth revealed by this Intermediary between God and humanity is the Truth—the true nature of God, of the Manifestation of God, of the human being and of the right relations between these parties according to the ancient, everlasting and unchanging Covenant of God with humanity. One of the attributes of the Religion of God which is reflected in the Manifestations and in the revelation of Truth is progression. As humanity has evolved, the Religion of God has evolved also, but not through the instigation of men but through the act of God through His Primal Will and in the form of His periodic appearance in the Manifestations of God.

Consequently, Muhammad was endowed with greater spiritual power and a more comprehensive revelation of the Truth than was Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ exhibited a superior degree to that of Moses. As humanity continues and will always continue to progress, the share of the sublime vision which it will be able to sustain and which will be vouchsafed to him will continue to grow. The Báb categorically asserted His spiritual superiority over Muhammad and He revealed that the Manifestation to follow Him would be infinitely greater than Himself, notwithstanding His incomparable brilliance in His own Day.

(3) The nature and behavior of human beings

Human beings are capable of acting like animals and also of soaring into the heights of spirituality, through their belief in and wholehearted devotion to the Manifestation of God and all of his teachings. In the Dispensation of Christ—which began with the “declaration” of his mission while being baptized by John the Baptist and ended with the “declaration” of Muhammad some 600 years later (according to the Gregorian calendar)—only those who become believers in him and followers of his teachings were blessed with the “Paradise” of God’s presence. The others were committed to the “Fire” of unbelief. In the Dispensation of Muhammad—which began with His “declaration” and ended according to the Báb precisely 1270 years later when he made his “declaration in 1844—all of those Christians who did not become Muslims became unbelievers, and pagans who became Muslims entered into the “Paradise” of God’s presence along with former Christians. We will explore this theme in greater depth later on. For the time being let us be satisfied with the assertion that the Báb revealed the existence of two categories of human beings—the one who are composed of the “saved”, called “believers”; and the other of the “damned”, called “unbelievers”. It is the aim of the Manifestation to make it possible for every human being to have a real choice and to have the freedom to make this choice; it is not His purpose to force human beings to recognize and follow him, something which is nevertheless within his power to effect. Within the ranks of the faithful there are myriads of degrees, the highest being that of the first disciples. In the Báb’s Dispensation these first disciples were called the Letters of the Living, and the Báb asserts that in the Dispensation of Muhammad these first disciples were the Imams. The lowest are the rank and file believers who have not achieved distinction for their knowledge, their words or their devotion to the Faith of God. If this scale were to include unbelievers they would be immeasurably inferior in station to the rank and file believers. The Báb also reveals the significance of “life”, “death” and “purity” as they apply to human beings. Believers have spiritual life, they are released from spiritual death and they have died to everything save the Will of God; believers are pure, inwardly and outwardly, and everything that belongs to a believer or which comes into contact with him is purified unless it is essentially impure (rather than made impure through its contact with unbelievers) in which case it should be avoided altogether. Non-believers are deprived of spiritual life, they are dead to the spiritual world and they are impure because they have not been purified by their faith in God. It must be remembered that there is no real faith in God which does not affirm the inseparability of such faith and belief in the Manifestations of God, and adherence to the most recent of these Manifestations and to whatsoever he has revealed.

(4) The requirements of true belief

The formula which is universally regarded as the essential creed of Islam —“There is no God but the [one] God and Muhammad is His Messenger”—is altered in every Dispensation to substitute the name of the

new Manifestation in place of that of the previous Manifestation. In the Dispensation of the Báb, the essential requirement of every human being in order to be accounted a believer in God is the inner acceptance and outer adherence to this affirmation –“There is no God but the [one] God and the Primal Point (a designation of the Báb) is His Messenger.” If the Unity of God and the Uniqueness of God are affirmed but the Prophethood of the Báb is denied this is unacceptable before God; these two are one, they are facets of the same jewel, and both are requirements, for if diversity of belief were tolerated then the Unity of God and of His Will for humanity and indeed the Unity of humankind would not be made manifest. For the followers of the Báb in the Day on which *Him Whom God shall make manifest* (the Báb’s designation for the Manifestation to succeed Him and supercede His Revelation) appears, belief in God will no longer be determined according to their faith in the Báb and their sincerity in following His teachings. In the Dispensation of *Him Whom God shall make manifest* the criteria of belief in God will be unhesitating and steadfast affirmation of the Unity and Unicity of God and the Prophethood of *Him Whom God shall make manifest*.

(5) New laws for the Bábí Dispensation

New laws superceding the laws of the Qur’án are revealed in the *Persian Bayán*. The rites and ceremonials, legal conditions and spiritual qualifications of marriage, divorce, burial, war (including holy war), property ownership; legal sanctions punitive of acts of assault, unfaithfulness robbery, arson, murder; regulations related to the selection of places of pilgrimage and the erection of buildings for the commemoration of the chosen ones of God, the Manifestation of God and for the utterance of the praises of the Creator Himself; all of these and others as well which are treated in specific fashion in the Qur’án are revolutionized in this Book. These will be described in some detail with the Báb’s reasonings attached in the course of the author’s chapter-by-chapter review which follows this thematic survey. Briefly then, marriage is between consenting parties who have the approval of both sets of parents and it is only permitted upon the payment by the groom of a dowry of a certain amount to the bride; a Bábí may not marry someone who is Christian or Muslim and if he or she does so he or she forfeits his exalted station as a true believer and is accounted among the unbelievers. This is likewise the case with marrying an adherent of any other faith, or of no faith at all. A spouse may only marry again –while remaining faithful to his or her first spouse—if that spouse is generative while his or her partner is infertile or impotent. Divorce is discouraged but tolerated if the two parties can not restore good relations with each other and if they are separated for a full year without intercourse or cohabitation before the legal bond is dissolved in the eyes of society and of God. There are considerable differences between these requirements and those of the Qur’án. They furnish but one example, albeit a good one, of the originality of the laws promulgated in the Bayán. These are established only for the Dispensation of the Báb.

(6) References to the succeeding Manifestations of God

He reveals that the *Bayán* with all of its teachings and laws is a gift to

Him Whom God shall make manifest with which He can do whatever He wishes, for in the Day of *Him Whom God shall make manifest* He is the Sovereign Lord, the Manifestation of Unity and the Báb is the meekest of His servants, the first to believe in Him and to follow His commands. *Him Whom God shall make manifest* is

referred to more frequently, mentioned more urgently and in greater detail in the *Persian Bayán* than any other subject or theme. Indeed *Him Whom God shall make manifest* is the focus of the Báb's revelations, as He Himself states. The purpose of His Revelation is to prepare humanity for the advent of the Revelation of *Him Whom God shall make manifest*. In some cases His successor is referred to in the course of a passage elucidating the nature of the Manifestation or the progressiveness of divine Revelation or the essential requirements of faith. At other times the Báb devotes entire paragraphs to *Him Whom God shall make manifest*.

The entirety of the last "báb" of the ninth Vahíd, and parts of numerous other abwáb are given over to announcing the advent of *Him Whom God shall make manifest* and warning the Báb's followers not to miss affirming their belief in Him when He manifests Himself. If His followers do not recognize *Him Whom God shall make manifest* they will have failed to attain the fruit of His Revelation, the purpose of the Bayán, and of all the laws and teachings therein. The emphasis which He places upon acceptance of *Him Whom God shall make manifest* is unparalleled in any of the Scriptures of the past, whether in the Gospels (where the "Return" of Jesus Christ is mentioned more than any other subject) or in the Qur'án (where the references are sparse and subtle but discernable to the serious student, such as Shaykh Ahmad and Siyyid Kazim were, especially when supplemented by the wealth of recorded utterances of Muhammad and the Imams, which were also available to these scholars). He does not make specific predictions, except with unexplained numbers and terms (such as al-Mustaghath) regarding the exact time of the declaration of the next Manifestation, nor the appearance of *Him Whom God shall make manifest*.

He made pregnant statements about His successor, but only one may be interpreted as a reference to His Name, and this statement will be quoted in full from the text of Nicolas' translation [with the original Persian wording of the Name in parentheses], rendering this in English and citing also the translation by Shoghi Effendi:

"Heureux celui qui regarde sur l'ordonnance de la splendeur de Dieu [Bahá'u'lláh], et remercie son Dieu par ce que cette splendeur de Dieu [Bahá'u'lláh] se manifesterá certainement, et il n'y a pas d'autre route que cela dans le Beyan tant que Dieu elevera les ordres qu'il veut et abaissera ceux qu'il veut. En verite ce Dieu est fort et puissant."⁶

"Happy is he who looks upon the order of the splendor of God, and thanks his God for this splendor of God will undoubtedly manifest itself, and there is no other route other than that of the Bayán for as long as God elevates the orders of His choice and abases the orders of His choice. In truth this God is Strong and Powerful."⁷

"Well is it with him who fixeth his gaze upon the Order of Bahá'u'láh, and rendereth thanks unto his Lord. For He will assuredly be made manifest. God hath indeed irrevocably ordained it in the Bayán."⁸

Bahá'u'lláh is the Name given by the Báb to one of His outstanding followers, whose given name was Mirza Husayn'Alí. The translation of this passage by Shoghi Effendi demonstrates the belief of the followers of Bahá'u'lláh, which is unreservedly affirmed in His Writings, that this passage gives the Name

of *Him Whom God shall make manifest* as well as making mention of His “Order”. It is not the purpose of this paper to demonstrate the truth of this assertion...for a further elucidation of this matter we would have to refer to other writings of the Báb, for while the Persian Bayán makes frequent mention of “Him Whom God shall make manifest”, it does not stipulate the time of His appearance, whereas passages in certain other writings, notably the Epistle of the Báb to Mulla Baqir, point to two particular dates, both of which, Baha’is believe, are fulfilled by Bahá’u’lláh and none other.

(7) The Word of God

Finally, the seventh theme concerns the Word of God, which the Báb affirms to be the greatest and most dependable testimony to the reality of the Manifestation of God and His Revelation. In numerous passages the Báb states that the Word of God can not be duplicated by anyone who is not a Manifestation of God, and that anyone endowed with perspicacity can recognize the Word of God and its vast superiority to the words of mortal men. Furthermore He asserts that the Word of God is revealed in more powerful fashion in each new Dispensation—the Word revealed in the *Bayán* (not just the *Persian Bayán* but the vast entirety of the “Exposition” of the Báb, which is not confined to 8000 verses but may well have encompassed well over 1,000,000 verses according to certain reports, but was cut short in 1850 with his martyrdom) is more powerful and elevated than the Word revealed in the Qur’án, which in turn is more powerful and elevated than that revealed in the Gospels. Not only are the teachings and laws of the successive Dispensations progressively more challenging and elevated, but the manner of the revelation of the Word of God and the quantity of verses revealed are also progressively more astounding. The Báb revealed in the *Persian Bayán* that so powerful is the spirit of Revelation in His Day that He could reveal 1000 verses in five hours⁹ and that if He could find an amanuensis capable of transcribing them He could reveal 6000 verses in the course of two days and two nights.¹⁰

The other proof of the truth of the Manifestation of God which is cited by the Báb in the Persian Bayán is His Person. He does not go into elaborate and extensive consideration of this theme however as the Manifestation of God remains in view only as long as his human body continues to live while the Word of God is a permanent testimony to the truth of his Revelation which can not be effectively and intelligently challenged by any standard and whose authority is absolute until the appearance of the subsequent Manifestation and the revelation by him of a new Book mightier and more exalted than the last. If the Manifestation of God to reveal but one verse the perspicacious among men would be able to discern its superiority to all man-made verses and thereby recognized the truth of that Manifestation. The Word of God is man’s abiding link with God, the tangible evidence of their Covenant—it contains the law which must guide his conduct, the prayers which will bring him closer to God, the commentaries on spiritual and practical truths which illuminate his thinking. The Báb lays special stress on this theme particularly in the first Vahíds of the Persian Bayán.

While the initial analysis and thematic summary of the Persian Bayán was based upon a study of its translation into French by A.L.M. Nicolas, it was subsequently confirmed through perusal of a second translation. Edward Granville Browne, M.A. M.B., the Sir Thomas Adams Professor of Arabic in the University of Cambridge “made a complete abstract of the *Persian Bayán*” which was not published in his lifetime. That “abstract” was completed on January 1, 1889 according to Browne.¹¹ The “abstract” was

discovered among Browne's papers by Dr. Moojan Momen, and published with editorial notes as "*A Summary of the Persian Bayán*"¹², Section 3 (pages: 316 - 406) of the book *Selection from the Writings of E. G. Browne on the Bábí and Baha'í Religions* (Oxford: George Ronald, 1987).

The Preludium to this Book, written by the Báb and without any subdivisions is in some ways dissimilar to the style and organization of the rest of the work, and for this reason, as well as for the edification of the reader, it is cited here in its entirety:

PRELUDIUM TO THE *PERSIAN BAYÁN*

"In the Name of God, the Inaccessible, the Most Holy"

"Glory and praise be to the holy and sublime immensity of the Sovereign, alone worthy of this name; Who, in the past and future eternity was and will be existing in the existence of His Essence, and Who, in the infinity of time and in the sublimity of His eternity, was and remains inaccessible to the comprehension of all things.

"He did not create the sign of His understanding in any thing except by the powerlessness of all things to understand Him! He did not radiate upon any thing if it was not within the existence of that thing in itself, for, from all eternity He has been above conjunction with any thing.

"He created all thing in such a way that all by the very reality of their nature, affirm in their servitude to Him, on the Day of Judgment, that nothing has any similarity to Him, that nothing is equal to Him, that nothing resembles Him, and that He has neither companion nor like, that, on the contrary, He was and is unique in the empire of His divinity, that He was and is alone in the sovereignty of His mastery.

"Nothing has understood Him as He should be understood, and it is impossible for anything to know Him as He is deserving of being known.

"In effect, everything to which applies the word "thing" was created by Him through the King of His Will and He radiated in it and by itself in the sublimity of His abode.

"He created the sign of His knowledge in the existence of all things so that they would be convince that it is He the First and the Last, He the Manifest and the Hidden, He the Creator and the Sustainer, He the Powerful and the Wise, He Who hears and He Who sees, He, the Victorious and He the Self-Subsistent, He Who makes live and Who makes die, He the Powerful and the Inaccessible, He the Most High and the Sublime, He of Whom not one thing can demonstrate the eminence of Whose praise, the exaltation of Whose glorification, the Sublimity of Whose Unity, the Inaccessibility of Whose Grandeur.

"He it is Who has had neither beginning nor end, unless He is Himself the Beginning and the End.

"Everything with Him that was fixed or will be, was or will be a thing by the existence of the Lord of the world; it is by the Word of this Essence hat it is endowed with existence.

“It is by It [the Word] that God began the creation of all things, and it is towards It (the Word] that He ordains the return of all things.

“It is It [the Word] for which were and are all of the excellent Names so that the existence itself of His Essenc is pure of all Names and all Attributes. His pure Essence is above all light and all exaltation, and the Essence of His nakedness is above all sublimity and all inaccessibility.

“It is It [the Word], his Essence, the First, and we cannot know it by this word; it is It [the Word], the Last, and by this word It cannot be described; it is It the Apparent, and by this word It cannot be styled; it is It the Hidden, and by this word It cannot be attained.

“It is It, the Primal Will, the first believer in *Him Whom God shall make manifest*, it is It, the first believer in Him Whom God manifests.

“It is It, the one thing for the sake of the creation of which the creation of all things was created, for the maintenance of which is given the maintenance of all things, by the death of which is outlived the death of all things, by the life of which is manifested the life of all things, by the resurrection of which all things are resurrected.

“The eye of existence has seen nothing like It, neither before nor after. It is the Name of Divinity; it is the Face of the Absolute Power fixed in the shadow of Divinity; it is the Name that guides all men towards the Kingdom of the All-Powerfulness of the Unity of God If I knew that all things tasted Its love, I would not have dared to make mention of the mention of fire: for this fire, as it has not prostrated itself in front of the Point of Truth, was, in truth, created with the same quality of fire which exists in It.

“If all things wanted to taste His love, all, because of His love, if they were to be Light, this Light creates Light, this Light that resides in the Light that God guides wherever He wills. In truth, this God is the First Cause and the Last Cause.

“It is It for which God, the Unique, the only One, created from the Manifestation of His Existence, eighteen persons who were created before all things of Its own Being. He put the sign of their knowledge in the existence of all things in order that all things by the very existence of their essence might testify that it is He, the First Unity and the One Who lives eternally. And He did not ordain for any of the contingent beings any other thing than the knowledge of His own existence and the knowledge of the Unity of His Truth, for everything that is other than this is the creature created by His order. For His is the creation and the order in the eternity of eternities, and He it is Who is Master of the worlds.

“And then: That it not remain hidden to him who looks at these utterances that God has made the creation of the Qur’án return in the Day of Judgment by His own appearance in Him, and He created the creation of all things anew as if all things had been created in this instant, as each thing was created in view of the Day of the Manifestation of God. As it is this Manifestation of God in Whom all things end, in which all things end.

“After He has manifested Hmself in the Manifestation of the signs of His Power, there is no doubt that all things have, with the perfection possible to them, arrived at the presence of God. Once again, God, the

Most High created the Primal Will, and, by It, created all things. But, as the actual creation of all things is a new creation, it follows that it was of His eternal creation, eternal in the past, as there has never been a time when God was and when there were no slaves to adore Him. He was, from all eternity, in the complete elevation of His glory, in such manner that everything other than God was, eternally also, in the depth of its abject rank. The beginning of the creation of all things was at this instant, that is Friday, because God has said so.

“God erected his new creation by His order and placed it under the shadow of His order until He made it return to Him (in the person of *Him Whom God must make manifest*). As there is no doubt that God created the creature and made it return to Him (by the Intermediary of *Him Whom God shall make manifest*) for He is Powerful over all things.

“Then He gave the ordinance of the creation of all things in the number of all things following the orders which He made to descend Himself, and He made them shine from the Sun of His Mercy so that all things by the mention of all things in all things could arrive at their perfection for the appearance of another Judgment, and so that He gave the reward of all things to every thing.

“If it was of “negation” it received the just chastisement, and if it was of “affirmation” the reward of the bounty of God.

“For His knowledge over all things before all things is the same as His knowledge over all things after all things; His Power, before the creation of all things, is the same as His Power over all things after the creation of all things.

“For all eternity God was Knowing over all things and Powerful over all things! For Him are the excellent names of the eternity of the Point, for Him will they be in the eternity of the future.

“All that is in the heavens and on the earth and in between the heavens and the earth sing His praises. There is no God worthy of adoration besides Him, the Conqueror, the Well-Beloved.

“And see with the eye of certitude that the Doors [abwáb] of the Religion of the Bayán are arranged according to the number of all things [kullu shay = 19X19 = 361]

“And in the shadow of each one of these Doors the angels of the heavens, of the earth and of what is between position themselves, and, with the permission of God, prostrate themselves, adoring, sanctifying, glorifying, acting and working. And all (these angels) on the Day of the Manifestation of God, Who is the Manifestation of the Point of the Bayán, at the end of this appearance, will return to Him (in the person of *Him Whom God shall make manifest*).

“And if 361 persons blessed by the Bayán believe, in the Day of Judgment, in “Him Whom God shall make manifest”, these ones will have received the fruit of the Bayán.

“And so happy is he who is resuscitated in the presence of God on the Day of Judgment, and finds himself acceptable to God, by one of the Doors of all things. For it is He the Master of Him Who makes all those

that have believed in the Religion of the Bayán return to Him, each one because of the act he accomplished in one of the Doors of all things.

“Hence, hasten yourselves most certainly, most certainly towards this Manifestation. And then, most certainly, most certainly, hasten yourselves! Hasten yourselves! Hasten yourselves most certainly! Indeed! Hasten yourselves! Hasten yourselves! Hasten yourselves! Indeed! Indeed! For God is the most prompt of accountants!

“It can happen that the Doors of all things will not be ready before Him, and that consequently He will ordain the return of the creation of the Bayán and of the heavens that were upraised in the Bayán. It can happen that He heaps them in His hand, as He did in the Qur’án without one being able to count them. For these multiplied Doors were multiple in the service of believers and at the very moment when God ordained the return of the creatures of the Qur’án, there as before Him only one individual. It was thus that God does what pleases Him and ordains what He wants. He cannot be questioned on what He does, and all the creatures will be questioned on what they do.

“And the moment in which the return of all the creation of the Qur’án took place was the beginning of the creation of all things in the Bayán. At this moment, the seat of the Point which is the appearance of Divinity, was found on the earth which goes by the name of Bacet (which extends the new heavens after having folded up those of the Qur’án). And the heavens which were elevated in the Qur’án were folded up and returned to the Primal Point.

“And bear not witness to that which God and those who are close to Him bear witness to only.

“And meanwhile God did not make an order more important than the order of the Judgment or the means to show it to descend in the Qur’án.

“God counts the number of all those who believe in the Qur’án. But, in the moment of the return of the Qur’án, of all these individuals, only one person remained close to God while the Judgment took place; and so He elevated in another world, and under the order of God, the creation of all things.

“Hence, O you, O you people of the Bayán, attend yourselves to remaining not in the ignorance of God, your Lord, for night and day you desire to become saints.”¹³

CHAPTER BY CHAPTER ANALYSIS

In describing the *Persian Bayán* chapter by chapter, an attempt has been made to avoid interpretation, other than that which is unavoidable for a translator and summarizer. The *Persian Bayán* is composed of nine subdivisions each of which is called Vahíd as pronounced in Persian, and Wahid as pronounced and written in Arabic. Vahíd means “unity” and is derived from “one”. The first eight of these Vahíds are each composed of nineteen abwáb (báb is the singular form and abwáb the plural form). The ninth Vahíd is composed of ten abwáb. The báb (meaning “door” or “gate”, is a subdivision of the Vahíd. The Báb

referred in many of his writings to number symbolism so it is appropriate for us to consider the numerical value of these two terms in Arabic. The numerical value of Vahíd is nineteen, which is reduced to $1+9=10=1+0=1$, and the numerical value of báb is 5. Each Vahíd is simultaneously a symbol of the Unity of God and of the Unity of His Religion, while each báb is likewise the symbol of the Perfect Man and of the Manifestation of God, in this case, the Point of the Bayán, that is, the Báb.

Vahíd I

The first Vahíd is the shortest of the nine “Unities”. In the French translation it begins on page 17 and ends on page 30. Some of its abwáb are only one verse in length. In this Vahíd there is a usage of numerical symbolism which is explained by its Author, some enigmatic references to his followers, and a clear enunciation of many of his teachings: the Oneness of God as the essence of Religion; affirmation of the Manifestation of God as inseparable from affirmation of the Unity of God; the return of the past Manifestations in the most recent Manifestation; the return of the true believers of old in the true believers of the present; the supercession of subsequent Manifestations over previously appearing Manifestations. He also affirms the truth of the twelve Imams, referring to each one individually and praising each one for his adherence to the Covenant of Muhammad.

Vahíd II

The second Vahíd begins on page 31 and ends on page 145 of Volume One of the translation...it is 114 pages in length, by far the longest of the Unities. Many of its abwáb are longer than the entirety of the first Vahíd. Consequently, we will be obliged to summarize the contents of each báb, rather than seeking to convey the contents of the Vahíd as a whole.

Vahíd II: Báb 1

This báb commences with a short caption signalling its selected theme, as follows: “Explanation of the notion of Pilgrimage and of the Proof”¹⁴. The speech of God revealed in the Qur’án and subsequently in the Bayán creates what has not existed heretofore, and it is the standard whereby existence may be distinguished from non-existence. Through the Word of God, human beings come to know God, and it is only through Him that we can come to know Him. The Word of God is the best testimony of the truth claim of prophetic revelation—the Bayán cites the eloquence of the Qur’án as the greatest proof of the mission of Muhammad. The Bayán is the Word of God. There is no revelation between that of the Qur’án and that of the Bayán—the Bayán makes this emphatically clear.¹⁵ All Scriptures are the Word of God and all Manifestations originate from the Will of God. The verses of the Bayán are proof of the Báb. His expositions on science and philosophy are also proofs of his prophetic station God is exalted above all; the Manifestation is not His equal—he is not even close to Him, but rather, he is God’s gift to humankind, designated for its guidance. The verses uttered or penned by the Báb and other Manifestations are not their verses—they are the verses of God. They are therefore superior to any and all man-made, humanly-conceived verses. The Bayán compares the knowledge of the most learned Bábís with the knowledge of God, indicating that the former is like the light of the stars in comparison with the light of the noon-day

sun. The Muslim who does not believe that the Báb's verses are the verses of God is condemned by God to spiritual ignorance, that is, he is no longer accounted among the believers in God. The Prophet of God is the highest, the most perfect man. The Bayán indicates that people should not be critical of the grammar and syntax of the verses he has revealed, for these are the verses of God, and it is these verses which create the rules of grammar and syntax for men to follow. The sign of the Prophethood of the Báb which the Bayán acclaims as the most manifest is the Báb's ability to reveal verses without reflection or hesitation and with the utmost rapidity. The Bayán implies that only a Manifestation of God can do this. A knowledge of sciences, including the sciences of grammar and syntax is attained by men so that they might better understand the Word of God. The Manifestation of God has no need of these sciences for he has innate knowledge. In this close of this báb, it is affirmed that the Ithna 'Ashari Shi'ah are closer to the truth of Islam than the Ahl al-Sunna. The closing verse is as follows: "For He is the Best of Aids, the Best of Guardians, the Best of Accountants, and of Managers."¹⁶

Vahíd II: Báb 2

The second báb begins with this caption: "On this, that nobody may embrace the science of all that is contained in the Bayán, except for *Him Whom God shall make manifest*."¹⁷ In this báb it is affirmed that the only ones who can write authoritative commentaries on the Bayán, and the only one who can correctly interpret its contents are the Báb Himself, *Him Whom God shall make manifest*, and whomsoever the latter may instruct with his knowledge. Once again the criteria for true belief in God are reiterated: they are belief in the Manifestation of God and obedience to the laws of God revealed by the Manifestation. He closes with: "Profit from this example, O perspicacious men, and hereafter understand the Command of God!"¹⁸

Vahíd II: Báb 3

This báb begins with the invocation: "In the explanation of this, that what is in the Bayán contains the order of all things."¹⁹ The opening summary of this báb is this: "From God, for all men, there are two testimonies: one, the verses, the other, the Person upon whom the verses descend."²⁰ In this báb, it is revealed that the 'ulama' have turned against the Báb because He is damaging their social rank and threatening their firm grip of control over their congregants. The Bayán ordains no priesthood and expects *Him Whom God shall make manifest* to take care of this aspect of religious organization. Few read the verses of God notwithstanding the fact that they are the testimony of God to humanity: all that man can see in them is God. So-called, false-hearted believers buy expensive Qur'áns but do not read the verses contained therein, while it is those verses which are the real treasure.

Two alternatives are open to the individual soul: either affirmation of the truth of the Manifestation or negation and rejection—no other options exist. For every hidden book there is one which is manifest, and the one who follows the orders of the silent Book is a speaking Book (that is, he becomes a walking, talking Qur'án, or, in this case, Bayán), and the speaking Book is *Him Whom God shall make manifest*. The last page of this báb is concerned exclusively with *Him Whom God shall make manifest* and preparing mankind and especially the followers of the Báb to recognize and follow Him.

Vahíd II: Báb 4

The fourth báb is concerned with the “Explanation of those letters which are ‘iliyyin²¹ and those which are not”.²² The ‘iliyyin letters are representative of the good, of the attributes of God, while the non-‘iliyyin letters are representative of evil, the attributes of Satan (which the Bayán aptly defines as “selfish desire”). Every word is endowed with a spirit which belongs to God, comes from God, and it is because of this spirit that the believer is made joyful by the verses of God and suffers from the words of the unbelievers. There are two kinds of words according to the Bayán—the paradisaical and the firey (or hellish). From the formula, “There is no God but the One God”, the letters of negation represent “There is no God” and the letters of affirmation (‘iliyyin) manifest “but the One God”. God has created negation is a condition whose result is the fire, and He has created negation as a condition whose result is the Fire, and He has created affirmation as a condition whose result is Paradise. This is both man’s nature and the nature of the Book of God. Good and evil deeds and words return to those who were responsible for manifesting them in the first place.

Whoever believes in the Báb during his Dispensation is in the Paradise of God until the advent of “Him Whom God shall make manifest” when he must become a believer in Him or be ejected from Paradise and consigned to the Fire. The meaning of Paradise is acceptance of the truth of God while Hell is rejection of this truth. It is up to man to choose which he will live with, which is best for him. No fire is fiercer than that of negation and no paradise is more beautiful than that of affirmation. The origin of negation is not in God but in the soul of the negator. Only “*Him Whom God shall make manifest* can give the negator refuge from his just punishment. Only those who become Bábís in the Dispensation of the Báb will be pardoned their misdeeds; all others will suffer the punishment which God has ordained for their education. The Bayán reveals that the true successor to Muhammad in the “Apostolic Succession” of Islam was ‘Alí rather than Umar. One can take refuge in the legitimate successors to the Manifestation of God as well as in Him; in the Islamic Dispensation these were the Imams, and the Doors (four abwáb). Likewise, during this Dispensation of the Báb this sanctuary was to be found in the Bayán of the Báb. No harm will come to the believer who reads the words of the negators if he seeks refuge in God and nourished his heart with the soothing, invigorating verses of affirmation which have streamed from the Pen of the Merciful.

Vahíd II: Báb 5

The fifth báb is concerned with the good and evil names which have descended in the Bayán. Of these “every good name that God made descend in the Bayán has as its goal, in its primary truth, *Him Whom God shall make manifest*. Every evil name that God has caused to descend in the Bayán has as its goal, in its primary truth, the speech of negation in the time of *Him Whom God shall make manifest*.”²³ To a lesser extent every good name applies to all believers in *Him Whom God shall make manifest*. Not only do they apply to *Him Whom God shall make manifest*—the good names in the Qur’án refer to the Primal Point (the Báb) and the good names in the Book of *Him Whom God shall make manifest* will apply to the Manifestation who is to follow him. What God reveals in His Book is the knowledge of God. The meaning of the Qur’anic word EARTH is explained in this báb. According to the Bayán this word applies to the Manifestation of God; the most exalted places on earth are those which have been frequented by the Manifestations of God. The

Bayán cites Mah-Ku, where the Persian Bayán and several other works were revealed as one such place. Where EARTH refers to the residence of the Arch-defector, the First Negator, that place is the most despicable of all places. The Bayán cites Shi'i examples of both types of EARTH inasmuch as he is particularly addressing his writings to the most recently elect of God, namely the Ithná 'Ashariyya Muslims.

Vahíd II: Báb 6

The sixth báb is also short, and its theme is the BALANCE of God. It begins with, "In this one that the Bayán is the balance of God even to the day of the appearance of *Him Whom God shall make manifest*. Whoever obeys it is light, whoever turns away is fire."²⁴ He reveals that the verses of the Bayán, and of all the Holy Books revealed prior to it were revealed for the sake of the adoration of God and not to be used as instruments for opposition to any one, especially opposition to the Manifestation of God. He repeats his assertion that the piety and good works of Christians in the Dispensation of Muhammad, and of Muslims in the Dispensation of the Báb are for naught. Whosoever is under the balance of the Bayán is in the highest Paradise and with the coming of the subsequent Manifestation, He is the new balance of the previous Book and the followers thereof. Furthermore, if the soul transgresses against the revealed Will of God he hurts only himself; the Revelation of God is a bounty revealed for the sake of man, for his happiness and perfection and not for the happiness and perfection of God Who is Self-Subsisting and Independent of All Things.

Vahíd II: Báb 7

The seventh báb is an explanation of the meaning of the DAY OF JUDGMENT: it is the period of the earthly existence of the Manifestation of God on earth in the human form. During this period there occurs the Final Judgment of the followers of the preceeding Manifestation. The greatest testimony of faith in Jesus for the Christian is in the acceptance of Muhammad in the Day of his Manifestation –or, during his Dispensation, for, from the moment of His declaration to the moment of the declaration of the next Manifestation He is the Lord of Judgment—and the greatest testimony of faith in Muhammad for the Muslim is the acceptance of the Báb in the Day of His appearance. A tiny fraction of a second of the period between the declaration and ascension of the Manifestation of God is better than all of the years which pass between two Days of Judgment, that is, between the lifetimes of two Manifestations of God. For example, a second during the life of Christ was more potent, more worthwhile, more precious than the entirety of the six hundred years between His ascension and the declaration of Muhammad. The previous Dispensation bears its fruit in the Day of Judgment of the latter Dispensation. The Báb therefore calls upon His followers to be vigilant in their expectation of the appearance of *Him Whom God shall make manifest*. He implores His followers not to attack *Him Whom God shall make manifest* even if they do not follow Him, as the Muslims attacked Him and as the infidels attacked Muhammad. The Day of Judgment cannot occur previous to the declaration of the Manifestation of God, for previous to His declaration nobody knows He is the Manifestation and it is only after His station has been revealed and the proofs of His station set forth that the faith of the believers in the previous Manifestation can be tested.

Vahíd II: Báb 8

Báb eight reveals the manifold meanings of the word DEAD. He who is the perfect follower of the Manifestation is dead to all but this Manifestation in that he does not live according to a contrary will of his own. As it is the command of God that all die to everything except the Will of God –and few have done so--, the very breath of the unbelievers is illicit for it is in obedience to their own will rather than to the Will of God. Purgatory is the period between the two Manifestations of God; during the Day of Judgment, Paradise is exalted and Hell is made to burn as the believers are separated from the non-believers by virtue of their faith or lack thereof in the living Manifestation of God. Only God knows what will happen to men after death; men have invented concepts of the afterlife which are of no benefit whatsoever to them. One meaning of DEATH is that it is the rejection of the Manifestation of God, while life is affirmation of the truth of the Manifestation of God, while life is affirmation of the truth of the Manifestation of God. If a believer allows anything not worthy of the Báb into his heart he is not dead to all else but Him at that moment. People do not realize that the highest rank which man can attain is DEATH –death to all save God. The Manifestation of God is the Primal Will; he is the first one to obey God when he speaks. The ARCH is the location of the Manifestation of God, not the thing which Muslims suppose it to be: an actual arch from which God is suspended. He identifies ‘Alí, the Commander of the Faithful and the first Imam as the first believer in Muhammad. The attributes of closeness and exaltation are not applicable to God because His Essence is beyond all description. He mentions the proof of Prophethood which is manifest in the Person of the Manifestation and he affirms that *Him Whom God shall make manifest*, the Manifestation destined to succeed him, is the first creation of God, and the God Himself is without equal or peer. Within His own rank, God has attributes which reflect Himself and which none other can approach: He is the Best-Beloved and He has no lovers befitting this attribute that is uniquely His. The attributes of God made manifest in His Manifestation are never comparable to Him. The sovereignty of Muhammad is therefore infinitely inferior and veritably unmentionable before the sovereignty of God. God reveals Himself in all things, that man may forget Him at no time and in nothing. All things depend utterly upon the Will of God, and this Will depends utterly on God, the Unique One. God is unconnected to anything else; all else is His creation; His Will is likewise created by Him; all things radiate from the Primal Will which He created; nothing can know Him; He has neither companion nor offspring.

Vahíd II: Báb 9

The ninth báb has a central message: Every spirit is given a TOMB according to its rank and all spirits end in the Day of Judgment of *Him Whom God shall make manifest* when all souls will be resurrected. The Bayán goes on to reveal that the entire spiritual creation of God is under the dominion of God and that each Manifestation recreates the creation of God through the power of God. True believers in one Dispensation are elevated to the shadow of the following Manifestation while non-believers are not. The Judgment is an interrogation in which the individual is judged according to his good and evil works. Everything good has its origin in the Manifestation of God and to a lesser extent in his followers, while everything that is evil is from the Anti-Christ and his followers whom the Bayán refers to as the Letters of Negation (even as his disciples are the Letters of the Living and his followers are the Letters of Affirmation). Whosoever affirms the truth of the Manifestation is a manifestation of the first affirmer, and

whosoever negates this truth is a manifestation of the first negator. The spirit of the believer associates with the spirits of affirmation while the spirit of the non-believer associates with the spirits of negation. The Fire which afflicts non-believers is too powerful for words to express and likewise is the reward of the believers in Paradise. No spirit ever goes beyond its limits –eternally its existence remains distinct from other existences. After this earthly life, man is either punished or rewarded, according to the faith he manifested in his earthly life. It is possible for the resident of Paradise to fall into the Fire of unbelief if he does not recognize and affirm the truth of the new Manifestation. During PURGATORY, which is the period of the Dispensation of the Manifestation that begins at the time of his ascension and the ends with the declaration of the new Manifestation, the Will of God permits the entry into the Paradise of belief whomsoever He willeth and only the true believer can understand the workings of the Will of God.

Vahíd II: Báb 10

Báb ten is concerned with “on the Day of Judgment the believers in *Him Whom God shall make manifest* will ask men, ‘Upon what is your faith based?’ They will reply, ‘On the testimony of the Bayán.’”²⁵ In this way will they deny the truth of the new Manifestation of God, *Him Whom God shall make manifest* and thereby deprive themselves of the bounties of belief and the benefits of Paradise. Everything associated with negators is through the order of God pronounced to be Hell and everything associated with affirmers is pronounced to be Paradise. Hence, we may conclude that if anyone should find that the Bayán or any of the writings of the Báb proves to be a veil concealing the light of the new Manifestation from men, they should be discarded as worthless, nay, as an influence which hampers men from attaining to the purpose of their existence and the purpose of God in revealing His Word.

Vahíd II: Báb 11

Báb eleven reaffirms the truth that all things are created by the Word of God, that whatever He mentions by name has been created by virtue of His mention. The place and position of all things is decided by God and revealed through His Primal Will. Through the Manifestation is effected the resurrection—all things are resuscitated by the grace of God, and this expression has a spiritual not a material meaning: the bodies do not leave their graves in order to become reanimated with earthly life, rather, the spirits are given new life through belief in and adherence to the new Manifestation of God.

Vahíd II: Báb 12

Báb twelve of the second Vahíd explains the SYRAT, the “bridge” referred to in the Qur’án. At the end of each Age or Epoch appears the Manifestation of God and His order –this is the SYRAT. It is higher, more glorious than all of creation, and without physical limits. For the believers, the “bridge” is more vast than the limitless space; while for unbelievers it is finer than a hair and sharper than the cutting edge of a saber. Crossing this spiritual bridge over Hell begins with belief in the verses or the Person of the Manifestation, and it may last until the next Judgment Day when it is tested in the presence of the new Manifestation of God. How many have believed and and many have hesitated and been unable to choose between belief or unbelief. And how many have disbelieved and how many at the point of death who have been thrown into the fire of unbelief, notwithstanding a lifetime of devotion to God and His Manifestation.

Vahíd II: Báb 13

Báb thirteen of the second Vahíd reveals the truth of the BALANCE and its correct meaning, which is the Point of Truth –the Manifestation of God. The highest degree of the BALANCE is the Unity of God which is manifested in these verses: “There is no God but the One God.” The Manifestation of God is inseparable both from God and from His teachings in the eye of the true believer. In this Day, that is to say at the time the Bayán was revealed, the Balance is the Bayán. Whosoever is accepted as a believer in the Báb and his Book is one of the ranks of the Balance, and whosoever is found to be unacceptable – whoever has deviated from him even a tiny bit—is humbled to the lowest rank until the Day of Judgment of *Him Whom God shall make manifest* at which time he will be given another opportunity to ‘save his soul’.

Vahíd II: Báb 14

Báb fourteen of the second Vahíd unveils the significance of the RECKONING. Only God can judge His creatures rightfully, and He does so through His Manifestation. The RECKONING He makes is of souls who have believed in Him, not of bodies. The instrument of the Count whereby souls are found to be believers or non-believers is the Word of God. The Bayán designates Arabic as the most eloquent of languages. The verses of God are revealed in a manner, style and with subject matter which make them utterly unsimilable by any human mind or pen. The Bayán asserts that if an amanuensis were to be found capable of transcribing the words of the Báb, He could reveal 2000 verses in one day, and even if one could not be found He would reveal as many as could be transcribed and in such manner that no intelligent man could deny their divine origin. The speech of God is the very being of the Primal Will which is the Word of God. Nevertheless, this speech of God is a creation of God and not of His Essence. The easiest form whereby the Báb may reveal the Will of God is through His verses. It is much easier than the writing of prayers, answers to scientific questions and utterances in the Persian language. We may deduce that the revelations which the Báb himself finds to be easiest come to him in the Arabic language and in free-flowing verses. People fear the RECKONING made of their material benefits, that is, the fortunes and misfortunes of this world, and they do not fear the RECKONING of God which is based upon His Religion and their faith –even though it is this RECKONING alone that matters. In the seventh year and the seventh month, or the seventh month following the declaration of *Him Whom God shall make manifest* the RECKONING will take place. That is, if He wishes it to be so, for *Him Whom God shall make manifest* will do as He pleases and He cannot be rightfully asked of His doings whereas all men shall be asked of their doings, and judged accordingly.

Vahíd II: Báb 15

Báb fifteen of the second Vahíd commences with “In the explanation of the Book, and in this, the Book is true.”²⁶ Although this is a relatively lengthy báb, a short summary thereof is possible. The word DOOR refers to that which is manifested from the Point of Truth not the Essence of God which is unchanging. Everything revealed by the Point of Truth is called a Book. The Bayán relates these words to various earthly compounds, expressing their differences and at the same time their exaltation above all perishable realities--His verses are incorruptible water, His sermons are milk which cannot go sour, His commentaries on verses are red wine, His replies or commentaries or oraisons are as eternally pure honey

and His Persian utterances are the same as the utterance of verses. The Bayán states here what is affirmed elsewhere several times in the course of the Persian Bayán, that the true believer is of greater rarity than red sulphur. It explains that the Last Judgment is so called because it is the Last Judgment before the coming of the next Manifestation of God; it is the only one with which we are familiar, the last that we have experienced. The relativity of religious truth is clearly demonstrated in view of the limitations and progressive evolution of mankind and the creativeness of God Who is always creating anew His creation. God does not create contradictions; sectarian adherents of religion create contradictions by attaching themselves dogmatically to one understanding or another of the revealed Will of God and not yielding to the eternal process of change which is inevitable in a creative universe governed by a creative Creator. The Bayán does not seem to clarify whether the world of faith and the order of human spiritual existence alone is recreated.

Vahíd II: Báb 16

Báb sixteen of the second Vahíd is nearly as long as the entirety of the first Vahíd. It is concerned with the explanation of the meanings of FIRE and PARADISE which, the Báb claims, were understood by none but the Manifestations of God until they were revealed in the Persian Bayán. In all Dispensations it is through the permission of the first believer that the doors of truth are opened. The world of souls corresponds to the world of appearances, so that when the Manifestation of Muhammad in the world of appearances revealed the first creature, in the soul of all believers in Him was born the conviction that He was the first creature. Paradise is the state of belief in the Manifestation of God; there is no Paradise higher in the knowledge of God than the reality of Muhammad; after his ascension, the highest Paradise was ‘Alí and after his ascension each Imam was in his turn a Paradise, for belief in Him alone was belief in God and belief in anything else but Him was counted as unbelief. One Paradise does not invalidate or lower the rank of the previous or succeeding Paradise—each retains its place according to the following hierarchy: the first and greatest Paradise is that of God, the second and next in rank is the Paradise of the Manifestation of God, in this case Muhammad; the third is the Paradise of the Imams (as noted earlier the twelve Imams of Ithna ‘Ashari Shi’i Islam are cited by the Báb as the spiritual successors to the leadership of Islam while the caliphs are summarily dismissed as usurpers and Covenant-breakers), the fourth are the Doors (abwáb), and the fifth the rank and file Ithna ‘Ashari believers. The wisdom of this is that the greatest happiness attainable to man is found in the glorification of God. In fact, there is no real and lasting delight to be found except in the knowledge of the Unity of God.

It is not by worshipping though that men can attain unto His pleasure but through obedience to the latest Manifestation of the Unity of God. The Bayán indicates that the Christians surely would have accepted Muhammad had they known that He was the return of Christ in great glory and power, and likewise the Muslims would have accepted Him had they understood that He is the return in greater glory still of the Messenger of God Himself. He makes reference to the coming of *Him Whom God shall make manifest* mentioning two numbers in this connection – the number of God (which Nicolas believes to be the number of all things, that is, 361, and which might be 19, the number of divine Unity), and the number 2001. The Bayán reveals that the Báb’s followers should not be hampered from recognizing *Him Whom God shall make manifest* because of any references to His advent made in the Bayán. If the Bábí hears that a man has revealed verses akin to the verses of the Bayán and the perspicacious wise men of the age have

recognized Him, then he must not hesitate to affirm His truth for this is *Him Whom God shall make manifest*. It is not the right of the believer to interrogate the Manifestation of God; he must follow Him and without hesitating once the signs of His Prophethood have been clearly established.

The Bayán repeats the teaching that all who do not believe in the succeeding Manifestation thereby prove their lack of faith in the preceding Manifestation; that only God knows what happens to the human being after death. He who enters the Paradise of belief in the Manifestation of God in this world will go to the Paradise of the next world and likewise will the inhabitant of the Fire of negation in this world go to the Fire in the next world. It is better to guide one person to the Truth of God than to possess all that is in this world. Belief in the Manifestation of God is without substance when it is not affirmed through the recognition and acceptance of the Manifestation in His human form. All things seek a relation to God and relation to the believer is related to God – the believer is a door into the Paradise of affirmation. Consequently, earthly places and objects are blessed through their contact with believers in God. Thus does God exalt and abase every thing according to His Will and not the will of any other than Him.

Vahíd II: Báb 17

Whereas báb sixteen is concerned mainly with the unfolding of the meanings of PARADISE, báb seventeen of the second Vahíd focuses on the FIRE. Even as there are many gradations of PARADISE, there are infinite gradations of the FIRE. The essence of the essences of the FIRE is the absence of the knowledge of God. The essence of all things which love God and which God in turn loves return to the Manifestation of God and the essence of all things which do not love the Manifestation of God and the Essence of God go to the FIRE. As the Bayán explained, the first believer's belief is the cause of all others' belief, and the first unbeliever's denial is the cause of the denial of all others. The first negator is identified by Nicolas, Shoghi Effendi and all other students of the Bábí Revelation with which the present author is familiar as Haji Mirza Aqasi, the Grand Vizier of Iran during the reign of Muhammad Shah²⁷. The first believer in the Báb is identified in numerous passages of the Bayán as Mulla Husayn Bushru'i, to whom the Báb first declared His mission in Shiráz. Whereas in the Dispensation of Muhammad the doors into PARADISE were the Messenger of God, His Imams, His Doors and His believers, in the Dispensation of the Báb there are only 19 doors into PARADISE and these are the Báb and His eighteen Letters of the Living. The difference between the believer and the non-believer is very great, and it is determined according to one truth – the unbeliever may accept everything but the Manifestation of God, but because he does not affirm the truth of the Manifestation of God he forfeits PARADISE. God wants to be obeyed according to His terms and not according to ours!

The Point of the Bayán calls upon His followers to be the first from amongst all mankind to recognize *Him Whom God shall make manifest* and not the first to deny Him, for the former is an inestimable benefit while the latter is a most grievous chastisement. It is because of the individual soul's ignorance that he is subject to the FIRE – he keeps himself from God; God does not make up his mind for him. He clarifies the gradations of the FIRE and of PARADISE, revealing that all are multiplications of the original 19 (the original Unity) of the believers and of the negators. The creation of the Qur'án was with the Bayán in mind and the creation of the Bayán is with *Him Whom God shall make manifest* in mind. *Him Whom God shall make manifest* will change FIRE into Light and Light into FIRE when He is made manifest, because some

who are FIRE for having denied the truth of the Bayán and its Revealer will accept *Him Whom God shall make manifest* and some who accepted the truth of the Bayán and the station of the Báb will deny *Him Whom God shall make manifest*. If *Him Whom God shall make manifest* is believed in while He is yet invisible, before His declaration, when He makes His declaration it is possible that the believers will not oppose Him but rather will not hesitate to accept Him. One of the most astounding statements in the Persian Bayán is this verse:

“Although the decisions of God are diverse in every state, in the Bayán there is no mention which is not the mention (of *Him Whom God shall make manifest*). Thus it may be that at the moment of His Manifestation He will not be tormented by the perception of a single anxiety on the part of the believers, who believe in Him in the very time in which He was invisible, in which they all awaited Him.”²⁸

Vahíd II: Báb 18

Báb eighteen and báb nineteen are both short, and both describe the nature of the Manifestation of God and the relations between Dispensations. In báb eighteen the HOUR is revealed as the Will of God manifest in the Book of His Revelation. The Manifestation must use words of human fabrication in order to communicate to men the divine significance. The HOUR in the Bayán is the Day of the Báb and it is the time when man is brought face to face with his Creator as He is manifested in the Revelation of the Báb (and in other Revelations, in the Revelation of the Lord of that Age, each a Manifestation in His own right). Human words cannot communicate the fullness of this theme or of any other theme: were all the seas ink and all things pens, and were their hands enough to wield all of these pens, nevertheless the fullness of this theme and of many other themes could never be divulged.

Vahíd II: Báb 19

The closing báb (19) of this Vahíd reiterates certain teachings of the Báb already mentioned, and we will mention them again only cursorily. God and His Manifestation are the Best-Beloved of all souls save those who are unaware that their greatest happiness is to be found in his love, this affirmation. The testimony of one Manifestation is a gift to His successor and the latter is free to accept or discard this gift as He sees fit. Very few would disbelieve in the return of the Manifestation they have accepted if they could know this to be true. The Bayán and all of the other writings of the Báb are gifts which He proffers before *Him Whom God shall make manifest*. This báb ends with the following verses, as powerful as any in these first two Vahíds and clearly revelatory of the tone of their Author²⁹:

“God does not need you, nor anything which depends upon you; and you, if you give to yourselves the title of being dependent upon God, then, because of this claimed relation you have displayed your arrogance. In truth, you only annihilate yourselves: you will see that and you will be convinced.”

Vahíd III

The third Vahíd is 73 pages long and as many of its themes are depicted in the first and second Vahíds, the description of the content of this Vahíd will not be as detailed as that to which the reader has become accustomed.

Vahíd III: Báb 1

In the first báb the Báb affirms that everything that is on the earth belongs to God and that therefore it belongs to the Manifestation of God, and whatever He wants should be given to Him as a matter of right.

Vahíd III: Báb 2

The second báb affirms the creative power of the Word of God and the superiority of this Word to any human utterances. He condemns ‘Umar and Abú Bakr and exalts ‘Alí, the Commander of the Faithful. He also reveals that if God does not make mention of something, such as the Fire, it does not exist.

Vahíd III: Báb 3

The third báb reaffirms that the purpose of the Bayán is fulfilled in *Him Whom God shall make manifest*, and that the purpose of each Holy Book is the subsequent Manifestation of God.

Vahíd III: Báb 4

The fourth báb states that the verses and words of *Him Whom God shall make manifest* will be of a more exalted character and more numerous than those of the Báb. It is indicated that this is always the case with the progressive revelations of the Manifestations of God. The order of God is revealed in its pristine simplicity--everything begins and ends with Him, and everything that exists is under the shadow of the Manifestation of God.

Vahíd III: Báb 5

The fifth báb maintains that the Manifestation of God is endowed with the power and prerogative to make “holy” places “secular” and “secular” places “holy”. He manifests the Will of God and nothing else: therefore, He is perfect and infallible, for He doeth whatsoever He (God) willeth.

Vahíd III: Báb 6

The REUNION is explained in the sixth báb: the “reunion” of all sciences in the Manifestation of God and His Book is the affirmation of God that there is only one God and that all else besides Him is His creation. The Manifestation of God and the sea of names and attributes which reflect God alone and always are His creations, not His Essence. Creation is through the Manifestation of God, which is the Primal Will, which is the Word of God. The Báb refers to Himself as the “Master of the Seven Letters”³⁰. The numerical value of His title, the Báb, is five, and the numerical value of all things (of which He is the Master) is 361, so He is not referring to either of these verities. It might be surmised that He refers here to

the seven proofs of His mission, revealed in the *Dalá'il-i-sab'ih* during His imprisonment in the fortress of Mah-Ku, where He also revealed the *Persian Bayán*. However it is even more likely that He refers here to the seven Arabic letters of His given name, 'Alí Muhammad (y-l-y-m-h-m-d).

Vahíd III: Báb 7

The seventh báb enunciates the truth that the presence of God is attained by man through the presence of the Manifestation of God and never in the presence of His Essence, which is unattainable. The mention of anything other than God is a mention of a reflection of God and not that which is Self-Subsisting, that which has an independent existence. As the Manifestation of God is the Sun of Reality, and all other created beings are mirrors which reflect the light of this Sun, and as this Sun represents all that the creature may know of God, so the apprehension of the Manifestation of God by this creature is its apprehension of God. This theme—of the spiritual reality of Unity and of the nature of God as Essence, His Sign as the Sun and His creatures as mirrors reflecting the attributes of that Sun—is made mention of in many passages of the Bayán. Although outwardly it seems to be simple, we shall see that it is very subtle indeed.

Vahíd III: Báb 8

The eighth báb reviews the following subjects: everything that exists is in the Bayán—the word and the spirit attached to this word, not the being itself and the spirit attached to the being; *Him Whom God shall make manifest* is manifest in the mirrors of the Bayán; good can only be attained in this Day through acceptance of Him. He also develops certain new themes: all good comes from the 19 names of God and the 19 letters (the Báb and the 18 Letters of the Living), and all bad comes from the 19 names of negation and the 19 letters of negation and whatever is born of these returns to them; God has fixed a limit to the revelation of Himself and no more can be revealed of Him in the present or in the future; the rank of every created thing is fixed and it cannot become greater or lesser than it is—man cannot become God and God cannot become man. He concludes with a commentary on the letter “B”. The eighth báb affirms that everything contained in the Bayán is revealed in one of the verses of the Bayán.

Vahíd III: Báb 9

It is also affirmed in the ninth báb that everything that is contained in the Bayán is revealed in one of its verses. The verse which contains all other verses, which contains the 19 names of God and, in their shadow, the 19 letters of affirmations are as follows:

“If we make this Bayán descend upon whomever is in the invisibilities of the heavens, of the earth, and of that which is between them, all would be in God, their (1)MERCIFUL Lord. Allah! There is no God but Him, THE (2)VICTORIOUS, THE (3)EVIDENT, THE (4)UNIQUE, THE (5)INACCESSIBLE, THE (6)SUBLIME, THE (7)EXALTED, THE (8)MOST HOLY. His are the excellent names. He Who is in the heavens, on the earth and between them exalts His (9)glory. And He is (10)EXALTED ABOVE WHAT MEN CAN SAY. Say: In truth, God! It is He, the (11)KING, the (12)SULTAN, the (13)ALL-POWERFUL, the (14)KNOWING: His are the

exalted names. (15)He Who is in the heavens, (16)on the earth and (17)between the two prostrates himself before Him. In truth, He is the (18)CHERISHED, the (19)WELL-BELOVED.”³¹

Vahíd III: Báb 10

The tenth báb reveals the meanings of RETURN and RESURRECTION and of the NEW CREATION. These three words have on and the same meaning and this is the return of attributes, of qualities, such as in the return of the attributes of the Manifestation in the Manifestations of God, and the return of the attributes of servitude in the true believers in the Manifestations of God. The letter “B” is revealed to be the essence of the Bayán.

Vahíd III: Báb 11

The multiplication of all names and attributes from the 19 names revealed in the eighth báb is cited. Colors are ranked according to the different aspects of man (that is, of the believer, whose mirror reflects the light of the Sun of Truth) with which they are associated. White is related to the heart, yellow to the spirit, green to the soul, red to the body. If a color other than these is reflected in the mirror of the believer then he is a non-believer, for these colors alone does God love. All of these names and letters and their spirits exist only through the Point of Truth, which was Muhammad in the Qur’án, the Báb in the Bayán and in the Day of *Him Whom God shall make manifest* they exist by the Sun of Truth Himself, which radiates His splendor in the verses of truth. All besides this radiation in His Day are shadows in the mirrors, having no reality. This is the message of the eleventh báb, which is followed by the brief twelfth báb.

Vahíd III: Báb 12

The twelfth báb reveals the meaning of the POINT—it is the Primal Will Who is referred to in the first letter (“B”) of the formula of faith, be it Bismi’llah (also caled shahada) or another. Themes which have already been touched upon are treated in a new light: true Bábís must accept *Him Whom God shall make manifest* when He appears in order to be accounted among the believers; the essence of faith and of knowledge is to become dead to everything bt God and His Manifestation; ‘Alí, the first mirror of Muhammad returns in every Dispensation; the infallibility of *Him Whom God shall make manifest*; all power, sovereignty, learning and wealth come from the Sun of Truth as they appear in the mirrors of men when they are turned towards the Sun of Truth; Paradise and the Fire; God guides whomever He wishes along the straight and narrow path; God loves those who fear Him and He does not like to mention those who will only accept the Manifestation if He is accepted by the “doctors” of Christianity and Islam (and other faiths), and this is because these “doctors” will not accept Him and are residents of the Fire.

Vahíd III: Báb 13

The thirteenth báb is replete with original themes, all of them of great importance. It is not permissible for followers of the Báb (and presumably non-believers as well) to interrogate *Him Whom God shall make manifest* with regard to anything but His own Book—this is so that the response that *Him Whom God shall make manifest* will give will bring happiness and joy to the interrogator. He loves only those hearts which demonstrate godliness and the love of God. From the Manifestation of Adam to the declaration of the

Báb, 12,210 years have transpired; before Adam there were infinite worlds and men, and no other but God can count their number. In every world the Manifestation of God was the Point of the Bayán, the Letters were the Letters of the Living and the names were similar to the 19 names manifested in the Bayán. *Him Whom God shall make manifest* is the Primal Will in all worlds and His Book is the Book of the Primal Will in all worlds. The Báb celebrates *Him Whom God shall make manifest* as a Manifestation of God and decrees that all are His slaves, including Himself. All of the attributes of the Manifestations Who preceded the Báb are in Him, but He does not call Himself by their names because there is progress in the world and each Manifestation is greater than the next. When the Dispensation of one Manifestation reaches its “age of reason”, the Dispensation of a new Manifestation commences. The testimony of the Bayán was withheld from some so that they would not be afflicted with the Fire should they deny its truth. *Him Whom God shall make manifest* will not be satisfied to leave a single believer in the Báb upon the earth in impiety, even if all of the kings and wisemen among the unbelievers become His followers; it is His desire that all believers return to Him so that they will be saved from the Fire and able to enter Paradise. He calls upon the Bábís to teach the religion of God and propagate its order. In each Dispensation the Manifestation of God unifies His people and His aim and greatest satisfaction is in bringing together all the peoples of the earth.

Vahíd II: Báb 14

The fourteen báb ordains the preservation of the Book of the Bayán in the greatest state of perfection and beauty of which each individual is capable, for it is the most precious of all things. The greater the attention paid to its preservation, the more the spirit which is attached to its verses will be manifested. He calls for beautiful and uniform writing, fine paper, rich ornamentation and the greatest possible lightness of the manuscript paper it is not good to write on the margins as this lowers the price of the Book in the eyes of men. This báb ends with a verse of unusual character which is quoted as follows:

“All of the splendor [Bahá’] of the Bayán is *Him Whom God shall make manifest*, all the mercy for whosoever has believed in Him, all the chastisement for him who does not believe in Him.”³²

Vahíd III: Báb 15

The fifteenth báb identifies the Manifestation of God as the BEAUTY of God, for all things become nothing before the revelations of His “BEAUTY”. Again, the teaching is reiterated that true belief is in acceptance of the most recent Manifestation of God and nothing else can take its place, even belief in thousands of previous Manifestations. He also reminds His readers that believers may become unbelievers and that non-believers may become believers in the Day of Judgment; that only God knows when *Him Whom God shall make manifest* will become manifest; that the proofs of the Manifestations and of *Him Whom God shall make manifest* in particular are His verses and His Person.

Vahíd III: Báb 16

In the sixteenth báb, the Bayán reveals that God values eagerness in obedience to Him above all things. Nobody is permitted to go beyond the limits set by the Bayán until the coming of *Him Whom God shall make manifest*. He encourages His followers to learn the sciences of letters and numbers and to organize the

passages of the Bayán in whatever way each is pleased to do so, in other words, to treat it as a thousand separate pages. The organization of the text may be changed to aid understanding, but not one word may be altered. It is in this báb that the verse mentioned in the beginning of the Book is found:

“Happy is he who looks upon the order of the splendor [Bahá’] of God, and thanks his God for this splendor [Bahá’] of God will undoubtedly manifest itself...”³³

He asserts that one line from His commentaries upon the Qur’án is worth more than all of the commentaries written by men from the revelation of the Qur’án until its abrogation in the Bayán—indeed, to compare these two is like comparing the light of the Sun to that of the stars.

Vahíd III: Báb 17

The seventeenth báb restates the Bayán’s insistence upon the preservation of the Báb’s Writings in the most perfect state possible, but each according to his capacity, and not according to a fixed standard. In this way will new believers be attracted to the Religion of the Bayán, and well taken care of Bayáns are signs that the Bábís are ready to serve *Him Whom God shall make manifest* and hence to serve God. All of the Writings of the Báb are called Bayán, and this applies to all five categories of His works—first to His verses, second to His prayers, third to His commentaries, fourth to His consideration of scientific questions, and fifth to His utterances in Persian (presumably then all the other categories were written in Arabic). Bayán is a name of God and it can be given to a child. (As we shall later see, the Báb ordains the bestowal of the names of God as names for children.) He then explains the numerical symbolism of Bayán and Vahíd, the combined value of which is 95, which is the mirror of God and of *Him Whom God shall make manifest* and which has the symbolic value of “for God”.

Vahíd III: Báb 18

In the eighteenth báb the Báb ordains that commentaries on the Bayán and all other writings made by men be written beautifully and in one script rather than in several scripts all mixed together; He desires that all things be perfected. A good copy should be made by each believer, or if he is unable to make one, by someone he selects to do so on his behalf.

Vahíd III: Báb 19

The nineteenth báb explains the meaning of ARK OF GOD as the place where the Manifestation of God is, whether this place is outwardly the highest place of grandeur or in the lowest place of the dust. Also God loves those who spend as much as they can on the Books of the Báb and who thus manifest in material terms their inestimable value; it is praiseworthy to set a high price for the purchase of the Bayán and to spend one’s wealth in the purchase thereof.

Vahíd IV

The fourth Vahíd is 92 pages long and it completes the second volume of the Bayán it is French translation by Nicolas. In this Vahíd the fundamental themes established in the first three Vahíds are reiterated and new laws are ordained, new symbols are introduced and old symbols unveiled.

Vahíd IV: Báb 1

The first báb begins with the disclosure of the twofold nature of the Manifestation of God—one aspect of which speaks on the part of God, while the other part is the most submissive slave of God who adores Him night and day. All that descends in verses originates from the first rank, is pure and unassailable by men. The significance of anything in the Writings of God does not become manifest until He wills it so, and hence at times a verse will remain obscure from the beginning of the Manifestation until a later time. The rarity of believers who are the first to recognize the Manifestation is noted, along with the insignificant rank of the appearances of the attributes of God in comparison with the Manifestation of God Himself. True faith is in seeing the the sign of God alone in the Manifestation of God, and the perfect manifestation of the attributes of God in the Manifestations of God. All created things reflect God to some degree. The Creator is in contact with His creation through the Manifestation of God alone. The Absolute Manifestation of God is in *Him Whom God shall make manifest*. He reiterates His explanation for the meaning of syrat, the BRIDGE. All of the above are themes which are found in this báb. The Syrat is the BRIDGE of understanding between the worlds of Creation and Deity. It is the Sea of the Will of God, it is the twofold nature of the Manifestation of God, and it is narrow indeed but nevertheless it is the only link between the created and the Uncreated. Because of the narrowness of the BRIDGE, the names of God were not explained in the previous Manifestations, nor were the appearances of Unity Who are the Manifestations of God. Hence it is yet another reference to the reality of the Manifestation of God.

Vahíd IV: Báb 2

The second báb of the fourth Vahíd emphasizes that acceptance of the Manifestation is inseparable from acceptance of God. He states that those who oppose *Him Whom God shall make manifest* will do so because they sincerely believe that in doing so they are fulfilling the Will of God.

Vahíd IV: Báb 3

The third báb introduces several terms which are preserved by Nicolas in their original Arabic: BIDA', DHIKIR, TASBIH, TAHAMID, TAHALIL and TAKBIR. Nicolas explains that BIDA' refers to the new creation in every Dispensation. The Essence of God is unchanging whereas His creation is constantly changing. FIRST is applied to the Essence of God, which came before all things, the Primal Will which is the first DHIKR and the first creature, the first Fire. There are four columns to reality, and these are TASBIH, TAHAMID, TAHALIL, and TAKBIR—all of these are names whereby God is praised and each one corresponds with one of the four elements: TASBIH with air, TAHAMID with fire, TAHALIL with water, and TAKBIR with earth. Everything ordained by the BIDA' of God remains unaltered until the Day of Judgment which follows the ascension of His Manifestation. Not to be cognizant of the BIDA' of God is the greatest of all sins for it deprives the believer of the knowledge of the origin of the Word of

God. What is worth more than the construction of many venerable edifices for the worship of God is to be worthy of mention by the Manifestation of God in His Day in His Writings.

Vahíd IV: Báb 4

The fourth báb again affirms that faith is made conditional upon the acceptance of the latest Manifestation of God, and that all believers are slaves of God. The spirits of all things return to the human form and the Paradise of all things is in the human Paradise. In Muhammad's time, the people in His place of residence were so blind to His station that for either seven or nine years nobody would believe in Him.

Vahíd IV: Báb 5

The Báb proclaims the fifth báb to be the same as the fourth báb. In it He prescribes the laws governing various acts—violence, marriage, rulership, punishments, holy war and the like. If God does not allow the union of His slaves under certain conditions then they are sanctioned if they disobey His Will. He has forbidden the union of believers and non-believers in marriage. He prohibits the murder of anyone by His followers, revealed that only God has the right to give and take life, and punishing this act on the part of the believer with his excommunication from the religion of the Bayán; even if the believer allows the thought of murder to enter into his heart, he leaves the religion of God—this is the greatest sin of all. Kings should prostrate themselves before the Manifestation of God, Who is the Manifestation of the King of Kings, and they should only rule if He directs them to do so, in which case nobody has the right to object. There is no greater sin than the sin of harming the Manifestation of God and His believers. The Báb affirms that His purpose in revealing laws is to protect His followers, not to upset or unduly disturb anyone. People must not be forced into becoming Bábís, and while the Báb encourages the Bábí ruler to conquer lands and subdue peoples He disallows the forced conversion of the peoples therein to His Faith. Most men are not perspicacious and consequently they are attached to the things of this world. If the believers give them these things they will accept the Faith of God.

Vahíd IV: Báb 6

The sixth báb is of great interest to the present reader because the Báb explains in this báb many of the teachings set forth in earlier abwáb in such a manner that they become easier for him to comprehend. God is not to be judged according to His acts, but His creatures are to be judged according to theirs; no one has access to God, nothing comes into contact with His Essence; He created His Will which created everything else; only the Will of God can be seen in the Manifestation, in the Letters of the Living and in all of the letters which have been generated from them; the true believer sees the Sun in himself, only the Sun is seen in him, and he follows the Sun wherever It goes; the power of God is manifested in His most recent Manifestation, His Faith and His “nation”; the path of God revealed in each Dispensation is endless and eternal in the spiritual worlds, but has an end and changes in the material world; the Manifestations of God are One and all manifest God; God is the Hidden and the Manifest; those who know God are in the utmost happiness when the Manifestation is manifest and are miserable and sorrowful when His appearance is withdrawn; all attributes are created in the shadow of the sovereignty of the Will and all depend upon It for their existence—these are some of the salient points made in this báb.

In detailing the subject of will, the Báb reveals that acceptance of the Manifestation of God entails submission to His Will and sacrifice of personal will. When the believer rejects or acts independently of Will of the Manifestation, the personal will rules within him and the personal will cannot bring him happiness so during the period when he is ruled by the personal will he is in the Fire. Actions which are engaged in for the sake of consciously and deliberately opposing the Will of God or with full knowledge that the Will of God ordains otherwise have not the strength of a fly. In the Dispensation of Islam all believers lived according to the Will of God and the only acts which were contrary to that Will were nevertheless believed to be right and satisfactory by those who engaged in them. There is no power nor force save in God. Even if a person is seeking the truth and leaves one Faith believing that it contains what he perceives to be false, in whatever Faith he enlists or if he searches in creation instead of in religion, he returns to God and is judged according to his actions. The Báb declares that *Him Whom God shall make manifest* has a monopoly on God's power and that it is through His aid that the Báb's Manifestation is taking place. He explains that the first Manifestation is made manifest in the last, that all must turn towards the Manifestation Who is Manifest when He is made manifest for at that time He is the only exponent of God's Will and "He doeth whatsoever He willeth and ordaineth whatsoever He desireth".

The true believer can see all Manifestations in each Manifestation, see the essence of order rather than the ranks multiplied from it in each Manifestation which are the ranks of the believers. In developing the theme of the attachment of the true believer to the Manifestation of God, the Báb compares the love between human beings to spiritual love and the love of hearts. Human love is unquestionably inferior to spiritual love and the latter is likewise inferior to the love of the heart. He discusses the various progressive stages of love and the fates of those who attain to the love of God. He defines these as the ones who are joyful because of their works in the path of God, independent of the conditions of this fleeting world and who recognize that God has not ordained perpetual happiness for His creatures, for whom the pain and sorrow of separation from the Manifestation of God is more delicious than any earthly happiness. He calls upon His followers to look at the fruit of His Revelation and of all Revelations, that they may discern the truth:

"The fruit of the Bayán is this: that you recognize the Point of Truth at the moment of His Manifestation, for, in knowing Him, you will know all that is good; and that you will not remain in obscurity for (otherwise) all good is forbidden to you."³⁴

Vahíd IV: Báb 7

In the seventh báb the Báb re-reveals the process of divine creation through the Primal Will, and He states that God begins all things in one Manifestation and ends them and begins them anew in the next Manifestation and that this cycle of creation is eternal.

Vahíd IV: Báb 8

The eighth báb elucidates the theme of the creative power of the verses of God. By these verses God creates, nourishes, gives life and bestows death upon all things. All things return to the human order which is created of four signs: 1)the verse of creation which is his heart; 2)the verses of nourishment which is his spirit; 3)the verse of death which is his being; 4)the verse of life which is his body. All things are manifested

by these signs and these signs are manifested by the 19 appearances of affirmation and the 19 appearances of negation. Everything which creates or nourishes or gives life or death in persuance of the Will of God is acting for God and therefore it is God Who is committing these acts. Everything which is not done in the name of God or in persuance of His Will cannot be ascribed to Him and is caused by the unbelievers. The glass of water of a follower of the Báb is worth more than everything that the unbelievers can do in this world, be it even in the highest degree of love. The Báb closes this báb with the affirmation that it is better to comprehend one of the ranks of the new Manifestation than to know all of the ranks of the previous Manifestation. He counsels His followers to wait attentively for the appearance of *Him Whom God shall make manifest*.

Vahíd IV: Báb 9

The ninth báb is concerned with the behavior of the kings or nobles who become Bábís—those who become believers will be richly recompensed. The Báb reveals that although it is possible to enumerate the man monarchs registered in the Faith of Islam from the time of the appearance of Muhammad to the declaration of Himself, not one soul among them followed word for word the Faith of Islam in his heart and in his deeds. The king who becomes a Bábí will be assisted by the power of God and he will conquer all of the nations and he will not have to take from the believers the value of a grain of mustard seed.

Vahíd IV: Báb 10

The tenth báb asserts that the standard and proof of all knowledge and learning is the Book of God, which is the Bayán in His Dispensation. The purpose of the knowledge of sciences (including the sciences of numbers, grammar, logic, jurisprudence, religious proofs, etymology, syntax, and archaic words) is to understand the revealed verses of God and thus the Will of God for man. When a new Manifestation of God appears the old sciences devised by men to understand the previous Manifestation are no longer serviceable, unless He declares them to be of service, and everything that is manifested in the new Revelation is clear to the true believer, independent of all past sciences. The Báb therefore prohibits the writing of books on the sciences of religious proofs, logic, theology and philosophy, archais words, etymology and syntax. He further prohibits instruction from books other than His Writings unless they have been written in conformity with the science of the Bayán in all of its degrees, concerning the knowledge of God and the first and final causes of existence. Consequently, it is forbidden to Bábís to teach the old sciences which have been referred to by name in this báb, although instruction in other sciences is permitted, including mathematics, astronomy, physiology, medicine and so forth, that is non-theological and non-linguistic sciences. A writer is permitted to quote from the Writings of the Báb in the course of writing his book but only if he believes in the Báb. God will not forgive the man who occupies himself exclusively with these old sciences. For those who believe, the Book of God is sufficient—the Bayán is clear enough as it stands and is in need of no explanations or commentaries. The Báb claims that He is capable of writing the equivalent of the Qur'án in two days and two nights, and that if all mankind were to unite they would not have the power to unravel a single verse thereof, much less produce one like it. The verses of Gd cannot be compared with the verses of men.

Vahíd IV: Báb 11

Most of the teachings of the eleventh báb are familiar to the reader by now: the Bayán as the law of God for all mankind in the Dispensation of the Báb, according to which all men will be judged; the independence of *Him Whom God shall make manifest* from the law revealed by the Báb; the inseparability of belief in God, the Primal Will and the Manifestation of God; the necessity of believing in the current Manifestation of God (as well as in all previous Manifestations of God) in order to be accounted a true believer in God; the true succession to Muhammad by the twelve Imams of Ithna ‘Ashari Shi’i Islam. He makes another reference in this báb to the “splendor of God” (Bahá’u’lláh) in connection with *Him Whom God shall make manifest*; He asserts that Jesus Christ foretold the appearance of Muhammad with these words “After Me will come He Whose name shall be Ahmad”³⁵; and He declares that whoever makes a believer happy makes the Manifestation of God happy, and whoever makes the Manifestation of God happy satisfies God. The concluding verses of the eleventh báb maintain that the objective of God in revealing the Bayán is that each reader may harvest the fruit of His Revelation for himself.

Vahíd IV: Báb 12

In the twelfth báb He again asserts the progressiveness of Revelation, the innate knowledge and the independence of human learning with which all of the Manifestations of God have been endowed, and the eternity of the religion of God—for which there will never be a last Manifestation. God abrogates old laws in each new Dispensation and substitutes greater and more elevated laws in their place. It is the Word of God and His command which makes sacred whatever it touches. In every Dispensation the Word of God decrees certain places as holy and abrogates the holy places of the previous Dispensation. In this báb the Báb revokes the “holiness” of the Faith of Islam, forbidding pilgrimages to Mecca and Medina and to all other Muslim shrines.

Vahíd IV: Báb 13

In the thirteenth báb He ordains the preservation of the holy places of Islam, perhaps as historical monuments rather than as places of pilgrimage, and decrees that the money collected in these places be spent for their benefit and upkeep.

Vahíd IV: Báb 14

The fourteenth báb designates the shrines of the Faith of the Báb—the places of the birth and death of each one of the Letters of the Living, of the Báb and of the eighteen disciples whom He chose. Asylum must be granted to anyone who seeks it in the places associated with the Letters of the Living. It is praiseworthy to make a pilgrimage to and pray in the shrines He has established, but it will not save the believer from the chastisement of God if he does not accept *Him Whom God shall make manifest* in His Day. Those who oppose *Him Whom God shall make manifest* will do so because they cleave to the forms of religion without attending to the spirit thereof, which is the image of God made manifest in His Manifestation. The Báb teaches the Golden Rule to His followers, intending that thereby *Him Whom God shall make manifest* will not be attacked or harmed by Bábís even if they should not accept Him. The time of the appearance of *Him Whom God shall make manifest* will be the Great Day of Judgment, when all human

beings who have ever existed will be judged according to the Will of God. It appears that this Day of Judgment is distinguished from that which takes place in each new Dispensation during the lifetime of the new Manifestation.

Vahíd IV: Báb 15

The fifteenth báb underlines the right of anyone to seek asylum in the holy places, and forbids anyone from interfering with his exercise of that right. In fact, out of respect for God and the holiness of God commemorated in these holy places, asylum will be accorded anyone who seeks it though he may be far away from the actual shrines.

Vahíd IV: Báb 16

The Báb explains the purpose for having holy places in the sixteenth báb. There is no and never will be a fixed abode for God. Nor is there a fixed abode for the Manifestation of God (other than the Primal Will from which each Manifestation is made manifest), for each one appears in a different place and veneration is accorded that place, which changes with each Manifestation. Men circle around the Manifestation of God while He is in this world, and when He leaves this world they circle around the place designated by Him for this purpose, it being symbolic of their circumambulation of Him. The purpose of pilgrimage is to draw closer to God and to recognize Him in His successive Manifestations. It is of no benefit to men for them to make pilgrimages to holy places and then fail to recognize the Manifestation of God when He appears. The Báb dwells on the importance of acting properly towards one's fellow believers while on pilgrimage, citing the misconduct of some of His fellow pilgrims on His pilgrimage to Mecca in 1844, asserting that the hearts of believers are closer to God than any place of dust (including by allusion Mecca and Medina), condemning disputes, discourtesy, selfishness and calling all pilgrims to observe knowledge, patience, resignation and modesty. He who makes the pilgrimage in the right manner will be forgiven his sins. The Báb ordains that believers do not have to make pilgrimage if they are separated from the place of pilgrimage by an ocean or some other major body of water; He also permits the believer to give whatever means he would need to make his pilgrimage to another believer and thereby fulfill his obligation by proxy. The Báb means to spare His follower the torment of a sea voyage (where were real enough during His lifetime and in the part of the world which He frequented). God gives double the reward for every good deed wrought by a believer who works on the sea, because of the greater difficulty with which he lives his life in comparison with the believer who lives on the land. In this báb the Báb calls for the establishment of a universal rapid mail and news service to be established by His followers similar to that which existed in European countries. By means of this service, all people would be able to know what was happening all over the world a few days instead of months after it occurred. The purpose of this service is that all may hear about the appearance of *Him Whom God shall make manifest* soon after His declaration and that all may have the honor of being one of the first believers in Him.

Vahíd IV: Báb 17

The seventeenth báb affirms that the possessor of all things is God, and that God has a greater right to any and all properties than does anyone other than Himself. Buildings built for the worship of God must supercede the normal laws which regulate the ownership of property. It is not permitted to sell lands

immediately adjacent to the House of God (that is, to buildings reserved for the worship of God); if beautiful dependencies to the House of God are to be erected then the lands which are adjacent to this House may be seized by right of eminent domain for that purpose.

Vahíd IV: Báb 18

The last two abwáb of the fourth Vahíd treat the details of pilgrimage during the Dispensation of the Báb. In the course of the eighteenth báb, pilgrimage is reaffirmed as the circumambulation of the House of God symbolizing the Manifestation of God; that when the Manifestation of God Himself appears all must circle around Him and not around buildings; that only those who can make the pilgrimage without hardship are permitted and encouraged to do so; that the Writings of *Him Whom God shall make manifest* are the best proof of the truth of His mission. Pilgrims should give four mithqáls³⁶ of gold to the four columns of the House of God to be collected and divided annually by and among the 19 servants who attend to that House; slaves, children, servants, those who have been robbed while on pilgrimage or who are poverty-stricken are exempted from this obligation. Pilgrimage is required only once during one's life. Women are not required to make pilgrimage. All three of these ordinances remove hardships from pilgrimage for those who undertake it and eliminate the requirement to make pilgrimage for those who would be hard-trying by its attendant difficulties. It is forbidden to buy a pilgrimage for a dead person. It is each individual's responsibility, if he is able, to make the pilgrimage during his lifetime—seeing the Manifestation of God for himself when He is living, and visiting the place associated with Him when He has passed on. The purpose of the pilgrimage is to prepare the pilgrim for the recognition of *Him Whom God shall make manifest*—when He declares Himself, all must turn to Him for He is the House of God. The Báb reveals that,

“In every era there have been blessed beings as guardians of His House who look into the science of the intimate of the intimate.”³⁷

In a footnote to this verse, Nicolas explains that there are three degrees of science or knowledge according to Shi'i theologians, the highest being the science of the intimate of the intimate, which is understood only by the Tree of Truth which is the Manifestation of God. We encounter this mysterious verse:

“And on this fourth column (the Letters of the Living—the abwáb) has passed, in days and nights, the number of eight Vahíds.”³⁸

According to Nicolas, this is the verse which Bahá'u'lláh applies to His own Manifestation, having translated it in the following fashion:

“And in the ninth year thou shalt be in the presence of thy Lord.”³⁹

The Báb reveals three truths for the first time in this báb which are vital to our understanding of His teaching on progressive revelation and the attributes of the true believer. He warns His followers not to be alienated from *Him Whom God shall make manifest* on account of that Manifestation's teachings nor to be kept back from recognizing Him because of a lack of popular drift in His direction, or, in other words, for lack of companions in belief. He also affirms that whereas those who have been informed of the

Revelation of God are obligated to respond to that Revelation with justice, this requirement does not hold for those who are ignorant of the Revelation. Finally, He proclaims that:

“The manifestation (*Him Whom God shall make manifest*) will take place in such rank that you (the believers in the Báb) will be able to be convinced of its truth for the proof will be perfect for you and for the others; God is the best of those who ordain.”⁴⁰

Vahíd IV: Báb 19

The nineteenth báb of the fourth Vahíd gives permission for women who live in Shíráz or in the vicinity of this town which the Báb has made the foremost place of pilgrimage of His Dispensation to make the pilgrimage by circumambulating a circle of 19 women seated on chairs during the night, chanting prayers and then returning to their homes; women are required to give four mithqáls of gold once in a lifetime a part of the pilgrimage although they may make the pilgrimage many times. Pilgrimage is not important for women though. The Báb reveals the following:

“That which for them is the very capital of their proximity to God, is the contentment of their husbands and the love of their children. For each one of them, all that she can testify to her children of mercy, and of solicitude beyond that which is her duty is greater than any obedience to the Intermediary by Whom she searches to come closer to God.”⁴¹

He further asserts that God has ordained that parents be loving to their children and children of their parents and of each other, and this is because all were created, nourished, given life and death for the One Person Who is the Manifestation of God, in the Báb’s Dispensation, *Him Whom God shall make manifest*, and the Manifestation is the Sign of the Unity of God. Love creates Unity and Unity creates Love.

Vahíd V

The fifth Vahíd contains many new ordinances and teachings not found in earlier Vahíds.

Vahíd V: Báb 1

The first báb reveals the nature of the mosque, which is the House of God around which the believers circle when the Manifestation of God has repaired to the spiritual worlds.

Vahíd V: Báb 2

The second báb stipulates that 18 mosques should be built, each in honor of one of the Letters of the Living; in each of these mosques there should be as many lights as possible, even 2001 or more lamps so that these mosques will like up like the stars of the firmament. He proclaims that mosques are built according to the command of God which is revealed in His verses. He warns the Bábís not to be blind to the meaning of pilgrimage, to the knowledge of where it leads and the reason for its existence. He furthermore warns them that prayer and remembrance of the Letters of the Living are meaningless, nay, harmful if the believer rejects the Manifestation of God (*Him Whom God shall make manifest*) when He

appears and if He and His Letters are forbidden to enter the mosques ordained by the previous Manifestation (the Báb)...for in this case such “worship” reveals the “believer” to be a hypocrite and spiritually blind. The Muslims, He asserts, are guilty of both of these transgressions, having not only rejected the Báb and His Letters but also forbidden them entry to the mosques ordained by Muhammad in the Qur’án. Pilgrimage to the House of God has always existed in the past and will exist always in the future, in the manifestation of *Him Whom God shall make manifest*.

Vahíd V: Báb 3

The third báb is concerned with the calendar revealed by the Báb, which is composed of 361 days of 19 months each having 19 days. The first month of this year is called Bahá’ and the last is called A’la. Hence the month that directly preceeds the beginning of the new year bears one of the names of the Báb, Who called Himself Nuqt-i-A’la, the Point of the Highest. The entire religion of the Bayán is based upon the number of Unity (of the Unity of God) which is 19. The meanings of the months are revealed as follows: the first three months are of the fire, and in them the creation of the fire of the love of God took place in the hearts of contingent beings; the following four months are of eternal love, and in them the creation of the spirits of all beings and the nourishment of God bestowed upon these beings were manifested; the next six months are of the Unity of God, and in them God made the creatures die of spiritual negation; and the last six months which are of the earth witness God giving life to those who love only Him and are firm in His love. He asserts that all creatures are “multiplications of unity by unity”⁴², hence, 19 times 19. All things are generated from the Unity of God. The Báb writes that the first month of the calendar is the month of the Point (that is, the Manifestation of God, for Moses is called the Point of the Torah, Jesus the Point of the Gospels, Muhammad the Point of the Qur’án even as the Báb calls Himself the Point of the Bayán) and all the other 18 months revolve around this Point. The same is true of the names of the days of the month:

“God called it the month of Bahá’ because the luminosity of all the months is found in Him. This first month, He fixed it for *Him Whom God shall make manifest*, and each of the days of this month He fixed for one of the Letters of the Unity.”⁴³

The first day of the new year, which is the first day of Bahá’ is called NawRuz, a Persian appellation meaning “New Day”. Whoever is constant on this day and who recites the formula of the Unity of God 361 times will be protected by Gd for the entire year. This, the Báb writes, is not revealed in order to glorify this day but rather to admonish the believers to glorify and humble themselves before God and before His Manifestation.

Vahíd V: Báb 4

The fourth báb ordains that children be named according to the names of God, so that in the day of the appearance of *Him Whom God shall make manifest* all may have names pleasing to Gd. Men and women should be named according to the names of God, and also those of Muhammad, of ‘Alí, of Fatima, of ‘Alí Muhammad, of Muhammad ‘Alí, of Hasan and Husayn. Apart from the names of God, the best names are the conjunctions of ‘Alí and Muhammad. “The fruit of this order,” writes the Báb in reference to naming children by the names of God, “is that, each time that one pronounces these

names, one is reminded of the Master of these names.”⁴⁴ Being named by a name of God does not make the bad man good however. The rest of the fourth báb is devoted to two themes: the value of all things is determined according to the spirit of man; and the essence of the religion of God. As to the first of these themes, all things are related to the spirit of man—if a believer sits upon the earth the spirit of the earth is happy; if an unbeliever sits upon the earth the spirit thereof is unhappy and only God knows how much. The perfection of each existence is in belief in God, in each Manifestation of God, and in whatever that Manifestation reveals. Nothing can arrive at its “Paradise” without having manifested the highest degree of perfection of which it is capable. The second theme, the essence of religion is expressed in these terms:

“True knowledge is the knowledge of God and this is naught but the knowledge of His Manifestation in each Manifestation: wealth is but poverty in relation to Him, it consists in having need of nothing besides Him. This knowledge is made manifest only through the Intermediary of the vision of the Manifestation of He Who is the Manifested.”⁴⁵

The final theme of this báb is that the manifestation of *Him Whom God shall make manifest* is the touchstone⁴⁶ of true faith.

Vahíd V: Báb 5

In the fifth báb the Báb treats the importance of the propagation of the Faith of God. He declares that it was the Will of God that Islam be spread throughout the world and that the reality that is was not spread everywhere is due not to the impotence of God or of His Messenger Muhammad, but to the weakness of the Muslims. He expressed the sincere desire that all the peoples of the world become Bábís during His Dispensation so that all would recognize *Him Whom God shall make manifest* when He appears. Every human being and every thing should adhere to the Faith of God in the time of every Manifestation, for those who do not will be condemned to the fire of unbelief eternally unless they repent and become believers. Nobody has the right to breathe without giving his faith to the Manifestation of God. To the kings and sovereigns who are believers (but not to individual believers who are their subjects) God has given the duty to appropriate the property of non-believers and otherwise induce them to become believers so that they will be saved from the fire of unbelief. In referring to the manifestation of *Him Whom God shall make manifest* the Báb writes:

“Be attentive to yourselves, for all religion consists of coming to His aid (that of the Manifestation) and not in religious acts, which were revealed in the Bayán: and this at the moment of His Manifestation. For, before His Manifestation, whoever turns away from the Bayán’s laws, be it the width of a grain of barley, he is turned away from Him.”⁴⁷

Vahíd V: Báb 6

The sixth báb reveals the laws and principles governing the use and sale and distribution of property as well as the spiritual meanings of these laws and principles. As we have heard before, during the lifetime of the Manifestation of God, He is the rightful proprietor of all goods and all things must be turned over to Him for His decision. After His passing, all transactions must take place according to the Book of God. Hence, all transactions not done with His permission are illegal and illicit. The Báb reveals the proper

manner for Bábí sovereigns to divide the spoils of conquest among the various ranks of Bábís. These ranks are determined according to the capacity and closeness of each believer to God.

Vahíd V: Báb 7

The seventh báb permits believers to do commerce with unbelievers and decrees that while all things in the possession of unbelievers are impure, when they come into the possession of believers they immediately become pure. All good things, He asserts should be owned by the Bábís so that they can offer these things to *Him Whom God shall make manifest* when He appears. The Báb repeats the teaching that the attributes of God (such as His purity) can not be compared to the attributes of His creatures, and that, moreover, God is exalted above all attributes.

Vahíd V: Báb 8

The eighth báb makes it obligatory for all Bábís who can read to peruse at least 19 verses of the Bayán every day, and permits them to read as many verses as please them, to plunge into the sea of His verses so that they may find the pearls hidden therein. Illiterate Bábís are obliged to repeat the following verse 19 times a day in lieu of reading the verses: “It is God Who is my Lord, and I give nobody partnership with God.”⁴⁸ He affirms the superiority of the verses of *Him Whom God shall make manifest* to His verses and indicates that the origin, inspiration and purpose of the Bayán is this same Manifestation of God:

“I bear witness by the Eternal and Blessed Essence that if in the Day of the manifestation of *Him Whom God shall make manifest* someone hears one of His verses and repeats it, this is better for him than to repeat the Bayán a thousand times.”⁴⁹

He reminds the Bábís that the seemingly best and most knowledgeable among the believers is accounted among the negators of the religion of God if he does not accept the new Manifestation of God.

Vahíd V: Báb 9

The ninth báb ordains that before using anything, all believers must make mention of one of the names of God either in his heart (silently) or openly (out loud). If he is unable to do so, then he must recite the formula “In the name of God, the Most Exalted, the Most Holy”. The purpose of this commandment is that the believer will realize that everything is an expression of the Will of God, that all things are mirrors reflecting *Him Whom God shall make manifest* and that without Him they could not exist.

Vahíd V: Báb 10

The tenth báb reveals the inseparability of the action of anything and its existence—the fire and its action of burning, the lamp and its action of lighting, God and His actions of creating, destroying, nourishing and so forth. The Báb requires all male Bábís to write in the interior and exterior of a five-pointed star (pentagram or pentacle) and all female Bábís to write in five concentric circles. Presumably what they are enjoined to write are the verses revealed by the Báb.

Vahíd V: Báb 11

In the eleventh báb the Báb reminds His followers that every one of His orders is a gift offered to *Him Whom God shall make manifest*; and that those who accept the Manifestation of God in His Day are a rare as red sulphur. He reveals a prayer to be said over the newborn bábe and for the dead. The purpose of reciting the former is that the bábe may recognize *Him Whom God shall make manifest* should he live to see the Day of Judgment in which He will be made manifest. The Báb attributes the dissidences which have divided the believers in each Manifestation to the unfaithfulness of certain of these believers in relation to the Manifestation, this being a particular problem after the passing of the Manifestation. He asserts that most people become believers only when they perceive that this course of action is popular. He identifies the Book of God as the **CORD** whereby men may make spiritual progress if they fear God.

Vahíd V: Báb 12

The twelfth and thirteenth abwáb go into further detail concerning death, burial, and the writing of a final will and testament. The twelfth báb reveals the intimate connection between the inner nature (also called the intimate body) and the visible body: everything which pertains to the one pertains to the other. Suffering in the visible body causes the intimate body to suffer. A ring with an inscription is to be placed on the finger of the visible body of the deceased when this body is buried in a crystal casket in order to protect it from danger. The body should be placed in the highest form of mineral which is stone, and, if possible, the most perfect stone which is crystal.

Vahíd V: Báb 13

The thirteenth báb requires every believer when close to death to write a will and testament according to the rules ordained in the Bayán. In this testament he must declare his belief in God, in the Báb, in the Letters of the Living and other aspects of his faith. This testament must be written in the most beautiful handwriting possible and it must be preserved carefully by each generation into whose hands it is entrusted until *Him Whom God shall make manifest* makes His appearance, when it should be given to Him so that He may respond to this testament if He wishes to do so. The Báb cautions His followers to make their declarations with perspicacity that they might derive the just benefits therefrom. Furthermore, He warns against outward faith which is blind and ignorant of the living truth and He identifies **PERSPICACITY** as an attribute of every true believer. The purpose of writing a will and testament is *Him Whom God shall make manifest*.

Vahíd V: Báb 14

The fourteenth báb is concerned with the redefinition of the meaning of purity in the new Dispensation of God. Purity is derived not from anything in itself, but from the Tree of the Origin of the Order of God, which has willed it to be pure. In other words, all things are intermediaries of purity, not sources thereof:

“The images that purify are: 1)belief in the Bayán, which purifies the body of the believer; 2)the Book of God...; 3)the name of God...; 4)the rupture of the association of a thing with an unbeliever and the commencement of the association of this thing with believer; 5)the Tree of Truth in the

Day of its manifestation and all that depends upon Him; 6)the four elements; 7)the sun; 8)that which changes in nature: all that, on condition that the object to purify is not essentially impure.”⁵⁰

The Báb further asserts that “Nothing in the Bayán is more beloved of God than neatness, purity and cleanliness.”⁵¹ The purpose of purity is to bring happiness to all, to prevent any disgust for another to develop, particularly if that one is a stranger. He affirms that He is changing the laws of purity as they are followed by Muslims, and that obedience to these new laws is only worthwhile if one recognizes the station of *Him Whom God shall make manifest*.

Vahíd V: Báb 15

In the fifteenth báb sperm [semen] is revealed to be pure in the eye of God; God loves it when the believer is perfectly clean and when this is easily accomplished and not difficult; that if a believer call another believer impure, he himself becomes an unbeliever; that impurity is not communicated from one person to another as the Muslims believe, and that this latter teaching is not contained in the Qur’án.

Vahíd V: Báb 16

The sixteenth báb is given over more predominantly to teachings than to laws. The laws are as follows: believers must give 19 percent of what they own to *Him Whom God shall make manifest* as well as all things which they possess which are without comparison (which are unique) unless they are too poor to do so—for He is the rightful possessor of all things during His lifetime. He reveals that whoever obeys the Bayán is a believer, and each according to the degree of his obedience. Nobody has the right to tell anyone that he is not a believer—if he does so then he must pay a fine to *Him Whom God shall make manifest*. He must likewise pay a fine if he does not give whatever he possesses which is unique to *Him Whom God shall make manifest*. “The greatest thing that God loves among the Bayánis and which manifests itself among them, is their mutual love of one another.”⁵² Progressive revelation is masterfully depicted in the following passage:

“At the moment of the manifestation of the Prophet of God⁵³, the Testimony of God was perfect for the people of the Evangel, and that which was promised them was manifested with the Testimony of their religion. But, as they (the Christians) remained in obscurity, their works were rendered in vain, as they did not even allow the idea that He Who was promised by Jesus could have come without their immediately believing in Him to penetrate into their hearts—and nevertheless, it is evident that He returned. It is thus in [the case of] every Manifestation of God—the nation of the preceding Manifestation, intending to be scrupulous and attentive to their religion, remain in ignorance of his very religion.”⁵⁴

Vahíd V: Báb 17

The seventeenth báb reveals ordinances regulating prayer. Each believer must recite one of the names of God 95 times every day of the year. The first day of the month of 19 days he must recite “Allah’u’Abha”, the second day he must recite “Allah’u’A’zam”, the third through the nineteenth days he must recite “Allah’u’Aqdam”. Through the recitation of these names the believer may draw closer to God, for in them can be seen nothing but God. Likewise, in the Letters of the Living one can see nothing but God, but

neither the names nor the Letters are God, but rather are they the mirrors of His Reality. Later in the báb it is revealed that other names of God may be recited in place of these particular ones, but in any case they must be recited 95 times in between sunrise and sunset.

Vahíd V: Báb 18

Regulations guiding commercial relations are revealed in the eighteenth báb. There must be a contract between the salesman and the buyer, and a sale is only legal when both parties agree to it, although this agreement does not have to be written down. Those who engage in commerce are entitled to make a profit, and likewise those who lend money are permitted to charge interest, but they must be aware of and inspired by the benevolence and mercy of God in these matters.

Vahíd V: Báb 19

The nineteenth báb reveals various laws related to money matters. A person who accumulates a certain amount of money must pay a percentage of this amount to the sovereign of his land if that sovereign is just and if he is a believer. Every year that he accumulates this amount of property he must give a fixed amount to the king. This law is ordained in the Bayán and it must be followed by all believers but the sovereign cannot enforce it. This money is given to the sovereign so that he can come to the aid of *Him Whom God shall make manifest* when He manifests Himself. In pursuance of this theme of enjoined by voluntary giving, the Báb writes as follows:

“In the Bayán, no adoration is more agreeable to God than the profit which one person voluntarily visits upon another, even if this profit takes no other form than contentment which he causes to penetrate the other’s heart. No act is further distant from God than the damage visited upon someone by another, be this damage but the sentiment of sorrow.”⁵⁵

The greatest Paradise is to be found in acts of obedience to the Bayán, the greatest Fire in going beyond the limits of the Bayán, and by doing “violence to someone even if this violence is only of a weight of a mustard seed.”⁵⁶ In this báb, the value of the weights and measures used by the Iranians is changed, with a new system made up of units of 19 and the multiple thereof. The Báb stipulates that those who owe debts previous to this change of system are obligated to pay back those debts according to the old system. The concluding statement of this báb is to the effect that God will separate the good from the evil in the Day of Judgment.

Vahíd VI

Vahíd VI: Báb 1

The sixth Vahíd begins with a first báb that gives exposition to the proper organization, the real meaning, the extent, the speed of revelation and the epochal nature of the Báb’s Writings. All of these Writings are denoted Bayán, meaning “Exposition”. The Báb ordains that His Writings be assembled into 19 volumes, with abwáb of between one and 2001 verses each, the first three volumes to be given over to verses [ayat],

the next four to sermons [khutba], followed by six volumes of commentaries [tafsir], and six of scientific questions [ilm]. Each believer (who is literate) must have a book of 1000 verses from which to read every day. The Báb reveals that the name of Bayán applies to the verses first, for they are the most sublime testimonies of the Manifestation of God; second to the sermons, third to the commentaries, fourth to the scientific questions, and fifth to those composed in Persian. Nevertheless, as all have descended from God, all are verses. He warns His followers to be attentive, to realize that God is unknowable by any means and that *Him Whom God shall make manifest* is the Sovereign Lord Whom they must recognize in order to be saved from the Fire of unbelief. “In effect, all of the Bayán and the spirits attached to it are like a garden in the palm of hand of *Him Whom God shall make manifest*.”⁵⁷ Through a spiritual act, the Manifestation of God gives life to believers, and annihilates unbelievers.

The Báb cautions Bábís not to use the verses of the Bayán to argue against the claims of *Him Whom God shall make manifest*⁵⁸ and He further maintains that science is only fruitful if the scientist is informed of the knowledge of God.⁵⁹ “Knowledge is the knowledge of God, of His Prophet, of the images of His order and of His law. To nothing else is the word knowledge applied by intelligent people.”⁶⁰ In this báb the Báb reveals the number of words in a divinely-revealed verse, that is, a line of metrical writing. “Every 30 letters form one line, which, with the accents forms 40 words.”⁶¹ He calls upon the true believer to read all of His Writings, from the first to the last, so that he might perceive their evolution from conformity to Qur’anic law to conformity to Bayánic law. All of His Writings are “the utterance of the Point of Truth...But the divine purpose is more evident in the most recent verses.”⁶² He affirms that the path of God is straight and narrow, and that Bayánis must not fix their attention upon the Bayán to such an extent that they fail to recognize the Manifestation of the Revealer of the Bayán in *Him Whom God shall make manifest*.

Vahíd VI: Báb 2

The second báb of the sixth Vahíd explains the purifying qualities of water, their origin and the conditions under which they become manifest. Water is pure because it is given purity by the Word of God. It can purify other things if it has not changed in color, odor and taste, and this applies as much to small as to large quantities of water. Purity is as easily derived from a cup as from a river of water, and the drop of water demonstrates the purity of God as much as the entire sea. Every house must be equipped with a basin where water may be kept to purify and cleanse the inhabitants. What is most important though is not physical purity, but “purification of the essential body by the water of Unity.”⁶³ The “water of Unity” is belief in the most recent Manifestation of God. Whereas the Europeans are scrupulously clean of body, they are spiritually impure because they do not believe in the most recent Manifestation of God. He warns Bábís not to pollute water by dipping things into it to make them pure and thereby rendering it disgusting and impure. His stated purpose is that believers may not disgust one another and *Him Whom God shall make manifest*. Consequently, the maintenance of the perfect purity of water is accounted the most precious thing in the eyes of God.

Vahíd VI: Báb 3

The third báb ordains that a bath be built in every village so that in every place the believer goes he may purify himself. The Báb asserts that the order of purity is more precise and exacting than in any previous Dispensation. Perfection is not required in matters of cleanliness alone: everyone must do the most perfect work of which he is capable. By aspiring to perfection in all things the believer may be a cause of torment to no one. The Báb calls upon His followers to recognize and obey *Him Whom God shall make manifest* immediately after they hear the announcement of His appearance. Alluding to the time of His manifestation, the Báb writes:

“In the day of the manifestation of *Him Whom God shall make manifest*, God knows at what age He will manifest Him. Be attentive that from the beginning of the manifestation to the number 19, in every year, you give your faith to the letter of life in such manner that one may not lay claim to the fruits of the previous manifestation if it is not by means of the subsequent manifestation.”⁶⁴

Vahíd VI: Báb 4

The fourth báb directs that the five regions of the earth be reserved exclusively for the residence of Bábís, these being: 1)Fars; 2)the two ‘Iraqs; 3)Adhirbayjan; 4)Khurasan; 5)Mazindaran. He indicates that “God knows from which side of these places the Sun of Reality will arise.”⁶⁵ It is better, He asserts, to breathe once in one of these five lands than to adore God for 10,000 years in some other land. He again reveals that there is no other true knowledge apart from the knowledge of God, and that attainment to this knowledge is what separates the believer from the unbeliever.

Vahíd VI: Báb 5

In the fifth báb He ordains the specific greetings that female believers are to use with one another and with male believers, and that male believers are to use with one another and with female believers. In greeting each other, women believers must say “Allah’u’Abha” and respond with “Allah’u’Ajmal” and men believers must say “Allah’u’Akbar” and respond with “Allah’u’A’zam”. The purpose of this is that believers may have faith in *Him Whom God shall make manifest* when He appears by having affirmed in their greetings to one another that it is He Who renews the garments of sublimity, elevation, luminosity and perfect beauty made mention of in these greetings. He again explains the purpose of religion which is to prepare the believer to accept the successive Manifestations of God, and states that all the Manifestations of God have been persecuted by the believers in former Dispensations and that this has occurred in His Day and will take place in the Day of *Him Whom God shall make manifest*.

Vahíd VI: Báb 6

The sixth báb calls for the effacing of all books except those written in the Dispensation of the Báb. He reveals that the Books of former Dispensations have been annulled by the Book of each succeeding Dispensation, and that all who continue to believe in the old Books are unbelievers. This is even more true of books which are man-made, which are reflections of the superceded Book of God. Hence, “in the Day

of the manifestation of *Him Whom God shall make manifest*” to recite one verse from among His verses is more elevated than to read the entire Bayán and that which emanates from the Bayán.”⁶⁶

Vahíd VI: Báb 7

The seventh báb sets forth the conditions which must govern the institution of marriage among believers in the Báb. The male spouse must give the female a dowry. This dowry is to be of mithqáls of gold if the believer is a city dweller and mithqáls of silver if a country dweller. The dowry should be composed of no less than 19 mithqáls and no greater than 95 mithqáls, and if between the two then preferably in increments of 19. Both the male and female partner must be agreeable to the marriage and must each recite a specific verse which has the meaning of “for God”. The two parties must sign an affidavit that bears witness to their intention, and if possible they should receive the permission of both sets of parents—this is however not required. Wedding gifts are permitted, from the bride to the groom, the groom to the bride, and from family and friends to the married couple. If the dowry is not paid the marriage cannot take place. Fundamental verities are recapitulated in this báb following its exposition of the marriage laws, including the unchanging Essence of God; belief in God being inseparable from belief in and obedience to the most recent Manifestation of God; the eternity of the formula of faith—“There is no God but the [one] God and the Manifestation of God (the most recent one) is His Prophet”. The Báb also refers to the leadership of the Letters of the Living appointed by every Manifestation of God to guide the believers after His passing; to the unfaithfulness of believers who do not follow these appointed leaders, such as ‘Alí and the other eleven Imams in the case of Islam, and the Bábu’l-Báb (Mulla Husayn) and the seventeen other Letters of the Living in the case of the Bábí Faith; the impossibility of human beings communicating with God other than through the intermediation of the most recent Manifestation of God. The purpose of God in sending His Manifestations is that all believers may become united, manifesting thereby the unity of the Manifestation Who Himself manifests the Unity of God. There is a hierarchy of comprehension according to the Báb. The simple villager cannot comprehend the Revelation of God so he goes to the village priest for enlightenment; the priest in turn goes to believers who are higher in rank than himself in order to attain a more perfect understanding of the Revelation of God. Innumerable veils surround the hearts of men and consequently the verses of God are of no profit to them for they can not perceive the verses. When all the veils are removed men become believers instantly. He who believes because of the efforts of a thousand intermediaries does not understand the verses of God and is therefore incapable of recognizing His new Manifestation. It is therefore the responsibility of those believers who do understand the verses of God to guide the blind ones to the recognition of the new Manifestation.

The great crime of the leaders of religion is that they do not really understand the verses of God—they only appear to do so—and when they fail to recognize the new Manifestation they lead astray those who follow their leadership. The Báb briefly returns to the subject of marriage to explain that it must be conducted in the sight of God so that “if a fruit (a child) results, he is for God.”⁶⁷ He returns to His consideration of the religion of God stating that even as in Islam the actions are in conformity with the Will of God if they are “in conformity with the Book of God, with the traces of the Prophet, the guiding Imams and the conducting abwáb”, so in the Dispensation of the Bayán, actions are in conformity with the Will of God if they have been ordained or permitted by the Báb while He is alive and by the Bayán (His Writings as a whole) when He ascends to the spiritual worlds.

Vahíd VI: Báb 8

The eighth báb of the sixth Vahíd is devoted to a forceful and unequivocal exposition of the greatest proof of the truth of any Manifestation of God—His revealed verses. He commands His followers to read this báb once every 19 days and to think about it day and night so that they may remember that the greatest proof of the Manifestation of God are His verses so that they will be prepared to acknowledge the truth of *Him Whom God shall make manifest*. He writes that the Muslims have been veiled from His Manifestation because they have not believed in the teaching of the Qur’án that only God can send down verses like the verses of God and that these verses are the greatest proof of the truth of the Manifestation of God. These Muslims respond to the Báb’s claim to have revealed verses by saying that anyone can write such verses and that it is impossible for such verses to come from God. The Báb affirms that one who claims to have revealed the verses of God after the ascension of the Báb is either an impostor or He is *Him Whom God shall make manifest*—in both cases Bábís are forbidden to oppose this person, for God will deal with the liar, and *Him Whom God shall make manifest* must be obeyed.

Vahíd VI: Báb 9

The ninth báb permits the use of silk, gold and silver by believers in their vestments and ornamentations, regardless of the rank of the believer. The poor believer will receive a recompense for his poverty in the terrestrial world double that of the wealthy believer. “Honor and grandeur do not reside in these things, but rather in *Him Whom God shall make manifest*.”⁶⁸ Closeness to God pleases Him, not the kind of garments with which one is decked. Nonetheless, the believer who has silk garments and silver and gold ornaments and who does not pride himself on their possession but is submissive to his Lord, that one will be rewarded and is blessed.

Vahíd VI: Báb 10

The tenth báb reveals that the most beloved of all ornaments in the Dispensation of the Bayán is a ring of red corneline upon which is engraved these words: “Say: God is the Truth, and in truth, all else but God is His creature, and all of us are the lovers of God.”⁶⁹ For believers, truth is Paradise; for unbelievers, truth is the Fire. The purpose of this ring and of another ring that is described in this báb is to prepare the believer for acceptance of *Him Whom God shall make manifest*. In whatever created thing in which the believer perceives a reflection of the Sun of Truth, he must bestow his love and in whatever created thing in which he does not see such a reflection, in the event that it is the possession of an unbeliever, he must withdraw his love and negate that thing as long as it remains in the possession of the unbeliever. The simplicity of existence is revealed—all that exists is for the Manifestation of God and is for God, and whatever is not for Him is not for God.

Vahíd VI: Báb 11

The eleventh báb begins with various regulations of the conduct between teachers and students. Parents and teachers alike are not permitted to strike a child before he reaches the age of five--previous to this age only verbal admonishments are allowed. After the age of five the child may be given only gentle slaps and never on the bare skin—always with a covering in between the skin and the striking hand. Whoever

breaks this law will be denied access to his wife for 19 days, or, if he is unmarried, he must pay 19 mithqáls of gold to the child he struck. Children may play the games which are current amongst them on feast days. God has ordained that the time that the child spends sitting on a bench, chair or seat will not be reckoned as part of his life. The Báb writes that the teacher does not know his student, and that he must honor his student. He then proceeds to proclaim that “God alone knows at what age *Him Whom God shall make manifest* will be manifest”. He indicates that He has revealed more than 500,000 verses on diverse subjects; that the purpose for which men were created is to affirm, follow, obey and aid the Manifestation of God.

Vahíd VI: Báb 12

The twelfth báb proscribes a year of waiting for married couples who decide to divorce, the purpose being to facilitate the reunion of the couple previous to the effecting of a final decision of rupture between them. In this year-long interval the husband is permitted to come to terms with his wife 19 times, and after the divorce he may seek reunion with her for 19 days. As marriage is dedicated to the service of God, it is not right for divorce to take place for it is not a sign of love, and hence divorce should only take place when one is obliged to divorce. “How difficult the order is for him who is ignorant of its Source, and how easy it is for him who returns to the Source.”⁷⁰

Vahíd VI: Báb 13

The thirteenth báb reveals most of the central teachings of the Báb, with the greatest detail being given over of the explanation of progressive revelation. He begins the báb by affirming the sublime exaltation of the earth in the vicinity of the tombs of the 19 Letters of Unity (the Báb and the 18 Letters of the Living). He indicates that the House of the Báb must have no more than 95 abwáb because this number demonstrates that He is the mirror of God both in the past and in the future; that the Houses of the Letters of the Living may have no more than 5 doors for this number symbolizes “the Point (which) is the complete form of His empire”⁷¹; that there are very few true believers in the revelation of Muhammad, for the mass of believers do not have personal conviction which is the fruit of independent investigation and the exertions of a spiritual nature, but rather believe through imitation of the belief of others—relatives, friends, and religious leaders. The Báb condemns those leaders of Islam who base their knowledge and faith on hadith, who do not recognize that the source of Islam is the Qur’án, its source Muhammad, and His source, God. He says that the difference between the true believer and he who acts in accordance with his passions but claims to believe is great indeed—there are few of the former and many of the latter. He cautions His followers not to imitate others in their belief but to act independently even if they find themselves the only ones to do so. Perspicacity is essential to every true believer.

Only three of the companions of the Prophet Muhammad remained faithful to Him after His ascension, and all who did not follow the descendants of ‘Alí were misguided. He identifies the difference between animals and men as this—that only man can appreciate the truth of the knowledge of God; only man has a heart whereby he may know and love God, recognize and love the Manifestation of God. Only those who seek the truth with the spiritual eyes of the heart opened can attain to it. These ones are picked by the angels inasmuch as in their hearts can be seen the love of the Well-Beloved; these ones are guided by Him

by becoming filled with His attributes, replacing their own attributes—His eyes, the eyes of truth; His ears, the ears of truth. As revelation is progressive, one must believe in and follow the most current revelation from God in order to be found acceptable in His eyes. The Báb uses the symbol of accumulating interest on capital in the eighth báb, and also the symbol of harvesting fruit from trees in order to demonstrate the manner in which souls who have believed in one Dispensation are weighed in the balance of the following Manifestation in order to determine whether or not they have really believed. The knowledge of God is revealed as the foundation of the religion of God, the origin of that knowledge for humanty being the Manifestation of God and such knowledge unattainable except through when acquired from the knowledge of the Manifestation Himself.

Vahíd VI: Báb 14

The fourteenth báb ordains that one day out of every year be designated as the Day of God, and that this Day is the day when the sun passes from Pisces to Aries, which is the 21st day of March according to the Gregorian calendar, the Vernal Equinox according to astronomical calculations and the first day of the Persian New Year. On this day every good work is worth the equivalent of the good works of the entire year. The number of dishes which must be served to guests in the homes of believers must be between 19 and 2001, and there should be only one dish at every meal so that there will be many reunions during this Day of God. This is the month of Bahá’—the first day is the day of the Báb, the 18 others are of the Letters of the Living. During this month fasting is not permitted. The first day of this month, which is the first day of the year, is the day of *Him Whom God shall make manifest*.

Vahíd VI: Báb 15

The fifteenth báb reveals the difference between Paradise and the Fire; that those who are dutiful, who follow the dictates of their faith but are blind to the truth do not recognize the Manifestation of God when He appears; during the Dispensation of Muhammad, revelation ceased after the disappearance of the last of the Ithna ‘Ashari abwáb. He requires that His followers stand out of respect and reverence whenever the name of *Him Whom God shall make manifest* is mentioned, and that they prostrate themselves before Him if He is made manifest during their lives, or be rejected by God. “Give the greatest attention to this point,” is His admonition, “for, of a certainty, you will encounter Him for Whose name you have shown so much respect.”⁷²

Vahíd VI: Báb 16

The sixteenth báb contains remarks related to pilgrimage, travel and commerce; penalties for overly long voyages, for theft, for tampering with the property of another, violence to other persons; admonitions concerning the treatment of animals including beasts of burden. The two kinds of penalties exacted upon believers in the Bayán are (1) monetary fines—the money derived therefrom is to be given to the poor according to their needs—and (2) periods of separation from one’s lawful wife. Those who commit certain crimes are forbidden access to their wives for an entire year. He who knows about the intention of one person to do violence to another but does not intervene will be fined 19 mithqáls of gold (or silver if he is incapable of paying in silver) and forbidden his wife for 19 days. The purpose of this is that believers will not do violence to each other, or to non-believers, so that no suffering will come to *Him Whom God shall*

make manifest when He is made manifest, at least from the Bábís. God loves those best who do not do an atom of violence to anyone.

Bábís must show respect and kindness to all animals, including beasts of burden (which should not be overburdened). There follow various laws which pertain to making voyages pleasant and comfortable. Travel is forbidden except for pilgrimage, commerce and to help one who is in need. One is permitted to travel by land without one's family for two years without returning, and to travel by sea for five years before making a return. Voyages are permitted only when they are properly prepared for so that the traveler may journey in comfort. In the Day of the manifestation of *Him Whom God shall make manifest* it is obligatory for all believers to see Him and to brave whatever hazards as are necessary in order to do so.

Vahíd VI: Báb 17

The seventeenth báb insists upon the formidable and absolute purity of *Him Whom God shall make manifest*. It also reveals that the excrement of mice and of similar animals is not inherently impure—for the sake of cleanliness, it is best to cleanse things from excrement.

Vahíd VI: Báb 18

The eighteenth báb prohibits anyone from looking at another's books whether they are opened or closed and whatever their subject matter may be without the prior permission of the proprietor.

Vahíd VI: Báb 19

The nineteenth báb makes obligatory response to invitations, correspondence, questions either in writing or in spoken language. "In all cases, response is obligatory."⁷³ This law is revealed in view of the necessity that each believer respond to the declaration of *Him Whom God shall make manifest* in verbal, written and active affirmation of His truth. Of these three responses, the Báb reveals that the believer's acts are the most powerful testimony to his belief.

Vahíd VII

The seventh Vahíd begins in the fourth and last volume of the French translation of the Persian Bayán. It is approximately sixty pages long, and contains several new laws for the regulation of the Bábís as well as repetitions and expansions of the central teachings of the Báb.

Vahíd VII: Báb 1

The first báb emphasizes the importance of believers always striving to be beautiful and perfect. All belongings must be renewed so that they will always be beautiful for the angels turn away from that which is ugly. All books must be replaced with new copies after 202 years—the old ones should be given away or destroyed. There are 19 different styles of writing the Persian-Arabic script, and all of these are good. The first style is called the Most Glorious [abha]. The Báb asserts that it is preferable to perfect one of these styles (and this constitutes the highest degree of perfection to which a believer may attain) than to

write all 19 styles imperfectly. He affirms that His Writings constitute the standard of perfection to which all must aspire. Printing, disseminating and writing of the verses of the Báb are all praiseworthy for they serve to promote the Faith of God.

Vahíd VII: Báb 2

The second báb reiterates the teaching that the true believer must commit all his acts for the sake of God, in obedience to the Báb and His Revelation in His Dispensation and in obedience to *Him Whom God shall make manifest* and whatever He reveals in His Day. A specific verse is revealed in this báb whereby the believer may make all of his acts God-conscious if he recites this verse either in his heart or vocally. If he does not do so, his good works are all in vain for they are unacceptable before God.⁷⁴

Vahíd VII: Báb 3

The third báb reveals that it is pleasing to God for a believer to lend money to other believers; that it is the obligation of the borrower to pay back his debt as soon as he is able, and that his haste in doing so is a proof of his faith in God.

Vahíd VII: Báb 4

The fourth báb ordains one 19 day month of self-purification in which one of the names of God is concentrated upon by each one of the believers. The Báb asserts that the purpose of this law, and of all of His laws, is to prepare His followers for the coming of *Him Whom God shall make manifest*. “And God alone knows which are those who are blind and those who are perspicuous.”⁷⁵

Vahíd VII: Báb 5

The fifth báb contains a summary of all of the teachings of the Bayán and refers to none of the laws.

Vahíd VII: Báb 6

The sixth báb forbids believers from carrying instruments of war unless they are being used in waging holy war in the path of God or transported by arms manufacturers. The purpose of this law is to remove the fear of one another from the hearts of men. Each person must associate with persons of his rank and profession and refrain from association with those of a higher or lower rank than themselves. The fear of God is enjoined in these emphatic verses: “Fear God, our Lord, He Who accepts us in His mercifulness. Fear those things by which the souls of men are tormented. Fear, O slaves of God, fear, all of you.”⁷⁶

Vahíd VII: Báb 7

The seventh báb asserts that the Manifestation of God is infinitely superior to and more perfect than all created things—whether of the past, present or future—and that men cannot understand the rank of the first believers in the Manifestation, much less the Manifestation Himself.

Vahíd VII: Báb 8

The eighth báb reveals new significances of the sacred number of unity, 19, and obligates each believer in the Báb to write one of the names of God in one space delineated on the surface of a table each day of his life, and if he misses a few days thereof his family is obligated to complete this work which must begin at his birth and end with his death. Herein is regulated the price of pens.

Vahíd VII: Báb 9

The ninth báb confirms the blessedness of the monarch who champions the Faith of the Báb⁷⁷--who must build a house with 95 doors and one with 90 doors, so that *Him Whom God shall make manifest* may choose between these two for His dwelling. It asserts the superiority of the verses of the subsequent Manifestation over those of the preceeding One; the power of the Manifestation to abase the powerful and uplift the debased in the spiritual worlds over which He is Sovereign; and the truth that if the best Bábí who reads the verses of *Him Whom God shall make manifest* and attests to their superiority over those of men and even over those of the Báb does not immediately affirm his faith in *Him Whom God shall make manifest* he is from that moment on accounted among the unbelievers.

Vahíd VII: Báb 10

The tenth báb requires each believer to have a table having 2001 squares on its surface, with the name Mustaghath upon it (this name having the numerical value of Mustaghath). The table should be inscribed with 2001 names of God, one in each one of the squares. The Báb reveals the two meanings of Mustaghath and the number 2001 which is relevant to His Revelation—this is the number of all of the Manifestations of God and it is the date before which *Him Whom God shall make manifest* must be made manifest. Only God though knows when He will appear, and, in fact, the Báb actually writes, “but it will not be longer than the name Mustaghath if God is willing.”⁷⁸

Vahíd VII: Báb 11

The eleventh báb begins by requiring believers to sit upon chairs and couches and not upon the ground, and according to their rank. He goes on to say that the Self of the Manifestation manifests the Self of God, and that the Utterance of the Manifestation manifests the Utterance of God; that ignorance of the Manifestation of God and of His Words can be forgiven, but that he who knows that the verses of God are His highest testimony and that no words can compare with those of the most recent Manifestation of God is accounted among the infidels until and unless he unhesitatingly affirms the truth of the most recent Manifestation; that he who does not sincerely obey God is not sincere⁷⁹; that the people who follow the dictates and imitate the lives of their religious leaders are not followers of the truth for they do not see it for themselves, and they believe because others believe and not according to the admonition: “Believe in Him by Himself.”⁸⁰ He asserts that at all times that which matters is the approval of God and not that of men—God proves and tests the hearts of men through His religion. He is the only one who can accept or reject the faith of the Bábís. Only those who accept the new Manifestation by virtue of their own volition and the clarity of their own judgment are true believers.

Vahíd VII: Báb 12

The twelfth báb contains an insistence upon the Oneness, Onliness, the Indivisibility of God, of His Manifestation and therefore the requirement that all obey and follow Him exclusively in the Day of His Manifestation.

Vahíd VII: Báb 13

The thirteenth báb reveals that the most valuable of all things in the eyes of God are the verses of the Manifestation of God, and, in particular, the verses of *Him Whom God shall make manifest*. The Báb requires all of His followers to each have a sheet of paper with 19 verses written thereon in the handwriting of the Manifestation of God. This applies to Him, and, in the Day of *Him Whom God shall make manifest*, to Him, and in each subsequent Day of Judgment to the Manifestation of God in that Day. He affirms the superiority of the verses of *Him Whom God shall make manifest* to those of the Bayán:

“If he writes only one of these verses, this is more valuable for him than to write the entire Bayán and all of the books written in the [Dispensation of the] Bayán, for the entire Bayán will be annulled and this verse will subsist until the following Manifestation.”⁸¹

Vahíd VII: Báb 14

The fourteenth báb forbids the confession of sins to all except the Manifestation of God when He is made manifest—or anyone whom He may appoint for this purpose—and to anyone but God when the Manifestation has ascended. Forgiveness sought through other channels is sought in vain for only God can forgive the sins of men.

Vahíd VII: Báb 15

The fifteenth báb enjoins believers in the Bayán to prostrate themselves before the gate of Shíráz, the city in which the Báb was made manifest. He asserts that the germ of the subsequent Manifestation is superior to the perfection of the previous Manifestation. This verse was cited by Bahá'u'lláh in one of His Tablets:

“He Who is the Heart and Center of the Bayán hath written: ‘The germ that holdeth within itself the potentialities of the Revelation that is to come is endowed with a potency superior to the combined forces of all those who follow Me.’”⁸²

The Bayán asserts that one verse revealed by the Manifestation of God is sufficient proof of His divine origin and prophethood; that “the value of an order depends only on the value of the value of him who gave it!”⁸³; that the Manifestation of God and God Himself are immeasurably exalted above any need of their servants, and that “It is not that He wishes that all become believers in Him, but that the happiness of all resides in their faith in Him.”⁸⁴

Vahíd VII: Báb 16

The sixteenth báb commands the believers in the Bayán, including a monarch and his subjects, to make every effort to rid the earth of all but believers in the Bayán, and, in the time of the appearance of *Him Whom God shall make manifest* to rid the earth of all who do not believe in Him. Not a single unbeliever must be tolerated among the believers, and believers who associate with unbelievers must be considered as unbelievers—the “condition of friendship” must be recognized as indicative of “purity of religious faith” in the Báb and in all He has revealed “and in nothing else”⁸⁵. He particularly wished that the five countries enumerated earlier in the text—Fars, the two ‘Iraqs, Adhirbayjan, Khurasan and Mazindaran (Vahíd 6-báb 4)—be reserved exclusively for His followers. He decreed that commerce with Christians is permitted if it is of benefit to the Bábís.

Vahíd VII: Báb 17

This báb ordains Friday as the day to be set aside every week for purity, cleanliness and rest. One good act performed during this day is worth the equivalent of all good acts performed during the other days of the week. A verse is revealed in this báb which all believers are obligated to recite on Friday whilst facing the sun.

Vahíd VII: Báb 18

This báb is concerned with penalties for certain crimes, and the abolition of particular punishments. Anyone who torment another will be fined a certain amount and although the fines are fixed, each believer will be required to pay according to his capacity. Violations against women bear a double penalty, in other words, a fine twice as big as that levied from one who violates a man. The purpose of these penalties is to insure satisfaction to those who are violated, for it is most pleasing to God when the believers are happy and most displeasing to God when they are unhappy.

Imprisonment and chaining of malfactors are absolutely forbidden, and the Bayán calls upon the believer kings to rid the earth of the prisons in which He was shut away. It is forbidden for the believer to imprison or chain either a believer or an unbeliever. If he does so, the first violation will necessitate punishment—presumably a fine—unless the one who has been violated is satisfied with being released, in which case punishment is withheld. The second violation results in expulsion from amongst the ranks of the believers. The purpose of this prohibition of imprisonment and chaining is to protect *Him Whom God shall make manifest* while He is hidden and not yet manifest to the eyes of men. The high are made low, the low are exalted through their response to the new Manifestation of God. All acts are acceptable only if they are undertaken in accordance with God’s Will as revealed by the new Manifestation of God—no human act is independent of this spiritual law, no act is acceptable in itself.

Vahíd VII: Báb 19

This báb is devoted to the revelation of a prayer and to a discourse on the origins, meanings and purposes of prayer, and on the love of Gd which is expressed in prayer. The Bayán reveals a prayer composed of 19 verses which is to be recited at noon and which is a sign of the believer’s submissiveness to *Him Whom God*

shall make manifest. “After the knowledge of God, no work is higher than prayer, and the prayers of each one proceed according to his rank.”⁸⁶ The highest prayers, those of the greatest spiritual potency are the prayers of the Manifestation of God; the next rank of prayer is that of the Letters of the Living. The source of all prayer must be remembered for that prayer to have any worth, for it to be acceptable to God; likewise, this knowledge must be kept in mind while one is praying. “At the moment of prayer, one must have God, the Unique One only in view.”⁸⁷

All value is derived from the Unity of God, and “Those who possess limited forms are creatures multiplied from the Primal Unity and are not the Primal Unity Itself.”⁸⁸ We should remember in this connection that the number of the Unity of God is 19, and that the number of all things is 361, which is 19 times 19. We should also remember that 5 is the number of the Báb and that 5 multiplied by 19 is 95, the number of “for God”.

The hierarchy of prayers is manifested in the hierarchy of existences. All of God’s creations are but mirrors reflecting His Being and His Acts. All sciences, all acts have as their end the knowledge of God. Consequently, as God is the only Reality which is Self-Subsisting and Independent, the believer must focus on the Essence of God during prayer rather than upon His Attributes or His creations. This applies in general to one’s attitude towards God:

“If it is out of fear that you adore God, this is not worthy of Him, and of a certainty you will not receive the order of Unity upon yourself. In the same manner, if your eyes are attached to Paradise and if it is your avid thirst for this Paradise that motivates you to adore Him—then you have associated in yourself something with God, something that is His creature, be it even a creature which is agreeable in His sight... That which is worthy of the Essence of God is for you to be loving without fear of the Fire, without hope of Paradise.”⁸⁹

That prayer is most acceptable to God which is made in a spirit of contentment and happiness, not that which is the longest and most difficult to deliver. Entry into the Paradise of God’s Presence does not come as a result of prayer or even the love of God on the part of the believer but according to the mercy of God. The prayer of 19 verses is the only prayer (daily prayer) permitted in the Dispensation of the Báb and it is better to recite this one prayer at noon than to possess all of the material goods of this world. The Muslim prayers, both those ordained in the Qur’án and those later required of believers by the Imams and the mullas are abrogated and their recitation is forbidden for it is no longer acceptable before God.

Vahíd VIII

This Vahíd is approximately 75 pages long in the French translation, and its contents are for the most part reiterations and expansions of teachings and regulations already revealed in other Vahíds.

Vahíd VIII: Báb 1

This báb compares *Him Whom God shall make manifest* with the sun, and the first to believe in Him with the moon, and the rest of His followers with the stars, all in terms of the brilliancy of the light which emanates

from them. The Báb asserts that He is the first believer in *Him Whom God shall make manifest* and that the moon (the Báb) and the stars (the followers of *Him Whom God shall make manifest*) derive their light from *Him Whom God shall make manifest*, Who is the Sun of Reality. Without His light they are dark. In each Dispensation, those who turn towards the new dawning of the Sun of Reality receive new light, and those who persist in turning towards the old Manifestation of God lose their brilliance. He reveals a verse which is found in many of the abwáb of the Bayán, either exactly in these words or with slight changes:

“In truth! Be certain that I am God, that there is no God but He; all that is not He is My creature. O My creatures, adore Me! Fear Me!”⁹⁰

Vahíd VIII: Báb 2

This báb proclaims that all acts enjoined in the Book of God are revealed for the purpose of men being obedient to God which is for their own well-being. If they disobey the Manifestation of God because He ordains differently from the previous Manifestation, they have misapprehended the purpose of the Law of God. This Law is revealed for his well-being—he is not created for its well-being.⁹¹ Each believer must leave to his descendants 19 sheets of paper of excellent quality and 19 rings engraved with one of the verses of God. Those who are entitled to inherit from believers belong to one of the following 7 categories: (1)father, (2)mother, (3)spouse, (4)children, (5)brother, (6)sister, (7)teacher. This corresponds in number to the 7 names of God which are explained in this báb. SYRAT is given the meaning of recognition of the Manifestation of God during His lifetime when He has few or no followers. “It is in this way that in the beginning of each Manifestation perspicacious people are more rare than red sulphur.”⁹²

Most people are not aware of the source of revelation and of its nature and consequently they are obedient to each other and because of the grandeur it brings them and not obedient to God. “The Qur’án was, in effect, revealed in the previous Manifestation in 23 years, while it is manifest that in this Manifestation, the descent of a book like the Qur’án does not take more than a week.”⁹³ The Bayán reaffirms its central teaching, that the purpose of God in revealing the Bayán is to prepare His servants to recognize and submit themselves to *Him Whom God shall make manifest*. This is true of all Dispensations. The subsequent Manifestation is revealed in a higher station than the previous One, and He is also the previous Manifestation in a new degree of revelation. Believers must purify their souls in order to be able to recognize and believe in *Him Whom God shall make manifest*.

Vahíd VIII: Báb 3

This báb opens with this statement—one only has spiritual life if one turns to God for His blessing. During life human beings often come to the brink of spiritual death, and only by seeking God’s gift of life can they be given new life. At the time when this verse was revealed, the Báb had declared Himself to be the new Manifestation of God, and it was to Him that all must turn for forgiveness from their sins. No order is more obligatory than this, and the blessing of souls consists in this, and not in the works which they accomplish. The Bayán asserts that the human spirit does not exist in other creatures. Spiritual life may be received from the Letters of the Living and Their Successors after the passing of the Báb and before the apparition of the next Manifestation of God. This is the way it happened in the past and the way it will happen in the future. The source of all truth is the Manifestation of God. All infidel nations believe that

they are following the Will of God. One can only truly recognize and know God by Himself, and never through His intermediaries who are only His creatures, His slaves.

Vahíd VIII: Báb 4

This báb stipulates that in order to love and know God one must follow the way He has prescribed and not the way that human beings imagine or wish to be good. The speed of affirmation of *Him Whom God shall make manifest* is the factor which will influence the believer's spiritual station. Obedience to the orders of God "was and is a mark of grandeur, but on the condition that one does not remain in ignorance of the source in each Manifestation."⁹⁴ If one obeys one of God's orders for the sake of His pleasure it is worth nothing unless one obeys them all.

Vahíd VIII: Báb 5

This báb is concerned with the ownership and symbolic significance of certain jewels. Each believer who has the capacity to make himself the owner of certain jewels is obligated in this verse of the Bayán to do so. The jewels are enumerated as follows: 3 diamonds (the number of "Ism"); 4 topazes (the number of "Allah"); 6 emeralds (the number of "al-Amna") 6 rubies (the number of "al-Aqdas"). These must be given to *Him Whom God shall make manifest* when He appears. They number 19 jewels in all. During the ministry of the Báb they should be given to Him, and then saved for *Him Whom God shall make manifest*. The significances of the different elements and of the 4 colors are described in this báb and 4 prayers are associated, one with each of the 4 colors, these prayers being decreed as highly blessed but not cited in the Persian Bayán itself.

Vahíd VIII: Báb 6

This báb contains laws governing personal appearance and hygiene. The Bayán obligates believers His followers to bathe the entire body once every 4 days, to pluck out hairs (presumably pubic hairs and chest hairs and perhaps eyebrow hairs) every 8 or 14 days, to cut one's nails and to use henna on the whole body. The word "al-rahim" must be tattooed on the chests of men believers, and the word "Allahum" on the chests of women believers. This writing must be the most beautiful and it is permitted to write more words than these. It is good to look at oneself in the mirror, once by night and once by day, and when one looks in the mirror, if one sees that one is beautiful one should thank God and if the ugly one should ask for mercy from Him. The more often the laundry is washed the better, and the cleaner one is in all things the better. Cleanliness is a relative matter and it is praiseworthy according to its rank of perfection. Those who cannot bathe themselves, or wash their clothes as often as is enjoined in the Bayán should not despair for in believing in cleanliness are they benefitted. The purpose of this bodily purity is to be acceptable before God Who is the Most Pure.

Vahíd VIII: Báb 7

This báb orders the printing of the Bayán but only in the most beautiful handwriting. Each believer should own one copy of the Bayán if possible. The RETURN of the Manifestation of God is mentioned, a theme the reader is very familiar with at this point.

Vahíd VIII, Báb 8

This báb permits believers to shave part or the whole of his head and the beard so that the hair will come back with more strength. It also permits men to trim their mustaches. Prayer in one's "abba" is enjoined and in one's "jubba" it is forbidden unless one cannot do otherwise.

Vahíd VIII: Báb 9

This báb obligates every believer from the beginning of the Báb's Dispensation to the commencement of the Dispensation of *Him Whom God shall make manifest* to write everything he did before and after becoming a Bábí in a book which must be preserved by his descendants for their edification. He proclaims the Day of Judgment to be the greatest of all days, inasmuch as in this Day is made manifest the Manifestation of God.

Vahíd VIII: Báb 10

In this báb is revealed that each man believer and each woman believer is permitted to talk to any man or woman in the entire human family—so that nobody may remain ignorant of the Revelation of the Báb in the Day of *Him Whom God shall make manifest* and all will be expecting His manifestation. It is pleasing to God that the conversation of the believer with the unbeliever be limited to 28 words or less.

Vahíd VIII: Báb 11

This báb is concerned with the purification of the dead which involves bathing of the deceased one's body in water and the recitation of certain verses revealed in this báb, which differ for men and for women. After the body has been purified it should be perfumed with the water of rose or some other scent; then dust from the graves of the first and last believer must be sprinkled upon the body of the deceased and a ring must be put on his finger; finally, the flesh of the body should be inscribed with 19 names of God. The same respect must be shown to the cadaver of the believer as is shown to the believer while alive. The dead should be visited every 19 days, that is, once every Bábí month. At death the angels will take the souls of believers to Paradise and the demons will take the souls of unbelievers to the Fire. "All persons, on the contrary, who die in anything else but faith in the Bayán, even if he has done all the good deeds of which he is capable, they will be of no service to him."⁹⁵ In this báb the ranking of the contents of the Persian Bayán is set forth as follows:

"All of the orders contained in the Bayán flow because of the secrets of the knowledge and of the Unity of God...the degrees of the Unity are named in five degrees: 1)There is no God but "hu"; 2)There is no God but "ana"; 3)There is no God but the One God; 4)There is no God but "anta"; 5)There is no God but "allazi".⁹⁶

Vahíd VIII: Báb 12

This báb introduces pilgrimage to the Báb's place of martyrdom, requiring every person after the age of 29 to spend 19 days in that place praying and focusing on one of the names of God. If the believer resides outside of the fixed distance stipulated in this báb it is permitted for him to follow this order in his own

home. He reveals the so-called Golden Rule in the following words: “Do not be happy with anything happening to another person which you would not want to happen to you.”⁹⁷

Vahíd VIII: Báb 13

This báb permits the believers in the Báb to recite 95 verses revealed by Him on the anniversary of His birth and His death. Five verses and no more, no less should be recited in the honor of the Letters of the Living on the occasion of the days of birth and death of each one of them. The purpose of reciting these verses is that they might believe and follow the Manifestation of God in the Day of His coming.

Vahíd VIII: Báb 14

This báb makes it obligatory for every believer to read 700 verses from the Bayán each day and night, or, if he is unable to do this, to mention God 700 times therein. If one reads the verses of the Bayán one will be drawn by the Word of God to God Himself. The Bayán ordains that His verses be read with a sorrowful and full voice. The purpose of this commandment is that by following the Báb’s instructions each believer may become one of the letters or names of God in the Day of *Him Whom God shall make manifest* and recognize Him immediately. He repeats that Paradise is in the affirmation and the Fire in negation; that, by virtue of the Will of God, in the Day of the Manifestation the high are abased, the low exalted, and He cites the example of the city of Isfahan during His own manifestation, where, when He resided there and astounded all of the divines and government officials by His innate power and knowledge, the first one to believe in Him was an ignorant, unlettered manual worker. The Bayán indicates that all believe in God and adore Him but few recognize His Manifestation when He is made manifest—many are called but few are chosen...many believe, but few indeed on God’s terms.

Vahíd VIII: Báb 15

Báb fifteen contains the injunction that every man must take a wife so that after his death there may remain one—a child, the fruit of his union with his wife—who may glorify God on earth in His stead. If the couple cannot have a child, the one who is infertile or impotent is permitted to marry another in order to have a child if permission is granted by the other, that is, the one who is impotent or infertile. Bábís are permitted to marry other Bábís only and the believer who is converted after marrying, if his or her spouse will not convert also is obligated to divorce that spouse until and unless he or she becomes a believer. A new formula is revealed for the worship of the Bábís—it is no longer “Bismillah al-rahim al-rahman” but “Bismillah al-amna al-aqdas”, meaning “In the name of God, the Inaccessible, the Most Holy.”

Vahíd VIII: Báb 16

This báb reveals a tax of 19% on all earthly goods in terms of their value in mithqáls of gold. This amount must be remitted to the Báb and the 18 Letters of the Living--1% to the Báb and after His passing it must be preserved to give to *Him Whom God shall make manifest* or spent for the Cause of God; 1% to each of the Letters of the Living, and after their passing to their children, and if they are childless then to be spent on weddings. It is good for believers to ask God to forgive and show mercy in His dealings with their parents,

and the Báb enjoins His followers to do so after uttering each prayer. “The fruit of this Báb is that if He [*Him Whom God shall make manifest*] gives an order, you must obey it as you obey [Me] today.”⁹⁸

Vahíd VIII: Báb 17

This báb begins with another tax, in which 95 out of every 6005 mithqáls of gold owned by every believer must be given to the Báb, and after His passing saved for *Him Whom God shall make manifest*. It is permitted to divide this mithqáls among 19 believers, each receiving 5 mithqáls apiece. There are symbolic meanings to all of these numbers and they are all related to the science of numbers to which the Báb makes copious reference in His Writings. It is revealed that all good comes from being obedient to the orders of God, and nothing else. Believers must be satisfied with whatever lot God has ordained for them, whether they are rich or poor, a king or a subject, illustrious or ignorant, a slave or a master. In all cases one must be satisfied that God’s Will is just, correct and benevolent. Intelligence and perspicacity are qualities which one must possess in order to recognize and follow the new Manifestation of God when He is made manifest. It is affirmed that the use of force was permitted in the religion of Islam in order to induce people to become believers, for it is better to be forced into Paradise than to be left to burn of one’s own free will in the Fire of unbelief. Jihad is approved in the Bábí Dispensation. Various doctrines are affirmed: Muhammad was made manifest for 23 years; the only true Muslims are those call Ithná ‘Ashariyyah Shí’ah who live in the five lands which the Bayán ordains for the occupancy of Bábís; all the precepts of Islam are based upon belief in the Prophethood of Muhammad, the Imamate of ‘Alí and the other Imams, and the rank of the Abwáb. The Bayán is sympathetic to the difficulty faced by the believer when called upon to accept a mere man, and in some cases a relative or other personal associate, as the new Manifestation of God.

Vahíd VIII: Báb 18

This báb reveals the laws pertaining to the fast, which takes place during the last month of the year according to the Bábí calendar for a full 19 days. The purpose of the fast is for the believers to act according to the good-pleasure of God and to be detached from all else but Him. If they fast for love of Him and in obedience to His most recent Manifestation it is acceptable. If not, it has no value whatsoever. In the fast one is abstaining from the Fire, from all that is repugnant to God. The text affirms that the laws of the Bayán are specific and must be followed exactly as they are revealed until the appearance of *Him Whom God shall make manifest*. During the fast believers must abstain from drink, food, sexual relations (literally, a man may not approach a woman, a woman may not approach a man), discussions including those that pertain to science, all violence (even the most light) and rendering sentences or decrees against God or the Manifestation of God. The last three abstentions are the most important as they may affect *Him Whom God shall make manifest*. The believer must begin fasting at the age of 11 and leave off fasting after the age of 42 and to fast before or after these ages is not recognized as a good deed in the eyes of God for it is not obedient to His specific instructions. It is not stipulated in this Báb, or elsewhere in the Persian Bayán whether believers must observe these abstentions from sunrise to sunset like Muslims, or from sunset to sunrise, or, twenty-fours a day.⁹⁹

Vahíd VIII: Báb 19

In this final báb of the eighth Vahíd, the spiritual merit of Friday is deemed to be double that of other days, and Bábís are to make mention of *Him Whom God shall make manifest* and His Letters 202 times and to say “Ya Allah” 4000 times on that day. Whenever *Him Whom God shall make manifest* and His Letters are mentioned the believer must utter benedictions upon them. Muslims say, “Muhammad, peace be upon Him!” It appears that the Bayán would have Bábís do likewise for *Him Whom God shall make manifest* and His Letters. The Intermediation of the Manifestation between God and His creatures is affirmed, and in the most clear language. “In effect, there is no route for the contingent being towards the Eternal Essence if it is not that which descends from God through Him Who is manifest in the Manifestation, and all that returns to God in returning to His Being.”¹⁰⁰ One is only acceptable before God if one is acceptable before the Manifestation of God. Whoever is truly acting for the love of God will recognize and obey *Him Whom God shall make manifest* for He is the Manifestation of God and the only link that man has with God. All else is personal religion and is utterly worthless. As acceptance by God is the purpose of all human existence, so the acceptance by the Manifestation of God is the most important event in the human being’s life. Everything is given meaning, reality and truth by the Manifestation of God. If anything is not mentioned, not approved, not revealed by the Manifestation of God it is insignificant and unworthy of men’s concern.

Vahíd IX

The final Vahíd of the Persian Bayán is composed of 10 rather than the 19 abwáb of all previous Vahíds is about 30 pages in length in the French translation.

Vahíd IX: Báb 1

This báb concerns blessed places, sacred spaces—every precious place, every unique town, the home of every king, all these belong to God and all must be returned to Him by being turned over to *Him Whom God shall make manifest*. If a believer in the Báb prays in the home of an unbeliever and if he spends even one mithqál of silver on alms he has blessed that dwelling. In all great solemn meetings a place should be reserved for 19 persons, in honor of *Him Whom God shall make manifest* and His Letters, or, if that is not possible, then at least for one person, *Him Whom God shall make manifest*. The Bayán designates the city of Shíráz where He was born and where He declared His mission as the most sacred place for believers during His Dispensation. In this city an edifice should be raised in which the believers may recite their prayers and make mention of God, and the walls of that edifice must be made of mirrors.

Vahíd IX: Báb 2

This báb admonishes the Bábís to teach their children to write the Persian-Arabic script beautifully. The verses of the new Manifestation are not those of the superannuated Manifestations should be written. Every scribe endowed with an uniquely perfect handwriting is obliged to write 1000 verses of the Báb’s Writings and have these preserved until the appearance of *Him Whom God shall make manifest*. If the scribe fulfils his duty he will receive the Báb’s blessing in Paradise. There are 19 varieties of the Arabic-Persian

script permitted in the Bábí Dispensation, but the one called shikaste is the most perfect and all of the Writing of the Báb may be penned in this script.

Vahíd IX: Báb 3

This báb contains the teaching that all human beings must be silent during the Day of Judgment, that is, during the period of the appearance of the Manifestation, for not one of their words can compare with the words of the Manifestation of God, these being the Words of God. The most brilliant among the believers is like a star which is completely hidden from view by the mid-day sun in its radiant splendor. All kings and emperors are commanded to build houses ornamented with mirrors, with inscriptions which will remind them to become the followers of *Him Whom God shall make manifest* when He appears, for His follower in His Day is the most exalted of all creatures while unbelievers in Him are the most vile of all creatures. So great is the blessing due a monarch who comes to the aid of *Him Whom God shall make manifest* that the Bayán reveals these words: “If a torment afflicts *Him Whom God shall make manifest*, chastisement which was due all contingent beings seizes him (the monarch); if, on the contrary, he comes to His aid, the blessing that was destined to flow upon all things will descend upon him.”¹⁰¹ The Bayán asserts that this is true to a lesser degree of the leaders of religion, for they are the guides of the believers and wherever they turn, the populace turns—if they recognize the truth they will be doubly rewarded (double the reward of the common man, not of the monarch), and if they reject the truth they will receive a greater punishment, for, in their blindness they will deprive others of vision.¹⁰² People are inhibited by the veils of their passions from becoming convinced of the truth of the verses of the Manifestation of God. This will be the case in the day of *Him Whom God shall make manifest*. God tests His slaves in every Day of Judgment, and the Báb’s followers will not be free from this test. Every person must attend to himself, that thereby he may be saved from ignorance and from the Fire.

Vahíd IX: Báb 4

This báb opens with the affirmation that “All science is the knowledge of moral qualities and man must live in conformity with this science.”¹⁰³ The Bayán counsels the Bábís not to take anything to its extreme¹⁰⁴, and thereby avoid causing torment either to themselves or to others. If one accepts his poverty in this world, in the world to come he will have no torment, but if he asks for help to alleviate his poverty and is delivered therefrom, this benefit cannot compare with the humiliation which he has experienced in asking for someone else’s aid. God desires that His servants not abase themselves before each other¹⁰⁵ and He desires that they seek aid from Him alone.¹⁰⁶ The believer must make mention of God at all times in his heart. In this way he will receive the reflection of the Sun of Truth in the mirror of his heart when the Sun is newly risen. If one makes mention of God in one’s heart when He is made manifest but does not turn towards Him, one has actually turned away from God, for the Manifestation is the Mention of God, His Testimony before all mankind.

To make mention of God in a loud voice is 95 times more valuable than to do so in a soft voice during the Day in which *Him Whom God shall make manifest* appears. It is better to accept *Him Whom God shall make manifest* with a heart which does not always mention God than to reject Him with a heart which makes mention of God at all times. Furthermore, to prostrate oneself before God is to prostrate oneself before

Him Whom God shall make manifest. The spirit of prayer, as has been previously noted in the Bayán is more important than its length. “Perhaps if you make mention (of God) with joy and happiness it is worth more than one thousand utterances made without joy and happiness.”¹⁰⁷

Vahíd IX: Báb 5

This báb reveals the purpose of the Revelation of God in the most cogent and powerful language. The purpose of divine revelation is to educate the creature, which is infinitely abased in comparison with God and His Manifestation, to teach the creature to be detached from all save God and to return to His Presence with joy and happiness. God is exalted above that is not Him; He is the Creator of the most perfect and the most vile of His creatures. Human beings are His slaves and they have no authority to say anything about God or His Manifestation. “If you look upon Him with any other vision than the vision of the Unity of God, He will unleash upon you a judgment, proclaiming that you are nothing but an ‘animal’. And if, God keep you from it!, you present to Him your observations, you have done so of your own volition and you will be held responsible for this act.”¹⁰⁸ The Bayán ordains that every believer must serve *Him Whom God shall make manifest* for 19 days, doing whatever He commands. If they do not follow His Will during these days, their service to God is not accepted.

Vahíd IX: Báb 6

This báb exhorts the believers to venerate the family of the Báb. They are to acknowledge that the name which is closest to God is that of the coming Manifestation, after the names of the Letters of the Unity (which are those of the Báb and the 18 Letters of the Living). The most temperate climate is that of the land in which the Sun of Reality is made manifest. The sanctity and exaltation of God’s Essence is reiterated, along with the assertion that the Manifestation of God is a creation of God, the Son of God in the sense that He manifests God’s attributes, for He takes no part in God’s Essence, albeit the most perfect of God’s creations, and the creation by virtue of which all other created beings are made to exist. A verse is revealed which the believers are counseled to recite 314 times, which is the numerical value of “Powerful”. God will respond to this recitation by making them the instruments of His response, the channels of His utterance. This verse is quoted in full, first in the translator’s rendering and second in the translation of Shoghi Effendi:

“Say: God sufficeth all things, for all things. And nothing sufficeth God your Lord, nothing amidst the things of the heavens, the earth or that which is between. He is the Wise, He Who Sufficeth, the Powerful.”¹⁰⁹

“Say: God sufficeth all things above all things, and nothing in the heavens or in the earth but God sufficeth. Verily, He is in Himself, the Knower, the Sustainer, the Omnipotent.”¹¹⁰

Vahíd IX: Báb 7

This báb repeats the teaching that whoever does not accept the Manifestation of God in His Day does not accept God, whatever he may think to the contrary. “Tombac”¹¹¹ and “asafoetida”¹¹² are forbidden to believers as they are impure and God desires all pure things for His servants. “Seek refuge in God alone,

for the unbeliever is like the asafoetida.”¹¹³ It is revealed here that the human being does not really have a free choice—that is to accept the Manifestation of God or to reject Him if he so chooses—for although he can not be forced into becoming a true believer in the Manifestation, God forbids negation and requires affirmation, and whosoever disobeys His orders will be punished until he repents and follows Divine Law.

Vahíd IX: Báb 8

This báb contains teachings which pertain to spiritual life as well as to practical and physical actions. It affirms that “Everything that is other than love comes from other than the truth, and everything that is love comes from the truth.”¹¹⁴ It then proceeds to reveal that believers cannot be accounted as faithful to God if they do not abstain from those things which are forbidden then by the Báb. In this Báb an absolute prohibition is revealed against the use of opium, of fermented beverages and of medicines except when these substances are employed in some industry where they are necessary. As in the case of association with unbelievers, use of these substances is only allowable if it is required by one’s work. In associating with unbelievers the believers must be affable for through this association the unbelievers may be benefitted, and some even become converts to the true Religion of God, “for the possibility of believing exists in every being, if this one does not allow himself to be led astray by his passions.”¹¹⁵

Vahíd IX: Báb 9

The ninth báb enjoins prayer and pilgrimage; communal prayer is forbidden except for the prayer for the dead which all must say together in unison, but not in accordance with abrogated rituals in which all follow a leader, repeating what he says after him. All prayer is fruitless if, in the Day of *Him Whom God shall make manifest* the believer remains ignorant of Him, or asks that He present proofs which cannot be made manifest, such as showing God to the believer, for He is Immeasurably Exalted above the vision and comprehension of men, or showing him the angels for they are in the spiritual worlds and unable to descend to the physical plane of reality or in human figures in which case they appear to be other human beings. The Manifestation of God fulfills His Mission and it is of no importance to Him whether men believe in Him or not—if they do it is for their good, not His. Pilgrimage is enjoined for those who can carry it out.

Vahíd IX: Báb 10

This is the last báb, and perhaps the most personal and most beautiful as well as the most pointedly specific of all the abwáb of the Persian Bayán. It reveals that the mention of God and belief in *Him Whom God shall make manifest* will purify all souls, filling them with affirmation and saving them from negation. Negation has affected all Revelations, and it is always made manifest among the believers of the past Manifestations when they are introduced to the succeeding Manifestation. The negators of the Qur’án were followers of the Gospel, those of the Bayán were followers of the Qur’án. This is the universal human condition and will always exist, for the Day of Judgment is the testing ground for the believers in God, and not merely of the unbelievers. *Him Whom God shall make manifest* is the Image of the words, “Allah’u’A’zam”. The whole point of the Bayán and of the Religion of the Báb is that the believer therein purify his heart so that it will be capable of recognizing *Him Whom God shall make manifest* and thereby obey God.

The Persian Bayán ends with these words, calling the believers to action:

“Of a certainty! Of a certainty! Purify your souls in the manner you can.”¹¹⁶

Notes

¹All pronouns referring to the Báb, to Bahá'u'lláh and to other Manifestations of God will be capitalized throughout this study, out of respect for the Bahá'í readers. It is hoped that all readers will appreciate the respect accorded these historical figures, the founders of religions.

²Vahíd II: báb 1, p. 43 in French translation; the same is found in Vahíd II: báb 1 in Browne's abstract.

³Edward Granville Browne, *A Traveler's Narrative written in illustrate the Episode of the Báb*, Cambridge: At the University Press, 1891, p. 274.

⁴The Báb, *Le Beyán Arabe*, Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1905.

⁵The Báb, *Le Beyán Persan*, Paris: Librairie Paul Geuthner: Tome 1, 1911; Tome 2, 1913; Tome 3, 1913; Tome 4, 1914.

⁶The Báb, *Le Beyán Persan*, Tome 2, p. 66.

⁷English translation of Ibid. by the author of this paper.

⁸Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1978, pp. 23, 324; Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1991, p. 146.

⁹Vahíd II: báb 1, p. 43.

¹⁰As a point of interest, Bahá'u'lláh later claims that if an amanuensis be found capable of such a transcription He could reveal 1000 verses in a single hour...over the course of 48 hours this would amount to a total of 48,000 verses.

¹¹The dating of his summary of the *Persian Bayán* is found on a note affixed to the manuscript and cited in the first published edition: “This abstract was completed at 12.40 a.m. on the morning of the 1st of January AD 1889. [signed] Edward G. Browne”.

¹² This document is also available online at bahai-library.com – search under Persian Bayán.

¹³ The Báb, *Le Beyán Persan*, Paris: Librairie Paul Geuthner, 1913, Tome 1, pp. 1-16.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 31.

¹⁵This addresses the belief common among Sufis in particular that certain writings of Muslim mystics such as Jalalu'd-Din Rumi and Ibn al-'Arabi were revealed and are of a similar (or even some say a superior) spiritual quality and authority as the verses of the Qur'án. It likewise addresses the belief common among many Isma'ílí and Ithná 'Ashariyyah Shí'í Muslims that the writings of their Imams were of a similar (or superior) spiritual quality and

authority as the verses of the Qur'án. The Báb exalts the verses revealed by the Manifestation of God far far above the writings of any and all human beings.

¹⁶The Báb, *Le Beyán Persan*, Paris: Librairie Paul Geuthner, 1913, Tome 1, p. 48.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 49.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 52.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 52.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 55

²¹ 'iliyyin is the plural form of 'ulayy which means “high places or the persons who sit in high places, or the dwellers of high parts of the mountains.” Some commentators have taken it to mean “a name of the upper part of the skies or upper part of Heaven”. Surat Mutaffifin in the Qur'án (83:18-28) uses this term to denote those who are close to God, the true believers.

²² Op. cit., p. 55.

²³ Ibid., p. 62.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 65.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 96.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 109.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 132.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 145.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 145.

³⁰ The seven letters are [ʻ], [l], [í], [m], [h], [m], [d].

³¹ Op. cit., Tome 2, pp. 31-32 (with the capitalizations employed by Nicolas).

³² The title “Bahá’” was assigned by the Báb to Mírzá Husayn ‘Alí Núrí, later known as Bahá’u’lláh.

³³ Op. cit., Tome 2, p. 66.

³⁴ Ibid., pp. 120-121.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 138.

³⁶ Mithqál is a unit of measure, equivalent to 4.3 or 4.72 metric grams. Currencies in use in Iran have, for centuries, been based on this unit of measure, including the dirham, the dínár, the túmán, the tanga, the állá and perhaps others. Gold dínárs “were first struck to the contemporary standard of 4.4 grams and with one or more Arabic standing figures on the obverse and an Arabic legend on the reverse. Dated coins exist from 74 hijra and are

named as 'dínárs'. These experimental issues were replaced in 77 hijra, except in North Africa and Spain, by completely epigraphical designs very similar to the designs adopted for the silver pieces but with a shorter reverse legend and no annulets or inner circles. This type was used without appreciable change for the whole of Umayyad period [40-132 hijra/661-750 CE], the coins being struck to a new and carefully controlled standard of 4.25 grams. This weight was reputed to be based on the average of the current Byzantine solidi, was called a mithqál, a term used earlier for 1/72 of a ratl.”

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gold_Dinar)

³⁷ Ibid., p. 161.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 162.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 162.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 166.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 167.

⁴² Ibid., Tome 3, p. 6.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 6.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 11.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 10.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 11.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 14.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 21.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 23; translated by Shoghi Effendi in *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 100: “A thousand perusals of the Bayán...cannot equal the perusal of a single verse to be revealed by *Him Whom God shall make manifest*.”

⁵⁰ Ibid., pp. 40-41.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 41.

⁵² Ibid., p. 46.

⁵³The context of this passage indicates that the Báb refers to Muhammad as the Prophet of God.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 49.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 54.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 56.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 61.

⁵⁸ Bahá'u'lláh addresses this theme in these words: “Whoso, while reading the Sacred Scriptures, is tempted to choose therefrom whatever may suit him with which to challenge the authority of the Representative of God among men, is, indeed, as one dead, though to outward seeming he may walk and converse with his neighbors, and share with them their food and their drink.” (Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 175-176)

⁵⁹ ‘Abdu’l-Bahá addresses this theme in some of His Tablets: “The sciences of today are bridges to reality; if then they lead not to reality, naught remains but fruitless illusion. By the one true God! If learning be not a means of access to Him, the Most Manifest, it is nothing but evident loss.” (*Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 110) “O thou son of the Kingdom! All things are beneficial if joined with the love of God; and without His love all things are harmful, and act as a veil between man and the Lord of the Kingdom. When His love is there, every bitterness turneth sweet, and every bounty rendereth a wholesome pleasure. For example, a melody, sweet to the ear, bringeth the very spirit of life to a heart in love with God, yet staineth with lust a soul engrossed in sensual desires. And every branch of learning, conjoined with the love of God, is approved and worthy of praise; but bereft of His love, learning is barren -- indeed, it bringeth on madness. Every kind of knowledge, every science, is as a tree: if the fruit of it be the love of God, then is it a blessed tree, but if not, that tree is but dried-up wood, and shall only feed the fire.” (*Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 181)

⁶⁰ Op. cit., p. 63.

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 63. This citation is problematic. The Báb seems to require a literal interpretation of His words, and yet it is evident that a line of 30 letters does not contain 40 words. Perhaps the correct rendering would be that a line of 30 letters contains 40 strokes including the accents? In any case, a line is designated as one verse, and that verse is composed of 30 letters. If the average word length is deemed to be composed of four consonants, this would result in there being between 7 and 8 words per verse. The actual significance of this description has not been carefully studied as far as the author is aware.

⁶² Ibid., p. 66.

⁶³ Ibid., p. 68.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 73.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 76.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 85.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 100.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 107.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 110.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 116.

⁷¹ Ibid. p. 117.

⁷² Ibid., p. 134.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 147.

⁷⁴ “Make not your deeds as snares wherewith to entrap the object of your aspiration, and deprive not yourselves of this Ultimate Objective for which have ever yearned all such as have drawn nigh unto God. Say: The very life of all deeds is My good pleasure, and all things depend upon Mine acceptance. Read ye the Tablets that ye may know what hath been purposed in the Books of God, the All-Glorious, the Ever-Bounteous. He who attaineth to My love hath title to a throne of gold, to sit thereon in honour over all the world; he who is deprived thereof, though he sit upon the dust, that dust would seek refuge with God, the Lord of all Religions.” (Bahá’u’lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, K36)

⁷⁵ Op. cit., Tome 4, p. 11.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 15.

⁷⁷ “We cherish the hope that one of the kings of the earth will, for the sake of God, arise for the triumph of this wronged, this oppressed people. Such a king will be eternally extolled and glorified. God hath prescribed unto this people the duty of aiding whosoever will aid them, of serving his best interests, and of demonstrating to him their abiding loyalty. They who follow Me must strive, under all circumstances, to promote the welfare of whosoever will arise for the triumph of My Cause, and must at all times prove their devotion and fidelity unto him. Happy is the man that hearkeneth and observeth My counsel. Woe unto him that faileth to fulfil My wish.” (Bahá’u’lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh*, CII, p. 207) “How great the blessedness that awaiteth the king who will arise to aid My Cause in My Kingdom, who will detach himself from all else but Me! Such a king is numbered with the companions of the Crimson Ark -- the Ark which God hath prepared for the people of Bahá. All must glorify his name, must reverence his station, and aid him to unlock the cities with the keys of My Name, the omnipotent Protector of all that inhabit the visible and invisible kingdoms. Such a king is the very eye of mankind, the luminous ornament on the brow of creation, the fountain-head of blessings unto the whole world. Offer up, O people of Bahá, your substance, nay your very lives, for his assistance.” (Bahá’u’lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh*, CV, p. 212)

⁷⁸ Op. cit., p. 26.

⁷⁹ Bahá’u’lláh reiterates this teaching in some of His Tablets.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 31.

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 3. This passage is translated and cited by Shoghi Effendi: “Better is it for thee...to recite but one of the verses of Him Whom God shall make manifest than to set down the whole of the Bayán, for, on that Day, that one verse can save thee, whereas the entire Bayán cannot save thee.” (*God Passes By*, p. 30)

⁸² Ibid., p. 43. [This passage was cited by Bahá’u’lláh in *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh*, Wilmette: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1952, p. 10.]

⁸³ Ibid., p. 43.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 42.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 46.

⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 53.

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 56.

⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 58.

⁸⁹ Ibid., pp. 60-61.

⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 65.

⁹¹ This principle is also found affirmed by Jesus in one of the canonical Gospels: “2:24 And the Pharisees said unto him, Behold, why do they on the sabbath day that which is not lawful? 2:25 And he said unto them, Have ye never read what David did, when he had need, and was an hungred, he, and they that were with him? 2:26 How he went into the house of God in the days of Abiathar the high priest, and did eat the shewbread, which is not lawful to eat but for the priests, and gave also to them which were with him? 2:27 And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath...” (*Gospel of Mark 2:24-27*)

⁹² Op. cit, p. 68.

⁹³ Ibid., p 71.

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 85.

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 104.

⁹⁶ Ibid. p. 101.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 108.

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 121.

⁹⁹ “Whatsoever the Creator commandeth His creatures to observe, the same must they diligently, and with the utmost joy and eagerness, arise and fulfil. They should in no wise allow their fancy to obscure their judgment, neither should they regard their own imaginings as the voice of the Eternal. In the Prayer of Fasting We have revealed: "Should Thy Will decree that out of Thy mouth these words proceed and be addressed unto them, 'Observe, for My Beauty's sake, the fast, O people, and set no limit to its duration,' I swear by the majesty of Thy glory, that every one of them will faithfully observe it, will abstain from whatsoever will violate Thy law, and will continue to do so until they yield up their souls unto Thee." In this consisteth the complete surrender of one's will to the Will of God.” (*Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, CLX, pp. 337-338*)

¹⁰⁰ Op. cit., p. 138.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., pp. 146-147.

¹⁰² A.L.M.Nicolas translated the *Persian Bayán* from a manuscript procured in Iran – from the beginning to the middle of the third Báb of the ninth Vahíd. From this point until the close of the text, that is, the remaining six and one half abwáb, he translated from a manuscript made available to him by Mirza Yahya who had, by this time, been found falsifying certain verses of the Báb. The authenticity of the manuscript used by Nicolas for the first part of the book is questionable in any case, while that supplied by Mirza Yahya is seriously in question. Only

comparative analysis of the extant manuscripts of the *Persian Bayán* will enable scholars to determine whether or not the remaining verses translated by Nicolas are true to the original.

¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 150.

¹⁰⁴ Bahá'u'lláh takes up this theme in many of His Writings, some passages of which are cited here: "It is incumbent upon them who are in authority to exercise moderation in all things. Whatsoever passeth beyond the limits of moderation will cease to exert a beneficial influence." (Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 216) "The word of God which the Supreme Pen hath recorded on the ninth leaf of the Most Exalted Paradise is this: In all matters moderation is desirable. If a thing is carried to excess, it will prove a source of evil." (Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 68) "Overstep not the bounds of moderation, and deal justly with them that serve thee. Bestow upon them according to their needs, and not to the extent that will enable them to lay up riches for themselves, to deck their persons, to embellish their homes, to acquire the things that are of no benefit unto them, and to be numbered with the extravagant. Deal with them with undeviating justice, so that none among them may either suffer want, or be pampered with luxuries. This is but manifest justice." (Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 235; *Summons of the Lord of Hosts*, p. 212) "Fear ye God, and take heed not to outstrip the bounds of moderation, and be numbered among the extravagant." (Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 251; *Summons of the Lord of Hosts*, p. 188) "It is incumbent upon them who are in authority to exercise moderation in all things. Whatsoever passeth beyond the limits of moderation will cease to exert a beneficial influence. Consider for instance such things as liberty, civilization and the like. However much men of understanding may favourably regard them, they will, if carried to excess, exercise a pernicious influence upon men." (Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 169) "Whoso cleaveth to justice, can, under no circumstances, transgress the limits of moderation. He discerneth the truth in all things, through the guidance of Him Who is the All-Seeing. The civilization, so often vaunted by the learned exponents of arts and sciences, will, if allowed to overleap the bounds of moderation, bring great evil upon men. Thus warneth you He Who is the All-Knowing. If carried to excess, civilization will prove as prolific a source of evil as it had been of goodness when kept within the restraints of moderation. Meditate on this, O people, and be not of them that wander distraught in the wilderness of error. The day is approaching when its flame will devour the cities, when the Tongue of Grandeur will proclaim: 'The Kingdom is God's, the Almighty, the All-Praised!' All other things are subject to this same principle of moderation. Render thanks unto thy Lord Who hath remembered thee in this wondrous Tablet. All-Praise be to God, the Lord of the glorious throne." (Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 342-343)

¹⁰⁵ "Confession of sins and transgressions before human beings is not permissible, as it hath never been nor will ever be conducive to divine forgiveness. Moreover such confession before people results in one's humiliation and abasement, and God -- exalted be His glory -- wisheth not the humiliation of His servants. Verily He is the Compassionate, the Merciful." (Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 24)

¹⁰⁶ Passages from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh that speak to this theme include: "The sinner should, between himself and God, implore mercy from the Ocean of mercy, beg forgiveness from the Heaven of generosity..." (Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 24) "Wholly unto Thee do I turn, fervently imploring Thee with all my heart, my mind and my tongue, to shield me from all that runs counter to Thy will in this, the cycle of Thy divine unity, and to cleanse me of all defilement that will hinder me from seeking, stainless and unsullied, the shade of the tree of Thy grace." ('Abdu'l-Bahá, in *Bahá'í Prayers*, p. 28)

¹⁰⁷ Op. cit., p. 150. [Similar passages in Bahá'u'lláh's Writings include: "Pride not yourselves on much reading of the verses or on a multitude of pious acts by night and day; for were a man to read a single verse with joy and radiance it would be better for him than to read with lassitude all the Holy Books of God, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting. Read ye the sacred verses in such measure that ye be not overcome by languor and despondency. Lay not upon your souls that which will weary them and weigh them down, but rather what will lighten and uplift them,

so that they may soar on the wings of the Divine verses towards the Dawning-place of His manifest signs; this will draw you nearer to God, did ye but comprehend.” (Bahá’u’lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, K149)]

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. pp. 156-157.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 160.

¹¹⁰ *Bahá’í Prayers*, Wilmette: BPT, 1973, p. 107.

¹¹¹ *Makhorka* is poor tobacco, cheap tobacco, low grade tobacco. This is typically the kind of tobacco smoked in waterpipes and by working people and soldiers. “The tobacco generally used in Yemen is *tombac*, a kind of makhorka. Rakower and Fatal compared its smoke with that of a popular brand of blended tobacco. The tombac smoked in the Boori (the pipe bowl) yielded only 16.1 mg of "tar" per gram of tobacco, at a puff volume of 200 ml, with puff pauses of 60 seconds. The tobacco blend under these conditions yielded 26.2 mg of "tar." Most remarkable, however, is the filter efficiency of the water in the Shishi, the water-filled main part of the Narghile. When the Narghile is used with water, as normally practiced, "tar" yield from 1.0 g of tombac is 8.4 mg, and from 1.0 g of tobacco blend, 14.2 mg. In other words, the percentage of "tar" absorbed by the water is 82% in the case of tombac and 91 % for the blended tobacco.” (<http://narghile.blogspot.com/2007/03/tribute-to-ernst-l-wynder-and-dietrich.html>)

¹¹² “This spice is used as a digestive aid, in food as a condiment and in pickles. Its odor is so strong that it must be stored in airtight containers; otherwise the aroma, which is nauseating in quantities, will contaminate other spices stored nearby. However, its odour and flavor become much milder and more pleasant upon heating in oil or ghee, acquiring a taste and aroma reminiscent of sautéed onion and garlic. In India, it is used especially by the merchant caste of the Hindus and by adherents of Jaimism, who do not eat onions or garlic. It is used in most vegetarian and lentil dishes to both add flavor and aroma and reduce flatulence. It is mainly grown in Iran, Afghanistan...*Ferula assafoetida* is an herbaceous, monoecious, perennial plant of the family Umbelliferae. It grows to 2 m high with a circular mass of leaves. Flowering stems are 2.5–3 m high and 10 cm thick, with a number of schizogenous ducts in the cortex containing the resinous gum. Stem leaves have wide sheathing petioles. Compound large umbels arise from large sheaths. Flowers are pale greenish yellow. Fruits are oval, flat, thin, reddish brown and have a milky juice. Roots are thick, massive, and pulpy. It yields a resin similar to that of the stems. All parts of the plant have the distinctive fetid smell.” (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asafoetida>)

¹¹³ Op. cit., p. 161.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., p. 163.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., p. 164.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., p. 171.