

A Grammar of the Divine: Translation, Notes, and Semi-Critical Edition of the Bāb's *Risāla fī al-naḥw wa al-ṣarf*

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The Bāb's Arabic prose has long been a source of criticism among his Muslim detractors and, consequently, a major subject of Bahā'ī apologetics. Despite the amount of ink that has been spilled over the subject, there has been no systematic study of the nature of the Bāb's violations of Arabic grammar or what he thought about the subject. To remedy this latter gap in our knowledge, I have made a semi-critical edition of the Bāb's *Risāla fī al-naḥw wa al-ṣarf* (*A Treatise on Grammar*).^[1] Even though the Bāb gave the treatise this title, he does so ironically since he says very little about the discipline and characterizes it as second-order knowledge compared to contemplation of the rules governing God's interaction with His creation. However, when describing the latter the Bāb uses the terminology of the former. Sometimes he does so jokingly, making puns out of words that have both a metaphysical and grammatical meaning in order to drive home his point that study of subjects like the declension of a noun (*i`rāb al-ism*) pale in comparison to contemplation of the appearance of the Name (*i`rāb al-ism*). At other times, the use of words with these dual meanings is meant to highlight the fundamentally linguistic nature of God's interaction with the world.

The English word "grammar" neatly conveys the various shades of meaning that are implicit in the Bāb's discussion of the subject. On one level, grammar is a system of rules that govern the formation of words (morphology) and their arrangement into units of meaning (syntax). On another level, a "grammar" is the basic principles of any branch of knowledge. In this sense we can talk about a grammar of music or a grammar of geography. Although the Bāb does talk about grammar in the first sense of the word in this treatise, he is primarily interested in the second sense; namely, the principles governing God's interaction with the world. Therefore, the Bāb delineates what might be called a grammar of the Divine.

As I hope to show, the Bāb's delineation of a grammar of the Divine draws heavily on Shaykh Aḥmad's theories on the linguistic nature of the operation of God's Will in the world. Therefore, a proper treatment of our text would compare the works of the two men on this subject. However, not enough is known about Shaykh Aḥmad's metaphysical grammar to comment intelligently on the Bāb's discussion and almost nothing of the Bāb's voluminous writings have been published and exist only in manuscripts that are not available for research.^[2] Therefore, I have established a semi-critical edition of his treatise on grammar in order to meet

this final need and offer a translation and gloss of the text to serve as a building block for future studies of the Bāb's ideas on the linguistic nature of Divine self-disclosure.

The purpose of creating a critical edition is to produce a version of a text that most likely resembles what the author wrote. Of course, if an autograph (a copy of the text in the author's own hand) can be found, then the job of the editor is fairly straightforward: just reproduce the text. However, there may be several copies of the same text written by the author and the editor would have to determine which one represents the final form of the text as the author intended it. While it is useful to compare it with earlier autographs, the base text (the text that is deemed to be most reliable and is reproduced in the critical edition) should reflect the author's final work on the subject.^[3]

Given the current resources of the modern Bahā'ī community and its general lack of enthusiasm for the creation of critical editions, researchers are not likely to have access to autograph manuscripts, either for viewing in a safe, archival environment or in color reproduction. Therefore, they must rely on manuscript copies by various scribes. Here too the task is daunting since many of these manuscripts are also inaccessible. Those that are accessible are usually in private hands and are photocopies of photocopies, *ad infinitum*. Further, unless the scribe dates his transcription, researchers have no tools available to aid them in guessing the approximate age of the text, such as the nature of the manuscript paper, types of inks, and analyses of scribal handwriting. Dating is crucial in the preparation of a critical edition since the goal of the editor is to reproduce the original version of the text, which is most likely the earliest one (unless the author made changes, as detailed above). Based on dating and family resemblances between manuscripts (i.e. certain groups of manuscripts share common scribal errors), one could then determine the genealogical relationship between the various manuscript traditions and work back to the original text as written by the author.

Due to this lack of resources, most prospective editors of Bābī and Bahā'ī texts must be satisfied for the time being with the prefix of "semi" to their critical editions and adopt a rather primitive procedure. Theoretically, the editor must gather as many manuscript copies as possible and then, after reading each of them thoroughly, designate the oldest manuscript as the base text. The general assumption is that there will be fewer lacunae and scribal errors in a manuscript that was transcribed soon after the original was written. Variants between this text and later manuscripts will then be recorded in the footnotes and commentary on the text and explanation of obscure terms are confined to the introduction and translation.^[4]

In practice, one of the secondary manuscripts that was transcribed at a later date might better preserve a particular passage than one found in the manuscript designated as the base text. A judicious editor should use the better-preserved passage in the main text of the critical edition and note that the base text contains something different. The measure of a successful critical edition is not its faithfulness to a single manuscript. Rather, the reader should be able to look at

the critical edition and the accompanying apparatus and recreate every single manuscript that has been consulted in the preparation of the text.^[5] In preparing the critical edition of the Bāb's *Risāla*, I have primarily reproduced the oldest manuscript (see below), but I have used variants from a later manuscript if a word in the older manuscript is an obvious error. All of the variants are found in the footnotes. As for the one or two cases of lacunae where a portion is obviously missing from the older manuscript but is preserved in the later manuscript, I have filled the gap in the critical edition with the passage from the later text and enclosed it in brackets.

Finally, a special word of caution for editors of works by the Bāb. Morphological or syntactical errors in early manuscripts may not necessarily be the result of scribal errors. The Bāb's Arabic grammar was often unconventional, particularly when he wrote in what he called the "mode of verses" (*sha 'n-i āyāt*), and ostensible scribal errors could be by the Bāb himself. Of course, scribal errors do frequently occur and can confuse an otherwise clear statement by the Bāb.^[6] Conversely, later scribes could have knowingly or unknowingly corrected grammatical errors in the original text written by the Bāb. To be cautious, grammatical errors found in the earliest manuscripts of a work should be preserved in the main text and noted in the critical apparatus along with later variants. This principle is obviously in tension with that enunciated in the preceding paragraph, so editors will have to be very careful about which variant reading is put in the main text of the critical edition. It is sometimes a personal judgment based on long exposure to the Bāb's style and therefore somewhat subjective. However, as long as every variant is noted in the critical apparatus, editors need not worry unduly about preserving an early scribal error in the main text.

In preparing the text of the Bāb's "Treatise on Grammar" I have consulted two badly reproduced photocopies of photocopies of INBMC volume 67 and INBA volume 4011C. Since INBA 4011 is the earlier manuscript, I have taken it as my base text.^[7] In the footnotes the two manuscripts are designated as follows:

أ: INBA 4011, p. 167-71.

ب: INBMC 67, pgs. 121-25.

Both texts are written in *naskh* script, although the handwriting differs. The manuscript in INBMC 67 is comprised of 62 lines of text with 16 lines per full page and roughly 14 words per line, while INBA 4011 is comprised of 87 lines of text with 19 lines per full page and roughly 9 words per line. INBMC 67 has some variants in the margins, with one of them designated "خ ل" (*nuskha badal*), which means that the scribe was noting a variant in another manuscript at his disposal. All marginal notes by the scribes have been recorded in the footnotes, whether they pertain to variant readings and corrections to the text or to commentary on the text (as occurs once in INBA 4011). Neither text is vocalized, although INBA 4011 does have *tashdīd*. In the edited version, I have vocalized the text when necessary and provided the *tashdīd* (differences

from INBA 4011 are recorded in the footnotes). However, I have tried to keep vocalization to a minimum and foregone punctuation so as not to prejudice future translators toward any particular reading. I have also stayed away from capitalizing many terms in the English translation for the same reason.

Although I have been unable to precisely date the *Risāla* using information in a colophon or textual clues, it is definitely an early work of the Bāb. First, it is found in INBA 4011, which largely contains texts that he composed between 1844 and 1846.[8] Further, Māzandarānī states that it was written during his pilgrimage, around the same time that he wrote *al-Muhammadaḥīfa bayn al-ḥaramayn*. [9] Finally, the Bāb himself notes in the *Kitāb al-fihrist* that one of the questions (*al-masā'il*) that he answered concerned grammar ("*fi al-naḥw wa al-ṣarf*"). [10] Since the *Kitāb al-fihrist* is dated Jumādā II 1261 (June 21, 1845), [11] the Bāb must have written the *Risāla fi al-naḥw wa al-ṣarf* [12] during the first year of his ministry, probably after he left for his ḥājī.

While we know that the Bāb composed this treatise very early in his ministry, we do not know who the recipient was. The Bāb does address the recipient as *mu'tamad al-quwā* ("one dependable in strength"), but this is not necessarily an allusion to someone's name (it is a paraphrase of Q 53:5). Given the gender of the address, the recipient was probably a male. Based on the content of the treatise and the time period in which it was written, the recipient was probably also a Shaykhī.

As I claimed in the opening paragraph, the title of the treatise is somewhat misleading since it purports to discuss grammar (*al-naḥw wa al-ṣarf*). [13] Therefore, anyone seeking a text in which the Bāb discusses the finer points of grammar or explains some of the more peculiar elements of his syntax, morphology, and style will be disappointed. Generally, the Bāb did not write about the mechanics of his Arabic, unlike a later claimant to divine revelation, Bahā'u'llāh. [14] Further, the Bāb composed this treatise before members of the Shī'ī clerical establishment began to criticize his Arabic prose, so we would not expect to see a rebuttal of their criticisms in this text. [15] The Bāb does signal, however, his view of Arabic grammar as a hindrance to his revelatory creativity by way of allegory. Near the beginning of the text, he equates syntax (*al-naḥw*) with Adam and morphology (*al-ṣarf*) with Eve. The ubiquitous speaker (the Bāb switches between the third and first person) gives them a place in Paradise, but warns them to not approach the tree of origination (*shajarat al-bad'*). As in the Biblical story, they disobey and are cast out of Paradise. The main lesson seems to be that Arabic grammar is an important part of revelation, but it can be discarded if it encroaches upon the expression of divine truth. In a similar vein, the Bāb councils the recipient of his treatise to accustom the children of believers to his Arabic style from an early age. The recipient should do this by writing down the Bāb's scripture for them in beautiful handwriting in order that they will know, upon reaching the age of maturity, that the Bāb is transcendent (*tanzīh*) above the limitations of exposition (*ḥadd al-bayān*).

This is not to say, however, that the Arabic writings of the Bāb can be understood without studying Arabic grammar. Indeed, a basic knowledge of its particulars is necessary to understand his neologisms. Further, some of his Arabic prose is quite standard and could only be understood by someone versed in the norms of grammar (see my discussion of this under *al-irāb* in the gloss). Finally, much of his metaphysical terminology is derived from Shaykh Aḥmad, who developed many of his metaphysical ideas by contemplating the operations of Arabic grammar. Therefore, even though the Bāb felt free to violate its norms, he relies upon the reader's understanding of those norms and the mechanics of grammar to decipher his prose and his metaphysical terminology.

As for the latter, the Bāb in this text divides the operation of God's Will in the created world into three components: Act (*fi'l*),^[16] Name (*ism*), and Letter (*ḥarf*). This mirrors the division of Arabic words into their three components: verb (*fi'l*), noun (*ism*), and particle (*ḥarf*). The reader should be aware that my translation of these grammatical terms is somewhat misleading, since there is not a one-to-one correspondence between them and the English equivalents I have given them. The category of *ism*, which is translated by English students of Arabic grammar as "noun," includes things that English grammarians would not classify as nouns, such as adjectives (*al-ṣafāt*). Further, the category of *ḥarf*, which is translated as "particle," also includes words that would not be classified as particles in English grammar, like *fī* (the preposition "in") and *wa* (the conjunction "and"). As with English prepositions and conjunctions, the *ḥurūf* (pl. of *ḥarf*) are the glue that connects the verbal and non-verbal elements of the sentence together.

At the end of his treatise, the Bāb uses these three grammatical categories to describe the three basic components of all existence: Act, Name, and Letter. Or, as he puts it, three of the four basic "letters" of the "word" that God originated and from which all other created things are ultimately derived. For example, the Bāb dwells on the movement (*ḥaraka*) and stillness (*sukūn*) of the Act (*fi'l*), both terms used in grammar to describe which letters of a verb (*fi'l*) or noun are vocalized (*mutaḥarrik*) with a diacritical mark (*ḥaraka*) or not vocalized (*sākin*) with a *sukūn* (a mark indicating that a consonant is not followed by a short vowel). The Bāb also designates some of the subsets of his metaphysical category of Name (*ism*) with terms like *ṣifa* (quality) that also fall under the category of noun (*ism*) in Arabic grammar (a *ṣifa* is an adjective). Finally, the Bāb writes of the component of Letters (*ḥurūf*) and describes them in terms that could be used to describe the function of particles (*ḥurūf*) in Arabic grammar.

In order to avoid a translation that is totally unwieldy (somewhat difficult given the technical nature of the subject matter), I have moved back and forth between rendering the Bāb's terminology in its metaphysical and grammatical meanings depending on the context. To ensure that readers are able to recognize the Bāb's wordplay, I put the Arabic terms in parentheses followed by notes highlighting the grammatical and philosophical denotations of these terms. By

this I hope to highlight a grammatical aspect of the Bāb's cosmology that has hitherto gone unnoticed in discussions of his metaphysical terminology and in translations of his writings.

Notes

[1] I have developed this article from [a talk on the same subject](#) that I gave at the 2002 Irfan Colloquium at Louhelen. I want to thank Iraj Ayman for giving me the opportunity to present my paper and Todd Lawson for facilitating an illuminating session on the Bāb's writings and helping me find the source of a *ḥadīth*. I also want to thank Vahid Brown for listening to my ideas on the Bāb's writings and freely sharing his own. Finally, I want to give a special word of thanks to Sholeh Quinn and Stephen Lambden for their encouragement, generosity with sources, and providing this forum for publication.

[2] Idris Hamid's "The Metaphysics and Cosmology of Shaykh 'Aḥmad al-'Aḥsā'ī: Critical Edition, Translation, and Analysis of *Observations in Wisdom*" (Ph.D. diss., State University of New York at Buffalo, 1998) is the only work in a Western language that attempts to make sense of the grammatical component of Shaykh Aḥmad's metaphysical language (see Chapter 2). It is an invaluable resource for students of Shaykh Aḥmad's highly elusive metaphysical writings and for deciphering the Bāb's treatises on cosmology and language, since he borrows heavily from Shaykh Aḥmad.

[3] Bahā'īs may want to preserve every revision made by the Bāb and Bahā'u'llāh since each new redaction is believed to be a brand-new revelation from God. For example, a critical edition of the *Sūrih-yi ḥaykal* would have three versions of the text corresponding to the original text written in Edirne (Adrianople) and the two redactions made by Bahā'u'llāh in 'Akka. The critical apparatus for each version would include variants found in manuscripts that are derived from that version.

[4] These and other concise guidelines for editing Arabic manuscripts are found in Salāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid's *Qawā'id taḥqīq al-makḥūṭāt*. Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-Jadīd, 1970: 2-30.

[5] M. G. Carter, "Arabic Literature," *Scholarly Editing: A Guide to Research*, ed. by D. C. Greetham (New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 1995), p. 570-71.

[6] For example, Moojan Momen used a corrupt manuscript when translating a portion of the Bāb's *al-Muḥammadahīfa al-dhahabiyya* in the introduction to his translation of Bahā'u'llāh's tablet on Uncompounded Reality (bahai-library.com/bahauallah_lawh_basit_haqiqqa). Momen translates one portion as, "without the existence of anything having form and shape" (*shay'un bi-mithl ma inna-hu kana shayyār*), although he notes that this is a tenuous translation because the text is not clear. Another version of this portion is found in Vahid Behmardī's "Muqaddimih-yi dar bārih-yi sabk va siyāq āthār mubārikih-yi hazrat rabb a'lā," *Khushih-hā'ī az kharman-i adab va hunar*, v. 6 (Landegg): 57. It seems to be drawn from a better manuscript since there is a clear connection between this sentence and the following sentence: *bi-lā wujūdi shay'in bi-mithli mā anna-hu kana h.ayyan* ("without the existence of anything in

the same manner that He is Living.") Thus, the Bāb was not being cryptic at all. Rather, Momen's manuscript preserved a corrupt text.

[7] A letter that precedes our text in INBMC 67 is dated Rajab 1264 (between July 3, 1848 and July 1, 1848), so it is possible that this manuscript of the *Risāla* was transcribed around this time or after, which would make it a much later copy than the 4011 manuscript.

[8] Denis MacEoin, *The Sources for Early Bābī Doctrine and History: A Survey* (Leiden: Brill, 1992): 35, 73. Although MacEoin briefly mentions the text on p. 73 and provides a sample of its opening line, he omits it from his index of manuscripts.

[9] Māzandarānī, *Ta'rikh-i zuhūr al-ḥaqq*, vol. 3: 288.

[10] `Alī Muḥammad, the Bāb, *Kitāb al-Fihrist*, f. 1^a-6^b, Islamic Manuscripts, Third Series, Vol. 4, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library, f. 5^b. The title of this work, "fī al-naḥw wa al-ṣarf," is found under the heading "*jadwal al-masā'il al-mukhtalifa wa tafsīr*" ("Table/index of various questions and exegesis").

[11] MacEoin, 50.

[12] The treatise is also known as *Risāla fī nuqṭat `ilm al-naḥw* and *Risāla fī al-naḥw*.

[13] *Al-naḥw* is roughly the equivalent of the English category of "syntax" and *al-ṣarf* is roughly equivalent to "morphology." To designate grammar as a whole, Arab grammarians just used the word *al-naḥw* or the phrase *al-naḥw wa al-ṣarf*.

[14] See, for example, Bahā'u'llāh's letter to one of his chief scribes, Zayn al-Muqarribīn, in which he explains some of his reasons for violating grammatical norms in Arabic (the letter is reproduced in Māzandarānī's *Asrār al-āthār* in the entry under "Zayn al-Muqarribīn").

[15] To my knowledge, the first sustained, written critique of the Bab's grammar did not appear until 12 Rajab, 1261 (July 17, 1845) when Ḥājji Muḥammad Karīm Khān finished writing his *Izhāq al-bāṭil*. In the section on "Examples of Some of the Simple-Minded Drivel of the Suspicious Bāb" (*fī dhikri ba`di khurāfāti al-bāb al-murtāb*) [*Izhāq al-bāṭil* (Kirmān: 1972), pgs. 80-103], Kirmānī criticizes the grammar and content of an early letter sent to him by the Bāb and chapters from the *Qayyūm al-asmā'*. His criticisms on both counts are illuminating since he was a well-educated man steeped in the intricacies of both Arabic grammar and Shaykhī terminology. With regard to the former, he was well-positioned to pick out a number of grammatical and stylistic irregularities in the Bāb's writings that might normally escape the attention of less capable readers (such as myself). Even though his aim is polemical (to prove that the Bāb is not eloquent (*faṣīḥ*), as the latter had claimed), his observations are helpful in understanding what was so striking about the Bāb's prose to an educated audience. Even more valuable are his criticisms of the Bāb's claims to divine authority in the *Qayyūm al-asmā'*. Kirmānī was one of a handful of people who knew enough of Shaykh Aḥmad and Sayyid Kāzīm's terminology to be able to decipher the Bāb's language in that book and he makes the important point that the Bāb was claiming multiple stations at the

same time. To prove his point, he goes verse-by-verse in several chapters and "decodes" the Bāb's cryptic claims. The chapter is an invaluable source for understanding how the Bāb's early works were received by the religious elite and I hope to write a more detailed article on the subject in the future.

[16] Hamid renders *al-fi'l*, "the Acting," and its five degrees as gerunds to indicate that they are not substantives but processes (Hamid, 176-84). For example, the first degree of Acting, *al-mashī'a*, is generally rendered "the Will," but in the metaphysics of Shaykh Aḥmad, Hamid contends, it is better rendered as "Willing" because it is not an entity but a process. It is not clear to me, however, that the Imams necessarily had this distinction in mind. Therefore, I will keep with the standard rendering of these terms but urge the reader to be mindful of Shaykh Aḥmad's distinction. See the gloss under *aqdā* for a fuller discussion of the stages of the Act.

Risāla fī al-naḥw wa al-ṣarf: Semi-Critical Edition

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الحمد لله الذي تجلّى على الانسان بالنقطة المنفصلة المتحرّكة عن مطلع البيان
والحمد لله الذي اقضى بجموده ما امضى^۱ للانسان بالنقطة المتّصلة^۲ المسكّنة في
مغرب البيان حتّى يتّصل البحرين في نقطة الالتقاء على هيكل الطّنجين لئلا يظنّ
اهل الاعيان بما قدر الله في نقطة البرزخين حكم الخليجين و لقد خلق الرحمن نقطة
النحو من عالم المحو و احكم الله في نفسها احكام التّحديد على حكم الموهوم من نقطة
المعلوم و كان لله البداء في حكمه و ما من شيء الا له كتاب مؤجّل لن يستطيع
الشيء على السّبقة من حكم الله ربّه و ذلك حكم من الله الحقّ في شأن الخلق على
الحقّ الخالص مقضياً

و لما خلق الله مركز النحو من حول سرّ السّطر قد اوحينا اليه لا تقرب شجرة البدء
فانّها محرّمة عليك بالحقّ ثمّ اقسّمته حظراً^۳ من غبار ارض الصّدّد^۴ على القريب^۵
فقربها على غير الاذن و لذا قد حكمنا عليه بالخروج من^۶ جنّة الباب و من ذلك
الحظر^۷ المتصاعدة من اسفل اعضائه قد خلقنا نقطة الصّرف زوجته فحينئذ^۸ امر الله
خروجها على هبط الالواح و كان الحكم^۹ في امّ الكتاب^{۱۰} من اهل التّغيير في سطر
التّحديد مكتوباً و الى الان قد بكت النقطتان في ارض الالواح و ها انا ذا قد غفرتُ

لهما قريهما بادن الله ربهما لما اعترفا بالعجز في ذلك الباب و إني انا اليوم بالحق
للعالمين على اذن الله العليّ قد كنت غفراً

يا ايها الباب الصفي فأعلم أنّ للصبيان المؤمنين بعد طلوع الشمس من مطلع الاذن
حق في ذلك الباب أن لا يأخذوا سبل العلم من كتب الخلاف لما قد ذقوا ابائهم حب
الثمرة من شجرة الخلد و لا ينبغي للامطار النازلة من بحر المزن شرب الحب من
حب العجل لما اراد الله تطهير الارض ليومه الاكبر ألا يعبدوا الخلق إلا آياه إنه
الحق لا اله الا هو فأكتب على طرق الحسان للصبيان من تعليم خالق الانسان من
مطلع البيان في نفسك على ظهور هيئته على كل الاكوان والاعيان حتى يشهدوا بعد
البلوغ الى الكمال بتنزيه الباب عن حدّ البيان فقد خلق الله العليين من الرّشحة
المرشحة من ذنبيك البحرين (مَرَجَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ يَلْتَقِيَانِ بَيْنَهُمَا بَرْزَخٌ لَا يَبْغِيَانِ)

ألا يا اهل الارض والسّماء إنّ الله ما قدر الشرف للانسان في ذلك العلم من ذنبيك
البحرين لانهما حظّ لاهل الخليجين و إنّ الشرف عند الله العلم بالرحمن و بالبرزخ
القائم بين العالمين فأرغبوا في خطّ الاستواء الى القائم بين البحرين و المخرج من
احدهما لؤلؤ الاعراب و من الاخر تصريف المرجان و للاول حدّ من الله محكم لا
يعرف الشّيء فصلاً إلا عن القطع [بالوصل و الثاني حكم متقن لا يعرف السكون
الا عن القطع بالسكون

و أطرّح سبيل القواعد من ماء الاكسير على الالواح المورقات من هيكل التوحيد
من ظلّ العالم العلوي حتى يشهد أولوا الالباب من اهل الايمان أنّ ما هنالك لا يعرف
الا بما ههنا و لا تكتب حرفاً الا و قد تقرء عليه حكم البداء و كلمة الامضاء من
الرحمن (إِنَّا لِلّهِ و إِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ) و أفتح باب الكتاب على الحروف التسعة و
العشرين و أجر من قلمك على الكلّ حكم القرب الى البدء ممّا اهلّمك الله من لسان
الباب و أبدء بالذکر على الفعل لانه مداد الحكم و أتمم عدده على التكرير في فعل
القديم و أحكم على نقطة البرزخ حكم الغيبين في الشهادتين و أفرق حكمها على التقاء
الجمعين و أذكر قرب الغيبة على الشهادة بعد نظرتك الى اعداد الحروف بالقلة
والكثره و أحكم على الأقلّ الى لجة القرب و أكتب على الاكثر نقطة البعد و

أصرف^[۱۱۱] الفعل على صرف الظهور و أعرب الاسم بالماء الظهور و أحكم على الحرف بالربط من عالم الظهور الى جبل الطور هنالك نُقِرَ النَّاقُورُ و نادى كُلُّ الحروف من في الطور أَنَّ الشَّمْسُ قد طلعت و النَّهَارُ قد تجلَّتْ^[۱۱۲] و الزَّوَالُ قد اقضت و اللَّيْلُ قد ادبرت^[۱۱۳] فما قَدَّرَ اللهُ لنا في ذلك اليوم لدى الباب و قوفاً اللهُ رَبَّنَا^[۱۱۴] الَّذِي لا اله الا هو فبمثل ذلك (فَلْيَعْمَلِ الْعَامِلُونَ)^[۱۱۵]

ثم أعلم يا معتمد^[۱۱۶] القوى أَنَّ الاسم سمة^[۱۱۷] الشَّيْء كما هي بما هي و له مراتب منها أَنَّ المرابا نعتُه^[۱۱۸] و الالفاظ حدُّه و الاشكال وَصْفُه و الصُّور المنقوشة رسمُه و لكلِّ كتاب على حكم الكلِّ من عند الله لا نفاذ لها و إِنَّ الله قد جعل الالفاظ اجساداً للارواح التي هي المعاني و إِنَّ الله قد كتب بايديه بينهما نسبة بالحق و ما كان بينهما الا كما كان بين الكاف والنون

و اما الفعل فهو^[۱۱۹] حركة الشَّيْء و عليها قد كان مداد الاسم و الحرف و اصل الفعل^[۱۲۰] خلق ساكن لا يُعْرَف بالسكون و على مذهبنا الَّذِي هو الحق خلق متحرِّك^[۱۲۱] لا يُعْرَف بالتحرك من عرف الفصل من الوصل فقد بلغ نقطة العلم

واما الحرف فهو^[۱۲۲] المعنى^[۱۲۳] الَّذِي لا يحكي الا عن الربط و إِنَّ الله لما اراد أَنْ يخلق الحروف ابداع كلمة على اربعة احرف و قد سمى^[۱۲۴] اللهُ لكلِّ حرف اسماً للاوّل فعل و للثاني اسم و للثالث حرف و للرابع سرّ مستسرّ مقومها و ها انا ذا اعرفكم^[۱۲۵] ذلك الحرف و هو الَّذِي اشار اليه الصادق عليه السلام في حديث الاسم^[۱۲۶] و قد ملاء^[۱۲۷] الابداع من فيض ذلك الحرف و لا يعلم صنعه^[۱۲۸] اللطيف الا هو و أَتَّكَلُ على الله و قل لا حول و لا قوّة الا بالله و أجر القلم على نقطة الباب بالباب (بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ) الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ^[۱۲۹]

Notes

[۱] في هامش ب: خ ل (نسخة بدل) اقتضى وجوده ما اقضى.

۱۳۱ هکذا في ب. و في أ: المنفصلة.

۱۳۲ أ: خطراً.

۱۳۳ ب: الصدق.

۱۳۴ ب: القرب.

۱۳۵ ب: عن.

۱۳۶ أ: الخطر.

۱۳۷ أ و ب: فح.

۱۳۸ ب ينقص: الحكم.

۱۳۹ ب ينقص: الكتاب.

۱۴۰ ب ينقص: العلي.

۱۴۱ ب يزيد: و بعد.

۱۴۲ أ: ذقوا.

۱۴۳ ب يزيد: من.

۱۴۴ ب: "جسد" بدلاً من "حب".

۱۴۵ ب: ان لا.

۱۴۶ أ: المرشحة.

۱۴۷ ب: ذلك. و المثني العادي لذاك هو "ذينك" (المجرور).

۱۵۱ (الرحمن) ۱۹:۵۵ - ۲۰.

۱۵۲ ب: ذلك.

۱۵۳ ب ينقص: إن.

۱۵۴ ب ينقص: فصلا. و بحاشية: فصلا.

۱۵۵ ب: الا.

۱۵۶ أ ينقص: بالوصل و الثاني حكم متقن لا يعرف السكون الا عن القطع.

۱۵۷ ب: سبل.

۱۵۸ هكذا في أ. و في ب: هيكل

۱۵۹ ب: يكتب.

۱۶۰ ب ينقص: تقرأ. و في هامش: تقرأ.

۱۶۱ (البقرة) ۲:۱۵۶.

۱۶۲ ب: لانها.

۱۶۳ هكذا في ب. و في أ: الحكيم.

۱۶۴ هكذا في ب. و في أ: احرف.

۱۶۵ هكذا في ب. و في أ: جلت.

۱۶۶ هكذا في ب. و في أ: ادرت.

۱۶۷ ب: ربّي.

۳۶۱: أ: فلنجري العاملين. و "فليعمل العاملون" من القرآن, (الصفات) ۳۷: ۶۱.

۳۶۲: ب: معتمدي.

۳۶۳: أ: سمّة.

۳۶۴: ب: نعمة.

۳۶۵: ب: هي.

۳۶۶: ب يزيد: هو.

۳۶۷: أ: "او خلق تحرك لا يعرف بالتحرك"، بدلاً من "و على مذهبنا... متحرك".

۳۶۸: ب: هي.

۳۶۹: أ: المعني.

۳۷۰: ب: سمّاه.

۳۷۱: أ: اعرفكم.

۳۷۲: في هامش أ: "حديث شريف قال النبي (صلى الله) إنّ الله خلق عبداً ليسوا بأنبياء الله و لا شهداء تغبطهم النبيون و الشهداء لقريهم في الله الحديث." بالرغم من هذا الشرح, الحديث الصحيح الذي الباب يشير اليه يبدأ بالكلمات التالية: " إنّ الله تبارك و تعالی خلق اسماً بالحروف غير متصوّتٍ.... " انظر الى الترجمة.

۳۷۳: ب: ملئت.

۳۷۴: هكذا في ب. و في أ: صفه.

۳۷۵: (الفاتحة) ۱: ۱ - ۲.

Translation and Notes : *wa al-ṣarf Risāla fī al-naḥw*

<p style="text-align: center;">In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ</p>
<p>Praise be to God Who has been revealed to (<i>tajallā `alā</i>) humankind (<i>al-insān</i>)[1] by means of the separated point[2] starting its motion (<i>al-nuqta al-munfaṣila al-mutaḥarrika</i>)[3] from the dawning-place of exposition (<i>al-bayān</i>)![4] Praise be to God Who undertook through His generosity that which He consummated[5] for humankind by means of the joined[6] point coming to rest (<i>al-nuqta al-muttaṣila al-musakkina</i>)[7] in the setting-place of exposition! (This transpires) until the two bodies of water[8] are joined at the point of meeting[9] in the form (<i>haykal</i>)[10] of the two Ṭatanj,[11] in order that the people of distinction[12] may not suppose that what God has determined in the point of the two <i>barzakhs</i>[13] is the allotment (<i>ḥukm</i>)[14] of the two gulfs (<i>al-khalījayn</i>).[15] The All-Merciful created the point of syntax (<i>nuqṭat al-naḥw</i>)[16] from the world of effacement (<i>‘ālam al-maḥw</i>) and God placed within it (<i>aḥkam allāh fī nafsihā</i>) the allotments of demarcation (<i>al-taḥdīd</i>)[17] according to the allotment[18] of the object of fancy from the point of the object of knowledge.[19] To God belongs the alteration (<i>al-badā’</i>)[20] of His judgment.[21] Everything has a fixed record (<i>kitāb mu’ajjal</i>)[22] such that no "thing" (<i>al-shay’</i>)[23] is able to change (<i>‘alā al-sabqa</i>)[24] the judgment of God, its Lord. That judgment from God, the Truth, is undertaken (<i>maqḍiyyan</i>) in the mode of creation according to the pure Truth.</p>	<p>الحمد لله الذي تجلّى على الإنسان بالنقطة المنفصلة المتحرّكة عن مطلع البيان والحمد لله الذي اقضى بجوده ما امضى للانسان بالنقطة المتصلة المسكّنة في مغرب البيان حتى يتصل البحران في نقطة الالتقاء على هيكل الطنتجين لئلا يظنّ اهل الاعيان بما قدر الله في نقطة البرزخين حكم الخليجين و لقد خلق الرحمن نقطة النحو من عالم المحو و احكم الله في نفسها احكام التّحديد على حكم الموهوم من نقطة المعلوم و كان لله البدء في حكمه و ما من شيء الا له كتاب مؤجّل لن يستطيع الشيء على السبّقة من حكم الله ربّه و ذلك حكم من الله الحقّ في شأن الخلق على الحقّ الخالص مقضياً</p>
<p>When God created the center[25] of syntax (<i>markaz al-naḥw</i>) around[26] the secret of the line (<i>sirr al-satr</i>).[27] We revealed unto it: "Do not approach the tree of origination (<i>shajarat al-bad’</i>), for, verily, it is forbidden unto you." [28] Whereupon I apportioned him a precinct (<i>aqsamtuhu ḥazran</i>)[29] from the dust of the land of proximity that was nearby. And so he drew nigh unto (the tree) without permission. Therefore, we decreed (<i>ḥakamnā</i>) for him exile from the paradise of the gate and from that exalted precinct (<i>al-ḥazr al-mutaṣā’ida</i>). From his utmost extremities (<i>asfal a’ḍā’ihī</i>)[30] we had created the</p>	<p>و لما خلق الله مركز النحو من حول سرّ السّطر قد اوحينا اليه لا تقرب شجرة البدء فانها محرّمة عليك بالحقّ ثمّ اقسّمته حظراً من غبار ارض الصّدّد على القريب فقربها على غير الاذن و لذا قد حكمنا عليه بالخروج من جنّة الباب و من ذلك الحظر</p>

point of morphology (*nuqṭat al-sarf*) as his wife. Then God commanded her to go in exile with the descent (*habṭ*)^[31] of the Tablets. Thus was the judgment written in the Mother Book among the people of alteration (*ahl al-taḥyīr*)^[32] in the line of demarcation. Until the present time, the two points [syntax and morphology] have wept in the land of the Tablets. Behold! By the leave of God, their Lord, I forgave them for drawing nigh since they acknowledged (their) powerlessness at that gate. In truth, today I am a forgiver^[33] for all the worlds in accordance with the permission of God.

المتصاعدة من اسفل اعضائه قد خلقنا نقطة
الصّرف زوجته فحينئذ امر الله خروجها
على هبط الألواح و كان الحكم في أم الكتاب
من اهل التّغيير في سطر التّحديد مكتوباً و
الى الان قد بكت النّقطتان في ارض الألواح
و ها انا ذا قد غفرتُ لهما قربهما بادن الله
ربّهما لما اعترفا بالعجز في ذلك الباب و
إنّي انا اليوم بالحقّ للعالمين على اذن الله
العليّ قد كنتُ غفّاراً

O pure gate! Know that after the dawning of the sun from the dayspring of (divine) permission, which hath been realized (*ḥaqqā*) in that gate, believing children should not take the paths of knowledge (*subul al-ilm*) from the books of contradiction since their fathers have tasted^[34] the seed (*ḥabb*)^[35] of the fruit from the tree of eternity. It is not befitting for the rains descending from the ocean of the *Muzn*^[36] to partake of love (*al-ḥubb*) from the love of the calf (*ḥubb al-ijl*)^[37] since God desired, (in order) to purify the earth^[38] for His Most Great Day, that creation should worship naught but Him Who is the Truth, no other god is there but Him.^[39] Write down for children the teachings of the Creator of humankind in a beautiful manner (*alā ṭuruq al-ḥisān*). (These teachings) from the dawning-place of exposition are within you at the manifestation of his awe-inspiring visage (*alā zuhūr haybatihī*) unto all generated beings (*al-akwān*) and entities (*al-a'yān*).^[40] (Do this) until they testify, after reaching the age of perfection, to the transcendence of the gate (*tanzīh al-bāb*) above the limit of exposition (*ḥadd al-bayān*). God had created the two sciences [syntax and morphology] from the mist rising (*al-rashḥa al-murassḥa*) from the two seas. "He hath loosed the two seas, meeting together. Between them is an barrier which they do not transgress."^[41]

يا ايّها الباب الصّفي فأعلم أنّ للصّبيان
المؤمنين بعد طلوع الشّمس من مطلع الاذن
حقّ في ذلك الباب أنّ لا يأخذوا سبل العلم
من كتب الخلاف لما قد ذقوا ابائهم حبّ
الثّمرة من شجرة الخلد و لا ينبغي للامطار
النّازلة من بحر المزن شرب الحبّ من حبّ
العجل لما اراد الله تطهير الارض ليومه
الاكبر ألا يعبدوا الخلق إلا ايّاه إنّ الحقّ لا
اله إلا هو فأكتب على طرق الحسان
للصّبيان من تعليم خالق الانسان من مطلع
البيان في نفسك على ظهور هيئته على كلّ
الاكوان والاعيان حتّى يشهدوا بعد البلوغ
الى الكمال بنتزيه الباب عن حدّ البيان فقد
خلق الله العلمين من الرّشحة المرشحة من
ذنيك البحرين (مَرَجَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ يَلْتَقِيَانِ بَيْنَهُمَا
بَرْزَخٌ لَا يَبْغِيَانِ)

O people of earth and heaven! Verily, God has not decreed nobility (*al-sharaf*) for humankind in (attainment of) this knowledge (*al-ilm*) from these two bodies of water because they are a lot (*ḥazz*)^[42]

ألا يا اهل الارض والسّماء إنّ الله ما قدر
الشّرف للانسان في ذلك العلم من ذنيك

belonging to the people of the two gulfs.[43] Verily, nobility, in the sight of God, is knowledge of the All-Merciful and the *barzakh* standing (*al-qā'im*) between the two worlds. Therefore, at the equator prefer that which is standing (*fa-rghabū fī khaṭṭ al-istiwā' ilā al-qā'im*) between the two bodies of water.[44] The pearl of case endings (*lu'lu' al-i'rāb*)[45] is brought forth from one and the inflection[46] of coral from the other (*taṣrīf al-marjān*).[47] The first one has an exact limit (*ḥadd...muḥkam*) from God; thing (*al-shay'*) does not know separation (*faṣlan*) save by certain knowledge of union (*illā 'an al-qaṭ' bil-waṣl*).[48] The second is a precise allotment (*ḥukm mutqan*) that does not know stillness (*al-sukūn*) except by certain knowledge of stillness (*illā 'an al-qaṭ' bil-sukūn*).[49]

Remove the dictate of grammatical rules (*sabīl al-qawā'id*)[50] from the water of the elixir (that is) upon the verdant tablets (*al-alwāḥ al-mūriqāt*)[51] (that are) from the temples of unity (*hayākil al-tawhīd*)[52] (that are) from the shade of the world of 'Alī (*min zill al-'ālam al-'alawī*).[53] (Do this) until those who possess understanding among the people of faith bear witness that "what is there is not known save by what is here." [54] Only write a letter over which you have recited the judgment of alteration (*ḥukm al-badā'*) and the word of consummation (*kalimat al-imdā'*) from the All-Merciful. "Verily, We belong to God and unto Him do we return." [55] Open the gate of the book to (*'alā*)[56] the twenty-nine letters and cause the judgment of drawing nigh (*ḥukm al-qurb*) unto the beginning (*al-bad'*)[57] to flow forth from you pen unto all things (*'alā al-kull*) by means of that which God has inspired you from the tongue of the gate. Begin with the Remembrance on the basis of the Act (*ibda' bil-dhikr 'alā al-fi'l*)[58] because it[59] is the ink of the judgment (*midād al-ḥukm*), and complete its number by repetition (*'alā al-takrūr*) in the Act of the Ancient One (*fi'l al-qadīm*). Decree (*uḥkum*) for the point of the *barzakh* the allotment of the two invisible (*al-ghaybayn*) (worlds) in the two visible (*al-shahādatayn*) (worlds).[60] Differentiate its [the point's] allotment at the meeting of the two junctions (*iltiqā' al-jam'ayn*)[61] and mention the drawing nigh of the occultation (*qurb al-ghayba*) to the visible (*al-shahāda*) (world) after you contemplate (*ba'da nazratika*) the numbers of the letters in (terms

البحرين لانهما حظ لاهل الخليجين و إن الشرف عند الله العلم بالرحمن و بالبرزخ القائم بين العالمين فأرغبوا في خط الاستواء الى القائم بين البحرين و المخرج من احدهما لؤلؤ الاعراب و من الاخر تصريف المرجان و للاول حد من الله محكم لا يعرف الشيء فصلاً إلا عن القطع [بالوصل و الثاني حكم متقن لا يعرف السكون إلا عن القطع] بالسكون

و أخرج سبيل القواعد من ماء الاكسير على الالواح المورقات من هيكل التوحيد من ظل العالم العلوي حتى يشهد أولوا الالباب من اهل الايمان أن ما هنالك لا يُعرف إلا بما ههنا و لا تكتب حرفاً إلا و قد تقرء عليه حكم البداء و كلمة الامضاء من الرحمن (إننا لله و إننا إليه راجعون) و أفتح باب الكتاب على الحروف التسعة و العشرين و أجر من قلمك على الكلّ حكم القرب الى البدء ممّا اهلّمك الله من لسان الباب و أبدء بالذکر على الفعل لانه مداد الحكم و أتم عدده على التكرير في فعل القديم و أحكم على نقطة البرزخ حكم الغيبين في الشهادتين و أفرق حكمها على التقاء الجمعین و أذكر قرب الغيبة على الشهادة بعد نظرتك الى اعداد الحروف بالقلة والكثرة و أحكم على الاقلّ الى لجة القرب و أكتب على الاكثر نقطة البعد و أصرف الفعل على صرف الظهور

of) fewness and multiplicity (*bil-qilla wa al-kathra*). [62] Place (*uḥkum*) the smallest (number) in the abyss of nearness (*lujjat al-qurb*) and write (*uktub*) for the largest (number) the point of remoteness. Conjugate (*iṣrif*) the verb (*al-fi'l*) [63] according to the inflection of the theophany (*ṣarf al-zuhūr*) and decline (*irāb*) the noun (*al-ism*) [64] by means of the pure water (*bil-mā' al-tuhūr*). Allot (*uḥkum*) the letters by means of the connection (*bil-rabṭ*) from the world of the theophany (*'ālam al-zuhūr*) to mountain of Tūr. [65] There, the *nāqūr* [66] is sounded and all the letters cry out (to) whomsoever is upon Tūr, "The sun has risen and the day has shone forth [67] and the noon has waned and night has slipped away. [68] That which God ordained for us on that day is to stand before the gate. God is our Lord besides whom there is no other god. Let those who will, strive for the like of this." [69]

و أعرب الاسم بالماء الطهور و أحكم على الحرف بالربط من عالم الظهور الى جبل الطور هنالك نُقِرَ الناقور و نادى كل الحروف من في الطور أنّ الشمس قد طلعت و النهار قد تجلّت و الزوال قد اقضت و الليل قد ادبرت فما قدر الله لنا في ذلك اليوم لدى الباب وقوفاً الله ربنا الذي لا اله الا هو فبمثل ذلك ﴿فَلْيَعْمَلِ الْعَامِلُونَ﴾

Know, O one who is dependable in strength (*mu'tamad al-quwā*), [70] that the Name (*ism*) [71] is the outward sign of the thing qua "thing" (*simat al-shay' kamā hiya bimā hiya*). It has several degrees (*marātib*), including: the mirrors (*al-marāyā*) that are its qualification (*na'tuhu*), [72] the expressions (*al-alfāz*) that are its limit (*hadduhu*), the figures (*al-ashkāl*) that are its quality (*waṣfuhu*), [73] and the inscribed forms (*al-ṣuwar al-manqūsha*) [74] that are its orthographic representation (*rasmuhu*). For every book (*kitāb*) there is no end to them [the degrees] according to an all-encompassing judgment (*ḥukm al-kull*) from God. Truly, God has made expressions (*al-alfāz*) as bodies (*ajsād*) for the spirits (*al-arwāh*), which are meanings (*al-ma'ānī*). [75] Verily, God has, with His own hands, inscribed (*kataba*) an affinity (*nisba*) [76] (for each other) between them. There is naught between them save that which is between the Kāf and Nūn. [77]

ثم أعلم يا معتمد القوى أنّ الاسم سمة الشيء كما هي بما هي و له مراتب منها أنّ المرايا نعته و الالفاظ حده و الاشكال و صنفه و الصور المنقوشة رسمه و لكل كتاب على حكم الكلّ من عند الله لا نفاذ لها و إنّ الله قد جعل الالفاظ اجساداً للارواح التي هي المعاني و إنّ الله قد كتب بايديه بينهما نسبة بالحقّ و ما كان بينهما الا كما كان بين الكاف والنون

As for the Act (*al-fi'l*), it is the motion of a thing (*ḥarakat al-shay'*), and the ink of the Name (*al-ism*) and the Letter (*al-ḥarf*) had been upon it. The root (*aṣl*) of the Act is a still creation (*khalq sākin*) that is not known through stillness (*lā yu'rafu bil-sukūn*). [78] According to our school (*madhhabinā*) [79] which is the truth, it is a moving creation (*khalq mutaḥarrik*) that is not known through movement (*bil-taḥarruk*). Whosoever knows separation (*al-faṣl*) from union (*al-waṣl*) has attained the point of knowledge. [80]

و اما الفعل فهو حركة الشيء و عليها قد كان مداد الاسم و الحرف و اصل الفعل خلق ساكن لا يُعرَف بالسكون و على مذهبنا الذي هو الحقّ خلق متحرّك لا يُعرَف بالتحرك من عرف الفصل من الوصل فقد بلغ نقطة العلم

As for the Letter (*ḥarf*), it is a meaning (*al-ma`nā*) that does not speak except by being connected (*lā yahkī illā `an al-rabṭ*). Verily, when God desired to create the letters, He originated (*abda`*) a word with four letters. God has given each letter a name (*ism*). For the first (He gave the name) "Act" (*fi`l*), for the second "Name" (*ism*), for the third "Letter" (*ḥarf*), and the (fourth is called) "a concealed secret" (*sirr mustasarr*)^[81] sustaining them (*muqawwimuhā*). Behold! I will inform you of that letter which al-Muhammadādiq, peace be upon him, alluded to in the Ḥadīth of the Name (*ḥadīth al-ism*).^[82] Originating (*al-ibdā`*) has been suffused with the emanation (*fayḍ*) of that letter and none knows its subtle production but Him. Put your trust in God and say, "There is no power or strength save by God." Cause your pen to flow upon the point of the gate by means of the gate^[83] of "In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. Praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds!"^[84]

وَأَمَّا الْحَرْفُ فَهُوَ الْمَعْنَى الَّذِي لَا يَحْكِي إِلَّا
عَنِ الرَّبِّطِ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَمَّا أَرَادَ أَنْ يَخْلُقَ
الْحُرُوفَ أَدْعَى كَلِمَةً عَلَى أَرْبَعَةِ أَحْرَافٍ وَ قَدْ
سَمَّى اللَّهُ لِكُلِّ حَرْفٍ اسْمًا لِلأَوَّلِ فَعَلٌ وَ
لِلثَّانِي اسْمٌ وَ لِلثَّالِثِ حَرْفٌ وَ لِلرَّابِعِ سِرٌّ
مُسْتَسَرٌّ مَقْوَمُهَا وَ هَا أَنَا ذَا أَعْرَفُكُمْ ذَلِكَ
الْحَرْفَ وَ هُوَ الَّذِي أَشَارَ إِلَيْهِ الصَّادِقُ عَلَيْهِ
السَّلَامُ فِي حَدِيثِ الْأَسْمِ وَ قَدْ مَلَأَ الْإِبْدَاعَ
مَنْ فَيضُ ذَلِكَ الْحَرْفِ وَ لَا يَعْلَمُ صَنْعَهُ
اللطيفُ إِلَّا هُوَ وَ أَتَكَلَّ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَ قَلَّ لَا حَوْلَ
وَ لَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ وَ أَجْرُ الْقَلَمِ عَلَى نَقْطَةٍ
الْبَابُ بِالْبَابِ (بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ الْحَمْدُ
لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ)

Gloss

[1] *Al-insān* is a notoriously difficult word to translate in Bābī/Bahā'ī scripture. It literally means "the man" or "the human being." Thus, the phrase *`alā al-insān* would be more literally translated as "unto the human being." Sometimes, however, *al-insān* seems to be used in a generic sense referring to all human beings, like the word *al-nās*. At other times it seems to be a reference to the Perfect Man (*al-insān al-kāmil*), a concept developed by Ibn `Arabī. I have translated it in the generic sense 1) since there is no obvious reason why it should be rendered in the latter technical sense and 2) the Bāb might have chosen to use *al-nās* (humanity) instead, but he seems to want to preserve the rhyme with *al-bayān* at the end of the sentence.

[2] The "point" (*nuqṭa*) is a dot that is placed under or above a letter to differentiate it from another letter with a similar shape. Early Muslim philologists devised this system of pointing to differentiate similarly-shaped letters in the Qur'an, early copies of which were not pointed. For example, only the memory of the oral recitation of the Qur'an could help an early Muslim reciter determine what letter the symbol ح signified in an early copy. By adding a point above or below the letter, or adding no point at all, the reader would know that the letter was a ج ("j" sound), خ ("kh" sound), or ح (the hard "h" sound, usually transliterated as ḥ).

For the Bāb, the "point" signified both a written dot and the highest ontological reality of absolute oneness. Both concepts are joined in a *ḥadīth* attributed to `Alī: "All that is in the world is in the Qur'an, and all that is in the Qur'an is condensed in the Fātiḥa of the Book, and all that is in the Fātiḥa is in the *basmala*, and all that is in the *basmala* is in the (letter) *bā'* and I am the point beneath the *bā'*." [Cited by Todd Lawson in "Reading Reading Itself: The Bab's `Sura of the Bees,' A Commentary on Qur'an 12:93 from the Sura of Joseph—Text, Translation and Commentary," Occasional Papers in Shaykhī, Babi and Bahá'í Studies No. 5 (November, 1997), bahai-library.com/bab_qayyum_asma] The Fātiḥa is the first *sūra* of the Qur'an and the *basmala* is its first line: *bismi 'llāh al-raḥmān al-raḥīm* ("In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate"). The first letter of the first line is the letter *bā'* (ب). The Bāb often refers to himself as the *nuqṭat al-bā'*, "the Point of the B" [see his *Qayyūm al-asmā'* in the "Surat al-Shams" and *passim*]. This is not only an allusion to this *ḥadīth* but also a reference to himself as the author of the *Bayān*, the primary Bābī scripture. In this sense he also refers to Muhammad as the *nuqṭat al-fā'*, "the Point of the F" (the Fur'qān, i.e. the Qur'an), to Jesus as the *nuqṭat al-alif*, "the Point of the A" (the Injīl or Gospel), and to Moses as the *nuqṭat al-tā'*, "the Point of the Letter T" (the Torah) [see Māzandarānī's *Asrār al-āthār*, v. 5, "Nuqṭih"]. In both senses, the word *nuqṭa* might be better rendered as "epitome."

One final note on the tradition attributed to `Alī: I have not been able to find the full text of this tradition in Shī'ī literature as it is cited by Lawson. Ḥaydar Āmulī (fl. 14th cen. AD), a transmitter of a number of *ḥadīth* attributed to `Alī that are not found in the canonical collections of Shī'ī traditions, only relates the "I am the Point beneath the *bā'*" portion in his *Jāmi' al-asrār* (ed. by Henry Corbin, Tehran, 1969), pgs. 411, 563, 695, 699-700 [thanks to Todd Lawson for this reference]. I have found something similar to what is quoted by Lawson in the *Mashāriq anwār al-yaqīn* (The Dawning-places of the Lights of Certainty) by Rajab al-Bursī (fl. 14th cen. AD) and perhaps it is the source of the tradition as it appears in the Bāb's writings (al-Bursī was also the Bāb's source for the *al-Khuṭba al-al-taṭanjiyya* – see the entry on this sermon below). First, al-Bursī attributes the following statement to `Alī: "I am the point that is beneath the supine *bā'* (*al-bā' al-mabsūṭa*)" [*Mashāriq*, 1416 AH (1995), p. 21]. Concerning the "supine *bā'*," al-Bursī says it is the "first thing revealed to the Messenger of God and the first page of scripture (*ṣaḥīfa*) (belonging) to Adam, Noah, and Abraham and its [the scripture's] secret (*sirr*)" (p. 20). Elsewhere al-Bursī further elaborates on this "secret":

"The secret (*sirr*) of God is deposited in His books. The secret of the books is in the Qur'an because it is comprehensive and indomitable and within it is the explanation of all things. The secret of the Qur'an is in the disconnected letters at the beginning of the *sūras*. The knowledge of letters (*ilm al-ḥurūf*) is in an *alif* in a *lām*, which is the curved *alif* [an *alif* (ا) that is curved into the letter *lām* (ل)] which contains the secret of the exoteric (*al-zāhir*) and the esoteric (*al-bāṭin*). The knowledge of the *lām* is an *alif* in the *alif*, and the knowledge of the *alif* is in the point (*al-nuqṭa*), and the knowledge of the point is in the root [or oringal] knowledge (*al-ma'rifa al-aṣaliyya*), and the secret of the Qur'an is in the Fātiḥa, and the secret of the Fātiḥa is in the opening (*miṭāḥihā*, or "key"), which is *bismi 'llāh*, and the secret of the *basmala* is in the *bā'*, and the secret of the *bā'* is in the point." (p. 23)

[3] *Al-mutaḥarrrika* means moving or starting to move. Used in a philosophical sense, it refers to the motion (*ḥaraka*) of a created thing and is contrasted with *sukūn* ("rest" or "stillness"). In grammar, it means "vocalized" or "voweled." When Muslims set about writing down the Qur'an, they found that the existing orthography was only capable of expressing consonants and long vowels. Short vowels and

consonants would be understood, but there was no way to represent them on the page. Thus, the word *mutaḥarrrik* would have been written *mṭhrk* (متحرک). In order to insure that a word would not be misread (there were a number of different readings of the Qur'an due to the absence of short vowels), Muslim philologists adopted a system of small markings that denoted the short "a" (َ), "i" (ِ), and "u" (ُ). They also created a mark to show when a consonant was doubled (ّ). For example, *mṭhrk* (متحرک) could then be rendered *mutaḥarrrik* (مُتَحَرِّك).

Returning to the translation, the phrase *al-nuqta al-munfaṣila al-mutaḥarrrika* could also be rendered as "the separated, vocalized point." A translator would usually render the term as "moving" or "starting motion" and I have not departed from this convention. But the reader should be aware that in these first few lines the Bāb is already beginning to play on the grammatical meanings of his metaphysical terminology.

[4] *Al-bayān* is another key term in the works of the Bāb. Bahā'ī exegetes generally see it as an allusion to a verse in the Qur'an (Q 75:17-19) in which the *bayān* ("clarification, explanation") is supposed to follow the *qur'ān* (lit. "recitation"). Thus, many Bahā'ī authors contend that the Bāb's central book, the *Bayān*, fulfills this prophecy [see, for example, Vahīd Behmardī, "Muqaddimih-yi dar bārih-yi sabk va siyāq-i āthār-i mubārikih-yi ḥazrat rabb a'lā," *Khushih-hā'ī az kharman-i adab va hunar*, v. 6 (Landegg): 49-50]. While it is probable that the Bāb saw his writings as a fulfillment of an eschatological prophecy, he may have also used it sometimes in its technical sense developed by Shaykh Aḥmad. As Idris Hamid notes, the term *al-bayān* had a very particular meaning in the writings of the Shaykh, who viewed the "science of declaration" (*ilm al-bayān*) as an integral part of his experiential Wisdom metaphysics (Hamid, 540-1).

[5] The reader may find my rendering of the terms *aqḍā* (a verbal neologism coined by the Bāb from the more standard verb *qaḍā*, "to decree," for the purpose of rhyme) and *amdā* as "undertook" and "consummated" to be awkward. I agree. However, the Bāb uses these terms in a very technical sense and I want to capture something of that in English as opposed to just rendering the terms as synonyms. *Al-qaḍā'* ("undertaking") and *al-imḍā'* ("consummating"), which are verbal nouns that are derived from the same root as the verbs, are two of the five degrees of the Act (*al-f'il*) in the world. The first degree is the Will (*al-mashī'a*). According to a tradition from the sixth Imam, Ja'far al-Muhammadādiq, "God created the Will by itself (*bi-nafsihā*), then things (*al-ashyā'*) were created by the Will." [*al-Kāfi* (Qum: Dar al-Kutub al-Islāmiyya, 1985), v. 1, p. 110] It is contemplation of this self-generating capacity of the uppermost stage of Acting that preoccupied Shaykh Aḥmad's intellectual life and was the cornerstone of his metaphysical system. The second degree is Desire (*al-irāda*), the third is Determination (*al-qadar*), the fourth is Undertaking (*al-qaḍā'*), and the fifth is Consummation (*al-imḍā'*). According to Shaykh Aḥmad in his *al-Fawā'id*, the first four degrees "constitute the Dawn of Pre-eternity (*ṣubḥ azal*)" and are the "pillars" (*al-arkān*) of the Act, while the degree of Consummation is the "disclosure" of these higher degrees [see Hamid, 294 (trans. of the Fourth Observation)]. Elsewhere, the number of stages in the Act are referred to as seven, based on traditions from the Imams al-Muhammadādiq and Mūsā Kāzim. The first four stages are the same, but the last stage, Consummation, has been replaced with *al-idhn* ("permission"), *al-kitāb* ("book" or "record"), and *al-ajal* ("term [of duration]"). Curiously, Shaykh Aḥmad and the Bāb reverse the last two degrees although I cannot find a *ḥadīth* with this variation. For a discussion of the use of the "seven degrees" (*marātib sab'a*) in Bahā'ī scripture, see Vahīd Ra'fatī's "Marātib-i sab'ih va ḥadīth-i mashiyyat," *Safīnih-i 'irfān*, v. 1: 53-81.

[6] "Joining" or "uniting" (*waṣl*) and "separation" or "division" (*faṣl*) are recurrent themes in this treatise and are paralleled with stillness (*sukūn*) and motion (*ḥaraka*) later on in this text. Perhaps the Bāb has in mind a *ḥadīth* attributed to Ja`far al-Muhammadādiq: "Whosoever knows separation (*al-faṣl*) and union (*al-waṣl*) and motion (*al-ḥaraka*) and stillness (*al-sukūn*) has attained steadfastness (*al-qarār*) in (the profession of God's) unity (*al-tawḥīd*)." [Āmulī, *Jāmi` al-asrār*, p. 364]

[7] In grammar, *sakkana* (the verb from which *al-musakkina* is derived) means to make a consonant vowelless. The written symbol for the absence of a vowel is a *sukūn* (◌), which literally means "silence," "state of rest." It is not surprising that the Bāb is using it to parallel the "moving" point, since it is also a reference to the philosophical notion of "stillness" (*sukūn*) as opposed to motion (*ḥaraka*).

[8] Mention of the "two bodies of water" (*al-baḥrān*) occurs frequently in the Qur'an. In 35:12, we find that they are different in quality. One is "fresh" (*`adhb*), "sweet" (*furāt*), and "easy to drink" or "palatable" (*sā'igh*). The other is "salty" (*milḥ*) and "bitter" (*ujāj*). Yet both are beneficial since they provide sustenance, supply "ornaments" (*ḥilya*) that can be worn, and serve as a medium for the travel of ships. Presumably, "the two bodies of water" in this context are rivers, whose water is drinkable, and oceans, whose water is too salty to drink. In other contexts, the "two bodies of water" might be better translated as "the two seas." For example, in 18:60 Moses tells a companion: "I will continue until I reach the junction (*majma`*) of the two seas (*al-baḥrayn*) or I will spend years (trying)." This episode is not the one in which Moses crosses the Red Sea with the Israelites, but a journey on which he meets a mysterious guide (Muslim exegetes say it is with the mystical Khidr).

What is important for the Bāb's treatise is the place at which the two bodies of water meet (*majma` al-baḥrayn*). The great polymath al-Ṭabarī explains that *majma`* is a verbal noun signifying "joining," so the phrase could also be rendered "until I reach the joining of the two bodies of water." He also notes that there is a variety of opinion about which two bodies of water are being referred to. Early commentators like the Successor (a Muslim who lived immediately after Muhammad's death) Qatāda (d. ca. 117/735) said that it was the meeting of the Persian Ocean (*baḥr al-fāris*) and the Mediterranean (*baḥr al-rūm*, lit. the Roman Sea). This would be the Suez isthmus. Another early exegete, Mujāhid (d. 100/718-104/722), confirms this interpretation and states that one of them (the Persian Ocean) is in the East (*qibal al-mashriq*) and the other (the Mediterranean) is in the West (*qibal al-maghrib*). Another early interpreter, Muhammad b. Ka`b (d. ca. 118/736) says that the joining place of the two bodies of water is Tangiers (Ṭanja) on the Straits of Gibraltar on the northern coast of Morocco. In this case, the "two bodies of water" would be the Mediterranean and the Atlantic [see al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi` al-bayān `an ta`wīl al-qur`ān* (1954), v. 15:271-5]. Finally, the next verses, 18:60-63, indicate that the *majma`* is a piece of land, as Moses and his companion lose their fish upon reaching the *majma`* when they climb a rock (*al-ṣakhra*).

In 25:53, the two bodies of water are again differentiated from one another as in 35:12: one is fresh and sweet, the other is salty and bitter. In this verse, we are also told that God loosed the two bodies of water (*maraja al-baḥrayn*) so that they flow into one another, but they will not mix because He has placed a "barrier" (*barzakh*, seemingly a synonym for *ḥājiz* in verse 27:61) and a "inviolable obstruction" (*ḥijran maḥjūran*) between them. According to al-Ṭabarī, the verb *maraja* ("release," "let loose") implies mixing. Following this definition of the verb, he lists the interpretation of several early Muslims who contended that the barrier is not one of land but one of nature, preventing the sweet water from mixing with the brine. If the barrier was made of land, they explain, then the two bodies of water could not have flowed

into one another as the verb implies. Alternatively, a few exegetes maintained that the barrier could be made of land separating one body of water from another, but they do not attempt to explain how they could have flowed into each other there was a physical barrier of land between them. Other interpreters pointed out that this latter position is untenable, since several rivers in the region obviously flowed into oceans. Another early interpretation is allegorical, casting the *barzakh* as the respite or time (*al-ajal*) in which the soul waits between this world and the next [al-Ṭabarī, v. 19, 23-5].

In verses 55:19-20, we are again informed that the two bodies of water have been loosed (*maraja al-baḥrāyn*) and that they meet together (*yaltaqiyān*). Further, it is again reinforced that there is a barrier (*barzakh*) between them that they do not transgress (*lā yabghiyān*). At this point, al-Ṭabarī notes that the exegetes differ over the location of the two bodies of water. Some say one is in the sky (*fī al-samā'*) and one is on the earth, while others maintain that they are the Persian Ocean and the Mediterranean, as we saw earlier (al-Ṭabarī, v. 27, 128). In verse 55:22, we learn that pearls (*al-lu'lu'*) and corals (*al-marjān*) are extracted from them. Ṭabarī states that pearls and corals are only extracted from the sea shells (*aṣḍāf*) of the ocean on Earth from the raindrops falling from the sky [al-Ṭabarī is referring to a common belief at the time about how pearls were produced. See "Lu'lu'," EI²]. He concludes, therefore, that one body of water is on earth and the other is in the sky [al-Ṭabarī, v. 27, 128-9].

Of course the Shī'ī Imams interpreted many of the verses as allusions to the Family of the Prophet. In reference to the last mentioned verse, Ja'far al-Sādiq reportedly stated that the two oceans that were joined are `Alī and his wife Fāṭima, who do not oppress each other (*yabdhī*). The coral and pearls that issued forth from them are their sons Ḥasan and Ḥusayn [*Bihār al-anwār* (Qum: Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmiyya, 1983), v. 24, 97]. In another tradition attributed to the Prophet, `Alī is called the "ocean of knowledge" (*baḥr al-`ilm*) and Fāṭima is called the "ocean of prophethood" (*baḥr al-nubuwwa*) that have been "joined" (*yattaṣalāni*) [*Bihār*, v. 24, 99]. As for the meaning of *barzakh*, Ja'far is reported to have said that it is the grave in which the dead person resides between the time of his death and the Day of Resurrection [*al-Kāfi*, v. 3, 243]. The notion of the *barzakh* as a type of purgatory is reinforced by its definition as a "matter between two matters" (*amr bayn amrayn*) [*Bihār*, v. 6, 214, citing the *Tafsīr* of al-Qummī]. This interpretation probably arises from the Qur'anic depiction of the ungodly when they have died, whereon they beg God to let them return to the world and work good deeds. However a barrier (*barzakh*) prevents them from doing so until the Day of Resurrection (Q 23:100).

In the writings of Shaykh Aḥmad, there are two *barzakhs*, or "interworlds" (as per Hamid's translation). The first is the Imaginal World between the Sensible World and the Intelligible World. The second interworld is Delimited Existence that separates the Intelligible World from Absolute Existence, which is the highest degree and the realm of Acting [Hamid, 404].

[9] See Q 55:19 and above.

[10] Like *al-insān*, another difficult term to translate in Bābī/Bahā'ī scripture. It literally means "form" or "temple." In the writings of Shaykh Aḥmad, the term usually means the outer human form of those who possess higher levels of spiritual perception, like Messengers and the Imāms [see his Seventh Observation in the *al-Fawā'id*, p. 309 of Hamid's translation]. Here, the "form of the two Tatanj" is probably an allusion to the station of the Imam `Alī (see below).

[11] This is an allusion to the *al-Khuṭba al-taṭanjīyya*, "The Taṭanjī Sermon" (also spelled *Ṭatanj* or *Ṭutunj*) attributed to `Alī. Its origins are obscure, but it has strong Ismā`īlī elements. A twelfth century Shī`ī scholar, Ibn Shahrashub, was the first person to mention the sermon and Rajab al-Bursī (see note above on *nuqta*) was the first person (that we know of) to write it down. Due to the absence of any chain of transmission and al-Bursī's extremist views regarding the Imams, the *khuṭba* was not recorded in any of the canonical collections of Shī`ī *hadīth*. However, the sermon was very important for Shaykhī imamology. Sayyid Kāzīm wrote a long commentary on it and its theophanic language has had a strong influence on the Bāb's writings (the Bāb even composed a supercommentary on a line in Sayyid Kāzīm's commentary). For more information on the history of the Taṭanjī Sermon and its significance in the Bāb's writings, see Todd Lawson's "Coincidentia Oppositorum in the Qayyum al-Asma: The Terms 'Point' (*nuqta*), "Pole" (*qutb*), "Center" (*markaz*) and the *Khutbat al-Tatanjiyya*," *Occasional Papers in Shaykhi, Babi, and Baha'i Studies*, vol. 5, no. 1 (January 2001), bahai-library.com/lawson_coincidentia_oppositorum.

The meaning of *al-taṭanjayn* is as obscure as the origin of the text. The title comes from the word *taṭanj*, which is used throughout the text. The most significant statement is made by `Alī near the beginning, "I am the one who stands upon the two Taṭanj" (*anā al-wāqifu `alā al-taṭanjayn*). I have been unable to find the term in any standard medieval Arabic dictionaries. Two later commentators assert that it means "gulf" (*khalīj*) [see Lawson]. While later authors may have understood it in this way, the etymological similarities of this word with the word *Ṭanja* (the Arabic word for the town of Tangiers in Morocco) suggests something different. As noted above, one of the commentators on verse 18:60 (Muḥammad b. Ka`b) asserts that the *majma` al-baḥrayn* (the place of the joining of the two oceans) is *Ṭanja*, on the very tip of the Moroccan side of the Straits of Gibraltar that are the gateway between the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean and mark the western edge of the medieval Islamic world. Shī`ī authors were also familiar with this interpretation [see, for example, *Bihār*, v. 13, 282]. So perhaps `Alī is being depicted as standing at *Ṭanja*.

But why are their two *Tanjas* named in the sermon? Perhaps the Spanish tip of the straights is also being called *Ṭanja*, a mirror image of the Moroccan town. Thus, `Alī is straddling the Straits of Gibraltar. Or it might be purely stylistic. The dual form sometimes occurs in the Qur'an instead of a singular if the rhyme scheme at the end of a verse calls for it. For example, "two paradises" are mentioned in 55:46 in order to keep with the rhyme scheme of the preceding verses. In reference to the "Taṭanjī Sermon," the word *Ṭatanj* may be in the dual form to rhyme with the following sentence "I am gazing towards the two Easts [*al-mashriqayn* – also "two dawning-places (of the Sun)"] and the two Wests [*al-maghribayn* – also "two setting-places (of the Sun)]." Interestingly, these phrases immediately proceed 55:19, which I commented on above (see *al-baḥrayn*), and it may be that the "two Easts" and the "two Wests" are just meant to be "East and West," but are put in the dual form for the sake of the Qur'anic rhyme scheme.

If, however, one were to insist that two *Ṭatanj* are being referred to in the *khuṭba*, we do not necessarily have to abandon the theory that "Taṭanj" in this text derives from the Arabic word for Tangiers. In the *Mu`jam al-Buldān* of the medieval Muslim geographer Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī (d. 1229 AD), we find mention of another *Ṭanj* on the opposite end of the Muslim world:

Ṭanj...does not (derive from) an Arabic root. It is a village in *Khurāsān* close to *Marv*.

Ṭanja...is a city in the fourth clime. Its longitude is 80 degrees from the West and its latitude is 35 ½ degrees from the South. It is a town on the coast of the Western Ocean [the Atlantic] opposite of Algeciras....It is in the land of the Berbers. [Yāqūt, *Mu`jam al-buldān* (Dār al-Kutub al-`Ilmiyya, 1990), v. 4, p. 49]

From Yāqūt we learn that there were two towns at the polar opposite ends of the Muslim domains. Ṭanja lies at the very western edge of the land of the Maghrib, "the setting sun," and Ṭanj is located at the eastern edge of the land of Khurāsān, "the rising sun." Thus, `Alī's statement "I am standing upon the two Ṭaṭanj" could have also meant that he was straddling the two poles of the Muslim lands.

Regardless of what the passage originally meant in the mind of the author, Shaykh Aḥmad, Sayyid Kāzīm, and the Bāb prize it for its statement of polarity, with the Imam `Alī centered between two opposites. As Lawson observes in his article, these authors see the Imam as the point at which all opposites arise and are ultimately resolved. To the believer who has accepted the authority of the Imam, the latter represents a new paradise on earth since he can explain the inner mysteries of the Qur'an. To the person who has denied the authority of the Imam, the latter represents God's judgment and wrath towards his wayward servant. In short, the Imam does not embody these contradictions in his own person but comes to symbolize them based on the person's choice to obey or disobey his spiritual authority. The duality represented by the two Ṭaṭanj in the sermon is very important in Shaykhī cosmology and imamology and perhaps even more so for the Bāb who claimed many of the spiritual stations delineated by `Alī in the text.

[12] *Ahl al-a`yān* could also be rendered as "the people of entities," which would give this phrase a much more philosophical shade since *al-a`yān* refers to a "concrete entity" as opposed to *al-akwān*, which is "generated beings." This pair appears later in the treatise, but I can see no obvious reason why *a`yān* should be translated according to its more technical sense here. Generally, *al-a`yān* refers to the prominent members of a community, as in the well-known biographical dictionary of Shī`ī scholars, *A`yān al-shī`a*.

[13] See note above on *al-baḥrayn*.

[14] It is sometimes difficult to translate the term *ḥukm* in the Bāb's writings due to its multifarious uses. Its primary meaning is a "judgment," usually from God. But the Bāb often speaks of the *ḥukm* of something other than God, as in the statement here: "the *ḥukm* of the two gulfs." Just rendering this phrase as "the judgment of the two gulfs" does not make sense in English and does nothing to clear-up the ambiguity of the term in the original text. To make a distinction between a *ḥukm* from God and a *ḥukm* that belongs to something other than God, I have translated the former as "judgment" or "decree" and the latter as "allotment" or "state." God makes a judgment regarding a particular thing, and it attaches to that thing as its allotment, or its designated role. This latter meaning is also the translation of *ḥukm* in its grammatical senses. Two grammatical definitions of the word are 1) "the proper function which the word performs at its *martaba* [degree] in which it is placed, its activity" and 2) "the proper function to be performed by the *martaba* in which it is placed." For example, when we combine the specific activities (*aḥkām*, pl. of *ḥukm*) of لَوْ (*law* = if) and لَا (*lā* = not) they have a new activity (*ḥukm*) independent of their constituent parts (*law lā* = if not). For more examples of the grammatical aspects of the word *ḥukm*, see "Ḥukm," EI².

[15] The meaning of this final clause is unclear to me, but the Bāb seems to be saying that the "point of the two *barzakhs*" does not have the same status as "the two gulfs." Again, the Bāb often uses the term "point" (*nuqṭa*) rather loosely to mean "epitome" (see above note on *nuqṭa*).

[16] The specific meaning of the term *al-naḥw* is "syntax," but, when used alone, can also designate "grammar" as a whole. In this case, however, the Bāb is using it in its specific sense since he mentions its usual counterpart, *ṣarf* (morphology), a few lines down.

[17] Limits (*ḥudūd*) and demarcation (*al-taḥdīd*) are the properties of created things. Perhaps *al-taḥdīd* here is also an allusion to statement attributed to Imam al-Riḍā: "His ultimate reality (*kunh*) is the separation between Him and His creation; His jealousy (*ghuyūruhu*) is the demarcation (*taḥdīd*) of that which is besides Him" (cited in Shaykh Aḥmad's *al-Fawā'id*, Hamid trans. 344). This tradition is found in *ʿUyūn al-akhbār* (Jahan Publications, 1959), v. 1, p. 149.

[18] Perhaps "principle" or "rule" would also work here.

[19] The Bāb seems to be alluding to the "Ḥadīth al-Ḥaqīqa" by ʿAlī related by his companion of twenty-three years, Kumayl. One day, Kumayl asked, "What is reality?" ("*mā al-ḥaqīqa?*"). ʿAlī responded with a cryptic explanation that Kumayl asked him to further elucidate, which ʿAlī then followed with another cryptic explanation, and so forth. This *ḥadīth* is prominent in the Bāb's writings – he wrote a treatise on it in the first-year of his ministry (*Fihrist*, 5^b) – and he alludes to it often [See Lawson's translation of the Bāb's "Risāla fī al-Sulūk" for another early allusion, *Translations of Shaykhi, Babi and Baha'i Texts*, H-Baha'i, vol. 2, no. 1 (January 1998)]. Here the reference is to one line of the *ḥadīth* which states that "reality" is "the effacing of the objects of fancy and the clarifying of the objects of knowledge" (*maḥw al-mawḥūm wa ṣaḥw al-ma'lūm*). This *ḥadīth* is also central in the writings Shaykh Aḥmad, who explains this line with the following in his *al-Fawā'id*: "Every time a servant reaches a station wherein the Compeller self-manifests to him, this effacing and clearing occur to him. So there, through effacing and clearing, he has cognizance of his Lord because through effacing and clearing, he knows his soul" (Hamid trans., p. 318). The "Ḥadīth al-Ḥaqīqa" does not appear in the canonical collections of Shī'ī ḥadīth, but is found in several fourteenth-century works, including Haydar Āmalī's *Jāmi' al-asrār*.

[20] A distinctly Shī'ī doctrine which holds that God is able to decree something and then later rescind it if He so wishes. Shaykh Aḥmad wrote a great deal on the subject of *al-badā'* and God's knowledge (see Hamid, 413, n. 123). It was also a subject of one of the Bāb's early treatises "Alteration and the Preserved Tablet" (*al-badā' wa al-lawḥ al-maḥfūz*). This text is listed in the *Kitāb al-fihrist* (Princeton ms., f. 5^b) – making it a first-year text – and several copies exist.

[21] Alternatively, "The alteration of its allotment belongs to God."

[22] *Ajal* and *kitāb* are two of the three categories of essence (*māhiyya*) in the writings of Shaykh Aḥmad (*idhn* is the third). As noted above (see gloss on *aqdā'*) these three categories are taken from a *ḥadīth* attributed to the sixth imam. The phrase *kitāb mu'ajjal* is from the Qur'an, v. 3:145: "A soul cannot die, save by God's permission (*idhn*), a fixed record (*kitāban mu'ajjalan*)."

[23] In the works of Shaykh Aḥmad, the term "thing" (*al-shay'*) applies to any "composite or concrecence of essence and existence," including humans (Hamid, p. 550). I have not seen evidence that the Bāb's notion of "thing" contradicts that of the Shaykh.

[24] Literally, "to slip," as in a pen slipping in the hand of a scribe.

[25] *Markaz* is another term that occurs frequently in the writings of the Bāb and is often a synonym for *quṭb* (pole) and *nuqṭa* (point). See Lawson, "Coincidentia Oppositorum."

[26] *Min ḥawl* or *ḥawl* frequently occurs in the Bāb's writings. The former occurs in Q 39:75: "And you will see angels surrounding (*ḥāffīn min ḥawl*) the Throne singing the praises of their Lord." The latter occurs in Q 19:68: "Now, by thy Lord, We shall surely muster them, and the Satans, then We shall parade them about Gehenna (*ḥawl jahannam*) hobbling on their knees" (Arberry trans.). In both places it has the sense of surrounding something.

[27] To my knowledge, this term does not occur in the works of Shaykh Aḥmad or Sayyid Kāzīm. It does, however, occur frequently in the early writings of the Bāb, particularly in relation to the four-fold secret found in several imāmī *ḥadīths*. Concerning the station of the Imams, Imam Ja'far reportedly said, "Our command (*amr*) is the secret (*sirr*), the secret of the secret (*sirr al-sirr*), the secret of that which is concealed (*sirr al-mustasarr*), and a secret veiled by the secret (*sirr al-muqanna` bil-sirr*)." [*Baṣā'ir al-Darajāt* (Qum: Publications of Ayatollah Mar'ashi Library, 1984), p. 29]. Shaykh Aḥmad also wrote a detailed chapter on the four-fold secret in the *Sharḥ al-ziyāra*, relating each one to a different station of the Imams' reality [see *Sharḥ al-ziyāra* (Beirut: Dār al-Muḥīd, 1999), v. 1, p. 42-50].

Allusions to the four-fold secret *ḥadīths* are scattered throughout the works of the Bāb. In his *Tafsīr al-basmala* (*Interpretation of the Opening Line of the Qur'an*), he writes: "Verily God hath made four stations (*maqāmāt*) for His manifestation unto His creation by means of His creating. (These four stations) are alluded to and mentioned cryptically in the words of the family of God, peace be upon them, as secrets: the secret (*as-sirr*), the secret of the secret (*sirr as-sirr*), the secret of that which is concealed (*sirr al-mustassar*), and the secret veiled by the secret (*al-sirr al-muqanna` bil-sirr*)." [Māzandarānī, *Asrār al-āthār*, "Sir"]. For more on the four-fold secret, see the gloss of *sirr mustasarr* near the end of the treatise.

As for the "secret of the line," the Bāb often couples it with the four-fold secret. For example, in chapter nine of the *Qayyūm al-asmā'*, the Bāb writes: "He is God! He has desired an esoteric interpretation of the concealed place of the secret (*mustasarr al-sirr*), upon the secret of the line, upon the Point of the *Bá'*." Perhaps in the mind of the Bāb, the "secret of the line" was the opening line of the Qur'an, as this example suggests. Or perhaps it is a more general reference to the ability to read concealed divine knowledge, as we find in Ibn `Arabī's *al-Futuḥāt al-makkiyya*. In the section preceding the chapter on "Meanings of the Hierarchical Arrangement of Letters" near the beginning of his *magnum opus*, he talks about an encounter with an enigmatic youth (*fatā*) at the Ka`ba who is "neither living nor dead" and who explains to Ibn `Arabī certain secrets about existence. Toward the end of the section, Ibn Arabī says that the youth instructed him to lift his (the youth's) veil and read/recite [like the angel Gabriel tells Muhammad to recite] his lines (*suṭuur*). He then instructs Ibn `Arabī to write down the things he had

shared with him so that others might benefit from them. Ibn Arabi says, "The first line (*saṭr*) that I read and the first secret (*sirr*) of that line (*saṭr*) which I learned is that which I now mention in this second chapter." Finally, references to the "secret of the line" also carried over into Bahā'u'llāh's writings (see, for example, a short letter in *La 'āli' al-ḥikma*, v. 1, p. 24).

[28] A paraphrase of God's admonition to Adam and Eve. Cf. Q 2:35, 7:19.

[29] *Aqsama* is a fourth-form intransitive verb that means "to swear an oath." However, the Bāb seems to be using the verb in its second-form, transitive sense, which means to "divide, set aside." As for *ḥazran*, I am inclined to read it adverbially but the Bāb uses it as a noun a few lines down. However, the noun means "a ban, forbiddance," which does not make sense in this context or in the second instance. The Bāb's intended meaning seems to be closer to a noun from the same root, *ḥazīra*, which means "a precinct, enclosure." It makes more sense to read it with this meaning in mind since grammar is being prohibited from drawing close, but still allowed to dwell near the "tree of origination." Therefore, I have translated *ḥazr* as "precinct." This reading also fits one common usage of the term *ḥazira*: *ḥazīrat al-quḍs*, which means the "precinct of holiness" or "paradise" (*janna*). See *Lisān al-'arab* under "ḥ-z-r."

Of course, the reading preserved in Ms. (1), *khatran* ("danger, peril"), could be correct, but it does not fit very well with the rest of the sentence. Hopefully this problem will be cleared up once more manuscript copies are available.

[30] Ja'far al-Muhammadādiq was reportedly asked about verse 25:54 in the Qur'an: "It is He who hath created a man from water..." Ja'far explains that "God created Adam from the sweet-tasting water and created his wife from his root (*sinkhihi*). Thereupon he fashioned her from his utmost extremities (*asfal a'dā'ihī*)..." [*Biḥār*, v. 57, p. 277].

[31] *Habṭ* is a noun meaning "lowering, decrease." Here the word is an allusion to Q 2:36, 2:38 and 7:24, where God commands Adam, Eve and Satan to "fall down" (*ihbiṭū*) upon the earth (i.e. cease to dwell in Paradise) due to their transgressions.

[32] I have not seen this phrase used by the Bāb before. *Al-taghyīr* is a verbal noun derived from the verb *ghayyara* (to change, alter). This verb occurs several times in the Qur'an with different associations. For example, in Q 13:11 change is positively associated with humanity's freewill: "God changes not what is in a people, until they change what is in themselves. (But) when God desires to evil for people, there is no turning it back" [slightly modified Arberry trans.]. In Q 4:119 change is negatively associated with Satan's corruption of human nature: "I will lead them astray, and fill them with fancies...I will command them and they will alter (*fala-yughayyirunna*) God's creation (*khalq allāh*)." Given the context, perhaps the Bāb has this latter verse in mind. Or perhaps he is alluding to those philosophers who contended that the essence of God changed when He created the world (i.e. He was not a Creator and then He was).

[33] Cf. Q 71:10.

[34] As it appears in the two manuscripts I have consulted, this phrase is grammatically incorrect and is therefore difficult to decipher. From the context, it seems that the intended verb is *dhāqū*, meaning "they

tasted." However, in the two manuscripts the middle long vowel has dropped out, indicating the imperative form of the verb. But an imperative cannot follow the particle *qad* and it does not fit the context of the sentence. Further, *abā'ahum* is in the accusative, which would make it the object of the verb and render the sentence rather nonsensical ("they tasted their fathers"). Therefore, I have read the phrase as *qad dhāqū abā'uhum* ("their fathers have tasted").

[35] I have read this as *ḥabb* (seed) because of the context, but it could just as well be *ḥubb* (love). In the next line there is some blurring between the two and I have switched to *ḥubb* because of the Qur'anic allusion.

[36] The word *al-muzn* occurs only once in the Qur'an in the course of a monologue by God directed at His creation in Q 56:57-74. God chastises his creatures for not knowing Who created them and failing to recognize the source of their sustenance. In v. 68-70, God asks, "Do you see the water that you drink? Do you think that you sent it down from the cloud (*al-muzn*) or that We are the one who sends (it) down?" In Imāmī *ḥadīth*, *al-muzn* was held to be the name of a tree in Paradise. For example, in one tradition attributed to Ja'far al-Muhammadādiq he says: "Verily, in Paradise there is a tree named *al-muzn*. If God desires to create a believer, he takes (*aqṭara*) a single drop from it. Neither herbs nor fruit can partake of it. (Only) a believer or an unbeliever can eat of it, but God, exalted and glorified is He, will draw out a believer from his loins (*ṣulbihi*)" (*al-Kāfi*, v. 2, p. 14). Another tradition from Ja'far relates that angels used the water of the *muzn* to cleanse the body of a martyr between heaven and earth who had not been washed properly [*Man la yaḥduruhu al-faḥīh* (Qum: Islamic Publications Institute, 1993 ed.), v. 1, p. 159]. In a tradition from 'Alī there is also the following: "Verily, the rain (*al-maṭar*) from which animals are provided for (comes) from beneath the Throne (*al-'arsh*). Then the Messenger of God asked for rain the first time and he stood until his head and his beard were wet. Then he said, 'Verily, water is recently (placed) (*qarība 'ahdin*) at the Throne. If God, blessed and exalted is He, wants to make rain, He sends it down from this (water) to the ocean (then) to heaven [*samā'* - also sky] after heaven until it reaches a place called *muzn*. Thereupon God, blessed and exalted is He, reveals to (*yuḥī...ilā*) the wind (*al-rīḥ*). Then it blows the cloud (*al-saḥāb*) until it reaches a place. Then it [the rain] descends from the *muzn* to the cloud. Therefore, every drop upon the earth is put in its place by an angel and no drop falls on another drop." [*Mustadrak al-wasā'il* (Qum: Āl al-Bayt, 1988 ed.), v. 6, p. 191] The *muzn* also plays an important role in the writings of Shaykh Aḥmad [see the relevant section in Juan Cole's "The World as Text: Cosmologies of Shaykh Aḥmad al-Aḥsa'i," *Studia Islamica* 80 (1994)].

[37] In Q 2:93, Moses' disobedient followers are said to have been made to "drink (*ushribū*) the calf (*al-'ijl*) into their hearts on account of their unbelief." Early commentators were split over meaning of this verse. Some said that what Moses' disobedient followers drank into their hearts was the love (*ḥubb*) of the calf, but it is only implied in the verse [al-Ṭabarī, v. 1, p. 422-3]. The Bāb seems to agree with this reading, which is also found in the Shī'ī tafsīr literature [for example, see *Bihār*, v. 22, p. 498]. Others contended that Moses' followers were made to drink of the water that held small bits of the Calf accumulated when Moses destroyed it [al-Ṭabarī, v. 1, p. 423].

[38] Cf. 8:11 and *Bihār*, section on "*Taḥīr al-ard*," v. 77, p. 147-59.

[39] Cf. 12:40, 17:23.

[40] For the distinction between *al-a`yān* and *al-akwān*, see note on *al-a`yān* above.

[41] Q 55:19-20. See note on *al-baḥrayn*.

[42] *Ḥazz* is used in the Qur'an in a variety of senses. First, it is used in its general sense as "part" of whole, such as in v. 5:13-4 and in a legal sense, as in a "share" or "portion" given to heirs (see 4:11, 176). It is also someone's good fortune (see 28:79 and 41:35). Finally, it is peoples' portion in the next world based on their belief or unbelief (3:176). Given the context, the Bāb is probably alluding to verses 28:78-79, in which the Pharaoh's wealthy minister, Qarūn (the biblical Korah), is chastised by his people. They council him not to rejoice in his wealth, since true wealth comes from God in the form of a home in the next world. Qarūn retorts that he attained his wealth by means of "a particular knowledge" (*'ilmīn*) and he walks with pride among the people because of it, making them envious of his "great fortune" (*ḥazzīn 'azīmīn*). But the people who had knowledge (*al-'ilm*, which is apparently contrasted with its indefinite counterpart that Qarūn possessed) remind him that true wealth is garnered by those who believe and do good works. Thereupon God causes the earth to swallow up Qarūn and his home. To account for his wealth, as well as the enigmatic phrase *'alā 'ilmīn 'indī* ("on account of a particular knowledge I possess") in 28:78, Muslim authors often state that Qarūn was a the master of alchemical wisdom that had been passed down from Moses through Aaron (see "Qarūn," EI²). As in the passages from the Qur'an, the Bāb seems to be saying that the particular science of grammar is of a second order compared to the first-order knowledge of the hereafter. See the following few lines.

[43] As in the beginning of this text, the Bāb places the status of the two gulfs (*al-khalījayn*) at a level lower than the *barzakh*.

[44] Here the Bāb seems to make the location of the "two bodies of water" explicit: the water north of the equator, all the way to the north pole, and the water south of the equator, all the way to the south pole. As we saw earlier, however, early exegetes also thought the "two bodies of water" could refer to the water that is on the earth (one body of water) and the water that is in the sky (another body of water). In this case, that which stands (*al-qā'im*) between the two bodies of water (i.e. between earth and heaven) is either an isthmus or barrier (*barzakh*) or the person of `Alī (as in the Taṭanjī sermon). The meaning of the Bāb's allusion is further complicated by the fact that the circle of the zodiac is equivalent to the circle of the "equator" (*khawṭ al-istiwā'*) [see "Istiwā'," Khatt," EI²]. Allusions such as this will be more easy to decipher once more research has been done on the terrestrial and celestial topography of Shaykh Aḥmad, Sayyid Kāzīm, and the Bāb.

[45] *Al-'irāb* are the case endings of a word that indicate its grammatical function in the sentence (this should be familiar to those with a knowledge of German or Greek). Unlike English, which relies more on syntax to convey meaning, proper declension is essential for comprehension of the meaning of an Arabic sentence. The Bāb often puts the wrong case ending on a word, particularly for sound masculine plurals, which makes it difficult to understand his intended meaning. This seems to occur more frequently when he writes in what he calls the "mode of verses" (*sha'n āyāt*) and less frequently or not at all when he writes in the "scientific mode" (*ṣuwar 'ilmīyya*). Certainly, therefore, people who read the Bāb's "scientific" works (like *al-Muḥammadahīfa al-dhahabīyya*) will have to concede that he was capable of writing in standard Arabic prose, but he often chose not to do so.

The reason why he chose to often violate those standards will require a fuller study of his prose, which goes beyond the aim of this commentary. Perhaps when writing in the "mode of verses" he did not pay much attention to the niceties of grammar since he was writing or dictating so rapidly. The process of this kind of ecstatic writing might be similar to extemporaneous spoken-word poetry in which the speaker does away with grammar for the sake of rhythm, rhyme, and meaning. The Bāb seems to suggest this when he differentiates his "verses" from his other modes of writing and tells his readers that he is writing them very quickly and in accordance with what comes naturally (*bil-fīṭra*).

On the other hand, his frequent violation of the rules governing case endings is reminiscent of similar irregularities occurring in the Qur'an. For Muhammad, there was no fixed grammatical standard for him to abide by and since the Qur'an was the first extended work in Arabic it became a model for the development of Arabic. However, grammarians went to some lengths to try and explain why a word that had the correct case in several instances was suddenly improperly declined in a similar grammatical position [for examples of grammatical irregularities in the Qur'ān, see Abū'l-Faḍl's *Kitāb al-farā'id*, p. 469-77, that contains a transcription of a nineteenth-century Arab Christian's critique]. Unlike Muhammad, however, the Bāb was certainly aware of the rules of grammar that had been standard for over a thousand years. For example, in a letter to a certain "Iṣfahānī," he quotes the rules on case endings in a statement attributed to `Alī: "Every subject is nominative, every object of a verbal clause is accusative, and every second term of a genitive construct is genitive" [from the letters of the Bāb in the possession of E.G. Browne, cited in Vahīd Ra'fatī, "Nigāhī bih chand zamīnih az tajallī-yi adab-i fārsī dar āthār-i bahā'ī," *Khushih-hā*, v. 1, p. 66]. Therefore, he may have deliberately violated the rules of grammar to further enhance the Qur'anic flavor of his "verses." For an example of the Bāb possibly mimicking the grammatical irregularities of the Qur'an in our present text, see his conjugation of the verb *dhāqa* and his declension of the word *ābā* earlier in the treatise. The former seems to resemble a violation of Arabic verb conjugation in verse 63:10 (the dropping of a middle letter of a root) while the latter is another example of the irregular use of case endings.

[46] *Taṣrīf* is a verbal noun that means "to inflect" a word or "to conjugate" a verb depending on its object. For the sake of simplicity, I have chosen one of these translations. Both operations are part of the part of Arabic grammar called *ṣarf* (morphology).

[47] An allusion to Q 55:22.

[48] This passage is particularly difficult to render because of the ambiguous meaning of the word *al-qaṭ`*. Second, it is unclear whether this is an independent clause with a dependent clause that modifies "an exact limit" or two independent clauses. Both are plausible since there is not *wa* or another connecting word to indicate a new sentence, but I am reading it as two independent clauses. As for the word *al-qaṭ`*, its root has the general meaning of "cutting," "severing" and I am tempted to read it this way because of the context of "separation" (*faṣl*) and "union" (*waṣl*) (see the gloss above on *al-muttaṣila*). However, to have this meaning the sentence would have to look something like this: لا يعرف الشيء فصلاً إلا بالقطع عن الوصل ("A thing does not know separation except by severance from union"). As it is written, I suppose the sentence could also be rendered, "A thing does not know separation except from severance by means of union." However, the phrase *al-qaṭ` bi* almost always means "certain knowledge of (s.th.)," which is a synonym of *al-yaqīn*, "certainty," and often contrasted with *al-ẓann*, "probable doubt," and *al-shakk*,

"doubt." All of the instances of this phrase that I have been able to find in the writings of the Bāb or Shaykh Aḥmad indicate its standard use as "certain knowledge of (s.th.)."

[49] This final phrase is a surprise, since we would expect to see the contrasting condition of "motion" (*al-ḥaraka*), similar to the contrasting pairs of "separation" and "union" in the preceding phrase. Since there is a major discrepancy between my two manuscripts here (see the critical edition), I am hopeful that comparison with other manuscripts will clear up this problem.

[50] *Al-qawā'id* generally means rules or standards. When used with regard to language, it means the rules governing writing; in other words, grammar.

[51] Perhaps an allusion to the Emerald Tablet, an alchemical tract attributed to Hermes Trismegistus, often equated by Muslims with the Qur'anic Idrīs.

[52] This phrase is often used in Shaykh Aḥmad's writings to refer to the Messengers of God and the Shī'ī Imams. See note above on *haykal*.

[53] This could also be rendered as "from the shade of the celestial world," but I have opted for "the world of 'Alī" due to the Bāb's reference to the "temples of unity," which often connotes the Shī'ī Imams (see above).

[54] This is a paraphrase of a statement by Imam al-Riḍā' during his debate with a Sabian philosopher in the presence of the 'Abbasid Caliph, al-Ma'mūn. In the course of explaining the relationship between God and His creation, al-Riḍā' states: "Those who possess understanding (*dhawū al-albāb*) know that seeking information (*al-istidlāl* – also "evidence) of what is there cannot be save by what is here" (نو (الألباب ان الاستدلال على ما هناك لا يكون إلا بما هاهنا [see *Biḥār*, v. 10, p. 316]. Shaykh Aḥmad drew heavily on the text of this debate (for example, see his paraphrase of this passage in the Thirteenth Observation of his *al-Fawā'id*), as did the Bāb (he quotes another passage from this debate below).

[55] Q 2:156.

[56] In this and the following passages the Bāb's use of the preposition *'alā* is somewhat vague. I have tried to translate it according to my sense of the context and its usual meaning. Further exploration of the Bāb's metaphysical terminology and gemantria should illumine some of the more obscure references in this part of the text.

[57] The language of this and the preceding sentences reminds the reader of the Bāb's earlier allegory of syntax and morphology being exiled from Paradise.

[58] *Al-dhikr* ("the remembrance") is a word that the Bāb often uses to refer to the Imams and to himself. The imperative phrase *ibda' bil-dhikr 'alā al-fi'l* is difficult to render because of the prepositional phrase *'alā al-fi'l*. If the Bāb had written the clause without the definite article before *dhikr* and the preposition *'alā*, (*ibda' bi-dhikr al-fi'l*), we could easily read it as "Begin with mention of the Acting."

[59] It is unclear if the pronoun refers to "the Remembrance" or "the Acting."

[60] By itself, *al-shahādatayn* would mean the two *shahādas*, or testimonies recited by Muslims at the call to prayer: "I bear witness that there is no god but God. I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of God." For the Twelver Shī'a in Iran, a third testimony is often added: "I bear witness that `Alī is the friend/saint/guardian of God (*walī allāh*). However, when contrasted with *al-ghayb* ("invisible" or "unseen"), it has the meaning of "visible." For example, in the Qur'an God is repeatedly referred to as "He who knows the invisible and the visible (*ālīm al-ghayb wa al-shahāda*)" (for example, see Q 6:73; 9:94, 105; 13:9). The Qur'an also asserts that knowledge of the *ghayb* only belongs to God: "He knows the *ghayb* and does not manifest (*yuzhir*) His *ghayb* unto anyone" (Q 72:26). In medieval Islam, the term *ghayb* was associated variously with God's hidden decree, the suprarational worlds of *jabarūt*, *malakūt* and *lahūt* penetrated by gnosis (as per Ibn `Arabī), and the realm of occult knowledge, like magic [see "al-Ghayb," EI2]. For Shī'īs, the Imams were held to have access to the knowledge of the *ghayb* and for Twelver Shī'īs the term is also closely connected with the twelfth Imam who disappeared at some point and is waiting in occultation (*al-ghayba*) to return one day and fill the world with justice. In the metaphysical world of Shaykh Aḥmad, there is a bleeding together of these two terms since he held that the spirit of the twelfth Imam is occulted in the *ghayb* (dwelling in a region that he variously equates with the interworld (*barzakh*), the world of similitudes (*`ālam al-mithāl*), and *Hurqalyā*) and the Perfect Shī'a can commune with him to attain esoteric knowledge. As the foregoing indicates, Shaykh Aḥmad's conception of the *ghayb* incorporated much of Ibn `Arabī's terminology and also aspects of the occult. In the writings of the Bāb, this terminology is also used to describe the *ghayb* and the connotations of the term also overlap with *al-ghayba*, as seen a few lines below in this text.

[61] Cf. Q 18:60 and note above on *al-baḥrayn*.

[62] *Al-qilla* (fewness) and *al-kathra* (plurality) are terms used to describe the quantity of a created thing. They are also grammatical terms: *jam` al-qilla* ("the plural of paucity") is used for things numbering between three and ten and *jam` al-kathra* ("the plural of multitude") is for things numbering more than this. Here, the Bāb seems to be alluding to gematria or the "science of letters" (*`ilm al-ḥurūf*) in which the esoteric meaning of scripture is discerned by complex calculations involving the numerical equivalents of letters in a word or words. The Bāb wrote a long treatise on the subject that has yet to be translated or studied in depth.

[63] Here, as elsewhere, the Bāb is playing with the grammatical meanings of his metaphysical terminology. I have translated *al-fi`l* as "the Act" throughout this text, but here the Bāb is clearly bringing out its grammatical denotation as "verb." However, the reader should keep in mind that the Bāb is still primarily talking about metaphysical matters.

[64] The fourth-form verb *a`raba* also has the meanings of "to Arabize" or "to make manifest" and *al-ism* also means "the name," so this phrase could also be rendered as, "Manifest the name with the pure water."

[65] The Qur'anic name for Mt. Sinai.

[66] A type of wind instrument. Cf. Q 74:8

[67] Cf. Q 92:2.

[68] Cf. Q 74:33.

[69] Cf. Q 37:61.

[70] Cf. Q 53:5.

[71] Also "noun." See the relevant section in the introduction.

[72] In Arabic grammar, the *na`t* is "used to designate a qualifying adjective and its function as an epithet" ["Na`t," EI2]. The term is usually synonymous with *wasf* (see below).

[73] In Arabic grammar, *wasf* is also a subdivision of the *ism* and would be translated as "adjective."

[74] Shaykh Ahmad equates the "loftiest book" (*al-kitāb al-a`lā*) with the "inscribed forms in the exalted realms, which are the loftiest (regions) of Paradise (*al-ṣuwar al-manqūsha fī illīyīn wa`illīyūn a`lā al-janna*). He also equates the "inscribed forms" with the "lowest book" (*al-kitāb al-asfal*) and they are written on the *sijjīn*, "which is a rock beneath the earth" (see Q:83:7-9). [Explanation of the Seventh Observation in the *Sharḥ al-fawā'id* (Tehran, 1858), p. 150]. According to the Qur'an, both realms (the most exalted Paradise and the lowest Hell) have their own "inscribed book" (*kitāb marqūm*) (Q 83:9, 20).

[75] *Lafz* (linguistic expression) and *ma`nā* (intended meaning) are classic pairs in Arabic grammar and Muslim thinkers quickly realized that a particular *lafz* could have a variety of *ma`ānī* (pl. of *ma`nā*). We have already seen an example of this in the expressions *ism* and *fī`l*, whose denotation differs depending on the context. *Ma`nā* also has its philosophical counterpart in medieval Muslim discussions of language and abstractions [See "Ma`nā," EI2].

The comparison of the *lafz* to the body and the *ma`nā* to the spirit was probably quite common, since the soul was thought to give life to the body and the body indicated the existence of the soul. I have been able to find one such equivalence by the North African *belle-lettrist* Ibn Rashīq (d. 456 or 463/1063-4 or 1070-1) in his *al-Umda* in the chapter on "*al-lafz wa al-ma`nā*." There he writes, "Expression (*al-lafz*) is a body (*jism*) and its spirit (*rūhuhu*) is meaning (*al-ma`nā*) and meaning is connected with expression like the connection of the spirit with the body. The spirit is weakened when the body is weak and strong when it is strong. If the meaning is sound and the expression is weak, then it diminishes poetry and it is faulty, just as occurs to bodies on account of lameness, paralysis, blindness, and so forth without the spirit leaving. Likewise, if the meaning is weak and some of it is defective, then the expression is better off, like that which occurs to bodies when the spirits are ill [i.e. the expressions still appear sound even though the meaning is defective]" [*al-Umda*, p. 124].

[76] A *nisba* is also an adjective derived from a noun that indicates affiliation with a person, place, or thing, like the word "Bābī" (one who follows the Bāb).

[77] The Arabic imperative *kun* (كُن, "be!") comes from the root k-w-n, which means "to be." Since the middle letter, called a *wāw* (و, the long "ū" sound), is considered a "weak" long vowel, it is dropped in the imperative form and replaced with a short vowel (ُ, the short "u" sound). This imperative often appears in the Qur'an as an expression of God's unbounded creative ability – God says "be and it is" (*kun fa-yakūn*). Since there is nothing separating the letter *kāf* from the letter *nūn*, the Bāb is saying that meaning and expression are inextricably bound, like matter and form coming together as a "thing" (*shay'*).

Concerning what lies between the two letters, Shaykh Aḥmad writes:

By the letter *kāf* He alludes to the first innovating [*al-iktirā'*], that is the willing [*al-mashiyya*], which is the Kāf that circles itself [*al-kāf al-mustadīra `alā nafsihā*], because it is the source of being. By the letter *nūn* He alludes to the First inventing [*al-ibdā'*], that is, the desiring [*al-irāda*], because it is the source of entity. Between these two letters is a letter dropped because it is phonetically weak. In order to allude to what is meant by that letter, it is outwardly dropped, yet subsists inwardly. It is the *water* from which every thing was made alive; it is existence; it is the signifying by an expression [of its signification]; it is the water from the clouds; it comprises the smoke particles which obtain their illumination from the fire, sustained by the thick oil that lies close to the smoke particles. That dropped letter is *wāw*, the original [verb], before dropping the weak letter, was *kūn*. It comprises the *six days* within which each thing was created. [*al-Farā'id*, p. 297-8, Hamid trans.].

[78] This is the second time that the Bāb is paraphrasing a passage that occurs in al-Riḍā's debate with the Sabian philosopher (referred to above). The Sabian asks al-Riḍā' to explain God's "originating" (*al-ibdā'*): "Is it something created (*khalq*) or not (*ghayr khalq*)?" Al-Riḍā' answers that it is "a still creation that is not perceived through stillness (*khalq sākin lā yudrak bil-sukūn*). It only becomes a creation because it is an originated thing (*shay' muḥdath*) and God is the One Who originated it (*aḥdathahu*). Therefore, it became His creation. There is only God, powerful and glorified is He, and His creation and there is no third thing (*thālith*) between the two and no third thing other than them." [*Bihār*, v. 10, p. 316] Shaykh Aḥmad also quotes this tradition in his *al-Fawā'id* and applies it to the first "originating" (*ibdā'*), which is equated with the Will (*al-mashī'a*), and to the first "inventing" (*iktirā'*), which is equated with Desire (*al-irāda*). The Bāb also paraphrases this statement in the letter to "Iṣfahānī" (cited earlier): "Verily, the root of the Act (*aṣl al-fi'l*) is the manifestation of the name of that which is hidden (*mazharism al-maknūn*), which is a still creation that is not known through stillness...." (Ra'fatī, "Niḡāhī," p. 66).

[79] I am not sure if the Bāb intends Imāmī Shī'ism by this term, Shaykh Aḥmad's teachings more specifically, or his own school of thought.

[80] This seems to be a paraphrase of the tradition attributed to Ja'far quoted earlier (see *al-muttaṣila*).

[81] As noted above, the *sirr mustasarr* or *sirr al-mustasarr* is one of the four-fold secrets mentioned by Ja'far al-Muhammadādiq in two different *ḥadīth* found in the *Baṣā'ir al-Darajāt* (p. 28-9). In Shaykh Aḥmad's *Sharḥ al-ziyāra*, he treats the two terms differently. He equates the first, the *sirr mustassar* ("a concealed secret"), with the station of the Imams or the imamate (*maqām al-imām* or *maqāq al-imāma*), which he contends is the fourth station of the Imams (*al-maqām al-rābi*). On the other hand, he equates

the *sirr al-mustassar* ("the secret of the concealed place") with the station of exposition (*maqām al-bayān*), which is the first station [*Shah al-ziyāra*, p. 42-3]. A detailed examination of Shaykh Aḥmad's treatment of this subject is beyond the scope of this gloss, but I have appended the two traditions from Ja`far below and given a table of some of the equivalencies that Shaykh Aḥmad sets out in the *Sharḥ al-ziyāra* (p. 42-50):

(1) ... Abū ` Abd Allāh [Ja`far] said, "Verily, our command (<i>amr</i>) is the truth and the truth of the truth; and it is the exoteric and the esoteric of the esoteric; and it is the secret, and the secret of the secret, and the secret of the concealed place, and the secret veiled by the secret."	(1) و روي عن ابن أبي محبوب عن مرزم قال قال أبو عبد الله ع إن أمرنا هو الحق و حق الحق و هو الظاهر و باطن الباطن و هو السر و سر السر و سر المستسر و سر مقنع بالسر
(2) ... Abū ` Abd Allāh said, "Verily, our command is a secret in a secret, and a concealed secret, and a secret that is only known as a secret, and a secret upon a secret and a secret veiled by a secret."	(2) حدثنا محمد بن الحسين عن محمد بن سنان عن عمار بن مروان عن جابر عن أبي عبد الله ع قال إن أمرنا سر في سر و سر مستسر و سر لا يفيد إلا سر و سر على سر و سر مقنع بسر

مقامات	الاحسائي	الاحسائي	الاحسائي	مقامات
مقام اول	السر المقنع بالسر	مقام البيان	سر المستسر	الصادق (۲) سر مقنع بسر
مقام ثاني	سر السر	مقام المعاني	سر مقنع بالسر (حق الحق)	سر على سر
مقام ثالث	السر السفارة و الوساطة و الترجمة	مقام الابواب	باطن الباطن (حق الحق)	سر لا يفيد الا سر
مقام رابع	مقام الامامة	مقام الامام	ظاهر (الحق)	سر مستسر

As I have already noted in my explanation of the "secret of the line" (*sirr al-satr*), the Bāb alludes to the four-fold secret frequently in his writings and connects the *sirr al-mustasarr* with the point of the letter *bā`* in the *Qayyūm al-asmā`*. The Bāb also mentions the four-fold secret in his *Tafsīr al-basmala*, an early exegesis of the meaning of the opening line of the Qur'an [it was written between

1260-1262 AH according to the Bāb. See a reprint of his second index of his writings in *Zuhūr al-haqq*, v. 3, p. 290 at <http://www2.h-net.msu.edu/~bahai/areprint/vol2/mazand/tzh3>. Regarding the *al-sirr al-mustasarr bil-sirr* (the secret concealed by the secret), he equates it with "the green pearl" (*al-durra al-khadrā*) and Determining (*qadar*), the third level of Acting [Muhammad Afnan, "Tafsīr bism allāh al-raḥmān al-raḥīm," *Āhang-i badī*, no. 5 & 6 (126 BE), p. 124].

[82] This *hadīth* is recorded in *al-Kāfi* (v. 1, p. 112) and translated below:

Abu `Abd Allāh (Ja`far al-Muhammadādiq) said: "Verily, God, exalted and glorified is He, created a name with letters that are not voiced, and with a pronunciation that is not uttered, and with individuality that is not corporeal, and with likeness that cannot be described, and with color that has no color. Diameters (*al-aqtār*) are shut out from it, the borders (or limits) are banished from it, (and) the sense perception of every one (capable of) conceiving is veiled from it. It is something hidden that is not veiled. He made it a word completed with the coming together of four parts. There is not one (letter) from it [the word] (that comes) before the other. He made three names to appear from it, due to the need of created things for them, and concealed one of them, which is the hidden, treasured name. The outer form of these names which have been manifested is "Allah, Blessed and Exalted." And He, praised is He, made four pillars subservient to each of these names. Therefore, there are twelve pillars. Then for each pillar He created thirty names, which are acts related to them.

[lists 35 names with one repeat]

These names and the names that (make up) the Most Beautiful Names comprise three hundred and sixty names and are related to these three names. These three names are pillars and He concealed the single, hidden,

عَلِيُّ بْنُ مُحَمَّدٍ عَنْ صَالِحِ بْنِ أَبِي حَمَّادٍ عَنِ
الْحُسَيْنِ بْنِ يَزِيدَ عَنِ الْحَسَنِ بْنِ عَلِيِّ بْنِ أَبِي
حَمْرَةَ عَنْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ بْنِ عُمَرَ عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ
ع قَالَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى خَلَقَ اسْمًا
بِالْأَحْرُوفِ غَيْرِ مُتَّصَوِّتٍ وَبِاللَّفْظِ غَيْرِ
مُنْطَقٍ وَبِالشَّخْصِ غَيْرِ مُجَسَّدٍ وَبِالتَّشْبِيهِ
غَيْرِ مَوْصُوفٍ وَبِالْوَلْوَانِ غَيْرِ مَصْبُوعٍ مَنْفِيٍّ
عَنْهُ الْأَقْطَارُ مُبَعَّدٌ عَنْهُ الْحُدُودُ مَحْجُوبٌ عَنْهُ
جِسٌّ كُلٌّ مُتَوَهِّمٌ مُسْتَنْزَعٌ غَيْرُ مَسْتَوْرٍ فَجَعَلَهُ
كَلِمَةً تَامَةً عَلَى أَرْبَعَةِ أَجْزَاءٍ مَعًا لَيْسَ مِنْهَا
وَاحِدٌ قَبْلَ الْآخِرِ فَأَظْهَرَ مِنْهَا ثَلَاثَةَ أَسْمَاءٍ
لِإِفَاقَةِ الْخَلْقِ إِلَيْهَا وَحَجَبَ مِنْهَا وَاحِدًا وَهُوَ
الْإِسْمُ الْمَكْنُونُ الْمَخْرُوعُ فَهَذِهِ الْأَسْمَاءُ الَّتِي
ظَهَرَتْ فَالظَّاهِرُ هُوَ اللَّهُ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى وَ
سَخَّرَ سُبْحَانَهُ لِكُلِّ اسْمٍ مِنْ هَذِهِ الْأَسْمَاءِ
أَرْبَعَةَ أَرْكَانٍ فَذَلِكَ اثْنَا عَشَرَ رُكْنًا ثُمَّ خَلَقَ
لِكُلِّ رُكْنٍ مِنْهَا ثَلَاثِينَ اسْمًا فِعْلًا مَنْسُوبًا
إِلَيْهَا فَهُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ الْمَلِكُ الْقُدُّوسُ
الْخَالِقُ الْبَارِئُ الْمُصَوِّرُ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ لَا
تَأْخُذُهُ سِنَةٌ وَلَا نَوْمٌ الْعَلِيمُ الْخَبِيرُ السَّمِيعُ
الْبَصِيرُ الْحَكِيمُ الْعَزِيزُ الْجَبَّارُ الْمُتَكَبِّرُ الْعَلِيُّ
الْعَظِيمُ الْمُقْتَدِرُ الْقَادِرُ السَّلَامُ الْمُؤْمِنُ

treasured name by these three names, even as He, exalted is He, says: "Say: Call upon Allah or call upon the Merciful. By whatsoever you call Him, His are the Most Beautiful Names." (Q 17:110)

الْمُهَيَّمِينَ الْبَارِئُ الْمُنْشِئُ الْبَدِيعُ الرَّفِيعُ الْجَلِيلُ
الْكَرِيمُ الرَّازِقُ الْمُحْيِي الْمُمِيتُ الْبَاعِثُ
الْوَارِثُ فَهَذِهِ الْأَسْمَاءُ وَ مَا كَانَ مِنَ الْأَسْمَاءِ
الْحُسْنَى حَتَّى تَتِمَّ ثَلَاثَ مِائَةٍ وَ سِتِّينَ اسْمًا
فَهِيَ نِسْبَةٌ لِهَذِهِ الْأَسْمَاءِ الثَّلَاثَةِ وَ هَذِهِ
الْأَسْمَاءُ الثَّلَاثَةُ أَرْكَانٌ وَ حَجَبَ الْإِسْمَ الْوَاحِدَ
الْمَكْنُونِ الْمَخْزُونِ بِهَذِهِ الْأَسْمَاءِ الثَّلَاثَةِ وَ
ذَلِكَ قَوْلُهُ تَعَالَى قُلِ ادْعُوا اللَّهَ أَوْ ادْعُوا
الرَّحْمَنَ أَيًّا مَا تَدْعُوا فَلَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَى

A certain Shaykh `Alī b. Shaykh Muhammadālīh asked Shaykh Aḥmad to explain this tradition and the latter wrote a detailed treatise in response. At the beginning of the treatise, Shaykh Aḥmad acknowledges that meaning of this tradition is very difficult to understand since it "is comprised of an exposition on the separation of existence into classes (*al-ajnās*) and parts (*al-fuṣūl*) and division (into) derivatives and roots" (*Jawāmi` al-kalim* (Tabriz, 1856), v. 2, p. 311). He then proceeds to give a concise description of his cosmology as it relates to this tradition. Finally, he closes with the assertion that "I have mentioned what none of the other interpreters of this noble *ḥadīth* have mentioned and from the riddle of its secrets (*mu`ammā asrārihi*) I have laid bare that which a subtle mind can barely stumble upon.... (p. 313)" Here is a translation of his summative paragraph at the end of the treatise:

...The name that is mentioned is the totality of Absolute Existence (*al-wujūd al-muṭlaq*), which is the World of the Command (*`alam al-amr*), and Delimited Existence (*al-wujūd al-muqayyad*), which is the World of Creation (*`alam al-khalq*). It is upon four pillars that are successive in manifestation and some proceed others in the essence [but outwardly exist at the same time]. The first (pillar) is that which is concealed and treasured, which is the Willing (*al-mashiyya*). The three (pillars) that are manifest, which are the World of Creation, are the World of *Jabarūt*, the World of *Malakūt*, and the World of *Mulk*. Each one of these three (pillars) has four pillars: a pillar of creation (*khalq*) and existentiation (*ijād*), a pillar of life, a pillar of sustenance (*rizq*), and a pillar of death. Each pillar is composed of nine celestial spheres and an earth and every one of these ten (spheres) is set made to revolve upon three cycles (*dawra*): a cycle in its mineral (existence), a cycle in its plant (existence), and a cycle in its animal (existence). In every thirty is an action (*fi`lan*) associated with it (the pillar) and especially applicable to it, which is one of the particular (*al-juz`iyya*) names of God. Verily these three all-encompassing (*al-kulliyya*) names are the pillars for Delimited Existence, the beginning of which is mind (*al-`aql*) and the end of which is dust. Verily He, exalted is He, has concealed the hidden name on account of the sufficiency of the manifestation of its effects on the (other) three since creation does not need to increase from it [i.e. creation has all it needs to exist from the appearance of the three manifest names]. Beneath these three (names) are all of the remaining names, just as they (the three names) are beneath the concealed, treasured name. [p. 313]

According to Shaykh Aḥmad, the three manifest names are *Allāh*, *Tabāraka* ("Blessed is He"), and *Ta`ālā* ("Exalted is He"). He also notes that in another version of this *ḥadīth* the word *al-`Alīy* ("Exalted") is substituted for *Ta`ālā* and *al-`Azīm* is substituted for *Tabāraka* (p. 312). Finally, he explains that one name is hidden by the manifestation of the other three because the hidden name would conceal the other three if it manifested itself. In other words, they can only appear if it remains hidden "because if the One Who Wills appears, the Will (*al-mashiyya*) disappears" (p. 313).

This *ḥadīth* plays a prominent role in some of the later writings of the Bāb, including his *Tafsīr wa al-`aṣr* and his treatise on *Nubuwwa khāṣṣa*.

[83] *Al-bāb bil-bāb* is a constant refrain in the Bāb's *Qayyūm al-asmā'* (it appears, for example, in the first *sūra*). Other translators might put a period between this phrase and the following verse, but I would point out that the phrase runs into the following Qur'anic verse without a conjunction between them, giving me the sense that the Bāb wanted his readers to connect the two. Further, the Bāb often ended his letters with *al-ḥamdu li-llāhi rabbi al-`ālamīna* ("Praise be to God, the Lord of the Worlds!"), but I have never seen an instance in which he ends with the *basmala*, which is traditionally used to begin a letter (as done by the Bāb at the opening of this treatise). Therefore, I am inclined to think that the phrase is connected with the verse that follows it and I have tried to sketch out some of the reasons why the Bāb might have done so in the following note.

Q 1:1-2. By the "gate" (*al-bāb*) of the phrase "In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate," [84] the Bāb is probably alluding to the letter *bā'* (the first Arabic letter of the phrase) and tying together four different groups of traditions. The first three groups deal with the authority and knowledge of the Imams. One group is the four-fold secret traditions of al-Muhammadādiq in which he equates the "command" or "mandate" (*amr*) of the Imams with various kinds of secrets. As I have already observed, one of these secrets (the *mustasarr al-sirr*) is linked by the Bāb in the *Qayyūm al-asmā'* with a group of traditions by `Alī in which he declares that he is the "point beneath the *bā'*" (see the gloss of *sirr al-saṭr* above). `Alī is also alluded to when the Bāb describes the opening of line of the Qur'an as a "gate" (*bāb*), reminiscent of a tradition attributed to Muhammad in which he calls himself the city of knowledge (*madīnat al-`ilm*) and names `Alī as its "gate" (*bāb*) [*Wasā'il al-shī'a* (Qum: Āl al-Bayt Institute, 1989), v. 2, p. 34]. Given these allusions and the Bāb's reference to the *basmala*, he is also probably expecting his readers to remember a tradition by al-Muhammadādiq that he often quotes in which the Imam explains the meaning of the first three letters of the opening line of the Qur'an that the Bāb has just referred to: "The (letter) *bā'* is the glory of God (*bahā' allāh*), the (letter) *sīn* is the radiance of God (*sanā' allāh*), and the (letter) *mīm* is the majesty of God (*majd allāh*)." [*al-Kāfi*, v. 1, p.114. According to other transmitters, the *mīm* is also equated with the "sovereignty of God" (*mulk allāh*)].