

Translation into English of Nicolas'  
French translation and notes of Mirza Siyyid 'Ali Muhammad Shirazi  
the Bab's Bayan Arabe originally written in Arabic

FOREWORD  
PREFACE (written & compiled by Nicolas)

Sometimes there occur, in the European (literature of) criticism, bizarre phenomena that treat certain special points of oriental literature and which disconcert by their strangeness. The most unlooked for of these phenomena is certainly him of whom it is given us for quite some time to be the testimonies and who consists of refusing with the Anglo-Saxons the title of Sufi to Khayyam, to bracket him, with the French School, by the name of Siyyid 'Ali Muhammad the Bab, who was however, in his life, the inveterate enemy of this sect and whose entire doctrine is in flagrant opposition with oriental pantheism. This result is made to stupify whoever knows Persia a little and knows what a Sufi is, what a Babi was, what a Baha'i or an Azali can be.

It is moreover not the first adventure run by the Bab in Europe, I should say in France. He had the singular fortune of being--on the whole by force--enregimented by M. de Gobineau, by the students of Mulla Sadra. The professor and the student should have been strongly scandalized, but they said nothing, and for a reason.

Khayyam can not interest us here<sup>1</sup> or we would occupy ourselves simply in re-establishing under his true day the physiognomy so curious and so expressive of the hero of Shiraz; and, to do this, after a few preliminary reflections, we will leave him to speak; he will make use of it, I like to believe, in a fashion as to completely enlighten us upon his ideas and upon his beliefs.

I encountered in Europe three accusations against the Bab. First: it is said that he is Sufi; Second: he is accused of preaching the incarnation; Third: it is affirmed that he forbids the study of the sciences to his followers.<sup>2</sup>

I

The Bab and Sufism

In that Siyyid 'Ali Muhammad claims to explain the inner sense of the

<sup>1</sup> See "Divinity and Wine" in the Persian poets.

<sup>2</sup> We will reply at the same time and by one simple citation to the allegations of M. de Gobineau.

Qur'an, it does not follow that he shared the doctrines of the Masnavi, of the Mantiq out-Tair and of all of the works which have a mystical character; in that he affirms that we encounter God or that we carry His glances, it does not follow that he is pantheistic, for that is an affirmation which we encounter even in Catholicism, as soon as we want to prove the existence of God; (the) affirmation which is contained in the formula "in the work one knows the artisan"; in that he recommends to free oneself from all that exists in order to discover "the sea of knowingness" and to find God all over, we are not obligated to class him with the Sufis, no more than among the solitaires of the Thebaide; in that he employs a vocabulary that we have more the habit of encountering in the books of the mystics, the fault of reading the works of the Shi'i orthodoxy, it does not follow that this vocabulary is has the same sense nor the same value for these ones and for the others; in that finally the Bab has recourse to talismanics, he should not be compared with this or that sect of passed times: inasmuch as the use he makes thereof is contrary to that which was made then, the conclusions which he draws therefrom are indeed different from those arrived at usually. I really do not think that we can uphold that Saint John was a Muslim because he gives the symbol of the Beast in his Apocalypse.

All of that is certainly very superficial and and provenes for the most part from hastiness to judge before knowing well. The Bab tells us meanwhile someplace: "To know my thinking well ~~it is~~ one must read my works from one end to the other."

The great inconvenience is that ~~the~~ error is unleashed and can make its way in the world notwithstanding what the Bab wrote to Mirza Hasan Vaqaye Nigar at Isfahan.<sup>1</sup>

"Upon the subject of that which you had said in your letter relative to what men had diverged (from) my subject and that certain even had said about me unbecoming things: there is no doubt that the greater part of men give themselves their own passions as God, for they speak in conformity with that which their passions dictate to them. Soon God will chastise them because of the bad works they accomplish. But this state, this manner of being of men is not an extraordinary thing, for in all times there have been men to accuse wrongly their God of lying. Look at the Christians how they accuse God of lying when they say that He is only one of the three persons of the Trinity! See the Jews who say that Qzair is the son of God."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>On page 200 of my manuscript of the Surah Tawhid.

<sup>2</sup>The Bab does not seem here to be very partisan of the dogma of incarnation.

In the Risala Zahabiye, the Bab replies himself, in this sense, to one of his disciples, Djavad, who seems to have floated indecisively between the the new revelation and the ~~affirmations~~ contrary affirmations of the orthodox sects. This Djavad must certainly have been a Sufi before becoming Babi because he had a murshid.<sup>1</sup> This murshid had given him verses fabricated by himself to give him the opportunity to compare them with those of Siyyid 'Ali Muhammad.

Djavad, powerfully embarrassed, did not find a manner simpler than to send these verses to the Bab, who replied:

"O Djavad! You have sent towards me black ink in these papers that you have had me take from someone who wants to guide<sup>2</sup> men towards the secret of truth.

"O Djavad! Fear the order of God! In truth the universal promise arrives at the day of the separation.<sup>3</sup>" "In truth! Your murshid did not know me and did not see me. If he had an indication of that which God has thrown into my heart and that in truth HE WAS SEARCHING FOR THE PURE TRUTH, he would not have placed these lying words opposite verses. I swear by Him who has my being in between His hands, He who in His treatise has written that He has brought verses similar to mine own, has pronounced words which are an absolute lie, an accusation against God, an affirmation without basis. Speed yourself from the lie of THOSE PEOPLE<sup>4</sup> THE WORDS WHICH COME OUT OF THEIR MOUTHS are far from their ranks.<sup>5</sup> They speak only to say lies.

"It would seem that you regret that those ones<sup>6</sup> do not give their faith! Know, that in truth, violence is the salary of the violent and the malediction of God attains the liars.

"...If you<sup>7</sup> give as testimony the macerations in the way of God and the attraction of God, in truth! God has the power to bring the slave to the highest ~~grade~~ degree of existence in these macerations, without this attraction,<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Murshid is a technical term to indicate the chief, the spiritual director, the pir, he who guides in the lanes of consciousness. This term is exclusively employed to designate a Sufi chief.

<sup>2</sup> He who wishes to guide men towards the secret of truth is the Sufi spiritual chief, the murshid.

<sup>3</sup> Of the good with the bad, it is the day of judgement.

<sup>4</sup> Those people. One may remark that the Bab speaks here of a murshid, a Sufi, and that generally he says 'those people' to mean 'the Sufis'.

<sup>5</sup> They are hypocrites.

<sup>6</sup> Same observation as next to last note.

<sup>7</sup> He addresses himself here to the murshid.

<sup>8</sup> This is the very negation of Sufism which exacts from its adepts the "Zuq" mercy, the attraction of God and the Riazat.

for God does what He wishes, in the manner which He wishes. Know in truth, that the honor of these macerations, of these attractions is not except because of (its) arrival at the degree of knowledge of the essence.<sup>1</sup> Thus, if God makes someone arrive at this degree without these two means, He does not have need of them. If you say that the testimony is in the love of God, in the divine secret, in the eternal form and the divine light, in the form outside of the human material pure of bad qualities, in the attributes of sainthood(saintliness), in the manifestations which subsist by themselves, in the ranks of this low world, in the majesty of the other, in that God created without finish and without finish, in truth God has testified to me that all of that exists in me. Every thing has a verity (essence), every arrival at the end has a divine light. Now you, today, you know that those who are like you from the Ourefa<sup>2</sup> and the others, all make claim to this degree (of the love of God) and meanwhile they foreswear each other. It is the same for the people of the Cheriat.<sup>3</sup>

If we continue a little the reading of this very long response we will see which are the sects from which the Bab separates himself absolutely: "If someone does not drink of this water, says he, for him there is no (longer any) delight in the Unity, he has no longer any route in the rank of the Nudity. In truth the most part of the Echraqi<sup>4</sup>in and Mechchahi<sup>4</sup>in and Sadrayin<sup>4</sup> and Elay<sup>5</sup>in<sup>5</sup>ulama, their feet have slipped in the explication of this world. They have been mistaken: the radiation of the essence upon the existences they have taken it for the very being of the essence. It is why they LIE when they say that the truths are fixed in the essence. And this lie they have said it to establish the science of God. They say that the Truth of existence is simple to establish the causality of the essence; and they speak of the relation between the essence and the acts and attributes, they speak of the unity of existence between the Creator and the created. But, all of that is not, for the people

<sup>1</sup>They are worth nothing by themselves: new negation of Sufism.

<sup>2</sup>Aref, Ourefa: words that serve to designate exclusively the Sufis: Irfan: Sufism.

<sup>3</sup>The orthodox, those who follow the pure doctrine of the Shi'i Church.

<sup>4</sup>The partisans of Mulla Sadra of whom the Bab is not a party notwithstanding what has been said.

<sup>5</sup>The partisans of Hekim Elahi, If "their feet have slid" it is that they have been mistaken. Can we admit that the Bab is saying "this sect is mistaken and I am not a party to it." Is it not true that in so far as he affirms that it is mistaken, he affirms that he is not a party to it. From that he is neither of the sect of Hekim Elahi, nor from that of Mulla Sadra.

of God, but absolute association, for God was in the know before the existence of everything, as well as he was alive. In the same way that God does not have need in his life for the existence of another besides Himself, He does not have need in his knowledge of the existence of the object of knowledge: in truth the essence does not conjugate with anything.<sup>1</sup> In truth, the cause of the contingencies is one creation of God, and it is the Will. God created this Will in itself without a fire coming to him from the divine essence: He created all of the existences by the intermediary of this Will and this Will always tells<sup>2</sup> His own being and demonstrates nothing but His essence. In the contingencies there is not a single verse which demonstrates the essence of God, for THE TRUTH OF GOD ALIENATES ALL OF THE CONTINGENCIES FROM HIS KNOWLEDGE AND THE ESSENCE OF GOD RENDERS IMPOSSIBLE THE COMPREHENSION OF ALL OF THE ESSENCES. In truth! the relation of the Will with God is like that of the house<sup>3</sup> with the supreme being. This relation is a relation of honor for the creature, but not for the essence, for God is pure...etc."

It is impossible to speak in a more distinct manner, more precise and more anti-Sufi.

If that did not suffice, that one listen to the Bab again in the Surah AC (Surah to the ulama) which is dated from the fifth year of the manifestation: "Today there are five years that he has cried in his loudest voice, 'Come to me! Come to me! Not by thought, not by imagination, not by the Sufi sayings, not by the infidel's words! In truth! It is I the Knowing in the certain truth with the highest arguments."

And finally something even more precise. Under the number 22 of the Response to the questions of him who has made hijra towards God, S.E. Mulla Ahmad, who is found on page 102 of my copy of the Surah Tawhid I read: "And if I ask all of the people of the earth on the subject of the reason of their faith, they can say nothing if it is not in the end of counting, their response returns to the book which confirms their religion. That which they will comprehend in the end if they comprehend it since the beginning, they will be happy in the way of their Lord, and will thank their God because of what He has given them in His benevolence. And those ones, night and day, prostrate themselves before God and I ask ask pardon, o my God, in that the mention of the letter Sad has been attributed to me.<sup>4</sup> Today all the men before me are equal, if it is but those who obey the Truth which comes from Thee and who believe in Thy verses."

<sup>1</sup> Again here the Bab does not seem to be partisan of the incarnation.

<sup>2</sup> For the explanation of this term, see the Treatise of the Seven Proofs.

<sup>3</sup> and <sup>4</sup> on back

of God, but absolute association, for God was in the know before the existence of everything, as well as he was alive. In the same way that God does not have need in his life for the existence of another besides Himself, He does not have need in his knowledge of the existence of the object of knowledge: in truth the essence does not conjugate with anything.<sup>1</sup> In truth, the cause of the contingencies is one creation of God, and it is the Will. God created this Will in itself without a fire coming to him from the divine essence: He created all of the existences by the intermediary of this Will and this Will always tells<sup>2</sup> His own being and demonstrates nothing but His essence. In the contingencies there is not a single verse which demonstrates the essence of God, for THE TRUTH OF GOD ALIENATES ALL OF THE CONTINGENCIES FROM HIS KNOWLEDGE AND THE ESSENCE OF GOD RENDERS IMPOSSIBLE THE COMPREHENSION OF ALL OF THE ESSENCES. In truth! the relation of the Will with God is like that of the house<sup>3</sup> with the supreme being. This relation is a relation of honor for the creature, but not for the essence, for God is pure...etc."

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<sup>3</sup> The Kaaba which God had called His house.

<sup>4</sup> It is the first letter of the word Sufism which elsewhere, in my copy is written under the formula Es Sad.

All men are equal in my eyes, except those who obey the truth: what does that mean? It is evident that the Bab means by these sayings: what does it matter to me about those who do not believe! They are all equal in my eyes and in their impiety! Only are in the truth those who have given me their faith! Jews, Christians, Catholics, Protestants, Sunnis, Shi'is, Sufis, philosophers are all one; all are in error, all turn away from God, all are blasphemers.

It is in all of the immense literary production of the Bab that it would be necessary to look to find there in each word of his work the horror and the disgust which Sufism inspires him with: that goes to the point where he writes to Mulla Hasan Bedjestani.<sup>1</sup>

"O thus you who have chosen to voyage in the way of God, thank God by your knowledge in God, for we have read your previous letter, and we have caused to fall upon you the verses and the explanations in which was the order of justice. Now we have read your letter, this letter which breathed by the false thoughts that it enclosed the atmosphere of the lying imaginations of men. Thus if this person who has written this letter is other than the students of Siyyid Kazim,<sup>2</sup> I should not even open this letter."

The disdain is there absolute for all, except for two categories of persons very clearly defined: those who believe in the Bab and those who, in not believing in him yet, are nevertheless upon the path, enlightened that they had been a part of the truth by Siyyid Kazim Rashti, of whom they are the students.

The rest is not worthy to occupy oneself with him, and the rest comprehend the Sufis.

<sup>1</sup>The letter is contained in the manuscript that I entitled AG.

<sup>2</sup>Siyyid Kazim Rashti, student and successor of Shaykh Ahmad Ahsa'i as chief of the Shaykhi sect. We know that the Bab considers them as two precursors. After the death of Siyyid Kazim, certain shaykhs recognized the revelation of Siyyid 'Ali Muhammad, (while) others, in much lesser numbers followed the doctrine of Karim who declared himself the true successor to Siyyid Kazim.

The proofs which I gave in my Siyyid 'Ali Muhammad that the Bab considered Shaykh Ahmad and Siyyid Kazim as his two precursors could not suffice for them who want with all their force to make of the Prophet a Sufi, I will cite here this passage of his response to Mulla Hasan Bedjestani:

"And Ahmad and Kazim, if they lived both of them and renounced the testimony of the verses of God, they would not have been neither the one of the other DOORS for the religion of God. And so it would have been appropriate for me to throw the sentence against them in the manner that God permitted it in His book."

Otherwise the whole work of the Bab demonstrates overabundantly that he is not the student of anyone: he depends only on God. In him, as in Jesus, as in Muhammad, as in Moses, is reflected the Primitive Will: he is nothing but a mirror and it is she (VP) Who speaks in him, by him, that which she speaks. It must not be forgotten that he is a Prophet, and we would have had grace to him to dispute this title, for he payed for it from the purest of his blood. Let us treat him thus accordingly, and not abase him to the rank of an ordinary philosopher. If we find that he lies, we need not occupy ourselves with him; if on the contrary he says truths, we must prostrate ourselves. This here is his claim, and we must put ourselves on his terrain in order to judge him.

In surplus, and to finish with this question, let us leave him upon this subject one last time the floor.

"Now that you know the true significances of this world, know that, today, in the branch of the Isna 'Ashari, the divergencies have arrived at their summit. Certain ones, known under the name of Ousouli believe in the possession of the truth, because they have the science of Zenn,<sup>1</sup> on the subject of which they all agree; others, known under the name of Akhbari beleieve they are in the truth because they do not accept the testimony of billiant intelligence; others, known under the name of the fire Shaykh Ahmad, son of Zenn ed din-- may God bless the dust of his tomb--believe they are in possession of the absolute and pure truth. They have not however understood the tenth (or one tenth?) of the sayings of this illustrious unitarian! OTHERS ARE KNOWN UNDER THE NAME OF SUFIS, AND THEY BELIEVE THEY POSSESS THE INTIMATE SENSE OF THE SHARIAT WHILE THEY ARE IN IGNORANCE AS/ FROM ITS APPARENT SENSE AS FROM ITS INTIMATE SENSE AND THEY HAVE FALLEN FAR, VERY FAR! PERHAPS ONE CAN SAY OF THEM THAT THESE PEOPLE WHO HAVE NO INTELLIGENCE HAVE CHOSEN THE ROAD FULL OF SHADOWS AND OF DOUBT."<sup>2</sup>

## II

### The Bab and incarnation

A second error, so extraordinary that it is unbelievable consists in affirming that the Bab admits incarnation, and that he accepts that the different Prophets which have succeeded each other are the diverse aspects of Divinity descending from His rank of Creator to take on the vestments of the creature.

<sup>1</sup>Analogy.

<sup>2</sup>See the Preface for the translation of the Sahife Adliye.

Never could an idea like that penetrate into the brain of a Persian, provided that this Persian is not tainted with mental alienation. That which displeases the Shi'is the most, that which exasperates them unto fury is not that we negate the mission of Muhammad, is not that we drink wine, is not that we eat pork, is not that our women go out with face uncovered, that which carries the summit of abomination, is our belief in the Divinity of Christ, it is our faith in the incarnation. That is for them a blasphemy~~x~~ unheard of and which renders us worthy of the most violent/<sup>and eternal</sup> chastisements; and the thought that we can be convinced of the truth of such a scurrilous invention gives them nausea.

Why from then on attribute such an idea to the Bab? Why and upon what ~~ises~~ is it based? Does he not say everywhere that God is inaccessible, that not one intelligence can conceive of Him, no Name designate Him, no qualifier attain Him. Does he not dig a ditch between the Creator and the Creature always insurmountable, and is he not~~x~~ from there obliged to comment upon the famous saying of God in the Qur'an: "Perhaps you will end by believing that you will be one day in the presence of your Lord?" Listen to him elsewhere, it is again the only way that we have to respond to his contradictors.

In the Sahife Adliye it is said:

"If you contemplate today the preceeding ranks, you will see them as the ranks of the progress of seed. Know that God has created everything for the day of judgment which is the day of the Manifestation of His being, as this verse of the Qu'ran says it: \*IT IS GOD WHO HAS ELEVATED THE SKIES WITHOUT VISIBLE COLUMNS AND ESTABLISHED HIMSELF UPON THE THRONE. HE HAS SUBJECTED THE SUN AND THE MOON AND EACH OF THE STARS FOLLOWS ITS COURSE UNTIL A DETERMINED POINT; HE MANIPULATES THE AFFAIRS OF THE UNIVERSE AND DISTINCTLY MAKES HIS MARVELS. PERHAPS YOU WILL END BY BELIEVING WITH CERTITUDE THAT ONE DAY YOU WILL BE IN THE PRESENCE OF YOUR LORD.<sup>1</sup> There is no doubt that does not mean to say: the contemplation of the essence of God, for that is something impossible and inaccessible. That means to say the contemplation of Him who is manifested in the manifestation and in whom one can see nothing but God. It is exactly as if you placed a mirror facing the sun: in this mirror one can see naught but the sun.

"Contemplation of God does not mean to say: to see Him with his material eye, it means to see Him with the eye of his heart. See, by example, today the believers: all do not look with the eye of their heart aught but the Prophet of God, insomuch that the non-believers, as they do not look at him, remain in obscurity. Contemplate the new manifestation.<sup>2</sup> How many people

<sup>1</sup>Qur'an XIII, 2

<sup>2</sup>Mine own.

URE.

"The beginning of the manifestation of the Primitive Will is of the Will itself, for the prophetism of the Prophet bases itself upon the words that he pronounces, etc.

" You<sup>1</sup> interrogated me upon the meaning of the words, 'GOD DID NOT ENGENDER AND WAS NOT ENGENDERED, NOTHING IS SIMILAR TO HIM.'

"There is no doubt that eternally God was while there was nothing other than Him. And now He is as He was previously.<sup>2</sup> And this word is like this verse: 'Do not chose two Gods! certainly! certainly! God is unique, thus, fear Me, Me only, O My slaves.'

"There is no doubt that it is impossible that there be two gods in this world!"

In his response to Siyyid Taghi which is found on page 79 of my copy of the Surah Tawhid it is written:

"The third question that you posed me is the meaning<sup>3</sup> of the of the saying of the philosophers who say, 'From one naught can be created but one.'

"The very essence of this saying is a lie when the cause means the eternal and absolute essence of God. God does not conjugate<sup>4</sup> ever with a thing and, never does anything leave (the being) of God. This quality of God<sup>5</sup> is proven in all estates. If the sense of the 'Cause' is the first Zikr<sup>6</sup>, that's to say him whom God created Himself, then this saying becomes true: other than One, in effect, can not explain the action of the essence to be Unique. That is the religion of the pure imams.

"It is in this way that God, in the hadith Qoutsi<sup>7</sup>, summons Jonas: 'O Jonas! Do you know the Will?' 'Jonas answered, "No." God says, 'The Will is the first Zikr.'" It is not possible that God create a thing ~~ex~~nihilo unless that thing be unique, for the first rank of the Zikr is to demonstrate the Unity of God. In the beginning of the degree of the Unity it is not possible to be other than One. The saying that the philosophers say, 'tha t the cause of all the existences is the essence of God' is a lie. THERE IS NO CONJUGATION BETWEEN<sup>8</sup> GOD AND THINGS. IT IS NOT ADMISSABLE THAT THE ESSENCE OF GOD BE A PLACE OF CHANGE.

<sup>1</sup>In my volume of the Surah Tawhid, on page 209, response to Mirza Hasan Vagaye Negar in Isfahan.

<sup>2</sup>The Qu'ran itself lances anathema upon those who believe in the incarnation of God in Jesus, which the Qur'an makes, the Bab makes (does) it also, and that which was true following the Qur'an remains true following the Bayan.

<sup>3</sup>That's to say: you asked me the meaning of the saying. <sup>4</sup>Where: does not incarnate.

<sup>5</sup>Which consists in not engendering and in not being engendered.

<sup>6</sup>See the Treatise of the Seven Proofs. <sup>7</sup>God speaks to Muhammad.

<sup>8</sup>Or incarnation of God.

"It must have a similitude between the cause and the effect. Thus, the truth is this that the cause of things is this first Zikr that God created ex nihilo. And He made in it the cause of all the creatures, as the imam says it, upon him be blessing! "THE CAUSE OF THINGS IS THE INDUSTRY OF GOD AND THIS INDUSTRY HAS NO CAUSE"...

"And in this world there is no Creator if it is not God alone. Thus even as it is necessary for the slave to unify the Essence, it is also obligatory for him to unify God in His attributes, in His acts, in His adoration. In these three unifications not one act of the slaves is accepted (recognized).

"In the rank of the First Zikr, which is the most GREAT OF THE DEGREES OF THE CREATURE,<sup>1</sup> this first Zikr must exist for four causes. 'The cause faele,<sup>2</sup> illet, Madde,<sup>3</sup> illet Souri,<sup>4</sup> illet Qahi.<sup>5</sup> His existence is not possible in the world of the newnesses<sup>6</sup> except by the aid of these four aspects, for each thing, to manifest his existence must have an element of fire, an element of air and of water to conserve this existence, and an element of earth to accept the degrees. Also when this is descended from a degree, these degrees become seven in number. It is why the imam says: 'No one thing exists in the sky nor upon the earth if it is not by the intermediary of seven things: the will, the desire, the destiny, the chance (lot), the permission, the time, the unity.' And if someone imagines that one can diminish one of these seven, it is an infidel...

That which I told you in the explanation of this saying of the philosophers who say: 'FROM ONE NAUGHT BUT ONE CAN COME', I told it to you in that which concerns the apparent rank. While for the explanation of this saying, regarding its intimate meaning, here it is: there is no doubt that the eternal essence does not conjugate<sup>7</sup> with its creatures to the point of becoming the place from which come things. If this question was verified in philosophy it is that it returns to the ranks of the creation of the creatures. The cause of the Will, in truth, is not the Eternal Essence, for if it were the Eternal Essence it would become obligatory that God be of the same rank as the contingencies. And God is well above that He be fixed as the place of the issue of Unity. When we say that <sup>from</sup> Unity can come nothing but Unity, the cause here is but that the first degree of the Creation is this degree of the Unity: in this first degree one can not find anything other than Unity. Those who say that the cause of the existence of the Unity in the rank of the creation is the essence of God, those ones are obliged to say; 'God is the place of the changing of newnesses.' And, truly, before God created the existences, He was necessarily in a certain state, then after the existence of things He was found in another state. Or then one must believe that the contingencies are eternal and reside in the e-

ternal essence. That returns to the saying 'the Truth of all things is in God'.

"There is no doubt but that that is an error. The truth is this: Nobody has a route which can conduct him towards the eternal essence. Always she subsists in her state of eternity and nothing can equal her; nothing can come<sup>1</sup> from her, nothing is similar to her essence, nothing separates itself from her. She created the Unity (the Primal Will) from herself, by herself and fixed it as the cause of the existence of all the existences."

In his response to Agha Abdullah Qazvini, who had written from Isfahan, the Bab said: "That which you had written that the Door of the imam must forcibly be the mirror of the imam, that is true and there is no doubt in this saying. Even as the imam is the MIRROR of God and that in him one can not see other than God, God has not made ANY DIFFERENCE between God and him, if it is in the degree of adoration,<sup>2</sup> as well as Houdjet makes allusion to it in his prayer of the night of Redjeb.

"You, will not remain in the obscurity of the rank of adoration<sup>3</sup>: "the imam despite his high degree, despite his non-need for all things, shows nevertheless his powerlessness to his assassin and asks him for water."<sup>4</sup>

### III

#### The Bab and Science (Knowledge)

Finally, the third accusation which was lanced against the Bab was that he

<sup>1</sup>Nothing can issue therefrom, that means that she can not engender, that she cannot incarnate herself.

<sup>2</sup>As mirror of God, there is not one difference between him and God: pure mirror he(it) reflects God exactly; but, as man, that's to say, as adorator of God, he is but an endless dust.

<sup>3</sup>Do not let yourself be dazzled by the splendour of the mirror, and that this does not hide from you the individuality of the prophet, man like yourself, and miserable like yourself: Guard yourself from believing in incarnation, for this does not exist, and you will not be if you let yourself be diverted into this way other than a vile blasphemer.

<sup>4</sup>Allusion to the drama of Karbila.

<sup>1</sup>If one has well understood that which we have said of the First Zikr in the treatise of the Seven Proofs, one will find that this saying suffices to prove the truth of our affirmations.

<sup>2</sup>His creation by God.

<sup>3</sup>His very being.

<sup>4</sup>His form.

<sup>5</sup>His utility, his fruit.

<sup>6</sup>Houdous: new, in opposition to the eternal world, or qadim.

interdicted to his disciples the instruction in the sciences.

In this way, this marvelous Reformer, this man audacious enough to attack the colossal edifice of a world full of life, which he had the pretention of renouncing and of annihilating at the evident risk of being crushed by its collapse, this Prometheus who ventured to climb the summits of mystery and of the unknown to unveil to the sky these secrets still doubted, this splendid and superhuman genius is naught but a vulgar fanatic parched with ignorance and preaching obscurantism throughout the world!

How can one reconcile this role which is attributed to him with that which he played in reality? Is it not a proof of ignorance to do other than this? Search the good of his similarities, to cry to them that which one believes to be the truth, and to die to prove that which one says, is that then a work so common and so vulgar that one has the right to throw these sorts of accusations against him who has been killed for having tried?

I imagine that it has always been thus and that this spectacle which we see in our day has already been seen, over the course of the centuries, on several occasions.

"Contemplate the alienation of the Creature: they obey a savant because the imam ordained 'Obey them who recite our hadith.' They believe it is obligatory to obey the imam because of the saying of the Prophet, and the mission of the Prophet is proved by the verses which descended upon him. Thus, these people remain in ignorance of the source of the proof while according to themselves they are firm in their faith. Meanwhile the authenticity of the hadith is not true unless it conforms with the Qur'an. If it is contrary or in contradiction to it, then it is obligatory to abandon it."<sup>1</sup>

A religion which inscribes on the forehead of humanity the word 'progress', which bases its teaching upon a growing ascension of man towards 'Good', that's to say towards God, at the same time as towards a more complete consciousness as much of himself as of the nature which encircles him, can not interdict the study of science to its adepts. In truth, Babism does not interdict it, no more than Baha'ism.

But it must be understood regarding the value of the word science, its signification, its implications. Science is not the same in Persia as in Europe, and it is something one must not forget if one wants to comprehend something of the texts which one reads. The wisemen of Iran, the ulama are religious savants or, if one prefers, savants in religion, but not the least in the world (are they) savants in physics, in chemistry or in geometry. They ignore all of nature, and their science is devoted to knowing the Qur'an and its pronunciation, the hadith, the commentaries, the history of the first times

*'From his piece entitled, "The best Guardian, Sayyid 92".*

of Islam, theology, the elements of a refined philosophy, Arabic and its grammar, a little mathematics, medicine, astronomy and talismatics. I would go further and I would say that a Persian--of the old school of course--is incapable of conceiving of a general idea and to have an insight into what makes up the object of the human sciences.

The Bab regards<sup>5</sup> some of these pseudo-sciences as useless and dangerous, it is these ones which he interdicts.

Furthermore he melts the pretention of being 'ourrai', that's to say ignorant like the child who has just been born: which means to say" the Bab the Bab would he not have followed the lessons of any professor, would he really know nothing of anything? Not even reading and writing? We know the contrary because he tells us so himself<sup>1</sup> and there again we cease on the run his thought: he ignored all that is called sciences and however, ignorant, he shined as Prophet with all of the magnificances of the divine science.

It is not, it seems to him, that from the human point of view, in it he has (but) to say over again (restate) at minimum the manner by which this science is expressed, and from that come all of the accusations of ignorance levelled by the Muslim world against the Reformer. It is thus that one can see those who are armed with a lying science to scoff science itself, represented by the Prophet and to convince themselves that it is nothing and that they are everything; and this, because precisely they are convinced of the truth of that which they mistakenly call their science. From then on to what can this science serve? And why take the pain to acquire it?

Take for example, logic. The Prophet, whatever be his name, comes to establish in his books, the Evangel, the Qur'an, or Bayan, the religious law edicted by God, and this done, (he) returns to the celestial habitation and disappears. Man then lays ~~his~~ hands on his work, turns and returns it in all senses, applies of it the rules of a reasoning which he believes to be infallible and arrives thus at diverse conclusions which divide the world into an infinity of sects. One of these sects is in the truth, but the others!

From then on to what can logic serve, if it is not to lead astray those who cultivate it? For it is precisely this (logic) which conducts men to all of these erroneous conclusions.

The bab 10 of Vahid IV says: "It is not permitted to instruct in other books than the Bayan if it is not when the book has been written in the science of the Bayan upon the sciences Qalam (theological). It is interdicted to all be-

<sup>1</sup>By example and by the Bayan and by the letter addressed to Ahmad the Professor.

lievers to teach the sciences come from Manteq (logic) and of the Ousouls (principles)."

There it must be admitted that the enumeration counts only Manteq and the Ousouls, it is the Manteq and the Ousouls which are interdicted. It would seem to me very exaggerated to continue this enumeration and to embrace all of the human sciences in this interdiction.

And it is so true that the Bab rests upon religious ground that he says furthermore in this same bab:

"It is permitted if someone, in a science writes a book and that every time that the name of God is mentioned therein he has faith in Him, it is permitted, I say, to study this book if the texts cited therein are the sayings of the Point. If not HOW CAN THIS BOOK DEMONSTRATE THE TREE OF TRUTH whereas he would not even mention the creator of the mention?"

And it is so much the uselessness of these sciences that exasperates the Bab that he cried out in the same bab: "It is interdicted to write a book by which man is neither fertilized nor brought to the brink of need, like the books relative to the Ousouls, to logic, to the theological and philosophical sciences, to the science of words not used and all that resembles it, to etymology and to syntax: all of that is useless."

For, he says, it is certain that I myself would ignore these sciences: "Even as in this manifestation of the Point, whoever has lived therein has seen that he was exempt from the grammatical science, of the science of logic, of jurisprudence, of the Ousouls and of all that depends on them.

"In truth, on the day of judgement, the book of the Truth will speak. So, to turn towards the dumb book will be marking that one 'ignores the speaking book.'<sup>1</sup>

"...For finally, all of these sciences are but for the comprehension of the purpose of God in his words; and He whom the purpose is the purpose of God, of whom the speech is the speech of God, what need has he for all that?"

What need can even the others have "for in this century the creatures, thanks to the Persian words, are sheltered from the need (to learn Arabic)."

These lying sciences are noxious, harmful. "All have remained ignorant because of their lying scientific ranks. For these ranks, if they had not joined the Faith, man becomes nothing, and meanwhile he becomes proud therein.

"With Faith, even if he does not have the science of God, the essence even of the science is confirmed by this believer: and they have not had this Faith.

"The most violent among men at the moment of the manifestation of Him Whom God must manifest are those who imagine themselves to be rare because of their

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"The most violent among men at the moment of the manifestation of Him Who God must manifest are those who imagine themselves to be rare because of their science, while they cannot even understand that their science can serve them only to comprehend these pretigious sayings."<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps it is useless to insist but nevertheless I will cite a few more texts, without commenting upon them, in praying that the reader to want to read them attentively, to extract the sense.

In the piece 'Bismillah el A'alem el A'alem' which is found in my copy of the Sahife Adliye it is said:

"Look in no matter what nation: all, in truth, believe themselves to be in search of God, all desire contentment of God! They do not love for sure the contrary of the contentment of God and yet all act and have acted contrarily to that which is real. Look at the letters of the Psalms, then the letters of the Bible, then the letters of the Evangel, then the letters of the Qur'an, then the letters of the Bayan, then the letters of the Book of Him Whom God must manifest, from the most elevated even unto the most humble, all imagine themselves to be searching (for) the contentment of God and to be, in His religion, perspicuous and convinced, and yet all, before Him who will be manifested after Him who God must manifest, are like the letters of the previous Books before the confessors of the Bayan.

"How you see manifestly their testimonies! See the manifestations which follow as the manifestations which precede. Those who cry: "It is I! It is I!"<sup>2</sup> in each manifestation, become nothing upon the following manifestation. How much the creatures in the Evangel have said: "It is I! It is I!" and believed themselves in minute truth in their religion. But when the Prophet of God manifested himself no more than 70 believers (in the Evangel) wanted to recognize in him the promised Prophet. The rest lived in his: "It is I! It is I!" and in truth believed themselves perspicuous in His religion. See then now that proofs claims do not weigh even the ammount of the wing of a fly! See that it is thus in the Manifestation of the Evangel, in that of the

<sup>1</sup>All of these citations are taken from the Persian Bayan, Unity IV, Door 10.

<sup>2</sup>It is I He Who is come in aid to religion, the first believer, the most zealous, etc., etc.

of the Qur'an, in that of the Bayan! In that of He Whom God must manifest and do not leave yourself be mistaken by these "it is I! it is I!" from the creatures, for they do not weigh as much as a grain of barley."

In my copy of the Sahife Adliye<sup>1</sup> it is written:

"And then--that it not remain hidden that the example of the science is exactly the example of the science is exactly the example of the known things. In the same way that every thing known is in its limit, the science of that thing is also in its limit.<sup>2</sup> For example, the science of the mineral at the level of the mineral, the science of the plants at that of the plants. From degree to degree, look thus at all things and ordain until that terminates in the science of God. This science has pre-eminence over all the other sciences. It is the same for the science of the Letters of Unity: in the Creature, there is no science higher than that. Multiply Unity, and the science of each Unity, see it in its degree, until the end of existence. This science of each manifestation anterior, relative to the following manifestation does not take it for a science. For example, all of the science of the Evangel and the sciences which are in its shadow have been written in the religion of the Christians: up until the moment in which the Prophet was not yet manifested the truth of the Science applied itself to this science. But, after the manifestation (of Muhammad) it is not any longer the same. Perhaps one can no longer mention (this science) except under the letter Djim (Djaheliet=ignorance). If someone (at this moment) had had the real science, he would have believed in the Prophet. But, even as the PRIESTS of this epoch, with the WHOLE OF THEIR SCIENCE have remained in obscurity--and it is a proof that they did not have the REAL SCIENCE--even so, in each manifestation of the degrees of science, see them following the degrees of known things. Before the manifestation of the Point of the Bayan how many were there of ulama (of savants) in Islam! Shaykh Muhammad Hasan, at Nedjef wrote 500,000 lines in jurisprudence and the consequences of the principles; and men of this kind there were in every country, in every science. Why then have you not found that they were savants? Why did you go chose the fire Siyyid.<sup>3</sup> That if you had beleived that they had

<sup>1</sup>To the response to the letter of the Life, the first believer. Letter written at Mah-Ku. Cause to arrive for Mulla Yusuf 'Ali Ardebili, so that he remit it to Azhend, to his proprietor.

<sup>2</sup>In the limit of this thing.

<sup>3</sup>Siyyid Kazim Rashti.

science (knowledge), IT WOULD HAVE BEEN OBLIGATORY FOR YOU TO GO SEARCH FOR IT BEFORE THEM, even as the Prophet, blessing be upon him, would have permitted it to you when he said: "GO IN SEARCH OF SCIENCE, BE IT TO CHINA."

"From that, since you yourself you do not say that they are in possession of science, how could you be content that another come to say it.

"And meanwhile if you look from the beginning to the end of existence, you will see that the essence of science is found in the branch of Isna 'Ashari and though you have not believed that their science was science, though in the end you chose Him who had before him the science of God,<sup>1</sup> and you saw in it the fruit. You saw that the nation of the Prophet of God claimed to obey him entirely, and that each one believed himself closer than the other to the Mahdi of the family of Muhammad by the force of his obedience. And yet the Letters of the Living<sup>2</sup> have been chosen from among the students of a savant<sup>2</sup> who had the science of God..."

The text continues thusly to arrive at this point: "For if you were the Plato of your time and that you did not know the science of the intimate, from where would you have been able to be Letters of the Living? From wheredid you take over the others the advance of the Faith? And meanwhile you see with your own eyes that in each science there is a Plato, but he went among those who die, for he did not have the science of God<sup>3</sup>..."

In the Arabic Bayan<sup>4</sup>, in the seventeenth bab of the eighth Vahid, it is said: "God rendered obligatory for you to acquire the science of your religion so that men could acquire from you science and the knowledge and would not be obliged to expatriate themselves in order to assimilate themselves."

And, in the 15th bab of Vahid XI: "God has rendered obligatory to the people of the Bayan TO RENDER THEMSELVES SAVANT. May they embrace then the whole earth, may they all know the Sultan, all the Prophet in his time, and His book; the limits of the kingdoms of the Sultans, the number of their soldiers, the price of the things which they have in their hands, of their gems; that they have this science and that the fruit return to it upon this day when all men are in the presence of their Lord!"

<sup>1</sup> Siyyid Kazim Rashti.

<sup>2</sup> There is here an allusion to the famous anecdote which places Jesus and Plato in (each other's) presence.

<sup>3</sup> The text continues at great length but I am obliged to limit myself.

## PREFACE

In the Foreword of the first volume of Siyyid 'Ali Muhammad dit le Bab, I explained why I could not admit the existence of the Three Bayans, which M. de Gobineau announces to us. I even said: "I do not thus believe, I do not believe in any way that the Bab had first published the Arabic verses of the Bayan to comment upon them in a second edition." I invoked for reason that whatever group of philosophers could give to the terms of this work whatever signification special and arrive, from there on, at conclusions very different from those which the Bab desired.

I even added that this danger seemed to me pressing and that it must be avoided (warded off).

Now, if I was mistaken in that which concerns the publication of the Arabic Bayan which certainly preceded--and by a great deal--the publication of the Persian Bayan, at minimum was I not mistaken in that which concerns the number of the Bayans, and was I absolutely right in my fears of an erroneous interpretation.

These fears were perfectly founded, so founded even that they were clearly and often expressed to Siyyid 'Ali Muhammad and by Mulla Husayn Bushruehi himself. It is what we learn the beginning of the work of the Bab entitled Sahife Adliye, to which we will return in a bit.

For the moment let it suffice me to say that the work which I offer today to the public is an attempt at translation of the Arabic Bayan, I say attempt, first because certain parts of this work are extremely obscure and demand to be close to comprehended, the support of the Persian Bayan, and secondly because the language in which it is written is not as familiar to me as Persian. I can however affirm that this translation is conscientious and that I have encircled myself, before delivering it to the printer, with all of the possible and imaginable precautions: I have spared neither the steps, nor the demands of information and I could almost say that this work was translated in collaboration with my Persian friends<sup>1</sup> if these knew French.

On the difference of the Persian Bayan which contains eight unities and ten doors of the ninth, the Arabic Bayan contains eleven complete.

These eleven unities of the Arabic Bayan are all from the hand of the Bab, but they are the product of a double drawing up. The first composition short, like the Persian Bayan from the beginning until the tenth door of the ninth unity. The part contained from this tenth door through the eleventh unity in-  
Among them I must above all cite Hadji Siyyid 'Ali Isfahani.

clusively were thus rendered as an afterthought. One has only to turn to the Bayan, Unity IX, door 10, to find out for oneself.

Now the Bab tells us himself--and we must not forget that it is God who speaks by his mouth--in the letter that we are going to cite in its entirety, that the number of the doors of the Bayan must be 'in the number of all things',<sup>1</sup> that in truth all were not manifested because eleven unities only were revealed,<sup>2</sup> but that he who must complete their number is Subh-i-Azal.<sup>3</sup>

Cemere Azelye: Ya Vahid!<sup>4</sup>

In the Name of God, the Eternal,<sup>5</sup> the Eternal!

In truth! Me I am God! There is no God, if it is not Me, the unicissime.

In truth! Me I am God! I am the one who removes the need of men!

.....

O Name of the Eternal!<sup>6</sup> Testify that there is not any god other than Me, who is the Beloved, the Cherished!

Testify that there is no god if it is not Thee! Thou who embraceth all, Who subsisteth by Thyself!

In truth! God created that which He created since the beginning which has no beginning; and He will create what He will create until the end which will have no end!

He creates by the intermediary of the spectacle of His being.....

Every day, every night, read and that all the slaves of God read: There is no god if it is not Me, the Wise! the Powerful!

And, if you wish to, say this prayer:.....

God loves that the bodies of the dead be shrouded in a shroud of white silk

<sup>1</sup>All things, Koslllchei=361

<sup>2</sup>That which shows that this letter was written after the Arabic Bayan had received its complement of two Unities and nine doors.

<sup>3</sup>Mirza--and not Siyyid--Yahya, Nuri Subh Azal, the sworn enemy of his half-brother Mirza Husayn 'Ali Nuri Baha'u'llah.

<sup>4</sup>It can not make doubt for me that this means Subh-Azal. That lthis last one was considered by the Bab and all of the Babis as the khalifa of the new Prophet, that has always appeared beyond discussion to us, and our conviction has been confirmed by the reading of the "Nuqtat-ul-Kaf" of the Biblioteque Nationale. We know that this work which carries the number 1071 in the catalog is the work of Mirza Djani who died at the epoch in which only Babis existed. He can thus not be suspect of partiality and his record projects a definitive light upon the first times of Babism.

That later He Whom God must manifest had been Mirza Husayn 'Ali Nuri Baha'u'llah, I do not contradict, but I here hold to re-stating here the historic truth too often misappreciated.

<sup>5</sup>The eternal, or more the most eternal, the only eternal=El A'azal.

<sup>6</sup>The eternal=Azal; O name of the Eternal means: O you who call yourself Azal.