

Ketab al-ruh, Sahifat aʿmal al-sana, thirty-eight letters to individuals, twelve kotbas delivered on the hajj journey, and replies to forty-one questions. The titles are also given of several works stolen in February, 1845, between Medina and Jedda. The Doʿa-ya sahifa seems to have been contemporary with the Qayyum al-asmaʿ and may be referred to in it (fol. 67b). It is also known as the Sahifa-ye makzuna and contains fourteen prayers for use on specific days or festivals; at least seven mss. are extant. The Sahifa bayn al-haramayn was written between Mecca and Medina for Mirza Mohit Kermani and Sayyed ʿAli Kermani, two leading Shaikhis from Karbalaʿ also on the hajj. Only about 100 short pages long, it is an unsystematic collection of replies to questions together with prayers; it contains a particularly interesting passage detailing the daily routine of the seeker (salek; pp. 66-84). Several mss. are extant, including two dated 1261/1845, in Haifa and Tehran. Several mss. exist of a Tafsir horuf al-besmillah, which appears to be identical with the Tafsir besmillah referred to and which is a short allegorical commentary. The Ketab al-ruh, composed at sea on the return journey from the hajj, was highly regarded by the Bab, who described it as “the greatest of all books” (Mazandarani, Asrar IV, p. 44); it was seized at the time of the Bab’s arrest in June, 1845, and thrown into a well in Shiraz, from which it was later rescued in a seriously damaged condition. Some five incomplete mss. are in existence. It is said to have consisted originally of 700 suras (Ketab al-fehrest). The Sahifat aʿmal al-sana seems to have been written in Bušehr after the Bab’s return from the hajj, between May and June, 1845. It contains fourteen sections interspersed with unnumbered sections and deals with the observances and prayers for important dates in the Muslim calendar. Only two mss. of this breviary are known to exist. Not mentioned by name in the Ketab al-fehrest is another work composed during the hajj, the Kasaʿel-e sabʿa, which includes seven interesting but scarcely radical rules prescribed for the Bab’s followers at this juncture. It is known to the present writer only through quotations in later works, but at least one ms. appears to exist in private hands.

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Of considerable importance are two works probably composed shortly after the Bab’s return to Shiraz in July, 1845. These are two related treatises, the Sahifa-ye ʿadliya and the Resala foruʿ al-ʿadliya, the former dealing with *osul al-din* and the latter with certain *foruʿ* of Shiʿite *feqh*. The first consists of five *abwab*: 1. on the mention of God, 2. in explanation of the Balance, 3. on the knowledge of God and his *awliaʿ*?, 4. on the return to God, 5. on the prayer of devotion to God. It appears to have been the first Persian work of the Bab’s (see pp. 3-4) and is of particular importance in helping us form a clear picture of his thought at this juncture, especially since it seems to represent his first effort at addressing a wider audience than the Shaikhi ʿolamaʿ?. For details of some of its contents, See

bab. Some dozen mss. are extant. The second of these works is less common but has the distinction of being the earliest of the Bab's works to have been translated (from Arabic to Persian between 1262/1846 and 1263/1847). It consists of seven chapters (abwab): 1. a short prayer for all the imams (ziara jame'a sagira), 2. on daily prayer (salat), 3. on the regulations for prayer (ahkam al-salat), 4. on the alms tax (zakat), 5. on koms, 6. on jihad, 7. on borrowing (dayn), all dealt with in the traditional manner. Only three mss. are known to the present writer. Another important work from this period is a tafsir on the Surat al-kawtar, a commentary of over 200 pages written for Sayyed Yahya Darabi during a visit he made to Shiraz to interview the Bab, possibly on behalf of Mohammad Shah. This commentary consists largely of highly abstract and insubstantial speculations on the verses, words, and letters of the sura in question. Of greater interest are numerous Hadiths quoted in a section toward the end, which indicate the Bab's familiarity with works of tradition and his concern with prophecies relating to the advent of the Qa'em. There is evidence that this work was highly regarded by the Bab's followers and widely distributed by them. Some ten mss. are extant, including one in Cambridge and one in London. During this period, the Bab wrote several short tafsirs, including those on the Ayat al-nur, the Surat al-qadr, the Surat al-tawhid, and various Hadiths; he also continued to pen replies to queries from a large number of correspondents and to write brief treatises on topics such as compulsion and free will (jabr and tafwiz), predestination (qadar), and even grammar and syntax (nahw wa sarf). Mss. of most of this material are extant.

Only two works of any importance may be ascribed to the period of the Bab's residence in Isfahan from September, 1846, to March, 1847: a tafsir on the Sura wa'l-'asr and a resala on the topic of the nobowwa kassa of Mohammad. The first of these was written for the emam-e jom'a of Isfahan, Mir Sayyed Mohammad: some 100 pages in length, it was, apparently, penned in the space of about one day. Eight mss. are known, including one in Cambridge. The second was composed in two hours for Manucehr Khan Mo'tamed-al-Dawla, governor of Isfahan. It is a short work of some fifty pages designed as an apologetic for the prophethood of Mohammad. Some seven mss. are extant. Several surviving minor works—mostly letters—may also be dated from this period.

The style and content of the Bab's works change markedly in the three-year period Rabi' II, 1263/March, 1847-Ramazan, 1266/July, 1850) of his imprisonment in Azerbaijan, when his claims and doctrines underwent a major transition (see bab). The most important work of this period and, indeed, the central book of the Babi canon, is the Bayan-e farsi, a lengthy but incomplete work of nine waheds (units) each of nineteen abwab (chapters), except for the last, which has only ten. It was originally intended to complete this work in nineteen waheds, an aim which seems to have been frustrated by the Bab's death. (A continuation entitled Motammem-e Bayan was later written by Mirza Yahya Sobh-e Azal and has been published.) The Bayan-e farsi was begun toward the end of the Bab's stay in Maku and

contains a full expression of his doctrine as elaborated between then and his execution, together with the basic laws and regulations of the Babi Šariʿa. Its contents have been discussed in a number of places, to which reference may be made (Rosen, III, pp. 1-32; Browne, 1889, pp. 918-33; idem, Nuqtatuʾl-kaf, London, 1910, pp. LIV-XCV; Wilson, "The Bayan"). A lithograph edition of this work, based on several mss., was published in Tehran about 1946 by the Azali Babis, but copies of it are now rare. A. L. M. Nicolas published a French translation between 1911 and 1914. Preliminary materials for a collated edition based on six mss. may be found among the Browne papers in Cambridge University Library. Some fifty mss. are known to this writer, including two in Cambridge, two in Leningrad, two in London, two in Paris, and a defective but important copy in the hand of the Bab's amanuensis, Sayyed Hosayn Yazdi, preserved by the Bahais in Haifa. The much shorter Arabic Bayan was also written in Maku and, like the Persian Bayan, is incomplete, with only eleven waheds. Each wahed has nineteen abwab, but these latter are each little more than a verse in length, the overall effect being one of great compression with little or no logic in the sequence of subjects, dictated by the fact that this work is basically little more than a statement of the principal doctrines and regulations of the Persian Bayan. Gobineau's statement (*Religions et philosophies dans l'Asie centrale*, 10th ed., Paris, 1957, pp. 279-80) that there are three Bayans, two in Arabic, is unfounded. Much rarer than its Persian equivalent, this work exists in some thirteen mss. (one an autograph), two of which are in Paris. It has been lithographed from the holograph ms. by the Azali Babis in Tehran (n.d.), printed (in ʿAbd-al-Razzaq Hasani, *al-Babiyun waʾl-Bahaʿiyun*, Sidon, 1957, pp. 81-107), and twice translated into French (Gobineau, *Religions*, appendix: "Ketab-è Hukkam," pp. 409-82 [incomplete and inaccurate]; Nicolas—see bibliography). A related work, composed in the last period of the Bab's life, is the *Haykal al-din*, originally written in two copies, one in the hand of the Bab, one in that of Sayyed Hosayn Yazdi, both of which appear to have been lost. Other copies have since been located, however, and the text has been published in lithograph together with the Arabic Bayan. It is a compendium in eight waheds of the laws of the Bab and, although it parallels the contents of the Arabic Bayan in most particulars, it frequently gives fresh or modified regulations. Another short but important work is the Persian *Dalaʾel-e sabʿa*, supported, like the Persian Bayan, by an even briefer Arabic version. There has been disagreement as to the date of its composition, but clear internal evidence indicates that it was written at the end of 1264/1848 in Maku. There has also been some controversy as to the identity of the recipient addressed in the text (the two main theories favoring either Sayyed Hosayn Yazdi or Molla Mohammad-Taqi Heravi), but all that can be said with certainty is that this individual was either not a believer or was a believer with doubts, had been a pupil of Sayyed Kazem Rašti, and had met Molla Mohammad Hosayn Bošruʿi. This work provides seven "proofs" of the Bab's mission, discusses his claim to qaʿemiya, cites numerous Hadiths of a prophetic nature, and refers by name to several of the Bab's followers. Thirteen mss. are known to me, of which two are in

Cambridge, one in London, and one in Paris. A lithograph edition has been published. An extremely lengthy work of this period is the *Ketab al-asma?* (also *Tafsir al-asma?* and *Ketab asma? koll šay?*) which consists largely of lengthy variations on the names of God, interspersed with doctrinal statements. It has been ascribed to the later Cahriq period. Normally found in two volumes, the entire work consists of nineteen waheds of nineteen abwab each, but defective copies are almost standard. Its popularity is clear from the large number of extant mss., twenty-six of which are known to me (three in Cambridge, seven in London, four in Paris). Another of the Bab's last works, similar in character to the last, is the *Ketab-e panj ša?n* or *Šo?un-e kamsa*. This originally consisted of seventeen sections of five passages each, arranged according to the "five grades" in which the Bab stated his works to have been written (*Bayan-e farsi* 3:17; 6:1; 9:2): *ayat*, *monajat*, *kotba* (= *sowar ?elmiya*), *tafsir*, and *farsi*. The work was written over a seventeen-day period during Jomada I, 1266/March-April, 1850, completed sections being sent, apparently, to individuals named in them. Eleven mss. are extant, one in Cambridge, two in London, and one in Paris. Numerous letters and *ziarat-namas* from this period are also extant, as are examples of talismans (*dawa?er*, *hayakel*) in the Bab's hand or containing passages from his writings.

It is impossible to comment adequately on the Bab's style without extensive quotation in the original languages, but some general remarks will be in order. Although there are major changes in style and form, the striking characteristic of the Bab's writing at all periods is its opacity and the syntactical contortions of the language, something true of both Persian and Arabic works. The Bab's Arabic grammar is consistently bad (a point often referred to in Muslim criticisms but dismissed by Babis as the prerogative of a prophet), as a result of which some passages are incomprehensible: The reader must be guided for the most part by context and a developed feeling for the style than by strict reliance on grammar or syntax. Works like the *Bayan* are couched in an eccentric Persian style which often conceals the author's meaning, while others, such as the *Ketab al-asma?*, are unconnected and repetitive to an exaggerated degree. Much of this apparent incoherence seems to be a result of the considerable speed at which the Bab composed (or "revealed") his works, a point to which he frequently alludes as evidence of divine inspiration. This inspirational quality—which may owe much to the disconnected nature of the Koran—becomes increasingly marked in the later works, where it is not infrequently linked to ideas and images of an exciting, vivid, and highly original nature. The effort required to penetrate the obscurities of the style of the Persian *Bayan* in particular is often rewarded by access to fresh insights, and it cannot be denied that the more developed works display an unusual genius that thoroughly justifies their study.

All of the writings of the Bab were recorded in the first instance in his own hand or in that of one of a number of amanuenses, of whom Sayyed Hosayn Yazdi (a "Letter of the Living") was by far the most important. These original texts appear to have been written in some form of "revelation

script” (katt-e wahy), a form of shorthand devised to accommodate the Bab’s rapid dictation; few examples of these appear to have survived, however. Transcription of these originals was carried out to a large extent under the supervision of the Bab himself, principally by Molla Abd-al-Karim Qazvini and Shaikh Hasan Zonuzi. Numerous copies were made from these transcriptions during the Bab’s lifetime, an activity encouraged in the Persian Bayan, which makes the possession of a sahiba of at least 1,000 verses obligatory for all Babis and gives instructions regarding the preparation of copies of the Bayan itself. There is evidence for wide distribution of copies of at least the major works of the Bab before 1266/1850, but it is also clear that large numbers of manuscripts must have perished in the disturbed conditions of this and the immediately succeeding period. Those Babis who left Iran for Baghdad in 1853 seem to have carried a substantial number of texts with them and to have made efforts in later years to assemble copies of scriptural works in Iran for transfer to Iraq. Toward the end of the 13th/19th century, the British scholar Edward G. Browne was instrumental in having numerous Babi mss. transcribed for himself, largely by Azali scribes; these now form an important part of the Browne collection in Cambridge University Library. Other Babi mss. were also acquired by the British Museum (now British Library), the Bibliothèque Nationale, and the Oriental Languages Institute in Petrograd. An important private collection belonging to the French scholar A. L. M. Nicolas was dispersed by sale in Paris in 1969; it seems that most (but not all) of it was purchased by the Bahai World Center in Israel. By far the largest and most important collections of Babi mss. are those in the national Bahai archives of Iran in Tehran and the international Bahai archives in Haifa. The former collection is extensive but uncatalogued and remains inaccessible owing to the conditions pertaining for the Bahais in Iran; its significance is considerable, however, in that it contains much extremely rare, even unique material. The latter is at present imperfectly catalogued and not freely accessible, although I am told that this situation may improve following the expansion of library facilities in coming years. There are also large numbers of mss. in the private collections of Azali families in Iran, but these remain scattered and, for the most part, inaccessible. The Azalis in Tehran have issued lithograph editions of a number of works of the Bab, copies of which have become quite rare. The publication of properly edited complete texts of major works remains a sine qua non of future scholarship in this field.

Bibliography : The only detailed study of this subject to date is the present writer’s *Early Babi Doctrine and History: A Survey of Source Materials*, Los Angeles, 1987. See also idem, “Nineteenth-Century Babi Talismans,” *Studia Iranica* 14, 1985, pp. 77-98. The works of E. G. Browne on this subject are still invaluable: “The Babis of Persia II: Their Literature and Doctrines,” *JRAS* 21, 1889, pp. 881-1009; “A Catalogue and Description of 27 Babi Manuscripts,” *ibid.*, 24, 1892, pp. 433-99, 637-710; “Some Remarks on the Babi Texts Edited by Baron Victor Rosen . . .,” *ibid.*, 24, 1892, pp. 259-332; “Further Notes on Babi Literature,” in *Materials for the Study*

of the Babi Religion, Cambridge, 1918, esp. pp. 198-208; "Writings of the Bab and Subh-i-Ezel," in *A Traveller's Narrative Written to Illustrate the Episode of the Bab*, 2 vols., Cambridge, 1891, I, pp. 335-47; completed by R. A. Nicholson, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Oriental MSS Belonging to the Late E. G. Browne*, Cambridge, 1932, section F. Baron Victor Rosen's articles are also worth referring to: *Collections scientifiques de l'Institut des Langues Orientales du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères I: Manuscrits arabes*, St. Petersburg, 1877, pp. 179-212; III: *Manuscrits persans*, *ibid.*, 1886, pp. 1-51; VI: *Manuscrits arabes*, *ibid.*, 1891, pp. 141-255. The Azali Babis in Tehran have published the following works of the Bab: *Sahifa-ye ?adliya*, n.d.; *Bayan -e farsi*, n.d.; *Dala?el-e sab?a ?arabi wa farsi*, n.d.; *al- Bayan al-?arabi with Ketab-e Haykal al-din and Tafsir-e do aya az Haykal al-din*, n.d.; *Qesmat-i az alwah-e katt-e Noqta-ye Ula wa Aqa Sayyed Hosayn Kateb*, n.d.; *Majmu?a-i az atar-e Noqta-ye Ula wa Sobh-e Azal*, n.d.. The Bahais have published *Montakabat-e ayat az atar-e Hazrat-e Noqta-ye Ula*, Tehran, 134 Badi?/1356 Š./1977), together with an English translation by Habib Taherzadeh, *Selections from the Writings of the Bab* (Haifa, 1976), a heavily edited selection of passages from major works.

The following mss. are among the most important: *Tafsir Surat al-Baqara*, Cambridge University Library [CUL], Browne Or. Ms. F. 8; *Tafsir Surat al-kawtar*, CUL, Browne Or. Ms. F. 10; *Qayyum al-asma?*, CUL, Browne Or. Ms. F. 11; *Arabic letters*, CUL, Browne Or. Ms. F. 21 and 28 (item 7); *Resala fi'l-suluk*, Iran National Bahai Archives [INBA] 4011.C, pp. 123-27; *Ketab al-ruh*, TBA, 4011.C, pp. 61-100, 7005.C; *Kotba fi Jedda*, INBA, 5006.C, pp. 330-35; *Ketab sahiyat a?mal al-sana*, INBA, 5006.C, pp. 262-78; *Resala foru? al-?Adliya*, INBA, 5010.C, pp. 86-119; *Ketab al-fehrest*, INBA, 6003.C, pp. 285-93; *al-Sahifa al-makzuna*, INBA, 6009.C, pp. 1-171, CUL, Add. 3704(6).

Several translations of works of the Bab into French were produced by A. L. M. Nicolas: *Le livre des sept preuves*, Paris, 1902 (*Dala?el-e sab?a*); *Le Beyan arabe*, Paris, 1905; *Le Beyan persan*, 4 vols., Paris, 1911-14. See also S. G. Wilson, "The Bayan of the Bab," *The Princeton Theological Review* 13, October, 1959, pp. 633-54; M. Afnan, "Ketab-e Bayan: Omm al-ketab-e dawr-e Babi," *Ahang-e Badi?*, 18 Badi?/1342 Š./1963, 2, pp. 54-64; *idem*, "Majmu?a-i az atar-e mobaraka-ye Hazrat-e Noqta-ye Ula", *ibid.*, 11/12, pp. 412-16, 443.

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