

Haykal or “Star Tablet”
written in the Báb’s own hand
(British Library Manuscript: BL Or 6887)

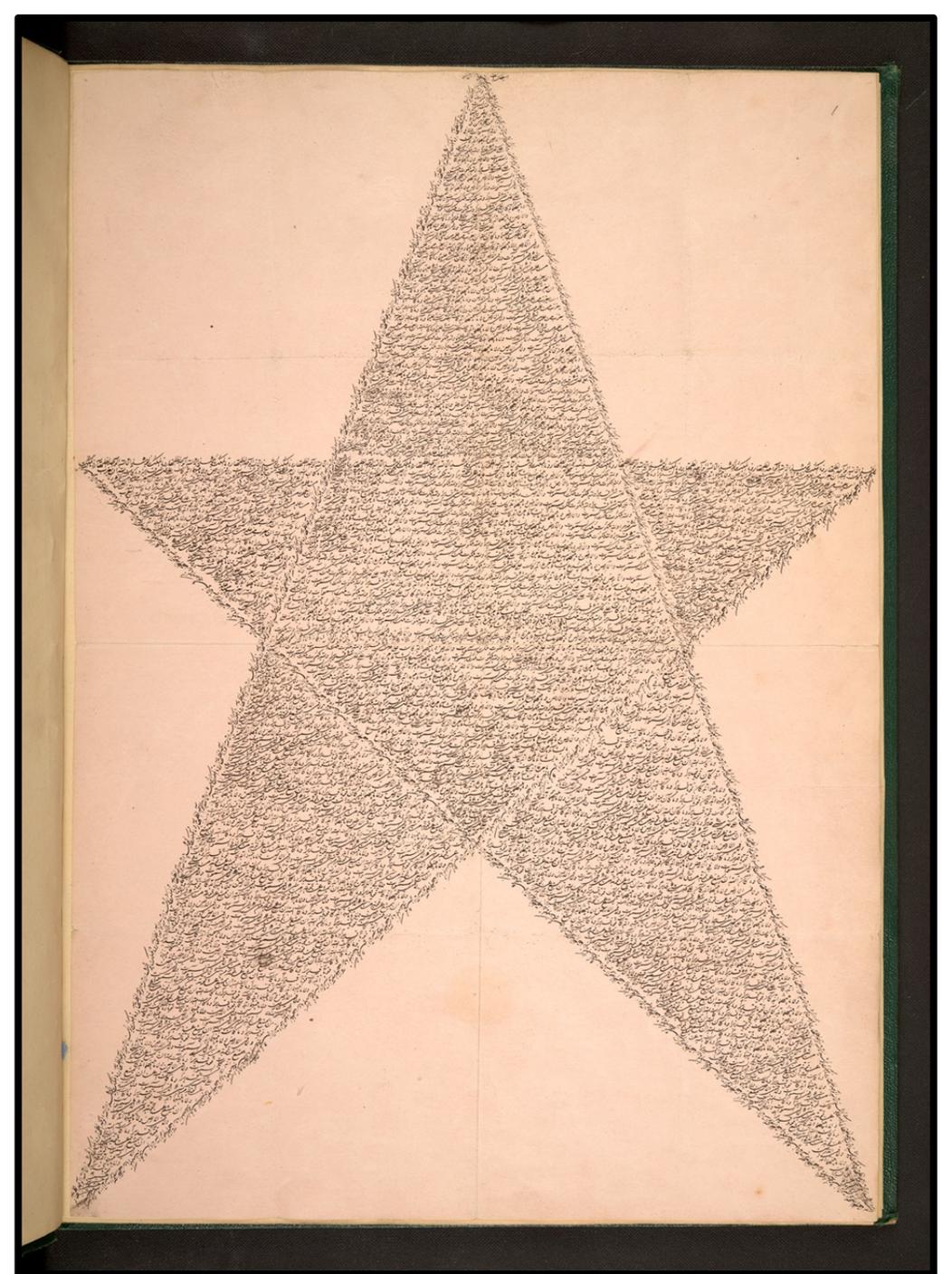
Form, Content and Provisional Translation

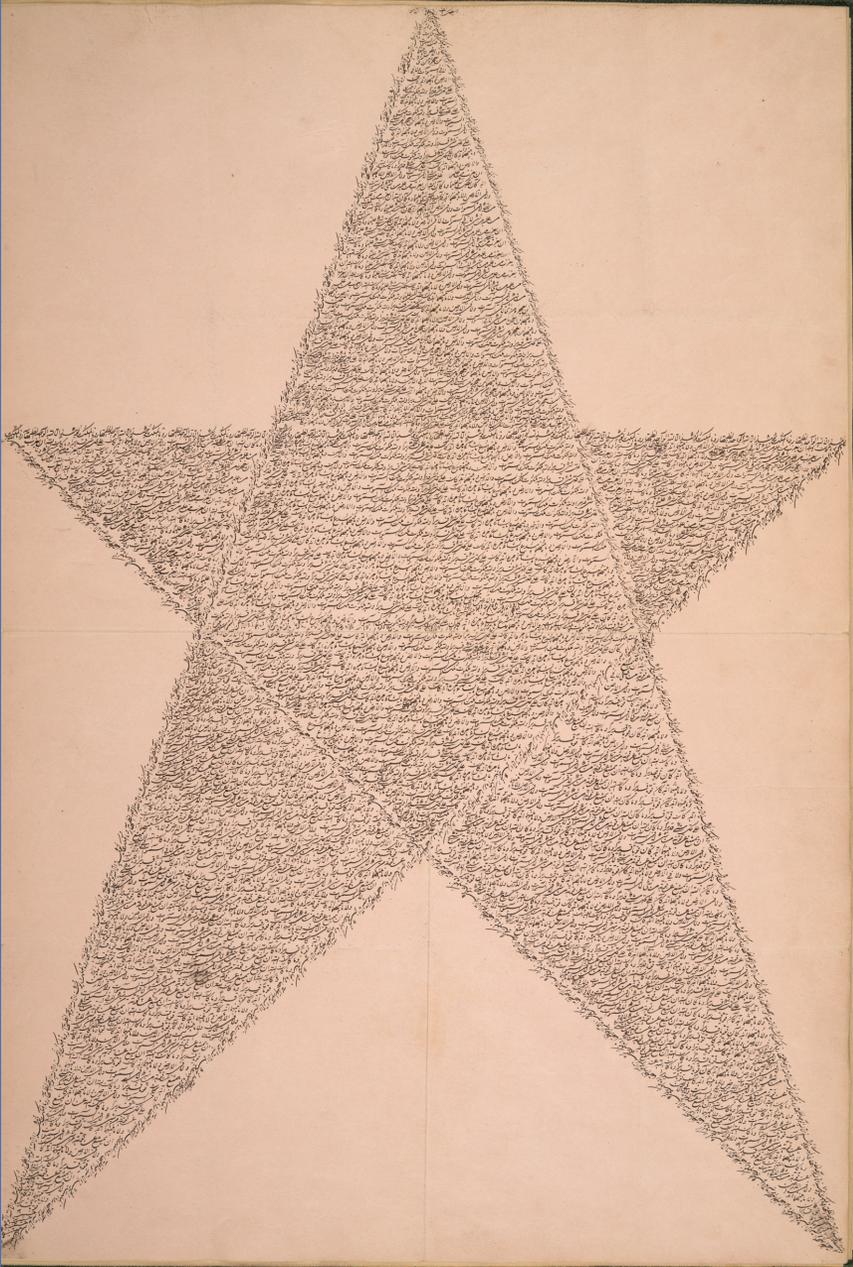
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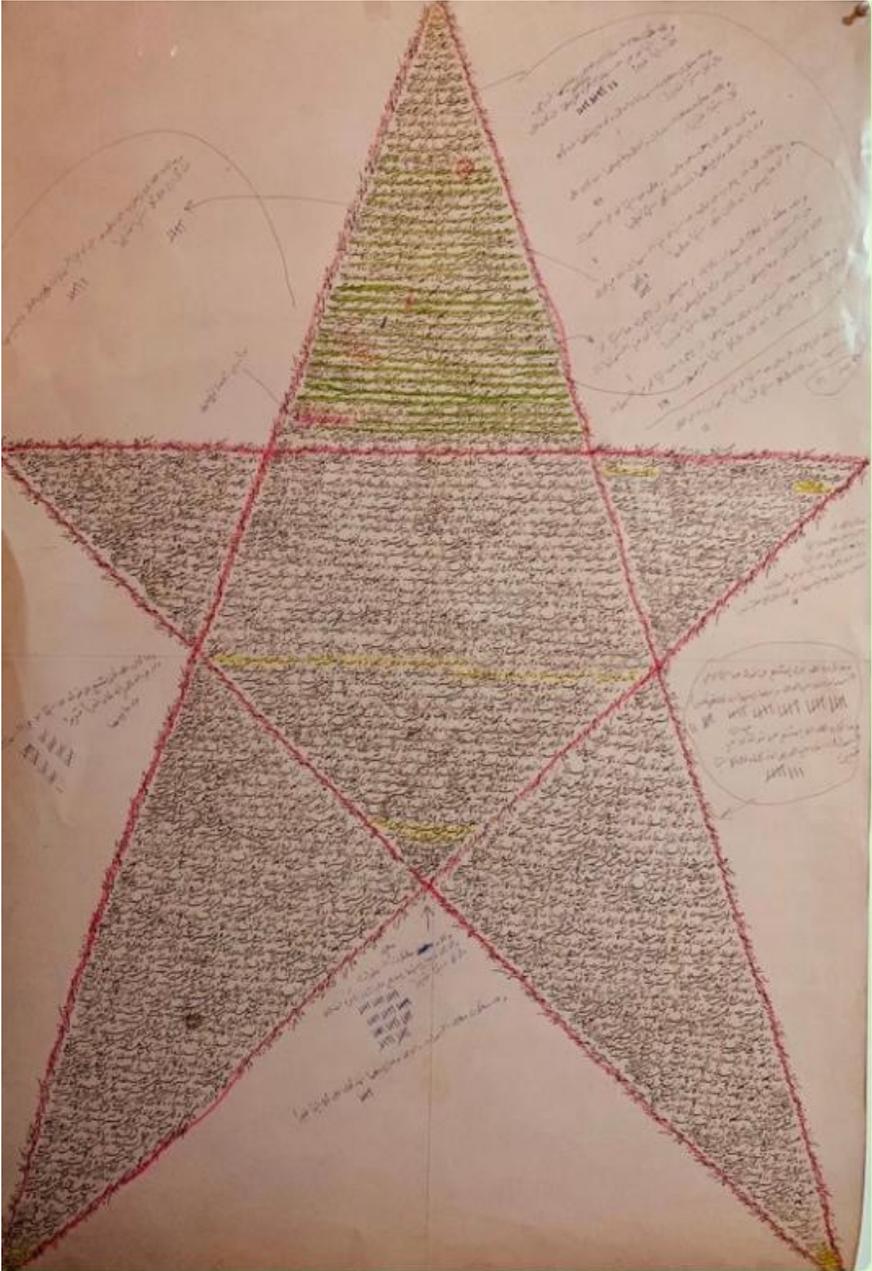
Dergham Aqiqi and Todd Lawson

9 November 2021

This is an updated version of a presentation given 29 August 2021
for Dr. Kavian Milani’s Zoom session. We would like to thank Dr. Milani
for his kind encouragement and organization of the event.
Thanks to all participants for their suggestions and comments.







The *haykal* we are studying, BL Or 6887, is 27.5cm x 40.5cm. We used a printed enlargement to facilitate reading and counting the repeated verses. The identity of the person for whom this *haykal* was written and the date of its composition are unknown.¹

This verse forms the outline of the star. It is repeated a total of 95 times.
Each of the six chambers is distinguished by one of six holy names in this order:
I Allāh (x2), II Muḥammad (x3), III 'Alī (x3), IV Fāṭima (x3), V Ḥasan (x4), and VI Ḥusayn (x4)
for a total of 19. See below, slide 17, for details of placement.

وَمَا الْمُلْكُ يَوْمَئِذٍ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ الْوَاحِدِ الظَّهَّارِ

On that day there will be no sovereignty except what belongs to God Alone, the Source of all manifestation.²

This verse is repeated 20 times along the line 1 - 4

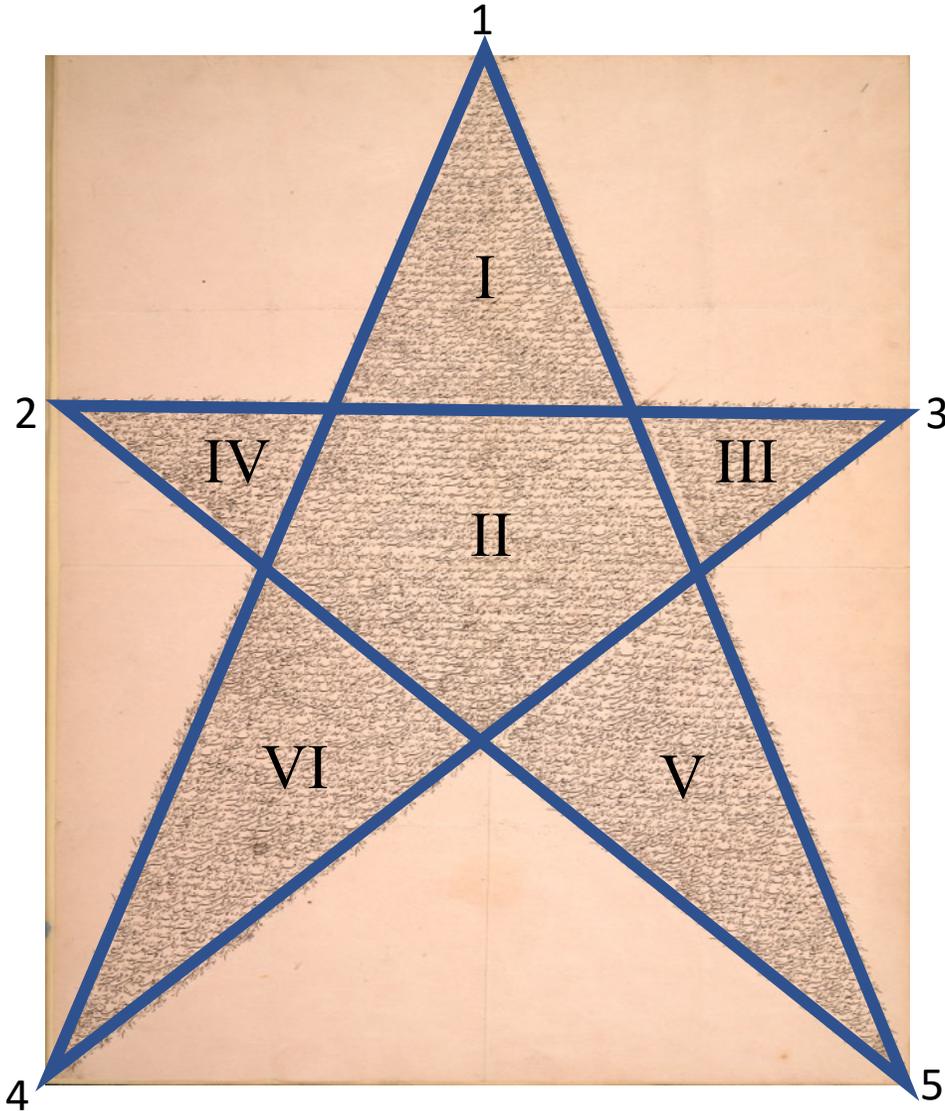
This verse is repeated 17 times along the line 4 - 3

This verse is repeated 12 times along the line 3 - 2

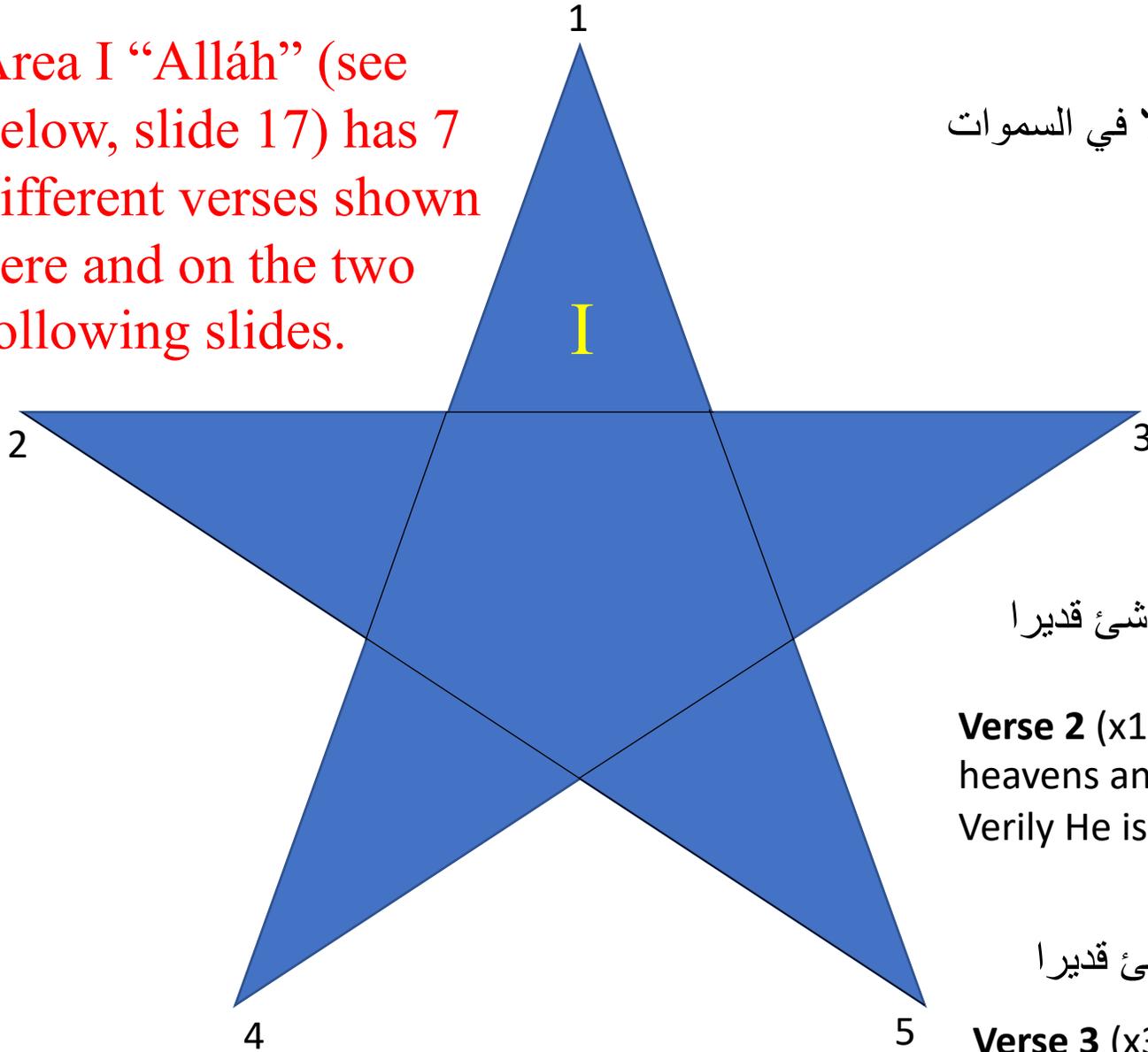
This verse is repeated 19 times along the line 2 - 5

This verse is repeated 27 times along the line 5 - 1

Total number of repetition of this verse = 95



Area I “Alláh” (see below, slide 17) has 7 different verses shown here and on the two following slides.



This section (area I) is distinguished by the presence, two times, of the name **Alláh**

ولله ملكوت ملك السموات والارض وما بينهما لن يعجزه من شئ لا في السموات ولا في الارض ولا ما بينهما انه كان على كل شئ قديرا

Verse 1 (x12) And to God belongs the kingdom of the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth and whatever is between them. There is no weakness in Him regarding anything, neither in the heavens nor in the earth nor beyond whatever is between them. Verily He is utterly powerful over all created things.

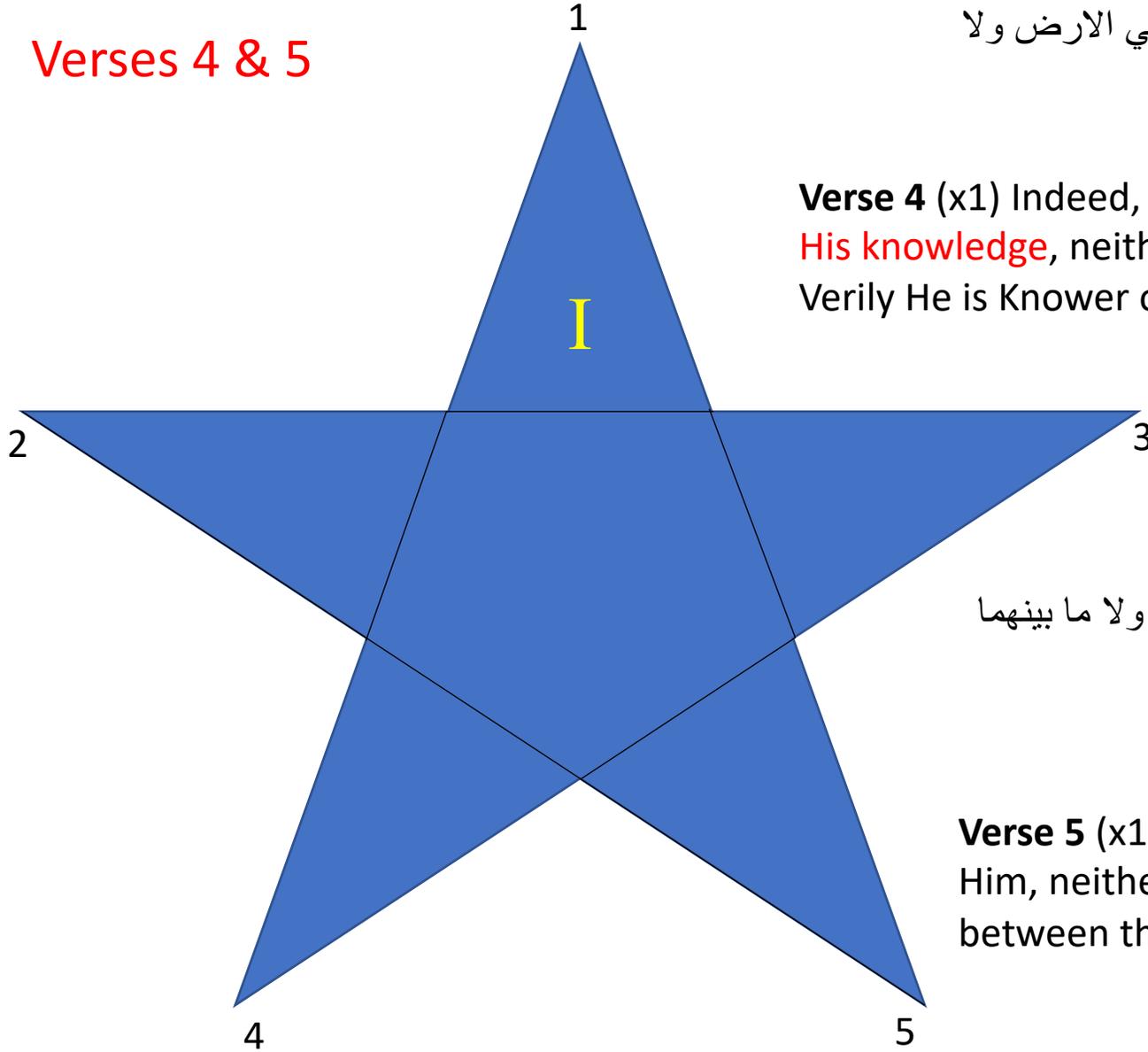
ولله ملكوت ملك السموات والارض ولا ما بينهما انه كان على كل شئ قديرا

Verse 2 (x1) And to God belongs the kingdom of the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth and beyond whatever is between them. Verily He is utterly powerful over all created things.

ولله ملكوت ملك السموات والارض وما بينهما انه كان على كل شئ قديرا

Verse 3 (x3) And to God belongs the kingdom of the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth and whatever is between them. Verily He is utterly powerful over all created things.

Verses 4 & 5



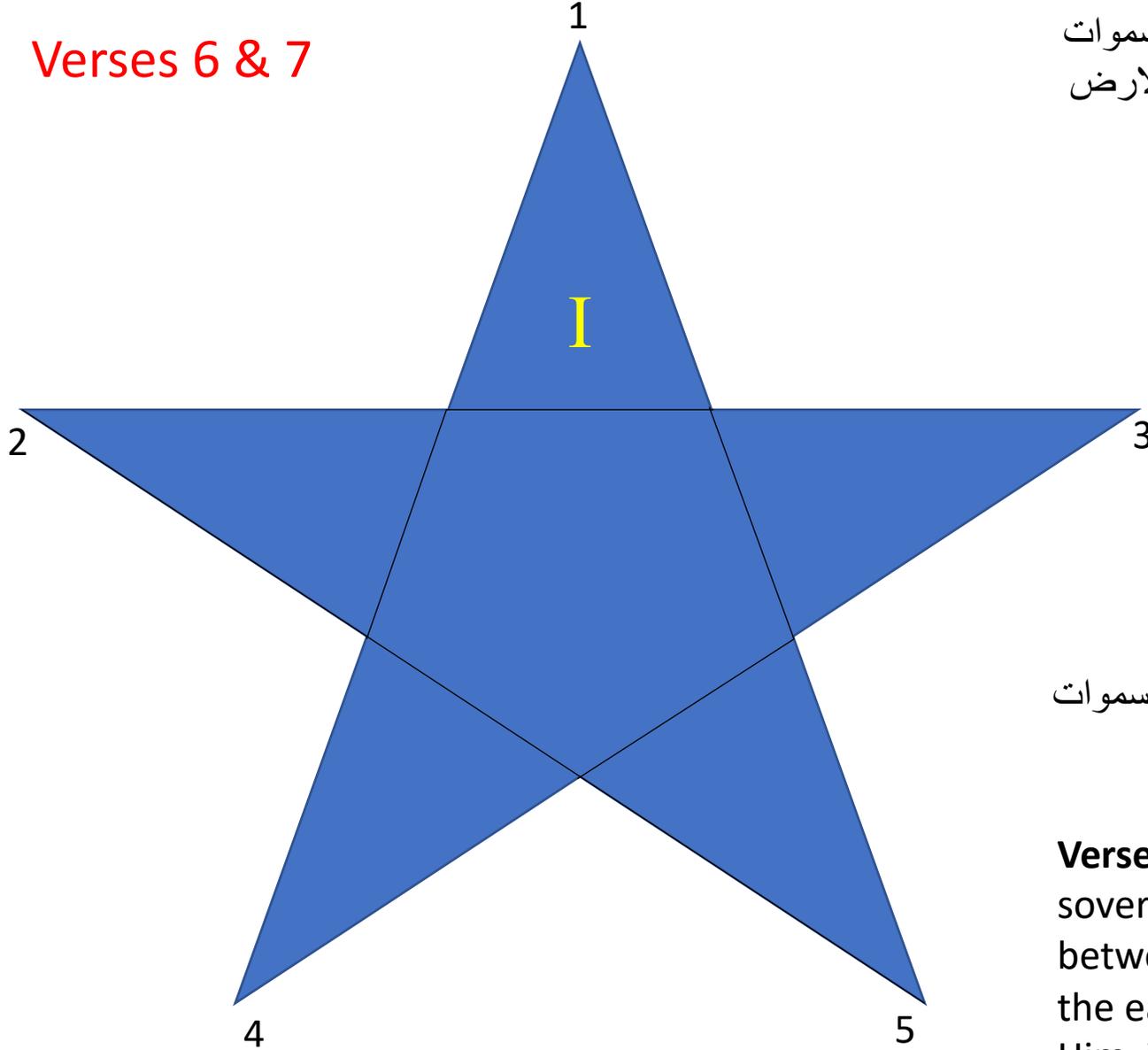
وما كان الله ان يعزب من علمه ... علمه من شئ لا في السموات ولا في الارض ولا بينهما انه كان بكل شئ عليما

Verse 4 (x1) Indeed, God is not such that anything escapes His knowledge **His knowledge**, neither in the heavens nor in the earth nor between them. Verily He is Knower of all created things.

وما كان الله ان يعزب من علمه من شئ لا في السموات ولا في الارض ولا ما بينهما انه كان بكل شئ عليما

Verse 5 (x11) Indeed, God is not such that any knowledge escapes Him, neither in the heavens, nor in the earth, nor beyond whatever is between them. Verily He is Knower of all created things.

Verses 6 & 7



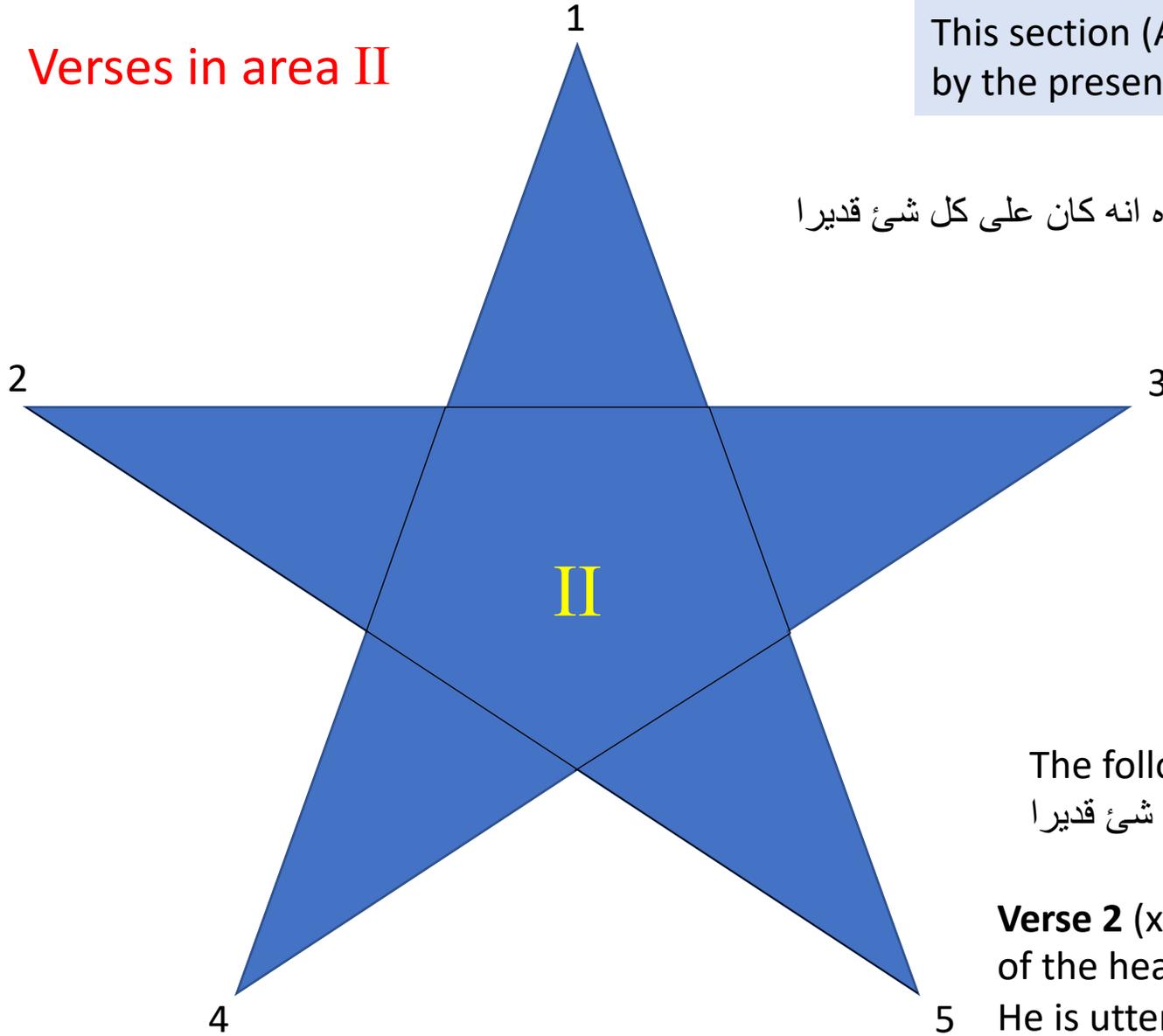
ولله ملكوت ملك السموات والارض وما بينهما لن يعجزه من شئ لا في السموات
ولا في الارض ولا ما بينهما لن يعجزه من شئ لا في السموات و لا في الارض
وما بينهما انه كان على كل شئ قديرا

Verse 6 (x1) Indeed, to God belongs the kingdom of the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth and whatever is between them. No created thing, neither in the heavens nor in the earth nor beyond whatever is between them can ever weaken Him. Indeed, nothing at all weakens Him, neither in the heavens nor in the earth nor whatever is between them. Verily He is utterly powerful over all created things.

ولله ملكوت ملك السموات والارض وما بينهما لن يعجزه من شئ لا في السموات
ولا في الارض و ما بينهما انه كان على كل شئ قديرا

Verse 7 (x3) Indeed, to God belongs the kingdom of the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth and whatever is between them. No created thing, neither in the heavens nor in the earth nor whatever is between them can ever weaken Him. Verily, He is utterly powerful over all created things.

Verses in area II



This section (Area II) is distinguished by the presence, three times, of the name **Muḥammad**.

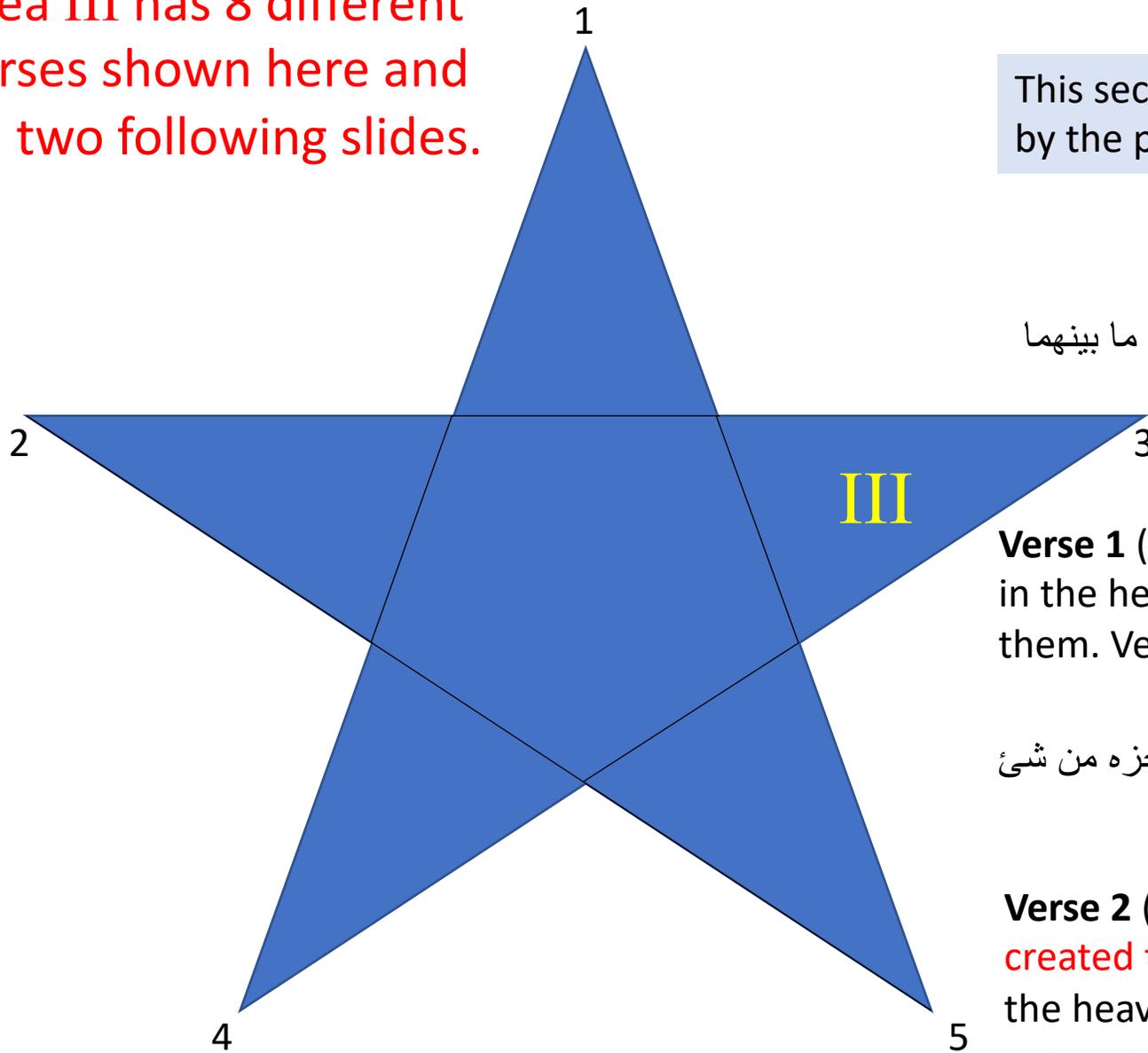
ولله ملكوت السموات و الارض و ما بينهما يبدع ما يشاء بأمره انه كان على كل شئ قديرا

Verse 1 (x55) Indeed, to God belongs the kingdom of the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth and whatever is between them. He originates from nothing whatever He wishes through His command. Verily He is utterly powerful over everything.

The following verse is repeated 5 times in the middle of area II
ولله ملكوت السموات و الارض و ما بينهما انه كان على كل شئ قديرا

Verse 2 (x5) Indeed, to God belongs the kingdom of the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth and whatever is between them. Verily He is utterly powerful over all created things.³

Area III has 8 different verses shown here and on two following slides.



This section (area III) is distinguished by the presence, three times, of the name 'Alí

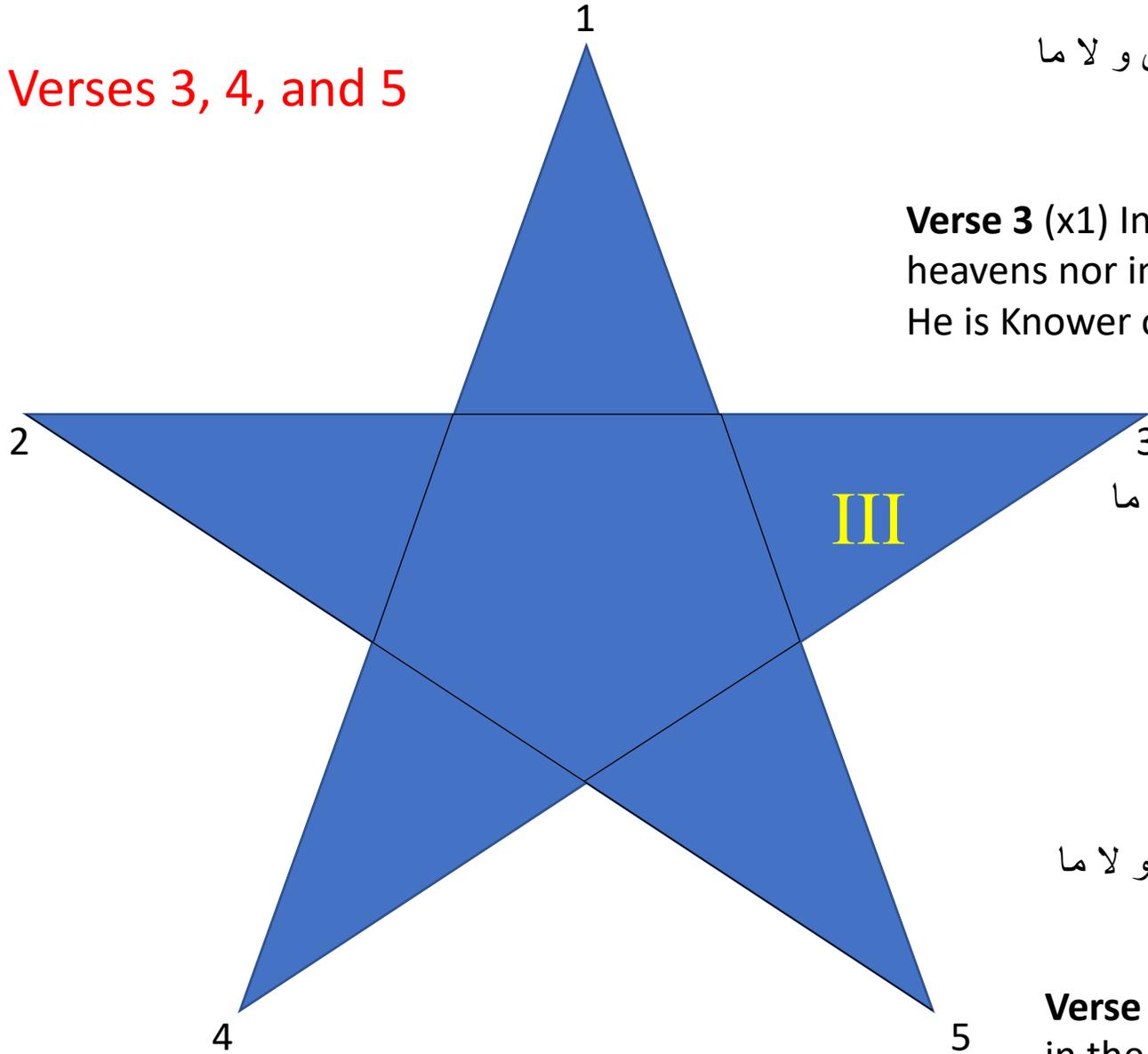
وما كان الله ان يعزب من علمه من شئ لا في السموات ولا في الارض ولا ما بينهما انه كان على كل شئ قديرا

Verse 1 (x2) Indeed, nothing escapes the knowledge of God, neither in the heavens nor in the earth nor beyond whatever is between them. Verily, He is utterly powerful over all created things.

وما كان الله ان يعزب من علمه من شئ ولا ان يعجزه من شئ ولا في السموات ولا في الارض و ما بينهما انه كان على كل شئ قديرا

Verse 2 (x1) Indeed, nothing escapes the knowledge of God **and no created thing can ever weaken Him** and no created thing neither in the heavens nor in the earth nor whatever is between them can ever weaken Him. Verily, He is utterly powerful over all created things.

Verses 3, 4, and 5



وما كان الله ان يعزب من علمه من شئ لا في السموات ولا في الارض و لا ما بينهما انه كان بكل شئ عليما

Verse 3 (x1) Indeed, nothing escapes God’s knowledge, neither in the heavens nor in the earth nor beyond whatever is between them. Verily, He is Knower of all created things.

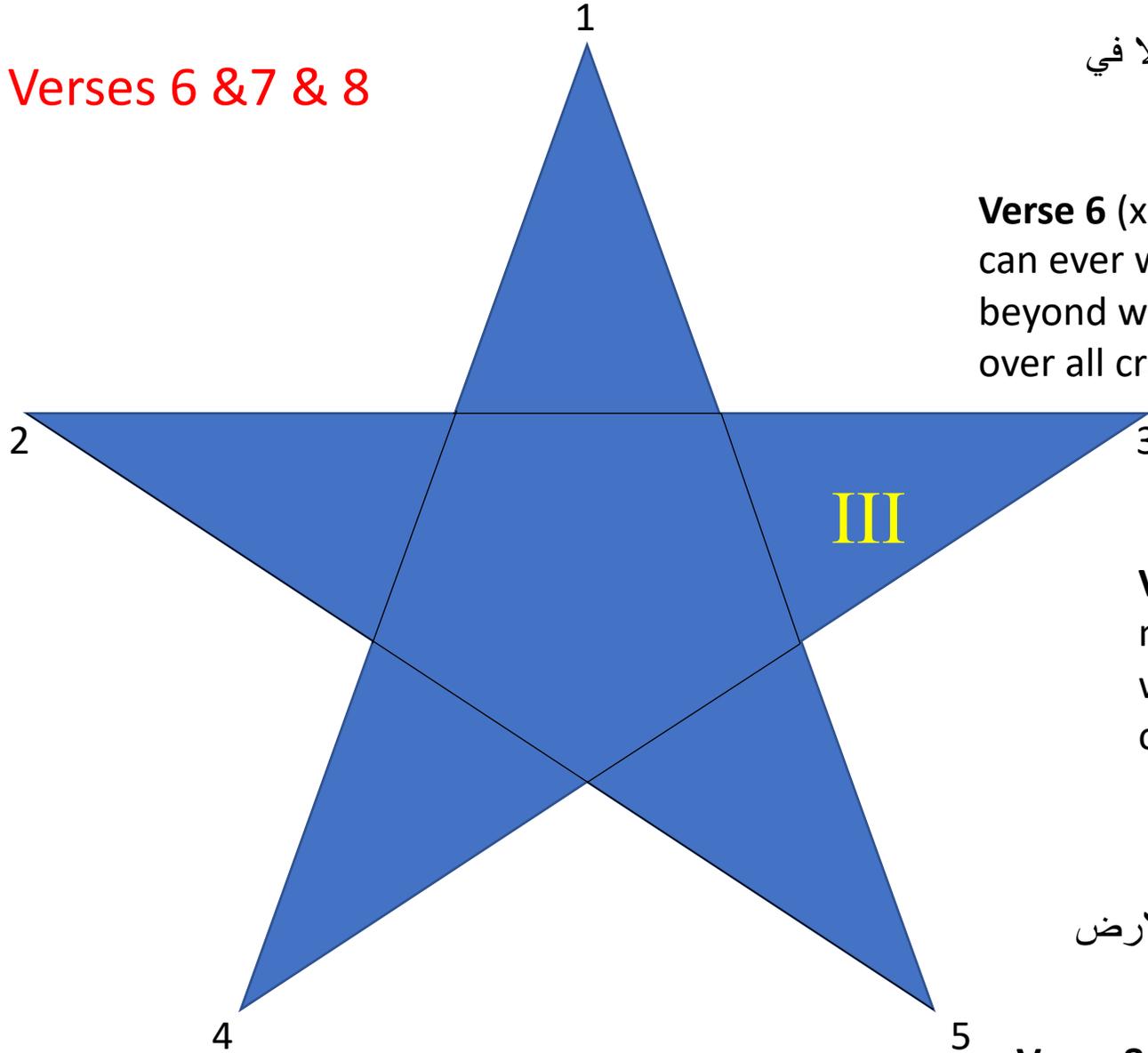
وما كان الله ان يعزب من علمه من شئ لا في السموات ولا في الارض و ما بينهما انه كان بكل شئ عليما

Verse 4 (x2) Indeed, nothing escapes God’s knowledge, neither in the heavens nor in the earth nor whatever is between them. Verily, He is Knower of all created things.

وما كان الله ان يعزب من علمه من شئ لا في السموات ولا في الارض و لا ما بينهما انه كان بكل شئ عليما

Verse 5 (x4) Indeed, nothing escapes God’s knowledge, neither in the heavens nor in the earth nor beyond whatever is between them. Verily, He is Knower of all created things.

Verses 6 & 7 & 8



وما كان الله ان يعزب من علمه من شئ ولا ان يعجزه لا في السموات ولا في الارض ولا ما بينهما انه كان على كل شئ قديرا

Verse 6 (x1) Indeed, nothing escapes God's knowledge, and nothing can ever weaken Him, neither in the heavens nor in the earth nor beyond whatever is between them. Verily, He is utterly powerful over all created things.

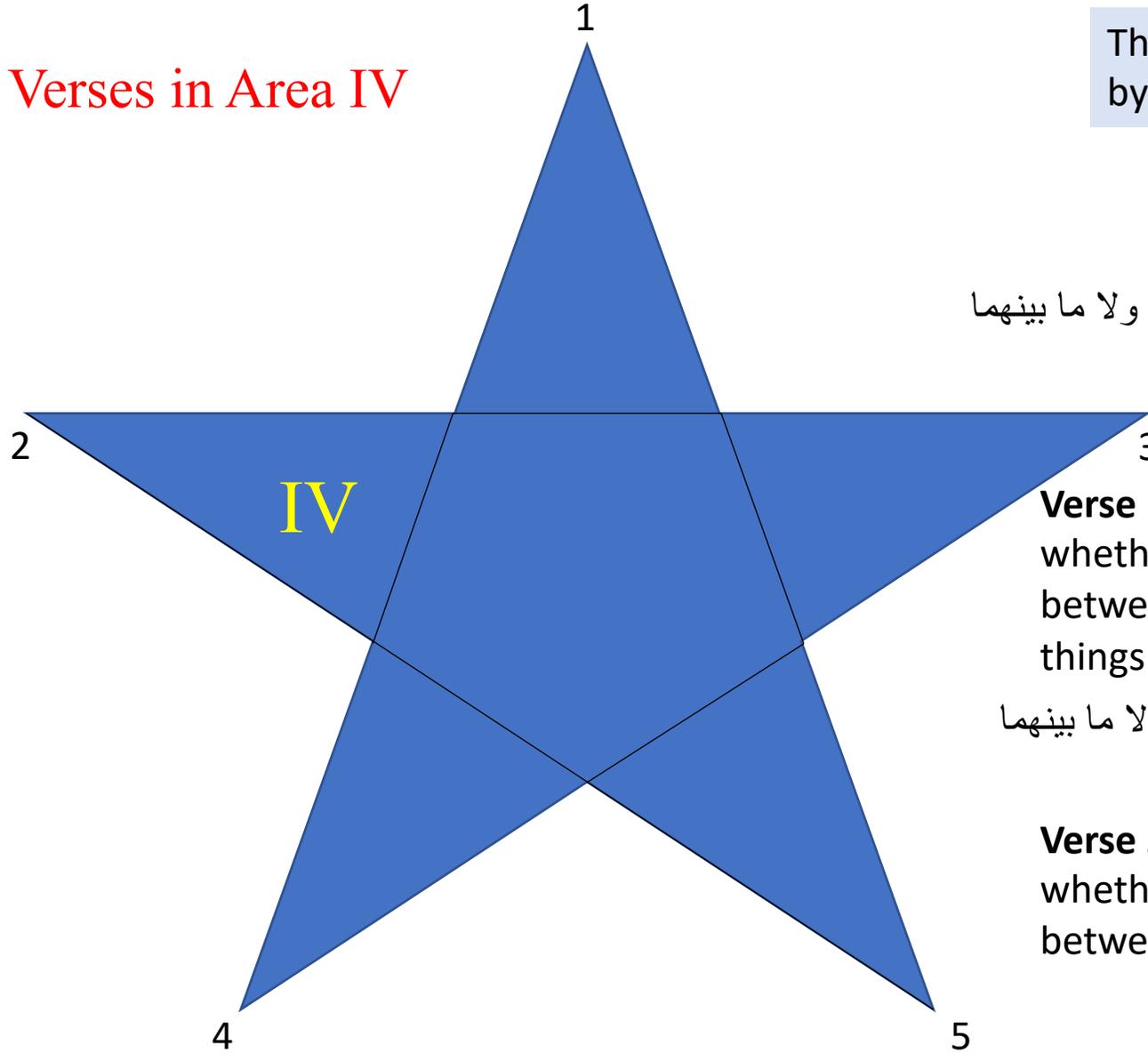
وما كان الله ان يعزب من علمه من شئ لا في السموات ولا في الارض ولا ما بينهما انه كان على كل شئ قديرا

Verse 7 (x1) Indeed, nothing escapes God's knowledge, neither in the heavens nor in the earth nor beyond whatever is between them. Verily, He is utterly powerful over all created things.

وما كان الله ان يعزب من علمه من شئ لا في السموات و لا في الارض

Verse 8 (x1) Indeed, nothing escapes God's knowledge, neither in the heavens nor in the earth.

Verses in Area IV



This section (area IV) is distinguished by the presence, three times, of the name **Fáṭima**

وما كان الله ان يعزب من علمه من شئ لا في السموات ولا في الارض ولا ما بينهما
انه كان بكل شئ قديرا

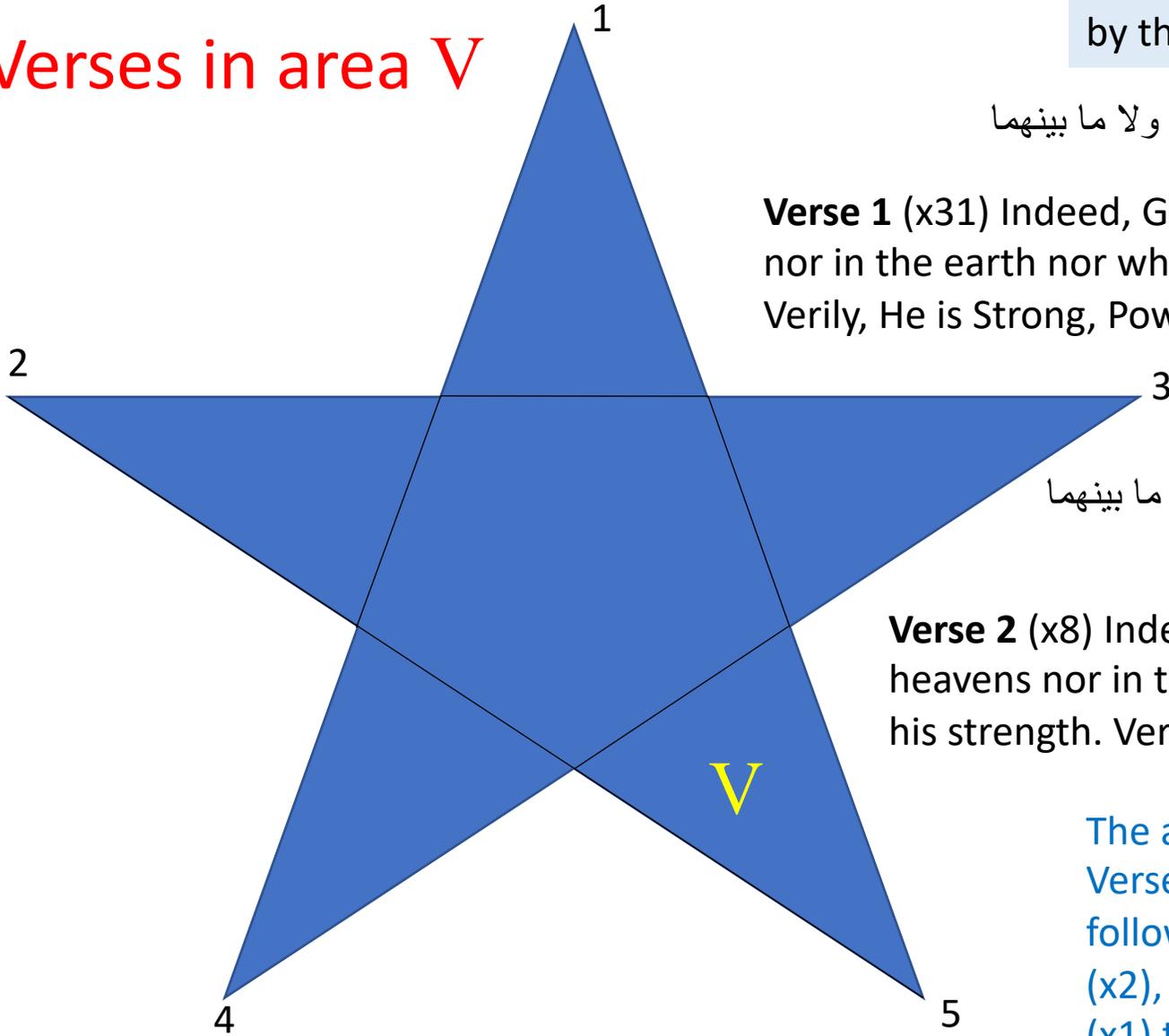
Verse 1 (x6) Indeed, nothing escapes the knowledge of God, whether in the heavens or in the earth or beyond whatever is between them. Verily, He is utterly powerful over all created things.

وما كان الله ان يعزب من علمه من شئ لا في السموات ولا في الارض ولا ما بينهما
انه كان بكل شئ عليما

Verse 2 (x5) Indeed, nothing escapes the knowledge of God, whether in the heavens or in the earth or beyond whatever is between them. Verily, He is Knower of all created things.

The above two verses are repeated in the following sequence: verse 1 (x5) followed by verse 2 (x1) then verse 1 (x1) followed by verse 2 (x4).

Verses in area V



This section (area V) is distinguished by the presence, four times, of the name **Ḥasan**

وما كان الله ان يمتنع عن قوته من شئ لا في السموات ولا في الارض ولا ما بينهما
انه كان قويا قديرا

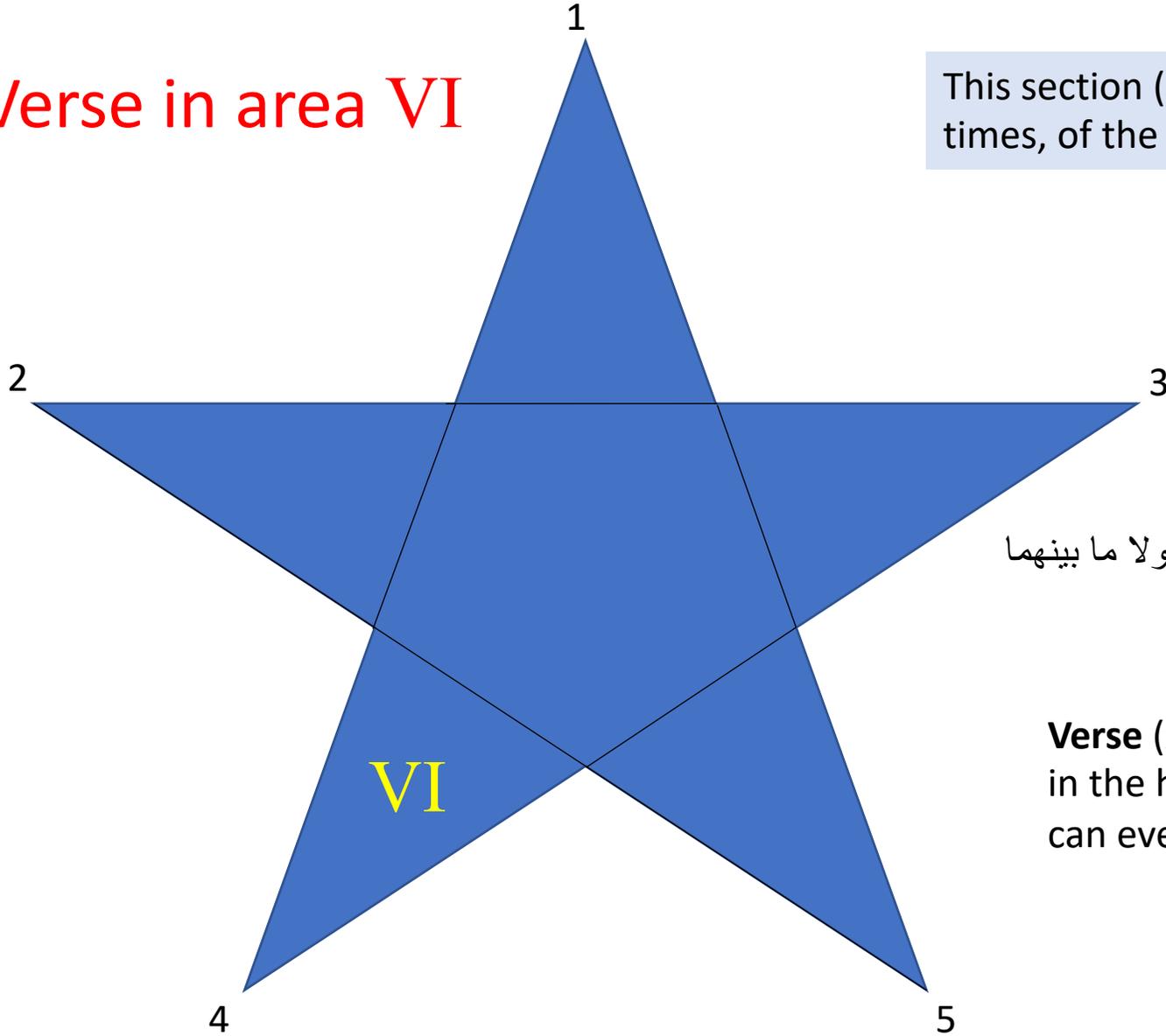
Verse 1 (x31) Indeed, God is He Whom no created thing, neither in the heavens nor in the earth nor whatever is beyond them, can ever withstand his strength. Verily, He is Strong, Powerful.

وما كان الله ان يمتنع عن قوته من شئ لا في السموات ولا في الارض ولا ما بينهما
انه كان على كل شئ قديرا

Verse 2 (x8) Indeed, God is He Whom no created thing, neither in the heavens nor in the earth nor whatever is beyond them, can ever withstand his strength. Verily, He is utterly powerful over all created things.

The above two verses are repeated in the following sequence:
Verse 1 (x7) followed by verse 2 (x1), then verse 1 (x8)
followed by verse 2 (x1), then verse 1 (x3) followed by verse 2
(x2), then verse 1 (x1) followed by verse 2 (x1), then verse 1,
(x1) time followed by verse 2 (x3), ending with verse 1 (x11).

Verse in area VI



This section (area VI) is distinguished by the presence, four times, of the name **Husayn**

وما كان الله ان يمتنع عن قوته من شئ لا في السموات ولا في الارض ولا ما بينهما
انه كان قويا قديرا

Verse (x41) Indeed, God is He Whom no created thing, neither in the heavens nor in the earth nor whatever is beyond them, can ever withstand his strength. Verily, He is Strong, Powerful.

“Say: God sufficeth all things above all things, and nothing in the heaven or in the earth or in **whatever lieth between them** but God, thy Lord, sufficeth. Verily, He is in Himself the Knower, the Sustainer, the Omnipotent.” SWB (1978) p.123

قُلِ اللَّهُ يَكْفِي عَنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَلَا يَكْفِي عَنِ اللَّهِ رَبِّكَ
 مِنْ شَيْءٍ لَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَلَا فِي الْأَرْضِ
 وَلَا بَيْنَهُمَا إِنَّهُ كَانَ عَلَّامًا كَافِيًا قَدِيرًا.

<https://reference.bahai.org/ar/t/c/NR1/nr1-3.html>

معنی این شریفه که بمعنیست او بنور اینست منظر کنه قل الله یکفی عن کل شیء
 ولا یکفی عن الله ربک من شیء لانه السموات والارض ولا ما بینهما
 انه کان علماً کافیا قديراً

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بود و فانی محض است این است معنی آیه شریفه اگر در معرفت او بنور اینست نظر کنی قل
 یکنی عن کل شیء ولا یکنی عن الله ربک من شیء لانی السموات والارض ولا ما بینهما
 انه کان علماً کافیا قديراً و از برای هیچ مطلب این آیه را تلاوت نمائی بعد اسم قدیر مگر

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" قل الله یکفی **کل شیء عن کل شیء** ولا یکفی عن الله
 ربک من شیء لا فی السموات ولا فی الارض
 و لا ما بینهما انه کان علماً کافیا قديراً"

SWB P. 87 (1978) USA

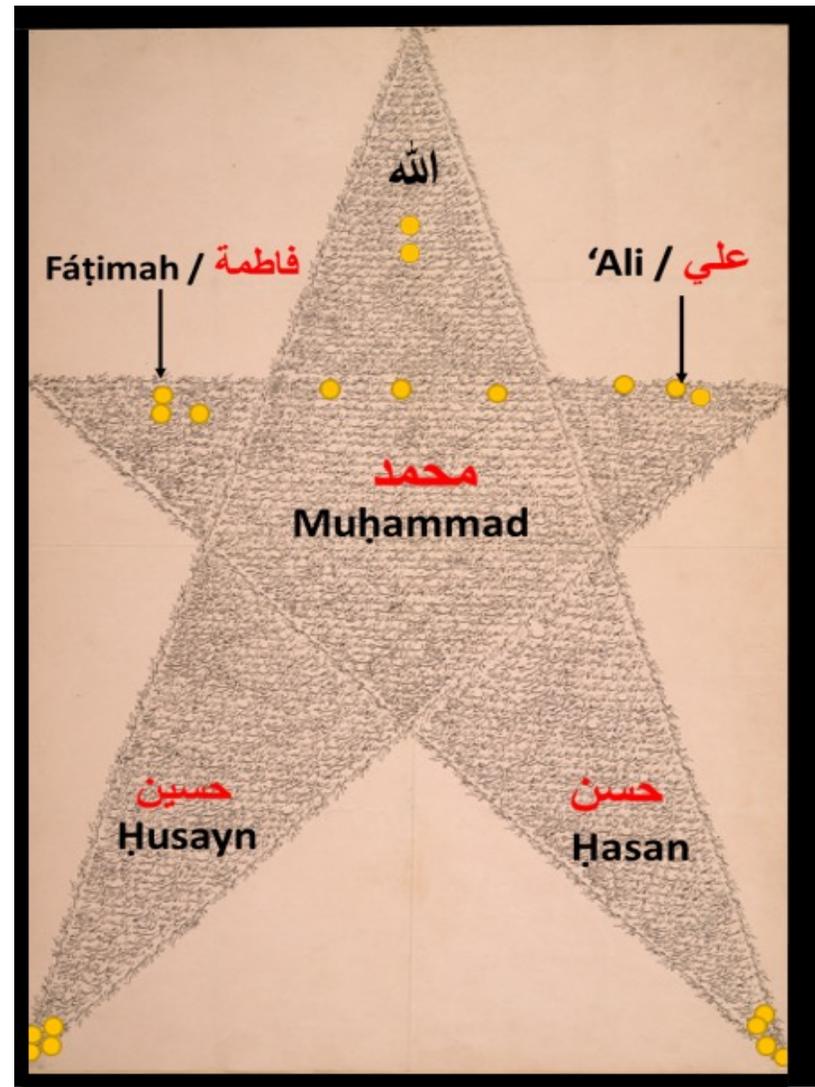
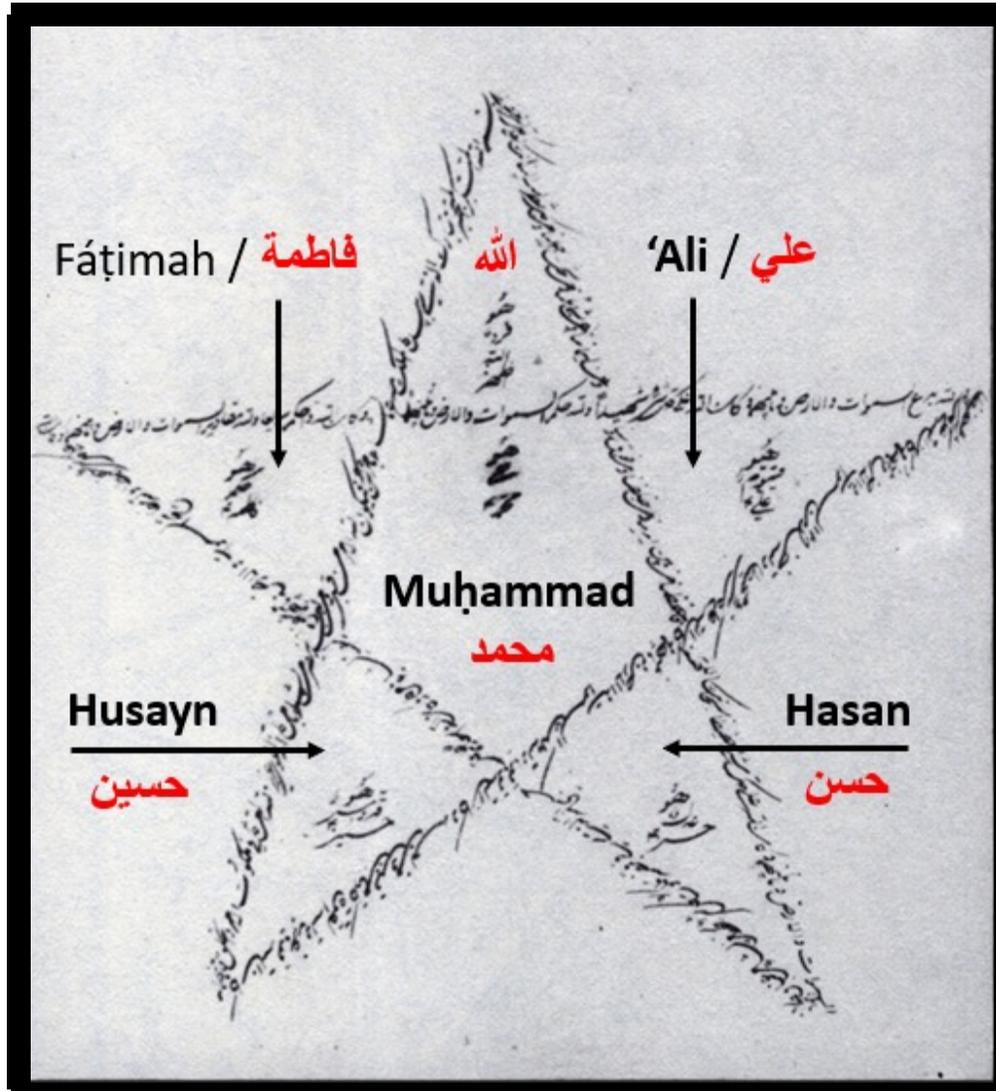
سازد او بوده و کل در ظن او صواب بود و در ادب او کل مشرف است
 و فانی محض است اینست معنی آیه شریفه اگر در معرفت او بنور اینست نظر کنی قل
 یکنی عن کل شیء ولا یکنی عن الله ربک من شیء لانی السموات والارض ولا ما بینهما
 انه کان علماً کافیا قديراً و از برای هیچ مطلب این آیه را تلاوت نمائی بعد اسم قدیر مگر

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As will be seen in the following slide, the BL *haykal* (on the right) follows the same pattern as the “empty *haykal*” (on the left, also in the Báb’s handwriting) in that it mentions the same six holy names in the same six sections: A: Alláh; B: Fáṭimah, C: Muḥammad, D: ‘Alí, E: Ḥusayn, F: Ḥasan. Incidentally, this empty *haykal* is a prayer for protection by the Báb. Its authorized translation, minus the holy names, is in *SWB*, 171-172. We are grateful to Dr. Omid Ghaemmaghami for suggesting such a comparison and for valuable consultation concerning the meaning and numerical value of the “crown” of the BL *haykal* which *appears* to have been inadvertently cut but which, in fact, may be all there as follows: هَيْكَلُ أَلْفِ إِلَّا هُوَ *haykal alif illā huwa*.

As Dr. Ghaemmaghami says (private email communication):

“I believe this is a reference to a number, almost certainly corresponding to the number of verses in the *haykal*. The following would be my guess. The numerical equivalent of هَيْكَلُ أَلْفِ إِلَّا هُوَ is 100: 111 (*alif*) minus 11 (*huwa*) = 100. The verse “On that Day, the Kingdom shall be God’s, the Incomparable, the Most Manifest” appears to be repeated 95 times. 100 minus 95 leaves 5, which may correspond to Muḥammad, Fáṭimah, ‘Alí, Ḥasan, and Ḥusayn, each of whom occupy five of the chambers of the *haykal*. One of the Báb’s prayers for protection, whose authorized translation has been published in *Selections from the Writings of the Báb* (www.bahai.org/r/405996039) and in many English prayer books, is also written in the form of a *haykal* in His blessed hand. This *haykal* was published in the front matter to the Bahá’í-Verlag edition of Muḥammad-‘Alí Fayḍí’s *Ḥaḍrat-i-Nuḡṭiy-i-Úlá*. Please see next slide. As you can see, the Báb specifies that the topmost chamber is reserved for God and the other five chambers to Muḥammad, ‘Alí, Fáṭimah, Ḥasan and Ḥusayn, although this wasn't conveyed in the authorized translation.”



Positions of the respective holy names are marked with gold.

In some ways, this beautiful *haykal*, this shining star, in the Hand of the Blessed Báb may be seen to be in direct conversation with the Qur’án, especially since the “outline” of the *haykal* is an obvious improvisation on Qur’án 22:56:

الْمُلْكُ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلَّهِ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَهُمْ ۚ فَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فِي جَنَّاتِ النَّعِيمِ

On that Day Sovereignty will belong to God alone and He shall judge between them. Those who believe and do deeds of righteousness shall find themselves in Gardens of Grace.

The Báb’s rendition is:

وَمَا الْمُلْكُ يَوْمَئِذٍ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ الْوَاحِدِ الظَّهَّارِ

On that Day Sovereignty will belong to God Alone, the Source of all manifestation.⁴

This verse the Báb repeats, as mentioned above, 95 times. Note that the prophecy of the original Quranic verse is replaced by two divine attributes, one Quranic, *al-wáhid* “the One (and Only)” provisionally translated here as “God alone” and the one authored by the Báb for this occasion, and not found in the Quran, *al-ẓahhár*, - a verbal noun of occupation and intensity. It is translated here provisionally as “the Source of all manifestation”. It might also be rendered: “the all-manifesting” or “the master of manifestation”. The sense of this new word indicates, perhaps, that the Báb wants the reader to understand that the prophecy in the original Quranic verse (Q22:56) has now come to pass.



هذا هيكل الله عزّ وجلّ وإنّ
مظهره النقطة علي محمد
هو ربّ بر ٢٠٢

A similar *Haykal* with a crown that is more legible

(reproduced in MacEoin, *Sources* (see Bibliography), p. [275])

- The five-pointed star is an emblem of the human form which, the Imam al-Sadiq has taught us, is “the greatest proof of God”.⁵
- The Guardian of the Cause of God, Shoghi Effendi, has pointed out the numerical symbol of the Bahai Faith is really this 5-pointed star: "Strictly speaking the 5-pointed star is the symbol of our Faith, as used by the Báb and explained by Him."
Shoghi Effendi, *Directives from the Guardian*, Hawai Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1973, p. 52.
- One major theme of the text, mentioned dozens of times as *mulk/malakút* inside this *haykal*, is precisely sovereignty, dominion, rule, supreme authority.
- This is also the main theme of the first chapter, the *Súrat al-mulk*, of the Qayyúm al-Asmá.
- This is the chapter that was written for Mulla Husayn on the night of the Báb's Declaration.
- Note also that *mulk* is a major theme of Baha'u'lláh's Arabic *Hidden Words*. The very first *Hidden Word* uses three derivative forms of the Arabic root M-L-K.⁶
- It is also a major theme of the Qayyúm al-Asmá' throughout its 111 chapters
- The beautiful, scintillating lines of the text may be seen as a kind of circuitry through which such sovereignty flows or circulates, both within the individual and outside the individual. This raises the topic of the relation of art to revelation.⁷

Wa Alláhu A'lam! “But God is the Most Knowing!”

A Few Examples of Other Similar Figures

For more information on the following examples please see

Stephen Lambden, Haykal and Dhar`ia: Talismanic and other esoteric writings of the Bāb, available at:

<https://hurqalya.ucmerced.edu/node/1291/>

Denis MacEoin, *The Sources for Early Bābī Doctrine and History: A Survey*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1992.

Denis MacEoin, Nineteenth Century Bāb Talismans, *Studia Iranica* 14:1 (1985) 77-98.

Moojan Momen, “Marking the Bicentenary of the Birth of the Bāb” in *Asian and African Studies Blog* British Library, 2019-09-24 at <https://blogs.bl.uk/asian-and-african/2019/10/the-star-tablet-of-the-bab.htm>

Qismatī az alwāḥ-i khaṭṭ Nuḡṭa-yi Ūlā wa Āqā Sayyid-i Ḥusayn-i Kātib [Tehran: s.n., 1958?] (This volume was unavailable to us.)

The following links are to brief related articles accessible at Bahai Library Online:

https://bahai-library.com/bab_daira_1

https://bahai-library.com/bab_haykal_1

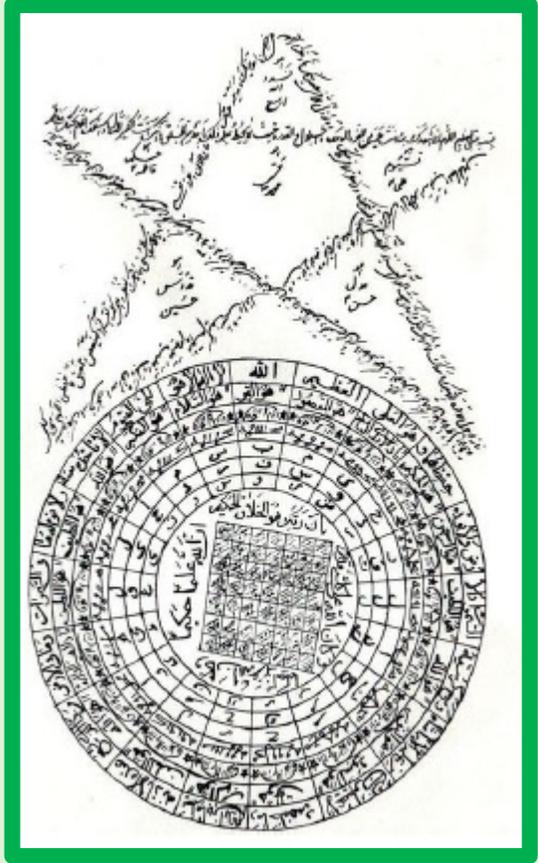
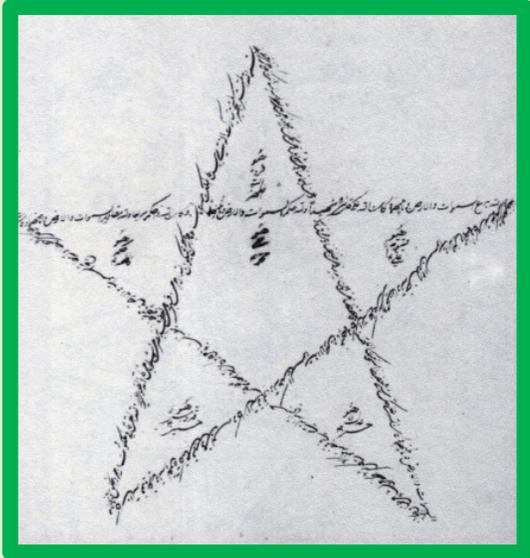
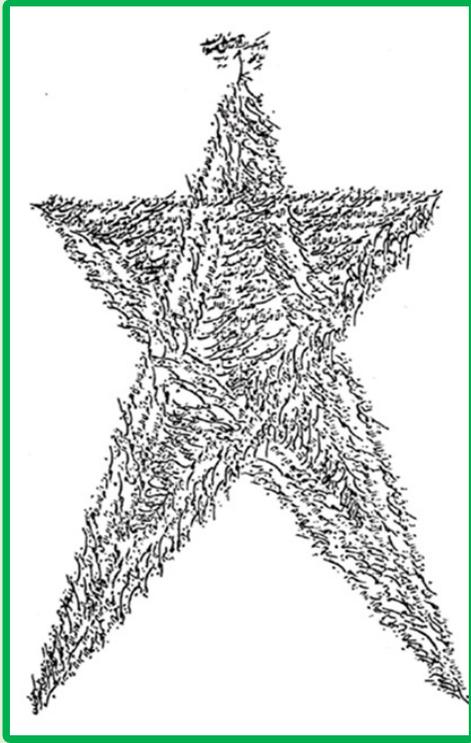
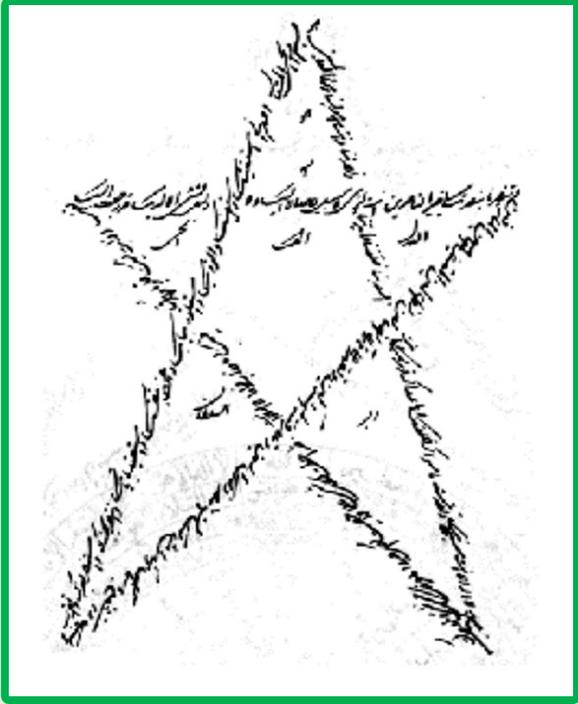
https://bahai-library.com/bab_haykal_2

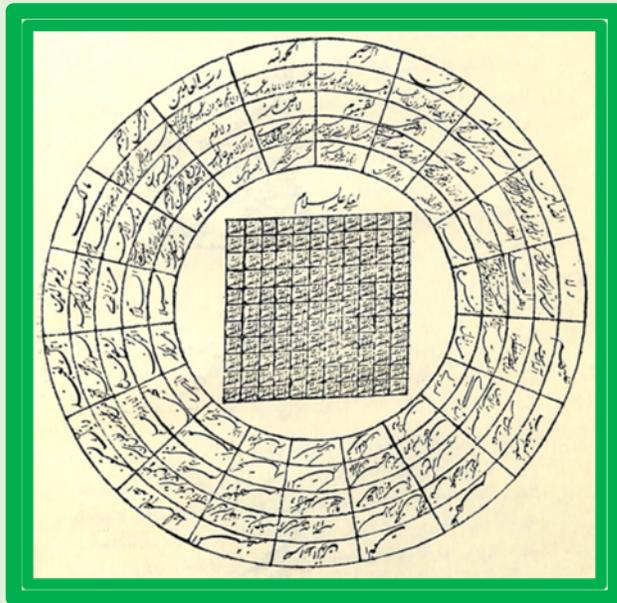
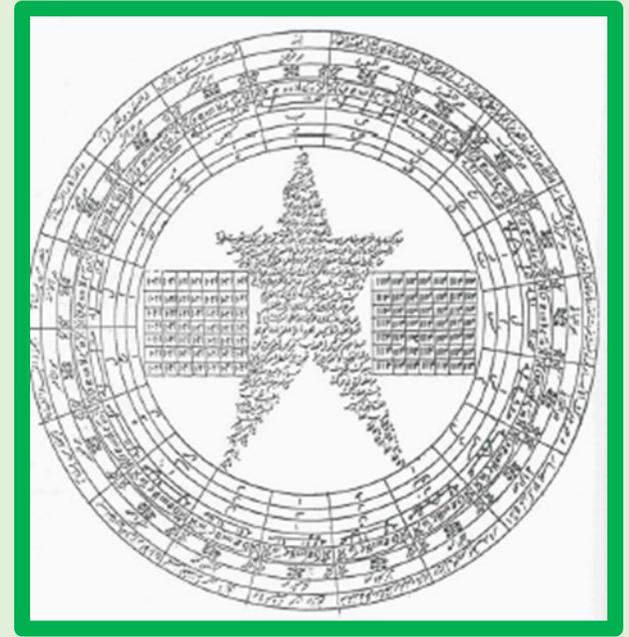
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References

- 1 For more information on this *haykal* see: “Marking the Bicentenary of the Birth of the Báb” by Moojan Momen (link below in Bibliography).
- 2 “Source of all manifestation” translates inadequately the word *al-zahhár*, an intensive form of the noun of agency for the basic idea of “manifestation” *z-h-r*. The word in this form does not occur in the Qur’án. While this verse does not occur in the Qur’án, Q25:26 and 22:56 are similar:
Q 25:26 الْمَلِكُ يُؤْمِنُ بِالْحَقِّ لِلرَّحْمَنِ ۖ وَكَانَ يَوْمًا عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ عَسِيرًا
On that Day, true sovereignty will belong to the Merciful, and it will be a difficult Day for the disbelievers
Q 22:56 الْمَلِكُ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَهُمْ ۖ فَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فِي جَنَّاتِ النَّعِيمِ
Sovereignty on that Day belongs to God; He will judge between them. Those who believe and do good deeds will be in the Gardens of Bliss.
- 3 Cf. Q10:61 & Q34:3
- 4 The relation between the Báb’s original compositions (such as the Qayyúm al-Asmá’ and many other texts, including this talisman) and the Qur’án is a topic of much interest. Virtually the entire Qayyúm al-asmá’ is intimately connected with the text of the Qur’án and the Báb frequently improvises on the existing sacred text. The same method of composition is in evidence with this talisman or *haykal*. The topic is much too large to adequately address here. Those interested may consult the publications of Todd Lawson, *Gnostic Apocalypse* and other publications mentioned in the Bibliography. It seems clear that the Báb was improvising on existing text in the way musicians improvise on existing melodies.
- 5 See Todd Lawson, *Being Human*, 37-53.
- 6 Derivative of M-L-K are shown in highlight: O Son of Spirit! My first counsel is this: Possess a pure, kindly and radiant heart, that thine may be a sovereignty ancient, imperishable and everlasting. يَا أَبْنِ الرُّوحِ فِي أَوَّلِ الْقَوْلِ أَمَلِكْ قَلْبًا جَيِّدًا حَسَنًا مُنِيرًا لَتَمَلِكْ مُلْكًا دَائِمًا بَاقِيًا أَرْ لَّا قَدِيمًا
- 7 See numerous articles by Lawson, Momen on art and the Báb listed in Bibliography.

Bibliography and Suggested Reading

In addition to publications already mentioned, the following may be of interest

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Postscriptum

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