



trinities of the Nusairiyah, the third person is called the Bab; as Maana, meaning; Ism, name; Bab, door. One of the trinities is Ali, Mohammed, and Salman Farsee ("Asian Mystery," pp. 57, 111, 131). It was a term applied to Ali, also, in the Traditions as in the one cited by the Bab himself at his examination subsequently at Tabriz. He was asked, "What is the meaning of the name Bab?" He answered, "The same as in the holy tradition, (in which Mohammed said) 'I am the city of knowledge and Ali is the gate thereof.'" From this name the followers were called

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Babi. The first disciples, full of zeal and devotion, spread the message of the advent far and wide through Persia. Their assurance of faith and enthusiasm kindled responsive fire in many hearts. Soon the Bab made more exalted claim for himself and at the shrine of Mecca announced himself as the Mahdi or Kaim, the long-absent Imam, and finally as the Nukta, the Point of Divinity, in some sense a Manifestation of God. The number of his disciples grew apace. Some were dreamers, mystics, religious enthusiasts who had lived in expectation of the Advent; others were the discontented in whose hearts the oppressions and injustices of the rulers and the clergy had caused a longing for that reign of righteousness in which iniquities would be righted. These were reinforced by those who hoped in some change to serve their own interests. (See Mirza Kazim in *Journal of Asia*, 1866.) By the time the Bab had returned from Mecca to Bushire the news had been carried to the bounds of Persia. In Shiraz even the call to prayer, azan, had been made in the Bab's name. The government was alarmed. The Bab's apostles, sent from Bushire, August, 1845, were forbidden to preach. The tendons of their feet were cut. The Bab was brought to Shiraz in chains. Thence he escaped to Ispahan, where the Governor, Minuchihr Khan, believed on him and befriended him. The Shah's Government was supremely interested in these developments. If the claim of the Bab were admitted, the Shah had nothing to do but to lead forth the waiting steed from the royal stables, mount Ali Mohammed on it, resign his throne to the Imam, and enlist under his

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banner. Instead of this the Shah and his government determined to treat him as a self-deceived and dangerous enthusiast. He was conveyed under guard to the extreme northwest of Persia and confined in the fortress of Maku and afterwards at Chirik in Salmas, 1847-50, but during the greater part of the time permitted to write his books of Revelation, called the "Bayan," and to correspond with his followers. (See writer's article, "The Bayan of the Bab," *Princeton Theological Review*, 19 15, pp. 633-55.)

The death of Mohammed Shah was a signal for revolts and disturbances in many parts of Persia, on the part of claimants for the throne and dissatisfied noblemen. In this confusion the Babis, incited by persecutions and anxious to take immediate advantage of disturbed conditions to bring about the triumph of their cause, collected in armed bands. Collisions soon occurred with the

Persian authorities, which developed into insurrections at Sheikh Tabarsi in Mezerandaran, at Zenjan, and at Niriz in Fars. The Babis fought with fierce courage, undaunted by the overwhelming odds and superior arms of the troops who attacked them. They threw up fortifications and, aided by their women, endured sieges for some months. Savage brutalities were enacted by both parties, the cruelties and barbarities of the Shiah's surpassing those of the Babis only from the fact that victory gave opportunity to the Shah's forces. The Babis massacred the captive soldiers and unarmed villagers at Dih-i-Nazar Khan (New History, p. 362). They cut off the heads of the slain enemies and placed them on posts around the rampart of their

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fortress, by order of their leader, Janab-i-Kuddus (Ibid., p. 73). Prisoners of war were put to death by them at Zenjan, the Shah's officer being skinned alive and then roasted (Ibid., p. 155).

Meanwhile the government, thinking to bring the contest to a close by removing the cause, determined on the execution of the Bab. He was brought to Tabriz, and condemned to death by the clergy and government. In the Jabbar-khana, when he and one of his disciples were bound and placed for execution, a marvel occurred. After the soldiers had fired and the smoke had cleared away, the dead body of the disciple was seen but not that of the Bab. His followers were ready to shout, "A miracle! A miracle!" and the populace to acclaim him. But unfortunately for the cause, though the shots had freed him from the ropes, the shop into which he fled had no outlet. He was discovered, led back, and executed. The insurrection continued for a time, with fierce reprisals and barbaric cruelties on both sides. Finally the Babis were overcome and slain, many of them after they had surrendered. Later a plot by some Babis and an attempt to assassinate the Shah led to the execution of several score Babis in most cruel ways. Each one was separately allotted to a guild or class of the population of Teheran that all collectively might be liable to any revenge the Babis might see fit to devise. The repression and persecution failed to obliterate the sect. Some fled into exile. Many adopted the practice of dissimulation, which, under the name of *tagiya*, deems legitimate the denial of one's faith and conforming to the dominant religion for safety.

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Babism as fully developed was intended to be a substitute for Islam. The Bab superseded Mohammed; and the Bayan, the Koran. The new law abrogated the old, and the Bab was rightful king entitled to supplant the Shah. As to his personality the Bab declared himself to be the manifestation and revelation of God — the Primal Will, the first and eternally created, the mirror of God, the Mukta or Point of Divinity. This Primal Will had been manifested in all the great prophets in an ascending scale of perfection and excellence. This manifestation said of himself: "I am God, and there is no other God than me, the Master of the Universe." In this theology the Babis resembled the Batinis or Ismielis. In teaching the eternity of matter, the emanation of the Primal

Reason, giving esoteric meanings to the precepts of the Koran, declaring the resurrection to mean the Advent of a new Imam, they but followed Abdullah Ibn Maimun, the leader of the Batinis ("Spirit of Islam," pp. 489-92).

The Bab has been called a reformer, and he has, maybe, a slight claim to that title. In social matters he made scarcely an improvement, for while he taught, with the Sunnis and Sheikhis, that men of other religions could be associated with and were ceremonially clean, yet he ordained that no unbelievers should dwell in the five chief provinces of Persia, and this prohibition excluded Moslems as well as Armenians and Jews. He was illiberal, discouraging the acquirement of sciences and foreign or ancient languages, and prohibiting the study of grammar, philosophy, law, and logic, and ordering the destruction of books on

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these subjects. He looked with some favour on the elevation of women and maintained Kurrat-ul-Ayn, his celebrated disciple, when she at times threw aside the veil and instructed men in the religion. He enjoined marriage as obligatory, favoured monogamy, yet allowed bigamy. In practice the Babis continued polygamy. He allowed divorce for any cause, such as a quarrel; but the divorced should wait a year before seeking another partner. But a man should not divorce and marry more than nineteen times. A woman may go unveiled before the members of the family in which she grows up; she may even talk with a man outside of her own household, if necessary; but if the conversation is limited "to twenty-eight words it is better for the woman and the man." He prohibited alcohol, tobacco, opium, and begging, and enjoined the golden rule, with kindness to children and animals. It is remarkable how little he has to say about morals, yet how much about dress, baths, and burial. Moslem rites, as the prayer postures, fast and pilgrimage, are modified as to time and place but with no essential difference. The zikrs or vain repetitions of the name of God are continued. The symbolism of numbers and letters was greatly elaborated, and many doctrines were explained away by allegorical interpretations. Politically the Bab proposed no reform. Supposedly the substitution of himself and disciples or "Letters," as he called them, for the old Persian rulers would bring about a reign of righteousness. He had assigned governorships to different ones of his followers. That of Constantinople was promised to the Governor of Ispahan when he

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pretended to be a Babi. The value of the Babi movement for Persia lay not in its ideas, for neither theologically nor socially did it afford any panacea. But it shook and shattered the power of the Shiah Mujtahids. It helped to awaken modern Persia, to bring about independence of thought. It prepared some to break the bonds of traditions who were far from accepting Babism.

## BAHAISM

The one outstanding result of Babism is Bahatism, [See writer's Bahatism and Its

Claims, Fleming H. Revell Co. (online at [bahai-library.com/wilson\\_bahatism\\_claims](http://bahai-library.com/wilson_bahatism_claims))] which sprang from it and won over almost the entire Babi community. The Bab taught that no revelation is final and that another dispensation was to be founded by "Him whom God would manifest." It is quite certain that the Bab expected an interval to elapse between himself and the next dispensation similar in extent to that which had passed between former dispensations. This interval is understood by Professor Browne to be either 1,511 or 2,001 years. It is irrational to suppose that the Bab delivered a revelation of several volumes and a detailed ritual to last only 19 years.

The Bab appointed, as his successor and head of the sect, Mirza Yahya, called Subh-i-Azal, the Dawn of the Eternal. At this time a number of the Babis laid claim to be "incarnations." A sort of hysteria or mania seized these men and led them to assert their deity and the divine inspiration of their words. Finally Azal, who had fled to Bagdad, was acknowledged as caliph of the religion. He had a half-brother,

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Mirza Husain Ali, called Baha Ullah. Both were sons of Mirza Buzurk, steward of the household of a vizier of the Shah. They were born in Nur, Mezanderan. Azal was son of the wife and Baha of the concubine. Baha Ullah acted as Azal's assistant for a time, but later repudiated his supremacy and announced that he himself was in reality "He whom God should manifest," and that by a secret arrangement with the Bab, they had put forward Azal to act as chief for a time that the risk and danger might come upon his brother, and he himself escape the persecution of the enemies. This rival claim resulted in a quarrel between the brothers which waxed hot at Bagdad, then at Adrianople, whither they were transferred at the request of the Persian Government to remove them from the frontier and from the pilgrim highway. At Adrianople the quarrel reached a climax. They even plotted to assassinate each other. So Azal was sent to Cyprus, and Baha Ullah and his party to Acca, Syria. Baha waxed stronger and his pretensions were accepted by the great majority of the Babis. A score of the leading Azalis who refused to follow him were assassinated. Azal became a negligible quantity, though his few followers in Persia have been rather conspicuous. Baha worked over the materials of Babism and evolved a system which he set forth as a new religion and universal dispensation. This is Bahatism. The two religions are essentially the same in theology, eschatology, hermeneutics, as well as in rites and ceremonies. They differ in some social and political principles and of course in substituting Baha for the Bab.

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Bahatism is a dogmatic religion, imposed by authority as a "revelation" to be received unconditionally and without question. It claims to be rational, but has as much mystery as any religion, with elements of pantheism and mysticism. Baha Ullah is regarded as a manifestation of the Deity — a higher one than the Bab, possibly of the Divine Essence itself. As God, he is the former of the

Universe from eternal matter and rules over it. He is worshipped as the supreme God, the Father, a dignity and degree which he himself assumed and which is granted him by his followers. The doctrine of incarnations is an old one among Persians. They regarded their ancient kings as divine and expected such an one in their deliverer, Saoshyant. They transferred their hopes and ideas to the line of Ali and the Imams. According to Makrisi, even in the lifetime of Ali there were those who exalted him to the divine rank. Afterwards Abdullah Ibn Wahab taught that "Ali was not dead but living, and that in him was a particle of the divinity" ("Asian Mystery," by Lyde, p. 31). The doctrine of hulul prevailed, that God descends into human form without ceasing to be a unity. Shahrastani describes it as "a descent of God's essence or of the whole Deity, or of a partial descent or of a portion, according to the degree of preparedness of the person." This doctrine appeared all through Mohammedan history, among the Ismailiyahs, Fatimides, Druses, Assassins, and others called in general Ghulats or exceders. One representative of these sects is the Ali Alahis of Persia, the same as the Alivi or KuzulBashi of Asia Minor and the Nusairiyahs of Syria,

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who altogether number some two millions. The Catechism and Manual of the latter says: "Who created us?" "Ali, son of Abu Talib." "Is not Ali your God?" "He is the creator of heaven and earth. Besides him there is no God, the living, the self-existent" ("Asian Mystery," pp. 234-52). To Ali ascription is made as follows:

"Mysterious Being! None can tell

The attributes that in thee dwell;

None can thine essence comprehend;

To thee should every mortal bend."

The persistence and wide acceptance of this doctrine is interesting as showing that the cold Moslem creed which puts God at a distance as an inaccessible ruler did not suffice for the human heart. This doctrine, and that of the Trinity, counted among the Christian mysteries, are not foreign to the thought of Moslem races nor uncongenial to their minds. These sects, in some measure perhaps remnants of Christian peoples, are found not only in Persia and Turkey, but among the Kurds, Syrians, Arabs, and Egyptians. This doctrine is again emphasized in Bahaism. It teaches that divinity was manifested in Moses, Jesus, Mohammed, Zoroaster, and others, but in greater fulness in Baha Ullah, who is set forth to the Jews as the fulfilment of the prophecies of the Messiah; to the Christians as the Second Coming of Christ; to the Moslems as the Mahdi or Husain; to the Parsees as Shah Bahram; to Brahmans as the Avatar. He is "It" with a capital letter, as I have seen printed in their books.

Another doctrine emphasized by Bahais is "Rijat,"

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the Return of the prominent believers of the former dispensation. It is akin to metempsychosis, but is explained to mean rather a reappearance in the spirit and power of the former Imam or apostle. Another aspect is allegorical interpretation. This method is said to have been first applied to Islam by Mohammed son of Ismiel, son of Imam Jafar-i-Sadik. It is called *tavil* or *elm-i-batin*, and its adepts were called *Batinis*. By setting forth the inner meaning they explain away the precepts and doctrines of Islam. In accordance with this, Baha, following closely the Bab and his predecessors, explained the general resurrection as the rising and appearance of a new manifestation, the judgment as condemnation or acquittal by the manifestation, and receiving spiritual life from him. The "Questioning by the angels in the tomb" is the summoning by the messengers of the manifestation to those in the tomb of ignorance to believe; and the return of the angels to God is the report of the missionaries; the "bridge of Sirat" is the testing at the call of faith; paradise is the condition of belief and hell is unbelief.

Bahaism makes much of the symbolism of numbers. It takes over the sacredness of 19 from Babism and establishes a new calendar of 19 months of 19 days each, abolishing the week. Baha also sanctifies the number 9 because the letters in Baha add to 9 in abjad counting. Much is made of the name Baha as a charm and talisman; it is inscribed on rings and breastpins.

The "Revelation" is contained in the "Ikan," "Kitab-ul-Akdas," and numerous other writings

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which surpass, it is claimed, all previous scriptures. Faith in Baha is now the supreme duty and the means of salvation. Baha condemned Sufism and darvishes, yet his book, "The Seven Valleys," shows how to follow the Sufi Path; he commends the *zikr* or repetitions of the divine name and his messengers travel as darvishes in their rounds. The chief rites are the same as in Islam, with variations; prayer has similar ablutions, postures, and genuflections, with prescribed words, but is made with face towards Acca and addressed to Baha Ullah; the fast is for a month of nineteen days, with total abstinence from food during daylight; the pilgrimage to Acca includes bowing before Baha's image and kissing the shrines. There are imitations of baptism and of the Lord's Supper; ablutions of the dead are minutely prescribed. There is an effort to be different from Islam, but Bahaism has nothing new nor superior to it in regard to worship.

Baha also attempted to lay down laws, criminal, civil, and social. Among the punishments prescribed are execution for murder, branding on the face for theft, small fines for adultery, and burning alive for arson. Mohammed never prescribed punishment by fire, saying it was God's instrument. As to woman, she should be educated and more social freedom allowed her. Marriage is enjoined, monogamy recommended, bigamy allowed. Baha himself took two wives and a concubine, all of whom bore him children and survived him. Loose divorce is allowed. War, the jihad, slavery, wine, and opium are condemned. Baha's contact

with the West at Adrianople and in Syria somewhat modified the theories he had learned

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in Babism. He revoked the condemnation of learning and travel, commended intercourse with all men, general education, and a universal language. The agitation connected with the great peace-movements of the first half of the nineteenth century influenced him to advocate peace and arbitration. He bound up the Bahai theocracy to a system of constitutional monarchy substituting local and national councils for one-man power. But he declared that all members of these councils should be Bahais and taxes collected and distributed according to Bahai law. It is quite evident that in such a newly constituted state Christians and Moslems alike would have few rights.

As a pensioner of the Turkish Government and restricted in residence to the neighbourhood of Acca, Baha spent the last twenty years of his life in a fine house and beautiful garden, surrounded by his disciples, receiving the pilgrims and their gifts and freely carrying on his propaganda by letters and messengers. His efforts at reconciliation with the Persian Government brought relief to his disciples, and their condition was rendered more secure by Baha's permission to practise *tagiya*, concealment or conformity to the Shiah religion.

Baha Ullah died in 1892. After his death a bitter quarrel occurred between his sons and wives regarding the succession. It was full of cursings and maledictions, anathemas and lawsuits. It resulted in a second schism and in both leaders being put under renewed restrictions by the Turkish Government. Finally Abbas, the oldest brother, became chief of the sect, with the title of Abdul Baha, the Servant of

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Baha. He claimed to be the Centre of the covenant, the Interpreter and Expounder of the Faith and Lord of the New Dispensation. Under him Bahaism has begun a wide propaganda, and aspires to be the universal religion. The zeal of a Christian convert to Bahaism, a Syrian named Khairalla, who had come to America on business, gave an impetus to this idea. He was able in 1894-98 to make some eight hundred converts to Bahaism in Chicago and its neighbourhood. The credulity of Americans inspired great hopes of success. These American converts began to make pilgrimages to Acca, recognizing, in Abdul Baha, Christ Jesus in his Second Coming and worshipping and adoring him as Lord and Master. This is described by one of the pilgrims, Mrs. Getsinger, in the following words (Isaac Adams: "Persia by a Persian," p. 479): "I was waiting for the king to come. I reached Him first and knelt down before Him, kissing the hem of His robe. He helped me to my feet and keeping my hand walked with me into the house. He led me into the room where lies the most brilliant jewel that ever shone on the earth, Baha Ullah. . . . He led me down a flight of stairs and I pressed His hand to my lips." In another letter she describes the meeting with Abdul Baha: "My heart gave a great throb and I held out my arms, crying, 'My Lord! my Lord!' and rushed to Him, kneeling at His blessed feet, sobbing like a

child. I sat down at His blessed feet, while He took my hand. . . . He allowed me to kiss His blessed hand." An Englishwoman, Mrs. Khairalla, of the same party wrote, "I threw myself on my knees before Him and sobbed

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aloud from the emotion that filled my soul. He gave me His dear hands to kiss, such fine delicate hands they are, and patted me tenderly on my cheeks and shoulders." But this party of pilgrims became affected by the schism. Khairalla became the leader of the sect of the younger brother, Mohammed Ali, in America. Though retarded by this, Bahaism has gained 2,000 or 3,000 converts in 17 States, comprising 27 congregations. It has a publication society, has issued Baha's "Revelations" in English, and has a monthly paper — i.e. published every 19 days. It has a missionary society called the Orient-Occident Unity, which sends missionaries to Persia and aids Bahai schools there.

In 1908 Abdul Baha was freed by the Turkish revolution from all restriction as to residence and spent several years in Egypt. Afterwards he made missionary journeys to Europe and America, being received to the pulpits and platforms of the United States with friendly cordiality as an honoured guest. His visit of eight months showed no special results. The propagandists have extended their journeys to India, Burma, South Africa, and Hawaii. They have gained small groups of believers in England and Germany. Though its success is very limited, and even in Persia its numbers have not reached beyond one or two hundred thousand, yet the fact that such a revolt from Islam has been able to establish itself among a Moslem people and to start a partially successful propaganda among Christian people constitutes it one of the interesting movements in the Moslem world of to-day. Its failure in Persia to co-

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operate with and assist the Constitutional movement and the struggle for the liberties of the people shows that expediency rather than the good of mankind guides its policy. In relation to Christian missions it is a hindrance. One aid that it has incidentally rendered is in breaking the solidarity of Persian Islam, and thus by its struggle to gain religious freedom for itself it has promoted freedom for converts to Christianity. ...

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... Mr. Khoja Kamal-ud-Din, an advocate, has established himself at Woking at the mosque erected by Dr. Leitner. By lectures and through a magazine called The Islamic Review, the doctrines are promulgated. A new translation of the Koran is being issued. Free literature is distributed. The mission has been encouraged by the conversion of Lord Headley to its faith.

In this effort to propagate itself in Christendom, it is like Bahaism. In not a few points there is a striking resemblance between these offshoots from Mohammedanism. Some of these may be accounted for by their springing up in a similar soil, a Mohammedan soil impregnated with Sufiism and Mahdiism, and in which some elements of nineteenth-century Christian thought had found lodgment.

Both claim that a new revelation is needed because Christianity is dead and Islam needs reforming. Both claim to be in some sense divine manifestations, in another sense the "return" of Jesus, of Mohammed, and of Krishna. Both propose to unite all religions. Both do away with the jihad and advocate peace principles. Both, after the example of Mohammed, sent letters to kings announcing their coming and inviting them to faith. Both practised polygamy and praised Mohammed and the Koran. Both belittled Jesus Christ, denying his miracles, his resurrection, his ascension and literal Second Coming. Both have some followers in foreign lands even among Christians. Both failed to bring about moral reformation in the conduct of their disciples, who have divided into sects on the death of the founders.

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Both claimed as signs of their mission their eloquence in the Arabic tongue, the writing of spontaneous verses, fulfilled predictions, their success in winning converts, and the good effects as seen in the conduct of their followers. Both made large use of the press; Baha Ullah sent his books to Bombay to be published owing to lack of liberty in Turkey and Persia; Gulam Ahmad had a press of his own at Qadian. The teachings of Ahmad are free from some extravagances and inanities of Bahaism. Neither sect appears to have any great future before it. Their chief usefulness has been to help towards the breaking down of scholastic Islam — the one among the Shiahs, the other among the Sunnis of India. Bahaism has definitely broken with Islam, while the Ahmadiya movement continues within its fold. ...

see complete book here.

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Language

English

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History

Typed 2012-09 by Bobbi Lyons; Formatted 2013-12-08 by Jonah Winters; Proofread 2012-09 by Bobbi Lyons.

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