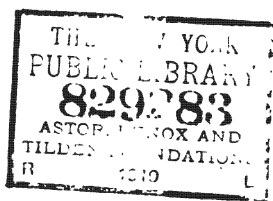


**MESSIAHS:
CHRISTIAN AND PAGAN**

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ples, 137-8. Oxford, 1907.]

The Zikris, a Mohammedan sect of Baluchistan, believe that their founder, Dost Mohammad, was the twelfth Mahdi. His abode, Koh-i-Murad, near Turbat, takes the place of Mecca as the object of their pilgrimages. [Baluchistan, Hastings' E.R.E., II, 340.]

Some sects in India, to whom the name of "Ghair Mahdi'm" ("not expecting a Mahdi") is given, believe the promised Mahdi has already appeared. In the District of Kirman, Baluchistan, they still say that the Mahdi appeared about the end of the fifteenth century in the person of Muhammad of Jaunpur, who, expelled from India, died, after many wanderings, in 1505, in the valley of Helمند. This sect is known as the "Dhikri." The Da'ire wale, a similar sect living in the province of Mysore, declared the Mahdi appeared more than four hundred years ago. [Ghair Mahdi, Hastings' E.R.E., VI, 189.]

The Mahdi in Persia and Syria

In 940 A. D. the Twelfth Imam disappeared into a well. He still lives in Jabulka, or Jabuka, whence he is expected to reappear as the Mahdi or Kaim. In communication with him were four persons, known as Bab or Gate, transmitters of messages from the Imam to his faithful followers. Mirza Ali Mohammed of Shiraz was one of these Bab who later advanced in station claiming to be the Kaim or Mahdi. He dared proclaim his manifestation in Mecca itself. After his death many of his followers claimed to be the promised one. There was a chaos of manifestations sorely puzzling the most faithful, not to mention the Turkish Government. It had been prophesied that the Kaim would behead seventy thousand mullahs like dogs, and it was not so easy to lay the ghost or allay the fears.

The Bab who appeared at Ispahan, Persia, about the middle of the nineteenth century, and of whom more will be said in the discussion of the political significance of messianic movements, was the embodiment of this long deferred hope for a redeemer and savior. Many followed him. [An

extensive account of the Bab and of Babism will be found in S. G. Wilson, *Bahaism and Its Claims*. Boston, 1915. See the same author, *Persian Life and Customs*, 62, 146, 185, 221. E. C. Sykes, *Persia and Its People*, 36, 140-3. L. Oliphant, *Haifa or Life in Modern Palestine*, 103-7. V. De Bunsen, *The Soul of a Turk*, 205-7, 251-7. W. E. Curtis, *To-day in Syria and Palestine*, 219. *Journal Asiatic*, 6th series, Vol. VII, 329-84. C. M. Remy, *The Bahai Movement*. Washington, D. C., 1912. Isaac Adams, *Persia by a Persian*, 453-90. H. C. Lukach, *Fringe of the East*, 264ff. London, 1913. A. G. Browne, *A Literary History of Persia*. London, 1902. Browne, The Babis of Persia, in *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1889, Vol. 21, p. 485ff., 881ff., and articles by Browne on Bab, Babis, in *Hastings' Ency. of Religion and Ethics*, and in the *Ency. Britt.*, 11th edition. In 1915 the New York Public Library published a long list of works relating to Babism and Bahaism.]

Bahaism, which developed out of Babism, has a leader whose messiahship is abundantly proclaimed. Some represent Baha as Christ, while others declare Christ has returned in the person of Abdul Baba Abbas. Baha, indeed, is represented as embodying all the promises, much as Ghulam Ahmad Qadiani embodied them in India. He is "the Messiah for the Jews, God the Father, the Word, and the Spirit for the Christians, Aurora or Shah Bahran for the Zoroastrians, the fifth Buddha for the Buddhists, reincarnated Krishna for the Brahmans, the Mahdi or the twelfth Imam or Husain for the Moslems. All are realized in the coming of Baha Ullah."

Bahaism is said to adapt its claims and doctrines to those prevailing in the land where it seeks to gain a foothold, showing in America a different creed from that flaunted in Persia. American Bahais are said to regard Baha as God the Father, and Abdul Baha Abbas as the Son of God, Jesus Christ. "The promises and prophecies given in the Holy Scriptures have been fulfilled by the appearance of the Prince of the Universe, the great Baba Ullah and of Abdul Baha." [S. G. Wilson, *Bahaism*, 92ff.] One writer declares the whole Bahai movement "a counterfeit of the Messiahship of

Christ." [G. W. Holmes, in Speer, *Missions and Modern History*, I, 169. See also, W. A. Shedd in *Missionary Review of the World*, 1911.]

In 1866-7, Baha Ullah (or Baha'u'llah), who had been gradually displacing Subhi-Ezel as leader of the Babi sect, proclaimed his messiahship as "He whom God shall manifest," declaring the Bab had been but the herald of his coming.

Baha Ullah and his followers were sent to Acre, for his claims caused a division among the Babis and much ill-feeling. The strength of his opponents waned rapidly and that of Baha Ullah grew apace. Acre became the center of a living force that spread abroad and attracted to the little Syrian town pilgrims from all parts of the globe.

When Baha Ullah died, in 1892, his son, Abbas, generally known now as Abbas Effendi, or as Abdul Baha, became his successor, and since then the sect has been known, after him, as the Bahai. In 1913 the number of Bahaists was computed as more than two million adherents — Persian and Indian Shiahs, Sunis from the Turkish Empire and North Africa, Brahmans, Buddhists, Taoists, Shintoists, Jews, and Christian converts in Europe and the United States.

One student of the sect has called it "a thing which may revivify Islam, and make great changes on the face of the Asiatic world." [Lukach, *op. cit.*, 264-7.] So far it seems to have exerted little or no political power.

Many accounts have been written about Abbas Effendi, the God incarnate, for whom, say his followers, the Bab was only a forerunner. An American devotee writes, under date of Washington, D. C., November 19, 1899, "regarding the 'Holy City' and the Blessed Master, who dwells therein:

"Although my stay in Acca was very short, as I was there only three days, yet I assure you these three days were the most memorable days of my life, still I feel incapable of describing them in the slightest degree.

"From a material standpoint everything was very simple and plain, but the spiritual atmosphere which pervaded the place, and was manifested in the lives and actions among the Believers, was truly wonderful, and something I had never

before experienced. One needs but to see them to know that they are a Holy people.

“The Master I will not attempt to describe; I will only state that I believe with all my heart that he is the Master, and my greatest blessing in this world is that I have been privileged to be in His presence and look upon His sanctified face. His life is truly the Christ life and His whole being radiates purity and Holiness!

“Without a doubt Abbas Effendi is the Messiah of this day and generation, and we need not look for another.

“Hoping you will find the joy that has come into my life, from accepting the truth as revealed in these great days, . . .”

A similar message comes from Washington under date of December 5, 1899.

“It seems to me,” says this devotee, “a real Truth-seeker would know at a glance that He is the Master! Withal I must say He is the Most Wonderful Being I have ever met or expect to meet in this world. Though He does not seek to impress one at all, strength, power, purity, love, and holiness are radiated from His majestic, yet humble, personality, and the spiritual atmosphere which surrounds Him, and most powerfully affects all those who are blessed by being near Him, is indescribable. His ideas and sentiments are of the loftiest and most chaste character, while His great love and devotion for humanity surpasses everything I have ever before encountered. I believe in Him with all my heart and soul, and I hope all who call themselves Believers will concede to Him all the greatness, all the glory, and all the praise, for surely he is the Son of God—and ‘the Spirit of the Father abideth in Him.’

“Regarding the Household, I found them all quiet, holy people, living only for the purpose of serving in the Cause of God. They dress very plainly, but with a grace that gives a sort of grandeur to their most humble abode. The purity of their morals is evident from the calm, benign and guileless faces, which characterize them as a people. To become spiritually more and more like them, and like the Blessed Master, is my daily supplication to God.”

Another American writes that she was allowed to enter "the special garden of the Manifestation, the one (according to Dr. Kheiralla) described in the prophecies thus: 'The place of my throne is part on the water and part on the land, under a green tent that has neither ropes nor a center pole to sustain it.' . . . The spiritual atmosphere of this place was overwhelming; our tears fell like rain over our faces, and some of the Believers with us cried aloud. Indeed, to enter this room is a great blessing. I have felt nearer to God since that day! On the chair was a wreath of flowers, and some beautiful cut roses placed there by the Greatest Branch, who commanded that they should be given to us; also four large oranges, which were on the table opposite, as we left that most sacred place.

"From here we were taken to the tomb of the Manifestation, and you must excuse me if I do not enter into details about this; I cannot find words to express myself; suffice it to say, that the Greatest Branch let me walk in His footsteps and led me by the hand into this sacred place, where I knelt down and begged of God to cleanse my heart of all impurity and kindle within it the fire of His love. I also remembered there the Assembly in Chicago and begged God's blessing to be showered upon you. After this visit we walked in the garden and our Lord, with His own blessed hands, picked flowers and leaves, which he gave us to take to the faithful Believers in America.

"That night He sat us all by the table, and dismissed the servants, saying He would serve us Himself, and He did so. He did not sit at the table with us, but waited upon us! At the conclusion of the meal He said: 'I have served you to-night that you may learn the lesson of ever serving your fellow-creatures with love and kindness.' He bade us good-night and advised us all to rest early, so we went to bed and this night I had a long delicious sleep and rest.

"The next morning he brought me a most beautiful bunch of white narcissus and allowed me to kiss His blessed hand as He gave them to me. He sat down and drank tea with us, then rose and bade us 'adieu,' as we were going back to Haifa that day and He had been called away. As we

were quitting the city we saw Him standing by the gate, and He smiled at us as we passed. Then we returned 'by the road in the sea' to Haifa, our hearts both happy and sorrowful, happy because we had seen Him and sorrowful because we were leaving Him.

"Oh, dear people, make firm your faith and belief, for truly He is our Lord. It seems to me that no one could doubt should He smile upon them, and no one could turn from Him should he seek to confirm them! But this He will not do, as God had declared that each must seek to confirm himself and gave to each of us the power or will for that purpose. I feel these words are very weak and inadequate, but I assure you no one could describe this place and 'tis foolish to try — to know each must see for himself — therefore pray God earnestly that the blessing of coming here may soon be bestowed. There is no other place in the world worth seeing, and surely no other King worthy of homage."

"This is He who quenches the thirst from the spring of life," declares a "Declaration Addressed to Americans." "This is He who heals the sick with the antidote of safety and confirms with a flood of grace from His Kingdom. He is of the greatest heirs to the apostles and saints, the Lord is His God and He is His dearest Son (Abdul-Beha)." [For these and similar accounts see Isaac Adams, *Persia; By a Persian*, 468-90. Grand Rapids, Mich., no date.]

Such has been the influence upon Western minds of the Syrian Messiah, Abbas Effendi, whose doctrines are mystical and symbolical, but kindly, sincere, and charged with pious zeal. [The best account of his teachings is that given by Myron H. Phelps, *Life and Teachings of Abbas Effendi: A Study of the Religion of the Babís, or Beha'ís Founded by the Persian Bab and His Successors, Beha Ullah and Abbas Effendi*. Putnam, 1912. Second edition. See also art., Babism in New Inter. Ency., and article on Baháism in America, published in *The American Journal of Theology*, Jan., 1902, p. 57-8.]

Though Baháism best flourishes on Syrian and other foreign soil whence it has been transported, messianic hope has not departed from Persia. In the royal stables of Persia,

it is said, two horses are kept saddled in readiness for the Mahdi and for his lieutenant, Jesus the son of Mary. [E. W. Latimer, op. cit., 76.]

One who travelled through Syria some thirty years ago gives the following description:

“ In my time there were two Christs in Syria ; one of them a second-sighted admirable person of the Persian religion, had been laid by the Ottoman government in ‘ little-ease ’ at Gaza. The other was between ignorant block and mystical hypocrite, a religious dreamer at large. Born in the Christian religion, this man was by turns Jew and Mohammedan ; ‘ he had God’s name,’ he told me in a terrific voice, ‘ sculptured between his two eyebrows.’ This divine handwriting, be it understood, was in Arabic ; that is he had dimples, as a triglyph, or somewhat resembling the trace (in Arabic) Allah. Herein he would covertly convey, among us Christians, was his mystical name, divine ! and he was himself Messiah of the second appearing. He was born in Latakia, and in this also, through barbarous ignorance of the Greek letters, he found a witness of the Scriptures unto himself. He prophesied to them with a lofty confidence, that the day was toward, when he should ride forth from Damascus’ horsemarket unto his eternal glory, and, all things being fulfilled in himself, the children of Adam should return unto their Lord God, to be manifested in the whole world. He was a Moslem among the Moslemin. I heard their ribalds deride this self-godded man upon a time as I walked with him in their cathedral mosque, and he went on saying (especially where we met with any simple hareem, near the gates) in an immense murmured voice, ‘ How great is Mohammed ! yea, O ye people ! he is the Apostle of Allah ! ’ They mocked him with ‘ Hail, Neby ! ’ Of the Christians no man trusted him. Yet I have heard simple women, half in awe of a man of so high pretense, beg of him to foresay to them the event of these dangerous times,—‘ whether the Nasara would be massacred ? ’ And he in mighty tones prophesied to them comfortable things ; he said they should have no hurt, these troubles should assuage shortly and Christ’s kingdom be established. Also he could show, unto

any faithful which resorted to him in certain hours, the testimony of miracles; for with solemn gesture, the divine man waved his hands over a little water, then he breathed in mystic wise, and spread his hands, and behold it was made wine: and such had been seen by a simple Christian person of my familiar acquaintance. Upon a time finding him in the street I bade him wend with me of his charity, to the house of fools, el-Moristan; by his holy power with God, we might heal a mad body: he granted. There entering, when we had passed bars and gates he received from the porter a cup of water in his hand, and led me confidently to the poor men in durance. He had promised if we found any raging one, with only the name of Allah to appease him: but as all was still, he approached a poor man who sat in a cage, and enquired his name and country and condition. The sad prisoner answered to all things well and civilly; and the blatant man of God, when he cried Allah! and breathed with an awesomeness upon the water, gave him through the bars his bowl, bidding him drink measurably thereof, and if the Lord would he should come to his health: the unhappy man received it very thankfully. 'Thou hast seen!' (said this doer of miracles), 'now we may return.' After a week he sent me his divine word that the dangerous madcap had mended, and was 'about to be sent home as a man in his right mind';—and *I did not believe him!* This wonder-worker, after walking through all Christian sects and Judaism, had gone over to the Mohammedan profession, in that hoping, said his Christian neighbors, to come again to his own: and this was, after he had put out his little patrimony at an iniquitous usury, to insolvent Moslems:—they having devoured the Nasrany's good, derided him; and a Christian has little or no hope in the Mohammedan judgment seats. The forlorn had fallen between the stools of his natural and his adopted religions, and his slender living was passed from his own into other shrews' hands; and there was all his grief: the apostate found no charity in either. The Christian people's whisper even imputed to him an atrocious guilt. In better days a boy had served him, and he was known to beat him more and more. Some while after, when the boy was

miration when they saw him boldly pushing forward with his meagre retinue against a powerful enemy. He affected independence of all earthly assistance, placing his sole reliance on the Heavenly Hosts who were fighting on his side. The boldness of his advance fired the latent fanaticism of the people and a wave of religious enthusiasm overcame every prejudice. Young men and old women, and even children, flocked to the standard of the leader under whose direction they were to gain rich loot in this world or attain Paradise in the next. The fanatics fought bravely for eight days, fully entitling those that fell to any reward that such a death may bring. [Viscount Fincastle and P. C. Elliott-Lockhardt, *A Frontier Campaign*, 28-9. G. C. Narang, *Transition of Sikhism Into a Political Organization*, 1-3. Lahore, India, 1910. H. L. Nevill, *Campaigns on the North-West Frontier*, 249-50.]

Gokul Chand Narang, in a study of "The Transition of Sikhism into a Political Organization," has shown, not only that this transition is real, but that it had its beginnings early in the history of that order and developed gradually from the time of Gurn Nanak, at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Gurn Nanak saw in religious revival the only remedy that could save the Hindu community of his day from impending destruction. The condition of the Hindus in the Punjab at that time was deplorable. Nearly every vestige of their greatness had disappeared. Centuries of invasion, foreign misrule, and persecution, had produced the greatest depression. Spiritual subjection and stagnation had greatly augmented the demoralization. Nanak was the first among the Hindus to raise his voice against the tyranny and oppression which were the climax of centuries of oppression. He leavened Hindu thought throughout the Punjab by pointing out the necessity of linking faith and hope with works and daring. [See also W. Crooke, in art. Hinduism, Hastings' E.R.E., VI, 707. J. P. Jones, *India, Its Life and Thought*, 62-6. New York, 1908.] The Sikh community gradually passed from a group of religious mystics into an army, and from a sect into a nation. [Pratt, op. cit., 247.] And yet not until Sir W. W. Hunter wrote *Our Indian*

Mussulmans, was the political danger accompanying religious revivals recognized!

The evolution of the Arya Samaj recalls very forcibly that of Sikhism — at first merely organized religious and moral reform, soon developing into a formidable political if not a formidable military movement. [Sir Valentine Chirol, op. cit., 117. London, 1901. Jones, op. cit., Ch. XIII. Arya Samaj in Hastings' E.R.E., II, 57-61. Brahma Samaj, *Ib.*, 813-24.] There seems some foundation for the statement credited to William II, the present German Emperor (1918), that "all religious movements are in reality political movements."

Hungry souls, like hungry stomachs, are prompt to violence.

It was when the ancient political framework of Indian society was undergoing a fundamental change that we find the ideas regarding Gotama and his mission crystallizing into new shape. Patriarchial societies developed into autocratic kingship. Then arose the hope for the ideal monarch, the Chakka-vatti, king of kings, irresistible and mighty, who would rule in righteousness over a happy people. [Rhys Davids, *Lectures*, etc., 129-30. Analogies might be pointed out in Judaism.]

Persia

The Bab which appeared at Ispahan during the last century, may himself, as Sell believes, have had no political aspirations, and perhaps until his death the Babis were interested mainly in religious reform. Yet even before his death his followers, in their despair and despondency, had turned upon the Government — as has frequently occurred among Mohammedan sects in Africa and in India. However much the political aspirations of the earlier sect may be minimized, as, for example, by their greatest apologist, Prof. Browne, the potentiality of political development is incisively present. Although in recent years this religious order has fomented no political troubles, "To the politician the matter is not devoid of importance; for what changes may not be effected

in a country now reckoned almost as a cypher in the balance of national forces by a religion capable of evoking so mighty a spirit? Let those who know what Muhammed made the Arabs, consider well what the Bab may yet make the Persians." [Browne, *Episode of the Bab*, lit. IX. Cambridge, 1891. Sell, *Essays on Islam*, 72. E. C. Sykes, *Persia and Its People*, 36, 140-3. A. V. W. Jackson, *Persia, Past and Present*, 48-50, 376. Art. (by Browne) on Bab, in Hastings' E.R.E., and in the Ency. Britt.]

Although Abbas Effendi recommended abstention from politics, his followers were accused of instigating the Constitutional Movement in Persia. [E. G. Browne, *The Persian Revolution of 1905-9*. Cambridge, 1910.]

China and Tibet

Oriental wisdom frequently has a turn for practical affairs. Many years ago the Chinese government gave practical recognition to the political force embodied in religious movements by requiring that a register of all the incarnate gods in the Chinese empire be kept in the Colonial Office at Peking. "The number of gods who have thus far taken out a license is one hundred and sixty. Tibet is blessed with thirty of them, northern Mongolia rejoices in nineteen, and southern Mongolia basks in the sunshine of no less than fifty-seven. The Chinese government, with a paternal solicitude for the welfare of its subjects, forbids the gods on the register to be re-born anywhere but in Tibet. They fear lest the birth of a god in Mongolia should have serious political consequences by stirring the dormant patriotism and warlike spirit of the Mongols, who might rally around an ambitious native deity of royal lineage and seek to win for him at the point of the sword, a temporal as well as a spiritual kingdom. But besides these public or licensed gods there are a great many little private gods, or unlicensed practitioners of divinity, who work miracles and bless their people in holes and corners; and of late years the Chinese government has winked at the rebirth of these pettifogging deities outside of Tibet. However, once they are born, the

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