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**AND**  
**NON-CHRISTIAN**  
**RELIGIONS**  
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## BABISM, OR BAHAIISM.

Within the past century there has arisen a system of belief known as "Babism," which demands our attention. It was founded by Mirza Ali Mohammed, who was born October 9, 1820, at Shiraz, in the south of Persia. He was a descendant of Mohammed and belonged to the Mohammedan sect called Sayid. He took the name Bab, meaning a "gate" and signifying that the "Son of Truth," the "Illuminated One," had come.

In 1843, while living near Bagdad, the Bab began to advocate his doctrine. He had studied under various renowned Mohammedan teachers, but he aspired to found a new system of his own. One day he suddenly announced himself as the "promised guide." He produced 20,000 verses in Persian and Arabic which constitute the "Beyan" or "Babite" Bible. His first disciple was converted May 23, 1844, and the new teaching spread over Persia.

In 1848, the Bab and his followers were in open rebellion against their persecutors. Horrible cruelties were inflicted upon them, many being slowly burned or sawed to death. The Babists made a brave resistance but were defeated, and on July 8, 1850, Mirza Ali Mohammed was slain at Tabriz.

In 1852 an attempt was made on the Shah's life, which resulted in a fresh inhuman persecution of the Babists. The boldness and fervency of the martyrs, together with their declarations and teachings caused Babism to increase in spite of the efforts to suppress it.

The Bab is declared to have led a respectable life. His teachings are more humane than those practiced by the Mohammedans. Dr. Shedd of Urumiah, Persia, gives the following gist of his teaching: "There is a community of brotherly love, dignity combined with courtesy; leisure with labor; the cultivation of all useful arts and the prohibition of all that are useless; elevation of women; general elementary education; provision for the poor, strict prohibition of mendicancy and tramps; children treated with gentleness; animals with kindness; no persecution for conscience sake."

The Bahai conception of the supreme being is not a personality, but an essence, an all-pervading force of power, frequently referred to as love, or truth or life."

Modern Babism has as one of its great leaders Abbas Effendi, a resident of Haifa, Palestine. He is a marvel at compromising. No one need to change or leave his church or sect to become a Babist. "It recognizes as equally divine in origin with itself, every other religion." He has advised Christians that they do not need to leave their churches, but that they may remain in them and teach Babism. The system is breaking down Mohammedanism and giving more freedom to the people to learn about Christianity.

Babism has a few adherents in the United States. It is gaining the same kind of a following as have other Oriental religions which have endeavored to gain a foothold in America. Their teachings are drawn from Hinduism, Pantheism, Sufism and even Christianity. "The deity is called Maana, the meaning or reality of all things."

Robert E. Speer has an excellent chapter on "The Religion of the Bab," in volume I of his work entitled "Missions and Modern History." Some of the above items of history are from this chapter. Mr. Speer's presentation of the subject is very valuable.

## JAINISM OF INDIA.

The Jains stand seventh in the numerical classification by adherents of the nine religions of India. Some writers claim that Jainism was contemporary with Buddhism, both being the outcome of a simultaneous revolt against Hinduism. Others say that it was originated about 1,000 years ago by a Buddhist priest, when a number of people broke away from Buddhism.

Jainism possesses characteristics similar to both Hinduism and Buddhism. Like the Brahmans, the Jains recognize the distinctions of caste, worship some of the gods of the Hindu pantheon and resemble Hindus in their family rites, weddings, and funeral ceremonies, their reverence for the cow, their fasts and pilgrimages. Like the Buddhists they carry their reverence for animal life to an extreme. Their devotees brush their pathway, strain their drinking water and wear a cloth over their mouths for fear they may tread upon, swallow or inhale some living thing. They are noted for their animal hospitals in which diseased cows and horses, cats, dogs and even insects are housed, being considered sacred because they possess the principle of life. "Snakes are not excluded, but children are not admitted." Bishop Thoburn writes that "even vermin are tolerated and protected."

They reject the Hindu "Vedas" and appeal to their own sacred books called "Agamas," which were begun by their great prophet Vardhamaha, or Mahavira, he being the twenty-fourth of their religious teachers. They believe in the practice of the four virtues of liberality, gentleness, piety, magnanimity and in goodness of thought, word and deed. They worship a number of deified saints whom they call Jina.

The Jains are confined to India. They number about one and one-half million are found in upper Hindustan, in the provinces of Mewar and Marwar; along the Ganges; the Malabar coast and in Calcutta. They call themselves "good Hindus" while the Hindus consider them heterodox. Some speak of them as degenerate Buddhists. Unlike the Sikhs, they are comparatively well educated. Almost all of them are traders and live in cities. Most of them belong to the Banya or Bhabra castes. Their numbers are increasing and they are divided into two orders:—priests and laymen; the former lead a life of abstinence and self-denial. Their widows cannot remarry. There are certain differences among the Jains which govern their dress and decorations.

"Jainism is the only one of the early monastic orders which has survived to the present day in India. It escaped the disasters which overcame Buddhism, partly because its severance from Buddhism was never so complete; partly because it never adopted an active missionary policy, but preferred to practice its peculiar rites in a quiet, unobtrusive fashion.

"The Jain pantheon consists of a body of deified saints, creating a passage through the circuit of life. The ascetic members of the order are known as Jati, who hold no property and never quit their dwellings except to beg for food. Their bodies and clothes are filthy and covered with vermin. The images of the saints, are statues of black and white marble and are represented as nude, but they present none of the indecencies which disfigure the modern Hindu temple. Jains choose for their sanctuaries wooded hills surrounded by lovely scenery."—"Imperial Gazateer of India."