

# **A Survey of World Religions**

## **The Baha'i Faith**

Monthly Taleem Focus Slides  
July 2018

# Baha'i: An Outline

- The Baha'i faith is a rather new entry in the list of religions, founded in 1863 by Mírzá Ḥusayn-`Alí Núrí, later known as Baha'ullah.
- Arose from Babism, a separate religion founded in 1844 by Siyyid `Alí Muhammad Shírází, who called himself the Bab.
  - Babism in itself is a splinter group of the Shaykhi Movement in Twelver Shiaism.
- In this presentation, we'll look into how these three movements fed into each other, learn about their claims, and finally examine some flaws in their ideologies.

# The Conflict Between Islam and Baha'i

- Baha'i adherents claim superiority over Islam and seek to show how Islamic Shariah has been replaced by theirs.
  - Their own shariah is an amalgamation of contradictory ideas and Islamic ideas that have been borrowed and sometimes arbitrarily changed.
- Their founder claimed to be a manifestation of God on Earth, not just a prophet.
- It will be useful for Khuddam to understand the beginnings, teachings, and doctrinal issues of this group.

# Shia Islam

- Believe that the family of the Holy Prophet<sup>saw</sup> through the descendants of Hazrat Ali<sup>ra</sup> should be the leaders of the Ummah.
  - Argue that the Holy Prophet<sup>saw</sup> himself wanted Hazrat Ali<sup>ra</sup> to succeed him.
- Reject the first three Khulafa-e-Rashideen and accept Hazrat Ali<sup>ra</sup> as their first Khalifa and Imam.
- Believe in such ideas as abrogation of the Holy Quran, taqiyya (lying in matters of faith to escape persecution), and a line of Imams that were appointed by God for the guidance of the community.

# Twelvers: The Largest Sect of Shia Islam

- This sect believes that 12 Imams, starting with Hazrat Ali <sup>(ra)</sup>, followed the Holy Prophet <sup>(saw)</sup>.
- According to their creed, the 11<sup>th</sup> Imam, Hasan al-Aksari, had a son whom he kept hidden due to a crackdown on Shi'ism by the Abassid Caliphate.
  - This son is the 12<sup>th</sup> Imam and he has been in hiding, but alive, since the 9<sup>th</sup> century.
    - He will appear to fight Ad-Dajjal in the latter days with Hazrat Isa <sup>(as)</sup>
  - The technical term for this belief is Ghaybah, or The Occultation.

# The Shaykhi Movement

- Founded by Shaykh Ahmad in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century after differing with mainstream Twelver Shias.
  - Died after two years of founding the movement.
  - Taught that he was a messenger of the Hidden Mahdi
- Succeeded by Sayyid Kazim Rashti, who asked his followers to begin searching for the Hidden Mahdi.
- Ali Muhammad Shírází had accepted Shaykhism and informed others in the movement that he was the Bab, an awaited personage who would precede the return of the Mahdi, much like John the Baptist signaled the return of the first Messiah.

# Babism

- Ali Muhammad Shírází taught that the law of Islam had come to an end, and that he had begun a new cycle of prophethood.
- Claimed to be the awaited Mahdi
- Claimed that his work, called the Bayan, was a revealed book and that it replaced the Quran.
  - Died before completing the book
  - Highly political and violent work which stated that no other religious work should be followed and all other books should be burnt
- Shirazi taught that “heads should be cut off, books and leaves burnt, places demolished and laid waste, and a general slaughter made” (Makatib Abdul Baha, Vol II, page 266).
- Was imprisoned for inciting his followers to fight against the government of Iran, and subsequently executed in 1850.

# Baha'i

- Mirza Husain Ali, who later called himself Baha Ullah, read a prophecy of Muhammad Shirazi about the advent of another individual sent by God, he claimed to be said personage and took leadership of the community
- Exiled to Akka, Palestine (now Acre, Israel) due to the ensuing clashes between the groups that had formed as a result of his succession.
  - Husain Ali was placed in prison under very harsh conditions until the death of the Ottoman Sultan who exiled him, after which he remained confined to Acre.
- Finding his predecessor's work insufficient, wrote a book called Kitab-e-Aqdas, claiming that it superseded the Bayan and all other religious texts.
- Died in 1892 in Israel as a prisoner of the Ottoman Empire.

# Baha'i Shariah

- Some tenants of the Baha'i Shariah are as follows:
  - 3 obligatory prayers of 9 rak'ats each
  - No pardah
  - No congregational prayer except in the case of a funeral
  - Face the direction of Acre, Israel during prayer (the place where Hussain Ali died)
  - Fast for 19 days a few days after the Persian New Year's day, which is celebrated as Eid.
  - All food and drink are allowed to be consumed, including pig and alcohol.

# Issues With Bahai Thought

- Husain Ali claimed to be God, the punishment for which is with God. Bahai's today have interesting ways of getting out of this accusation, but Husain Ali's work speaks for itself:
  - "O Abu Talib! Thou art he who has aimed at the highest goal, and traversed lands and seas until thou didst reach this noble valley in which has been raised the voice of the Glorious one saying that there is no God but I the protector of all that exists and all that shall exist."
    - <http://www.reviewofreligions.org/wp-content/pdf-downloads/RR190711.pdf#page=1>
- The religion itself has changed in a short period of time. Baha'is consider Ali Muhammad Shirazi to be the Mahdi, but they do not follow the book he wrote. If the religion were perfect, there would have been no need for Husain Ali to render his predecessor's work obsolete.

# Baha'i Current Leadership

- Baha'is have no system of successorship.
  - Hussain Ali was succeeded by his son and grandson, but after this the community could not find a way to properly appoint a new leader.
- Currently governed by The Universal House of Justice in Haifa, Israel which consists of 9 members.
  - They have the authority to legislate matters not clearly stated in their law.

# Learn More

- To gain a deeper understanding of the Baha'i faith and their false claims, see the following links:
  - <https://www.alislam.org/library/books/babi-and-bahai.pdf>
  - <http://www.reviewofreligions.org/tag/notable-personalities-bahauallah/>