

Brief Notes on Bahaism

Background:

- Evolved from the Baabi movement in 1844 at the 1000th year anniversary of the disappearance of the 12th Shi'ite Imām
- It was founded by Sayed 'Ali Muhammad Shiraazi (1819-50), who became known as the Bab, or "Gate." He earned this label because his followers saw him as the "Gate of the Hidden Imam," although they later regarded him as the "Gate of God", the Hidden Imam himself.
- Shirazi was executed in 1850. Before he died, he prophesied that a figure would soon come and would be called "Him whom God shall make manifest."
- One of the Shirazi's followers who was exiled during the rounds of persecution was Mirza Husayn 'Ali Nuri, and in 1864 he proclaimed himself to be the prophet foretold by t Shirazi. He died in Bahji, near Haifa, now in Israel, in 1892.
- Most Babis were either killed, started following Nuri (later known as Bahais), or simply went to some other religion. Those who remained Babis followed the leader of the time, Subh-i Azal, and their holy book, the Bayan (Declaration).
- On the death of Bahauallah, the movement came under the leadership of his eldest son 'Abbas Effendi (1844-1921), who acquired the title 'Abd al-Baha (servant of the glory of God).
- 'Abbas Effendi was succeeded by his grandson, Shoghi Effendi (1897-1957), who directed his energies into developing the Baha'i communities in Europe and North America. Under his leadership, the Baha'i community came to be organized within a system based on local and national assemblies. When he died in 1957, he left no heirs, and the movement's organization was placed under the jurisdiction of a body known as the Council of the Hands of the Cause.
- In 1962, the International House of Justice was established in Haifa as their headquarters. This body is re-elected every five years.

The claims of Bahauallah

- Bahauallah taught that Allah had become manifest in many different forms such as Nabi Ibrahim (a.s), Nabi Moosa (a.s), Zoroaster, the Buddha, Nabi Isa (a.s), Nabi Muhammad +, the Baab and Bahauallah himself. Bahauallah is not, however, the final and definitive manifestation of God. Other prophets will come, but not for at least 1000 years.
- Bahauallah mentions in Aqdas, page 43, "There is no God but I the Honoured, the Wise."
- He again writes in Aqdas, page 144 "Accept whatever is commanded by Baha (himself) the Lord of Eternity."
- In Aqdas, page 8, Bahauallah says, "We have sent down all the Messengers and we have revealed all the Books."

The claims of Bab and his followers

- Initially he claimed to be the Baab (Gate) of Mahdi
- He claimed to be Mahdi himself
- He also claimed to be the incarnation of Nabi Muhammad +
- Finally, he claimed to be Allah

Claims of Gender Equality

Amongst the many doctrines adopted by the Bahais to attract converts to their fold is the concept of "Advancing the Status of Women". Bahais are often found to shout themselves hoarse over this concept as if they were the first to put forth the concept of equality of men and women. The Bahais use this doctrine very aggressively to secure a place in the minds of the people of today's liberal world.

However, a question arises here....

Why has the Universal House of Justice - the apex governing body of the Bahai Faith - never had any female representation? This is not due to the lack of qualified women amongst the Bahai Faith. Rather women are expressly debarred from becoming members of the Universal House of Justice!

Please note that leave alone equality, Bahauallah did not deem fit to give any position to women. It is clear from above that neither in the past (Bab, Bahauallah) nor in the present (UHJ), were women considered equal to men.

One Universal Language

The Bahai Faith has introduced the idea of having an auxiliary language. This is an important Bahai principle which claims to be a step towards bringing world peace, as Abdul Baha has been quoted to have said: "One of the great steps towards universal peace would be the establishment of a universal language." - (Paris Talks, The Eighth Principle)

Bahauallah wanted Arabic, Abdul Baha backs Esperanto, while the Universal House of Justice recommends English. With so much confusion amongst the leaders in the first 150 years itself, makes one wonder if this could ever be called a divine commandment.

Bahaism in South Africa

In a message to the gathering, held at the national Baha'i center on 12 November, former South African President Thabo Mbeki said, "We are...greatly encouraged by the fact that as you have responded to the challenges of human development you have sought not only to deliver services but also to nurture the capacity of all human beings to develop themselves, including their morality."

"We are honoured and feel greatly strengthened that we have members of the Baha'i Faith in our country and among us," he added.

The Baha'i Faith in South Africa began with the holding of Baha'i meetings in the country in 1911. A small population of Bahais remained until 1950 when large numbers of international Bahai pioneers settled in South Africa. In 1956, after members of various tribes in South Africa became Bahais, a

regional Bahai Assembly which included South Africa was elected. Later each of the constituent countries successively formed their own independent Bahai National Spiritual Assembly. Then in 1995, after a prolonged period of growth and oppression during Apartheid and the homelands reuniting with South Africa, the Bahai National Spiritual Assembly of South Africa was formed. In 2005 Bahai were estimated at about 240 100 adherents in South Africa.

The Bahai Faith and Shi'ism.

- The Babi and Bahai scriptures support the Shi'ite interpretation of the events of early Islamic history by upholding the baseless claims that Sayyidunā Ali was usurped of religious and temporal leadership after Muhammad, as well as the succession of Imams among the descendants of 'Ali.
- The Baha'i Faith was born into a Shi'ite environment in Iran and almost all of the early converts were from Shi'ite background. Thus, in the same way a number of Jewish institutions were grown up within Christianity, some of the institutions of Shi'ism were carried forward into the Baha'i Faith. Some of the teachings of the Baha'i Faith are also to be found in embryonic form in Shi'ism.
- The Shi'ite practice of visiting the shrines of the Imams and the family of the Imams, together with the reading of Tablets of Visitation, finds parallels with the Baha'i pilgrimage to Haifa and the reading of Tablets of Visitation at the shrines there. Baha'is also visit the graves of prominent Baha'is and locations associated with Baha'i history.
- A great deal has been written by both the central figures of the Babi and Baha'i Faith and by their followers seeking to establish that the Bab and Baha'u'llah fulfill the Shi'ite prophecies relating to the appearance of the Hidden Twelfth Imam.
- The Baha'is are using verses of the Holy Quran and the Ahaadeeth to prove that the appearance of the new prophet will take place in Akaa, a city of Syria. From amongst the many verses, which they use, are: "And listen attentively to the day when a proclaimer shall call out from a near place, the day when they will hear the truth. That is the day of emergence." The closest land to the Arabian Peninsula is the plains of Syria.

They also believe that Nabi + had determined the place in a Hadeeth which they quote often: "Glad tidings to that person who has seen Akaa." These are such fabrications that do not warrant discussion.

However, in Akaa, they lived amongst the Jews where they were highly influenced. This led to the termination of the link between them and Islam.

BAHAISM WHICH ORIGINATED FROM SHI'ISM THUS BECAME A NEW EDITION OF JUDAISM AND ZIONISM.

Baha proclaimed that all men belonged to one religion and one homeland. He therefore called towards one religion, which is a combination of all religions and creeds.