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BĀBISM. *See* Bahā'ī.

BAHĀ' ALLĀH. *See* Bahā'ī.

BAHĀ'Ī. It is debatable whether an article on "Bahā'ī" should appear in an encyclopedia on Islam, since the members of the Bahā'ī Faith, and increasingly scholars of religion, regard it as a separate religion. Insofar as the religion was founded in the Islamic world and has historically interacted with that world, it can, however, be considered as having roots in that cultural realm, even though it has developed Islamic terms and concepts well beyond their evolution within the Islamic civilization.

The origins of the Bahā'ī Faith lie in the Bābī movement in Iran, founded by Sayyid 'Alī Muḥammad Shīrāzī, the Bāb (1819–1850). The Shī'ī clerical class of Iran perceived this movement as a direct threat to their interests. They initiated, and then dragged the state into, a campaign of persecution that saw three major upheavals in different parts of Iran in 1848–1850, where government troops were pitted against the Bābīs for months. A small group of Bābīs then attempted to assassinate the shah in 1852.

The intense persecution that followed the attempted assassination drove the movement underground, but it was to reemerge less than two decades later transformed into the Bahā'ī Faith, founded by Bahā' Allāh (Mīrzā Ḥusayn 'Alī Nūrī, 1817–1892). Bahā' Allāh had been exiled as a leading Bābī to Baghdad by the Iranian government in 1853 and, at the insistence of the Iranian government, was subsequently exiled by the Ottoman government further away from the Iranian border to Istanbul (1863), Edirne (1863), and 'Akkā (1868). He advanced his claim to be the founder of a new religion, at first to a small number of followers in 1863, and then more openly in 1866. A very small group of Bābīs (probably about 5 percent of surviving Bābīs) rejected Bahā' Allāh's claim and followed the leadership of his half-brother Mīrzā Yaḥyā Azal. The Azalī Bābīs played an important role in the Iranian Constitutional Revolution of 1906–1911 but were never a structured religious community.

From the 1870s onwards, Bahā' Allāh and his son and successor, 'Abd-al-Bahā' ('Abbās Effendi, 1844–1921), began to issue books and treatises on the social reforms needed in both the Middle East and the world as a whole. The topics covered