

# 19<sup>th</sup> Century Mystics

Part 2: Non-Christian  
based movements

## **The list of actors**

- ⦿ **Phineas Quimby and New Thought**
- ⦿ **Mírzá Ḥusayn-`Alí Núrí and Bahá'í**
- ⦿ **Paschal Randolph and the Rosicrucians**
- ⦿ **Helena Blavatsky and Theosophy**
- ⦿ **Mirza Ahmad and Ahmadiyya Muslims**
- ⦿ **Swami Vivekananda and Vedanta**

## **Phineas Quimby and New Thought**

- Born 1802 into working class
- Tuberculosis as child
- Doctor treatments not effective
- He purportedly cured himself with his mind
- Career as watchmaker, inventor; holds several patents

Quimby followed Charles Poyen, a French mesmerist in the tradition of Puysegur

## **Phineas Quimby**

- ◉ Attracted to mesmerist Charles Poyen at age 36
- ◉ Followed for two years until he was proficient at hypnotism
- ◉ Went on tour in 1840 hypnotizing Lucius Burkmar
- ◉ Began to heal people through mesmerism, faith healing

Quimby followed Charles Poyen, a French mesmerist in the tradition of Puysegur

## **Phineas Quimby**

- ⦿ **Quimby did not use prayer or refer to God**
- ⦿ **Did not publish ideas**
- ⦿ **Trained others in his methods**
- ⦿ **New Thought organizations begun by his students:**
  - > **Christian Science or Church of Christ Scientist**
  - > **Unity Church**
  - > **Church of Divine Science**
  - > **Religious Science/Science of Mind**

Mary Baker Eddy started Christian Science. They claim all is spirit/mind. Physical is illusion, more or less. They call themselves Christians and have molded their beliefs to fit into the teaching of Christ.

Charles Filmore and his wife Myrtle started Unity, aka Unity Church. Their beliefs do not include the Trinity and Divine nature of Christ but see Christ as an example of one who understood and used the power of the mind.

Malinda Cramer and Nona Brooks started Church of Divine Science in 1888. They modified Christian Science to include doctor consultations.

Ernest Holmes founded Institute of Religious Science as a teaching institute and published his book *Science of Mind* both in 1926. It later became Church of Religious Science.

All of these are considered part of the New Thought movement. Except for Christian Science they are explicitly pantheistic. They all include Christ as part of their belief system, Christian Science more directly. Unity and Religious Science less directly

## Mírzá Ḥusayn-`Alí Núrí

- Born 1817 in Tehran, Persia (Iran)
- Father a Governor of province
- Three wives and fourteen children, five died young
- Began following Siyyid Mírzá `Alí-Muḥammad, aka Báb, at age 27, a Shia Muslim who claimed he was the Mahdi and that another Promised One will soon be here

Hadith prophecy – the Mahdi will come; he will be such and such....

Some Muslims believe Jesus will return with the Mahdi to lead a military jihad that will lead to theocratic rule over earth

## **Mírzá Ḥusayn-`Alí Núrí**

- ⦿ **Báb executed in 1850 after making his declaration public**
- ⦿ **In 1852 some Báb followers tried to execute the Shah**
- ⦿ **Báb followers killed or imprisoned**
- ⦿ **Mírzá Ḥusayn-`Alí Núrí imprisoned**

## Mírzá Ḥusayn-`Alí Núrí

- Mystical experience in prison revealed that he was the Promised One
- Released from prison after plotter confessed
- Exiled to Iraq (part of Ottoman empire), where conflict with his brother who was the new leader of movement vs himself the de facto leader
- Left for Kurdistan, lived as a hermit 2 yrs

Brother publicly disavowed movement.

Mírzá Ḥusayn-`Alí Núrí was seen as religious leader, although he did not share revelation at this time.

## Mírzá Ḥusayn-`Alí Núrí

- Mirza Husayn returns to Baghdad in 1856
- Mirza Yahya poor leadership so Mirza Husayn takes control
- Persia officials try to extradite him but Ottoman officials decide to move him to Constantinople
- Before leaving he reveals his mission to twelve followers in Garden of Ridvan

Mirza Yahya sent second group to assassinate the Shah

Bahá'ís regard this period (right before going to Constantinople) with great significance and celebrate the twelve days that Bahá'u'lláh spent in this Garden as the festival of Ridvan

the period of messianic secrecy between when he claimed to have seen the Maiden of Heaven in the Síyáh-Chál and his declaration as the *ayyam-i butun* ("Days of Concealment").

## Bahá'u'lláh (the glory of God)

- ⦿ Takes on new name - Bahá'u'lláh
- ⦿ Forms Baha'i' faith
- ⦿ Doesn't cooperate with Ottoman officials in Constantinople
- ⦿ Exiled to Adrianople (European Turkey)
- ⦿ Brother plots three attempts on his life
- ⦿ Brother challenges him to a test of divine will at mosque but backs down

Less than a year in Constantinople  
Four and one-half years in Adrianople

## Bahá'u'lláh

- Brother tries to get Ottoman rulers to jail Bahá'u'lláh, but only succeeds in getting both exiled
- Bahá'u'lláh exiled to Acre, Palestine, for last 24 years of life.
- Lived in prison for about a decade before moving into much nicer Mansion of Bahjí
- Wrote letters to virtually all world leaders

## Letters to world leaders

- Listen to my call
- Cast away material possessions
- Rule with justice
- Protect downtrodden
- Reduce armaments
- Reconcile differences

Later when Bahá'u'lláh was in Acre, he continued writing letters to the leaders of the world including:[47]

Pope Pius IX

Napoleon III, Emperor of France

Alexander II, Tsar of Russia

Wilhelm I, King in Prussia

Queen Victoria, Queen of Great Britain and Ireland

Franz Joseph, Emperor of Austria-Hungary

Sultan 'Abdu'l-'Azíz of the Ottoman Empire

Násiri'd-Dín Sháh of the Persian Empire

Rulers of America and the Presidents of the republics therein

the rulers of the earth were asked to listen to Bahá'u'lláh's call, and cast away their material possessions, and since they were given the reins of government that they should rule with justice and protect the rights of the downtrodden. He also told the rulers to reduce their armaments and reconcile their differences. The Christian monarchs were also asked to be faithful to Jesus' call to follow the promised "Spirit of Truth."

## Bahá'í beliefs

- Bahá'u'lláh a messenger of God, manifestation of God, intermediary between God and man. NOT divinity.
- Fulfills the messianic prophecies in all religions
- Bahá'u'lláh works amount to 15 times Old and New Testament combined; considered sacred texts
- 8 Million adherents; fastest growing religion in last 100 years

Prophecies fulfilled: from Judaism, the incarnation of the "Everlasting Father" from the Yuletide prophecy of Isaiah 9:6, the "Lord of Hosts"; from Christianity, the "Spirit of Truth" or Comforter predicted by Jesus in his farewell discourse of John 14-17 and the return of Christ "in the glory of the Father"; from Zoroastrianism, the return of Shah Bahram Varjavand, a Zoroastrian messiah predicted in various late Pahlavi texts; from Shi'a Islam the return of the Third Imam, Imam Husayn; from Sunni Islam, the return of Jesus (Isa);[61] and from Bábism, He whom God shall make manifest the Kalki avatar, who in the classical Hindu Vaishnavas tradition is the tenth and final Avatar (great incarnation) of Vishnu who will come to end The Age of Darkness and Destruction.<sup>[2]</sup> Bahá'ís also believe that Bahá'u'lláh is the fulfilment of the prophecy of appearance of the Maitreya Buddha, who is a future Buddha who will eventually appear on earth, achieve complete enlightenment, and teach the pure Dharma

## Bahá'í beliefs

- Monotheistic
- Spiritual Unity of all mankind
- Unity of religion, accepts validity of all established religions
- Unity of humanity
- Unity in diversity
- Equality of man and woman

While the religion was initially seen as a sect of Islam, most religious specialists now see it as an independent religion, with its religious background in Shi'a Islam being seen as analogous to the Jewish context in which Christianity was established. Muslim institutions and clergy, both Sunni and Shia, consider Bahá'ís to be deserters or apostates from Islam, which has led to Bahá'ís being persecuted.<sup>1</sup>

## **Rosicrucian Disputed History**

- ◎ **Rosicrucian Order created in 46 by Ormus and six others after converted by Mark .... or**
- ◎ **Started in 1313 or 1407 by German Christian Rosenkreuz ...or**
- ◎ **Started in 1530 at the Convent of the Order of Christ in Portugal, home of the Knights Templar... or**
- ◎ **Started in 1607 in Germany via a manifesto containing Legend of Rosenkreuz**

The Rosicrucian Manifestos of 1607 heralded a "Universal Reformation of Mankind", through a science allegedly kept secret for decades until the intellectual climate might receive it.

With the Dark Ages behind them, Renaissance scholars began a fresh examination of the wisdom of the ancient world, and therein they discovered forgotten gems of knowledge, which they polished and placed in new settings. These various jewels of wisdom are collectively known as the Western Esoteric Tradition.

Controversies have arisen on whether they were a hoax, whether the "order of the Rosy Cross" existed as described in the Manifestos, or whether the whole thing was a metaphor disguising a movement that really existed, but in a different form. By promising a spiritual transformation at a time of great turmoil, the Manifestos tempted many figures to seek esoteric knowledge. The manifestos were and are not taken literally by many but rather regarded either as hoaxes or as allegorical statements. The idea gave rise to the Invisible College. This was the precursor to the Royal Society founded in 1660.

Around 1530, more than eighty years before the publication of the first manifesto, the association of cross and rose already existed in Portugal in the Convent of the Order of Christ, home of the Knights Templar, later renamed Order of Christ.

It is accepted by some that the manifestos were written by Lutheran theologian Johann Valentin Andreae (1586–1654), inspired perhaps by discussions with learned associates from Tübingen University who, like Andreae, were visionary thinkers interested in esoteric subjects and social reform.

## **Modern Rosicrucian Groups**

- ⊙ **Goal: Prepare world for new phase**
- ⊙ **Esoteric Christian**
  - > **Based on scripture of New Testament**
- ⊙ **Masonic**
  - > **Use rites of Masonic lodges**
- ⊙ **Mystical**
  - > **Have programs for initiates**

Esoteric Christian - twelve exalted Beings gathered around a thirteenth, Christian Rosenkreuz. These great Adepts have already advanced far beyond the cycle of rebirth; their mission is to prepare the *whole wide world* for a new phase in religion—which includes awareness of the inner worlds and the subtle bodies

## **Rosicrucian Teachings**

- ⦿ **Awakening of Humankind's Spiritual Faculties**
- ⦿ **Focus on Inner Worlds**
- ⦿ **Awareness of Subtle Bodies**
- ⦿ **Guidance into Age of Aquarias**

## **Rosicrucians in America**

- ◎ **Fraternitas Rosae Crucis founded in 1858 by Paschal Randolph, African American,**
- ◎ **Societas Rosicruciana in America established in 1878**
- ◎ **American Rosicrucian Order claim to be oldest, formed in 1764 in Louisiana**

Randolph traveled over much of Europe and Middle East when young seeking out occultists.

Randolph founded Fraternitas Rosae Crucis in 1858

Societas Rosicruciana in America established in 1878. Reorganized twice, last in 1916. ARO – American Rosicrucian Order claim to be oldest, formed in 1764 in Louisiana.

## **Paschal Randolph**

- ◎ **Born 1825, mixed race, 1/8 African**
- ◎ **Traveled Europe and Middle East studying occult, esoteric systems**
- ◎ **Joined Rosicrucians in Paris**
- ◎ **MD, Occultist, spiritualist, trance medium, writer**
- ◎ **Wrote many books of esoteric nature; one about Pre-Adam man in 1863**

magico-sexual theories and techniques formed the basis of much of the teachings of another occult fraternity, The Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor, although it is not clear that Randolph himself was ever personally associated with the Brotherhood.

Wrote over fifty books, advocated birth control at a time when it was illegal to mention it in many places

largely neglected by historians of esotericism

worked "largely alone", producing "his own synthesis" of "esoteric teachings".<sup>[2]</sup> The manner in which Randolph incorporated sex into his occult system was considered uncharacteristically bold for the period in which he lived

"Ansairitic Mystery - A New Revelation Concerning Sex!":

"The ejective moment, therefore, is the most divine and tremendously important one in the human career as an independent entity; for not only may we launch Genius, Power, Beauty, Deformity, Crime, Idiocy, Shame or Glory on the world's great sea of Life, in the person of the children we may then produce, but we may plunge our own souls neck-deep in Hell's horrid slime, or else mount the Azure as coequal associate Gods; for then the mystic Soul swings wide its Golden gates, opens its portals to the whole vast Universe and through them come trooping either Angels of Light or the Grizzly Presence from the dark corners of the Spaces. Therefore, human copulation is either ascentive and ennobling, or descensive and degrading..."

## **Paschal Randolph**

- ◎ **Introduced "Sex magic" to North America - Rosicrucian Rooms**
- ◎ **Jailed for distribution of "free love" pamphlets**
- ◎ **Influenced Theosophy and Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor**
- ◎ **Death at 49, some say suicide, likely murdered by jealous friend**

Rosicrucian Rooms, San Francisco - *taught* the outer and inner teachings of Dr. Randolph, but they appear to have overlapped from "magick in theory" to "magick in practice

magico-sexual theories and techniques formed the basis of much of the teachings of another occult fraternity, The Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor, although it is not clear that Randolph himself was ever personally associated with the Brotherhood and the *Ordo Templi Orientis*, a Masonic type organization with 13 degrees of initiation, including VII on masturbation, IX on vaginal intercourse, and XI on anal intercourse  
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## **Rosicrucian Influences**

- ◎ **Neoplatonism**
  - > Plato & Gnosticism
- ◎ **Hermetics**
  - > Hermes Trismegistos works
- ◎ **Qabalah**
  - > Sephiroth (ten shperes); Hebrew letters

Influences credited for Rosicrucian ideas.

none is more important to the teachings of the Western Esoteric Tradition and the development of Rosicrucianism than the Qabalah, the mystical philosophy of the Hebrews

## **Neoplatonism**

- ⦿ **God is completely beyond all human knowledge or definition;**
- ⦿ **the world is the result of progressive emanations from God;**
- ⦿ **the soul of man is immortal and incorruptible;**
- ⦿ **the objective of man is to return to God through contemplation of the divine.**

## **Hermetics**

- ◎ **Hermes Trismegistos' forty-two books in two groups**
- ◎ **First: 3rd century BCE - astrology, alchemy, the secret or magical properties of plants and gemstones**
- ◎ **Second: 2nd and 3rd centuries CE, religious philosophy and theurgy. Claims that matter is essential part of creation; man must learn to control it**

**Theurgy** describes the practice of rituals, sometimes seen as magical in nature, performed with the intention of invoking the action or evoking the presence of one or more gods, especially with the goal of uniting with the divine, achieving henosis, and perfecting oneself.

Henosis is the word for mystical "oneness," "union," or "unity" in classical Greek. In Platonism, and especially Neoplatonism, the goal of henosis is union with what is fundamental in reality: the One, the Source, or Monad.

## **Qabalah**

- ◎ **Expounds on**
  - > The origin of the cosmos
  - > The mind and essence of God
  - > The relationship between God and man
- ◎ **Primary glyph of Qabalah is Sephiroth**
  - > Diagram of ten spheres, said to be the outward emanations of God
- ◎ **Hebrews letters divine**
  - > Language is numerical cipher
  - > Scriptures have hidden meanings

Qabalah or “tradition” is a complex philosophy that includes ideas on the origin of the cosmos, the mind and essence of God, and the relationship that exists between God and man. The primary glyph of the Qabalah is a diagram of ten spheres or Sephiroth, said to be the outward emanations of God, which extend down into all things in creation, even into the internal makeup of humanity. Qabalah also considers the letters of the Hebrew alphabet to be divine, and all manner of correspondences and properties are assigned to them. The Qabalistic teachings include a method of reading the Hebrew language as a numerical cipher. Thus, the Hebrew scriptures can be interpreted by Qabalists who know how to extract the hidden or occult meanings of Biblical words and phrases

## **Helena Blavatsky & Theosophy**

- ◎ **Born 1831, aristocracy**
- ◎ **Wild spirit as a youth**
- ◎ **Early exposure to esoteric studies**
- ◎ **World traveler beginning age 17**
- ◎ **Early marriage lasted only months**

"a short, stout, forceful woman, with strong arms, several chins, unruly hair, a determined mouth, and large, liquid, slightly bulging eyes". She had distinctive azure colored eyes, and struggled with obesity throughout her life. In later life, she was known for wearing loose robes, and wore many rings on her fingers She was a heavy cigarette smoker throughout her life, and at times was known for smoking hashish at times. She lived simply and her followers believed that she refused to accept monetary payment in return for disseminating her teachings. Blavatsky preferred to be known by the acronym "HPB, a sobriquet applied to her by many of her friends which was first developed by Olcott. She avoided social functions and was scornful of social obligations.

Biographer Meade believed that Blavatsky perceived herself as a messianic figure whose purpose was to save the world by promoting Theosophy

she discovered the personal library of her maternal great-grandfather, which contained a variety of books on esoteric subjects,  
Married someone 25 years older at age 17, said attracted to him because of his interest in magic

## **Helena Blavatsky (cont.)**

- ⦿ **Twenty five years of travel, undocumented; only her accounts**
- ⦿ **Met mysterious Indian, Morya, in London whom she had seen in a vision in her youth**
- ⦿ **Paranormal abilities claimed, age 27**
- ⦿ **Taught ancient wisdom in Tibet by Morya**

Visited Europe, America – Canada, many states, Mexico, South America, West Indies, India, Tibet, Egypt, Greece, Eastern Europe, Paris, Germany, Turkey, Iran, Afganistan  
London – claims to have been musician in the Royal Philharmonic Society  
Met with Mohawk tribe in Quebec – inspired by Cooper, says she was robbed

## Helena Blavatsky (cont.)

- ◎ **Psychic powers developed in Tibet?**
  - > **clairvoyance, clairaudience, telepathy**
  - > **control another's consciousness**
  - > **dematerialize and rematerialize physical objects**
  - > **project astral bodies**

Many critics and biographers have expressed doubts regarding the veracity of Blavatsky's claims regarding her visits to Tibet, Tibet was closed to Europeans, and visitors faced the perils of bandits and a harsh terrain possibility that she would have been allowed to enter accompanied by Morya,

## **Helena Blavatsky (cont.)**

- ⦿ **Wanted to prove Spiritualist phenomena real**
- ⦿ **Arrives in New York; inherits fortune**
- ⦿ **Marries again; not consummated**
- ⦿ **Joins up with Henry Olcott; together they form the Theosophical Society in 1875**

Often dressed as man; nickname of Jack; some speculate she was a lesbian; others say she died a virgin

## *Isis Unveiled* (1875 work)

- ⦿ Theosophical “Bible”
- ⦿ Wrote in a trance; “the lodger who is in me”
- ⦿ Book has quotes from books that she did not have – eidetic memory?
- ⦿ All religions stem from one “Ancient Wisdom”
- ⦿ Critical of Darwin for ignoring spiritual
- ⦿ Huge commercial success

Not a religion but a single "Ancient Wisdom", which she connected to the Western esotericism of ancient Hermeticism and Neoplatonism

Communicated via mediumistic relationship with The Brothers or Mahatmas, claimed to be spiritual beings who had formerly lived as mortals, but had acquired great wisdom and ascended to a higher plane. From their spirit realm, they looked down upon the earth with compassionate eyes and aided humanity on its path of evolution

Book has negative mainstream press reviews, including from those who highlighted that it extensively quoted around 100 other books without acknowledgement

Many joined the Theosophical Society as a result, including Edison, who gave them a phonograph (invented in 1877)

Publisher wanted a sequel, Blavatsky refused offer.

Other major books *The Secret Doctrine* and *The Key to Theosophy*

## Theosophical Society

- ◉ **Moved to India in 1879**
- ◉ **Joined with Hindu Reform movement**
- ◉ **Investigated for fraud by Society for Psychical Research in 1884 by Richard Hodgson**
- ◉ **Report retracted in 1986. Fraud accusation based on forged letters?**

Hindu Reform movement Arya Samaj, which had been founded by the Swami Dayananda Saraswati; Blavatsky and Olcott believed that the two organisations shared a common spiritual world-view

Hodgson concluded that Blavatsky was a fraud based on a letter supposedly written by Blavatsky to cohorts about tricks to make phenomena happen during séances.

**(mockingly referred to it as the "Spookical Research Society" by Blavatsky)**

The society's Board of Control had accused Emma Coulomb of misappropriating their funds for her own purposes, and asked her to leave their center. She and her husband in response blackmailed the society with letters that they claimed were written by Blavatsky and which proved that her paranormal abilities were fraudulent. The society refused to pay the blackmail.

Claims in letter: Tricks include letters appearing from hidden spaces, instead of materializing out of nothing. Apparitions that were really fake heads in dim light  
Hodgson found no direct evidence other than hidden panels sliding doors in séance room.  
Later Hodgson came to believe in communication with people in the afterlife after investigating Ms. Leonora Piper.

## **Theosophical Society Objectives**

- ◎ **To form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste, or colour.**
- ◎ **To encourage the study of Comparative Religion, Philosophy, and Science.**
- ◎ **To investigate the unexplained laws of Nature and the powers latent in man**

Must note that Blavatsky said many racist things.... Blacks, Jews inferior

## Theosophy Philosophy

- ◎ **Pantheism – Universal God, root of All, from which All proceeds**
- ◎ **Christian God illogical, bundle of contradictions**
- ◎ **Primordial Nothingness separated into Seven Rays**
- ◎ **Man has seven parts, aka bodies**
- ◎ **Influenced: Anthroposophy, New Age, Gandhi**

Seven parts of man - Atma, Buddhi, Manas, Kama rupa, Linga sharira, Prana, and Sthula sharira

Blavatsky's cosmology contained all four of the prime characteristics of Western esotericism that had been identified by the scholar Antoine Faivre: "(a) correspondences between all parts of the universe, the macrocosm and microcosm; (b) living nature as a complex, plural, hierarchical, and animate whole; (c) imagination and mediations in the form of intermediary spirits, symbols, and mandalas; and (d) the experience of transmutation of the soul through purification and ascent

most likely remain the most memorable and innovative esotericist of the 19th century no one who detested, more than she did, any attempt to hero-worship herself

She had a greater power over the weak and credulous, a greater capacity for making black appear white, a larger waist, a more voracious appetite, a more confirmed passion for tobacco, a more ceaseless and insatiable hatred for those whom she thought to be her enemies, a greater disrespect for *les convenances*, a worse temper, a greater command of bad language, and a greater contempt for the intelligence of her fellow-beings than I had ever supposed possible to be contained in one person.

appeal to women by de-emphasizing the importance of gender and allowing them to take on spiritual leadership

suggested that Blavatsky had a greater impact in Asia than in the Western world

paved the way for the emergence of later movements such as the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, Transcendental Meditation movement, Zen Buddhism, and yoga in the West

## **Mirza Ghulam Ahmad**

- Born into wealthy Muslim family in 1835 in British controlled India (now Pakistan)
- Religious study at young age; Social recluse; spent most time in mosque
- As young adult debated Christian missionaries and Arya Samja (Veda/Hindu group)

## **Mirza Ghulam Ahmad**

- ◉ Two wives, twelve children (5 died as infants)
- ◉ Age 47 claims to have received divine appointment:
  - > Promised messiah – as in returned Christ
  - > Mahdi – predicted by hadiths of Muhammad
  - > Reformer of Islam – return Islam to its pure, peaceful form

## **Mirza Ghulam Ahmad**

- ◎ **In 1888 followers pledge allegiance**
- ◎ **In 1889 40 join hands and form Ahmadiyya Muslim community**
- ◎ **Followers take pledge consisting of 10 conditions - Ten Conditions of Bai'at**
  - > **Many same as Islam**
  - > **Also non-violence**
  - > **Agree to obey Ahmad**

The ten conditions one must pledge to become part of the Ahmadiyya community:

I

That he/she shall solemnly promise that he/she shall abstain from shirk (associating any partner with God) right up to the day of his/her death

II

That he/she shall keep away from falsehood, fornication, adultery, trespasses of the eye, debauchery, dissipation, cruelty, dishonesty, mischief and rebellion; and will not permit himself/herself to be carried away by passions, however strong they might be

III

That he/she shall regularly offer the five daily prayers in accordance with the commandments of God and the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him); and shall try his/her best to be regular in offering the Tahajjud (pre-dawn supererogatory prayers) and invoking Durood (blessings) on the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him); that he/she shall make it his/her daily routine to ask forgiveness for his/her sins, to remember the bounties of God and to praise and glorify Him

IV

That under the impulse of any passions, he/she shall cause no harm whatsoever to the creatures of Allah in general, and Muslims in particular, neither by his/her tongue nor by his/her hands nor by any other means

V

That he/she shall remain faithful to God in all circumstances of life, in sorrow and happiness, adversity and prosperity, in felicity and trial; and shall in all conditions remain resigned to the decree of Allah and keep himself/herself ready to face all kinds of indignities and sufferings in His way and shall never turn away from it at the onslaught of any misfortune; on the contrary, he/she shall march forward

VI

That he/she shall refrain from following un-Islamic customs and lustful inclinations, and

## **More Debates/Challenges**

- Other Muslims in Delhi (1900)
- Elijah the Reformer, John Dowie (1902) – claimed to be forerunner of Christ's return
- John Smyth-Pigott (1903) – claimed to be the returned Christ
- Challenges all to a spiritual duel in one of his 90 books

Sent out invitation to Muslim religious scholars in Delhi with conditions for debate. Wanted to debate what happened to Jesus after crucifixion. Was agreed to by others, but when he got there they just wanted to debate his claims. Near riot. Police had to break up. Letter exchange was the debate forum with Dowie. Challenged him to a prayer duel. If one of us is fabricating a lie he should die. Dowie declined. Smyth-Pigott led the Agapemonites in church called Ark of the Covenant

## **Ahmad Claims/Beliefs**

- ◉ He is the fulfilment of prophecies in Hadiths
- ◉ New prophet, but still lesser than Muhammad
- ◉ Jesus survived crucifixion, lived to old age in India/Kashmir
- ◉ Mahdi in Hadith a reference to a spiritual leader not military
- ◉ Peaceful; jihad a personal struggle not military; Love for all. Hatred for none.

Hadith prophecy – the Mahdi will come; he will be such and such.... Fits Ahmed's description

Some Muslims believe Jesus will return as the Mahdi to lead a military jihad that will lead to theocratic rule over earth

Others claim that the Mahdi will be with Jesus

Other who claimed to be Mahdi led fighters in jihad in Sudan

1400 yrs after Muhammad, Christ 1400 yrs after Moses

## **Reactions to Ahmed's Claims**

- ⦿ **Not accepted by Muslim religious scholars but some praised his character**
- ⦿ **No new prophets allowed**
- ⦿ **Followers persecuted in majority Muslim nations**
- ⦿ **Exiled to Britain after banned in Pakistan**
- ⦿ **Pakistanis must renounce Ahmed for passport; Saudis believers get arrested**

## **Ahmadiyya Community**

- Approximately 15,000,000 today
- Two communities in this area
- Heavy proselytizing
- Known for ecumenical-type gatherings

## Swami Vivekananda

- Born Narendranath Datta in 1863 in Calcutta into upper-middle class
- Outstanding student; fascinated by Hindu religion but also excelled in philosophy and other subjects taught in English
- Became Freemason; studied western esotericism in early 20s

His initial beliefs were shaped by Brahmo concepts, which included belief in a formless God and the deprecation of idolatry, and a "streamlined, rationalized, monotheistic theology strongly coloured by a selective and modernistic reading of the *Upanisads* and of the Vedanta

Swami Vivekananda believed that "every religion is only an evolving a God out of the material man; and the same God is the inspirer of all of them." Contradictions among religions for him were only apparent and came from the same truth "adapting itself to the different circumstances of different natures." Vivekananda's ultimate goal was undoubtedly represented in his proposal of a "universal religion," which would hold no location in place or time, which would be infinite like God it would preach, whose sun shines upon the followers of Krishna or Christ; saints or sinner alike; which would not be the Brahman or Buddhist, Christian or Mohammedan, but the sum total of all these, and still have infinite space for development; which in its catholicity would embrace in its infinite arms and formulate a place for every human being, from the lowest groveling man who is scarcely removed in intellectuality from the brute, to the highest mind, towering almost above humanity, and who makes society stand in awe and doubt his human nature.

## **Swami Vivekananda**

- ◉ Introduced to Ramakrishna in 1881
- ◉ Attracted to guru's personality but resisted his teachings at first
- ◉ Opposed to idol worship and polytheism and saw the monism of Advaita Vedanta as blasphemy and madness
- ◉ Resistance was futile... accepted Ramakrishna as his guru in 1884

At first Vivekananda saw Ramakrishna's ecstasies and visions as "mere figments of imagination" and "hallucinations". As a member of Brahmo Samaj, he opposed idol worship, polytheism and Ramakrishna's worship of Kali. He even rejected the Advaita Vedanta of "identity with the absolute" as blasphemy and madness, and often ridiculed the idea

## **Swami Vivekananda**

- Monastic vows in 1886
- Wandered in India 1888-1893
  - > Lived on alms
  - > Visited centers of learning
  - > Exposed to various traditions
- Left for west in 1893
  - > First time to take name Vivekanada, which means the bliss of discerning wisdom

## **Chicago Parliament of Religion - 1893**

- Brainchild of Swedenborgian Charles Bonney
- Birth of inter-religious dialogue
  - > Bahá'í, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jain, Jewish, Muslim, Shinto, Spiritualist
- Vivekananda proposed a “universal religion”
- Idea attacked by threatened Christians

No Sikh or Native American religions represented

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What Vivekananda meant by the “universal religion” was not that all religious traditions would be disappeared and replaced by a new and single religion. Rather, it would be an authentic togetherness of all religions, in which “each must assimilate the others and yet preserve its individuality and grow according to its law of growth” (in Barrows 1893a, 170). The necessity to “assimilate the others” was expressed by Vivekananda as the avoidance of the triumph of any one of the religions over others.

Vivekananda's idea was certainly threatening the Christian supremacy. In his “Review and Summary” of the Parliament, Barrows seemed to attack Vivekananda directly, The idea of evolving a cosmic or universal faith out of the Parliament was not present in the minds of its chief promoters. They believe that the elements of such a religion are already contained in the Christian ideal and the Christian Scripture

## Swami Vivekananda at Parliament of Religions

- Two minute standing ovation after 5 words
- Quoted passages that captured essence of parliament
- Papers called him the greatest figure of the meeting, the most popular, and the most influential, an orator by divine right

began his speech with "Sisters and brothers of America!". At these words, Vivekananda received a two-minute standing ovation from the crowd of seven thousand

greeting the youngest of the nations on behalf of "the most ancient order of monks in the world, the Vedic order of sannyasins, a religion which has taught the world both tolerance, of and universal acceptance". Vivekananda quoted two illustrative passages from the "Shiva mahima strotam": "As the different streams having their sources in different places all mingle their water in the sea, so, O Lord, the different paths which men take, through different tendencies, various though they appear, crooked or straight, all lead to Thee!" and "Whosoever comes to Me, through whatsoever form, I reach him; all men are struggling through paths that in the end lead to Me

## **Swami Vivekananda in the US**

- Toured for two years
- Established the Vedanta Society in New York City in 1894
- Gave private lessons in Vedanta and yoga
- Adapted Hindu ideas to western formats
- Books included: Raja yoga; translation of Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras*

In 1896 his book Raja Yoga was published, which became an instant success and was highly influential in the western understanding of Yoga.

Four yogas model: Raja, karma, bhakti, jnana

## **Swami Vivekananda**

- His fame earned him a triumphant return to India where he lectured widely
- Returned to US for a second visit
- Attracted many, including some rather famous
- Wrote dozens of books
- Website: [www.Ramakrishna.org](http://www.Ramakrishna.org)
- Died at age 39 during deep meditation

Influenced by Vivekananda - Aldous Huxley, Nicolas Tesla