

**Muhammad A. R. Webb:**  
**The First Anglo-White Convert to Islam in the USA**  
**and the Influence of the *Ahmadyya* Movement**

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### ملخص

يعتبر محمد اليكسندر راسل ويب أول رجل أبيض ينحدر من العرق الأنجلوساكسوني اعتنق الإسلام في الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية، وقد كان ذلك سنة 1888. ولد ويب بهودسن بولاية نيو يورك سنة 1846 من أب صحافي. ولما بلغ أشده عمل هو الآخر صحافيا وناشرا ثم عينه الرئيس الأمريكي كليفلاند قنصلا لبلاده بمانيلا بالفلبين. وهناك قرأ كتباً إسلامية لمؤلفين مسلمين فتعرف على هذا الدين واعتنقه قبل أن يتعرف على أي مسلم. لم يكن هذا نتيجة عاطفة جامحة ولا بقصر نظر وإنما اهتمام بعد بحث مضمن استمر سنوات طويلة كان خلالها منكبا على كتب الفلاسفة وغيرها وقبل أن يلتقي أي مسلم. لقد بحث في مكتبة قوامها ثلاثة عشر ألف كتاب. فقد درس الثقافات والديانات الشرقية فلم يقتنع بأي أحد منها إلى أن قرأ الكتب الإسلامية فأعجبه هذا الدين لأنه الوحيد الذي كان بمقدوره أن يجيبه عن الأسئلة المحيرة التي رافقته منذ صباه فلم يستطع القساوسة وكتب اللاهوت أن تجيبه عنها كمصير الإنسان بعد الموت مثلا. فقد كان يذهب إلى قداس الأحد ويسمع القس غير أنه لم يقتنع بكلامه وشروحه، فضاقت صدره بالمسيحية، وكان لا يطيق مواصلة السماع للقس بل ينتظر نهاية القداس بفارغ الصبر لكي يغادر الكنيسة. ولما دخل الإسلام وهو بعد في الفلبين، زاره بعض الهنود من المسلمين ورحبوا به وشجعوه على الثبات ودعوه لزيارة الهند ففعل. وهناك التقى بعدة شخصيات مسلمة ثرية

عرضت عليه المساعدة المادية والمعنوية لنقل الدعوة إلى الولايات المتحدة فقبل وارتحل إلى هناك وراح يصحح صورة الإسلام التي كانت مشوهة للغاية. وكما يقول محمد ويب لم تتعرض شخصية في التاريخ للتشويه كما شوّهت شخصية النبي محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم. فالأمريكيون كانوا قد كونوا صورة خاطئة جدا عن هذا الدين. فوقر في أذهانهم أنه دين التخلف وعدم التطور والعنف وتعدد الزوجات، وحكموا بعدم صلاحيته للإنسان الأوربي. أراد محمد ويب أن يناظر المتقنين ويصحح لهم الصورة، إلا أنه وجدهم جاهلين تمام الجهل بهذا الدين ومتعصبين مكابرين إلى أبعد الحدود وغير قابلين للنقاش. ففشلت دعوته ولكنه مهد الطريق لمن جاءوا بعده. ولكن الدعوة الذين احتضنوه في البداية كانوا من فئة الأحمدية أو القاديانية الضالة. وقد جاءوا إلى أمريكا وقاموا بالدعوة ونجحوا في استدراج الكثير من الناس، خاصة الهنود والأفارقة الأمريكيين. فترى، هل تأثر محمد ويب بضلالات القاديانيين؟ هل كان قنوة لغيره من البيض المنحدرين من أصل أوربي ليدخلوا الإسلام من بعده؟

### Abstract

This article explores the life and circumstances surrounding the first recorded White Anglo-Saxon Protestant to convert to Islam in the USA in 1888. It was Alexander Russell Webb, a Hudsonian Presbyterian from New York, who was not convinced with Christianity which failed to answer his essential universal questions such as the becoming of man after life. He forsook Christianity and spent about fifteen years without religion, just reading from a library of about thirteen thousand books. Later, he was appointed US Consul of the USA in Manila, where he read true Islamic books and embraced this religion. Yet, the deviated *Ahmadis* from India surrounded him and made him their pioneer missionary to the US. To which extent was his Islam true and untainted with *Ahmadyya* beliefs?

### Introduction

Towards the end of the 19th century, an event of great note came to happen in the Islamic experience in the United States, marking, thus, a significant shift in the traditional itinerary of conversion to Islam in the USA. Reverend Norman, a Methodist missionary, converted to Islam in 1888. This was unprecedented. Prior to that date, this religion had been carried to that land by Muslim guides of Christopher Columbus, the Spanish explorers' Muslim guides, and mostly African black slaves and lastly by Arab immigrants from Greater Syria as well as Turks and others. However, by this conversion, he set precedence for other whites, though the terrain

was unprepared and thorny for the sowing of this faith in that land where Christianity held sway and the image of Islam was very distorted and dismissed as not fit for white Europeans.

### Biography

He was born at Hudson, Columbia County, New York, in 1846. His father was proprietor of the Hudson *Daily Star*. He was educated in the public schools at Hudson and at private schools in Massachusetts and New York.<sup>1</sup> Before age of sixteen, his taste for literature grew and allowed him to write poems and short stories. Upon attaining adulthood, he bought the *Missouri Republican* in 1873, at Unionville, Missouri, and conducted it for three years. To satisfy himself with more work, he became editor of the *Gazette*, (Mo.). While he was editor of the *Missouri Republican*, President Cleveland appointed him United States Consul at Manila, Philippines in 1887.

Effective 1871, Webb had been engaged seriously in the study of Oriental religions and spiritual philosophies, for he was not satisfied with his Christianity. As he wrote, "When I reached the age of twenty, and became my own master, I was so weary of the restraint and dullness of the church that I wandered away from it, and never returned to it."<sup>2</sup>

In his book *Islam in America* he expounds in justifying his choice of his new religion:

I have been requested to tell you why, an American, born in a country which is

Nominally Christian, and reared under the drippings, or more properly perhaps the driveling, of an orthodox Presbyterian pulpit, came to adopt the faith of Islam as my guide in life.

I (...) adopted this religion because I found, after protracted study, that it was the best

And only system adapted to the spiritual needs of the humanity.<sup>3</sup>

Muhammad Webb, then, gives more details about why he left the Church and was convinced with Islam. He wrote:

Fortunately I was of an enquiring turn of mind-I wanted a reason for everything and I found that neither laymen nor clergy could give me any rational explasm and

Nomads, and yet not one of them could tell me what were mysterious or so that they were beyond my comprehension.<sup>4</sup>

After telling that he had read philosophers like Mill, Locke, Kant, Fichte, Huxley, Hegel and others who wrote with great wisdom concerning protoplasm and nomads none of them could tell him about what the soul

was and what it became after death. He then gives the reasons for his conversion:

I have spoken so much about myself (...) my adoption of Islam was not the result of misguided sentiment, blind credulity, or sudden emotional impulse, but it was born of earnest, honest, persistent, unprejudiced study and investigation and an intense desire to know the truth.<sup>5</sup>

### Manila and the conversion

The purpose of taking the post of Consul at Manila was to secure a position that would give him the opportunity to read, study and experiment as far as his duties permitted.<sup>6</sup> This was made possible as he got hold of a set of books authored by Muslims. His interest became aroused to the utmost degree, and he gave himself up to studying them. Such books, as he wrote, were not to be found in America. He wrote,

"...it is practically impossible for the investigator to gain any reliable information upon the subject [Islam] from English literature..."<sup>7</sup> Having become thoroughly convinced of the truth of Islam, he embraced it publicly in 1888. While there, he corresponded with Budruddin Abdulla Kur, a Muslim from Bombay, India, and through him became acquainted with other learned and prominent Indian Muslims. Hajee Abdulla Arab, a rich Muslim from Medina, Saudi Arabia, paid Webb a visit in Manila, and upon his return he passed through India and secured Webb the sympathy and the money to establish an organization for the *daawa* to Islam in America. In June 1892 he resigned his post and travelled to India which he toured, making accurate accounts of it.

It was believed that the leaders of the *Ahmadyya* movement gave him his conception of Islam. Thanks to their financial aid and a third of Abdulla Arab's wealth, Webb was able later to establish the American Muslim Brotherhood in New York City.<sup>8</sup> While still in India, he started a lecture tour and visited four cities. The lectures were eventually published in books under the title: *The Three Lectures*. They covered topics such as *Islam, the Better Way* and *Philosophical Islam*. When he returned to America he set up The Moslem World Publishing Company in 1893, and published over six books among which *Islam in America* by himself. He also published twenty-six volumes of *The Moslem World* magazine and the *Voice of Islam*, but this activity was short lived. In addition, he had a mosque on upper Broadway, which closed a year before his death in 1916.

### **Return to America**

Muhammad Webb won the admiration of many a Muslim leader. The Ottoman *Sultan* Abdul-Hamid II eventually chose him as his representative and the Honorary Consul General for Turkey in New York City. It is to be noted here that Webb was a theosophist<sup>9</sup> as well, who believed in Oriental Philosophy<sup>10</sup>, and attempted to synthesize Islam with Indian philosophy.<sup>11</sup> Also of importance is the fact that after his death, Indian Muslims continued to shape American Islam. Thus, his role consisted in the establishment of the first missionary outpost of Islam in the United States.

### **Nature of his movement**

His movement was one of philosophers, and this was, perhaps, the reason why it failed to have converts. It did not address the needs of the generality of people; thus, it never developed into a real religious movement.<sup>12</sup> Webb had, in fact, himself limited his role to that of Islamic propaganda, as he clearly stated:

The American Islamic Propaganda is to be purely educational, although missionaries will come here and preach in various parts of the country when their services are required. But for the present the efforts of all engaged on the work will be to teach the intelligent masses who and what Mohammed was and what he really taught, and to overturn the fabric of falsehood and error that prejudiced and ignorant writers have been constructing and supporting for centuries against Islam.<sup>13</sup>

Thus, his efforts were only educational and were destined to the literati of the USA to inform them who Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) was and what his faith was, not convert people into Islam. This would be a second step to be achieved by Muslim missionaries later in time. The prejudices about Islam in America in his time were well established, leading to a totally erroneous and false conception of it. Americans wrongly judged the Islamic religion as being a non-white, non-European phenomenon, mysterious, unchanging and ultimately inferior.<sup>14</sup> To corroborate this, Webb wrote in his book *Islam in America*:

There is no religious system of which so little is known, not only among the masses of English-speaking people, but among those who are considered the most learned, as the Islamic.

This fact is due to several causes, the most prominent of which is the Mussulman's quite natural aversion to the English language and English-speaking nations, his unwillingness to have Mohammedan literature translated into our own language, and the strong prejudice which has, for

the past eight or nine centuries, existed among Christians against Mohammedans and Mohammedanism.<sup>15</sup>

To do so, he contributed with a speech to the World's Parliament of religions held in Chicago during the World's Columbian Exposition in 1893. The Parliament was part of the Exposition organized to the quadricentennial celebration of Christopher Columbus's landing in the American continent. Around thirty million people from seventy countries visited the fair, and the American authorities intended the Parliament to promote religious freedom and tolerance. Representatives of major religions such as Islam, Christianity, Judaism as well as other unrevealed religions and sects such as *Bahaism*<sup>16</sup>, Hinduism, etc. were invited to discuss the issue of religion in America in the coming twentieth century. Nevertheless, American participants sought to make of this event an opportunity to assimilate Asians to the values of Christianity. Likewise, the representatives of the eastern religions saw in it an occasion to present their religions as appropriate alternatives for the Americans, which would vie with Christianity. Around the time of the Parliament of Religions, the above religions were beginning to lay foundations for their first missions in the USA. It was in this forum that Muhammad Webb made his first Islamic confrontation with an American audience, who disapproved him when he tried to explain the polygamy issue in Islam. But before tackling his speech, it would be suitable to make a brief indication to the 'new American Islam' that eventually resulted from the first Islamic missions in the US. It focused on the African American community early in the twentieth century, sided against Christianity and englobed a multi-culture and developed an internationalist political agenda. Of note was the fact that it was a version of Islamic modernism, which began as a movement in the Muslim World as a response to Colonialism in the nineteenth century.

It is called 'new American Islam' as against the old known American Islam that had been brought by Muslim slaves from West Africa. The old one was dead by the end of the Civil War (1861-1865), for it was an individualistic version of Islam. It died with its embracers, because they could not develop institutions that would perpetuate it after them.

Back to the first encounter of Webb with a non-Muslim audience in the Parliament of Religions, Chicago, where his chief aim was to refute a primary error about Islam, which is that Islam was "the religion of the sword." He attempted to demonstrate to the audience that the wars of *jihad* during the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) were, in reality, humane and defensive. He explained that the meaning of *jihad* in Islamic

culture had several dimensions and that along the greatest part of Islamic history this religion was propagated by a just struggle to uphold "piety, benevolence...and social virtues." <sup>17</sup> Then he made a charge on Christianity to remind his audience that it was rather Christianity that held the most "horribly sanguinary record known to history."

Webb used what became known as the "*Jihad* of words"<sup>18</sup> in his campaign to promote the understanding of Islam in the USA by interpreting *Surat El-alaq* from the *Qur'an*:

Read! For they Lord is the most beneficent, Who hath taught the use of the pen;

Hath taught Man that which he knew not.<sup>19</sup>

The "*jihad* of words" was a phrase that African Americans utilized in the twentieth century, because they felt overwhelmed by the domination of the whites. They could not use force against the latter. Some African Americans in the early twentieth century imitated Webb's Islamic identity, for he changed his name when he embraced Islam from Alexander Russell Webb to Muhammed Alexander Russell Webb. Besides, he always wore an Indian turban, as he believed that Western clothes signified Western decadence. Thus, they were prone to cause eventually Muslims to degenerate, and their morals to corrupt. Muslim clothing to the African Americans of that time wore a considerable aspect to resist the corrupt Western ideologies.

While in the World's Parliament of Religions, Webb closed his presentation by observing that:

There is no system that has been so willfully and persistently misrepresented as Islam, both by writers of so-called history and by the newspapers and press. I feel that Americans ... are disposed to go to the bottom facts...and when they have done so, I feel that we shall have a universal system to the position where it belongs.<sup>20</sup>

However, the American audience was insensitive to his presentation, for the majority had already judged Islam as not being the religion that suited white Americans. Finally, it can be said that Webb was the sower of the seeds of the new American Islam, which arrived later to America from the Indian *Ahmadyya* movement at first. Although the *Ahmadis* did not start their formal missionary activities in the USA until 1920, the spirit of their deviated movement was sowed by Webb in America since the World's Parliament of Religions in 1893. Probably, Webb did not realize that some of the teachings of the *Ahmadyya* sect were deviated and contrary to Islam.

Anyway, without being conscious of its dangers, he paved the way for that movement to come from India to America.

### **The Ahmadyya movement in the USA**

The *Ahmadyya* movement in Islam had considerable influence upon the US religious scene in the name of Islam in the 1920's. Although judged in Islam as heterodox, its followers from the land of its origin, India, played an active role in doing missionary work among African Americans and converting them to their heterodox version of Islam. As its missionaries worked among black communities, it is believed that the movement contributed along with the Moorish Science Temple of America<sup>21</sup> (1913 – 1929) in giving rise to the Nation of Islam<sup>22</sup> (1930 – 1975) and in shaping its ideology. The *Ahmadi* missionaries set up study groups that taught the beliefs of Islam and the fundamentals of Islamic practice. Interested people were taught Arabic and the *Qur'an*.<sup>23</sup> They published the first *Qur'an* in use in America in 1917. They produced a high number of texts and newsletters that helped promote Islam in America.<sup>24</sup> During the 1920's, the *Ahmadyya* missionaries encouraged positive religious interaction between Muslims of different ethnic and racial origins. Regardless of their Turkish, Tartar, African American, Arab, Persian or Albanian origins, they intermarried and got together. Thus, the *Ahmadyya* movement presented the first multi-racial model for American Islam.<sup>25</sup>

Although heterodox, the *Ahmadis* were active and systematic in diffusing Islamic literature, translating the *Qur'an* into English, converting blacks and whites alike to their version of Islam. They also endeavored to correct to common distortions of Islam in the media, established mosques and reading rooms. Their goal being to eliminate the ethnic separation existing hitherto among Muslims in America, they worked to establish a link between the various Muslim groups. This movement started among Muslims in the Punjab, India, in the 1880's as a reaction to the Muslim defeat in 1857, which allowed the British to colonize India. The Indian Muslims felt defeated, powerless and demoralized, the same feelings that the Egyptians experienced when Napoleon invaded their country in 1789. Muslims in Egypt and India and other parts of the Mediterranean, South and South East Asia began to question the reasons of their defeat in the face of Britain, France, Holland and Italy. Was the success of the West due to the superiority of Christendom, the backwardness of Islam, or the faithlessness of the Muslim community? To answer this question, the intellectuals of the Muslim World made considerable studies and tried to



modernize their societies to get out of the state of weakness they were in by the late eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century. The *Ahmadyya* was inscribed within this framework. The Punjabi Muslims attempted to restudy Islam and their identity in the light of new political and philosophical realities of the Western invasion of their land. Among the Muslim intellectuals who attempted to find an answer to the general defeat of Muslims everywhere and to "modernize" Islam to face the new challenges was Ghulam Ahmad (1835 – 1908), the founder of the movement. Having secluded himself from society for study and reflection, he pretended in 1879 that he had received revelation and that it was his obligation to diffuse his message worldwide. In 1880 he published his book *Al-Barahin-al-Ahmadyya* in which he argued that Islam was valid to resist the threat of Hindu majority and the Christian missionaries working in the Punjab. Soon, he engaged in a fierce controversial debate with Orthodox Muslims and Christians. At first, his ideas bore only minor deviations from the principles of Islam; however, gradually the gap widened and his threat became substantial to Christians and Muslims alike. He claimed that he was the *Mahdi* of Islam and the Promised Messiah of Christianity and Islam as well as the *avatar* of Krishna for the Hindus.<sup>26</sup> Finally, in 1899, he claimed that Jesus Christ did not die on the cross as Christians believe, but had gone to India where he had ascended physically into Heaven.<sup>27</sup> Ghulam Ahmad also claimed that Allah had sent him as a *mujaddid* (renewer) at the turn of that century for the service of the public at large. In addition, he pretended that Allah also called him Jesus the son of Maryam, and that he received from Allah the secret that only saints could receive.<sup>28</sup> These are just a few examples from his heresies. These pretensions created tension between him and the Muslims, Christians and Hindus and continued until his death. Orthodox Muslims opposed Ghulam Ahmad powerfully because of his daring heterodoxy, as he claimed prophethood. Muslims believe that Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) was the last prophet and messenger, whom Allah had sent as the last prophet to seal the revelations with Islam, which is a perfection of all the previous religions. It is well known among people of Muslim faith that anyone who believes that another prophet would come after Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) is considered an unbeliever.

The Prophet (PBUH) said that no prophet would come after him, as it is clearly stated in the following *hadith*:

In my *Ummah* (Islamic nation), there shall be born Thirty Grand Liars (*dajjal*), each of whom will claim to be a prophet, but I am the last prophet; there is no prophet after me.

(Dawood and Tirmidi)

It is worth indicating here that the idea of continuous prophecy in the *Ahmadyya* was received and embraced by African Americans in the 1920's and 1930's. Furthermore, the Black Muslims, who appeared in 1930, took those heterodox ideas as a rule since the Indian Muslims of the *Ahmadyya* served as their role models. In addition, two more aspects of *Ahmadi* heterodoxy that had left an impact on the system of belief of Black Muslims in the twentieth century were the concepts of *mujaddid* and *jihad* as interpreted by the *Ahmadis*.

As regards the first concept, Ghulam Ahmad proclaimed himself a *mujaddid* or renewer, by which he meant to be a person sent by God every turn of an Islamic century to revive the Islamic faith. Later, he associated this concept with that of the *Mahdi* and declared himself the Promised Messiah. This means in Arabic: Jesus Christ (المسيح). The *Sunni* Muslims rejected both claims as the *Mahdi* and the *Messiah* are two separate individuals in their belief. As to the other concept, that is *jihad*, he gave it a different interpretation from that of *Sunni* Islam. He coined the phrase '*jihad* of words', arguing that the wars with arms could not be fairly resorted to, except in case of self-defense. *Jihad*, in his belief, was a spiritual war that could be fought through prayer duels and arguments about faith. This conception of *jihad* is what Mohammed Webb adopted in America, since the Muslim missionaries were unable there to fight with arms for the propagation of Islam. Ghulam Ahmad declared that he was going to lead a '*jihad* of words' and avoid any unnecessary bloody wars. In India, *Sunni* Muslims reacted to this declaration by rejecting this un-Islamic interpretation of *jihad* and accused him of distorting Islam to please the British invaders, that is, by not fighting them with arms. To verify this, one observes that the British showed their readiness to protect the *Ahmadis* from persecution as long as they renounced to traditional *jihad* and adopted the '*jihad* of words'.

Finally, Ghulam Ahmad taught heretical ideas about Jesus Christ that served in America as a paradigm for the reinterpretations of Christ in the mythic histories of certain black Islamic movements.<sup>29</sup> The Islamic traditional teaching about Jesus Christ (PUH) is that he had not been killed on the Cross, and that Allah ascended him to Heaven, from which he may

return eventually. This is evidenced by the *Qur'an*; Allah says in *Surat En-Nissa*, verse 157:

That they said (in boast), "We killed Jesus Christ the son of Mary, the Messenger of Allah; but they killed him not, nor crucified him, but so it was made to appear to them, and those who differ therein are full of doubts, with no (certain) knowledge; but they only conjecture to follow, for of surety they killed him not."<sup>30</sup>

Another verse from the *Qur'an* shows that Allah ascended him to Heaven. Verse 55 from *surat Al-Imran* says:

Behold! Allah said: "O Jesus! I will take thee and raise thee to myself and clear thee (of the falsehood) of those who blaspheme..."<sup>31</sup>

The founder of the *Ahmadyya* movement in Islam taught that Jesus Christ was removed from the cross while still alive in an unconscious state, and that his wounds were healed, and then he left the sepulcher alive and went to Kashmir. There, he spent the rest of his life teaching the lost tribe of Israel and died at age 120. This statement does not match with Islamic teaching.

In 1901 the *Ahmadis* separated from *Sunni* Islam in India. Eventually, after the death of Ghulam Ahmad in 1908, two factions developed: one was led by intellectuals, who tried to reunite with *Sunni* Islam. The other, however, consisted mainly of businessmen who insisted on preserving the *Ahmadyya* doctrine. The conservatives were from Qadian, Punjab.

Before it split into factions, however, the *Ahmadyya* was able to establish the groundwork for its missionary activities for the English-speaking people in Britain and the USA.

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<sup>1</sup> Alexander Russell Webb, *Islam in America*, New York, Oriental Publishing Company, 1893, p.5.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p.11.

<sup>3</sup> WEBB, *op. cit.*, p.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p.12

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Frank *Leslie's Weekly*, March 30, 1893.

<sup>7</sup> WEBB, *op. cit.*, p.9.

<sup>8</sup> Richard, Brent TURNER, *Islam in the African-American Experience*, Bloomington & Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 1997, p. 64.

<sup>9</sup> Theosophy is an occult movement originating in the 19<sup>th</sup> century with roots that can be traced to ancient Gnosticism and Neoplatonism. The term *theosophy*, derived from the Greek *theos* "god" and *Sophia* "wisdom", is generally understood to mean "divine wisdom".

John Gordon Melton, "Theosophy", Britannica Online Encyclopedia, [www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/591137/theosophy](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/591137/theosophy) February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2012.

<sup>10</sup> The philosophies and religions of Ancient Egypt, Babylonia-Assyria, Persia, India, China such as Confucianism, Zoroastrianism, etc. James Mark Baldwin, Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology (1901), in Classics in the History of Psychology, developed by Christopher D. Greene <http://www.psychoclassics.yorku.ca/Baldwin/Dictionary/defs/O3defs.htm>

<sup>11</sup> TURNER, op. cit., p. 64.

<sup>12</sup> Muhammed ABDULLAH AHARI, "The Islamic Community in the United States: Historical Development."

<http://www.sunnah.org/history/islamamr.htm>

<sup>13</sup> WEBB, op. cit.

<sup>14</sup> TURNER, op. cit., p. 63.

<sup>15</sup> WEBB, op. cit., p. 9.

<sup>16</sup> *Bahatism* is a pseudo-religious movement which appeared in Iraq and flourished in Akaa, Syria, as a succession to another movement called *Al-Babya* in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The founder was Hussein Ali Thowry (b. 1233 H), who claimed to be the successor of the assassinated *Al-Bab*, then the *Bab* himself, claiming prophethood and finally divinity. He called himself *Bahauallah* "the brilliance of Allah" and covered his face, claiming that Allah's brilliance had transmigrated his form, thus, human beings were not allowed to observe 'Allah's brilliance' in his face. He called to the unity of religions, which he said they were all united by his appearance as the last prophet and divinity. His ideas were highly influenced by Judaism in

Akaa, Syria. Among others, the *Bahais* reject the miracles of prophets. ( See Zakariyya Ahmed Muhammed Nur, " *Bahatism*"

<http://www.jamiat.org.za/isinfo/bahatism.html>)

The founder of the *Babya* movement was Ali Mohammed born in Shiraz in 1819, who became mentally sick after torturing himself by reading until very late at night and confronting the bright sun at 42° C in the day. He was rejected by Muslim scholars and executed by the *Shah* of Iran for his un-Islamic teachings. See in Arabic

الشهرستاني، الملل والنحل، تحقيق محمد سيد كيلاني، الجزء الأول، دار صعب، بيروت، 1986، ص 49-53.

<sup>17</sup> Quoted in TURNER, op. cit., p. 64.

<sup>18</sup> The "*Jihad* of words" was a newly coined term by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the founder of the *Ahmadyya* movement in Islam. The definition does not match with the teachings of true Islam. It means: trying to convince the enemy with arguments alone, not war.

<sup>19</sup> سورة العلق، الآيات من 1 إلى 5.

<sup>20</sup> Quoted in TURNER, op. cit., p. 63.

<sup>21</sup> A Black-Nationalist religious movement among African Americans that was established by Noble Drew Ali in 1913 as a reaction to the rejection of African Americans by the white American community. He taught his followers that they were originally from Morocco. The movement disappeared in 1929.

<sup>22</sup> The Nation of Islam was a Black-Nationalist movement created by W. D. Fard, in Chicago, in 1930 and used a system of beliefs and claimed it was Islam. After scrutiny, it was concluded that it had no relation with true Islam, and that it was a mere black supremacist movement among African Americans.

<sup>23</sup> Aminah BEVERLY McCLOUD, *African American Islam*, New York and London, Routeledge, 1960, p.19.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> TURNER, op. cit., p. 110.

<sup>26</sup> Sanskrit AVATARA " descent," in Hinduism, the incarnation of a deity in human or animal form to counteract some particular evil in the world. (*The Encyclopaedia Britannica*)

<sup>27</sup> TURNER, op.cit., p. 112.

<sup>28</sup> الشهرستاني، الملل والنحل، تحقيق محمد سيد كيلاني، الجزء الأول، دار صعب، بيروت، 1986، ص 49-53.

الشهرستاني، المرجع السابق، ص 58-59.

<sup>29</sup> TURNER, op.cit., p. 113.

<sup>30</sup> قال تعالى: « وقولهم إنا قتلنا المسيح عيسى ابن مريم رسول الله وما قتلوه وما صلبوه ولكن شبه لهم وإن الذين اختلفوا فيه لفي شك منه ما لهم به من علم إلا اتباع الظن وما قتلوه يقينا » سورة النساء، الآية 157.

<sup>31</sup> جاء في كتابه العزيز: « إذ قال الله يا عيسى إني متوفيك ورافعك إلي ومطهرك من الذين كفروا ... » سورة آل عمران، الآية 55.

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