

Mohammed, born 1820, died 1850, the Bab ; and Mirza Hussein Ali, born 1817, died 1892, called Beha.

The series of causes leading to this movement must be sought in the Persian form of Islam. Persia is the land of the twelve Imams, Ali and eleven of his descendants. They are supposed to possess a peculiar Divine ingredient in their creation, the *nur* or light from the Divine essence. The yearly passion play keeps alive the love of Imam Hussein. The twelfth Imam, called the Mahdi, or guide, is believed to have disappeared and to live in concealment, one day to come forth with a splendor and power that shall dazzle and subdue the world. The longing expectation of the Persians is the reappearance of the Mahdi. The shrines of several of the Imams are at Kerbela, near Bagdad, and there is the central school of the Sheah sect. Every age new expounders of the Imamat arise with new theories, and often with the wildest vagaries. Sheikh Akhmed was one who taught early in the present century. He was a genius in speculation, and gave name to the sect called *Sheikhis*. His doctrine was that if we could but discover the key we should find all knowledge locked up in the Koran. To discover the inner meaning of the Koran he applied cabalistic methods to the Arabic letters. He exalted Ali to a place of worship and as God's agent in the creation of the heavens and the earth. He was sure that the Imams visited him in his dreams and gave him special communications of their will, and he hinted that the Mahdi would soon return. When he died in 1826 his pupil, Hadji Seyyed Kazim, received his mantle, and raised a more intense expectation of the speedy appearance of the Mahdi. Among those who attended his lectures and drank deepest of his teaching was Mirza Ali Mohammed, the Bab. In the Sheikhhi teaching Mr. Browne notes three points : " Extreme veneration for the Imams, who are regarded as incarnate attributes of God ; the belief in spiritual communication with them and instruction from them ; and the denial of a material resurrection in the sense held by Mohammedan theologians." Here was in part the germ from which the Bab developed his system. Another germ was the ever-recurring pantheistic longings of the Persian poets, especially in the *Mesnevi*. The fatalism of the Koran is but a form of pantheism, for God is the sole agent in both the good and the evil in the world. The mysticism of Persian poets charms the meditative mind to accept and enjoy the conception it presents of God, as essentially and ineffably pure, holy, and beautiful, and to long for absorption as waves on the surface of being into the ocean that is God.

The following is an outline of the careers of the Bab and of Beha :

October 9th, 1820, born at Shiraz, Ali Mohammed. In his boyhood he was amiable and given to thought.

1837 was sent to Bushire to conduct his father's mercantile business. Sooa after made a pilgrimage to Mecca and thence to the shrines near Bagdad. Here he became the disciple of Hadji Seyyed Kazim.

1843 died Hadji Seyyed Kazim. The question arose who among his