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In memory of Bob and Gretchen Passantino,
who both passed away in the midst of this project.
They were dear friends,
and I cherished their friendship for many years.

And in memory of my late wife, Leta,
who gave me encouragement on this project from its beginning.

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H. Wayne House
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INTRODUCTION

The Evangelical Dictionary of World Religions recognizes that from its inception Christianity has been a world religion. This may surprise many people who identify Christianity with Western Europe and North America. Christianity was birthed in the Middle East, and it quickly traveled the world. Christian communities emerged in Europe, Africa, India, and China within a relatively short time.

This historically global character of Christianity has only been accentuated in our increasingly global world. People and ideas are spreading across the globe in new and unprecedented ways. This means that Christians (and those of all religions) are more likely than ever to interact with people of other faiths in their travels or on their street. So here we include information that will help Christians understand their own faith better in this context and information they will find useful in their encounters with members of other faiths.

This dictionary contains articles that describe Christianity, particularly in its evangelical form. This will help evangelicals understand their own beliefs and how they differ both from other Christian traditions and from other world religions. The other main focus is on the nature and beliefs of other major world religions. In the category of world religions, we have included Buddhism, the Hindu tradition, Islam, and Judaism, as well

as a number of smaller groups. Here we followed a fairly common academic practice of classing any religious movement with around ten million members as a world religion. Therefore, in most cases, the groups chosen contain more than ten million members worldwide. They are also groups that have members scattered around the globe. Finally, they are groups with a history—that is, ones that have demonstrated staying power over several generations. At the same time, we also included some information about smaller or more localized groups that people are likely to encounter in their daily lives.

Some people may be surprised that we included the Mormons, or more correctly the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Our reason for classifying them as a “world religion” is threefold. First, there are now well over ten million Mormons worldwide, making them a global religious movement. Second, while the Mormon Church claims to be Christian and many Mormons attempt to live “Christian lives,” the core teachings of this new religion reject the Christian tradition and condemn all Christian groups as apostates. Third, when Mormon doctrines are examined closely (and even many Mormons do not realize this), they sharply differ from traditional Christianity and take the form of an entirely new religion.

We hope that *The Evangelical Dictionary of World Religions* will provide readers

INTRODUCTION

with a rich resource that will enable them to live as Christians in an increasingly complex world that reflects the religious confusion of the first century of the Christian era. In this way, we hope we have prepared Christians to understand the culture we now live in, their non-Christian colleagues and neighbors, and, in a possibly surprising way, the world of the New Testament.

All the contributors are Christians who hold to the core evangelical commitments. They are also scholars in the relevant fields,

most in the academy, but others primarily in the field interacting with persons and groups of alternate faiths. So while much unites the contributors, there is certain to be a diversity in many areas, and we have not sought uniformity. Instead, scholarly differences will be seen in many matters, such as preferred dates for historical events and persons, preferred translations or transliterations of foreign-language terms, and the meaning or significance of various concepts.

ABBREVIATIONS

AD	<i>anno domini</i> , in the year of the Lord	Mt.	Mount
a.k.a.	also known as	NASB	New American Standard Bible
b.	born	NIV	New International Version
BC	before Christ	NKJV	New King James Version
BYU	Brigham Young University	NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
ca.	circa	NT	New Testament
cf.	confer, compare	NWT	New World Translation
chap(s).	chapter(s)	OT	Old Testament
d.	died	p(p).	page(s)
D&C	Doctrine and Covenants	par.	parallel
e.g.	<i>exempli gratia</i> , for example	r.	reigned
esp.	especially	RLDS	Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints
ESV	English Standard Version	RSV	Revised Standard Version
fl.	flourished	sec.	section
i.e.	<i>id est</i> , that is	SDA	Seventh-day Adventist
<i>JD</i>	<i>Journal of Discourses</i> , edited by G. D. Watt et al., 26 vols. (1855–86)	UK	United Kingdom
JS-H	Joseph Smith—History	US	United States of America
JST	Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible	v(v).	verse(s)
JW(s)	Jehovah’s Witnesses	WT	Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society
KJV	King James Version		
LDS	Latter-day Saints; the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints		



'ABDU'L-BAHÁ. 'Abdu'l-Bahá (1844–1921; his name means “slave of the glory [of God]”) was born 'Abbás Effendí in Tehran, Persia (now Iran). His father, Bahá'u'lláh (1817–92), founder of the Bahá'í Faith, believed himself to be the divine herald of all true religion about whom Siyyad Ali Muhammad (1819–50), the Bab (meaning “gate”), had prophesied. During his childhood, 'Abdu'l-Bahá witnessed intense persecution of his father as well as suffering some himself; when he was eight or nine years of age, his father was imprisoned for promoting and defending the Bahá'í Faith. After Bahá'u'lláh was released from prison and placed under house arrest in Akko, Israel, 'Abdu'l-Bahá traveled with him and became his father's most trusted ally as an adult. As a result of this strong alliance, Bahá'u'lláh appointed 'Abdu'l-Bahá (in his will and testament) to succeed him as the foremost leader and exponent of Bahá'í after his death. Yet, unlike his father, who believed himself to be a manifestation of God, 'Abdu'l-Bahá repeatedly stated that he was merely a servant of God.

As the authorized interpreter of Bahá'í, 'Abdu'l-Bahá proclaimed that “love is the greatest law” and that humankind's greatest need is international cooperation. His *Tablets of the Divine Plan* served to establish Bahá'í leadership in North America, and his *Will and Testament* set forth plans for a worldwide administrative order of the Bahá'í Faith. He began a world tour in 1912, during which he dedicated the grounds for the Bahá'í temple in Wilmette, Illinois. His

major teachings included the fundamental oneness of the human race; condemnation of all forms of prejudice; the basic unity of all religions; advocacy of the independent quest for truth, unfettered by superstition or tradition; the essential harmony between science and religion; gender equality; the abolition of extreme wealth and poverty; universal compulsory education; and the institution of a world tribunal for adjudicating disputes between nations.

See also BAHÁ'Í; BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

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ADAM-GOD THEORY. The LDS doctrine of the plurality of Gods, coupled with the church's veneration of Adam, provided the ideal environment for the eventual development of the Adam-God theory. Because of Adam's elevated status in LDS theology, his fall in Eden is never said to be sin but is instead labeled a transgression. LDS authority Joseph Fielding Smith goes so far as to say that transgressing the law is not a sin in every instance. So Adam's transgression was

a legitimate and even honorable violation of the law since its purpose was for Adam to fall downward as a first step toward rising upward toward the goal of eventual godhood.

The controversial “Adam-God” doctrine originated with Brigham Young and was taught for the first time at the Salt Lake Tabernacle in 1852. In his sermon titled “Self-Government, Mysteries, Recreation and Amusements, Not in Themselves Sinful, Tithing, Adam, Our Father and Our God,” Young declared, “When our father Adam came into the garden of Eden, he came into it with a celestial body, and brought Eve, one of his wives, with him. He helped to make and organize this world. He is Michael, the archangel, the Ancient of Days! about whom holy men have written and spoken—He is our Father and our God, and the only God with whom we have to do” (*JD* 1:50). Regarding the father of Jesus, Young stated, “Jesus, our elder brother, was begotten in the flesh by the same character that was in the garden of Eden, and who is our Father in Heaven” (*JD* 1:51). Regarding his Adam-God views and the response of his critics, Young wrote, “Some years ago, I advanced a doctrine with respect to Adam being our father and God. That will be a curse to many Elders of Israel because of their folly. With regard to it they yet grovel in darkness and will. It is one of the most glorious revealments of the economy of heaven” (Young, “A Few Words of Doctrine,” quoted in Buerger, 29).

Young’s Adam-God theory was new territory theologically, for nowhere in any LDS documents or “standard works” was the doctrine taught. Given that Young was president of the church, his teaching was seen as revelation from God and thus found support from numerous members. However, there were those who found the teaching not only strange but great cause for alarm, and it didn’t take long for LDS reactions to Young’s teaching on Adam to become a substantial controversy. While it has been argued that Young’s

statements have been taken out of context or misunderstood, the evidence from church documents shows that both supporters and opponents understood him to be teaching that Adam is God the Father, the father of Jesus Christ (which conflicts with the biblical record that Christ was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit), and that he came to the earth in a celestial body, rather than a body created “from the dust of the earth” as is recorded in the book of Genesis. The most ardent opponent of Young’s Adam-God doctrine was Orson Pratt, one of Mormonism’s more capable theologians and a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. His vehement opposition to Young’s doctrine presented another substantial problem for LDS leaders, the authority of the living prophet. Pratt’s contention that Young’s teaching was wrong raised an important question: Could a living prophet fall into doctrinal error? Pratt believed that the prophet was capable of error and that Young’s Adam-God doctrine was evidence to that effect. However, the church authorities maintained that the living prophet could not err doctrinally, for to do so would undermine the belief that the prophet was God’s mouthpiece. Logically, if Young was wrong, then either God was giving erroneous revelation, or Young was a false prophet.

Pratt recognized the seriousness of the Adam-God controversy by virtue of the fact that it contradicts the accounts of Adam’s creation by God found in the King James Version and in the LDS scriptures called the Book of Moses and the Book of Abraham. As for Adam being the Father of Jesus Christ, according to Moses 6:51–62, Adam is conversing with God regarding Adam’s need to repent in the name of God’s Son, Jesus Christ. Pratt contended that Young’s doctrine was clearly in contradiction with the scriptures and therefore a false doctrine. Not only did the Adam-God doctrine call into question the trustworthiness of the office of the living

prophet as God's infallible mouthpiece; it put the prophet's teachings in direct contradiction with the standard works. Despite the magnitude of the controversy regarding his Adam-God teaching, Young continued to boldly assert the doctrine in stronger terms. In 1873 he stated, "How much unbelief exists in the minds of the Latter-day Saints in regard to one particular doctrine which I revealed to them, which God revealed to me—namely that Adam is our Father and God. . . . The Christian world read of, and think about, St. Paul, also St. Peter, the chief of the Apostles. These men were faithful to and magnified the priesthood while on the earth" (*Deseret News Weekly*).

Given that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints held the office of prophet in high regard and considered the prophet's revelatory teachings authoritative and trustworthy, Young was in no position to abandon his Adam-God doctrine. Furthermore, years earlier in the presence of Joseph Smith, Young stated that the living prophet was superior to the standard works. Wilford Woodruff recounts the incident:

Brother Joseph turned to Brother Brigham Young and said, "Brother Brigham I want you to take the stand and tell us your views with regard to the living oracles and the written word of God." Brother Brigham took the stand, and he took the Bible, and laid it down; he took the Book of Mormon, and laid it down; and he took the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, and laid it down before him, and he said: "There is the written word of God to us, concerning the work of God from the beginning of the world, almost, to our day. And now . . . when compared with the living oracles those books are nothing to me; those books do not convey the word of God direct to us now, as do the words of a Prophet or a man bearing the Holy Priesthood in our day and generation. I would rather have the living oracles than all the writing in the books."

That was the course he pursued. When he was through, Brother Joseph said to the congregation: "Brother Brigham has told you the word of the Lord, and he has told you the truth." (Benson)

Eventually Pratt was relocated to the eastern US, but this didn't quell opposition to the Adam-God doctrine. Orson Pratt was not the only voice speaking out against the Adam-God doctrine of Brigham Young. The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, which was committed to Smith's original teachings, also noted Young's error and published its opposition to his doctrine. In more recent times, LDS authorities such as former prophet Spencer Kimball and apostle Mark Petersen have condemned the doctrine (but without criticizing Young). Defenders of Brigham Young offer two lines of defense. First, they contend that the Adam-God doctrine, as interpreted by non-Mormons, is a distortion of Young's views. In his book *Mormon Doctrine*, Bruce McConkie says that Adam is a god, but not God the Father. However, in a letter to Eugene England dated February 19, 1981, McConkie acknowledges that Young did teach that God was the Father. He writes, "There are those who believe or say they believe that Adam is our father and our God, that he is the father of our spirits and our bodies, and that he is the one we worship. I, of course, indicated the utter absurdity of this doctrine and said it was totally false" (McConkie, "Letter to Eugene England"). Others contend Brigham Young was misquoted, and that his teachings found in the *Journal of Discourses* were poorly recorded. Yet there is no record of Young ever stating this to be the case. The historical evidence supports the fact that Mormons who attended Young's meetings understood him to be teaching the Adam-God doctrine. Harry Stout, Samuel Rogers, and Wilford Woodruff all recorded what Young taught, and their notes point out the particular elements in

the Adam-God theory, namely, Adam came to the earth in a celestial body, he was the father of Jesus Christ, and he is the only God with whom we have any relationship.

The second line of defense has been to follow Pratt's position that the living prophet can and occasionally does teach things that are incorrect. McConkie says that Young taught this doctrine but also taught contrary to it, making it difficult to know which Young to believe. McConkie continues with a corrective: "The answer is we will believe the expressions that accord with the teachings of the Standard Works" ("Letter to Eugene England").

Having acknowledged that Young did teach the Adam-God doctrine, and that it was false, McConkie goes on to point out that God "permits false doctrine to be taught in and out of the Church and that such teaching is part of the sifting process of mortality" ("Letter to Eugene England").

McConkie's defense of Young doesn't solve the problem. The implications of the issue regarding the prophet's doctrinal integrity were best stated by Wilford Woodruff, who in 1890 wrote,

The Lord will never permit me or any other man who stands as President of this Church, to lead you astray. It is not in the programme. It is not in the mind of God. (Woodruff, "Excerpts from Three Addresses")

The Adam-God doctrine continues to pose a substantial epistemological dilemma for the LDS Church. Differing streams of church authority and sources of knowledge were no longer unified but in conflict with each other. Given the fact that the president of the church was teaching a doctrine that conflicted with the standard works, what is now at issue is whether the standard works are doctrinally trustworthy, or is the living prophet the final word on matters of faith and practice? In this particular situation, to

follow Brigham Young would have put the person in conflict with the standard works, and to follow the LDS canon of scripture would have conflicted with the living prophet, a dilemma that has yet to be resolved.

See also CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

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ADONAI-SHOMO. Adonai-Shomo (Hebrew, "The Lord is there") was a nineteenth-century religious society founded by Frederick I. Howland (ca. 1810–80) in 1861. A Quaker earlier in life, in 1843 Howland came to hold eschatological views similar to those of proto-Adventist preacher William Miller (1782–1849), largely as a result of Miller's preaching during the period prior to the Great Disappointment. Convinced that the "gift of inspiration" had been divinely bestowed on him in 1855, in 1861 Howland formed a group whose members shared a strong commitment

to Howland's understanding of a number of Millerite theological distinctives. Many of these doctrines would later be appropriated by more influential groups such as the Seventh-day Adventists, the Advent Christian Church, the Bible Students (Russellites), and the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society (Jehovah's Witnesses). The group eventually reached a peak membership of about thirty and established itself in Petersham, Massachusetts, where it was officially chartered in 1876. However, in 1896 the organization's charter was annulled by the Massachusetts State Supreme Court in light of the fact that only one member of the group was still living. By the twentieth century, the group was effectively defunct, a footnote in Seventh-day Adventist history.

The most basic teachings of Adonai-Shomo can be summarized as follows: As predicted by God's prophets, Jesus Christ will restore all things, at which time God's elect will be inducted into the everlasting priesthood of Melchizedek. Distinctive practices of the group included holding all possessions in common, observing the Sabbath on Saturday, and offering the Lord's Prayer as a morning and evening sacrifice.

See also *JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES (JW); SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISM; WATCHTOWER, THE*

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ADVAITA. Although in ancient Hinduism the terms were less connected, today Advaita (nondualism or monism) refers to a main school of Vedanta (the "supplement to the Vedas" or Upanishads), Advaita Vedanta, as first systematized by Sankara (AD 788–820), who is also known as Adi Sankara (the true or original Sankara) and, sometimes,

as Shankaracharya, though the latter term is usually applied to his followers who became leaders in the movement he started. The Brahma Sutra, also known as Vedanta Sutra, epitomizes the philosophy or viewpoint (*darshana*) of Advaita Vedanta. Like all schools of Hinduism, it also claims the Bhagavad Gita as expressing its philosophy.

Unlike popular Hinduism, Advaita is sophisticated in theory and practice. At its core, however, are three main presuppositions: (1) that Brahma (God) alone exists as perfect existence, consciousness, and bliss; (2) that the Atman (self) and Brahma (God) are in *reality* one; and (3) that the goal of every soul universally is to achieve this eternal Oneness.

Unity of Existence. Because Brahma is the only reality, forming the warp and woof of existence, diversity and duality are merely appearances. Even the religionist's sense that he is worshiping a personal Creator (Isvara) is appearance rather than reality. When one obtains self-knowledge (*atmabodha*), this Creator himself disappears into the infinite, eternal ocean of Brahma, as an iceberg finally melts under the sun. Afterward, the liberated soul (*jivanmukta*) declares, "Aham Brahmasmi" (I am Brahma). Until then it is the appearance of duality and separateness (*maya*) that bars the way to this truth. One who sees the universe rather than Brahma, claims Sankara, is like one who encounters a rope at dusk and mistakes it for a snake.

Unity of Identity. The cause of this delusion is ignorance (*avidya*). One mistakenly identifies with his body, senses, mind, and ego rather than his "true self" (Atman). In time a person can overcome this ignorance by practicing spiritual disciplines. Employing discrimination (*viveka*), he separates reality from *maya* by repeating, "Neti, neti" (I am not this, not that), meditates on Brahma, renounces all desires, and often, too, practices yoga. After many incarnations, he eventually realizes his identity with Brahma, whereupon his illusory self disappears. According to one

analogy, as water trapped within a jar in the ocean becomes one with the ocean when the jar breaks, so does the soul merge with Brahma when it ceases to identify with the body, senses, and so on.

Unity of Truth. The Rig Veda states, “Ekam sat vipra bahudha vadanti” (The truth is one, but sages call it by different names). For Advaitans that “truth” is nonduality: all is Brahma; Brahma, all. For them, then, Brahma is also behind all temporal truths, including those of the world’s religions. Each believer must find his own way. In the famous words of Ramakrishna (a notable nineteenth-century guru), “As many faiths, so many paths.” Advaita Vedanta, its proponents maintain, is compatible with all religions.

Today, groups that embrace religious syncretism—for example, Theosophy, The Fourth Way—incorporate advaitic concepts into their teachings. Traditional Advaita, nevertheless, remains a significant force inside and outside India, espoused in modern times by figures such as Ramakrishna, Ramaana Maharishi, Swami Yogananda, and Swami Sivananda Saraswati.

As a rule, teachers whose names begin with “Swami” and end with “-ananda” are proponents of Advaita Vedanta—for example, Swami Vivekananda, Swami Satchidananda, Swami Kriyananda.

See also ATMAN; BHAGAVAD GITA; BRAHMA; HINDUISM; MAYA; RAMAKRISHNA, SRI; RAMANA MAHARISHI; SUTRA; SWAMI; UPANISHADS; VEDANTA; VEDAS

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B. Scott

ADVENTIST MOVEMENT. Originating in the nineteenth century, the Adventist movement focuses on the imminent return of Christ, who will usher in his millennial reign. Therefore, Adventism has much in common with other

historical forms of premillennial schools of thought. Though typically associated with Seventh-day Adventism, Adventism itself is actually much broader than this particular denomination. Moreover, while Seventh-day Adventism in some respects has turned more toward orthodoxy, Adventism in general is still seen to be more heterodox.

Beginning with a Baptist minister from New York named William Miller, the Adventist movement began to take form. After serving in the War of 1812, Miller began seriously studying both religious and nonreligious literature. Converting to Christianity shortly thereafter, he focused his readings on the Bible, carefully attending to the smallest details of Scripture, such as symbolism and numbers. He soon concluded that Christ would return between March 21, 1843, and March 21, 1844. The Millerite movement, however, based on the suggestion of Samuel Snow, subsequently also advocated for October 22, 1844.

By this point, Miller’s teachings had been circulated widely by Joseph Himes, who printed over five million pieces of Miller’s work. Thus, by October 22, 1844, thousands of devotees gathered in anticipation of Christ’s return. When this prediction went unfulfilled, most members in the movement were devastated and returned to the denominations to which they previously belonged. Miller himself was no exception. When his first prediction failed, he responded with a revised prediction. Upon his second failed attempt, Miller abandoned this teaching altogether.

Nevertheless, the “Great Disappointment” of 1844 did not utterly destroy the Adventist movement. On October 23, 1844, just one day removed from the Great Disappointment, Hiram Edson, a staunch Millerite, went to pray with a friend about how to interpret the events of the preceding day. While walking through a field to pray, Edson claimed that he was stopped in the field and heaven was

opened to him. According to Edson, he saw Christ enter into the holy of holies of the heavenly sanctuary to begin a new work of redemption on earth. With this the remaining Millerites reinterpreted and celebrated the Great Disappointment as a fulfillment of prophecy. In their view, Miller simply misidentified the location in which the prophecy would be fulfilled, but not the timing.

By December 1844, another staunch devotee of Miller, Ellen White, began having visions that were taken to confirm Adventist teaching. In one early vision, White claimed to have risen above the earth, where she could look down and see that Adventist believers were on the road to heaven, while those who turned back from their teachings fell back to the ways of the world. In a second vision, Christ appeared to her, revealing the Ten Commandments to her, with the fourth commandment in a small glowing halo of light. Though she had originally opposed certain Adventists who taught that the Sabbath should be the day of worship, this second vision caused White to change her view and accept the Sabbath as the proper day of worship in preparation for the Lord's return.

Critics have noted that this movement gave tremendous authority to White and her visions. Her influence was so strong at one point that when her husband began to have questions about the validity and authority of her visions, he was asked to resign as editor of the *Review and Herald*. Indeed, within the movement itself, White's visions seemed to rival the Bible in terms of authority. Yet this is not characteristic of all sectors of Adventist thinking. Even in White's day, moderate adherents viewed her and her followers as representatives from the fringes of Adventism. Today Seventh-day Adventists profess to hold the Bible as the sole authority for doctrine and practice while also upholding White as a prophetess through whom the Bible is illuminated.

See also MILLER, WILLIAM; SABBATARIANISM; SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISM

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J. K. Dew

AHIMSA. Though many definitions of *ahimsa* (Sanskrit, “noninjury” or “the avoidance of violence”) have been proposed, its advocates generally maintain that it involves the sincere effort to refrain from inflicting harm on (or from desiring the suffering of) any living creature. Ahimsa is closely linked with the belief that any type violence, whether manifested in thoughts, speech, or actions, results in the accumulation of bad karma in the one perpetrating the violence. However, most religions, sects, and cults that embrace the practice of ahimsa make exceptions to the rules regulating it, wherein at least some kinds of harm are allowed, or some classes of creatures are exempt from the demands of ahimsa, or various circumstances are recognized as mitigating the negative consequences of failing to adhere to ahimsa's dictates. Some practitioners of ahimsa claim that it is the most effective method of expunging the cruel, brutal, animalistic nature (*pasu-svabhava*) of human beings and that it is the only way to attain lasting peace. Others emphasize the importance of supplementing the habit of merely abstaining from violence with demonstrating love toward all sentient beings by doing kind things to them.

Hinduism. In many sects of Hinduism, ahimsa is said to be a means to the acquisition of mystical powers, protection from harm, and liberation from the cycle of death and rebirth. Notable Hindu religious authorities who have advocated the practice of ahimsa include Mahatma Gandhi (1869–1948), Sri Aurobindo (1872–1950), Ramana Maharishi (1879–1950), Swami Sivananda (1887–1963), and A. C. Bhaktivedanta Prabhupada

(1896–1977). Traditions within Hinduism that stress the importance of ahimsa include Hatha Yoga, Raja Yoga (the Patanjali school), and Bhakti Yoga (especially among devotees of Krishna and Vishnu).

Jainism. A prominent symbol of Jainism is a wheel on the palm of an open hand, which represents *dharmacakra*, the determination to employ ahimsa as the means of ending the cycle of death and rebirth. In Jainism the manner in which ahimsa is carried out is more meticulous and all-inclusive than in other Indian religions, such as Jain monks' practice of wearing face masks to avoid accidentally inhaling gnats, or sweeping the path with a broom as they walk in order to avoid stepping on ants. Jainists view ahimsa as a universal moral obligation, including either a lacto-vegetarian or a vegan diet.

Buddhism. Nearly all sects of Buddhism defend an understanding of ahimsa that is significantly less severe than the one proposed by Jain teachers and scholars. For example, Buddhist religious authorities generally do not demand that adherents eat a vegetarian diet. Instead, it is widely declared that the essence of ahimsa consists in making a reasonable attempt (during the various activities of ordinary human life) not to kill living creatures of any kind. Buddhists are advised to practice loving-kindness and compassion both in deed and in meditations.

See also BUDDHISM; HINDUISM; JAINISM

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AHMAD, MIRZA GHULAM. Founder of the Indian Ahmadiyya Islamic movement, also known as Qadiani or Ahmadi, Ahmad was born in 1835 to a wealthy, landowning family

in the village of Qadian in the Punjab area of India. He was educated at home by tutors and became proficient in both Persian and Arabic. As a young man, he was drawn to religious thought and life and spent much time alone studying religious texts, praying in the local mosque, and debating with Christian missionaries.

In 1868, at age thirty-three, he claimed to receive a divine revelation telling him: “Thy God is well pleased with what thou hast done. He will bless thee greatly, so much so that Kings shall seek blessing from your garments” (quoted in Ahmad). In the ensuing years, he claimed at various times to have subsequent revelations, and in 1882 he claimed to have a definitive vision that commissioned him to alter the direction of orthodox Islam.

In his 1882 book *Barahin-i-Ahmadiyya* (The blessings of Ahmad), he wrote of his divine appointment as the Promised Messiah and Reformer (Mujaddid) of the era—in essence, the messiah of Islam. The book, which intimated that Ahmad was another prophet of Allah, created controversy among the ulama (scholars of Islam), especially as followers began to make pilgrimages to Qadian to listen to his teaching. During this era in India, many spiritual teachers had great followings, and the reported first visitor Ahmad received was Pir Sirajudin Haq Nomani, a renowned spiritual leader with many followers. Nomani quickly espoused Ahmad as the Islamic messiah, and Ahmad’s following grew.

Other Indian spiritual leaders also visited Ahmad, which validated his claims. In 1886, his movement gained some social acceptance and regional prominence when two men, Munshi Zafar Ahmad, registrar of the High Court of Kapurthala, and Maulana Hakim Nooruddin of Bhera, royal physician to the Maharajah of Jammu and Kashmir, became followers, which further increased his popularity. He soon began to train other teachers in this new “dispensation” of Islam, including Bhai Abdur Rahman in 1895.