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**ABSTRACT**

“Mandaeans of Iran and Iraq”

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Mandaeans are an ethno-religious group of gnostic people living in different parts of the world with the largest group living in Iran and Iraq. In general, their worldview is dualistic, and they pay reverence to Adam, Abel, Seth, Enosh, Noah, Shem, Aram and John the Baptist, while rejecting Abraham, Moses and Jesus of Nazareth. Their original language is Mandaic, which belongs to the Semitic language group, evolved from Eastern Middle Aramaic in Assyria and the Upper Mesopotamian region. Because of their migrations, they now speak different languages. The Iranian Mandaeans speak Persian (Farsi) in addition to a localized Arabic spoken in the southern region. Mandaeans who live in Iraq speak a colloquial form of Iraqi Arabic. The Mandaean communities of both Iran and Iraq are closely linked together and perceived to be low-key people who live in a close and rather secretive society. This paper focuses on religious beliefs and cultural practices of the Mandaeans of Iran and Iraq, the migration of Iraqi Mandaeans to Iran and the Western world due to the 2003 invasion of Iraq, and the rise of sectarian violence since 2007 caused by Muslim extremists. I also examine the status of Iranian Mandaeans inside Iran based on human rights reports and my personal interviews with several Mandaean refugees from Iran in Austin, Texas, where I served as interpreter.