

Reform Bahai Faith Forum



Hello Jenabe Fazel

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News:

Reform Bahai Faith Forum created for Bahais of all persuasions on August 21, 2011.

"The shining spark of truth cometh forth only after the clash of differing opinions."
—Abdul-Baha

"The conscience of man is sacred and to be respected."
—Abdul-Baha

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Reform Bahai Faith Forum » General Category » General Bahai Discussion (Moderator: Jenabe Fazel) » Baha'is in Los Angeles

[« previous](#) [next »](#)

Pages: [1]

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Author

thoffman25

Newbie



Posts: 8



Topic: Baha'is in Los Angeles (Read 1900 times)

Baha'is in Los Angeles
« on: July 10, 2012, 10:25:37 PM »

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Hello,
I'm a new member of this forum and I find it very refreshing. I was wondering if there were any members that live in the Los Angeles area.
Thanks



Report to moderator 76.173.10.132 (?)

Jenabe Fazel

Administrator
Jr. Member



Posts: 76



Re: Baha'is in Los Angeles
« Reply #1 on: July 11, 2012, 09:10:55 PM »

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Hello & welcome!

Thanks for your interest. I'm glad to hear you find the Reform Bahai Forum "refreshing"! We like to think of it as a breath of fresh air...

As Abdul-Baha wrote in A Traveler's Narrative, 91, "These are effectual and sufficient proofs that the conscience of man is sacred and to be respected; and that liberty thereof produces widening of ideas, amendment of morals, improvement of conduct, disclosure of the secrets of creation, and manifestation of the hidden verities of the contingent world. Moreover, if interrogation of conscience, which is one of the private possessions of the heart

and the soul, take place in this world, what further recompense remains for man in the court of divine justice at the day of general resurrection? Convictions and ideas are within the scope of the comprehension of the King of kings, not of kings; and soul and conscience are between the fingers of control of the Lord of hearts, not of [His] servants. So in the world of existence two persons unanimous in all grades [of thought] and all beliefs cannot be found."

The Master's guidance is so simple and down to earth... yet so many Baha'is seem to have lost sight of that as they moved away from his Interpretation of his father's teachings, into organized religion and all its oppression.

The Master assured us that there are Bahais in every city, so there are certainly many in LA. I invite you to start a Reform Bahai group and reach out to them!



Report to moderator 76.112.30.51 (?)

"To be a Bahai simply means to love all the world; to love humanity and try to serve it; to work for universal peace and universal brotherhood." —Abdul-Baha

The Reform Bahai Faith, <http://reformbahai.org/>

thoffman25

Newbie



Posts: 8



Re: Baha'is in Los Angeles

« Reply #2 on: July 12, 2012, 01:16:02

AM »

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Thank you for the quote, it is wonderful. One of the reasons I joined the faith was because I was led to think that it is very loosely organized. This apparently isn't the case. I've been running from organized religion for 30 years. Why would I want that now? I believe in challenging, questioning and freethinking, so you can understand my disappointment.

With regard to starting a group here. Unfortunately, I don't think that I'll be able to attract current Baha'is. The ones that are questioning things seem to be underground and think that things will eventually change. However, I have many progressive friends that might be interested in this pure form of Baha'ism. They were really turned off by the Faith's stance on Homosexuality. Thank you for this exchange.



Report to moderator 76.173.10.132 (?)

Jenabe Fazel

Administrator

Jr. Member



Posts: 76



Re: Baha'is in Los Angeles

« Reply #3 on: July 16, 2012, 09:30:46

AM »

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Sorry to be slow in "approving" and responding...

I fully agree with your thinking, and, indeed, much of it resonates with my own personal experience. I don't know if you're aware of the Baha'i Censorship website, but it has much of the historical record of the journey through the decades of various people, along these lines:

<http://www.fglaysher.com/bahaicensorship> Much of that is, as you know or sense, kept and been kept, out of view from most Baha'is. The extent to which that is true is even quite shocking, it's fair to say, probably, or would be for

most Americans, whether Baha'i or not.

Yet I believe and would argue that the actual interpretation of Abdul-Baha's vision of Baha'u'llah's teachings is one that is moderate, balanced, and tolerant of the conscience of other people, not at all the oppressive, organizational fanaticism that has arisen since Shoghi Effendi took over the Bahai Movement in 1921.

Reform Bahais believe we can recover, revive, and restore Abdul-Baha's Vision of universal love and brotherly unity. With time, God willing, we shall, and hope you and other like-minded Bahais will join us and share your experience and consultation.

The Haifans and members of the other Baha'i denominations, the Orthodox Baha'is, for instance, all have the right to follow their conscience, as do Bahais of more liberal, I would say, temperament, all these years after Abdul-Baha's passing, when it's so clear the dominant denomination has gone in the wrong direction. Often in religious history, the best thing for all concerned is a parting of ways and each following their own conscience and understanding. Fortunately, the history and legal structure of the United States of America respects and protects individual religious freedom and liberty, as did Abdul-Baha.

Bahai regards...



« Last Edit: July 16, 2012, 09:12:56 PM by Jenabe Fazel »

Report to moderator  76.112.30.51 (?)

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thoffman25

Newbie



Posts: 8



Re: Baha'is in Los Angeles

« Reply #4 on: July 16, 2012, 04:24:23

PM »

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Hi, No problem. Yes I've seen the site and it is quite illuminating. The irony is that I know some of the individuals that are referred on the site that have been on both sides of the fence. This is very difficult for me and I'm not sure where it puts me. I am an independent thinker and I will not compromise my ethics or morals for anyone. I feel connected with Baha'ullah and Abdul Baha but not with the structure that has formed after Abdul Baha's death. I love the people in my community but I haven't been to an event or even a feast in eight months. I don't like what I experience at these events and resent the structure "imposed." I haven't sent my card back but it no longer resides in my wallet. I'm not exactly sure what I'm going to do next but I do know that this hasn't shaken my core beliefs. Thank you for this frank and stimulating exchange. I'm interested to see if it will be monitored and I will be contacted. We shall see.



Report to moderator  76.173.10.132 (?)

Jenabe Fazel



Re: Baha'is in Los Angeles

« Reply #5 on: July 16, 2012, 09:24:21

Administrator
Jr. Member



Posts: 76



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It's the nature of Shiite takfir, which is what Haifan Baha'i "shunning" really is, to, by definition, "identify and denounce" kafirs, i.e., infidels, apostates, and so on. For all Baha'u'llah and Abdul-Baha's universality, especially the former's removing all that kind of Islamic fanaticism "from the Book," Shoghi Effendi put it all right back in, and even though Abdul-Baha had clearly envisioned the Bahai Movement growing further beyond it.

So basically what I'm suggesting is from the experience of watching over the decades what happens to people who demonstrate any ability to think for themselves and integrity. There are many people on the Bahai Censorship site who also confirm this observation in various ways, if interested.

Of course, the Baha'is who lack those qualities have nothing to worry about.



[Report to moderator](#) 76.112.30.51 (?)

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thoffman25

Newbie



Posts: 8



Re: Baha'is in Los Angeles

« **Reply #6 on:** July 16, 2012, 11:10:12

PM »

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I look forward to reading more on the censorship website. Thank you.



[Report to moderator](#) 76.173.10.132 (?)

Jenabe Fazel

Administrator
Jr. Member



Posts: 76



Re: Baha'is in Los Angeles

« **Reply #7 on:** July 18, 2012, 08:01:01

AM »

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I don't really mean to suggest that you or anyone has anything to "worry about," because the US Federal Courts were quite clear recently in their THREE rulings against the Haifan, Wilmette Baha'is. ALL Bahai denominations enjoy the rights, privileges, and duties of the Constitution:

Judge Sykes, p 14-15: "Considered in light of these First Amendment limitations on the court's authority, certain aspects of the 1966 injunction are troubling. The decree declares that "there is only one Baha'i Faith," that Shoghi Effendi was its last Guardian and none has come since, and the National Spiritual Assembly was its representative and "highest authority" in the United States and was "entitled to exclusive use of the marks and symbols of the Faith," including the exclusive use of the word "Bahá'í." Declarations of this sort push the boundaries of the court's authority under Kedroff and Presbyterian Church. In church property disputes (trademark suits obviously qualify), the First Amendment limits the sphere in which civil courts may operate. When a

district judge takes sides in a religious schism, purports to decide matters of spiritual succession, and excludes dissenters from using the name, symbols, and marks of the faith (as distinct from the name and marks of a church), the First Amendment line appears to have been crossed" (boldface added).
<http://www.ca7.uscourts.gov/fdocs/docs.fwx?caseno=08-2306&submit=showdkt&yr=08&num=2306>

So, the Court sent the Iranian Shiite Baha'i fanatics who think otherwise the right message... though, obviously, knowing that "community," as we do, we know otherwise remains the case for many. In that regard, what I'm thinking of is that you might specifically find interesting some of the personal stories and accounts under Shunning and The Baha'i Technique:

Shunning > Menu
<http://www.fglaysher.com/bahaicensorship/Shunning.htm>

Compare "The Bahai Technique" - Slander & Shunning
<http://www.fglaysher.com/bahaicensorship/technique.htm>



Report to moderator 76.112.30.51 (?)

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thoffman25

Newbie



Posts: 8



Re: Baha'is in Los Angeles

« Reply #8 on: July 18, 2012, 09:25:14

AM »

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Thank you again. As you can see, I'm not worried at all as I have my name in my user ID. :-) I continue my independent search for the truth as intended.



Report to moderator 76.173.10.132 (?)

Jenabe Fazel

Administrator

Jr. Member



Posts: 76



Re: Baha'is in Los Angeles

« Reply #9 on: July 23, 2012, 07:08:50

PM »

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You made me think of...

"Among these teachings was the independent investigation of reality so that the world of humanity may be saved from the darkness of imitation and attain to the truth; may tear off and cast away this ragged and outgrown garment of 1,000 years ago and may put on the robe woven in the utmost purity and holiness in the loom of reality." - Abdu'l-Baha

Bahai regards.



Report to moderator 76.112.30.51 (?)

"To be a Bahai simply means to love all the world; to love humanity and try to serve it; to work for universal peace and universal brotherhood." —Abdul-Baha

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thoffman25

Newbie



Posts: 8



 **Re: Baha'is in Los Angeles**

« **Reply #10 on:** July 24, 2012,

07:06:50 PM »

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Beautiful. Thank you.



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Pages: [1]

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