

# 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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### Author

#### dsaly1969

Newbie



Posts: 3



### Topic: Greetings from California (Read 1636 times)



#### Greetings from California

« on: December 10, 2012, 04:16:35 PM

»

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Hi all,

I'm so happy to see that there is still activity to promote the Reform Bahai Cause and Movement. Like many I had been a member of the Haifa organization having been attracted by the seemingly progressive nature of the principles they espoused at Firesides, and then incrementally becoming dismayed at the increasing authoritarian and conservative nature of the organizational structure and corresponding beliefs.

I'm independent, nonsectarian and universalist. I see the religions of the world as particular cultural expressions of the universal human need to connect with something larger than our own petty wants and egocentric tendencies. I think Baha'u'llah correctly put his finger on the pulse of this which was revolutionary in insight for someone from 19th Century Persia.

I believe in freedom of thought and expression and association. I believe in equal rights for my brothers and sisters who are LGBTQ. I do not believe in ascribing infallibility to any individual and believe that for spirituality to be living then it must be continually evolving in understanding and application. I freely associate with progressive Bahais of all stripes be they Reform Bahais, Unitarian Bahais, Tarbiyat Bahais, and unenrolled (am I missing any others?). I support all efforts including that of the Reform Bahais to actively promote the Bahai Movement as it was originally envisioned.

I live out in California and would welcome connection with others of like mind.



Report to moderator  159.83.168.254 (?)

## Jenabe Fazel

Administrator  
Jr. Member



Posts: 76



### Re: Greetings from California

« **Reply #1 on:** December 12, 2012,  
08:48:55 AM »

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Hello & a warm welcome!

Thanks for joining the forum and contributing. What a pleasure to hear your thoughts! As you know, sometimes some Baha'i opinions can tend toward fundamentalism and all that, unfortunately.

I heartily agree and share your views, which make so much sense in terms of what Abdul-Baha actually taught and *lived!*

If not familiar with it, let me mention the webpage, About the Reform Bahai Faith, which might help you get a sense of what the Reform Bahai Faith is all about:

<http://www.reformbahai.org/about.html>

There is or was, not sure which, a group of German Bahais, the Free Bahais, on and off the net, for some decades, I believe. They too are basically people who realized things started going wrong when Shoghi Effendi took over in 1921. I'm not sure if they're still on the Net. And then are the various Orthodox Baha'i denominations, five I think, all of which basically believe the 1921 will and testament was a valid document of Abdul-Baha's, but have different views as to the successor to Shoghi. I've communicated off and on with some Bahais from these various denominations, and most of them have always proven to me that they're very nice and decent people. Most of them don't follow the Iranian Shiite "takfir," "shunning," and religious bigotry and hate that now characterizes the Haifan Baha'is, for decades really. Although Baha'u'llah removed all that "from the Book," Shoghi really brought all that back, despising and excommunicating his own family and others... as you probably know, facts carefully concealed from the average American Baha'i convert.

In all humility, Reform Bahais hope to recover and promote the Bahai Movement as Abdul-Baha conceived it--open and universalist in thought and deed. Fortunately, all the books and publications during his lifetime document and clearly set out the direction he believed his father's teachings intended for modernity. In the long view of things, I believe it's very fortunate that Shoghi Effendi's fanatical takeover of his grandfather's Movement happened, because it highlights in such stark terms, for everybody to see, Bahais of all persuasions, and non-Bahais of all viewpoints, why and how Shoghi Effendi's Shiite distortion of Baha'u'llah and Abdul-Baha's vision is such a betrayal and threat to modern life. It's really become a kind of Kool-Aid cult, deceiving and brainwashing its followers into corrupt Iranian Shiite thinking that was EXACTLY what both Baha'u'llah and Abdul-Baha wanted to get away from!!!

We really welcome your presence and voice, and look forward to getting to know you better.

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

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

## dsaly1969

Newbie



Posts: 3



### Re: Greetings from California

« **Reply #2** on: December 12, 2012, 11:52:34 AM »

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Thank you for the gracious welcome!

I remember when I first ran across the teachings of the Baha'i Faith. I was immediately attracted to the Principles and declared soon thereafter. My first Baha'i community was quite nice - there will still quite a few "Baha'i liberals" still involved at the time (this was before the big Los Angeles Baha'i Center, Talisman, and Internet purge). I really resonated with the practices of the twice daily readings (usually from the Hidden Words or Seven Valleys and Four Valleys), the daily obligatory prayer (with ablution), and the 95 repetitions of the Greatest Name (all practices that I still maintain today). I remember going to Bosch and having some interesting discussions about the Maiden of Heaven (conversations that would be officially discouraged by Haifa nowadays).

After the "purge", I left along with many others who were discouraged at the increasingly authoritarian push (many of us were hoping for more liberalization on views of LGBTQ individuals, equal rights for women in the highest bodies of the Faith, free intellectual discourse and understanding on all matters of the Baha'i teachings, etc.). This did allow me to explore other options such as the Unitarian Universalists, Unity churches, Centers for Spiritual Living (aka Religious Science or Science of Mind), Vedanta centers, et al. I found that the "Baha'i spirit" was far more alive in many of these locations than it was in the Haifa-centered communities. I also spoke to members from a variety of smaller Baha'i groups - the Orthodox Baha'is, the Tarbiyat Baha'is, the BUPC Baha'is, and the Unitarian Bahais. While I may not have agreed with all of their views, none of them promoted "shunning".

In fact, the Reform Baha'is and the Unitarian Bahais share very similar views of the Faith aka "Bahai Movement". I read the writings from both sides of the conflict where it seems to be more takfir of each other due to familial conflict and not really anything doctrinal. Abdu'l-Baha and his brother Muhammad Ali Behai (Ghusn-i-Akbar) share far more in common in thought than with Shoghi Effendi. From my study it seems more of "do what I say and not what I do" which just proves that both the Greatest Branch and the Mightiest Branch were fallible human beings like the rest of us. I'm thinking that it will take us today to heal the breach that happened among the Aghsan (and why perpetuate old feuds?).

For myself, if I used a label it would probably just be Universalist who happens to use Baha'i practices as my daily spiritual discipline. I'm not sure that trying to

fit the Bahai Movement into boxes like Reform or Unitarian may even be wise anymore. Bahai truly practiced as in its original, inclusive vision would both match the vision of Reform as well as be Unitarian. :-) Maybe I'm just part of the wider Bahai Movement.

"The Baha'i Movement is not an organization. You can never organize the Baha'i Cause. The Baha'i movement is the spirit of the age. It is the essence of all the highest ideals of this century. The Baha'i Cause is an INCLUSIVE MOVEMENT: The teachings of all the religions and societies are found here; the Christians, Jews, Buddhists, Mohammedans, Zoroastrians, Theosophists, Freemasons, Spiritualists, et. al. find their highest aims in this Cause. Even the Socialists and philosophers find their theories fully developed in this Movement." (Abdu'l-Baha, quoted in "The Baha'i Temple at Wilmette To Be Built with Money from Every Race, Clime and Religion under the Sun," By Isabel Fraser, The North Shore Review, May 16, 1914, in Star of the West, Vol. 25, p. 67)

"Behold! – a great principle: religion without clergy. Bahauallah commanded that his teachings are our leaders, and we accept them as written without interpretation. Indeed by this command he released us from the bondage of the clergy....Free souls, yet remaining enslaved, allowing themselves and others to be caught in the meshes of religious superstition, to be ruled over by a small group of hand-picked leaders. O friends and brothers, withdraw from your deluded seclusion and become your noble selves. Arise with great energy and vigor and fly in the vast and unlimited space of freedom. Think, and allow not yourself or your fellows to become entangled in the cobwebs of imagination and religious intrigue." (Ghusn-i-Akbar, "On Religious Conflict and Religious Liberalism", 1935).

God bless the Reform Bahai's!



« Last Edit: December 12, 2012, 10:20:40 PM by dsaly1969 »

Report to moderator 75.104.174.7 (?)

### thoffman25

Newbie



Posts: 8



### Re: Greetings from California

« Reply #3 on: January 09, 2013, 12:36:42 AM »

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Dsaly1969, I am located in Southern California. After not participating in my local area over the last year, I finally sent my card back to the NSA. Along with my card I included a letter that outlines the main reason for withdrawal from the faith. I cannot be part of any organization that discriminates against the LGBTQ community. Ignorance of scientific fact that is reprehensible and contradicts the very pillars of the Baha'i movement. Thank you for providing a place for free thought and discussion.



Report to moderator 76.173.13.98 (?)

### Jenabe Fazel

Administrator  
Jr. Member



Posts: 76



### Re: Greetings from California

« Reply #4 on: January 09, 2013, 04:03:48 PM »

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Sorry it's taken a while to respond to your December post.

In hindsight, what can be seen now, or has been since the 1996 purge of Juan Cole and others, leading to all the rest you allude to, is that the "liberal" nature of the Haifan interpretation of Baha'u'llah's teachings was a completely smokescreen concealing the imamate of Shoghi Effendi and the fraudulent will and testament he substituted for Abdul-Baha's 1912 Address Upon the Covenant, precisely what the Master had feared would happen after his death.

The deception and brainwashing of Haifan Baha'is and to some degree the Baha'is of the other denominations that accept the spurious will shouldn't come as a surprise, if one reads the actual history of the Bahai Movement in the USA as documents in all the publications prior to 1921, when Shoghi Effendi began to re-write history and the teachings to suit his fantasies.

The Reform Bahai Faith does not harbor "takfir" for the Unitarian Baha'is or any other Baha'i denomination, including the Haifans. As US citizens, they, and we, have the right to our own conscience. There are significant differences. Reform Bahais do not believe that Muhammad Ali Behai (Ghusn-i-Akbar) is a legitimate successor to Abdul-Baha. This is not the forum to rehearse all the old arguments. If you want to discuss that, you'll have to take it elsewhere. The Reform Bahai Faith has moved on from all that and the Haifan heresy.

The authoritarianism of Shoghi Effendi's concealed imamate has been there right from the beginning. Again, it's just that recent events, the last 15 years, has made it indubitably clear to anyone who isn't, as Juan Cole once phrased it, a glazed-eyed cultist. Shoghi wanted a theocracy, and obviously the Iranian Shiite Baha'is who really control the cult do too.

I respect your views and your saying you consider yourself, "independent, nonsectarian and universalist." That's very much the way Reform Bahais think. If not familiar with it, see About the Reform Bahai Faith <http://www.reformbahai.org/about.html>

Have we spoken before? As you perhaps know, the Reform Bahai Faith does not share the benighted Haifan views on homosexuality and pseudo-medical science, nor those of the radically politicized gay agenda, and all those arguments. Abdul-Baha emphasized the importance of marriage, which isn't the same as the Christian rightwing. The Reform Bahai Faith is open and welcoming to gay people, but practicality requires affirming and supporting young heterosexual couples having and raising a family. Abdul-Baha on Marriage and Children [http://reformbahai.org/Marriage\\_Children.html](http://reformbahai.org/Marriage_Children.html)

There are several other denominations. See 9 Bahai Denominations, if interested in a fuller rollcall. <http://www.fglaysheer.com/bahaicensorship/ninedenominations.htm>



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/>

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