

# Reform Bahai Faith Forum



## Hello Jenabe Fazel

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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

#### rabryant

Newbie



Posts: 4



### Topic: Introduction (Read 2155 times)



#### Introduction

« on: February 09, 2012, 12:46:57 AM »

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Thanks so much for allowing me to be a part of your forum. I have always had an interest in the Baha'i Faith but some aspects have not always sat well with me. Maybe I should clarify. I am a member of a Latter Day Saint denomination called the Community of Christ. Although I love the church, I have become quite a bit progressive in my theology over the years. I do accept the statement of Abdul-Baha: "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." On the other hand, my acceptance is somewhat conditional since my faith in the goodness of humanity has slowly faded through the years.

I accept the oneness of God, although I am a process theologian (amateur that is) and accept the idea that God is constantly changing; not his/her will and attributes per se, rather the way he/she deals with creation. I accept that God works through persuasive inspiration as opposed to coercive action (i.e. healing, parting waters, resurrection). Process is an interesting theology and it takes more of an explanation than I have time/space for here.

I am also a Progressive. As a progressive, I do not accept scriptures as the words of God, rather I accept them as Man's attempt at coming to an understanding of God. Inspired? Yes, but not to be taken word for word. Culture, language, time period, etc. always must be considered.

Although I love the words written/spoken by Baha'u'llah, and I try to follow his lead in many situations, I do not accept, or possibly do not understand, the "manifestation" theory. I see him as a very enlightened, humanistic, and

compassionate man who had greater understanding of the will of God than the typical person. However, my understanding of the word "manifestation" may be flawed; I have always understood this word to mean "God incarnate". I love his teachings, his ability to love, and his wisdom. I believe these traits equally exemplify his humanness as much as his godliness. The standard principles of the Faith are some of the most insightful/beautiful principles ever spoken and I agree with them wholeheartedly.

I really hope to have some engaging and insightful dialogues with everyone. I hope to learn a lot and talk with some good people (I know 3 Baha'is and I can honestly say that I have never met a Baha'i that I didn't like). Thanks again for adding me! God bless!



Report to moderator 76.217.143.243 (?)

### pathfinder

Newbie



Posts: 15



#### Re: Introduction

« Reply #1 on: February 10, 2012,

04:54:28 PM »

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Indeed I know the feeling. I want to serve and I do in fact serve in a helping profession when I could be making a boatload of money being some wealth manager MBA deal or something. But I do get frustrated at the downright EVIL in this world and the callous cruelty, people brutalizing and killing each other. Like you, yes, I think there is a oneness of God. I can't belong to a liberal Christian church as I don't buy the trinity deal. and no way do I accept anyone's writings or scriptures as literal, but inspired, yes, sure. I also believe people today in 2012-well what's to say WE aren't inspired? I ponder why people put God in such a box that only every X amount of years, someone is the Divine Messenger? It's the 21st Century-isn't God here with us NOW? Yet if someone wrote their thoughts, they would be dismissed as cuckoo, heretic, delusional, etc. I feel like I should write a bit of my own theology, like see where it takes me-what's to say it's not God communicating to me? No, I'm not about to lay out some writings, but in theory, just WHY can't someone in modern times do so? And I do believe messengers are not incarnations, but messengers of God, and perhaps Jesus was one, but he could have also been God coming to earth in human form, but then why not all the time?



Report to moderator 71.225.44.91 (?)

### Jenabe Fazel

Administrator

Jr. Member



Posts: 76



#### Re: Introduction

« Reply #2 on: February 12, 2012,

09:42:01 PM »

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#### Quote from: rabryant on February 09, 2012, 12:46:57 AM

Thanks so much for allowing me to be a part of your forum. I have always had an interest in the Baha'i Faith but some aspects have not always sat well with me. Maybe I should clarify. I am a member of a Latter Day Saint denomination called the Community of Christ. Although I love the church, I have become quite a bit progressive in my theology over the years. I do accept the statement of Abdul-Baha: "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." On the other hand, my acceptance is somewhat conditional since my faith in the goodness of humanity has slowly faded through the years. ...

...I really hope to have some engaging and insightful dialogues with everyone. I hope to learn a lot and talk with some good people (I know 3 Baha'is and I can honestly say that I have never met a Baha'i that I didn't like). Thanks again for adding me! God bless!

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Greetings, rabryant,

Welcome to the Reform Bahai forum! Thank you for sharing a little your background and interests. I'll try to answer your concerns as best I can.

Reform Bahais don't believe in a literal reading of the Bahai writings or other scriptures. Abdul-Baha, for instance, said he was a man just like everybody else. It's his example of universal brotherhood and service that is most important, especially as the other Bahai denominations have tended towards theocracy and fundamentalism.

Baha'u'llah taught that religion addresses the needs of its time and evolves. It seems to me that the Christian "incarnation" doctrine isn't really analogous to the Bahai idea of manifestation, in a sense, manifesting the Will of God.

There's an increasing tendency to deify Baha'u'llah, it seems, by the Haifans or organized Baha'is. For example, in Shoghi Effendi's title, "God Passes By." It's shown itself to have had similar results to the worst in other authoritarian religions, Christian or otherwise, in terms of leading to a very rigid creed that has often been used to coerce and harass people. Details to the degree of your interest at The Baha'i Faith & Religious Freedom of Conscience  
<http://www.fglaysher.com/bahaicensorship>

Reform Bahai follows Abdul-Baha's original open, universal interpretation of his father's teachings. An easy way to get a sense of what that means is to read or skim some of the addresses of Jenabe Fazel Mazandarani  
[http://reformbahai.org/Jenabe\\_Fazel.html](http://reformbahai.org/Jenabe_Fazel.html)

or read About the Reform Bahai Faith  
<http://www.reformbahai.org/about.html>

Welcome again! Look forward to getting to know you more.



Report to moderator  76.112.30.51 (?)

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"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/>

**rabryant**

Newbie



Posts: 4



### Re: Introduction

« **Reply #3 on:** February 13, 2012,  
09:54:38 AM »

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Pathfinder - I know the trinity concept is difficult to swallow, and I agree that

from a literal standpoint it can be. I have begun to look at it from a more symbolic position. In other words, "the Father" represents the creator and/or creative aspect of God, where as "the son" symbolizes God's relationship to humanity, his/her love for us and his/her desire to guide us through our roughest points in life. The "Holy Ghost" symbolizes God's eternal presence among us. The whole three-in-one thing is just rubbish in my opinion.



Report to moderator 147.26.217.175 (?)

### Jenabe Fazel

Administrator  
Jr. Member



Posts: 76



#### Re: Introduction

« **Reply #4 on:** February 15, 2012,  
08:12:20 PM »

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It's well known too that early Christians, such as in the Gospel of Thomas, had a much more mystical view of Christ and God. The emphasis was more on unity and oneness, highly comparable to many traditions in the India and elsewhere, even the Sufis. Baha'u'llah, in my opinion, conceives of the Divine much more in such terms.



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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### pathfinder

Newbie



Posts: 15



#### Re: Introduction

« **Reply #5 on:** February 17, 2012,  
06:26:22 PM »

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I rather agree with you both-symbolic look and mystical look at the Christian concept of the trinity. I definitely believe there is a One. Jesus as a man was a messenger or perhaps God coming down himself in human form to walk amongst us, although as I stated earlier on this thread, any one of us can speak as a child of God/creation of God, etc. Why not? Sure, there are false messengers-like that Heaven's Gate cult that okay, steer clear from, but a rational, thinking person can be inspired too in our times.



Report to moderator 71.225.44.91 (?)

### Jenabe Fazel

Administrator  
Jr. Member



Posts: 76



#### Re: Introduction

« **Reply #6 on:** February 18, 2012,  
11:55:36 AM »

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#### Quote from: pathfinder on February 17, 2012, 06:26:22 PM

... but a rational, thinking person can be inspired too in our times.

Yes, Abdul-Baha spoke somewhere about faith being "rational knowledge." To my mind, that's not the hocus-pocus of blind belief and rituals, what Tolstoy scathingly called once "sorcery." There are many *rational reasons* that the Bahai teachings make sense, given their view of history, the oneness of all peoples and religions, seeking a moderate, democratic world order through the give and take of consultation, not bombs and bullets...



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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