

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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Topic: Starting out questions (Read 3184 times)

pathfinder

Newbie



Posts: 15



Starting out questions

« on: January 02, 2012, 11:44:45 PM »

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As you can see, I'm new to the forum, and this is my first post. I was thrilled to find reformbahai.org. I happened on it through Beliefnet. I have been looking at the Bahai faith, and so many aspects of it seem wonderful. I see that this is a reform group that I am guessing is in response to limitations of the main organization of the faith. I do not know the particulars, but I can say this-I am very cautious about being a "card carrying" member of a religion and being subject to potential judgment within the religion, and being contacted for involvement, or feeling pressured to be involved in organizational activities. I gather that in the US there aren't reform bahai houses of worship, literal structures, though I do know within the main movement based out of Haifa, there are local centers in the US, and then that center might have members that hold devotional groups, etc. I don't know the organizational structure at all, other than the idea that there are assembly bodies LSA, etc, submission of a declaration card. This is something I am cautious of. I want a good stucture and belief system, but not politics and declarations, etc. Example- alcohol consumption. I rarely drink, but I don't think I would be an immoral aberrant for an occasional drink, but I know it is not permitted in the "main" faith. I also am concerned about obligations of reading certian prayers. My personality does not fit into repetition, and I can easily lapse into the adult version of writing on the chalkboard 100 times, I will not talk in class, which ends up an exercise in going through the motions. I can personally challenge myself to read a certain bit daily, just not a "prescribed amount". I think I could find a home in the reform faith, even if it is at the cost of being considered some sort of heretic to the Haifa based main Bahai. So... I want to know more, and get a general idea. I'd like to hear examples of how

reform persons go about in their faith. Obviously it seems individual, perhaps a Unitarian Universalist style to an extent, but does anyone also still gather in devotional groups or communication with anyone who belongs to the Haifa based group? Does Haifa disavow reform Baha'is? How does one become a Reform Baha'i? If I see that it aligns well for me, is it then bestowed on me as my own personal declaration and thus it is so, that I am a Reform Baha'i? I get that sense, but I just want to ask. Thanks!



Report to moderator  71.225.44.91 (?)

Jenabe Fazel

Administrator
Jr. Member



Posts: 76



Re: Starting out questions

« **Reply #1 on:** January 03, 2012,
08:45:40 AM »

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Welcome and thanks for your thoughtful comments and questions.

"Submission of a declaration card." ...Which is basically a type of creed, for the Bahai denominations that use a declaration card, it's really used to control and manipulate people, the way creeds have always been used. Such was not the practice nor interpretation of Abdul Baha, who was appointed by Baha'u'llah as the Center of his Covenant, basically the interpreter of his teachings for the modern world.

It's largely a matter of personal conscience to decide such things regarding alcohol and so forth. Ultimately it always is. The thought-police approach to religion is one of the fortes of the Haifan branch since Shoghi Effendi coerced it back into a Shiite conception of religion.

What claims to be a the "mainstream" Bahai faith broke away from Abdul Baha's open, universal interpretation of a "spiritual democracy" in 1921 by forging a bogus will and testament; since then it has been attempting to create, essentially, without exaggeration, a worldwide theocracy. By analogy, Catholicism claimed to the true tradition, but Martin Luther and others, though rather late, woke up and realized it just wasn't so. To Reform Bahais, the Islamic baggage of heretics and infidels are thought relics, if you will, detritus that belongs to the past, which both Baha'u'llah and Abdul Baha at times made clear had been "removed from the Book." That some Baha'i denominations continue in the fanatical mold of the past, along Shiite Iranian lines, should not be confused with the authentic vision of tolerance and universalism that Abdul Baha clearly taught all over the Western world prior to his death.

Prayers are up to the individual, again, a matter of conscience. Baha'u'llah reduced the Islamic five prayers a day to basically choose one of three, though that's really still within the Muslim context of the heritage of the Bahai faith. Religion evolves and changes is one of the most important teachings of Baha'u'llah. We're now talking about more than a 150 years later... in a truly global world. All such things are really for the individual to decide and negotiate. Even in Abdul Baha's time, he himself was never the rigid, accusatory type of sanctimonious personality that creates so much stress for others. To quote, Abdul Baha taught that "People think religion is confined in an edifice, to be worshiped at an altar. In reality it is an attitude toward divinity which is reflected through life." No one can "bestow" that on another person. It's a matter of one's own spiritual search and conscience.

Did Protestants continue to gather and pray with Catholics? Sunnis with Shias?

etc, etc... Why should Reform Bahais with Haifan cult members, who have allowed themselves to be deceived and brainwashed into believing in a palpably fraudulent will and testament justifying all the coercion and crime it has led to? Why should Reform Bahais care in the slightest whether Haifa "disavows" them or not? Along with Ruth White and other early Reform Bahais, as far back as the 1920s, we disavow them! Utterly... in no uncertain terms. They do not represent the true teachings of Baha'u'llah nor the authoritative interpretation of them by Abdul Baha. Indeed, Shoghi Effendi debased Abdul Baha's universalism into a cultish, fanatical organization that seeks to dominate both the individual and society for the purposes of power, control, and the accumulation of worldly wealth. See for instance the records of the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals regarding the Haifan attempt to destroy several other Bahai denominations:

08-2306 : Nat'l Spiritual v. Nat'l Spiritual

Case Type: Civil ; Nature of Suit: Oth Stat Act-federal Question

Doc Uploaded Filed Description

2 02/20/2009 02/20/2009 Oral Argument

3 11/23/2010 11/23/2010 Opinion (SYKES)

<http://www.ca7.uscourts.gov/fdocs/docs.fwx?caseno=08-2306&submit=showdkt&yr=08&num=2306>

Only the individual, before God and his own conscience, can say whether he is a Bahai or not. See <http://reformbahai.org/Declare.html> Despite all the hocus-pocus of corrupt and decadent organizations, no matter how much granite and marble they may pile upon their whited sepulchers, they do not make one a believer and have not been appointed by God to do so.

You might find some of the following links helpful:

About the Reform Bahai Faith

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

Abdu'l-Baha's 1912 Authentic Covenant

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

An Analysis of Abdul-Baha's 1912 Authentic Covenant

http://www.reformbahai.org/Covenant_comments.html

Dr. C. (Charles) Ainsworth Mitchell. Report on the Writing Shown on the Photographs of the Alleged Will of Abdul-Baha. 1930. Certified Copy from the Library of Congress.

http://www.reformbahai.org/CAMitchell_Report.html

Jenabe Fazel Mazandarani. Universal Religion

http://www.reformbahai.org/Jenabe_Fazel.html

Hope this helps. I'd be happy to discuss any further questions or concerns you might have.

« Last Edit: January 03, 2012, 08:57:20 AM by Jenabe Fazel »

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/>

pathfinder

Newbie



Posts: 15

**Re: Starting out questions**« **Reply #2 on:** January 11, 2012,
07:12:55 PM »[Quote](#)[Modify](#)[Remove](#)[Split Topic](#)

Only the individual, before God and his own conscience, can say whether he is a Bahai or not. See <http://reformbahai.org/Declare.html> Despite all the hocus-pocus of corrupt and decadent organizations, no matter how much granite and marble they may pile upon their whited sepulchers, they do not make one a believer and have not been appointed by God to do so.

I like that quote. I don't need a formal declaration card or even an organized church/worship house structure.

And I do have my own questions about some of the mainstream "rules", "musts" and "shoulds".

My biggest beef with religion is being told exactly how and what I must think. I believe and respect holy writing and words from a messenger who is inspired by God. When messages then get splintered into rules and regulations after the messenger is dead, that's where I feel the mess happens, as in Christianity, the religious structure I'm most familiar with, from Roman Catholicism and on down.

The bans on alcohol, just the totally blatant ban, and the notion that someone of homosexual orientation can just "turn off the switch or be cured" or just be expected to not have sexual feelings that can be shared with someone the person loves legitimately, that's what bothers me. I guess the fact that the mainstream supposedly at least "accepts" gays (I could be wrong, so correct me if I am), okay, that's more progress than fundamentalist Christianity where I've literally seen people holding up the sign "God hates _____ (condescending word that starts with f and ends with s-you know what I mean). I find that behavior deplorable and the antithesis of what their own leader and savior follows. I imagine if Jesus were standing next to them, he'd be like, excuse me, what? 🙄

So, as an obvious American, okay, here I am, coming from the exposure of mostly Christianity, so it does permeate much of my feelings.

So any dialogue is welcome as the topic says, I am starting out here looking at Bahai from a fresh perspective of inclusiveness. And by the way, I don't rule out the beauty of parts of the Christian Bible either. If anything, I'm trying to look past the annoyance I've personally experienced, and be open to the good parts of Christianity. I am a former Christian and a current respector of Jesus if that makes sense, and the other prophets too, and I want to look at Bahai now.

[Report to moderator](#) 12.230.217.4 (?)**Jenabe Fazel**

Administrator

Jr. Member



Posts: 76

**Re: Starting out questions**« **Reply #3 on:** January 12, 2012,
09:51:50 PM »[Quote](#)[Modify](#)[Remove](#)[Split Topic](#)

Hi Pathfinder!

"Mainstream" is quite relative. Was Catholicism "mainstream"? Martin Luther didn't think so... nor much of the 16th century. Driving university scholars out or into silence over matters of conscience fails to impress me as a reputable approach to religious belief... a very muddy stream, at best. Just my view...

I agree with you on the "mess" and its origin. Abdul-Baha emphasized religion is "an attitude of mind," not an organization. To me, it's that impulse to become rigid and inflexible, wanting simplistic rules and applications of whatever teaching, that is really damaging to people's lives. But, that's all the negative... which happens, really, with everything human beings are and do, and must struggle against, struggle to become and stay human, or, to use the old word, spiritual.

In regard to homosexuality, other than pederasty, there is nothing clearly stated by Abdul-Baha. Homosexuality is as you rightly suggest a very complex issue, with real human beings involved, and a very wide range of people and conditions, DNA and otherwise. This and other such things, like alcohol, always is a matter for the individual to decide according to their own conscience, as ultimately everything is when people are in their homes or in every moment of their lives. The Haifan approach really comes from Shoghi Effendi, who got so much wrong once he forged a will for his grandfather... which has damaged and ruined a lot of lives.

We Bahais, and people in general in our time, have become terribly traumatized by religion. I think Abdul-Baha was much more down to earth and relaxed. To my mind, that's the Example that's important... not all the accusations and self-righteousness of some one at feasts or whatever.

No reason to be apologetic about Christianity with me. When I became a Bahai I added to my spiritual outlook rather than detracting from it. I grew up sort of Catholic, with Protestant relatives, Anglican and dissenters, Huguenot, Unity, atheists, and so on. America! I don't believe Abdul-Baha ever intimidated anything else. I've read many times the Bible and other substantive Christian sources all my life. The Bahai writings compliment the past scriptures, I think. They have helped me see and understand the Bible, the Quran, Upanishads and other central religious texts to a deeper level, not less, inclusive as you say.

Yet interpreting the Bahai teachings after Abdul-Baha died in 1921 has mistakenly become increasingly Shiite and fanatical, literal-minded, for some denominations, harassing hundreds, if not thousands, out of the religion. All of which is very reminiscent of what happened in the 1920s because about 50% of the Bahais of the time, most of whom had met Abdul-Baha, left in shock and disgust at the change of direction. Ruth White is quite articulate on the events of that time. You might skim around the extracts from her books, such as Ruth White. *Abdul Baha's Questioned Will and Testament*. Beverly Hills: White, 1946 http://reformbahai.org/Ruth_White.html (Scroll about two thirds down the page for that book)

Abdul-Baha thought very highly of Jenabe Fazel Mazandarani at the end of his own life. It's one of the important indications of Abdul-Baha's own conception of where the Bahai Movement should evolve towards. It is the kind of Faith that Reform Bahais believe can be recovered and renewed:

Universal Religion

http://www.reformbahai.org/Jenabe_Fazel.html

I thank you for your sensitive and thoughtful questions.



« Last Edit: January 13, 2012, 08:11:02 AM by Jenabe Fazel »

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/>

pathfinder

Newbie



Posts: 15



Re: Starting out questions

« **Reply #4 on:** January 13, 2012,

10:16:53 AM »

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Mainstream is definitely relative. I guess I meant mainstream, specifically to refer to the "distinction" between the Haifan Bahais and the other "denominations", for lack of better description, though for example, while you are a "Reform Bahai" universally you are still a Bahai, at least that's how I feel, although if I do come to realize I am Reform Bahai, I would probably identify myself as the Reform, as the Haifan based does have the much more rigid, Shiite flavor. No thank you for a Shiite twist for me. and while of course women serve in other capacities, they are barred from the UHJ, and I imagine the apolegetic stance is that women can serve in other capacities, but indeed, isn't that fundamentalism Christianity too, a patronizing of women. It seems a theme in more of the rules oriented, rigid religions. In RC, no women priests, in fundamentalist Christianity, no women ministers, or "elders" as some of the independent churches are run really by an elder. (I've known some fundamental Christians). So yes, religion is an attitude of mind, yet some followers are all caught up in the rituals. I will say, I've never known an RC to flaunt their religion as superior, and in fact, most I know hardly abide by all the "requirements". I'm a little like you with a splintered background. In reality, my religious heritage is about 3/4 RC, though I was not raised it, and was "unchurched" growing up, but as a teen, chose to explore on my own RC, then went to liberal Christianity, which at times, the worship services really follow what I felt were a very slimmed down version of an RC Mass anyway, though much freer. Nonetheless, much as I tried, I felt no spiritual growth, and tried another church a few years later which was even worse, I used to call it (to myself) the Church of Apathy. The pastor had no life or vigor-nice man, just not an effective pastor, and a rock sitting on the ground was more inspiring. The congergants were the same small group, and totally just going through the motions. I left, and decided I just can't possibly ever again officially join a church/house of worship that has a formal organizational structure. The one church I attended, I'll never forget the one council member literally shouting at the pastor in disagreement; he just clearly disliked the pastor, and I was appalled-it had no place in a meeting like that, and I just want NO part of political BS like that. No way. The second church wasn't nasty like that, but just was drop dead boring and meaningless in its politics. I had been on the church council in both, so I saw firsthand how things went, and no thank you to any of this. I DREADED going to council meetings in both churches-mindless and boring. Not for me. Even with a liberal religious/spiritual whatever you want to call it structure of UU, I couldn't belong to a brick & mortar congregation THERE either-to me it's still politics, so that's where I sit. I don't need committees, politics, structured worship services and the like, official "joining" of the faith community, what have you not. EVEN in a non creedal group like UU.



[Report to moderator](#)



71.225.44.91 (?)

Jenabe Fazel

Administrator

Jr. Member



Re: Starting out questions

« **Reply #5 on:** January 14, 2012,

11:19:23 AM »

[Quote](#)

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[Split Topic](#)

Posts: 76



"...women can serve in other capacities, but indeed, isn't that fundamentalism Christianity too, a patronizing of women."

Yes, I think it is. Also, it's an attempt to conceal the double standard and hidden contempt for women, so characteristic of Shiism. Shoghi Effendi, for instance, referred in writing to his brother's wife as "a low-born Christian woman" and to Ruth White as "a besotted woman." The emphasis each time falls on the gender, utterly in contradiction to Baha'u'llah's and Abdul-Baha's teaching of the equality of men and women. It's one of the many examples showing Shoghi Effendi took the Bahai Cause of his grandfather in the wrong direction.

"RC, no women priests..."

A centuries-long history of that too. Actually, the New York Times just had an Opinion piece during the last few days about the treatment of women in Catholicism, especially the wives of priests who had converted after marriage. The point was made that even back a thousand years such women were treated very poorly as "vessels of sin" and all that kind of thing, leading the priests astray into lust and whatever. Since apparently the Vatican is now allowing more Protestant ministers to convert and bring their families along the editorial writer was saying the wives should realize deep-down the same attitudes toward women persist. ...kind of scary, really, in this day and age! I'd expect it from the Taliban, but RC?

"...and decided I just can't possibly ever again officially join a church/house of worship that has a formal organizational structure."

To my mind and view of what Abdul-Baha meant when he said "the Bahai Movement can not be organized," is along those lines. When the organization becomes the thrust of everything, not one's own spiritual relationship with God and striving to understand and grow, the purpose and meaning of life gets lost in the shuffle. People start using the "organization" for their own benefit, power, control, money, is what it always comes down to, including the pride, arrogance, self, all that kind of thing. The religion becomes a political power symbol, as many commentators have called it, in one way or another, Christian, Muslim, etc., have written along those lines.

Paradoxically, Abdul Baha discusses how to run the affairs of a Bahai community in The Tablets of Abdul Baha Abbas (3 volumes), published prior to his death. Shoghi Effendi definitely runs off in a completely different direction, hyper-organizing everything, so that the simple grass-roots assemblies of Abdul-Baha and "spiritual democracy" become lost. Abdul-Baha's vision is not one of top-down administration, just the opposite.

It's really the spirit that has been lost in so many ways in modernity by the various religions. Baha'u'llah's and Abdul-Baha's prayers and writings, universal in address and outlook, show humanity how to recover a perspective to respiritualize and reinvigorate the individual and community.

The form of the community, too, is important and implicit and explicit in Abdul-Baha's interpretation, away from the pulpit and imam approach and more towards the circle, the togetherness of the community... with the individual responsible for his or her own spiritual development, teaching by example, not sanctimony....

Just some thoughts.



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/>

Jenabe Fazel

Administrator
Jr. Member



Posts: 76



Re: Starting out questions

« **Reply #6 on:** January 14, 2012,
05:09:14 PM »

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Sorry, Pathfinder, I answered your message, forgetting to approve it! ... There it is now!



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/>

pathfinder

Newbie



Posts: 15



Re: Starting out questions

« **Reply #7 on:** January 15, 2012,
01:12:43 PM »

[Quote](#) [Modify](#) [Remove](#) [Split Topic](#)

Quote from: Jenabe Fazel on January 14, 2012, 11:19:23 AM

"RC, no women priests..."

thousand years such women were treated very poorly as "vessels of sin" and all that kind of thing, leading the priests astray into lust and whatever. Since apparently the Vatican is now allowing more Protestant ministers to convert and bring their families along the editorial writer was saying the wives should realize deep-down the same attitudes toward women persist. ...kind of scary, really, in this day and age! I'd expect it from the Taliban, but RC?

Yes, indeed! Really quite pathetic, like women are these luring, nothing but seductive machines. Yeah, sure, whatever. I assume that's why in Islam they need to be in a parka because otherwise they are somehow flaunting themselves, and of course men have no responsibility in any of this. Same goes for any of the fundamentalist end of religions; hardly just Islam. As you well pointed out, in RC the wives are like these wanton women. Here we are in 2012, and this kind of thing pervades. 😏[/color]

To my mind and view of what Abdul-Baha meant when he said "the Bahai Movement can not be organized," is along those lines. When the organization becomes the thrust of everything, not one's own spiritual relationship with God and striving to understand and grow, the purpose and meaning of life gets lost in the shuffle. People start using the "organization" for their own benefit, power, control, money, is what it always comes down to, including the pride, arrogance, self, all that kind of thing. The religion becomes a political power symbol, as many commentators have called it, in one way or another, Christian, Muslim, etc., have written along those lines.

Absolutely! A smaller organized system, I could almost go for that, if it's in the interest of brother and sisterhood together, and no large formal politics or "leader" in the system. I know that for example, should I realize and be able to state that I am a Reform Bahai, I

can be one without attending meaningless council and assembly meetings, absent of the political power and control structure. I can commune online with others like I am doing now and attend to my learning and readings, and living the life and growth that I want to do to benefit others and myself. I want to talk to God minus a huge being forced thing. The obligatory prayers, like the short one, okay, no big deal, but the recitation 95 times or whatever it is that God is Gracious, I think if God knows I believe that about God and began to behave accordingly with grace, God gets the point. If stating 95 times provides comfort for a person and actually DOES something for the person, that's also great. It doesn't work for me, and is using up my energy that can be more productive elsewhere. That's just me. And I love the term of "hyper organizing everything. Again-exactly what I RUN from because while I think a degree of discipline in one's own INDIVIDUAL conduct and study is one thing, OTHERS telling me how things must be is another and doesn't fly with me because it simply does not help me spiritually.

« Last Edit: January 15, 2012, 03:24:19 PM by Jenabe Fazel »

Report to moderator  12.230.217.4 (?)

pathfinder

Newbie



Posts: 15



 **Re: Starting out questions**

« **Reply #8 on:** January 16, 2012, 11:43:28 PM »

[Quote](#) [Modify](#) [Remove](#) [Split Topic](#)

I was going to start a new topic, but figured I'd add here. I have the book *The Universal Principles of the Reform Bahai Faith*. I have the Kindle version. The writings are lovely. They are grouped by Roman numerals and I do see there is a sources section, but I would LOVE to be able to know which section is part of each specific source. I think they are lovely and a great start for me. I am wondering if it would be of benefit to read the Book of Certitude or the Kitáb-i-Aqdas ? I don't know if there is one I should start "first" that might help me learn about the general Bahai faith itself. I then am obviously taking it upon myself to lean toward Reform Bahai, but it's obvious that writings by Bahá'u'lláh and certainly Abdu'l-Bahá, whose covenant is referenced a big piece of Reform Bahai being that it reinforced his father's teachings, would be relevant. So as I read a section of their writings in the book, I'd also like to know where else might be logical to help me as I learn. I kind of don't know where to start, or what might be a helpful place to start, or if reading each of one is fine. (I tend to read like three different books at the same time anyway. I'm not one that feels a rigid reading order is necessary, ha ha, unless it's in a classroom setting 😊)

Report to moderator  71.225.44.91 (?)

Jenabe Fazel

Administrator

Jr. Member



Posts: 76



 **Re: Starting out questions**

« **Reply #9 on:** January 18, 2012, 09:33:00 PM »

[Quote](#) [Modify](#) [Remove](#) [Split Topic](#)

I'm glad to hear you have *The Universal Principles of the Reform Bahai Faith* and like it. For anyone looking in here, it is available now on Amazon and elsewhere for only 99 cents!
http://www.amazon.com/Universal-Principles-Reform-Bahai-ebook/dp/B003TXT4FC/ref=sr_1_1?

[ie=UTF8&m=AG56TWVU5XWC2&s=digital-text&qid=1283429375&sr=8-1](http://www.reformbahai.org/forum/index.php?topic=31.0)

As you say, all the sources are listed in the back. While the Reform Bahai Press has a complete list of the original page numbers, it would be just too extensive for publication.

The Book of Iqan, that is The Book of Certitude, is available on the Reform Bahai Faith website, under Bahai Writings:
http://reformbahai.org/images/Bahauallah_The_Book_of_Ighan_1915.pdf

The Kitab-i-Aqdas was never translated during Abdul-Baha's time. What is available was translated either by Shoghi Effendi or other Bahai denominations. It will have to be retranslated someday for Reform Bahais.

Here's Abdu'l-Baha's 1912 Authentic Covenant
<http://www.reformbahai.org/Covenant.html>

These are the books that we recommend for Bahai history and so on:

Recommended Works on Babi and Bahai History
http://reformbahai.org/Babi_Bahai_history.html

Haifan books are all skewed along the lines of the fraudulent will and testament and Shoghi Effendi's oppressive opinions.



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/>

pathfinder

Newbie



Posts: 15



Re: Starting out questions

« **Reply #10 on:** January 19, 2012, 12:14:55 AM »

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Thanks! The idea is to take the meaning with me in the writings anyway. Thanks for The Book of Certitude link. And yes, I appreciate the Universal Principles book, and was surprised to see the Kindle version of it for 99 cents! I would have bought it anyway, but I have a Kindle reader app in my tablet computers and phone anyway, so this way books are always with me. The pdf I'll just put in my various devices too. I do have a copy of the Kiab-i-aqdas, a free version, but I shall remain mindful if it is a biased translation. Do you read it ever and then reinterpret perhaps the perspective it was meant to convey?



Report to moderator 71.225.44.91 (?)

Jenabe Fazel

Administrator
Jr. Member



Re: Starting out questions

« **Reply #11 on:** February 02, 2012, 10:03:07 PM »

[Quote](#) [Modify](#) [Remove](#) [Split Topic](#)

Posts: 76



As you've probably noticed, there are a lot of books on the Reform Bahai Faith website under "Reform Bahai Writings." Thought I'd just mention it in case others peak in here.

Abdul-Baha reinterpreted the teachings of Baha'u'llah because with the passage of time it became necessary. Religion is not a fossil that never changes since human nature changes and evolves, progresses. That's what the whole notion of "progressive revelation" is really about. Without such practical growth and evolution, any faith ends up with fanaticism and literal mindedness. That being said, the Reform Bahai Faith strives to follow the Example of Abdul-Baha, even as it remembers that he said he was a man like everyone else, showing the way to serve Baha'u'llah in the modern world.



Report to moderator 76.112.30.51 (?)

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

pathfinder

Newbie



Posts: 15



Re: Starting out questions

« Reply #12 on: February 09, 2012, 12:48:07 AM »

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Yes, I noticed. I'm just looking for the references that are not biased. Here's another question: What are opinions on all the prophets, Mohammed, Abraham, Jesus. Especially in the Western countries where Christianity, even it's most liberal forms, purport Jesus as part of the trinity. So is Jesus regarded as another prophet, or a form of God who decided to come to Earth in human form? I guess I ask, as it is said anyone can be a Bahai-Christian, Bahai-Jew, all the teachings of other religions are also found in the movement. Teachings of Christianity say Jesus is God and savior. Jews await their Messiah and reject Jesus as such. Where do all the other religions fit in?



Report to moderator 71.225.44.91 (?)

Jenabe Fazel

Administrator
Jr. Member



Posts: 76



Re: Starting out questions

« Reply #13 on: February 12, 2012, 08:39:33 PM »

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You're right that today most Christians believe in the trinity, but Christianity existed for over three-hundred years before the doctrine of the trinity was declared the official teaching of the church, in 325 AD at the Council of Nicaea. Also, there have been at various times throughout history Christians who rejected the doctrine. The Unitarians in Europe and the USA, for instance from about the 1820s on. Also, the Cathars in southern Europe and Spain.

Baha'u'llah and Abdul-Baha teach that Christ was one of the manifestations of God, essentially a prophet, but not God. Similarly, the other major religious figures are considered manifestations of God's will to the peoples of their own

times and day or culture. What Bahais tend to call progressive revelation. Abdul-Baha explains these teachings more in

Some Answered Questions, by Abdul-Baha

http://reformbahai.org/images/Abdul-Baha_Some_Answered_Questions.pdf

The Promulgation of Universal Peace, 1921-1922 edition.

http://reformbahai.org/images/The_promulgation_of_universal_peace.pdf

Hope this helps.



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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