

What About ... Baha'i ?

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We can think of Baha'i as Iranian Shi'ite Islam and the Coexist movement mixed together, with their own Messiah. But Baha'i is a disobedient child because Shi'ite Islam is exclusive and Baha'i is inclusive of other major world religions. Today, it's a big deal with about 5 million members world-wide.

A Brief History

On May 23, 1844, an Iranian (Persian) named Sayid Ali Muhammad proclaimed himself the Bab or "Gate," the eighth manifestation of God and first since Muhammad. That, of course, meant that Muhammad was not the last prophet and the Koran was not the only authority from God. His followers were severely persecuted, but before his death on July 9, 1850, he predicted the coming of a great prophet. On April 22, 1863 (the year Lincoln freed the slaves, during the American Civil War) Mirza Husayn Ali (1817-1892), one of Bab's followers, declared himself the fulfillment of that prophecy and the latest manifesta-

tion of God. He donned the title Baha'u'llah (the glory of Allah). With that, he declared himself to be both the coming prophet of Islam (the Mahdi), the Maiytrea (from Buddhism), the Krishna (from Hinduism), and the Second Coming of Christ. Hence the inclusiveness of the Baha'i faith. When Baha'u'llah died, he was initially succeeded by his son and then a great-grandson. Today, the religion is led by the "Universal House of Justice," a group that gives annual conferences in Haifa, Israel, where the Bab's remains were buried after taken from Iran.

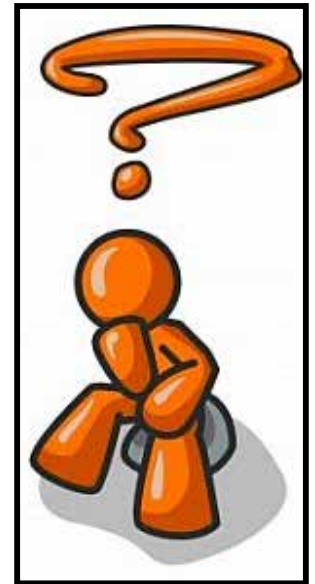


Shrine of the Báb
in Haifa, Israel

Some Basic Doctrines of Baha'i

- There is one God and all the world religions are to be reconciled together under God. There should not be proselytizing from one religion to another. All differences in religion are explained as: (1) an earlier, less complete, revelation, (2) social applications, or (3) incorrect teaching about the religions.
- We must strive for global peace through the elimination of both wealth and poverty, global education, a global government tribunal, a global measuring system, global equality of women, men, and all people.
- God cannot be known, but He is revealed through manifestations. Krishna, Buddha, Jesus, Muhammad, the Bab, and Baha'u'llah were all manifestations of God, and the latest, Baha'u'llah, is the most complete.

Coexist



- Not only Baha'i books, but other scriptures should be studied. No one body of scripture is sufficient.
- Social liberalism should include science and religion, but they support family and oppose abortion.
- Jesus was a manifestation of God but not an incarnation of God. He did not die and raise from the dead or pay for sin so people could go to heaven. There is no heaven or hell, in the sense of places for the dead.

Some Fundamental Problems with Baha'i

1. An inclusive religion is also exclusive, since it has to exclude any non-inclusive religion. For example, Baha'i cannot include evangelical Christianity because it excludes Baha'i (John 14:6; Acts 4:12).
2. Baha'i believes humans are sometimes selfish, but fundamentally good, without a sin nature, or any judgment for sin. That's a completely unrealistic assessment of human nature all through history.
3. Including all world religions is self-contradictory, since these religions contradict each other. For example, Baha'i describes God as monotheistic and all eastern religions are pantheistic or polytheistic. The similarities, they point out, in world religions are only surface and superficial.
4. The Second Coming of Christ is not a personal proclamation but a public, global, catastrophic event as He descends to the Mount of Olives, and Jerusalem undergoes massive geological change.

Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be (Matthew 24:26-27 KJV).