

interfaith Unitarian Universalist Association. Several organisations also exist specifically for Christians who believe in Universalism, both within that denominational tradition and outside it.

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A response to Takfir

Moojan Momen's paragraph about me in his article 'Marginality and Apostasy in the Baha'i Community' (Religion 37 [2007] 187–209, p. 198), under the guise of scholarly content and factual statement, is a litany of falsehoods and distortions about who I am.

Holding two degrees from the University of Michigan, I studied there with the poet Robert Hayden, who was a Baha'i, and edited both Hayden's Collected Prose (University of Michigan Press, 1984) and his Collected Poems (Liveright, 1985). A man of formidable intellectual integrity, Robert Hayden loathed fundamentalist Baha'is. Sharing his assessment, I discuss Hayden's actual views on the Baha'i Faith at length in my essay about him in my recently published *The Grove of the Eumenides: Essays on Literature, Criticism, and Culture* (2007). I have also published three other books of poetry and prose, have a forthcoming volume in Spring 2008, and have been a Fulbright-Hays scholar to China and an NEH scholar on India; but since I'm supposed to be a 'marginal' Baha'i 'apostate,' Momen, like all zealous Baha'i apologists, can only treat people with caricature and slander, as has been done by fundamentalists for over a decade on talk.religion.bahai and elsewhere online.

Implicitly deriding my four years of community college teaching, Momen conveniently leaves out that I taught English literature and rhetoric for seven years at Gunma University (Japan), Illinois State University, and Oakland University.

Momen claims that I had 'personal clashes with Iranian Baha'is' (p. 198). Apparently someone thought so and reported something to someone. What is the accusation and who is my accuser? In Western law, the accused have the right to know and confront the accuser, in order to protect the innocent from libel.

Haifan Baha'is have often denied the existence of other Bahai denominations. Following that pattern, Momen implies that the Reform Bahai Faith does not exist. The Reform Bahai Faith began August 19, 2004, although its roots go back to Ruth White, Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, Julie Chanler, and other early Baha'is who were similarly maligned for not accepting the fundamentalist interpretation of Baha'u'llah's Teachings, based on the purported will and testament of Abdu'l-Baha, written by the family of Shoghi Effendi, and pronounced a fraud in 1930 by Dr. C. Ainsworth Mitchell of the British Museum: http://www.reformbahai.org/CAMitchell_Report.htm.

The Reform Bahai Faith is already much larger than any other Bahai denomination, including the three combined that the NSA of Wilmette is currently suing in the US District Court of Northern Illinois. See http://trueseeker.typepad.com/true_seeker/court_case.html.

My website 'The Baha'i Faith & Religious Freedom of Conscience' may be the most comprehensive effort made to document the fanaticism that has taken over the largest Baha'i denomination. See <http://www.fglaysheer.com/bahaicensorship>.

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Four heroes and an anti-hero

Although some response to my article (Momen, 2007, all references not otherwise attributed are to this article) was to be anticipated, the extent of the Internet campaign that has been waged against it on webpages, blogs and e-mail lists has been greater than I anticipated. Not all of the comments on the Internet have, however, been negative. One ex-Baha'i who has gone on to become a Catholic records his own experience of participating in various apostate e-mail lists and states: 'They act exactly the way Momen describes them' (Jonah, 2007). I have had similar private e-mails.

Because of restrictions of space, it is impossible to respond to all of the points raised in the four published replies and I have been forced to pick a selection of them. Some of the points made in these replies seem to be the result of these individuals forgetting what they themselves have written and done. Eric Stetson denies that my description of apostasy applies to him and implies that he is rarely involved with the Baha'i Faith now. Yet he is constantly updating his webpage, where he writes on