

*A Bahá'í denies no religion; he accepts the Truth in all, and would die to uphold it. He loves all men as his brothers, of whatever class, of whatever race or nationality, of whatever creed or colour, whether good or bad, rich or poor, beautiful or hideous. He commits no violence; if he is struck he does not return the blow. He calls nothing bad, following the example of the Lord Bahá'u'lláh. As a safeguard against intemperance he does not drink wine or spirits. Bahá'u'lláh has said it is not good for a sane man to take that which will destroy his health and sense.*

*`Abdu'l-Bahá*

*In brief, let each one of you be as a lamp shining forth with the light of the virtues of the world of humanity. Be trustworthy, sincere, affectionate and replete with chastity. Be illumined, be spiritual, be divine, be glorious, be quickened of God, be a Bahá'í.*

*`Abdu'l-Bahá*

*...the Bahá'ís are the well-wishers of the government, obedient to its laws and bearing love towards all peoples.*

*`Abdu'l-Bahá*

*It makes no difference whether you have ever heard of Bahá'u'lláh or not," was the answer, "the man who lives the life according to the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh is already a Bahá'í. On the other hand a man may call himself a Bahá'í for fifty years and if he does not live the life he is not a Bahá'í. An ugly man may call himself handsome, but he deceives no one, and a black man may call himself white yet he deceives no one: not even himself!*

*`Abdu'l-Bahá*

*Strive then to the best of thine ability to let these children know that a Bahá'í is one who embodieth all the perfections, that he must shine out like a lighted taper—not be darkness upon darkness and yet bear the name Bahá'í.*

*`Abdu'l-Bahá*

*You must thank God that your efforts are high and noble, that your endeavors are worthy, that your intentions are centered upon the Kingdom of God and that your supreme desire is the acquisition of eternal virtues. You must act in accordance with these requirements. A man may be a Bahá'í in name only. If he is a Bahá'í in reality, his deeds and actions will be decisive proofs of*

*it. What are the requirements? Love for mankind, sincerity toward all, reflecting the oneness of the world of humanity, philanthropy, becoming enkindled with the fire of the love of God, attainment to the knowledge of God and that which is conducive to human welfare.*

*`Abdu'l-Bahá*

*O army of God! Through the protection and help vouchsafed by the Blessed Beauty—may my life be a sacrifice to His loved ones—ye must conduct yourselves in such a manner that ye may stand out distinguished and brilliant as the sun among other souls. Should any one of you enter a city, he should become a centre of attraction by reason of his sincerity, his faithfulness and love, his honesty and fidelity, his truthfulness and loving-kindness towards all the peoples of the world, so that the people of that city may cry out and say: 'This man is unquestionably a Bahá'í, for his manners, his behaviour, his conduct, his morals, his nature, and disposition reflect the attributes of the Bahá'ís.' Not until ye attain this station can ye be said to have been faithful to the Covenant and*

*Testament of God. For He hath, through irrefutable Texts, entered into a binding Covenant with us all, requiring us to act in accordance with His sacred instructions and counsels.*

*`Abdu'l-Bahá*

*I desire distinction for you. The Bahá'ís must be distinguished from others of humanity. But this distinction must not depend upon wealth—that they should become more affluent than other people. I do not desire for you financial distinction. It is not an ordinary distinction I desire; not scientific, commercial, industrial distinction. For you I desire spiritual distinction—that is, you must become eminent and distinguished in morals. In the love of God you must become distinguished from all else. You must become distinguished for loving humanity, for unity and accord, for love and justice. In brief, you must become distinguished in all the virtues of the human world—for faithfulness and sincerity, for justice and fidelity, for firmness and steadfastness, for philanthropic deeds and service to the human world, for love toward every human*

*being, for unity and accord with all people, for removing prejudices and promoting international peace. Finally, you must become distinguished for heavenly illumination and for acquiring the bestowals of God. I desire this distinction for you. This must be the point of distinction among you.*

*`Abdu'l-Bahá*

*The Bahá'ís must not engage in political movements which lead to sedition. They must interest themselves in movements which conduce to law and order.*

*`Abdu'l-Bahá*

*When Christians act according to the teachings of Christ, they are called Bahá'ís. For the foundations of Christianity and the religion of Bahá'u'lláh are one. The foundations of all the divine Prophets and Holy Books are one. The difference among them is one of terminology only. ... Whoever acts completely in accordance with the teachings of Christ is a Bahá'í. The purpose is the essential meaning of Christian, not the mere word. The purpose is the sun itself and not the dawning points.*

*`Abdu'l-Bahá*

# *What is a Bahá'í?*

A brief selection from the

*Bahá'í Writings*