

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE
DEPARTMENT OF THE SECRETARIAT

30 September 1988

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

We enclose a copy of a new compilation entitled *A Chaste and Holy Life*, which was prepared by the Research Department at the request of the Universal House of Justice.

Given the rapidly declining moral standards in the world, the House of Justice has instructed us to emphasize that it considers it both necessary and timely for the Bahá'í friends to increase their understanding of and adherence to the standard of a chaste and holy life that is upheld in our Teachings. To this end, the House of Justice urges the National Spiritual Assemblies to make the compilation available to the friends on the widest possible scale, having it translated, as necessary, in whole or in part, into the major languages of the country. It is also important that the friends be encouraged to study the implications set forth in these extracts, and to endeavor strenuously to exemplify these noble standards in their personal lives.

As the range of activities and projects in which the Bahá'í community engages necessarily continues to expand and diversify, the House of Justice believes it is vital that the moral and ethical teachings of our Faith be neither overlooked nor mistakenly regarded as being of less importance than our social, administrative and metaphysical teachings. Indeed, Shoghi Effendi, in a letter written on his behalf, stressed the need for such balance and for according appropriate weight to the moral principles of the Faith.

Too much emphasis is often laid on the social and economic aspects of the Teachings; but the moral aspect cannot be overemphasized.

In the current climate of social and moral decline, at a time when, in the world at large, moral decay, hypocrisy and compromise are endemic, and words, unsupported by actions, have lost their value, the believers are challenged to become "Bahá'ís in character as well as in belief," to strive determinedly to exemplify the Bahá'í standard, to become distinguished for their moral excellence, and, by the quality of their individual lives and the nature of their Bahá'í community life, to demonstrate the vitalizing power of the Cause not only to bring peace, security and true spiritual happiness to the individual heart, but to transform society as well. Shoghi Effendi repeatedly emphasized the importance of the force of example. A letter written on his behalf states:

His constant hope is that the believers will conduct themselves, individually and in their Bahá'í Community life, in such a manner as to attract the attention of others to the Cause. The world is not only starving for lofty principles and ideals, it is, above all, starving for a shining example which the Bahá'ís can and must provide.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat