



DEEDS DEVOTIONAL PROGRAM

1. Welcome & Introductory Prayer

*O Thou kind God! In the utmost state of humility and submission do we entreat and supplicate at Thy threshold, seeking Thine endless confirmations and illimitable assistance. O Thou Lord! Regenerate these souls, and confer upon them a new life. Animate the spirits, inform the hearts, open the eyes, and make the ears attentive. From Thine ancient treasury confer a new being and animus, and from Thy preexistent abode assist them to attain to new confirmations.

O God! Verily, the world is in need of reformation. Bestow upon it a new existence. Give it newness of thoughts, and reveal unto it heavenly sciences. Breathe into it a fresh spirit, and grant unto it a holier and higher purpose.

O God! Verily, Thou hast made this century radiant, and in it Thou hast manifested Thy merciful effulgence. Thou hast effaced the darkness of superstitions and permitted the light of assurance to shine. O God! Grant that these servants may be acceptable at Thy threshold. Reveal a new heaven, and spread out a new earth for habitation. Let a new Jerusalem descend from on high. Bestow new thoughts, new life upon mankind. Endow souls with new perceptions, and confer upon them new virtues. Verily, Thou art the Almighty, the Powerful. Thou art the Giver, the Generous.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 276)

2. Reading: Deeds

*The virtues and attributes pertaining unto God are all evident and manifest, and have been mentioned and described in all the heavenly Books. Among them are trustworthiness, truthfulness, purity of heart while communing with God, forbearance, resignation to whatever the Almighty hath decreed, contentment with the things His Will hath provided, patience, nay, thankfulness in the midst of tribulation, and complete reliance, in all circumstances, upon Him. These rank, according to the estimate of God, among the highest and most laudable of all acts. All other acts are, and will ever remain, secondary and subordinate unto them....

(Bahá’u’lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh, p. 290-291)

3. Prayers and Readings

Open session – friends may choose any prayer or reading that they would like to recite. This may include the selected writings from the Bahá’í Faith included below.

*Man reacheth perfection through good deeds, voluntarily performed, not through good deeds the doing of which was forced upon him. And sharing is a personally chosen righteous act: that is, the rich should extend assistance to the poor, they should expend their substance for the poor, but of their own free will, and not because the poor have gained this end by force. For the harvest of force is turmoil and the ruin of the social order. On the other hand voluntary sharing, the freely-chosen expending of one's substance, leadeth to society's comfort and peace. It lighteth up the world; it bestoweth honour upon humankind.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, p. 115)

*The Law of God is divided into two parts. One is the fundamental basis which comprises all spiritual things -- that is to say, it refers to the spiritual virtues and divine qualities; this does not change nor alter: it is

the Holy of Holies, which is the essence of the Law of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Christ, Muhammad, the Báb, and Bahá'u'lláh, and which lasts and is established in all the prophetic cycles. It will never be abrogated, for it is spiritual and not material truth; it is faith, knowledge, certitude, justice, piety, righteousness, trustworthiness, love of God, benevolence, purity, detachment, humility, meekness, patience and constancy. It shows mercy to the poor, defends the oppressed, gives to the wretched and uplifts the fallen.

These divine qualities, these eternal commandments, will never be abolished; nay, they will last and remain established for ever and ever. These virtues of humanity will be renewed in each of the different cycles; for at the end of every cycle the spiritual Law of God -- that is to say, the human virtues -- disappears, and only the form subsists.

(*'Abdu'l-Bahá, Some Answered Questions, p. 47*)

*O thou who art advancing toward the Kingdom of God!

Verily, I supplicate God to illuminate thy heart through the light which is shining from the Supreme Concourse that His mightiest power may strengthen thee to be firm, steadfast, submissive and lowly before the Kingdom of God, and to be an example of good deeds among the maid-servants of the Merciful. And I beseech Him to make thy breast a clear mirror to reflect the light of the spirit of God.

(*'Abdu'l-Bahá, Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá VI, p. 121*)

*Moreover, a soul of excellent deeds and good manners will undoubtedly advance from whatever horizon he beholdeth the lights radiating. Herein lies the difference: By faith is meant, first, conscious knowledge, and second, the practice of good deeds.

(*'Abdu'l-Bahá, Bahá'í World Faith - 'Abdu'l-Bahá Section, p. 383*)

*But they must arise to perform good deeds according to divine instructions, so that they may guide the people with heavenly actions and manners: -- to such an extent that all the inhabitants of the world may draw conclusions from their behavior and deeds, that these persons are Bahá'ís.

(*'Abdu'l-Bahá, Bahá'í World Faith - 'Abdu'l-Bahá Section, p. 408*)

*Gracious God! This people need no weapons of destruction, inasmuch as they have girded themselves to reconstruct the world. Their hosts are the hosts of goodly deeds, and their arms the arms of upright conduct, and their commander the fear of God. (*Bahá'u'lláh, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, p. 74*)

*The Prophet -- may the blessings of God and His salutations be upon Him -- is stated to have said: "In 'Akká are works of supererogation and acts which are beneficial, which God vouchsafed specially unto whomsoever He pleaseth. And he that saith in 'Akká: 'Glorified be God, and praise be unto God, and there is none other God but God, and most great is God, and there is no power nor strength except in God, the Exalted, the Mighty,' God will write down for him a thousand good deeds, and blot out from him a thousand evil deeds, and will uplift him a thousand grades in Paradise, and will forgive him his transgressions.

(*Bahá'u'lláh, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, p. 180*)

4. Closing Prayer

*O my God, aid Thou Thy servant to raise up the Word, and to refute what is vain and false, to establish the truth, to spread the sacred verses abroad, reveal the splendors, and make the morning's light to dawn in the hearts of the righteous.

Thou art, verily, the Generous, the Forgiving. (*'Abdu'l-Bahá, Bahá'í Prayers*)

5. Social Portion

Refreshments and conversation.