

OFFICE OF PUBLIC INFORMATION
BAHÁ'ÍS OF THE UNITED STATES

1320 NINETEENTH STREET, NW SUITE 350 WASHINGTON, DC 20036-1610
PHONE (202) 466-9870 FAX (202) 466-9873 EMAIL: OPI@USBNC.ORG

Style Guidelines for Published References to the Bahá'í Faith

In a first reference to the Bahá'í Faith, capitalize both the words “Bahá'í” and “Faith” as a proper noun. In subsequent references, the terms “the religion” or “the faith” are appropriate.

Members of the Bahá'í Faith are referred to as Bahá'ís; an individual adherent is a Bahá'í. The term Bahá'í may also be used as an adjective, as in “the Bahá'í community” or “a Bahá'í holy day.”

It is not accurate to refer to the faith as a sect, as the Bahá'í Faith is widely recognized as an independent world religion with its own scriptures, holy days and administrative structure. The faith may be described as an offshoot of Shiite Islam in a historical sense, in the same way that Christianity is an offshoot of Judaism and Buddhism is an offshoot of Hinduism. Since 1994 the Britannica Encyclopedia Book of the Year has described the Bahá'í Faith as the second-most widespread religion in the world, next to Christianity, with a significant following in more than 200 countries and territories. The Bahá'í Faith has more than 5 million adherents around the world; its prophet-founder, Bahá'u'lláh, was born in Persia in 1817 and passed away in exile in Ottoman Palestine in 1892.

The terms “Bahaism” and “Bahaist” are not considered correct usage.

Pronunciation Guide

Bahá'í — Bah-HIGH or bah-hah-EE

Bahá'u'lláh (The Prophet-Founder of the Bahá'í Faith) — Bah-hah-ol-LAH

Báb (The Prophet-Herald of the Bahá'í Faith) — BOB

‘Abdu’l-Bahá (Son of Bahá'u'lláh) — Ab-dol ba-HAH