

Gambling

Bahá'u'lláh

Partial translation



Gambling

*"Gambling and the use of opium have been forbidden unto you. Eschew them both, O people, and be not of those who transgress. Beware of using any substance that induceth sluggishness and torpor in the human temple and inflicteth harm upon the body. We, verily, desire for you naught save what shall profit you, and to this bear witness all created things, had ye but ears to hear."*¹

"In reviewing your Minutes for 15 March 1967, we note Item 25-8 in which the Treasurer suggests a lottery as a means of disposing of a Persian carpet which has been given to you by one of the believers. We do not feel this is an appropriate way in which to raise funds....

"As far as individuals are concerned, we have carefully studied the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi on this point and it is apparent that such subsidiary matters are not recorded in the Holy Texts. The Universal House of Justice is not prepared to decide at this time whether the purchase of lottery tickets should be permitted or prohibited."²

"Although we have not found any text which forbids the owning of race horses, horse racing as a means of winning the prize money and betting at race courses, we quote the translation of a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá on horse racing:

'Betting on horse racing is a pernicious disease. It hath been seen in Europe what distress this hath caused. Thousands have become afflicted and distraught. The friends of God must engage in work which is lawful and attracteth blessings, so that God's aid and bounty may always surround them.' (Translated from the Persian)

"We do not feel ... that it is appropriate for funds for the Faith to be raised through raffles."³

"Although we may have written to you previously commenting on the question as to whether lotteries and betting, such as betting on football games, bingo, etc., are included under the prohibition of gambling, we repeat that this is a matter that is to be considered in detail by the Universal House of Justice. In the meantime, your National Assembly should not make an issue

1. Baha'u'llah, The Most Holy Book, para 155

2. From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to a National Spiritual Assembly, July 4, 1967: Extracts Concerning Gambling, Lotteries and Raffles, a compilation of the Universal House of Justice

3. From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to a National Spiritual Assembly, June 20, 1972



of these matters and should leave it to the consciences of the individual friends who are to decide for themselves in each case." ⁴

"As to participation in Bingo games by a Local Spiritual Assembly with the intention of contributing to the Fund, we do not feel it is appropriate for funds for the Faith to be raised through games of chance or raffles." ⁵

"Gambling"

The activities that are included in this prohibition have not been outlined in the Writings of Baha'u'llah. As both Abdu'lBaha and Shoghi Effendi have indicated, it is left to the Universal House of Justice to specify the details of this prohibition. In response to questions about whether lotteries, betting on such things as horse races and football games, bingo, and the like, are included under the prohibition of gambling, the Universal House of Justice has indicated that this is a matter that will be considered in detail in the future. In the meantime, the Assemblies and individuals are counseled not to make an issue of these matters and to leave it to the conscience of the individual believers.

The House of Justice has ruled that it is not appropriate for funds for the Faith to be raised through lotteries, raffles, and games of chance." ⁶



⁴. From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to a National Spiritual Assembly, September 27, 1972

⁵. From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to a National Spiritual Assembly, January 29, 1973

⁶. Notes to Kitab-i-Aqdas no. 169