

## XLVIII. TEACHING

Compiled from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, Abdu'l

Original English



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### A. Deepening

#### 1. Incumbent on Believers to Read Sacred Writings Daily

"Recite ye the verses of God every morn and eventide. Whoso faileth to recite them hath not been faithful to the Covenant of God and His Testament, and whoso turneth away from these holy verses in this Day is of those who throughout eternity have turned away from God. Fear ye God, O My servants, one and all...."

(Bahá'u'lláh: The Kitab-i-Aqdas, K 149, p. 73)

#### 1. Deepening — What It Means — No Limit to the Study of the Cause

"To deepen in the Cause means to read the writings of Bahá'u'lláh and the Master so thoroughly as to be able to give it to others in its pure form. There are many who have some superficial idea of what the Cause stands for. They, therefore, present it together with all sorts of ideas that are their own. As the Cause is still in its early days we must be most careful lest we fall under this error and injure the Movement we so much adore."

"There is no limit to the study of the Cause. The more we read the writings the more truths we can find in them the more we will see that our previous notions were erroneous."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, August 25, 1926)

#### 1. Deepening Generates Stimulus

"...Deepening the newly-enrolled believers generates tremendous stimulus which results in further expansion. The enrollment of new believers, on the other hand, creates a new spirit in the community and provides additional potential manpower that will reinforce the consolidation work."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to All National Spiritual Assemblies, July 13, 1964)

#### 1. Study with Others



ORIGINAL

"He urges you to study deeply the teachings, teach others, study with those Bahá'ís who are anxious to do so the deeper teachings of our Faith, and through example, effort and prayer bring about a change."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, September 30, 1949: *Living the Life*, p. 16)

#### 1. **Study Classes — Little Knowledge is Dangerous — Quote from the Tablets**

"It is also very important to hold study classes and go deep in the Teachings. A great harm is done by starting to teach without being firmly grounded in the literature. 'Little knowledge is dangerous' fully applies to the teaching work. The friends [pg 567] should read the Writings and be able to quote from the Tablets when discussing subjects pertaining to the Faith."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, May 9, 1932: *Bahá'í News*, No. 67, October 1932, p. 4)

#### 1. **Deepen Their Knowledge**

"...the friends should deepen their knowledge and this can be achieved if, together with the lectures, there are study classes and seminar work carried on by the same lecturer...."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, January 27, 1932: *Bahá'í Summer Schools*, p. 1)

#### 1. **Understanding the Import of His Teachings Motivates New Believers to Dedicate Their Lives to His Service**

"Shoghi Effendi trusts, however, that these souls who are attracted by the teachings would be made to live the life and also deepen their knowledge of the writings of Bahá'u'lláh. For it is only by fully appreciating the spiritual and social import of His mission that we can be willing to dedicate our life to its service."

"By holding study classes where the Word is read and understood and obtaining a thorough knowledge of the spirit that animated the early believers we can make sure that these newcomers are grounded in the teachings and made into real and devoted believers. Books such as the *Iqan*, *Some Answered Questions*, the *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, *Nabil's Narrative* and *Dr. Esselmont's book* should be read and read over again by every soul who desires to serve the Movement or considers himself an active member of the group."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, November 9, 1932)

#### 1. **Study and Application**

"Without the study and application of the administration the teachings of the Cause becomes not only meaningless, but loses in effectiveness and in scope."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, May 31, 1935: *Bahá'í News*, No. 105, p. 1, February 1937)

## **1. Spiritual Teachings of Faith — Will and Testament, Firm Grounding Needed**

"...Some of the ... believers, from letters and reports received here, seem to lack a firm grounding on such matters as the Will and Testament and the deeper spiritual teachings of the Faith. Whenever the grasp of these fundamentals is weak, the friends are almost sure to pay undue attention to secondary procedures, to quibble over details, to lose themselves in personalities, and to founder in a sea of unnecessary inharmony. This has nothing to do with their devotion, their loyalty, their zeal, their eagerness to serve. It is merely a question of not having received, perhaps through lack of sufficient teachers to carry on the all-important work of deepening the friends in their own faith, a strong enough education in the Covenant before the duties and responsibilities of the Administrative Order were thrust upon them."

(Shoghi Effendi: Messages to Canada, pp. 58-59) [pg 568]

### **1. Presenting the Master's Will to Newcomers**

"Concerning the best method of presenting the Master's Will to the newcomers, Shoghi Effendi is of the opinion that the N.S.A. should first make some suitable extracts from the Testament, and to send these to all the Local Assemblies for their use, so that there may be full unity in circulating the provisions of the Will among the new believers... The main thing, as it appears to the Guardian, is that the full station of the Bab, Bahá'u'lláh and Abdu'l-Bahá be clearly explained, and that the origins, nature and working of the Administrative Order of the Faith be clearly stated. The full implications of such a recognition are evidently beyond the comprehension of any new believer. Such a knowledge can be acquired gradually and only when the essentials of the Faith have been clearly recognized and adequately understood."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, March 21, 1934: Bahá'í News, No. 211, September 1948, p. 1)

### **1. The Cause Needs People Whose Faith Stands on a Rock, No Trial Can Move**

"Another essential thing is that those who do embrace the Faith should be constantly urged to study the literature of the Cause. It is not sufficient that our numbers should increase, we want people whose faith stands on a rock and no trial can move. We want people who in turn arise and carry the message to other people and guide other souls."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, March 13, 1932: Bahá'í News, No. 64, July 1932, p. 4)

### **1. Education of New Believers**

"It is not enough to bring people into the Faith; one must educate them and deepen their love for it and their knowledge of its teachings, after they declare themselves. As the Bahá'ís are few in number, especially the active teachers, and there is a great deal of work to be done, the education of these new believers is often sadly neglected, and then results are seen such as the resignations you have had recently."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada, July 18, 1957: A Special Measure of Love, p. 19)

**1. Regarding Spiritual Children, Each Soul Receives Gift of Faith for Himself, Independent of Teachers**

"As to your question about the spiritual children of people who enter the Cause with some old ideas still clinging to them: Everyone should study the Faith for himself, and just because a person's Bahá'í teacher has some concept not strictly Bahá'í, it does not stand to reason that the new believer must be saddled with it; old believers, as well as new, should constantly endeavour to grow more fully into the Bahá'í pattern of thought and of life. Each soul receives the gift of faith for himself, and from then on is a Bahá'í in his own right, independent of his teacher."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, July 17, 1945)

**1. One Cannot Catch the Spirit of the Cause Through the Reading of Books Alone**

"It behooves you now to try to deepen your knowledge of the history and the teachings of the Faith and get acquainted with the principles that stand at the basis of its [pg 569] present-day Administration. The best way to attain that goal is through continued cooperation with the friends and through participation in their spiritual activities. For you cannot catch the spirit of the Cause through the reading of books alone. You should reinforce the knowledge you get through Bahá'í Writings with a whole-hearted association with the friends."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, August 20, 1932)

**1. Imperative Need to Deepen in the Cause — God's Purpose for Man**

"A detailed and exact knowledge of the present structure of Bahá'í administration, or of the By-laws of National and Local Spiritual Assemblies or of the many and varied applications of Bahá'í law under the diverse conditions prevailing around the world, while valuable in itself, cannot be regarded as the sort of knowledge primarily intended by deepening. Rather is suggested a clearer apprehension of the purpose of God for man, and particularly of His immediate purpose as revealed and directed by Bahá'u'lláh, a purpose as far removed from current concepts of human well-being and happiness as is possible...."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to the Bahá'ís of the World, Ridvan 1967: Wellspring of Guidance, p. 113)

**1. The Study of Dawn-Breakers Will Arouse the Friends to Renewed Zeal**

"The reading of the Dawn-Breakers is sure to arouse the friends to renewed zeal and added perseverance in spreading the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh. Consider to what extent the Bab and those early leaders of the Faith suffered. It was not through a blind religious zeal but because they desired to bring about for the future generations that promised era that the Faith of the Bab promised to start — an era of peace, good-will and full realization of the spiritual significance of the life of man upon the earth. They suffered that we may be happy. They died that we may live in perfect bliss. What a sacred debt, therefore, we owe to them! How much we ought to labour

to repay them for their sacrifices, and how willing and earnest we should be in consecrating our life in the path they trod!"

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, January 27, 1933)

**1. Theme Pursued in Effort to Deepen — What is God's Purpose for the Human Race?**

"...this is the theme we must pursue in our efforts to deepen in the Cause. What is Bahá'u'lláh's purpose for the human race? For what ends did He submit to the appalling cruelties and indignities heaped upon Him? What does He mean by a 'new race of men'? What are the profound changes which He will bring about? The answers are to be found in the Sacred Writings of our Faith and in their interpretation by Abdu'l-Bahá and our beloved Guardian. Let the friends immerse themselves in this ocean, let them organize regular study classes for its constant consideration, and as reinforcements to their effort, let them remember conscientiously the requirements of daily prayers and reading of the Word of God enjoined upon all Bahá'ís by Bahá'u'lláh."

(From the Message of the Universal House of Justice to the Bahá'ís of the World, Ridvan 1967: Wellspring of Guidance, pp. 114-115)

**1. Presenting Greatest Name Prematurely**

"He feels that it is not necessary to present, prematurely, to every new Bahá'í the teachings regarding the use of the Greatest Name. Some souls need and are ready [pg 570] for this; others are not. Judgement must be used in such matters. It is more essential to stress the importance of prayer and to urge the use of one of the obligatory prayers."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, October 11, 1949: Bahá'í News, No. 228, February 1950, p. 4)

**1. One Must Deepen His Knowledge of the Literature in Order to Teach Others and Render Service to the Faith**

"...Shoghi Effendi hopes that you will exert all your effort to deepen your knowledge of the literature of the movement, until you become fully acquainted with its spirit and tenets. Unless you do obtain such a firm hold you will never be able to teach others and render real service to the promulgation of the Faith. Of special importance is the Book of the Iqan which explains the attitude of the Cause towards the prophets of God and their mission in the history of society. Besides this there is 'Some Answered Questions' of the Master and the 'Dawn-Breakers' of Nabil. Every Bahá'í should master these books and be able to explain their contents to others. Besides their importance, they are interesting and most absorbing."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, February 9, 1932)

**1. The Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh Deal with Many Aspects of Man's Inner and Communal Life**

"The Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh are so great, and deal with so many aspects of both the inner life of man and his communal life, that it takes years to really plumb them to the depths. He has brought spiritual food for the soul of the individual, to help each one to find himself and become a finer and better developed personality; and also He has brought the laws and principles needed to enable all men to live in harmony together in a great, united world. The Guardian hopes you, together with ..., will do all in your power to help the believers to understand both aspects of the teachings, and to develop both as individuals and as a community, an ever higher, finer way of life."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, December 12, 1942)

### **1. Progress of Cause Now to be Characterized by Increasing Relationship with Non-Bahá'í World — Our Preparation Must Be Continual Deepening**

"There can be no doubt that the progress of the Cause from this time onward will be characterized by an ever increasing relationship to the agencies, activities, institutions and leading individuals of the non-Bahá'í world. We shall acquire greater stature at the United Nations, become better known in the deliberations of governments, a familiar figure to the media, a subject of interest to academics, and inevitably the envy of failing establishments. Our preparation for and response to this situation must be a continual deepening of our faith, an unwavering adherence to its principles of abstention from partisan politics and freedom from prejudices, and above all an increasing understanding of its fundamental verities and relevance to the modern world."

(From the Message of the Universal House of Justice to the Bahá'ís of the World, Ridvan 1984)  
[pg 571]



## **B. Pioneers and Pioneering**

### **1. Pioneers — Homeless and Wanderers in the Path of God**

"O ye homeless and wanderers in the Path of God! Prosperity, contentment, and freedom, however much desired and conducive to the gladness of the human heart, can in no wise compare with the trials of homelessness and adversity in the pathway of God; for such exile and banishment are blessed by the divine favour, and are surely followed by the mercy of Providence. The joy of tranquillity in one's home, and the sweetness of freedom from all cares shall pass away, whilst the blessings of homelessness shall endure forever, and its far-reaching results shall be made manifest."

"Abraham's migration from His native land caused bountiful gifts of the All-Glorious to be made manifest, and the setting of Canaan's brightest star unfolded to the eyes the radiance of Joseph. The flight of Moses, the Prophet of Sinai, revealed the Flame of the Lord's burning Fire, and the rise of Jesus breathed the breaths of the Holy Spirit into the world. The departure of Muhammad, the Beloved of God, from the city of His birth was the cause of the exaltation of

God's Holy Word, and the banishment of the Sacred Beauty led to the diffusion of the light of His divine Revelation throughout all regions."

"Take ye good heed, O people of insight!"

(Abdu'l-Bahá: Selections from the Writings of Abdu'l-Bahá, pp. 280-281)

#### 1. **Not for a Moment Are Ye Alone**

"O ye My soldiers of the Kingdom! Be ye valiant and fearless! Day by day add to your spiritual victories. Be ye not disturbed by the constant assaults of the enemies. Attack ye like unto the roaring lions. Have no thought of yourselves, for the invisible armies of the Kingdom are fighting on your side. Enter ye the battlefield with the confirmations of the Holy Spirit. Know ye of a certainty that the powers of the Kingdom of Abha are with you. The hosts of the heaven of Truth are with you. The cool breezes of the Paradise of Abha are wafting over your heated brows. Not for a moment are ye alone. Not for a second are ye left to yourselves. The beauty of Abha is with you. The Glorious God is with you. The King of Kings is with you."

(Words of Abdu'l-Bahá: Star of the West, Vol. XIII, No. 5, p. 113)

#### 1. **Flee Their Homelands**

"...The hour is ripe to disencumber themselves of worldly vanities, to mount the steed of steadfastness, unfurl the banner of renunciation, don the armor of utter consecration to God's Cause, gird themselves with the girdle of a chaste and holy life, unsheathe the sword of Bahá'u'lláh's utterance, buckle on the shield of His love, carry as sole provision implicit trust in His promise, flee their homelands, and scatter far and wide to capture the unsundered territories of the entire planet."

(From cablegram of the Guardian, May 5, 1953: Messages to the Bahá'í World, p. 49)

#### 1. **House of Justice Defines "Pioneer" and "Pioneering" — There Can Be No Question of "Recalling" a Pioneer from His Field of Service**

"From the Bahá'í point of view it is quite clear that a pioneer can be likened to neither an employee nor a minister...." [pg 572]

"...We wish to share with you the following points of fundamental importance."

"1. The Secretary of the beloved Guardian wrote to the National Spiritual Assembly of India and Burma, on his behalf, on August 12, 1944:

'Regarding the question of paid teachers: As we have no clergy or priests there is no paid career open to Bahá'í teachers. This, however, does not mean that teachers going out to spread the Faith, and unable to support themselves, should not receive money from the National Spiritual Assembly or a Local Assembly. At present it would be quite impossible to spread the Cause if those who arise to serve it as teachers or pioneers were not given financial assistance. All must



realize, however, that the moneys they receive are only to enable them to fulfil their objectives, and that they cannot consider themselves permanently entitled to be supported by the Cause. In America the pioneers have made every effort to establish themselves in some position in the place they have gone to settle in, and thus be freed from the necessity of drawing further upon Bahá'í Funds."

"and to the British National Spiritual Assembly on May 29, 1946:

'Pioneers who volunteer for work, if they are not able to support themselves, should be supported by the National Fund until they either find work or their task is completed.'

'Likewise, travelling teachers should be assisted financially to carry out the 'projects' assigned to them. The friends should not for a moment confuse this type of support with the creation of a paid clergy. Any Bahá'í can, at the discretion of the N.S.A., receive this necessary assistance, and it is clearly understood it is temporary and only to carry out a specific plan.'

'Bahá'u'lláh Himself has not only enjoined on every one the duty of teaching His Faith, but stated if you cannot go yourself, to send someone in your stead.'"

"and in a letter to Mr. Ioas, Chairman of your own National Teaching Committee, on March 5, 1934:

'Concerning the abolition of the institution of paid national teachers, the Guardian wishes to re-affirm his former statements on this matter, and to stress once more that great care be taken to avoid the difficulties and the misunderstandings which in former days had caused so much trouble among the friends. The main point to be emphasized in this connection is that of making the teaching of the Cause not the work of a limited group but the chief duty and responsibility of every Bahá'í. This is why no salaried teachers should any longer exist. But occasionally to defray the expenses of a teaching trip of a certain Bahá'í, particularly when it is done spontaneously, can do no harm to the Cause. Such an action, provided it is done with care and only when circumstances make it necessary, constitutes no violation of the principles already referred to. The danger in all activities of this nature is to give the impression that the teaching of the Cause is an institution, depending on the support of paid teachers. Those who willingly and with utmost detachment arise to promote the Cause should, undoubtedly, be helped in every way. But they have no claim whatever on the financial help which some friends may freely choose to extend to them.'"

"2. As stated in our circular letter to all National Spiritual Assemblies engaged in teaching work among the masses, dated 25th June, 1964: '...no Bahá'í teacher anywhere should consider himself as permanently employed by the Faith. We do [pg 573] not have in the Cause of God any paid career open to Bahá'í teachers....' 'Likewise, when pioneer projects are envisaged, it must be made clear to the pioneer that he must make every effort to establish himself in some position in his pioneering post and thus become freed from the necessity of drawing further on Bahá'í funds.'"



"3. The duties of teaching and pioneering are enjoined upon all believers. There are no special categories of believers for these functions. Any Bahá'í who spreads the Message of Bahá'u'lláh is a teacher, any Bahá'í who moves to another area to spread the Faith is a pioneer."

"4. The duty of the Assembly to give financial assistance to a believer who cannot support himself is a general one, and is in no way limited to those who may perform specific services for the Faith."

"5. No special training is required for a pioneer. A believer who leaves his home spontaneously and goes to teach the Faith elsewhere without consulting anybody is as much a pioneer as one who goes after consultation with the committee responsible. This is a matter of principle, no matter how desirable it may be that all prospective pioneers first consult to ensure the best use of their services."

"6. Similarly, there can be no question of 'recalling' a pioneer from his field of service. If a committee is providing a pioneer with financial assistance it can terminate this assistance whenever it judges it right and proper, in which case it would, in all justice, offer the pioneer his travel expenses to return to his home or to go to some place where he could earn his living — but this is quite different in principle from recalling the pioneer. In many instances the pioneer's intention when going to his chosen goal is to put his roots down and make it his home."

"7. A pioneer who goes to the area of jurisdiction of another National Spiritual Assembly comes under the authority of that Assembly, and the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States ceases to have any authority over him. The matter of financial assistance to such a pioneer, should he need it, is arranged on a basis of expediency. Usually, for simplicity's sake, the National Assembly of origin continues to give assistance direct to the pioneer concerned until he becomes self-supporting or until his own National Spiritual Assembly is able to take over the responsibility. As far as the matter of control is concerned, it would be quite in order and perfectly legal to arrange for the pioneer to receive his budget without having any contact whatsoever with the United States National Spiritual Assembly."

"8. A pioneer has no special administrative status except in the case where he goes to a new area where there are no Bahá'ís. He then usually remains the channel of communication between the new Bahá'í group, as it is formed, and the National Committee in charge, until such time as a Local Spiritual Assembly is formed. At that point his special status ceases altogether. Any services he may perform in advising or teaching the new believers spring from the fact that he is an older believer, and not from his being a pioneer. Many pioneers who go to places where Bahá'ís of long standing already live often receive the counsel and spiritual support of the older

native believers rather than vice-versa. Similarly there is no special significance in the dwelling of a pioneer — it frequently happens that the homes of some of the new believers, being less cramped than the quarters of the pioneer, are the places used for meetings of the community."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, July 2, 1965) [pg 574]

**1. Pioneer Status Clarified: Who is a Pioneer?**

"The place of settlement of any pioneer depends on his circumstances. If therefore, he can not settle in the localities suggested by the receiving National Spiritual Assembly, this does not mean that he should not be considered a pioneer. Any believer who arises and leaves his home to journey to another country for the purpose of teaching the Cause is a pioneer."

"As you know, one of the objectives of every pioneer is to settle and become self-supporting, if possible. If the localities where this condition can be met are not the same as the goals of the National Assembly, such goals may have to be filled by the National Assembly making use of homefront pioneers. The friends are free to go wherever they like and even those supported by the Fund should not be subjected to rigid rules."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to a National Spiritual Assembly, March 30, 1971)

**1. Every Bahá'í, Especially Those Who Leave Their Homes to Serve in Foreign Lands, Should Turn Their Gaze to Marion Jack**

"For over thirty years, with an enlarged heart, and many other ailments, she remained at her post in Bulgaria. Never well-to-do, she often suffered actual poverty and want; want of heat, want of clothing, want of food, when her money failed to reach her because Bulgaria had come under the Soviet zone of influence. She was bombed, lost her possessions, she was evacuated, she lived in drafty, cold dormitories for many, many months in the country, she returned valiant to the capital of Bulgaria after the war, and continued, on foot, to carry out her teaching work."

"The Guardian himself urged her strongly, when the war first began to threaten to cut her off in Bulgaria, to go to Switzerland. She was a Canadian subject, and ran great risks by remaining, not to mention the danger and the privations of war. However, she begged the Guardian not to insist, and assured him her one desire was to remain with her spiritual children. This she did, up to the last breath of her glorious life. Her tomb will become a national shrine, immensely loved and revered, as the Faith rises in stature in that country."

"He thinks that every Bahá'í, and most particularly those who have left their homes and gone to serve in foreign fields, should know of, and turn their gaze to, Marion Jack."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the European Teaching Committee, May 24, 1954)

**1. A Self-Supporting Pioneer Cannot Be Required to Settle in Any Given Locality**

"In regard to pioneering, this is a matter requiring the greatest degree of consultation and encouragement. Naturally, if an Assembly is supporting a pioneer from the Fund, it can decide to withdraw such support if the pioneer refuses to go to the post that he had agreed to serve in, or if, for any other reason, the Assembly decides that the project should not be continued, but in so doing the Assembly must give the pioneer ample opportunity to become self-supporting. If, however, a pioneer is entirely self-supporting, an Assembly has no right to direct him to live in one place or another; it, or its appropriate committee, should consult with the pioneer, explain the needs, offer assistance to enable the pioneer to become established in the post where he is needed, and in consultation with him, decide where it would be best for him to settle, but the ultimate decision rests with the believer himself. You have believers coming from abroad as pioneer to Austria, and you certainly hope that they will settle in those cities which most urgently need help, but, if a self-supporting pioneer feels that he cannot go where you would like him to, you should then consider how best you can make use of his services wherever he may be."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Austria, March 30, 1970)

**1. Only if Especially Required for a Specific Locality Can a Pioneer Be Required to Settle There**

"...When pioneers arise to settle in foreign fields, they do not, and in fact cannot, be required to commit themselves to settle in a given locality, unless they are especially recruited for such a purpose and they understand and accept the nature of the local living conditions they are to face."

"At this stage of the development of the Faith, best results are achieved when the National Spiritual Assembly or one of its appropriate committees deals with each case separately, consults with the pioneer concerned individually, takes into consideration his personal circumstances, points out the needs of the Faith in the locality requiring pioneer support, and encourages him to move to the area in question, if feasible."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to a National Spiritual Assembly, March 20, 1980: cited in a compilation included with a letter to the National Spiritual Assembly of Ecuador written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice, August 23, 1981)

**1. The Guardian's Exhortations to Bahá'ís to Leave Centres Where Large Numbers Had Congregated Were to Disperse Them to Needy Goals — The Spiritual Importance of Remaining at Their Posts**

"The beloved Guardian's exhortations to the Bahá'ís to leave those centers where large numbers had congregated was not primarily for the sake of their safety but in order to disperse them to greatly needy pioneer goals. These urgings, which were in the form of admonitions, were often repeated by the Guardian himself, and have been reiterated by the Universal House of Justice, not only by calling on the friends to disperse, but also by drawing to their attention the spiritual importance of remaining at their posts. While it is correct to say that a number of these pioneers, because of a variety of personal reasons, and at time insuperable visa difficulties,

unfortunately did not remain at their posts and returned to their original homelands, it is equally true to say that the majority of the pioneers, who were able and free to continue serving in the pioneer field, steadfastly remained at their posts."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, June 5, 1980: Ibid.)

**1. All Bahá'ís Have the Duty to Teach and Serve; Some Who Settle for Personal Purposes May Fill Pioneer Goals**

"Whether a Bahá'í is in a place because he pioneered there or has settled there for some other reason does not affect the duty of teaching and serving the Cause [pg 576] laid upon him by Bahá'u'lláh. Generally, a person who goes to a country expressly as a pioneer should be counted as such. There are also many who, although they go primarily for some other purpose, nevertheless fill a goal or are very active in the service of the Faith, and there is no reason not to record them as pioneers in your files. The decision whether to consider a person as a pioneer for the purposes of your records must be made in each individual case."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to a Continental Pioneer Committee, September 22, 1974: cited in a compilation regarding the definition of a pioneer sent to the National Spiritual Assembly of Ecuador, February 22, 1984)

**1. Iranians Who Settle in the Americas**

"Regarding your query whether Iranians who settle in the Americas should be considered as filling assigned pioneer goals, each case should be judged by itself according to the circumstances. Consideration should be given to such questions as: Does the National Spiritual Assembly of the country involved feel that the individual concerned fills a pioneer goal? Is it the intent of the individual to remain if possible in that place? Would the National Spiritual Assembly responsible for sending a pioneer consider the post filled? Otherwise, the believer concerned could be considered as filling a supplementary goal."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to a Continental Pioneer Committee, November 28, 1979: Ibid.)

**1. Persians Can Render Utmost Service to the Teaching Work, But They Must Settle as Pioneers and be in the Minority**

"He feels the Persians can render the utmost assistance to the teaching work, wherever they settle; but they must go on the basis of pioneers, and take up residence where they can render the best service to the Cause of God. It does little good for the Faith to have large groups of Persians settled in a city, and thus constitute an Assembly. When they move the Assembly falls. What we need in all areas is native believers. The pioneers should be in the minority, and aid the natives to shoulder the responsibilities of the Faith."

"Thus he feels you should encourage the friends leaving Persia, to settle in outlying areas, in smaller cities, where there are no Bahá'ís, or few, and teach there."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to a National Spiritual Assembly, February 17, 1957: cited in a compilation included with a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Ecuador, August 23, 1981)

#### **1. Whether Youth and Children Should Be Listed as Pioneers**

"Regarding your question on whether children and youth should be listed as pioneers, the Universal House of Justice has instructed us to share with you the following excerpts from letters addressed to National Spiritual Assemblies who asked similar questions:

'...if a Bahá'í child, that is to say one under the age of 15, has gone to a country to serve the Cause, he should be numbered among the pioneers. Children born to pioneers in the country of their pioneer service are not considered pioneers, although of course, for completeness of your information on pioneer families you may wish to keep a note of them in your files.'

(From a letter dated 2nd March 1981 written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to a National Spiritual Assembly) [pg 577]

'...CHILDREN CERTAINLY PIONEERS BUT THOSE UNDER 15 CANNOT COUNT FILL QUOTAS SET.'  
(Cable dated 15 April, 1982 from the Universal House of Justice to a National Spiritual Assembly)

"Therefore, children under the age of 15, even though they are pioneers, should not be added to the list which you send to the World Centre as they do not count towards filling the goals given; however, youth 15 years of age and over should be listed, and when children reach the age of 15 and register as Bahá'ís they should be included."

"We must stress that the above definitions are merely guidelines intended to assist you in keeping your records of pioneer goals and their fulfilment. They are not to be regarded as definitions of the term 'pioneer' in any general sense."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Surinam, June 19, 1984)

#### **1. The Native Believers Should Be Encouraged to Become the Pivot of the Teaching Activities**

"The House of Justice noted your comments about how heavily certain of your communities rely on resident pioneers; that in fact the pioneers have become the pivot of the teaching activities of the Faith in these communities. Your comment underscores how important it is to encourage the believers native to the community themselves to seek out friends and neighbours to investigate the Faith. The House of Justice understands that it is not easy for believers who have always relied on ministers or priests to now be responsible for their own spiritual development. The very act of teaching the Cause will help them to realize their own worth and enable them to fulfil their individual spiritual responsibilities."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahamas, April 20, 1986)

## **1. Pioneering is the Highest Form of Bahá'í Cooperation in Marriage**

"He appreciates very much the pioneer services you have rendered. He hopes that from now on you and your dear husband will be able to serve the Faith unitedly and devotedly together, as that is the highest form of Bahá'í cooperation in marriage."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, March 3, 1955)

## **1. Neither Persian nor American Pioneers Should Congregate in a Few Chosen Places**

"The Guardian feels that the Persians should not congregate in a few chosen places, but rather that they should, ... spread out in the various cities of these countries where there are no Bahá'ís. If this is done, it will greatly facilitate the teaching work in those countries, and at the same time will overcome the problem of establishing Persian colonies...."

"One of the problems ... is that so many of the Persian pioneers congregate in certain cities, and this creates actually a Persian colony, and little or nothing seems to be done about teaching the natives. If the Persian pioneers dispersed to various cities, then of course they would automatically begin to teach the natives, because they would not be burdened with the necessity of Assembly functioning and association with other Persian Bahá'ís." [pg 578]

"The same situation exists with regard to American pioneers in these countries. They all want to congregate in one place, and thus little or nothing is done for the country itself."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to a National Spiritual Assembly, February 5, 1956)

## **1. Pioneer Should Not Leave Post Until There is Nothing Else to Do — They Should Confirm Native People Like Enoch Olinga Who Will Ignite the Flame of Faith in Others**

"...He constantly impresses upon the pioneers in all countries that they should not leave their posts unless there is nothing else possible for them to do; otherwise the effort, time and sacrifice which have been put into the work there are lost to the Faith."

"He has emphasized on more than one occasion that the important thing for the pioneer to do is to bend his energies toward teaching the native people of the country. He should teach and confirm them, and assist them to gradually shoulder their responsibilities in the Faith and become the active supporters and upholders of its institutions. This means that the Cause then is built on a solid foundation, and is not being carried forward by people who have gone to that country from other lands. Then too, in most people there is a certain degree of hidden feeling of racial distinction, whether or not they realize or admit it; and those other than natives may be called upon to experience great tests upon accepting the Faith, because of its principle of complete freedom from prejudice."

"This does not mean that people other than natives are not to be taught, if you find they are really spiritually prepared for the Message of Bahá'u'lláh; but the important thing is to strive to teach and confirm a few native people, who will not only themselves become quickened with its

spirit, but who will in turn, like Enoch Olinga from Uganda, quickly ignite the flame of the Faith in the hearts of others of their countrymen."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, August 2, 1955)

### **1. Initial Obscurity Surrounding Work of Pioneer — Protection to Faith**

"The pioneers and settlers, as well as the National Assemblies responsible for the administration of the Faith in areas assigned to them, should ever bear in mind that in the initial states of the establishment of the Faith in any territory the obscurity surrounding the work of the pioneer or the local Bahá'ís is in itself a protection to the Faith. Patience, tact and wisdom should be exercised. Public attention should not be attracted to the Faith until such time as the believers see the Faith touch more and more of the hearts of receptive souls responding to its Divine Call."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to all National Spiritual Assemblies, June 5, 1966)

### **1. The Purpose of Dispersal**

"By dispersal the Guardian means the friends should get away entirely from the large centres of population and, leaving a nucleus of about 15 Bahá'ís to maintain the Local Assembly, go settle, live and teach in new towns, cities and even villages. Naturally, it is no service to the Cause to disperse if it breaks up an existing Assembly. The purpose of dispersal is to create more Assemblies over a wider area. Until a given [pg 579] assembly can spare some of its local Community to go out and settle, they should by all means at least do extension teaching."

"In the instance you cited about the friend who with independent means was willing to go out and sell her home and move to a new area, he feels she would have done better to go. You had more than 9 members in your Community; you could have found another place to meet. This is just the type of pioneering the Guardian is urging. Those who can go should go. Others will arise locally to take their places."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, June 19, 1955)

### **1. Pioneers Entering Pioneer Field Should Realize They Go as National Spiritual Assembly Representatives — To Represent the Cause**

"...The principle is that pioneers entering the pioneer field should realize that they are going there to represent the Cause, in fact, to be the Cause. Their minds and their hearts should be centered in their new tasks and in their new environment. They should not be thinking of when they can return home, or when they can go somewhere else. Only when the Faith is firmly established should they give any thought to moving, and then, only in consultation with the National Assembly."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly of Germany and Austria, June 28, 1954)

### **1. The Work of the Pioneer is the Most Important Task an Individual Can Perform; Its Blessings Are Great**



"The Guardian is well aware of the great sacrifices required of the devoted pioneers, and of the problems they must meet and conquer. This is why he feels that the work of the pioneers is the most important Bahá'í task any individual can perform today — more important than serving on a National Assembly, or any administrative post."

"While it carries great responsibilities and difficulties, yet its spiritual blessings are so great, they overshadow everything else; and the opportunities for special victories of the Faith so abundant; the soul who once tastes the elixir of pioneering service, seldom will do anything else."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, June 5, 1954)

**1. When an Administrative Body is Established, the Pioneer Ceases to Have a Unique Status**

"The pioneer, as soon as an administrative body has been established, ceases to have any unique status in the Community. But of course the service he has rendered remains very great, and he should continue to do his utmost for the Cause in conjunction with the Assembly and the other believers."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to two individual believers, March 24, 1945)

**1. Pioneers Enhance Prestige of Faith**

"The pioneers themselves must realize that not only are they fulfilling the wishes of Bahá'u'lláh, and doing that which the Master Himself said He longed to do; namely, to go, if necessary on foot, and carry His Father's Message to all the regions of the earth; but they are enhancing the prestige of the Faith to a remarkable degree in the eyes of the public, and especially [pg 580] in the eyes of officials. There is no doubt that the rapid forward march of the Faith recently has attracted a far greater measure of attention on the part of thoughtful people, and people of position in society and in educational fields, than has been the case for almost one hundred years."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, June 20, 1954: Bahá'í News, No. 283, p. 1, September 1954)

**1. Perseverance of Pioneers Assured Reward in Both Worlds**

"The pioneers who have already settled or are settling in their posts, particularly in virgin unoccupied territories, must be reminded that their movement to their goals is far from being a short stay designed to class a particular territory or island as opened, or label it as having received one or more pioneers, even if, in some cases, new believers native to the land have been enrolled. It is basically and clearly intended to establish the Faith of God securely and firmly in the hearts of people of the area and to ensure that its divinely-ordained institutions are understood, adopted and operated by them. The perseverance of the pioneers in their posts, however great the sacrifices involved, is an act of devoted service, which, as attested by our teachings, will have an assured reward in both worlds. The admonitions of the Guardian on this subject are too numerous to cite and amply demonstrate the vital nature of this clear policy."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to all National Spiritual Assemblies, June 5, 1966)

**1. Isolated Pioneers Are Like a Lighthouse of Bahá'u'lláh**

"...It is hard for the friends to appreciate, when they are isolated in one of these goal territories, and see that they are making no progress in teaching others, are living in inhospitable climes for the most part, and are lonesome for Bahá'í companionship and activity, that they represent a force for good, that they are like a lighthouse of Bahá'u'lláh shining at a strategic point and casting its beam out into the darkness. This is why he so consistently urges these pioneers not to abandon their posts."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada, July 18, 1957: Messages to Canada, p. 68)

**1. Struggles of a Pioneer — God Will Assist All Those Who Arise to Serve Him**

"Your struggles have been richly blessed and must serve as an example to other pioneers and a sure proof that God will assist all those who arise to serve Him. It is part of the preciousness of this great work being done in the teaching field that it should be done through real sacrifices and not without heartaches attending it. There is a tendency in the American outlook on life at present to believe that suffering is produced by clumsiness and is not only avoidable but not a good thing, and not essential. While there is some truth in this attitude, we as Bahá'ís cannot but believe that suffering is often an essential part of our service. The Prophets suffered bitterly, so did all the Saints and Martyrs, and often 'fed on the fragments of those broken hearts', as Bahá'u'lláh says in one of His beautiful prayers."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, July 4, 1949) [pg 581]

**1. Even if Bereft of Every Human Knowledge, Everyone Who with a Pure, Detached Heart Arises to Serve His Cause is Promised Bahá'u'lláh's Divine Assistance**

"...Do not feel discouraged if your labours do not always yield an abundant fruitage. For a quick and rapidly-won success is not always the best and the most lasting. The harder you strive to attain your goal, the greater will be the confirmations of Bahá'u'lláh, and the more certain you can feel to attain success. Be cheerful, therefore, and exert yourself with full faith and confidence. For Bahá'u'lláh has promised His Divine assistance to everyone who arises with a pure and detached heart to spread His holy Word, even though he may be bereft of every human knowledge and capacity, and notwithstanding the forces of darkness and of opposition which may be arrayed against him. The goal is clear, the path safe and certain, and the assurances of Bahá'u'lláh as to the eventual success of our efforts quite emphatic. Let us keep firm, and wholeheartedly carry on the great work which He has entrusted into our hands."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, February 3, 1937)

**1. Bahá'u'lláh is Always on the Watch, Ready to Come to Our Assistance**

"Such pioneer work is always difficult and unless we are strong-hearted and have faith in our Cause, we are apt to be discouraged. We should always bear in mind that Bahá'u'lláh is always

on the watch ready to come to our assistance if we only rise to serve Him with the spirit of self consecration and absolute detachment. His promises along those lines are very forceful and clear, we are only to act upon them."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, November 11, 1931)

**1. In the Best and Highest Sense of the Term "Missionary" It Can Be Applied to Our Teachers — There is No Objection to the Word Appearing on Passports**

"He sees no objection to the word 'Missionary' appearing on your Passport as long as it is clearly understood what kind of a 'missionary' a Bahá'í pioneer is. In the best and highest sense of the term it certainly could be applied to our teachers. Unfortunately this word has often been associated with a narrow-minded, bigoted type of proselytizing quite alien to the Bahá'í method of spreading our teachings."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, February 7, 1945)

**1. Assembly Should Arrange to Replace Pioneer Before He Leaves Post**

"No pioneer should leave his post unless there is some very urgent reason and then only after consultation with the appropriate committee or National Assembly. If it is found someone must leave their post because of very urgent matters, then the National Assembly should arrange to replace the pioneer before the pioneer leaves...."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian: Messages to Canada, p. 43)

**1. No Service in Entire Bahá'í World as Important as Pioneering Work in Virgin Areas**

"...he feels there is no service in the entire Bahá'í world as important as their pioneering work in the virgin areas. They have achieved a great station of service. They are the representative of the Faith in these virgin areas. They have the [pg 582] inestimable privilege of bringing the light of Bahá'u'lláh to those hitherto deprived of Divine Guidance for this day. The Guardian has repeatedly pointed out that they can and should become the spiritual conquerors of these new lands."

(Ibid., p. 43)

**1. Pioneers in Virgin Areas Cannot Vote in National Elections**

"...all pioneers in virgin areas, or new Bahá'ís who are confirmed in those virgin areas, are not part of the National Bahá'í Community, and cannot vote in elections."

"The virgin areas are separate, administratively, and under the jurisdiction of the National Spiritual Assembly responsible for their development. The same ruling applies to any Assemblies which might develop in these virgin areas. They do not become part of the National Bahá'í Community."

(Ibid., p. 50)

## **1. Pioneers Should Work in Close Harmony with Local Believers**

"...all National Spiritual Assemblies receiving pioneer support should devise ways and means for the pioneers and local believers to work together in close harmony, thus taking full advantage of the help and support that pioneers are anxious to offer, often at great sacrifice, to the teaching or deepening work of the community to which they have gone, and demonstrating to a sceptical world the undivided solidarity and exemplary unity of the followers of the Most Great Name."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to all National Spiritual Assemblies, July 6, 1969)



## **C. Publicity and Proclamation**

### **1. Youth Should Not Be Stultified**

"Publicity itself should be well conceived, dignified, and reverent. A flamboyant approach which may succeed in drawing much initial attention to the Cause may ultimately prove to have produced a revulsion which would require great effort to overcome. The standard of dignity and reverence set by the beloved Guardian should always be upheld particularly in musical and dramatic items; and photographs of the Master should not be used indiscriminately. This does not mean that activities of the youth, for example, should be stultified; one can be exuberant without being irreverent or undermining the dignity of the Cause."

"Every land has its own conditions... National Spiritual Assemblies need not follow or copy programs initiated in other countries...."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice, July 2, 1967: Wellspring of Guidance, p. 118)

### **1. Mass Distribution of Reply Paid Inquiry Cards**

"The details of such matters are within the discretion of each National Spiritual Assembly to decide in the light of certain fundamental principles and in the context of the situation in each country."

"In deciding such a matter you should bear in mind not only the effectiveness of the project from the teaching point of view, but also its bearing upon the dignity of the Faith. Any leaflet used in such a way should be brief, contain the minimum of quotations from the Sacred Writings, and be designed primarily to arouse the [pg 583] interest of the reader so that he will request more information, and should not, at that stage, be intended to convince or convert the reader."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to National Spiritual Assembly of Australia, December 9, 1971)

### **1. Importance of Reaching Distinguished Persons with the Teachings**

"Your letters with the wonderful reports of your activities in teaching the Cause and interesting distinguished persons always bring him much joy and pleasure. He wished he had a large number of your type, so devoted to the Faith and so determined to spread its message throughout the world."

"Even though the men you contact do not immediately embrace the Cause and wholeheartedly support it, yet the Word of God that has penetrated their mind and heart will not remain idle. They will be bound, once they read something or lend an attentive ear, to unconsciously modify their views, for the Message will be gradually working in their subconscious mind and thereby moulding their views and interests. One day the Cause will pass the threshold of their consciousness and they will become completely converted. But even before that day, they will be expressing that spirit in their deliberations and thereby helping the progress of the cause of peace throughout the world."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, May 3, 1932)

**1. Eminent Men Are Often Captives of Their Cherished Ideas, But When the Pendulum Starts to Swing...**

"He sincerely hopes and prays that the literature and letters you are sending to eminent men in the different parts of the country will bear their desired effect and that the Word of God will gradually permeate into their heart and win it. It however takes time. Such men are generally captive into the hands of some cherished ideas and principles which they cannot give up so quickly. The mere fact that a person is learned does not mean that he is free from prejudices. The academic life also has its fashions and fads even though they are of different nature from the fads of the man in the street."

"These fashions are not permanent; they are bound to change. Today the fad is a materialistic view of life and of the world. A day will soon come when it will become deeply religious and spiritual. In fact we can discern the beginning of such a change in the writings of some of the most eminent souls and liberal minds. When the pendulum will start its full swing then we shall see all such eminent men turn again to God."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, October 18, 1932)

**1. Proclaiming the Faith to Modern Thinkers and Leaders of Society**

"It is really strange how much modern thinkers are, of their own accord, drawing nearer to the teachings of the Faith and voicing views very much like ours. It shows clearly the truth of the saying of the Master that the spirit of the Movement has permeated the hearts of all the people of the world. It is God's hands operating and guiding the nations and intellectual men and leaders of society to a gradual acceptance of His Message revealed through Bahá'u'lláh."

"The way we can hasten the development of this process is by doing our share in spreading the words of God far and wide. Even though we may not see any case of sudden conversion on the part of these intellectuals, yet they are bound to [pg 584] be influenced in their views and look to the Faith with greater admiration and with a more willing desire to be led by its precepts."

Shoghi Effendi, therefore, wishes me to encourage you in your work, in sending appropriate literature to such men of learning."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, May 7, 1933)



## **D. Radio**

### **1. Power of Radio for Proclamation**

"It is our hope that the great power of radio for proclamation, teaching and deepening may be mobilized wherever possible, and with the promising initiatives which have occurred in Ecuador and elsewhere we now anticipate the development of more widespread uses of the medium which will be of service to the Cause and to mankind."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Ecuador, April 7, 1974)

### **1. Historic Forward Step in Proclamation**

"The religious and cultural content of your programs is important alike for achieving the goals of the Faith and bringing education and service to the non-Bahá'ís' community...."

"Your perception of Bahá'í needs and their satisfaction through radio broadcasts has prepared you for what may well, in time, be hailed as an historic forward step in proclamation, expansion and deepening through the medium of radio, a medium which the beloved Guardian hoped would be exploited on behalf of the Cause of God. We congratulate you and look forward to news of your progress in this significant initial program."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Ecuador, December 12, 1974)

### **1. Bring to Attention of the Public the Fact that the Faith Exists**

"In connection with the radio work ... he would suggest that the main consideration is to bring to the attention of the public the fact that the Faith exists, and its teachings. Every kind of broadcast, whether of passages from the writings, or on topical subjects, or lectures, should be used. The people need to hear the word 'Bahá'í' so that they can, if receptive, respond and seek the Cause out. The primary duty of the friends everywhere in the world is to let the people know such a Revelation is in existence; their next duty is to teach it."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, July 24, 1943: A Compilation on the 'Use of Radio and Television in Teaching', April 1, 1975, from the World Centre)

### **1. Examples of Prudence to be Exercised in Presenting History and Teachings of the Faith**

"He feels that the projected radio broadcasts are of the utmost importance as they afford you an opportunity of bringing to many listeners a sense of the greatness of the Cause. In this connection he has some advice to give you: You should stick carefully to facts and beware of putting any interpretations of facts into it. Your [pg 585] best sources are Nabil's Narrative and Martha Root's book on Tahirih, as far as she is concerned, and, of course the general literature of our Faith. The Guardian advises you not to introduce into a series for public consumption anything obscure or mystical. By all means avoid the scene in the Presence of Bahá'u'lláh between Tahirih and Quddus. Her separation from her husband and children, her teaching in Baghdad, her imprisonment and death, and her poems, make a beautiful and moving tale. He would not call her the first suffragette, for this certainly was strictly speaking no part of her concept."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to a group of believers, November 9, 1949)

**1. Voluntary Contributions May Be Accepted — However, Fund-Raising Activities Should Not Be Carried Out by Bahá'í Radio**

"The Universal House of Justice sees no objection to accepting voluntary donations spontaneously contributed by non-Bahá'ís for your radio activities. In a letter written to a National Spiritual Assembly on behalf of the House of Justice, the following advice was given. '...A point to bear in mind is that a Bahá'í radio station should strictly uphold a standard for its operations that will guard its programs against being confused in the public mind with the radio programs sponsored by other religious groups. The latter programs often involve fund-raising activities which, if associated with Bahá'í programs, would eventually undermine the prestige of the Faith and expose its institutions to certain dangers.'"

"The donations accepted from non-Bahá'ís must be used toward providing services or programs which are not a direct Bahá'í teaching."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Ecuador, April 15, 1985)



## **E. Teaching**

**1. Arise to Serve His Cause**

"Whosoever ariseth to aid our Cause, God will render him victorious over ten times ten thousand souls, and, should he wax in his love for Me, him will We cause to triumph over all that is in the heaven and all that is on earth."

(Bahá'u'lláh: cited by Shoghi Effendi in Messages to the Bahá'í World, p. 101)

**1. Teaching Enjoined on Believers in Aqdas**

"In the Aqdas Bahá'u'lláh considers teaching as a spiritual obligation imposed upon every devoted believer and servant of His Faith. Should the friends become fully conscious of this duty



and arise to do their share, this Cause will soon permeate every home throughout the world and the Kingdom of God will be established."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer: Bahá'í News, No. 85, p. 8, July 1934)

#### **1. Meditate on Methods of Teaching**

"The sanctified souls should ponder and meditate in their hearts regarding the methods of teaching. From the texts of the wondrous, heavenly Scriptures they should memorize phrases and passages bearing on various instances, so that in the course of their [pg 586] speech they may recite divine verses whenever the occasion demandeth it, inasmuch as these holy verses are the most potent elixir, the greatest and mightiest talisman. So potent is their influence that the hearer will have no cause for vacillation...."

(Bahá'u'lláh: Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 200)

#### **1. The Teachings Are Not Given to Us to Treasure and Hide**

"The world is in great turmoil and its problems seem to become daily more acute. We should therefore not sit idle; otherwise we would be failing in carrying out our sacred duty. Bahá'u'lláh has not given us His teachings to treasure them and hide them for our personal delight and pleasure. He gave them to us that we may pass them from mouth to mouth until all the world becomes familiar with them and enjoys their blessings and uplifting influence."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to the Spiritual Assembly of Eliot, Maine, March 27, 1933: Bahá'í News, No. 73, May 1933, p. 2)

#### **1. Abdu'l-Bahá Teaches How to Teach**

"...in the city of Baghdad, I talked with a learned man, Mulla Hassan, some of whose relatives were believers. No matter how hard they tried to give him the Message, he would not accept it. Once, they brought him to my house when I was just getting up from my sleep and combing my hair. They said, 'We have brought so-and-so here and we beg you to come and speak with him; perhaps, he will become a believer.' I said, 'Very well,' and then I turned to the Blessed Beauty and prayed: 'O Blessed Beauty, confirm me!' Afterwards, I talked to him, and in the same hour he became a believer. He became exceedingly good and was so enkindled that, although he was of high rank, he used to go into the kitchen and cook things with his own hand to entertain the friends."

(Talk by Abdu'l-Bahá in the Holy Land, translated by Dr. Zia Baghdadi: Star of the West, Vol. IX, No. 3, p. 36)

#### **1. Recompense of Martyr Assuredly Recorded**

"In this day, the beloved of God must not hesitate or delay an instant in teaching the Cause of the Manifestation; and reconciling words of the religion of majestic oneness; because, verily, in this day, to the soul who is the cause of guidance to another soul the recompense of a martyr in

the way of God will be assuredly recorded by the pen of the Cause for his deed. This is from the Bounty of God unto thee. Do according to what thou hast been commanded and do not be of those who tarry."

(Abdu'l-Bahá: Bahá'í Scriptures, p. 204)

### **1. Teaching Not Conditioned by Occupation**

"Teaching the Faith is not conditioned by what occupation we have, or how great our knowledge is, but rather on how much we have studied the Teachings, to what degree we live the Bahá'í life, and how much we long to share this Message with others. When we have these characteristics, we are sure, if we search, to find receptive souls."

"You should persevere and be confident that, with effort, success can be yours."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi by his secretary to an American believer, 1957: Bahá'í News, No. 351, p. 2, May 1960) [pg 587]

### **1. Intensive Work is of More Lasting Nature**

"Shoghi Effendi has seen, through the experience of the international teachers that keep him informed regarding their activities, that intensive work is ultimately of a more lasting nature. It has proven to be far better that a teacher should spend a month or two in one center and wait until a group is formed, than to cover a large area and not stay enough in a center to help the progress of those interested to the stage that they would feel themselves able to embrace the Cause and identify themselves with it."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, May 30, 1932: Bahá'í News, No. 67, October 1932, pp. 4-5)

### **1. Teachers Must Be Satisfied with Little Food**

"As regards the teachers, they must completely divest themselves from the old garments and be invested with a new garment. According to the statement of Christ, they must attain to the station of rebirth — that is, whereas in the first instance they were born from the womb of the mother, this time they must be born from the womb of the world of nature. Just as they are now totally unaware of the experiences of the foetal world, they must also forget entirely the defects of the world of nature. They must be baptized with the water of life, the fire of the love of God and the breaths of the Holy Spirit; be satisfied with little food, but take a large portion from the heavenly table. They must disengage themselves from temptation and covetousness, and be filled with the spirit. Through the effect of their pure breath, they must change the stone into the brilliant ruby and the shell into pearl. Like unto the cloud of vernal shower, they must transform the black soil into the rose garden and orchard. They must make the blind seeing, the deaf hearing, the extinguished one enkindled and set aglow, and the dead quickened."

(Abdu'l-Bahá: Tablets of the Divine Plan, p. 96)

### **1. Develop a System of Travelling Teacher Circuits**

"In this connection we feel you would be well advised to develop a system of travelling teacher circuits. There is no doubt whatever that the constant movement of teachers, even though circulating within a small radius, can have a highly stimulating effect on the teaching work. Permanent settlers, a constant stream of visiting teachers to speak at regular firesides, is a pattern which has not yet been bettered."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of the British Isles, January 20, 1966: Bahá'í Journal, No. 173, p. 1, March 4, 1966)

### **1. Travelling Teachers Reinforce Work of Pioneers**

"While pioneers provide a very valuable long-term reinforcement of a community and are often the only feasible means for opening new areas — and here we are speaking not only of pioneers from foreign lands but of homefront pioneers as well, the use of whom must be greatly developed in most countries — a second vital reinforcement of the work is provided by travelling teachers. As mentioned in the message sent to all believers at Ridvan, a new international travel teaching program is now being launched. National Assemblies and their committees, therefore, need to develop a threefold integrated program for travel teaching. Firstly, there should be within each national community regular circuits of local travelling teachers, that is to say of [pg 588] believers who are members of that national community, whether native or pioneers, who are able and willing to devote time to this activity. Secondly, and integrated with these circuits, provision should be made for planned visits of travelling teachers from abroad. Thirdly, each National Assembly should establish an agency and a procedure for taking advantage of the unheralded arrival of visitors from abroad, or of sudden offers from believers on the homefront, who would be able to give valuable help in the fields of travel teaching or proclamation if properly organized. Such an agency would, of course, be responsible for evaluating the capacity of those who offer services because while an unexpected offer can often provide a very valuable teaching opportunity, it is also true to say that some Bahá'í communities have been exhausted and their work hindered by the arrival of a succession of travelling Bahá'ís who were not really suited, for lack of a language or for other reasons, to assist with teaching in the area concerned. Friends who travel spontaneously in this way can do valuable teaching themselves but should not expect the assistance of local administrative institutions if they have not arranged the trip in advance."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to all National Spiritual Assemblies, May 25, 1975)

### **1. What Visiting Teachers Are Supposed to Do**

"Visiting teachers, who are, at least in a general way, supposed to be more competent and able than the rest, are undoubtedly of great help. But these can never replace the mass of individual believers and fulfil what must be inevitably accomplished through the collective effort and wisdom of the community at large. What visiting teachers are supposed to do is to give the final touch to the work that has been done, to consolidate rather than supplement individual efforts and thereby direct them in a constructive and suitable channel. Their task is to encourage and inspire individual believers, and to broaden and deepen their vision of the task that is to be done. And this, not by virtue of any inherent spiritual right, but in the spirit of simple and wholehearted cooperation."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, September 1, 1933)

#### **1. Travelling Teachers Have No Special Status**

"From time to time we receive reports that pioneers or travelling teachers who are subsidized by the International Fund or receive letters of encouragement from the Universal House of Justice are assumed to have some special status or authority."

"In order that there be no misunderstanding, it should be made clear that such individuals have no special status and have no authority or standing other than that of any believer residing in the area where he is pioneering or teaching."

"Furthermore, pioneers and travelling teachers are under the jurisdiction of the National Spiritual Assembly of the country or area in which they are travelling or residing, as the case may be, and they must be obedient to the instructions of these National Spiritual Assemblies."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to all National Spiritual Assemblies, August 3, 1970)

#### **1. Travelling Expenses of Teachers**

"He believes that the continuous expenditure of a considerable sum to provide for [pg 589] travelling expenses of teachers who are in need constitutes in these days the chief obligation of the National Fund. An effort should be made to facilitate, as much as possible, the extension of the teaching work by helping those who are financially unable to reach their destination, and once there, to encourage them to settle and earn the means of their livelihood."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, November 14, 1936: Bahá'í News, No. 105, February 1937, p. 1: Lifeblood of the Cause, p. 15)

#### **1. No Bahá'í Teachers Permanently Employed by Faith**

"The beloved Guardian elucidated this basic principle of Bahá'í administration through his repeated letters to National Assemblies from which we quote: 'At present it would be quite impossible to spread the Cause if those who arise to serve it as teachers or pioneers were not given financial assistance. All must realize, however, that the monies they receive are only to enable them to fulfil their objectives, and that they cannot consider themselves permanently entitled to be supported by the Cause.'" (From a letter to the N.S.A. of India and Burma dated August 12, 1944)

"Each National Assembly, through its auxiliary Teaching Committees, should be able to so plan the time and efforts of its band of subsidized traveling teachers that no impression of permanency is given. As far as possible each 'project' must be definite in objective and in duration."

"Likewise, when pioneer projects are envisaged, it must be made clear to the pioneer that he must make every effort to establish himself in some position in his pioneering post and thus become freed from the necessity of drawing further on Bahá'í funds."

(From a letter by the Universal House of Justice to all National Spiritual Assemblies engaged in Mass Teaching Work, June 25, 1964)

**1. Travelling Teachers Should Be Assisted Financially to Carry Out Assigned Projects**

"Likewise travelling teachers should be assisted financially to carry out the 'projects' assigned to them. The friends should not for a moment confuse this type of support with the creation of a paid clergy. Any Bahá'í can, at the discretion of the N.S.A., receive this necessary assistance, and it is clearly understood it is temporary and only to carry out a specific plan. Bahá'u'lláh Himself has not only enjoined on everyone the duty of teaching His Faith, but stated if you cannot go yourself, to send someone in your stead. The National Assembly, through and with its National Teaching Committee, should take immediate steps to get pioneers out into the goal towns and teachers circulating about, to not only support and inaugurate the new work, but to stimulate the existing Assemblies and groups, and help them to expand."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly of the British Isles, May 29, 1946)

**1. We Have No One in the Faith Whose Position is Comparable to Professional Clergymen or Priests**

"We have no people in the Bahá'í Faith whose position is comparable to professional clergymen or priests. No paid teachers, in other words. However, it is difficult [pg 590] to see how the ever-increasing work of the Cause is to be run unless those devoting all their time to it are not supported from the Fund while doing so. This is administrative work, and there is no objection to those doing it being paid a regular salary if they have not the independent means to do it free of any charge. We cannot lay down a rule that no one receiving remuneration for Bahá'í administrative work should be elected to Assemblies, as this would interfere with the free choice of electing the best qualified people for such service on Assemblies."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, October 9, 1947)

**1. Support by the Fund Only Temporary**

"...this is a Cause in which every believer is called upon to teach. If at the present time certain friends are supported by the Fund to enable them to devote all their time to the vital and urgent work of expansion and consolidation, this is but a temporary arrangement designed to meet the exigencies of this period of crisis in human history. It must never be allowed to replace the individual voluntary efforts of the friends, but rather should stimulate and reinforce them."

"If every Bahá'í will arise whole-heartedly to support and develop the institutions of the Cause — primarily the Local Spiritual Assemblies — and to teach the Faith, all will be astonished at the vast achievements which can be made with comparatively little assistance from the National Fund."

(From a letter by the Universal House of Justice to various National Spiritual Assemblies, July 27, 1971)

## **1. Travelling Teachers and Believers Who Travel Frequently**

"It has been reported to the Universal House of Justice by the Continental Board of Counsellors in South America that your National Spiritual Assembly has ruled that full-time travelling teachers are to be considered as not having a fixed residence and are therefore not eligible in any local community for elective service. We have been asked to share with you the following excerpt of a letter written to the National Spiritual Assembly of North West Africa dated 5 December, 1972, setting forth the general policy regarding believers who are travelling most of the time."

'At present no hard and fast rule can be laid down for determining the places of residence of the officers of a ship or its crew, or the personnel manning aircraft when such individuals have no fixed home and no family ties to commit them to any specific place of residence. The National Spiritual Assembly should, in each case, discuss the matter with the person involved and decide where his Bahá'í membership shall count. Factors such as the frequency of recurrence of his visits to any locality, opportunities to participate in local Bahá'í activities, the extent of the period of his stay each time he visits, and his own choice should all be taken into consideration in arriving at a decision.'

"We have been instructed to say that it would not be proper for rules to be laid down that travelling teachers should not be considered as having a fixed place of residence. If one of them should be elected to a Local Spiritual Assembly the question would then arise as to whether his anticipated travels necessitating his frequent absence from the Assembly would constitute a valid reason for him to resign as a member of that Assembly."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to a National Spiritual Assembly, January 26, 1978) [pg 591]

## **1. Spiritual Maturing is a Slow Process**

"a. Visiting pioneers or teachers may find in some places newly enrolled believers not so enthusiastic about their religion as expected, or not adjusting to standards of Bahá'í life, or they may find them thinking of material benefits they may hope to derive from their new membership. We should always remember that the process of nursing the believer into full spiritual maturity is slow, and needs loving education and patience."

"b. Some teaching committees, in their eagerness to obtain results, place undue emphasis on obtaining a great number of declarations to the detriment of the quality of teaching."

"c. Some travelling teachers, in their desire to show the result of their services, may not scrupulously teach their contacts, and in some rare cases, if God forbid, they are insincere, may even give false reports."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to all National Spiritual Assemblies, Teaching the Masses, dated July 13, 1964: Wellspring of Guidance, pp. 35-36)

## **1. Each One of the Believers is Like an Ark of Salvation**

"I desire that you may see the divine ships. These ships are the blessed sails who are traversing the sea of Divine mercy; their propellers are the powers of spiritual love and their captains are the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. No ship is ever wrecked in this sea; its waves are life-giving. Each one of the friends of God is like unto an ark of Salvation. Each ark saves many souls from the storms of troubles. The signs and traces of these sails are never-ending and eternal. The future centuries and cycles are like the sea on the surface of which these arks glide blissfully toward their spiritual destination."

(Talk by Abdu'l-Bahá: Star of the West, Vol. VIII, No. 8, p. 104, August 11, 1917)

### **1. First Condition of a Religious Teacher**

"It is a wonderful, priceless boon to be a vessel carrying food from God. It cannot be bought with gold. The first condition of a religious teacher is to believe in God; the second, to turn his face toward God; the third to be severed from all save God. Such teachers will constitute illumined lamps of guidance, the stars of the heaven of mercy, the trees of the orchard of Abha, flowers of the garden of mystery and torches of the path of salvation."

"Teaching the Cause of God is not only through the tongue; it is through deeds, a good disposition, happiness of nature, kindness and sympathy, good fellowship, trustworthiness, holiness, virtue, purity of ideals, and lastly, speech."

(Abdu'l-Bahá: Bahá'í News, No. 243, May 1951, p. 8)

### **1. Importance of Teaching — Terrible Problems Confronting Humanity**

"The more one observes the conditions of the world and the terrible problems confronting humanity, the more deeply one realizes that the only remedy is that which Bahá'u'lláh has brought, and yet, alas, the masses of the people seem to not yet be aware that the way out of our problems can only be a divine way, given by something far greater than human understanding! However, many souls are seriously thinking and seeking, and the Bahá'ís must try to bring the knowledge of the teachings to all, so that those prepared to accept may not be denied the Message!"

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer: Ibid., p. 72) [pg 592]

### **1. Need Teachers of Spiritual Capacity, Knowledge of Covenant**

"...the National Assembly should pay particular attention to getting teachers with spiritual capacity and a deep knowledge of the Covenant out to the weaker communities on circuit teaching trips, and that an effort should be made for them to stay for some time in each place. It is evident that one of the reasons that the work on the home front in America is so seriously lagging is that the Bahá'ís themselves, though undoubtedly devoted, loyal and conscientious, are not always very deeply grounded in the spiritual fundamentals of their Faith. This produces a maladjustment, so to speak, in the nature of their service to the Cause; and only through a deeper understanding of their Faith and the inner spiritual strength that this understanding brings, will they be able to reinforce themselves to meet their tasks, to see the joy of discharging their duties and grasping their privileges."



(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, July 19, 1956: Bahá'í News, No. 307, September 1956, p. 1)

### 1. **Everyone is a Potential Teacher**

"...Not until all the friends come to realize that everyone is able, in his own measure, to deliver the Message can they ever hope to reach the goal that has been set for them by a loving and wise Master. It is no use for some able and eloquent teacher to take all the responsibility for the spread of the Cause. For such a thing is not only contrary to the spirit of the Teachings, but to the explicit text of the writings of Bahá'u'lláh and Abdu'l-Bahá, both of Whom place the obligation of teaching not on any particular class as in former ecclesiastical organizations but on every faithful and loyal follower of the Cause. The teaching of the Word is thus made universal and compulsory. How long, then, shall we wait to carry out this command, the full wisdom of which only future generations will be able to appreciate? We have no special teachers in this Cause. Everyone is a potential teacher. He has only to use what God has given him and thus prove that he is faithful to his trust."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer: The Bahá'í World, p. 126, Vol. V)



## **F. Mass Teaching**

### 1. **Distribution of Bahá'í Material in Mail Boxes of Homes and Apartments**

"The Universal House of Justice has received your letter ... concerning the distribution of Bahá'í material to the mail boxes of the houses and apartments in a locality, and it has instructed us to send you the following reply."

"The details of all such matters are within the discretion of each National Spiritual Assembly to decide in the light of certain principles and in the context of the situation in each country."

"The principles the House of Justice wishes National Assemblies to observe in this connection are:

1. The dignity of the Faith should be carefully safeguarded in all Bahá'í activities.
1. It is important that no teaching activity should be an encroachment on people's privacy nor should it force the teachings upon unwilling listeners." [pg 593]

"In general the House of Justice feels that there would be no objection in principle to mailing or distributing to mail boxes such items as invitations to meetings or introductory circular letters, or brief informative leaflets. Any leaflet used in such a way should be designed primarily to arouse the interest of the reader so that he will seek more information. It should not be intended to convince or convert the reader at that stage. A number of National Spiritual Assemblies have produced introductory circulars of this nature, which have a reply-paid card attached. It is not, of course, essential that the card be part of the leaflet provided that the leaflet itself is restrained

and dignified. However, each National Spiritual Assembly must decide what is proper to be done in its own country."

"The quotation which you ask for is as follows: 'He feels that to distribute Bahá'í pamphlets from door-to-door ... is undignified and might create a bad impression of the Faith. No doubt, it is the eagerness and devotion of the friends that led them to make this proposal, but he does not think that the best interests of the Cause are served by such a method....'"

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to the National Assembly of Iceland, December 6, 1981)

#### **1. Great Care Should Be Exercised in Selecting Teachers to Teach**

"Great care and discretion should be exercised in the selection of teachers who will be contacting people who are mostly illiterate and cannot benefit from reading for themselves the written word, and are largely dependent on what they hear. Teachers, be they local or from outside, should be acutely aware of this. The spiritual calibre and moral quality of these teachers is of great importance, and particularly they should be of pure spirit and have a true love for the Cause. They should have the capacity to convey that spirit and that love to others. Furthermore, they should avoid pressure tactics in their efforts to obtain declarations of faith."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, dated May 5, 1982, attached to a letter to the National Spiritual Assembly of Germany dated February 6, 1986 and entitled "Statement of the Universal House of Justice Regarding Teaching the Faith")

#### **1. Exercise Care in Presenting Cause to Avoid Misconceptions**

"Bahá'u'lláh, in 'The Hidden Words', Says 'O Son of Dust! The wise are they that speak not unless they obtain a hearing, even as the cup-bearer, who proffereth not his cup till he findeth a seeker, and the lover who crieth not out from the depths of his heart until he gazeth upon the beauty of his beloved...', and on page 55 of 'The Advent of Divine Justice', a letter which is primarily directed towards exhorting the friends to fulfil their responsibilities in teaching the Faith, Shoghi Effendi writes: 'Care, however, should, at all times, be exercised, lest in their eagerness to further the international interests of the Faith they frustrate their purpose, and turn away, through any act that might be misconstrued as an attempt to proselytize and bring undue pressure upon them, those whom they wish to win over to their Cause'. Some Bahá'ís sometimes overstep the proper bounds, but this does not alter the clear principle."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, January 3, 1982: Teaching and Commitment, A Compilation of the Universal House of Justice) [pg 594]

#### **1. Mankind Has the Right to Hear the Message of Bahá'u'lláh**

"The responsibility of the Bahá'ís to teach the Faith is very great. The contraction of the world and the onward rush of events require us to seize every chance open to us to touch the hearts and minds of our fellow-men. The Message of Bahá'u'lláh is God's guidance for mankind to overcome the difficulties of this age of transition and move forward into the next stage of its

evolution, and human beings have the right to hear it. Those who accept it incur the duty of passing it on to their fellow-men. The slowness of the response of the world has caused and is causing great suffering; hence the historical pressure upon Bahá'ís to exert every effort to teach the Faith for the sake of their fellow-men. They should teach with enthusiasm, conviction, wisdom and courtesy, but without pressing their hearer, bearing in mind the words of Bahá'u'lláh 'Beware lest ye contend with any one, nay, strive to make him aware of the truth with kindly manner and most convincing exhortation. If your hearer respond, he will have responded to his own behoof, and if not, turn ye away from him, and set your face towards God's sacred Court, the seat of resplendent holiness.'" (Gleanings CXXVIII)"

(Extract from "Statement of the Universal House of Justice Regarding Teaching the Faith", op. cit. No. 2003)

### **1. The Purpose of Consolidation**

"Consolidation activities promote the individual spiritual development of the friends, help to unite and strengthen Bahá'í community life, establish new social patterns for the friends, and stimulate the teaching work."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to all National Spiritual Assemblies, April 17, 1981)

### **1. True Consolidation**

"...true consolidation is to ensure that the love of Bahá'u'lláh and devotion to His Faith are firmly rooted in the hearts of the believers; this is the essential foundation for the subsequent addition of increased knowledge of the Teachings and the development of the Bahá'í way of life."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice, November 3, 1974)

### **1. Proclamation, Expansion and Consolidation**

"The House of Justice ... has instructed us to point out that proclamation, expansion, and consolidation are really three different aspects of teaching which to some degree merge into one another and therefore it is largely for each National Spiritual Assembly to decide how it will allocate these different aspects to committees in light of the volume of the work and the condition in each country."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to a National Spiritual Assembly, February 27, 1975)

### **1. Consolidation is that Aspect of Teaching which Assists Believers to Deepen Their Knowledge of the Teachings...**

"Consolidation is as vital a part of the teaching work as expansion. It is that aspect of teaching which assists the believers to deepen their knowledge and understanding of the Teachings, and fans the flame of their devotion of Bahá'u'lláh and His Cause, so that they will, of their own volition, continue the process of their spiritual development, promote the teaching work, and

strengthen the functioning of their administrative institutions. Proper consolidation is essential to the preservation of [pg 595] the spiritual health of the community, to the protection of its interests, to the upholding of its good name, and ultimately to the continuation of the work of expansion itself."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to all National Spiritual Assemblies, April 17, 1981)

#### **1. Consolidation is an Essential and Inseparable Element of Teaching**

"...they must remember that consolidation is an essential and inseparable element of teaching, and if they go to a remote area and enrol believers whom no one is going to be able to visit again in the near future, they may well be doing a disservice to those people and to the Faith. To give people this glorious Message and then leave them in the lurch produces disappointment and disillusionment, so that, when it does become possible to carry out properly planned teaching in that area, the teachers may well find the people resistant to the Message. The first teacher who was careless of consolidation, instead of planting and nourishing the seeds of faith has, in fact, 'inoculated' the people against the divine Message and made subsequent teaching very much harder."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to all Continental Pioneer Committees, April 16, 1981: Teaching and Commitment, A Compilation of the Universal House of Justice)

#### **1. Expansion and Consolidation Are Co-Equal**

"Simultaneous and co-equal with this vast, ordered and ever-growing teaching effort, the work of consolidation must go hand in hand. In fact these two processes must be regarded as inseparable parts of the expansion of the Faith. While the work of teaching inevitably goes first, to pursue it alone without consolidation would leave the community unprepared to receive the masses who must sooner or later respond to the life-giving message of the Cause... Consolidation must comprise not only the establishment of Bahá'í administrative institutions, but a true deepening in the fundamental verities of the Cause and in its spiritual principles, understanding of its prime purpose in the establishment of the unity of mankind, instruction in its standards of behaviour in all aspects of private and public life, in the particular practice of Bahá'í life in such things as daily prayer, education of children, observance of the laws of Bahá'í marriage, abstention from politics, the obligation to contribute to the Fund, the importance of the Nineteen Day Feast and opportunity to acquire a sound knowledge of the present-day practice of Bahá'í administration."

(From the Message of the Universal House of Justice to the Bahá'ís of the World, Ridvan 1966)

#### **1. The Purpose of Teaching is Not Complete with a Declaration of Faith**

"Teaching the Faith embraces many diverse activities, all of which are vital to success, and each of which reinforces the other. Time and again the beloved Guardian emphasized that expansion and consolidation are twin and inseparable aspects to teaching that must proceed simultaneously, yet one still hears believers discussing the virtues of one as against the other."

The purpose of teaching is not complete when a person declares that he has accepted Bahá'u'lláh as the Manifestation of God for this age; the purpose of teaching is to attract human beings to the divine Message and so imbue them with its spirit that they will dedicate themselves to its service, and this world will become another world and its people another people. Viewed in this light a declaration of Faith is merely a milestone along the way — albeit a [pg 596] very important one. Teaching may also be likened to kindling a fire, the fire of faith, in the hearts of men. If a fire burns only so long as the match is held to it, it cannot truly be said to have been kindled; to be kindled it must continue to burn of its own accord. Thereafter more fuel can be added and the flame can be fanned, but even if left alone for a period, a truly kindled fire will not be extinguished by the first breath of wind."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to all National Spiritual Assemblies, May 25, 1975)

**1. Qualities Necessary — Pure Spirit and Love — Illiterates Cannot Read for Themselves**

"It must be realized that people who are mostly illiterate cannot have the benefit of reading for themselves the written word and of deriving directly from it the spiritual sustenance they need for the enrichment of their Bahá'í lives. They become dependent, therefore, to a large extent on their contacts with visiting teachers. The spiritual calibre or moral quality of these teachers assumes, therefore, great importance. The National Spiritual Assembly or the Teaching Committees responsible for the selection of these teachers should bear in mind that their choice must depend, not only on the knowledge or grasp of the teachings on the part of the teachers, but primarily upon their pure spirit and their true love for the Cause, and their capacity to convey that spirit and love to others."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to all National Spiritual Assemblies engaged in mass teaching, October 26, 1967)

**1. Simplicity in Giving the Message — The Unsophisticated People Form Majority**

"The unsophisticated people of the world — and they form the large majority of its population — have the same right to know of the Cause of God as others. When the friends are teaching the Word of God they should be careful to give the Message in the same simplicity as it is enunciated in our Teachings. In their contacts they must show genuine and divine love. The heart of an unlettered soul is extremely sensitive, and any trace of prejudice on the part of the pioneer or teacher is immediately sensed."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to all National Spiritual Assemblies, July 13, 1964)

**1. Poorer Classes Should Be Taught — Confirm People**

"There is no doubt that the poorer classes should be taught the Cause and given every opportunity to embrace it. More especially in order to demonstrate to people our cardinal lack of prejudice — class prejudice as much as any other kind of prejudice. However, he feels that the great point is to confirm people of true capacity and ability — from whatever social stratum they may be — because the Cause needs now, and will ever increasingly need, souls of great ability who can bring it before the public at large, administer its ever-growing affairs, and contribute to its advancement in every field."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian by his secretary to an individual believer, October 30, 1941: A Special Measure of Love, p. 2)

### **1. Teaching Campaigns**

"He fully approves of the concept of uniting the believers' labors through [pg 597] focussing them on nation-wide teaching campaigns and so on. But he feels that the friends should constantly be encouraged to bear in mind certain salient facts: Bahá'u'lláh has brought a new system and new laws and standards of personal as well as racial conduct into the world. Although outside agencies have been to a certain extent illumined by the radiance of His Message and doctrines, and are exerting efforts to bring the world into that orbit of universal peace and harmony He has set for it, these outside forces cannot achieve what only the followers of His Faith can. The believers must not take their eyes off their own immediate tasks of patiently consolidating their administrative institutions, building up new Assemblies in North, Central and South America, and laboring to perfect the Bahá'í pattern of life, for these are things that no other group of people in the world can do or will do, and they alone are able to provide the spiritual foundation and example on which the larger world schemes must ultimately rest."

"At the same time every effort should be made to broadcast the Teaching at this time, and correlate them to the plight of humanity and the plans for its future. Both tasks should go forward simultaneously — internal consolidation and expansion, and a wider contact with the masses, maintained through public meetings, radio, publicity, etc."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, March 29, 1945: Bahá'í News, No. 175, June 1945, p. 3)

### **1. Aim of All Bahá'í Institutions and Teachers**

"The aim, therefore, of all Bahá'í institutions and Bahá'í teachers is to advance continually to new areas and strata of society, with such thoroughness, that, as the spark of faith kindles the hearts of the hearers, the teaching of the believers continues until and even after they shoulder the responsibilities as Bahá'ís and participate in both the teaching and administrative work of the Faith."

"There are now many areas in the world where thousands of people have accepted the Faith so quickly that it has been beyond the capacity of the existing Bahá'í communities to consolidate adequately these advances. The people in these areas must be progressively deepened in their understanding of the Faith, in accordance with well-laid plans, so that the communities may, as soon as possible, become sources of great strength to the work of the Faith and begin to manifest the pattern of Bahá'í life."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to all National Spiritual Assemblies, May 25, 1975)

### **1. Challenge to Every Believer and Institution**

"Every individual follower of Bahá'u'lláh, as well as the institutions of the Faith, at local, national, continental and world levels, must now meet the challenge to raise the intensity of teaching to a pitch never before attained, in order to realize that vast increase called for in the Plan. For those

believers living in countries where they have freedom to teach their Faith, this challenge is more sharply pointed by the oppressive measures imposed on the Faith elsewhere."

(From the Message of the Universal House of Justice to the Bahá'ís of the World, Ridvan 1966)

### **1. Challenge to Local and National Administrative Institutions**

"The challenge to the local and national administrative institutions of the Faith is to organize and promote the teaching work through systematic plans, involving not only the regular fireside meetings in the homes of the believers, the public meetings, receptions and conferences, the weekend, summer and winter schools, the youth conferences and activities, all of which are so vigorously upheld at present, but in addition through a constant stream of visiting teachers to every locality..."

(From the Message of the Universal House of Justice to the Bahá'ís of the World, Ridvan 1966)

### **1. Challenge to the Individual Bahá'í**

"The challenge to the individual Bahá'í in every field of service, but above all in teaching the Cause of God, is never-ending. With every fresh affliction visited upon mankind our inescapable duty becomes more apparent, nor should we ever forget that if we neglect this duty, 'others', in the words of Shoghi Effendi, 'will be called upon to take up our task as ministers to the crying needs of this afflicted world.'"

(From the Message of the Universal House of Justice to the Bahá'ís of the World, Ridvan 1966)

### **1. How Can True Believer Remain Silent**

"Every Bahá'í, however humble or inarticulate, must become intent on fulfilling his role as a bearer of the Divine Message. Indeed, how can a true believer remain silent while around us men cry out in anguish for truth, love and unity to descend upon this world?"

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to the Bahá'ís of the World, November 16, 1969)

### **1. Charitable and Humanitarian Aspects of Faith — Be Careful Not to Emphasize**

"When teaching among the masses, the friends should be careful not to emphasize the charitable and humanitarian aspects of the Faith as a means to win recruits. Experience has shown that when facilities such as schools, dispensaries, hospitals, or even clothes and food are offered to the people being taught, many complications arise. The prime motive should always be the response of man to God's message, and the recognition of His Messenger. Those who declare themselves as Bahá'ís should become enchanted with the beauty of the Teachings, and touched by the love of Bahá'u'lláh. The declarants need not know all the proofs, history, laws, and principles of the Faith, but in the process of declaring themselves they must, in addition to catching the spark of faith, become basically informed about the Central Figures of the Faith, as well as the existence of laws they must follow and an administration they must obey."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to all National Spiritual Assemblies, July 13, 1964)



## **1. Honoraria or Expenses for Talking on the Faith at Non-Bahá'í Events**

"As to honoraria, obviously it is preferable for individuals to present the Faith without receiving any fee. However, there is no objection to a Bahá'í receiving his travel and other expenses in connection with the talk."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, April 25, 1966)

## **1. Teachers as Administrators**

"There is no reason why teachers should not also be administrators; but an active [pg 599] teacher does not have much time for committee work. Unfortunately there are more people qualified to do the administrative work than the teaching work — and teachers are greatly needed."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to a National Spiritual Assembly, July 15, 1947)

## **1. Bahá'ís Should Be Aware that Opening a New Territory or Town is Only the First Move**

"It must be made quite clear to the Bahá'ís that opening a new territory or a new town, for that matter, meritorious as it is, is nevertheless only the first move. The consolidation of the Bahá'í work undertaken there is the most important thing of all. Victories are won usually through a great deal of patience, planning and perseverance, and rarely accomplished at a single stroke."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia and New Zealand, July 24, 1955)

## **1. The Basic Objective of Teaching**

"It is reassuring to know that you understand that the basic objective of teaching is to promote the Cause of God — not merely to increase numbers for numbers' sake. However, care should be exercised in applying this principle lest we become so rigid as to exclude from our rolls those waiting souls who have been touched by the spirit of the Faith without being very knowledgeable about all the Teachings."

"A Local Spiritual Assembly should be formed in any locality where nine or more adult believers reside. The fact that some of them are not well grounded in the Faith is not a reason for delaying formation of the Assembly, but is a matter to be dealt with separately."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to a National Spiritual Assembly, November 23, 1975)

## **1. The Guardian Encouraged Early Enrollment of New Believers**

"...As you are aware, the beloved Guardian encouraged early enrollment of new believers upon their declarations, and not the creation of obstacles to their acceptance. After declaration, follow-up with deepening is imperative, and it may be that some will fall away. However, those

who remain are the true fruits of the teaching endeavor and may include persons of great merit who might have been lost to the Cause through arbitrary early judgements."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, November 18, 1980)

#### **1. Indirect Teaching: What It Constitutes**

"As to your question as to what constitutes indirect teaching: It essentially consists in presenting some of the humanitarian or social teachings of the Cause which are shared by those whom we are teaching, as a means of attracting them to those aspects of the Faith which are more challenging in character, and are specifically and solely Bahá'í. The teaching of Esperanto, for instance, has been a very useful way of presenting the Cause indirectly to many people. It has opened many doors of contact for the believers, and has lately proved to be of tremendous help in introducing the Teachings into important social and intellectual circles."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, May 28, 1937) [pg 600]

#### **1. The Teaching of the Indians in America**

"As you know, the Master attached the utmost importance to the teaching of the Indians in America. The Guardian therefore hopes that your Assembly will devote considerable energy to this most important matter so that contacts are made with Indians in all of the Countries under your jurisdiction and some of these Indians become confirmed in the Faith."

"If the light of Divine Guidance enters properly into the lives of the Indians, it will be found that they will arise with a great power and will become an example of spirituality and culture to all of the people in these countries."

"The Master has likened the Indians in your Countries to the early Arabian Nomads at the time of the appearance of Muhammad. Within a short period of time they became the outstanding examples of education, of culture and of civilization for the entire world. The Master feels that similar wonders will occur today if the Indians are properly taught and if the power of the Spirit properly enters into their living."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly of Central America and Mexico, August 22, 1957)

#### **1. Teaching the Muslims**

"...Teaching Muslims the Faith requires to a great degree a knowledge of the Qur'an, so that you can bring them proofs from their own texts. If you have not mastered this yet, he suggests that you do so with the help of some of the Bahá'ís from the Islamic background. In this way you will attract the well-educated Muslims, and they will be deeply appreciative that an American should know so much about their religion."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, April 9, 1956)

**1. It is the Holy Spirit that Confirms and the Individual Should Become as a Reed Through which the Spirit May Descend**

"One should remember it is not the individual who confirms another, but the Holy Spirit which confirms. Thus the individual must become as a reed, through which the spirit may descend, and quicken souls. Thus the best way to develop capacity in teaching the Faith is to teach. As one teaches, he gains more knowledge himself, he relies more on the guidance of the spirit, and expands his own character. This is why Bahá'u'lláh made it incumbent on all to teach the Faith."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, November 24, 1956)

**1. Many People Are Ready for and Longing to Find These Teachings**

"There are many, many people ready for and longing to find these Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh. The friends must, through prayers for guidance, and through trying to contact different types of groups, seek out these hungry souls and confirm them."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, February 5, 1948)

**1. The Teacher Should Use Whatever Method of Expression that Will Attract the Listener**

"English is, compared to Latin and oriental languages, lacking (as spoken in daily [pg 601] use) in flowery terms, and the Guardian feels that in teaching you should always use whatever method will most attract your hearers. If such terms as 'The Glory of God' are not suited to certain individuals' mentality you should refrain from using them until they draw really close to the spirit of the Cause. The teaching is of primary, the words of secondary importance."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, January 23, 1945)

**1. Audacity in Teaching is Essential, But with Tact, Wisdom and Consideration**

"...It is certainly necessary, nay indeed vitally urgent, that the believers should make no compromise in teaching the Cause, and should not allow any consciousness of their limited means and resources to deter them from presenting the Teachings in their entirety, and with absolute courage and firm conviction. It is the realization that they are but the instruments of the Divine Will, and as such are endowed with a potency with which no earthly power, be it fame, wealth, human knowledge and capacity, can possibly compare, that should inspire them with an indomitable courage and determination to teach and deliver the Message to whomsoever they contact, and thus insure the faithful execution of the divine trust committed to their charge by Bahá'u'lláh."

"As the Guardian himself has pointed out, audacity in teaching is essential, but no less important is the necessity for the exercise of the utmost tact, wisdom and consideration, in approaching either separate individuals or large public audiences. Only when these qualities have been duly combined and harmonized can the teaching work be carried on effectively, and produce lasting results."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, September 2, 1939)

## **1. Regarding Those Who Are Enrolled, But Do Not Consider Themselves Bahá'ís**

"With regard to those who do not consider themselves Bahá'ís on the basis of the argument that they signed the Declaration Card without actually knowing the significance of what they were doing, you should determine who these people are. You should then deepen their knowledge of the Faith. If they feel, after receiving sufficient information, that they do not wish to be Bahá'í, then their names should be removed from the Bahá'í membership list."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to a National Spiritual Assembly, June 23, 1985)

## **1. The Most Successful Way for the Individual to Carry on the Teaching Work**

"The Bahá'ís must realize that the success of this work depends upon the individual. The individual must arise as never before to proclaim the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. The most effective way for them to carry on their work is for the individual to make many contacts, select a few whom they feel would become Bahá'ís, develop a close friendship with them, then complete confidence, and finally teach them the Faith, until they become strong supporters of the Cause of God."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to all National Spiritual Assemblies, May 13, 1955) [pg 602]

