

V. Function of Officer

Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Shoghi Effendi

Original English



V. Function of Officer

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All donations and contributions should be offered to the Treasurer of the Assembly, for the express purpose of promoting the interests of the Cause, throughout that locality or country. It is the sacred obligation of every conscientious and faithful servant of Bahá'u'lláh, who desires to see His Cause advance, to contribute freely and generously for the increase of that Fund. The members of the Spiritual Assembly will at their own discretion expend it to promote the Teaching Campaign, to help the needy, to establish educational Bahá'í institutions, to extend in every way possible their sphere of service....

From a letter 12 March 1923 written by Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly of _____ the Bahá'ís of America, Australasia, France, Germany, British Isles, Italy, Japan and Switzerland

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By now the election of the new National Spiritual Assembly and of its office-bearers will probably be completed. The office of Secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly is most important and the smooth and efficient working of the Bahá'í organization in India and Burma will depend to a large extent on him....

It is obvious that to carry out these manifold duties efficiently, thoroughly and tactfully is no easy task and Shoghi Effendi greatly hopes that someone may be found who will be able to devote the necessary ability, time and energy to carry them out satisfactorily.

From a letter 12 May 1925 written by Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly of India and Burma



ORIGINAL



AUDIO

As regards your question whether the president of the National Spiritual Assembly is entitled to give any ruling during the period of his tenure, the Guardian wishes me to state that no such ruling can be valid unless approved by the other members of the National Assembly. The president has no special legislative capacity, except as a member of the Assembly.

From a letter 28 February 1937 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly of India and Burma

In connection with resolution No. 15 recorded in the minutes of your National Spiritual Assembly: the Guardian wishes you to make clear to all the believers that membership in a Bahá'í Assembly or Committee is a sacred obligation which should be gladly and confidently accepted by every loyal and conscientious member of the Community, no matter how humble and inexperienced. Once elected to serve in a given Assembly a believer's duty is to do his utmost to attend all Assembly meetings, and co-operate with his fellow-members, unless, however, he is prevented from doing so by some major reason such as illness, and even then he should notify the Assembly to this effect.

The National Spiritual Assembly's duty is to urge, and also facilitate attendance at Assembly meetings. If a member has no valid reason to justify his repeated absence from Assembly meetings, he should be advised, and even warned, and if such warning is deliberately ignored by him, the Assembly will then have the right to suspend his rights as a voting member of the Community. Such administrative sanction would seem to be absolutely imperative and necessary, and while not tantamount to a complete expulsion of such [a] member from the Cause, deprives him of any real participation in its administrative functions and affairs, and is thus a most effective corrective measure which the Assembly can use against all such half-hearted and irresponsible individuals in the Community.

From a letter 2 July 1939 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly of India and Burma

As regards the question of what procedure the Bahá'í Assemblies should adopt when dissatisfied with the services of any of their officers: Should such dissatisfaction involve the loyalty of an Assembly officer to the Faith, he should, following a majority vote, be dismissed. But in case the dissatisfaction is due to the incompetence of a member, or

simply to a neglect on his part to discharge his duties, this does not constitute sufficient justification to force his resignation or dismissal from the Assembly. He should be kept in office until new elections are held.

From a letter 22 November 1940 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly of the British Isles

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Regarding your question concerning the secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly: There cannot be any permanently elected secretary who would year after year hold office, as this would be contrary to the principles of the administration; however, the Guardian feels that the National Spiritual Assembly should supply the secretary with a paid helper in order to enable him to carry on his duties properly and at the same time pursue his own profession, if that is necessary for him. In other words the secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly can have a full-time secretary under him if the work requires it.

From a letter 22 June 1943 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly of India and Burma

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Generally speaking the secretary of an Assembly must be careful to convey exactly what the majority decision or advice of the body was. There can surely be no objection to his putting it in proper terms and clarifying the matter according to the decision or instruction of the Assembly. But he should of course not introduce his personal views unless endorsed by the Assembly.

From a letter 19 October 1947 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer

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He was sorry that he felt it necessary to insist that the secretary of your Assembly must be located in Buenos Aires, so that the Secretariat can be located in the Headquarters of this region; this is a general principle which he has insisted the friends adhere to everywhere. A situation similar to yours arose in Scandinavia, where the secretary was in Oslo instead of Stockholm, and a change was necessary there also. As the Ten Year Crusade unfolds it is increasingly important for the work to go forward in a uniform manner and according to general principles applicable to all.

From a letter 29 July 1957 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly of Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, Paraguay and Bolivia

