

# IX. Appeals

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

Original English



## IX. Appeals

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To facilitate matters and avoid misunderstandings he prefers to refer you and the individual friends to them. He is sure that you will obtain full satisfaction by putting the question to them. The purpose of the Guardian in this is not to avoid the issue but only to facilitate matters and eliminate misunderstandings. In all such matters the friends should first approach the Local, then the National Assembly and only in case they can obtain no satisfaction should they approach the Guardian on these matters. This way many difficulties will be avoided.

From a letter 14 November 1932 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, 'Bahá'í News' 71, February 1933, p. 2

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Anything whatsoever affecting the interests of the Cause and in which the National Assembly as a body is involved should, if regarded as unsatisfactory by Local Assemblies or individual believers, be immediately referred to the National Assembly itself. Neither the general body of the believers, nor any Local Assembly, nor even the delegates to the Annual Convention should be regarded as having any authority to entertain appeals against the decision of the National Assembly. Should the matter be referred to the Guardian it will be his duty to consider it with the utmost care and to decide whether the issues involved justify him to consider it in person, or to leave it entirely to the discretion of the National Assembly.

This administrative principle which the Guardian is now restating and emphasizing is so clear, so comprehensive and simple that no misunderstanding as to its application, he feels, can possibly arise. There are no exceptions whatever to this rule, and the Guardian would deprecate any attempt to elaborate or dwell any further upon this fundamental and clearly-enunciated principle.



ORIGINAL



AUDIO

The problems with which the Faith is now grappling, whether national or international, are so pressing and momentous that no one among its loyal adherents can afford to dissipate his precious energies on details arising from the application of administrative principles, or even on the perfecting of the machinery of the administration itself. Purely secondary matters can be postponed until the primary tasks are performed.

From a letter 10 September 1934 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada

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As to your second question relative to the right of a committee to appeal to the National Spiritual Assembly against the Local Assembly by which it has been elected, the Guardian wishes me to inform you that this matter, being of a rather secondary character involving as it does the application of a minor administrative regulation, is one for your National Spiritual Assembly to consider and to decide upon. It is a matter that should be left to the discretion of your Assembly.

From a letter 14 January 1935 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly of India and Burma

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When the Local Assembly has given its decision in the matter, you then have the right to appeal, if you wish, to the National Spiritual Assembly for further consideration of your case. But before taking such an action it is your duty as a loyal and steadfast believer to whole-heartedly and unreservedly accept the National Spiritual Assembly's request to enter into joint conference with your Local Assembly. You should have confidence that in obeying the orders of your National Assembly you will not only succeed in solving your own personal problems with the friends, but will in addition set a noble example before them.

Shoghi Effendi hopes, therefore, that you will follow the advice and guidance of the National Spiritual Assembly, confident that the final outcome of all these questions will be full justice to you and to everybody concerned.

From a letter 2 October 1935 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer

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Regarding the matter you mentioned concerning the Chicago Spiritual Assembly and one of its members: Whenever there is any infringement of Bahá'í rights, or lapse in the

proper procedure, the friends should take the matter up with the Assembly concerned, and, if not satisfied, then with the National Spiritual Assembly. This is both their privilege and their duty.

From a letter 10 July 1942 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer

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Committees should first take up their problems with the National Spiritual Assembly and seek to solve them satisfactorily; if they are dissatisfied they have the right to appeal to the Guardian himself. The Guardian will then decide whether it is a matter for him to pronounce upon, or if he will refer it back to the National body.

From a letter 28 March 1943 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer

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Appeal can be made from the Local Assembly's decision to the National Assembly, and from the National Assembly's decision to the Guardian. But the principle of authority invested in our elected bodies must be upheld. This is not something which can be learned without trial and test....

From a letter 30 June 1949 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly of Germany and Austria

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He suggests you let the entire matter of your appeal drop. Unless a very serious major issue is involved (which he does not feel is the case this time) to drive these subjects home is far more likely to do the Cause harm than good. There are many mistakes made, but they are, for the most part, not serious enough to warrant creating inharmony and raising issues which lead to endless argument and discussion, wasting time and energy better spent on creative action.

From a letter 8 December 1950 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer

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The friends have every right to appeal to the Australian National Assembly and express their views that (she)... be allowed to teach people of all races as she has been doing; but in the mean time she should comply with the wishes of the National Assembly,

because all Bahá'ís must learn to live according to the administrative principles of our Faith. If they don't, they only undermine the very institutions they are trying to create, and which we know, carry the solution to the world's problems. It is often difficult to follow this course, but it is the one 'Abdu'l-Bahá always asked the friends to follow; and obedience, even when we believe the instruction is not wise, brings in itself blessings from on high.

From a letter 29 November 1952 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer

