

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE
DEPARTMENT OF THE SECRETARIAT

4 November 2019

Transmitted by email:

U.S.A.

Dear Bahá'í Friend,

The Universal House of Justice has received your email letter of 7 April 2019 in which you share your thoughts about the education of children in your community and seek guidance. We have been asked to convey the following and regret the delay in the response due to the pressure of work at the Bahá'í World Centre.

The House of Justice feels that among the most important considerations for the education of young people is not only their study of the Bahá'í teachings but their active involvement, according to their capacity, in the life and work of the community—especially their participation in the Divine Plan, including teaching, community building, and involvement in the life of society. Such wholehearted participation will assuredly confirm them in their faith. As Shoghi Effendi affirmed:

His brotherly advice to you, and to all loyal and ardent young believers like you, is that you should deepen your knowledge of the history and of the tenets of the Faith, not merely by means of careful and thorough study, but also through active, whole-hearted and continued participation in all the activities, whether administrative or otherwise, of your community. The Bahá'í community life provides you with an indispensable laboratory, where you can translate into living and constructive action the principles which you imbibe from the Teachings. By becoming a real part of that living organism you can catch the real spirit which runs throughout the Bahá'í Teachings. To study the principles, and to try to live according to them, are, therefore, the two essential mediums through which you can ensure the development and progress of your inner spiritual life and of your outer existence as well. May Bahá'u'lláh enable you to attain this high station, and may He keep the torch of faith for ever burning in your heart!

(From a letter dated 2 November 1933 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer)

One current aim of the Five Year Plan, pertaining to the training institute, involves the creation of a systematic program, in three parts, for the education of young people from age five to young adulthood to foster their active participation in the Cause. While much educational material to this end has already been created, more is currently being developed. Even then, the program will not cover all Bahá'í subjects or activity. Any need to temporarily fill the gaps or

supplement the existing program can be met by the teachers, the training institute, the community, or the institutions.

While all members of the community lend their energies to educate children, the responsibility for the spiritual education of children and youth does not rest solely upon the community, and the parents have a very important role in training and educating their own children. As the House of Justice stated in its Ridván 2000 message, parents “should not ever underestimate their capacity to mold their children’s moral character. For they exercise indispensable influence through the home environment they consciously create by their love of God, their striving to adhere to His laws, their spirit of service to His Cause, their lack of fanaticism, and their freedom from the corrosive effects of backbiting.” The friends should candidly accept that the spiritual and social environment they create in their communities and their homes has a profound influence on shaping the thought and character of young people and that the negative influences of disunity, complaints and contention, and disparaging references to the believers, the institutions, or community affairs can gradually, imperceptibly, and cumulatively extinguish the spirit of faith in young and impressionable hearts that no curriculum or educational program can overcome.

Rest assured of the supplications of the House of Justice at the Sacred Threshold that you may be confirmed in your efforts to promote the education of children in your community. Prayers will also be offered that blessings may surround your family.

With loving Bahá’í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

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