

# References for Subjects of Study

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1. Above all, the paramount duty of deepening the spiritual life of these newly fledged, these precious and highly esteemed co-workers, and of enlightening their minds regarding the essential verities enshrined in their Faith, its fundamental institutions, its history and genesis — the twin Covenants of Bahá'u'lláh and of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the present Administrative Order, the future World Order, the Laws of the Most Holy Book, the inseparable institutions of the Guardianship and of the Universal House of Justice, the salient events of the Heroic and Formative Ages of the Faith, and its relationship with the Dispensations that have preceded it, its attitude toward the social and political organizations by which it is surrounded — must continue to constitute the most vital aspect of the great spiritual Crusade launched by the champions of the Faith...

(Shoghi Effendi, *Citadel of Faith: Messages to America 1947-1957*, pp. 76-77)

2. The special stress laid on some of the fundamental laws contained in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas regarding daily obligatory prayers; the observance of the fast, the consent of the parents as a prerequisite of marriage; the one-year separation between husband and wife as an indispensable condition of divorce; abstinence from all alcoholic drinks; the emphasis placed on the institution of the Nineteen Day Feast as ordained by Bahá'u'lláh in that same Book; the discontinuation of membership in, and affiliation with, all ecclesiastical organizations, and the refusal to accept any ecclesiastical post — these have served to forcibly underline the distinctive character of the Bahá'í Fellowship, and to dissociate it, in the eyes of the public, from the rituals, the ceremonials and man-made institutions identified with the religious systems of the past.

(Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 373)

3. Above all, the utmost endeavour should be exerted by your Assembly to familiarize the newly enrolled believers with the fundamental and spiritual verities of the Faith, and with the origins, the aims and purposes, as well as the processes of a divinely appointed Administrative Order, to acquaint them more fully with the history of the Faith, to instill in them a deeper understanding of the Covenants of both Bahá'u'lláh and of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, to enrich their spiritual life, to rouse them to a greater effort and a closer participation in both the teaching of the Faith and the administration of its activities, and to inspire them to make the necessary sacrifices for the furtherance of its vital interests. For as the body of the avowed supporters of the Faith is enlarged, and the basis of the structure of its Administrative Order is broadened, and the fame of the rising community spreads far and wide, a parallel progress must be achieved, if the fruits already garnered are to endure, in the spiritual quickening of its members and the deepening of their inner life.

(Shoghi Effendi, *Messages to Canada*, pp. 61-62)

4. The material to be taught is prepared ahead of time, presented in simple language, and translated into the vernacular...

The subjects taught usually consist of Bahá'í History, Laws and Teachings, and the Administrative Order. Special emphasis is laid upon living the Bahá'í life, the importance of teaching, prayer, fasting, Nineteen Day Feasts, Bahá'í elections, and contribution to the Fund.

(Enclosure in a letter from the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Guatemala, cited in *Centers of Bahá'í Learning*, p. 19)

5. 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.

(Universal House of Justice letter to the Bahá'ís of the World, Ridván 1966, cited in *Wellspring of Guidance: Messages 1963-1968*, p. 78)

6. In the visits made to the villages, the visiting teacher meets with the Local Communities to give them basic Bahá'í knowledge, such as living the Bahá'í life, the importance of teaching, prayer, fasting, Nineteen Day Feasts, Bahá'í elections, and contributions to the Fund.

(Annex to a letter from the Universal House of Justice to all National Spiritual Assemblies, cited in *Wellspring of Guidance: Messages 1963-1968*, pp. 35-36)

7. 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....

Dearly loved Friends, this is the theme we must pursue in our efforts to deepen in the Cause.

(*Messages from the Universal House of Justice, 1963-1986: The Third Epoch of the Formative Age*, p. 107, #42.43)

8. Many of the National Spiritual Assemblies have been given a specific goal, during the second phase of the Seven Year Plan, to organized programs for the development of family life and to nurture in the friends a deeper understanding of the nature of an institution which is at the very base of Bahá'í society. In order to help the friends everywhere to strengthen and enrich their family ties, and enable the family unit to reflect the glory of the Words of God, the Universal House of Justice asked its Research Department to prepare a compilation of suitable texts on this subject.

(Letter from the Department of the Secretariat of the Universal House of Justice to all National Spiritual Assemblies, dated 18 February 1982, cited in *Messages from the Universal House of Justice, 1963-1986: The Third Epoch of the Formative Age*, p. 533, #316.1)

**9.** These objectives can only be attained when each National Spiritual Assembly makes proper arrangements for all the friends to be deepened in the knowledge of the Faith. The National Spiritual Assemblies in consultation with the Hands of the Cause, who are the Standard-Bearers of the Nine Year Plan, should avail themselves of the assistance of Auxiliary Board Members, who, together with the traveling teachers selected by the Assembly or its Teaching Committees, should be continuously encouraged to conduct deepening courses at Teaching Institutes and to make regular visits to local Spiritual Assemblies. The visitors, whether Board Members or traveling teachers should meet on such occasions not only with the local Assembly but, of course, with the local community members, collectively at general meetings and even, if necessary, individually in their homes.

The subjects to be discussed at such meetings with the local Assembly and the friends should include among others the following points:

- 1) the extent of the spread and stature of the Faith today;
- 2) the importance of the daily obligatory prayers (at least the short prayer);
- 3) the need to educate Bahá'í children in the Teachings of the Faith and encourage them to memorize some of the prayers;
- 4) the stimulation of youth to participate in community life by giving talks, etc. and having their own activities, if possible;
- 5) the necessity to abide by the laws of marriage, namely, the need to have a Bahá'í ceremony, to obtain the consent of parents, to observe monogamy; faithfulness after marriage; like-wise the importance of abstinence from all intoxicating drinks and drugs;
- 6) the local Fund and the need for the friends to understand that the voluntary act of contributing to the Fund is both a privilege and spiritual obligation. There should also be discussion of various methods that could be followed by the friends to facilitate their contributions and the ways open to the local Assembly to utilize its local Fund to serve the interests of its community and the Cause;
- 7) the importance of the Nineteen-Day Feast and the fact that it should be a joyful occasion and rallying point of the entire community;
- 8) the manner of election with as many workshops as required, including teaching of simple methods of balloting for illiterates, such as having one central home as the place for balloting and arranging for one literate person, if only a child, to be present at the home during the whole day, if necessary;
- 9) last but not least, the all-important teaching work, both in the locality and its neighboring centers, as well as the need to continuously deepen the friends in the essentials of the Faith.

(Universal House of Justice letter to all National Spiritual Assemblies, cited in  
*A Special Measure of Love*, pp. 30-32)

**10.** We have determined, therefore, that it is imperative for all the believers to deepen their awareness of the blessings conferred by the laws which directly foster the devotional life of the individual and, thus, of the community. The essentials of these laws are known to all Bahá'ís, but acquiring greater insight into their significance must include carrying out all the divinely revealed aspects of their observance. These are the laws which pertain to obligatory prayer, fasting and recitation of the Greatest Name ninety-five times a day.

(Universal House of Justice letter to the Bahá'ís of the World, dated 28 December 1999)

**11.** Much stress should be laid on the thorough study of the history and of the teachings of the Cause, and particularly of the nature, basis and outstanding features of the Administration.

(Written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, cited in *The Light of Divine Guidance*, Vol. I, p. 52)

**12.** Since the Huqúqu'lláh has, according to the injunction in the Book, been designated as one of the institutions of the Cause, and inasmuch as the fulfilment of this obligation is binding on the people of Bahá, therefore it is deemed appropriate that your Spiritual Assembly should fully familiarize the dear friends in ... with the significance of this momentous responsibility and to promulgate gradually in the entire community such ordinances related to Huqúqu'lláh as are laid down in His perspicuous Book.

(Universal House of Justice, cited in *Huqúqu'lláh: Extracts from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Shoghi Effendi and The Universal House of Justice*, p. 33, #96)

**13.** Spurred on by these initial and superb victories – victories unprecedented in the annals of their Faith in that land – they must press on, more diligently than ever, to reinforce their unity, to deepen their understanding of the spiritual verities of their Faith and of the administrative principles underlying its new world order, to multiply its nascent institutions, to broadcast its Message, to disseminate its literature, to exemplify its spirit, to proclaim its truths, and to swell the ranks of its unreserved supporters.

(Shoghi Effendi, *Dawn of a New Day: Messages to India 1923-1957*, p. 122)

**14.** From time to time questions have arisen about the application of the law of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas on the observance of Bahá'í Holy Days. ... National Assemblies should give this subject their careful consideration, and should provide ways and means for bringing this matter to the attention of the believers under their jurisdiction so that, as a matter of conscience, the mass of believers will uphold these laws and observe them.

(*Messages from the Universal House of Justice, 1963-1986: The Third Epoch of the Formative Age*, pp. 70-71, #29.1 and #29.4)

**15.** As the processes impelling a rapidly evolving Order on the highroad of its destiny multiply and gather momentum, attention should be increasingly directed to the vital need of ensuring, by every means possible, the deepening of the Faith, the understanding and the spiritual life of the individuals who, as the privileged members of this community, are called upon to participate in this glorious unfoldment, and are lending their assistance to this historic evolution. A profound study of the Faith which they have espoused, its history, its spiritual as well as administrative principles; a thorough understanding of the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh and of the Will of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, a deeper realization of the implications of the claims advanced by the Founders of the Faith; strict adherence to the laws and principles which they have established; a greater dedication to the fundamentals and verities enshrined in their teachings - these constitute, I feel convinced, the urgent need of the members of this rapidly expanding community. For upon this spiritual foundation must depend the solidity of the institutions which they are now so painstakingly erecting. Every outward thrust into new fields, every multiplication of Baha'i institutions, must be paralleled by a deeper thrust of the roots which sustain the spiritual life of the community and ensure its sound development. From this vital, this ever-present need, attention must at no time be diverted; nor must it be, under any circumstances, neglected, or subordinated to the no less vital and urgent task of ensuring the outer expansion of Baha'i administrative institutions. That this community, so alive, so devoted, so strikingly and rapidly developing, may maintain a proper balance between these two essential aspects of its development, and march forward with rapid strides and along sound lines toward the goal of the Plan it has adopted, is the ardent hope of my heart and my constant prayer.

(Shoghi Effendi, *Letters from the Guardian to Australia and New Zealand*, pp. 75-76)

**16.** You are well aware, of course, that the principle of the oneness of humankind, as proclaimed by Bahá'u'lláh, is inconsistent with any attempt to impose uniformity. Its watchword is unity in diversity. To accept it is to embrace the rich diversity that characterizes the human race. To promote it implies helping every soul to develop and express his or her God-given talents and capacities in service to humanity.

(Letter from The Universal House of Justice, 28 July 2008, To the Believers in the Cradle of the Faith, ¶3)

**17.** If people only realized it, the inner life of the spirit is that which counts, but they are so blinded by desires and so misled that they have brought upon themselves all the suffering we see at present in the world. The Bahá'ís seek to lead people back to a knowledge of their true selves and the purpose for which they were created, and thus to their greatest happiness and highest good.

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, July 24, 1943, cited in *Lights of Guidance, A Bahá'í Reference File*, p. 112 #383)

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