

The Bahá'í Administrative Order

INTRODUCTION: *Approaching the threshold...*

One of the most unique and welcoming features of the Bahá'í Faith is its system of organization and governance. We have no priesthood, no clergy, or positions of ecclesiastical power and authority to which one can aspire. In this Faith, decision-making authority has been transferred to nine-member Assemblages at the local, national, and international levels. These governing bodies, all to eventually be referred to as "Houses of Justice", are composed of individual community members elected by the body of believers through a process of private balloting.

Complimentary to these elected Assemblages exists an appointed institution made up of eminent and devoted individuals who have no legislative, executive, or judicial powers, and who serve for the specific purpose of protecting and propagating the Faith under the guidance of the Universal House of Justice. These two institutional arms of the Administrative Order collaborate in their functions to ensure the steady progress of the Faith.

The Bahá'í Administrative Order is considered divine in nature, in that Bahá'u'lláh Himself is its sole originator. Its purpose and process of development are clearly described by Him and His authorized interpreters, 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi. The Universal House of Justice, whose decisions are based solely on principles described in the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh and His authorized successors, currently guides the process of its development.

The Bahá'í vision into the future is one of a New World Order, spiritual in character, and balanced with true justice, equity, and liberty. Bahá'ís are confident that the development of the Bahá'í Administrative System will provide both the nucleus and the pattern for that God-inspired New World Order, destined to evolve over time into the promised Kingdom of God on earth.



Seat of the Universal House of Justice in Haifa, Israel

OBJECTIVE: *A look to the horizon...*

Facilitator

Review the following objective with the participants:

The objective of this study is to understand the fundamental verities or basic truths regarding the origins, purposes, and process of the Bahá'í Administrative Order and the future World Order.

THE STUDY PROCESS: *Attaining the water of life...*

Facilitator

Review the following study process with the participants. Then study the numbered quotations that follow, one at a time as described below.

1. **READING:** *A drink from the cup of guidance...*
 - A. **Read the quotation** out loud in its entirety.
2. **CONFIRMING MEANING:** *A spray from the fountain of light...*

To better understand certain words used in the quotation, take turns with the following:

 - A. Each participant **choose a word** from the quotation and **state it** for the whole group to hear. (Like a fun game – pick a word!) Then...
 - B. Read out loud the sentence that contains the **word** you selected, **while substituting for that word**, its given phrase, definition, or synonym from the boxes below the quotation.
 - C. Repeat A and B above until everyone is satisfied with their understanding of the words.
3. **FINDING VALUE:** *Mining the gems of truth...*
 - A. **Read the quotation** out loud again in its entirety.
 - B. Take turns **stating each basic fact or truth** you can find in the quotation about **the Bahá'í Administrative Order or the future World Order**.

QUOTATIONS: *Within the meadows of Thy nearness...*

1. ...this Administrative Order is fundamentally different from anything that any Prophet has previously established, inasmuch as Bahá'u'lláh has Himself revealed its principles, established its institutions, appointed the person to interpret His Word and conferred the necessary authority on the body [the Universal House of Justice] designed to supplement and apply His legislative ordinances.

—Shoghi Effendi

The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1974), p. 145.

Administrative Order: system or structure of Bahá'í institutions that unite, manage, and direct the affairs of the Cause
apply: put to use
authority: legitimate and rightful power to decide
conferred: from the position of authority, gave
designed: planned with the intention
established: originated and made permanent
fundamentally: basically and essentially
institutions: practices, relationships, and ↻

administrative structures, authorized and maintained through prescribed rules and agencies
interpret: explain or expound the meaning of
legislative ordinances: prescribed laws and practices that are suited to enactment or change
person: `Abdu'l-Bahá
principles: basic governing truths and standards
Prophet: Manifestation of God
supplement: make complete, add to, or continue into the future

2. We urge you ever to bear in mind that the purpose of Bahá'í administration is primarily to lend strength and directive to the teaching work and to promote the establishment of the Faith. It should never be regarded as an end in itself but purely as a means to canalize and make effective a spiritual vitality generated by the Word of God in the hearts of the believers.

—The Universal House of Justice

Cited in *Lights of Guidance: A Bahá'í Reference File*, (New Delhi: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1997), no. 4, p. 2.

administration: institutions that unite, manage, and direct its affairs
canalize: direct into preferred channels
directive: intentional guidance, direction, and influence
effective: desired results of
end: final aim
establishment: bringing into recognized and permanent existence
generated: stimulated into existence

lend: grant or furnish
means: useful method
primarily: above all
promote: assist the advancement of
purpose: main aim, reason, or intention
regarded: considered or thought of
teaching work: imparting of knowledge that causes others to learn [about the Bahá'í Faith]
urge: strongly advise
vitality: life-giving power

3. He feels that what the ... Bahá'ís need—and must have—more than anything else in the world is a far deeper understanding of the Covenants of both Bahá'u'lláh and the Master. This is the rock-foundation without which no sound superstructure can be built. Neither the administration, nor the general teaching work of the Cause ... will progress, or be able to accomplish anything, unless the believers are truly firm, deep, spiritually convinced Bahá'ís. An intellectual grasp of the Teachings is purely superficial; with the first real test such believers are shaken from the bough! But once a Bahá'í has the profound conviction of the authority from God, vested in the Prophet, passed on to the Master, and by Him, to the Guardians, and which flows out through the Assemblies and creates order based on obedience — once a Bahá'í has this, nothing can shake him...

—written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi
 “Deepening”. In *The Compilation of Compilations: Prepared by the Universal House of Justice 1963-1990*, (Maryborough: Bahá'í Publications Australia, 1991), vol. I, no. 508, p. 229.

administration: institutions that unite, manage, and direct its affairs
Assemblies: local and national administrative bodies of the Bahá'í community
authority: legitimate and rightful power to decide
bough: figuratively — main branch of the tree of life, the Bahá'í Administrative Order
conviction: strong certainty
Covenants: binding agreement between Bahá'u'lláh and the believers to turn to and accept `Abdu'l-Bahá, and eventually the Universal House of Justice, on all matters pertaining to the Faith; and between `Abdu'l-Bahá and the believers to turn to and accept Shoghi Effendi and eventually the Universal House of Justice on all matters pertaining to the Faith.
deep: far beyond the superficial or surface; profound
firm: certain and unchangeable under pressure
Guardians: The one appointed by `Abdu'l-Bahá in His Will and Testament (Shoghi Effendi) to

carry on into the future the function of authoritative interpretation of the Sacred Writings and the care and protection of the Bahá'í Faith. There were no other Guardians appointed.
obedience: willing submission and compliance
profound: deep-seated
Prophet: Manifestation of God, Bahá'u'lláh
rock-foundation: firm and solid underlying base or support for establishment
shake: from mental or emotional disturbance, weaken
shaken: from mental or emotional disturbance, caused to disengage
superficial: concerned with the simpler aspects
test: trying situation in which one is tempted to act or behave in ways contrary to the teaching of the Faith; difficulty, hardship, or calamity
the Master: `Abdu'l-Bahá
vested: fully and unconditionally guaranteed

4. ... the Guardian wishes me to again affirm his view that the authority of the National Spiritual Assembly is undivided and unchallengeable in all matters pertaining to the administration of the Faith... and that, therefore, the obedience of individual Bahá'ís, delegates, groups, and assemblies to that authority is imperative, and should be whole-hearted and unqualified. He is convinced that the unreserved acceptance and complete application of this vital provision of the Administration is essential to the maintenance of the highest degree of unity among the believers, and is indispensable to the effective working of the administrative machinery of the Faith in every country.

—written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi
 “The National Spiritual Assembly”. In *The Compilation of Compilations: Prepared by the Universal House of Justice 1963-1990*, (Maryborough: Bahá'í Publications Australia, 1991), vol. II, no. 1458, p. 105.

acceptance: willingness to agree to
administration: management or directing of affairs
application: putting into use
authority: legitimate and rightful power to decide
essential: necessary and highly important
imperative: a necessary requirement not to be avoided or evaded
indispensable: absolutely necessary and not subject to being set aside or neglected
machinery: functional units
National Spiritual Assembly: Bahá'í administrative body of a nation
obedience: willing submission and compliance

provision: stipulated requirement
the Guardian: Shoghi Effendi
unchallengeable: not capable of being disputed as unjust, invalid, or outmoded
undivided: not to be separated into opposing sides or parties
unity: a heartfelt condition of peace, love, and harmony in human relations, free of conflict, contention, dissension, and strife
unqualified: without modification or restriction
unreserved: without holding back
vital: necessary; essential
whole-hearted: with complete and sincere devotion

5. Obedience to the decisions of the local assembly should be unqualified and whole-hearted, as by this means alone can the community work as a united body and achieve something constructive and enduring.

—written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi

The Light of Divine Guidance, (Hofheim-Langenhain: Bahá'í-Verlag, 1982) vol. I, p. 80.

body: organized group of individuals
community: Bahá'ís living in a particular area
constructive: helpful towards improvement and development
decisions: choices and judgments
enduring: lasting and unyielding
local assembly: administrative body of the local ↗

Bahá'í community
means: useful method
obedience: willing submission and compliance
united: harmonious, agreeable, and peaceful
unqualified: without modification or restriction
whole-hearted: with complete and sincere devotion

6. The Assembly may make a mistake, but, as the Master pointed out, if the Community does not abide by its decisions, or the individual Bahá'í, the result is worse, as it undermines the very institution which must be strengthened in order to uphold the principles and laws of the Faith. He tells us God will right the wrongs done. We must have confidence in this and obey our Assemblies.

—written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi

“The Local Spiritual Assembly”. In *The Compilation of Compilations: Prepared by the Universal House of Justice 1963-1990*, (Maryborough: Bahá'í Publications Australia, 1991), vol. II, no. 1401, p. 58.

abide by: conform to, acknowledge as valid, and accept the consequences of
Assembly: Bahá'í local or national administrative body
community: Bahá'í residents of a given locality
confidence in: faith and belief that God will make right and good of
institution: administrative structure, authorized and maintained through prescribed rules and agencies

obey: willingly submit to and comply with
principles: basic governing truths and standards
right: cause to be right, good, and just
the Master: `Abdu'l-Bahá
undermines: in a hidden way, gradually weakens and subverts
uphold: agree with and give support to
wrongs: mistaken or incorrect judgments or decisions

7. The bedrock on which this Administrative Order is founded is God's immutable Purpose for mankind in this day. The Source from which it derives its inspiration is no one less than Bahá'u'lláh Himself. Its shield and defender are the embattled hosts of the `Abhá Kingdom. Its seed is the blood of no less than twenty thousand martyrs who have offered up their lives that it may be born and flourish. ... The central, the underlying aim which animates it is the establishment of the New World Order as adumbrated by Bahá'u'lláh.

—Shoghi Effendi

The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1974), pp. 156-57.

`Abhá Kingdom: most glorious spiritual world where souls pass on to after death
Administrative Order: system or structure of Bahá'í institutions that unite, direct, and manage its affairs
adumbrated: suggested and partially outlined
aim: intended achievement or purpose
animates: gives energy and vitality to
bedrock: firm and reliable foundation
central: most important
defender: that which wards off attack, danger, or challenge
derives: draws and receives
embattled: prepared and ready to engage, as if in conflict or battle
establishment: bringing into recognized and permanent existence
flourish: reach the climax of development

founded: established as a basis
hosts: multiple supporters and attendants
immutable: incapable of change
inspiration: divine power, influence, and guidance
martyrs: persons who voluntarily suffered death as a penalty for refusing to renounce their faith
New World Order: future "...Divine Civilization, the establishment of which is the primary mission of the Bahá'í Faith."—Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1974), pp. 3-4.
Purpose: main aim, reason, or intention
seed: initial source of growth and development
shield: guard and protection
Source: origin of supply
underlying: foundation upon which everything is based

8. The features of the “*new World Order*” are delineated in the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and in the letters of Shoghi Effendi and the Universal House of Justice. The institutions of the present-day Bahá’í Administrative Order, which constitute the “structural basis” of Bahá’u’lláh’s World Order, will mature and evolve into the Bahá’í World Commonwealth. In this regard, Shoghi Effendi affirms that the Administrative Order “will, as its component parts, its organic institutions, begin to function with efficiency and vigour, assert its claim and demonstrate its capacity to be regarded not only as the nucleus but the very pattern of the New World Order destined to embrace in the fullness of time the whole of mankind”.

—written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice

Cited in *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas: The Most Holy Book*, (Haifa: Bahá’í World Centre, 1992), Notes no. 189, p. 248.

Administrative Order: system or structure of Bahá’í institutions that unite, manage, and direct its affairs
affirms: declares as a fact
assert: strongly declare and defend
basis: underlying foundation
capacity: potential and position
claim: declared beliefs
Commonwealth: governmental system, of, and for the good of, the common people [for more on the Bahá’í World Commonwealth, see *The World Order of Bahá’u’lláh*, (Wilmette: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1974), pp. 203-06.]
component: basic formative
constitute: compose or form
delineated: described and set forth in detail
demonstrate: clearly show
destined: predetermined through the divine will and of necessity
efficiency: action that produces the desired effects, complete, and without waste

embrace: include readily and gladly
evolve: develop by gradual changes
features: structure, form, or characteristics
institutions: established practices, relationships, and administrative structures, authorized and maintained through prescribed rules and agencies
mature: reach a fully developed state
new World Order: future “...Divine Civilization, the establishment of which is the primary mission of the Bahá’í Faith.”—Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá’u’lláh*, (Wilmette: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1974), pp. 3-4.
nucleus: central core and heart of growth and development
organic: having parts that work together
pattern: reliable example of traits and characteristics proposed as a worthy model
regarded: considered or thought of
structural basis: make-up of the underlying foundation
vigour: active strength and force

9. It is this building process, slow and unobtrusive, to which the life of the world-wide Bahá’í Community is wholly consecrated, that constitutes the one hope of a stricken society. For this process is actuated by the generating influence of God’s changeless Purpose, and is evolving within the framework of the Administrative Order of His Faith.

—Shoghi Effendi

The World Order of Bahá’u’lláh, (Wilmette: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1974), p. 195.

actuated: moved into action
Administrative Order: system or structure of Bahá’í institutions that unite, manage, and direct its affairs
consecrated: devoted to, as a sacred purpose
constitutes: composes or forms
framework: basic structure and system
generating: creative and productive
His: Bahá’u’lláh’s

process: series of identifiable steps leading to a particular result
Purpose: main aim, reason, or intention
society: order of human relationships
stricken: overwhelmed with difficulties
unobtrusive: without calling attention to itself in any displeasing way
wholly: to the fullest extent; completely

SHARING EXERCISE: *A breath from the spirit of inspiration...*

Facilitator

Ask the participants to complete the statements below. When everyone has finished, have each person share, in a round, one thing that was outstanding or inspiring and what spiritual feelings it enkindled. Please remind everyone not to remark on the comments of others.

One thing from the quotations that was outstanding or inspiring to me was _____

It made me feel _____

I felt this way because _____

SOME QUESTIONS: *A cup from the showers of confirmation...*

Facilitator

Ask the participants to answer the following questions. They can usually find answers in the quotations just studied or in the introduction. When everyone has finished, review the questions, then share and discuss the answers.

1. Shoghi Effendi wrote: "...this Administrative Order is fundamentally different from anything that any Prophet has previously established, inasmuch as Bahá'u'lláh has Himself revealed its principles, established its institutions, appointed the person to interpret His Word and conferred the necessary authority on the body designed to supplement and apply His legislative ordinances."¹ Bahá'u'lláh is the divinely inspired source or _____ of the Bahá'í Administrative Order and the future World Order.
 - a. process
 - b. purpose
 - c. origin
2. Bahá'u'lláh revealed: "*God's purpose in sending His Prophets unto men is twofold. The first is to liberate the children of men from the darkness of ignorance, and guide them to the light of true understanding. The second is to ensure the peace and tranquillity of mankind, and provide all the means by which they can be established.*"² The Bahá'í _____ Order provides the means by which God's twofold purpose for humankind can be accomplished.
3. The Bahá'í Administrative Order and the future World Order are divine in origin. "Divine in origin" means _____
4. The **central** aim or _____ of the Bahá'í Administrative Order is eventually to establish the New World Order as revealed by Bahá'u'lláh.
 - a. process
 - b. purpose
 - c. origin

Continued on next page...

¹ Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1974), p. 145.

² Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1952, 1971 printing), XXXIV, pp. 79-80.

5. There are two other **purposes** of Bahá'í Administration: to lend strength and directive to the _____, and to promote _____.
6. How is this Administrative Order “fundamentally different from anything that any Prophet has previously established”? _____

7. The principles and prominent characteristics of the Bahá'í Administrative Order are derived from four divinely inspired sources. Name them. _____

8. Obedience to the Institutions of the Faith should be _____ and _____.
9. The authority that makes the Bahá'í Administrative Order divine, is authorized in what order?
From ___ to ___ to ___ to ___ to ___ to ___ to ___ to ____.
 a. God
 b. the individual
 c. the National Spiritual Assembly, someday to be called the National House of Justice
 d. the Master, `Abdu'l-Bahá
 e. the Local Spiritual Assembly, someday to be called the Local House of Justice
 f. the Universal House of Justice
 g. the Guardian, Shoghi Effendi
 h. the Manifestation of God, Bahá'u'lláh
10. Obedience to the Institutions of the Faith is necessary to maintain _____, which is the central theme of the Bahá'í Faith.
11. If, for some reason, a local or national Assembly makes a decision that appears to be wrong or incorrect, the decision should be obeyed by the Bahá'ís with confidence that _____

APPLICATION: *Showing forth divine light...*

Facilitator

Read through #1 together and proceed as stated. Then take time for the participants to write out their individual plans for action in #2. (these are not shared) When everyone has finished, move on to the closing reading.

1. IMAGINING THE POSSIBILITIES: *Visions of radiant lights...*

Bahá'u'lláh wrote: “*It is incumbent upon every man of insight and understanding to strive to translate that which hath been written into reality and action....*” Imagine how the Bahá'í Teachings in this study class could be translated into reality and action. Take turns sharing the possibilities. Begin your statements with: “**One could...**” Suggest as many ideas as you want.

2. DECIDING ACTION: *Mirroring forth a beam of light...*

From your experience in this study class on “The Bahá'í Administrative Order,” describe what **you** are inspired to put into reality and action. ***I will make conscious efforts to...*** _____

My next step will be... _____

CLOSING MEDITATION: *A heart song...*

The Majesty of the Bahá'í Administrative Order.

The Bahá'í Administrative Order is a sacred System that eventually will evolve into the Kingdom of God on earth. Its Holy Contributors were all divinely appointed, and their scope, responsibility, and authority laid out by the unerring Pen of Bahá'u'lláh Himself, the Mouthpiece of God on earth for our time. His appointment of `Abdu'l-Bahá as the Center of His Covenant and the Interpreter of His Word assured the continuity of that divine Spirit of truth in the governance of the affairs of this Faith. The appointment of Shoghi Effendi as the Guardian of the Cause of God by `Abdu'l-Bahá provided for the continuation of a divinely inspired interpretation of the holy Word of Bahá'u'lláh. The call by Bahá'u'lláh Himself for the election of a world body, the Universal House of Justice, to legislate on matters not expressly revealed in His book of laws (the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* or the *Most Holy Book*), provides for a divinely inspired, infallible Institution to guide the Bahá'í world to its glorious destiny. “*It is incumbent upon the Trustees of the House of Justice,*” Bahá'u'lláh declares, “*to take counsel together regarding those things which have not outwardly been revealed in the Book, and to enforce that which is agreeable to them. God will verily inspire them with whatsoever He willeth, and He, verily, is the Provider, the Omniscient.*”¹ These Institutions stand out as the only divinely appointed Institutions of the Religions of God ever to withstand the rebellion and disobedience following the ascension of every other Prophet of God on earth. This single truth, in and of itself, is the sole provision and assurance for the righteous evolution of the Bahá'í Administrative Order to its stated destiny.

Other **elected** Institutions of the Bahá'í Administrative Order, having jurisdiction over activities of national and local importance include: the National Spiritual Assembly, comprised of nine adult individuals elected from each nation to collectively guide, supervise, and direct the Bahá'í affairs in their respective nation; the Local Spiritual Assembly, consisting of nine adult individuals elected to serve the needs and promote the Faith in each civil locality where at least nine adult Bahá'ís reside; and Regional Bahá'í Councils, elected to assist some National Spiritual Assemblies with their work in designated regions. At this time, these constitute the elected Administrative Institutions of the Cause of God. These Institutions of the Faith are all supervised by the Universal House of Justice, which, as designated by `Abdu'l-Bahá, is that illustrious institution “which God hath ordained as the source of all good and freed from all error.”²

The elected local and national Institutions of the Cause are consultative bodies that have only executive and judicial functions, while the Universal House of Justice has the additional and exclusive role of legislative authority. Equally important, different, yet complementary in their administrative functions, are the **appointed** Institutions of the Bahá'í Administrative Order. The appointed line consists of individuals who have an advisory and inspirational role for promotion and protection of the Faith, but have no legislative, judicial, or executive authority. This arrangement eliminates the possibility of any individual having excessive power in the New World Order. One of these appointed Institutions included the Hands of the Cause of God, designated as its Chief Stewards, whose duties primarily consisted of protecting and propagating the Faith. Some of these individuals were initially appointed by Bahá'u'lláh. Their station and scope of service were further reinforced by `Abdu'l-Bahá. Shoghi Effendi continued to appoint Hands of the Cause during his Guardianship and further clarified their role. In November 1964, the Universal House of Justice determined that it could not legislate to enable the appointment of additional Hands of the Cause. Instead, by a decision of the Universal House of Justice in 1968, the functions of the Hands of the Cause to protect and propagate the Faith were extended into the future by creating the Continental Boards of Counsellors, and further in 1973 by establishing the International Teaching Centre, which has its seat in the Holy Land. Serving to protect

¹ Bahá'u'lláh, *Fountain of Wisdom*, (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing, 2016), par. 6.28, p. 59.

² `Abdu'l-Bahá, *Will and Testament of `Abdu'l-Bahá*, (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1944, 1971 printing), p. 14.

and propagate the Faith on a more local level are the members of the Auxiliary Board and their assistants who are appointed and supervised by the Continental Counsellors.

The uniqueness and complementary functions of the elected and appointed Institutions of the Faith, specifically the Universal House of Justice and the Guardian of the Cause of God, were expounded upon by Shoghi Effendi when he wrote: “It should be stated, at the very outset, in clear and unambiguous language, that these twin institutions of the Administrative Order of Bahá’u’lláh should be regarded as divine in origin, essential in their functions and complementary in their aim and purpose. Their common, their fundamental object is to ensure the continuity of that divinely-appointed authority which flows from the Source of our Faith, to safeguard the unity of its followers and to maintain the integrity and flexibility of its teachings.”¹

Shoghi Effendi inspired hope for a new and better future when he wrote: “The Bahá’í Commonwealth of the future, of which this vast Administrative Order is the sole framework, is, both in theory and practice, not only unique in the entire history of political institutions, but can find no parallel in the annals of any of the world’s recognized religious systems.”² Commenting further on its unique components he stated: “This new-born Administrative Order incorporates within its structure certain elements which are to be found in each of the three recognized forms of secular government [democracy, dictatorship or aristocracy], without being in any sense a mere replica of any one of them, and without introducing within its machinery any of the objectionable features which they inherently possess. It blends and harmonizes, as no government fashioned by mortal hands has as yet accomplished, the salutary truths which each of these systems undoubtedly contains without vitiating the integrity of those God-given verities on which it is ultimately founded.”³ And again he wrote: “...this Administrative Order cannot be said to have been modeled after any of these recognized systems of government, it nevertheless embodies, reconciles and assimilates within its framework such wholesome elements as are to be found in each one of them.”⁴ Identifying one of the most unique characteristics of this wondrous system he states: “The Administrative Order of the Faith of Bahá’u’lláh must in no wise be regarded as purely democratic in character inasmuch as the basic assumption which requires all democracies to depend fundamentally upon getting their mandate from the people is altogether lacking in this Dispensation. In the conduct of the administrative affairs of the Faith, in the enactment of the legislation necessary to supplement the laws of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, the members of the Universal House of Justice, [and members of all elected Bahá’í Institutions] it should be borne in mind, are not, as Bahá’u’lláh’s utterances clearly imply, responsible to those whom they represent, nor are they allowed to be governed by the feelings, the general opinion, and even the convictions of the mass of the faithful, or of those who directly elect them. They are to follow, in a prayerful attitude, the dictates and promptings of their conscience.”⁵

Expounding on an additional fundamental principle of this administration, the Guardian wrote: “The principle of consultation, which constitutes one of the basic laws of the Administration, should be applied to all Bahá’í activities which affect the collective interests of the Faith, for it is through co-operation and continual exchange of thoughts and views that the Cause can best safeguard and foster its interests. Individual initiative, personal ability and resourcefulness, though indispensable, are, unless supported and enriched by the collective experiences and wisdom of the group, utterly incapable of achieving such a tremendous task.”⁶

“Let no one,” he further writes, “while this System is still in its infancy, misconceive its character, belittle its significance or misrepresent its purpose. The bedrock on which this Administrative Order is founded is God’s immutable Purpose for mankind in this day. The Source from which it derives its inspiration is no one less than Bahá’u’lláh Himself. Its shield and defender

¹ Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá’u’lláh*, (Wilmette: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1974), p. 148.

² Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá’u’lláh*, (Wilmette: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1974), p. 152.

³ Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá’u’lláh*, (Wilmette: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1974), pp. 152-53.

⁴ Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá’u’lláh*, (Wilmette: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1974), p. 154.

⁵ Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá’u’lláh*, (Wilmette: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1974), p. 153.

⁶ Written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, cited in *Lights of Guidance: A Bahá’í Reference File*, (New Delhi: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1997), no. 151, p. 43.

are the embattled hosts of the `Abhá Kingdom. Its seed is the blood of no less than twenty thousand martyrs who have offered up their lives that it may be born and flourish. The axis round which its institutions revolve are the authentic provisions of the Will and Testament of `Abdu'l-Bahá. Its guiding principles are the truths, which He Who is the unerring Interpreter of the teachings of our Faith has so clearly enunciated in His public addresses throughout the West. The laws that govern its operation and limit its functions are those which have been expressly ordained in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. The seat round which its spiritual, its humanitarian and administrative activities will cluster are the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár [Bahá'í House of Worship or Temple] and its Dependencies. The pillars that sustain its authority and buttress its structure are the twin institutions of the Guardianship and of the Universal House of Justice. The central, the underlying aim which animates it is the establishment of the New World Order as adumbrated by Bahá'u'lláh. The methods it employs, the standard it inculcates, incline it to neither East nor West, neither Jew nor Gentile, neither rich nor poor, neither white nor colored. Its watchword is the unification of the human race; its standard the 'Most Great Peace'; its consummation the advent of that golden millennium—the Day when the kingdoms of this world shall have become the Kingdom of God Himself, the Kingdom of Bahá'u'lláh.”¹

“This will indeed be the fitting climax of that process of integration which, starting with the family, the smallest unit in the scale of human organization, must, after having called successively into being the tribe, the city-state, and the nation, continue to operate until it culminates in the unification of the whole world, the final object and the crowning glory of human evolution on this planet. It is this stage which humanity, willingly or unwillingly, is resistlessly approaching. It is for this stage that this vast, this fiery ordeal which humanity is experiencing is mysteriously paving the way. It is with this stage that the fortunes and the purpose of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh are indissolubly linked. It is the creative energies which His Revelation has released ... that have instilled into humanity the capacity to attain this final stage in its organic and collective evolution. It is with the Golden Age of His Dispensation that the consummation of this process will be forever associated. It is the structure of His New World Order, now stirring in the womb of the administrative institutions He Himself has created, that will serve both as a pattern and a nucleus of that world commonwealth which is the sure, the inevitable destiny of the peoples and nations of the earth.”²

ANSWERS: *Affirming treasures...*

1. c
2. Administrative
3. anything similar to: “the source of its beginning is inspired by God”
4. b
5. to lend strength and directive to the teaching work, and to promote the establishment of the Faith
6. ...inasmuch as Bahá'u'lláh has Himself revealed its principles, established its institutions, appointed the person to interpret His Word and conferred the necessary authority on the body [the Universal House of Justice] designed to supplement and apply His legislative ordinances
7. Bahá'u'lláh, `Abdu'l-Bahá, Shoghi Effendi, and the Universal House of Justice
8. whole-hearted and unqualified
9. a, h, d, g, f, c, e, b
10. unity
11. God will right the wrongs done

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¹ Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1974), pp. 156-57.

² Shoghi Effendi, *The Promised Day is Come*, (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1980), pp. 116-17.