

# Lifeblood of the Cause

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THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

Bahá'í World Centre  
Haifa, Israel

January 1, 1970

National Spiritual Assemblies of the  
Bahá'ís of the World

Dear Bahá'í Friends

In order to assist the friends everywhere in the proper appreciation of the importance and meaning of contributing to Bahá'í Funds, and to remind them as well as all Assemblies of the underlying principles that must govern the offering and administration of these funds, we have made a compilation of extracts from the Guardian's letters on this subject which we are now sharing with you.

You may use these extracts in any manner you deem advisable at conferences, in summer schools, in deepening classes, and in your newsletters and circular letters.

With loving Bahá'í greetings

*The Universal House of Justice*

EXTRACTS FROM THE GUARDIAN'S LETTERS  
ON BAHÁ'Í FUNDS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

January 1970

I. Importance of Giving

“And as the progress and execution of spiritual activities is dependent and conditioned upon material means, it is of absolute necessity that immediately after the establishment of local as well as national Spiritual Assemblies, a Bahá'í Fund be established, to be placed under the exclusive control of the Spiritual Assembly. 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. I cherish the hope that all the friends, realizing the necessity of this measure, will bestir themselves and contribute, however modestly at first, towards the speedy establishment and the increase of that Fund”

(From letter dated March 12, 1923 to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, "Bahá'í Administration" pp 41-42)

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“That you may reinforce this Teaching Campaign - so vitally needed in these days - and conduct, properly and efficiently, the rest of your manifold activities, spiritual as well as humanitarian,, it is urgently necessary to establish that Central Fund, which if generously supported and upheld by individual friends and local Assemblies, will soon enable you to execute your plans with promptness and vigor.”

(From a letter dated May 6, 1923, to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, "Bahá'í Administration" p. 49)

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“With regard to the Bahá'í Fund, recently established among the friends, I trust that the matter now stands clear to everyone throughout the country. As I have previously intimated, although individual friends and local Assemblies are absolutely free to

specify the object and purpose of their donations to the National Spiritual Assembly, yet, in my opinion, I regard it

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of the utmost vital importance that individuals, as well as local Assemblies, throughout the land should, in view of the paramount importance of National Teaching and as an evidence of their absolute confidence in their national representatives, endeavor, however small at first, to contribute freely towards the upkeep and the increase of the National Bahá'í Fund, so that the members of the National Assembly may at their full discretion expend it for whatever they deem urgent and necessary.

(From a letter dated November 26, 1923, to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, "Bahá'í Administration" p. 54)

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“It is for the National Assembly ... to exercise its judgment as to what extent the resources at their disposal enable them to aid financially the individual undertakings of the friends. Should the response of the friends and Assemblies to the appeals made on behalf of the National Fund be prompt, sustained and generous, the National Assembly will, I am certain, justify its sympathy, good-will and genuine cooperation with every individual Bahá'í enterprise. I would, however, at this early stage of our work, strongly urge, nay entreat, the friends not to dissipate their efforts, but to seek, after frank, mature and continuous deliberation, to arrive at a common conclusion as to the most urgent requirements and needs of the hour, and having unified their views to strive to uphold and enforce them with promptitude, wholeheartedness and understanding.”

(From a letter dated January 16, 1925, to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, "Bahá'í Administration" pp. 76-77)

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“That the work of the National Assembly may be efficiently conducted it is incumbent upon their members to seek if feasible the establishment of an adequate and permanent centre for their activities which would be widely and officially advertised and be recognised as the headquarters of their secretariat. To it all communications from the individual friends and local assemblies within its province, from the Holy Land and from foreign countries, should be directly addressed. It would be its first duty to keep in close and constant touch, without exception, discrimination or favour with the various localities and isolated believers in its jurisdiction and diligently and promptly

distribute to them as well as to the friends abroad any matters of common concern and general interest.

“That this cherished aim may materialize and the standard of efficiency be maintained, the institution of the National Fund is of paramount importance. I would unceasingly urge the individual believers as well as the local assemblies throughout India and Burma to arise with heart and soul and generously and regularly contribute toward the upkeep and the extension of a fund upon which will greatly depend the success of their endeavours.

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“I am personally instructing the Bombay Assembly whose past services moral as well as financial to the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh in India and elsewhere are graven upon my heart, to concentrate their energies upon, and uphold with their resources the twin institutions of the National Spiritual Assembly and the National Fund. I trust that these may soon be enabled to shoulder the burden that is now weighing upon the self-sacrificing friends of Bombay”

(From a letter dated March 25, 1925, to the Secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of India)

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“As to material sacrifices towards the welfare of the Cause he wished you to understand that the general interests of the Cause take precedence over the interests of particular individuals. For instance contributions to the welfare of individuals are secondary to contributions towards the National and Local Funds and that of the Temple.

“This is a general instruction. Of course helping the individuals in case one is able to help, is also desirable and merits appreciation.”

(From a letter written on his behalf, dated November 20, 1925 to an individual believer)

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“In connection with the institution of the National Fund and the budgetary system set forth in the minutes of the National Spiritual Assembly, I feel urged to remind you of the necessity of ever bearing in mind the cardinal principle that all contributions to the Fund are to be purely and strictly voluntary in character. It should be made clear and evident to every one that any form of compulsion, however slight and indirect, strikes at the very root of the principle underlying the formation of the Fund ever since its inception. While appeals of a general character, carefully worded and moving and dignified in tone are welcome under all circumstances, it should be left entirely to the

conscientious believer to decide upon the nature, the amount, and purpose of his or her contribution for the propagation of the Cause.”

(From a letter dated January 10, 1926, to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, “Bahá’í Administration” p. 101)

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“The National Fund must be firmly established, generously supported and universally and continuously upheld, for it is the prerequisite of future progress and achievement. The News Letter should be extended, widely distributed and utilized as a means to supply information, coordinate activities and to secure the support of all the believers to the Institutions of the Cause. I strongly urge you to ensure the success of these two primary and essential organs of our work.”

(From a letter dated May 25, 1926 to the National Spiritual Assembly of India)

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“In times of disappointment, stress and anxiety, which we must inevitably encounter, we should remember the sufferings of our departed Master. Your work, your energy, your vigilance and care, your loving kindness are assets that I greatly value and prize. Keep on, persevere, redouble your efforts, repeat and re-write the admonitions and instructions of our Beloved in your communications with individuals and Assemblies until they sink in their hearts and minds. This was truly our Beloved’s way and method and none better can we ever pursue. Your present pioneer work will surely be remembered and extolled by future generations. My prayers will always be offered for you. In matters of contributions we should not use any compulsion whatsoever and ascertain clearly the desire of the donor. We should appeal to but not co-erce the friends.”

(From a letter dated July 9, 1926 to the National Spiritual Assembly of India)

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“As Bahá’ís we should follow the prophet’s method. We know that the Cause will ultimately conquer and its ranks be fully united. We know that the Master’s promises will ultimately be realised, therefore why be discouraged by trivial oppositions we see on our way. We should rather add to our zeal and persist in our prayers and endeavours. Shoghi Effendi has taken the available measures, and by letter as well as cable, has urged the Bombay friends to give a moral and material support to the National Fund. It always takes time for a people to change from one administration to another. Up to the present they have been accustomed to think of the local assemblies as next only to the center of the Cause, and it will take some time and training before

they can admit another superior. The same problem existed in America and for sometime the work of the National body seemed to be paralysed. But through personal contact and Shoghi Effendi's incessant reminding that problem has been solved and now we see the National Assembly considered as the only body to undertake matters that are beyond the purely local jurisdiction of the local Assemblies."

(From a letter written on his behalf, dated September 7, 1926 to the National Spiritual Assembly of India)

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"... we should, I feel, regard it as an axiom and guiding principle of Bahá'í administration that in the conduct of every specific Bahá'í activity, as different from undertakings of a humanitarian, philanthropic or charitable character, which may in future be conducted under Bahá'í auspices, only those who have already identified themselves with the Faith and are regarded as its avowed and unreserved supporters should be invited to join and collaborate. For apart from the consideration of embarrassing complications which the association of non-believers in the financing of institutions of a strictly Bahá'í character may conceivably engender in the administration of the Bahá'í community of the future, it should be

remembered that these specific Bahá'í institutions, which should be viewed in the light of Bahá'u'lláh's gifts bestowed upon the world, can best function and most powerfully exert their influence in the world only if reared and maintained solely by the support of those who are fully conscious of, and are unreservedly submissive to, the claims inherent in the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh. In cases, however, where a friend or sympathizer of the Faith eagerly insists on a monetary contribution for the promotion of the Faith, such gifts should be accepted and duly acknowledged by the elected representatives of the believers with the express understanding that they would be utilized by them only to reinforce that section of the Bahá'í Fund exclusively devoted to philanthropic or charitable purposes. For, as the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh extends in scope and influence, and the resources of Bahá'í communities correspondingly multiply, it will become increasingly desirable to differentiate such departments of the Bahá'í treasury as minister the needs of the world at large that are specifically designed to promote the direct interests of the Faith itself.

"From this apparent divorce between Bahá'í and humanitarian activities it must not, however, be inferred that the animating purpose of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh stands at variance with the aims and objects of the humanitarian and philanthropic

institutions of the day. Nay, it should be realized by every judicious promoter of the Faith that at such an early stage in the evolution and crystalization of the Cause, such discriminating and precautionary measures are inevitable and even necessary if the nascent institutions of the Faith are to emerge triumphant and unimpaired from the present welter of confused and often conflicting interests with which they are surrounded. This note of warning may not be thought inappropriate at a time when, inflamed by a consuming passion to witness the early completion of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, we may not only be apt to acquiesce in the desire of those who, as yet uninitiated into the Cause, are willing to lend financial assistance to its institutions, but may even feel inclined to solicit from them such aid as it is in their power to render. Ours surely is the paramount duty so as to acquit ourselves in the discharge of our most sacred task that in the days to come neither the tongue of the slanderer nor the pen of the malevolent may dare to insinuate that so beautiful, so significant an Edifice has been reared by anything short of the unanimous, the exclusive and the self-sacrificing strivings of the small yet determined body of the convinced supporters of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. How delicate our task, how pressing the responsibility that weighs upon us, who are called upon on one hand to preserve inviolate the integrity and the identity of the regenerating Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, and to vindicate on the other its broad, its humanitarian, its all-embracing principles!

“True, we cannot fail to realize at the present stage of our work the extremely limited number of contributors qualified to lend financial support

to such a vast, such an elaborate and costly enterprise. We are fully aware of the many issues and varied Bahá'í activities that are unavoidably held in abeyance pending the successful completion of the Plan of Unified Action. We are only too conscious of the pressing need of some sort of befitting and concrete embodiment of the spirit animating the Cause that would stand in the heart of the American Continent both as a witness and as a rallying center to the manifold activities of a fast growing Faith. But spurred by those reflections may we not bestir ourselves and resolve as we have never resolved before to hasten by every means in our power the consummation of this all-absorbing yet so meritorious a task? I beseech you, dear friends, not to allow considerations of numbers, or the consciousness of the limitations of our resources, or even the experience of inevitable setbacks which every mighty undertaking is bound to encounter, to blur your vision, to dim your hopes, or to paralyze your efforts in the prosecution of your divinely appointed task. Neither, do I entreat you, to suffer the least deviation into the paths of expediency and compromise to obstruct those channels

of vivifying grace that can alone provide the inspiration and strength vital not only to the successful conduct of its material construction, but to the fulfillment of its high destiny.”

(From a letter dated October 25, 1929 to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, "Bahá'í Administration" pp. 182-184)

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“You asked concerning some plans whereby funds could be gathered for the Temple. Shoghi Effendi believes that the best and noblest method is to have free donations that are made spontaneously and with the sense of making some sacrifice in furthering the Cause. It is with sacrifice that this Temple is to be built. This is the truly worthy method. This principle therefore excludes any method whereby the help of non-Bahá'ís is included. A Bahá'í Temple should be built by the Bahá'ís alone; it is not an ordinary humanitarian activity in which the help of any person could be solicited. Anyhow Shoghi Effendi has fully explained these matters to the National Spiritual Assembly and you could easily refer to them as to further light on the subject.”

(From a letter written on his behalf, dated April 14, 1932, to the Local Spiritual Assembly of Kenosha, Wisconsin)

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“Even though Shoghi Effendi would urge every believer to sacrifice as much as possible for the sake of contributing towards the fund of the National Assembly, yet he would discourage the friends to incur debts for that purpose. We are asked to give what we have, not what we do not possess, especially if such an act causes suffering to others. In such matters we should use judgment and wisdom and take into our confidence other devoted Bahá'ís.”

(From a letter written on his behalf, dated May 4, 1932, to an individual believer)

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“Shoghi Effendi wishes me to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated May 8th, 1932, telling him of some incidents that transpired during the Convention this year, especially when funds were collected for the Temple. He was very glad to learn of the wonderful spirit that prevailed at those gatherings; for it is only through such a spirit of devotion and sacrifice that the Cause can prosper and its message embrace the whole world. It was also wonderful to see the interest shown by the public in the general gatherings that formed part of the Convention program.

“Shoghi Effendi hopes that as the Temple is gradually completed this interest will increase and they will try to share in the spirit that motivates the friends and



accepting the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, arise to serve it and dedicate their life to its spread.

“Such gatherings for collections of funds are permissible if it is done with a true spirit of sacrifice, not when the audience is especially aroused to a frenzy and mob psychology is used to induce them to pay.

“Shoghi Effendi has repeatedly stated that no pressure should be used upon the friends and psychological pressure falls under that category. But there is much difference between such gatherings often used by religious bodies, and a true quiet, prayerful atmosphere when a person is, of his own accord, aroused to make some sacrifice. This distinction is very delicate, but it is for the Chairman to use his power to see that one desirable form is not corrupted into the other. All the activities of the Cause should be carried through in a dignified manner.

“Shoghi Effendi is sure that the funds gathered at the last Convention was not due to the play of mob psychology but to the prayerful attitude of the friends and their desire to make further sacrifice.”

(From a letter written on his behalf, dated May 28, 1932, to an individual believer, "Bahá'í News" No. 67, p15)

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“Your donations to the Temple as well as the remarkable manner in which you are assisting the believers in their efforts to widen the scope of their publicity work are real and abiding contributions you have made to the Faith. And although at present you are unable to contribute financially as much as you did in former years you should not feel discouraged much less dissatisfied. For the best way in which you can effectively support the Temple Cause is not through material means but by the moral help which is your primary obligation to extend to those who are in charge of the building of that sacred and unique Edifice. It is devotion, sincerity and genuine enthusiasm which in the long run can insure the completion of our beloved Temple. Had it been otherwise the Temple would have never

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reached the stage of progress which it has already so well attained. For the resources of the community are limited, and have been severely affected during the last two years by an unprecedented and world-wide economic crisis. But despite these material obstacles the Temple has made a steady progress and this alone is sufficient to convince every unbiased observer of the divine potency animating the Faith - a potency before which all material difficulties must inevitably wane.”

(From a letter written on his behalf, dated December 30, 1933, to an individual believer)

“He wishes you particularly to impress the believers with the necessity of maintaining the flow of their contributions to the Temple, and also to stress the importance of the institution of the National Bahá’í Fund which, in these early days of the administrative development of the Faith, is the indispensable medium for the growth and expansion of the Movement. Contributions to this fund constitute, in addition, a practical and effective way whereby every believer can test the measure and character of his faith, and to prove in deeds the intensity of his devotion and attachment to the Cause.”

(From letter written on his behalf, dated September 25, 1934, to the Chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, “Bahá’í News” No. 88, pp. 1-2)

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“The Guardian would advise your Assembly to continue impressing upon the believers the necessity of their contributing regularly to the National Fund, irrespective of whether there is an emergency to be met or not. Nothing short of a continuous flow of contributions to that Fund can, indeed, insure the financial stability upon which so much of the progress of the institutions of the Faith must now inevitably depend.”

(From a letter written on his behalf, dated July 29, 1935, to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, “Bahá’í News” No. 95, p. 1)

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“As the activities of the American Bahá’í community expand, and its world-wide prestige correspondingly increases, the institution of the National Fund, the bedrock upon which all other institutions must necessarily rest and be established, acquires added importance, and should be increasingly supported by the entire body of the believers, both in their individual capacities, and through their collective efforts, whether as organised groups or as local Assemblies. The supply of funds, in support of the National Treasury, constitutes, at the present time, the life-blood of those nascent institutions which you are laboring to erect. Its importance cannot, surely, be over-estimated. Untold blessings shall no doubt crown every

effort directed to that end. I am eagerly and prayerfully awaiting the news of an unprecedented expansion in so vital an organ of the administrative Order of the Faith.”

(Post script in the Guardian’s handwriting from letter written on his behalf, dated July 29, 1935, to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada)

“With regard to your question concerning contributions to the Temple fund; the friends should certainly be encouraged and even urged to support financially this, as well as other national institutions of the Cause. But they should, under no circumstances, be required to do so.

“As to the idea of ‘giving what one can afford’; this does by no means put a limit or even exclude the possibility of self-sacrifice. There can be no limit on one’s contributions to the national fund. The more one can give the better it is, specially when such offerings necessitate the sacrifice of other wants and desires on the part of the donor. The harder the sacrifice the more meritorious it will be, of course, in the sight of God. For after all it is not so much the quantity of one’s offerings that matters, but rather the measure of deprivation that such offerings entail. It is the spirit, and not the mere fact of contributing that we should always take into account when we stress the necessity for a universal and whole-hearted support of the various funds of the Cause.”

(From a letter dated December 31, 1935 to an individual believer)

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“Above all he wishes through you to reiterate his wish, already expressed in his recent cable to the N.S.A., that the National Fund, which undoubtedly constitutes the bedrock upon which all the activities of the Cause ultimately rest, should receive the continued and whole-hearted support of all the believers. Both the local Assemblies and the individual believers should realize that unless they contribute regularly and generously to that Fund the progress of the Faith in India and Burma will not only be considerably retarded, but will inevitably come to a standstill. There should be a continual flow of funds to the National Treasury of the N.S.A., if that body wishes to properly administer the manifold and ever-increasing activities of the Faith. Every Bahá’í, no matter how poor, must realize what a grave responsibility he has to shoulder in this connection, and should have confidence that his spiritual progress as a believer in the World Order of Bahá’u’lláh will largely depend on the measure in which he proves, in deeds, his readiness to support materially the Divine institutions of His Faith.”

(From a letter written on his behalf, dated July 17, 1937, to the National Spiritual Assembly of India)

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“Regarding the state of the National Fund, which you have reported as suffering from

a general slackness in contributions from both individual believers and the local Assemblies and groups. It is only evident that unless the flow of donations is regularly maintained by means of generous and continual support by all the believers, individually and collectively, the National Fund will never be able to meet the needs and requirements of the Cause, particularly in these days when the national activities of the American believers are assuming such wide and increasing proportions.”

(From a letter written on his behalf, dated February 3, 1941, to an individual believer, “Bahá’í News” No. 143, p. 3)

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“Indeed the splendid spirit that animates the American believers these days is a great source of joy and inspiration to the Guardian, and as the good news comes in of new victories won and new sacrifices made, one can see his spirits rise and a wave of new strength sweep over him - tired and over-burdened as he so often is.

“In this connection the letter you so thoughtfully enclosed from that dear Bahá’í who gave the difference in price of a cheap or expensive coffin to the Fund of the Cause greatly touched him. Such sacrifices prove the caliber of the friends and insure the very foundation of the Faith.”

(From letter written on his behalf, dated May 4, 1941, to the Treasurer of the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, “Bahá’í News” No. 144 pp. 2-3)

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“Conscious of the state of the National Fund, and realizing the urgency of the task facing its administrators, I have felt the urge to devote the offering of the American believers to the International Fund to the work which is now vitally facing and challenging the friends in the teaching field. Much as I appreciate the spirit prompting you and your fellow members to make this monthly contribution to the Cause at the World Center, I felt that it was my duty to consecrate this offering while the Seven Year Plan is still operating, to that vital aspect of teaching upon which its success must ultimately depend. May the friends in view of the vastness of the field that stretches before them, and the potentialities of their labors within it, and of the glowing promise of future blessings which such a labor must yield, rise to still greater heights of self-sacrifice and evince nobler manifestations of solidarity in the face of the critical situation that so insistently demands their support.”

(From a letter dated October 26, 1941 to the Treasurer of the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada. “Bahá’í News” No 149, p. 2)

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“Each and every believer, undaunted by the uncertainties, the perils and the financial

stringency afflicting the nation, must arise and insure, to the full measure of his or her capacity, that continuous and abundant flow of funds to the national Treasury, on which the successful prosecution of the Plan must chiefly depend....

“He wishes you particularly to impress the believers with ... the importance of the institution of the National Bahá’í Fund which, in these early days of the administrative development of the Faith, is the indispensable medium for the growth and expansion of the Movement. Contributions to this fund constitute, in addition, a practical and effective way whereby every believer can test the measure and character of his faith, and to prove in deeds the intensity of his devotion and attachment to the Cause....

“We must be like the fountain or spring that is continually emptying itself of all that it has and is continually being refilled from an invisible source. To be continually giving out for the good of our fellows undeterred by the fear of poverty and reliant on the unfailing bounty of the Source of all wealth and good - this is the secret of right living”

(From a letter written on his behalf, published in “Bahá’í Procedure”, 1942 edition, pp. 8-9)

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“There is no objection to the Adelaide S.A. keeping a record of the names of contributors, and sums received; but no pressure must ever be brought on the Bahá’ís to contribute, it must be voluntary, and should be considered confidential, unless the friends themselves wish to mention it openly.”

(From a letter written on his behalf, dated October 26, 1945, to an individual believer)

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“Regarding your questions: He does not feel that it is desirable to lay down any conditions for giving to the Bahá’í Fund. This is an entirely personal matter, and each believer must act according to his own judgement and the needs of the Faith. In times of crisis, whether in the affairs of the Cause or in one’s own family, people naturally behave differently than under normal circumstances. But decisions in these matters must rest with each individual Bahá’í”

(From a letter written on his behalf, dated October 19, 1947, to an individual believer)

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“Regarding the question you raised: in the first place every believer is free to follow the dictates of his own conscience as regards the manner in which he should spend his own money. Secondly, we must always bear in mind

that there are so few Bahá'ís in the world, relative to the world's population, and so many people in need, that even if all of us gave all we had, it would *not* relieve more than an infinitesimal amount of suffering. This does not mean that we must not help the needy, we should; but our contributions to the Faith are the surest way of lifting once and for all time the burden of hunger and misery from mankind, for it is only through the system of Bahá'u'lláh - Divine in origin - that the world can be gotten on its feet and want, fear, hunger, war etc., be eliminated. Non-Bahá'ís cannot contribute to our work or do it for us; so really our first obligation is to support our own teaching work, as this will lead to the healing of nations."

(From a letter written on his behalf, dated December 8, 1947, to an individual believer)

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"Regarding your question about contributions: it is up to the individual to decide; if he wishes to donate a sum to a specific purpose, he is free to do so; but the friends should recognize the fact that too much labelling of contributions will tie the hands of the Assembly and prevent it from meeting its many obligations in various fields of Bahá'í activity."

(From a letter written on his behalf, dated June 23, 1950, to the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada)

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"As to your question: the friends can give their contributions to the treasurer, or, if they wish to remain anonymous and give small sums, a receptacle can be provided. The local assembly can decide this matter."

(From letter written on his behalf, dated September 29, 1951, to an individual believer)

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"In your letter of September 28, 1953, you mentioned the sum of ... as being included in the ... allocated from your Assembly's Budget to the World Center. The principle involved is as follows: The Guardian feels that your Assembly when allocating its annual budget, and having stipulated what sum is for the purposes of the International Center of the Faith, should immediately pigeon-hole that sum to be at the Guardian's disposal. Any monies received as contributions from the Bahá'ís for the International Center should not be credited to this account which represent a national joint contribution, and has nothing to do with individual local contributions forwarded to the World Center in your care."

(From a letter written on his behalf, dated June 20, 1954, to the National Spiritual Assembly of the

United States)

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“The Guardian feels that now that the new National Assembly has been established, with headquarters in Kampala, that the Assembly should

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establish its own Bank Account. When this is done, the moneys you have received for the Kampala Temple, should be turned over to them, for deposit in their account. This applies not only to the munificent contribution of Mr ....., but also applies to past contributions which you have received, and any which you receive in the future.

(From a letter written on his behalf, dated June 10, 1956, to an individual believer)

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“In the November Minutes of the National Spiritual Assembly Meeting, Page 28, the Guardian has noticed that the National Assembly plans to make a contribution of ... Dollars to the Australia and New Zealand Assembly for their Temple. He wishes to know if this is the contribution that Mrs Collins has made for that purpose, or if this is another contribution given from the funds of the National Assembly. If it is Mrs Collins’ contribution, then it should naturally be given under her name.”

(From a letter written on his behalf, dated December 15, 1956, to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States)

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“The institution of the National Fund, so vital and essential for the un-interrupted progress of these activities must, in particular, be assured of the whole-hearted, the ever-increasing and universal support of the mass of believers, for whose welfare and in whose name these beneficent activities have been initiated and have been conducted. All, no matter how modest their resources, must participate.”

(From letter dated August 8, 1957 to the National Spiritual Assenbly of Central and East Africa)

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## II. Assemblies' Responsibilities in Administering Bahá'í Funds

“The financial questions that confront the Cause are all very pressing and important. They need a judicious administration and a wide policy. We should study the needs of the Cause, find the fields which will give the greatest yield and then appropriate the necessary funds. And such a task is surely most difficult and responsible.”

(Post script in the Guardian's handwriting from letter to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, April 1930 issue of "Bahá'í News" No. 40 p. 7)

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“Regarding his special contribution to the Teaching Fund; he feels that this is a matter to be left entirely to the discretion of the N.S.A. He believes that the continuous expenditure of a considerable sum to provide for travelling expenses of teachers who are in need constitutes in these days the chief obligation of the National Fund. An effort should be made to facilitate, as much as possible, the extension of the teaching work by helping those who are financially unable to reach their destination, and once there to encourage them to settle and earn the means of their livelihood.”

(From a letter written on his behalf, dated November 14, 1936, to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, "Bahá'í News" No. 105 p. 1)

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“With regard to your question concerning the National Bahá'í Fund; there is nothing in the Declaration of Trust or the By-Laws which prevents the allocation of any funds to any individual who is in dire financial need. But it should be emphasized and clearly understood by the friends that the national interests and requirements of the Cause take absolute precedence over individual and private needs. It is the duty of the N.S.A. to so dispose of the national fund as not to allow the national interests of the Faith to be jeopardized by individual considerations that are obviously transient when compared to the lasting interests of the Cause of God. In rare and exceptional cases, when a believer has absolutely no other means of material sustenance, the N.S.A. may either contribute toward his expenses from the national fund, or make a special appeal to the body of the believers to that effect. It is for the family, the civil community and the local assembly to administer to such local and private needs of the individual. But in case none of these sources has the means to do so, the N.S.A. may, if it is convinced of the gravity, urgency and justice of the case, appropriate a part of its fund for that purpose.”

(From a letter written on his behalf, dated July 17, 1937, to an individual believer)



“The Guardian can only outline to you the principle, which is that Bahá’í funds should not be invested to building up a place that has dear associations for a number of friends, but is not going to really serve a large group of the believers.

“The Guardian’s point is that National Bodies when creating national institutions, should use sound judgment, because of the financial investment involved. This is only reasonable.”

(From letter written on his behalf, dated June 8, 1952, to the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada)

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“He urges your Assembly, in addition to expediting the Temple work as much as is reasonably possible, to carefully supervise expenditures and prevent the architect from getting extravagant ideas. It is only through a wise economy, the elimination of non-essentials, concentration of essentials and a careful supervision, that the Guardian himself has been able to build the Shrine and the International Archives at the World Center and surround the Holy Places here by what appears in the eyes of the public to be lavish gardens, but are in reality the result of rigorous and economical planning. This will not only insure that the budget of the Temple is adhered to, but will be a salutary example to the African Bahá’ís, who must not be led to believe that because the Bahá’ís of the world are building for them a Temple in the heart of their homelands, our resources are infinite and that the affairs of the Cause can be supported from abroad. The more they see that economy and intelligent supervision of the work is carried on in connection with their own Temple, the more they will be encouraged to feel some financial responsibility toward the National Body. Having very little themselves, it is a delicate matter, and as he has already informed your Assembly, under no circumstances should a heavy budget be imposed upon such weak communities, and thus discourage them from the outset, or lead them to believe that like the Missions, our money comes from abroad.”

(From letter written on his behalf, dated August 8, 1957, to the National Spiritual Assembly of Central and East Africa)

### III. Who can Contribute to the Fund?

“I feel that only such goods as are *owned* by believers, whether made by Bahá’í or non-Bahá’ís, may be sold in the interests of the Temple or any other Bahá’í institution, thus maintaining the general principle that non-believers are not, whether directly or indirectly, expected to contribute to the support of institutions that are of a strictly Bahá’í character. As to the manner of the disposal of Bahá’í property for such purposes, and the channel through which the sale may be effected, I feel that no rigid rule should be imposed. Individual Bahá’ís are free to seek the help of private individuals or of Spiritual Assemblies to act as intermediary for such transactions. We should avoid confusion on one hand and maintain efficiency on the other, and lay no unnecessary restrictions that would fetter individual initiative and enterprise.”

(From a letter dated January 4, 1929 to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, “Bahá’í News” No. 31, p. 3)

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“In regard to Miss ...’s contribution to the fund, Shoghi Effendi wishes you to make it quite clear to her that her money-offering should be made to the Bahá’í fund, and not to any individual. This being an important principle governing all Bahá’í publications and publishing societies, it should be duly emphasized and clearly understood, so that no difficulty may appear in the future. Of course, contributions should be accepted only when made by the Bahá’ís themselves. You should, therefore, first ascertain whether Miss ... is a true Bahá’í, and then and only then accept her contributions to your book fund.”

(From letter written on his behalf, dated April 14, 1934, to an individual believer)

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“The question you have raised in connection with the recommendation made by the Convention delegates to the effect of installing a Radio Sending Station in the Temple involves a fundamental principle governing the Temple Fund which the Guardian has already explained in several communications. He wishes me to stress again that under no circumstances the believers should accept any financial help from non-Bahá’ís for use in connection with specific administrative activities of the Faith such as the Temple construction fund, and other local or national Bahá’í administrative funds. The reason for this is twofold: first because the Institutions which the Bahá’ís are gradually building are in the nature of gifts from Bahá’u’lláh to the world; and secondly the acceptance of funds from non-believers for specific Bahá’í use would, sooner or later, involve the Bahá’ís into unforeseen complications and difficulties with others, and thus

cause incalculable harm to the body of the Cause.”

(From letter written on his behalf, dated July 12, 1938, to an individual believer)

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“You may not perhaps know that in connection with all National assemblies the Guardian is advising that rules and regulations should not be multiplied and new statements on ‘procedure’ issued; we should be elastic in details and rigid in principles; consequently he does not want your Assembly to issue statements of a binding nature unless absolutely necessary. In this connection he will answer your questions about sanctions: there is nothing to object to in paragraphs 1, 2 and 4 of your letter of March 4th, but No. 3 is incorrect; it is only those who have been spiritually ex-communicated by the Guardian with whom the believers are forbidden to associate, and not a person who is being punished by being deprived of his voting rights. As contributions to the Bahá’í Funds are used to support the Administration of the Faith, they should not be accepted from those who are deprived of their voting rights; but, such believers, should not be prevented from being buried in a Bahá’í Cemetery or receiving charity - which we even give to non-Bahá’ís...”

(From letter written on his behalf, dated May 8, 1947, to the National Spiritual Assembly of India)

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“Any Bahá’í can give to the Cause’s Funds, adult or child. No statement is required on this subject, Bahá’í children have always given to the Cause, everywhere. Whatever situation may arise in a class which non-Bahá’í children attend is for the teacher of the class to solve. No ruling should be made to cover such things.”

(From letter written on his behalf, dated February 12, 1949, to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States)

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“Regarding Mr .....’s bequest to the Temple: Your Assembly should inform his widow that, because he was not a Bahá’í, we cannot use his money for our purposes, as we consider our Faith and its institutions our free gift to humanity. You can, however, and indeed should, accept it for charity and expend it in his name.”

(From letter written on his behalf, dated July 5, 1950, to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, “Bahá’í News”, No. 256, p. 2)

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“As regards the question of the Bahá’í School in India: As this institution is run by

Bahá'ís but for the benefit of both Bahá'ís and any other group sending its children there, he see no reason why a school concert should not receive money from the public attending, and use it for the school

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itself. It is not the same as a bazaar where the things sold are solely for the Bahá'í Fund.”

(From letter written on his behalf, date June 30, 1952, to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States)

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“As regards the question of accepting contributions from people whose voting rights are suspended, the *Guardian* says this is not permissible.”

(From letter written on his behalf, dated June 21, 1953, to the National Spiritual Assembly of India)

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“Thank you for the report you enclosed in your letter regarding the Fund, and in this connection he wishes to answer your questions about .....’s Trust Fund: We cannot accept money from non-Bahá'ís for the Cause. It would seem if the family of ... wish to do this for her (and it is certainly a highly praiseworthy idea) they must take action during her lifetime to establish such a Trust as the property of ..., otherwise the Cause could only accept to use the money for charitable purposes, for Bahá'í and non-Bahá'í”

(From letter written on his behalf, dated October 4, 1956)

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