

## Some Solutions to Basic Problems

### LOVE AMONGST THE BELIEVERS BRINGS NEW SOULS INTO THE CAUSE...

“This love amongst the believers is the magnet which will, above all else, attract the hearts and bring new souls into the Cause. Because obviously the teachings - however wonderful - cannot change the world unless the Spirit of Bahá’u’lláh’s love is mirrored in the Bahá’í Communities.”

(From a letter dated 27 October 1944 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer *Compilation of Compilations II Pg. 13:* )

### TAKING OFFENSE, GIVING OFFENSE...

“Act in such a way that your heart may be free from hatred. Let not your heart be offended with anyone. If someone commits an error and wrong toward you, you must instantly forgive him. Do not complain of others. Refrain from reprimanding them, and if you wish to give admonition or advice, let it be offered in such a way that it will not burden the bearer. Turn all your thoughts toward bringing joy to hearts. Beware! Beware! lest ye offend any heart.”

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Promulgation of Universal Peace* pg. 453)

### WHENSOEVER A MOTHER...

Therefore is it incumbent upon the mothers to rear their little ones even as a gardener tendeth his young plants. Let them strive by day and by night to establish within their children faith and certitude, the fear of God, the love of the Beloved of the worlds, and all good qualities and traits. Whensoever a mother seeth that her child hath done well, let her praise and applaud him and cheer his heart; and if the slightest undesirable trait should manifest itself, let her counsel the child and punish him, and use means based on reason, even a slight verbal chastisement should this be necessary. It is not, however, permissible to strike a child, or vilify him, for the child's character will be totally perverted if he be subjected to blows or verbal abuse.

(Abdu'l-Baha, p. 125)

(Abdu'l-Baha, *Selections from the Writings of*

### FORGET ABOUT PERSONAL GRIEVANCES...DO NOT REMAIN AWAY FROM MEETINGS...

“Since you have turned to him for guidance, he will very frankly give you his opinion. He feels that the present inharmony prevailing amongst you ... is very detrimental to the advancement of the Cause, and can only lead to disruption and the chilling of the interest of new believers. You ... should forget about your personal grievances, and unite for the protection of the Faith which he well knows you are all loyally devoted to and ready to sacrifice for. Perhaps the greatest test Bahá’ís are ever subjected to is from each other; but for the sake of the Master they should be ever ready to overlook each other's mistakes, apologize for harsh words they have uttered, forgive and forget. He strongly recommends to you this course of action.

Also he feels that you and ... should not remain away from the meetings and Feasts in ...; you have now got an enthusiastic group of young Bahá’ís in ..., and you should show them a strong example of Bahá’í discipline and the unity which can and must prevail amongst the Community of the Most

Great Name.” (From a letter dated 18 December 1945 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, *Compilation of Compilations II Pg. 15:* )

### NO AMOUNT OF ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE...

“The need is very great, everywhere in the world, in and outside the Faith, for a true spiritual awareness to pervade and motivate peoples’ lives. No amount of administrative procedure or adherence to rules can take the place of this soul-characteristic, this spirituality which is the essence of Man. He is very glad to see you are stressing this and aiding the friends to realize its supreme importance.” (From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer on April 25, 1945, *Lights of Guidance Page 542:* )

### **ROLE OF ASSEMBLY, ROLE OF INDIVIDUAL...**

“The greatest need it seems everywhere inside the Cause is to impress upon the friends the need for love among them. There is a tendency to mix up the functions of the Administration and try to apply it in individual relationships, which is abortive, because the Assembly is a nascent House of Justice and is supposed to administer, according to the Teachings, the affairs of the community. But individuals toward each other are governed by love, unity, forgiveness and a sin-covering eye. Once the friends grasp this they will get along much better, but they keep playing Spiritual Assembly to each other and expect the Assembly to behave like an individual.” (Shoghi Effendi *Compilation of Compilations II* Pg. 22- 23 )

### **AVOID TOO MANY RULES AND REGULATIONS...**

“You should also be fearful of laying down too many rules and regulations. The Cause is not so fragile that a degree of mistakes cannot be tolerated. When you feel that certain actions may become trends with harmful consequences, you may, instead of making a new rule, discuss the matter with the Counsellors, enlisting their support in educating the friends in a manner that will improve their understanding and their conduct.” (The Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of the United States, May 19 1994)

### **ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE...**

“The temperament of authority in the administration of justice varies according to the degree of the gravity of each case. Some cases require that the Assembly take action that is firm or drastic. Even so, Assembly members have always to be mindful that the authority they wield must in general be expressed with love, humility and a genuine respect for others. Thus exercised, authority strikes a natural note and accords with that which is acceptable to spiritually attuned and fair-minded souls. The following guidance of Shoghi Effendi, as conveyed by his secretary, is especially relevant: ‘The administrators of the Faith of God must be like unto shepherds. Their aim should be to dispel all the doubts, misunderstandings and harmful differences which may arise in the community of the believers. And this they can adequately achieve provided they are motivated by a true sense of love for their fellow-brethren coupled with firm determination to act with justice in all cases which are submitted to them for their consideration.’” (The Universal House of Justice May 19 1994 to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of the United States)

### **PURPOSE OF PUNISHMENT IS TO PROTECT OTHERS...**

“But the community has the right of defense and of self-protection; moreover, the community has no hatred nor animosity for the murderer: it imprisons or punishes him merely for the protection and security of others. It is not for the purpose of taking vengeance upon the murderer, but for the purpose of inflicting a punishment by which the community will be protected. If the community and the inheritors of the murdered one were to forgive and return good for evil, the cruel would be continually ill-treating others, and assassinations would continually occur. Vicious people, like wolves, would destroy the sheep of God. The community has no ill-will and rancor in the infliction of punishment, and it does not desire to appease the anger of the heart; its purpose is by punishment to protect others so that no atrocious actions may be committed. Thus when Christ said: ‘Whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the left one also,’ [Matt. 5:39] it was for the purpose of teaching men not to take personal revenge.

“He did not mean that, if a wolf should fall upon a flock of sheep and wish to destroy it, the wolf should be encouraged to do so. No, if Christ had known that a wolf had entered the fold and was about to destroy the sheep, most certainly He would have prevented it.”

<sup>1</sup>Abdu’l-Bahá, *Some Answered Questions*, pg 279