

SOME GUIDANCE ON PARTICIPATION IN BAHÁ'Í ELECTIONS

“The electors ... must prayerfully and devotedly and after meditation and reflection elect faithful, sincere, experienced, capable and competent souls who are worthy of membership....” (Shoghi Effendi, *Bahá'í Elections*, p. 4)

“...I earnestly appeal to every one of you ... to make ... yet another effort, this time more spontaneous and selfless than before, and endeavour to approach your task with that purity of spirit that can alone obtain our Beloved's most cherished desire. Let us recall His explicit and often-repeated assurances that every Assembly elected in that rarified atmosphere of selflessness and detachment is, in truth, appointed of God....” (Shoghi Effendi, *Bahá'í Administration*, p. 65)

“...it is incumbent upon the chosen delegates to consider without the least trace of passion and prejudice, and irrespective of any material consideration the names of only those who can best combine the necessary qualities of unquestioned loyalty, of selfless devotion, of a well-trained mind, of recognized ability and mature experience.” (Shoghi Effendi, *Bahá'í Administration*, p. 88)

“One's vote should be kept confidential. It is not permissible to make any reference whatsoever to individual names. The friends must avoid the evil methods and detestable practices of politicians. They must turn completely to God, and with a purity of motive, a freedom of spirit and a sanctity of heart, participate in the elections...” (Shoghi Effendi, *Bahá'í Elections*, p. 7)

“...I do not feel it to be in keeping with the spirit of the Cause to impose any limitation upon the freedom of the believers to choose those of any race, nationality or temperament, who best combine the essential qualifications for membership of administrative institutions. They should disregard personalities and concentrate their attention on the qualities and requirements of office, without prejudice, passion or partiality. The Assembly should be representative of the choicest and most varied and capable elements in every Bahá'í community.” (Shoghi Effendi, *Bahá'í Elections*, p. 4)

“...every organized community enlisted under the banner of Bahá'u'lláh should feel it to be its first and inescapable obligation to nurture, encourage, and safeguard every minority belonging to any faith, race, class or nation within it. So great and vital is the principle that in such circumstances, as when an equal number of ballots have been cast in an election, or where the qualifications for any office are balanced as between the various races, faiths or nationalities within the community, priority should unhesitatingly be accorded the party representing the minority, and this for no other reason except to stimulate and encourage it, and afford it an opportunity to further the interests of the community....” (Shoghi Effendi, *The Advent of Divine Justice*, p. 35)

“...Bahá'í electoral procedures and methods have, indeed, for one of their essential purposes the development in every believer of the spirit of responsibility. By emphasizing the necessity of maintaining his full freedom in the elections, they make it incumbent upon him to become an active and well-informed member of the Bahá'í community in which he lives. To be able to make a wise choice at the election time, it is necessary for him to be in close and continued contact with all local activities, be they teaching, administrative or otherwise, and to fully and wholeheartedly participate in the affairs of the local as well as national committees and assemblies in his country. It is only in this way that a believer can develop a true social consciousness and acquire a true sense of responsibility in matters affecting the interests of the Cause. Bahá'í community life thus makes it a duty for every loyal and faithful believer to become an intelligent, well-informed and responsible elector, and also gives him the opportunity of raising himself to such a station. And since the practice of nomination hinders the development of such qualities in the believer, and in addition leads to corruption and partisanship, it has to be entirely discarded in all Bahá'í elections.” (Shoghi Effendi, *Light of Divine Guidance Vol.1*, p. 68)