

NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF THE UNITED STATES

April 20, 2018

To the friends gathered for
the annual election of their
Local Spiritual Assemblies

Dearest Bahá'í Friends,

One of Shoghi Effendi's first acts as Guardian of the Faith was to call for the election, in every locality where nine or more believers resided, of Local Spiritual Assemblies. As early as March 1922, just months after the Master's passing, we find him stressing the "sacredness of their nature, the wide scope of their activity, and the grave responsibility which rests upon them." A year later, he was fixing the first day of the Festival of Ridván as the date on which believers in local Bahá'í communities across the globe would cast their ballots to elect these Assemblies.

Throughout the 36 years of his ministry, the beloved Guardian labored assiduously to help the Bahá'í community understand the dynamics of the Administrative Order they had begun to build, its indissoluble bond with the spiritual verities of their Faith, and its vital necessity as the "nucleus" and the "very pattern" of Bahá'u'lláh's peaceful and just New World Order, "destined to embrace, in the fullness of time, the whole of mankind."

Today, nearly a century since Shoghi Effendi began his efforts to establish the Bahá'í Administrative Order, we daily witness a swiftly accelerating breakdown of trust in time-honored institutions that have for long guided humanity's ordered life, and, with it, rapidly growing divisiveness and turmoil. We can see, with ever greater clarity, "the contrast between the accumulating evidences of steady consolidation" manifest in the rise of Bahá'u'lláh's World Order and "the forces of disintegration which batter at the fabric of a travailing society."

At the same time, we can now see how important it is that, at this critical juncture in humanity's fortunes, we have in place, across the globe, a great network of healthy Local Spiritual Assemblies supported by an enthusiastic body of believers. It is these Assemblies, which constitute the bedrock on which the Bahá'í Administrative Order is built, that are gradually mastering the essentials of the role they will play in creating a new pattern of life founded on the divine teachings—and which, at the present moment, are contributing much to the advancement of the work of the Five Year Plan.

Casting our ballots, then, in accordance with the principles established by Bahá'u'lláh and further defined by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, closely adhering to the procedures meticulously elaborated by the beloved Guardian, let us be mindful of both the responsibility and the privilege that is ours, executors of "a supreme instrument for the establishment of the Most Great Peace," proponents of "the one agency for the unification of the world, and the proclamation of the reign of righteousness and justice upon the earth."

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF
THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF THE UNITED STATES



Kenneth E. Bowers
Secretary