

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE
DEPARTMENT OF THE SECRETARIAT

5 June 2018

Transmitted by email:

U.S.A.

Dear Bahá'í Friend,

The Universal House of Justice has received your email letter of 3 January 2018 concerning the enrollment of individuals who are in a same-sex relationship. We have been asked to convey the following.

Although you seem to have presented information about a particular couple, the questions you raise are hypothetical in nature. Specific cases often include factors that can affect the application of general principles, and therefore it is best to refer such questions to the relevant Local Spiritual Assembly or to the National Spiritual Assembly.

As you are surely aware, the doors are open for all of humanity to enter the Bahá'í community, irrespective of their present circumstances. In a letter dated 13 July 1964 and addressed to all National Spiritual Assemblies, the House of Justice explained, “Those who declare themselves as Bahá'ís should become enchanted with the beauty of the Teachings; and touched by the love of Bahá'u'lláh. The declarants need not know all the proofs, history, laws, and principles of the Faith, but in the process of declaring themselves they must, in addition to catching the spark of faith, become basically informed about the Central Figures of the Faith, as well as the existence of laws they must follow and an administration they must obey.” It is evident that an individual will grow in his or her understanding of and adherence to the Teachings over time. Yet in becoming a Bahá'í, an individual freely and consciously embraces the twin duties set forth by Bahá'u'lláh in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas: the “recognition of Him Who is the Dayspring of His Revelation and the Fountain of His laws” and the commitment to “observe every ordinance of Him Who is the Desire of the world.”

Those who come to recognize Bahá'u'lláh as “the representative and mouthpiece of God” in this day will naturally strive to obey, out of love for His Beauty, the laws and exhortations He has brought. It would be a profound contradiction, however, for someone to profess the intention to be a Bahá'í yet consciously reject, disregard, or contend with aspects of belief or practice ordained by Him. It would only be reasonable in such instances for a person to resolve any fundamental contradiction for himself or herself before deciding whether to make the commitment to join the Bahá'í community. An example of this would be someone who holds a political post and shows interest in the Cause. Another would be someone whose professional life is prominently associated with the manufacture or distribution of alcohol. The same principle would also apply to the example you give of an individual involved in a same sex marriage. It is clear from the Bahá'í laws and principles concerning marriage and sexual

conduct that marriage is a union between a man and a woman, and therefore it is not possible to recognize a same-sex union within the Bahá'í community.

The House of Justice is deeply sympathetic to those who may find themselves facing such a dilemma. No pressure should be brought to bear by the Bahá'í community on any person in this position, who must prayerfully determine the path to take. Recognition of Bahá'u'lláh is a matter between the individual and God. While it may not be possible for some individuals to enroll as Bahá'ís, they can, if they choose, continue their study of the Teachings and strive to put them into practice in their lives.

May your endeavors in the path of service to the Cause of God be bountifully blessed and confirmed.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

bc: International Teaching Centre
Counsellors Farah Guchani-Rosenberg,
Sonlla Heern, Nwandi Ngozi Lawson,
and Mark Sisson
National Assembly of the United States