

Becoming A Brilliant Star Self, Temperament, and Personality

Self and Human Nature

1. The first Taraz and the first effulgence which hath dawned from the horizon of the Mother Book is that man should know his own self and recognize that which leadeth unto loftiness or lowliness, glory or abasement, wealth or poverty . . .

Bahá'u'lláh: *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh Revealed after the Kitáb-i-Áqdas*, pp. 34-35

2. True loss is for him whose days have been spent in utter ignorance of his self.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh Revealed after the Kitáb-i-Áqdas*, p. 156

3. And now, concerning thy question regarding the creation of man. Know thou that all men have been created in the nature made by God, the Guardian, the Self-Subsisting. Unto each one hath been prescribed a pre-ordained measure, as decreed in God's mighty and guarded Tablets. All that which ye potentially possess can, however, be manifested only as a result of your own volition. Your own acts testify this truth . . .

Bahá'u'lláh: *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 149

4. Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth is a direct evidence of the revelation within it of the attributes and names of God, inasmuch as within every atom are enshrined the signs that bear eloquent testimony to the revelation of that most Great Light. Methinks, but for the potency of that revelation, no being could ever exist. How resplendent the luminaries of knowledge that shine in an atom, and how vast the oceans of wisdom that surge within a drop! To a supreme degree is this true of man, who, among all created things, hath been invested with the robe of such gifts, and hath been singled out for the glory of such distinction. For in him are potentially revealed all the attributes and names of God to a degree that no other created being hath excelled or surpassed. All these names and attributes are applicable to him. Even as He hath said: "Man is My mystery, and I am his mystery." Manifold are the verses that have been repeatedly revealed in all the Heavenly Books and the Holy Scriptures, expressive of this most subtle and lofty theme. Even as He hath revealed: "We will surely show them Our signs in the world and within themselves." Again He saith: "And also in your own selves: will ye not, then, behold the signs of God?" And yet again He revealeth: And be ye not like those who forget God, and whom He hath therefore caused to forget their own selves." In this connection, He Who is the eternal King -- may the souls of all that dwell within the mystic Tabernacle be a sacrifice unto Him -- hath spoken: "He hath known God who hath known himself."

Bahá'u'lláh: *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 177-178

5. O My servants! Could ye apprehend with what wonders of My munificence and bounty I have willed to entrust your souls, ye would, of a truth, rid yourselves of attachment to all created things, and would gain a true knowledge of your own selves -- a knowledge which is the same as the comprehension of Mine own Being. Ye would find yourselves independent of all else but Me, and would perceive, with your inner and outer eye, and as manifest as the revelation of My effulgent Name, the seas of My loving-kindness and bounty moving within you. Suffer not your idle fancies, your evil passions, your insincerity and blindness of heart to dim the luster, or stain

the sanctity, of so lofty a station . . .

Bahá'u'lláh: *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 326-327

Two Meanings of Self

6. . . . self has really two meanings, or is used in two senses, in the Bahá'í writings; one is self, the identity of the individual created by God. This is the self mentioned in such passages as "he hath known God who hath know himself", etc. The other self is the ego, the dark, animalistic heritage each one of us has, the lower nature that can develop into a monster of selfishness, brutality, lust and so on. It is this self we must struggle against, or this side of our natures, in order to strengthen and free the spirit within us and help it to attain perfection

Shoghi Effendi: letter to an individual believer, 10 December 1947

Human Personality Appears In Two Aspects: The Divine And The Satanic

7. . . . It is evident that human personality appears in two aspects: the image or likeness of God, and the aspect of Satan. The human reality stands between these two: the divine and the satanic. It is manifest that beyond this material body, man is endowed with another reality, which is the world of exemplars constituting the heavenly body of man. In speaking, man says, "I saw," "I spoke," "I went." Who is this I? It is obvious that this I is different from this body. It is clear that when man is thinking, it is as though he were consulting with some other person. With whom is he consulting? It is evident that it is another reality, or one aside from this body, with whom he enters into consultation when he thinks, "Shall I do this work or not?" "What will be the result of my doing this?" Or when he questions the other reality, "What is the objection to this work if I do it?" And then that reality in man communicates its opinion to him concerning the point at issue. Therefore, that reality in man is clearly and obviously other than his body--an ego with which man enters into consultation and whose opinion man seeks.

'Abdu'l-Bahá: *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, pp. 463-464

The Body Carries The Personality And Spirit

8. He is delighted to hear you are now fully recovered and again active in your important work for the Cause. However, you should not neglect your health, but consider it the means which enables you to serve. It--the body--is like a horse which carries the personality and spirit, and as such should be well cared for so it can do its work! You should certainly safeguard your nerves, and force yourself to take time, and not only for prayer and meditation, but for real rest and relaxation. We don't have to pray and meditate for hours in order to be spiritual.

Shoghi Effendi: *Compilation of Compilations*, Vol I (Health & Healing), p. 482;
Vol II (Prayer & Med.), p. 242

The Rational Soul Has Its Own Personality

9. The rational soul--that is to say, the human spirit--has neither entered this body nor existed through it; so after the disintegration of the composition of the body, how should it be in need of a substance through which it may exist? On the contrary, the rational soul is the substance through which the body exists. The personality of the rational soul is from its beginning; it is not

due to the instrumentality of the body, but the state and the personality of the rational soul may be strengthened in this world; it will make progress and will attain to the degrees of perfection, or it will remain in the lowest abyss of ignorance, veiled and deprived from beholding the signs of God.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Some Answered Questions*, pp. 239-240

The Personality Of The Rational Soul Continues To Exist In The Spiritual World

10. Great as is the love and paternal care which our beloved Master is extending to us from on High, and unique as is the Spirit that animates today His servants in the world, yet a great deal will depend upon the character and efforts of His loved ones on whom now rests the responsibility of carrying on His work gloriously after Him. How great is the need at this moment when the promised outpourings of His grace are ready to be extended to every soul, for us all to form a broad vision of the mission of the Cause to mankind, and to do all in our power to spread it throughout the world! The eyes of the world, now that the sublime Personality of the Master has been removed from this visible plane, are turned with eager anticipation to us who are named after His name, and on whom rests primarily the responsibility to keep burning the torch that He has lit in this world. How keenly I feel at this challenging hour in the history of the Cause the need for a firm and definite determination to subordinate all our personal likings, our local interests, to the interests and requirements of the Cause of God! Now is the time to set aside, nay, to forget altogether, minor considerations regarding our internal relationships, and to present a solid united front to the world animated by no other desire but to serve and propagate His Cause.

Shoghi Effendi: *Bahá’í Administration*, p. 18; *Unfolding Destiny*, p. 3

The Reality Of Perfections And Personality Are Separate Entities

11. They asked John the Baptist, “Are you Elias?” He answered, “No, I am not,” although it is said in the Gospel that John was the promised Elias, and Christ also said so clearly.¹ Then if John was Elias, why did he say, “I am not”? And if he was not Elias, why did Christ say that he was?

The explanation is this: not the personality, but the reality of the perfections, is meant--that is to say, the same perfections that were in Elias existed in John the Baptist and were exactly realized in him. Therefore, John the Baptist was the promised Elias. In this case not the essence,² but the qualities, are regarded. For example, there was a flower last year, and this year there is also a flower; I say the flower of last year has returned. Now, I do not mean that same flower in its exact individuality has come back; but as this flower has the same qualities as that of last year--as it has the same perfume, delicacy, color and form--I say the flower of last year has returned, and this flower is the former flower. When spring comes, we say last year’s spring has come back because all that was found in last year’s spring exists in this spring. That is why Christ said, “You will see all that happened in the days of the former Prophets.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Some Answered Questions*, p. 133

¹ Cf. p. 110, n. 2.

² Cf. John 1:19-21.

12. But let us return to our subject. In the Divine Scriptures and Holy Books “return” is spoken of, but the ignorant have not understood the meaning, and those who believed in reincarnation have made conjectures on the subject. For what the divine Prophets meant by “return” is not the return of the essence, but that of the qualities; it is not the return of the Manifestation, but that of the perfections. In the Gospel it says that John, the son of Zacharias, is Elias. These words do not mean the return of the rational soul and personality of Elias in the body of John, but rather that the perfections and qualities of Elias were manifested and appeared in John.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Some Answered Questions*, p. 288

Focus on Others Rather Than Self

13. Let your vision be world-embracing, rather than confined to your own self . . .

Bahá'u'lláh: *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 94

Education and Effort Needed

14. Regard man as a mine rich in gems of inestimable value. Education can, alone, cause it to reveal its treasures, and enable mankind to benefit therefrom . . .

Bahá'u'lláh: *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 260

15. From the exalted source, and out of the essence of His favour and bounty He hath entrusted every created thing with a sign of His knowledge, so that none of His creatures may be deprived of its share in expressing, each according to its capacity and rank, this knowledge. This sign is the mirror of His beauty in the world of creation . . .

There can be no doubt whatever that, in consequence of the efforts which every man may consciously exert and as a result of the exertion of his own spiritual faculties, this mirror can be so cleansed from the dross of earthly defilements and purged from satanic fancies as to be able to draw nigh unto the meads of eternal holiness and attain the courts of everlasting fellowship. . .

Bahá'u'lláh: *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 262

16. The Bahá'í youth should . . . be taught the lesson of self-control which, when exercised, undoubtedly has a salutary effect on the development of character and of personality . . .

Shoghi Effendi: *A Chaste and Holy Life*, p. 56

Advancement and Blessings

17. Through the Teachings of this Day Star of Truth every man will advance and develop until he attaineth the station at which he can manifest all the potential forces with which his inmost true self hath been endowed. It is for this very purpose that in every age and dispensation the prophets of God and His chosen Ones have appeared amongst men, and have evinced such power as is born of God and such might as only the Eternal can reveal.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 68

18. Blessed art thou for having utterly abolished the idol of self and of vain imagination, and for having rent asunder the veil of idle fancy, through the power of the might of thy Lord, the Supreme Protector, the Almighty, the one Beloved . . .

Bahá'u'lláh: *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh* p. 291

Do Not Allow Own Aptitudes and Capacities to Limit One's Efforts

19. Day and night I entreat and supplicate to the Kingdom of God and beg for you infinite assistance and confirmation. Do not take into consideration your own aptitudes and capacities, but fix your gaze on the consummate bounty, the divine bestowal and the power of the Holy Spirit--the power that converteth the drop into a sea and the star into a sun.

'Abdu'l-Bahá: *Selections ... 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 104

Not Working on Self Has Consequences

20. . . . certain invalid souls have confined the lands of knowledge within the wall of self and passion, and clouded them with ignorance and blindness, and have been veiled from the light of the mystic sun and the mysteries of the Eternal Beloved; they have strayed afar from the jewelled wisdom of the lucid Faith of the Lord of Messengers, have been shut out of the sanctuary of the All-Beauteous One, and banished from the Ka'bih of splendour. Such is the worth of the people of this age!

Bahá'u'lláh: *The Seven Valleys and The Four Valleys*, pp. 19-20

Never Stop Struggling

21. Life is a constant struggle, not only against forces around us, but above all against our own "ego". We can never afford to rest on our oars, for if we do, we soon see ourselves carried downstream again. Many of those who drift away from the Cause do so for the reason that they had ceased to go on developing. They became complacent, or indifferent, and consequently ceased to draw the spiritual strength and vitality from the Cause which they should have. Sometimes, of course, people fail because of a test they just do not meet, and often our severest tests come from each other. Certainly the believers should try to avert such things, and if they happen, remedy them through love. Generally speaking nine-tenths of the friends' troubles are because they don't do the Bahá'í thing, in relation to each other, to the administrative bodies or in their personal lives.

Shoghi Effendi: *Principles of Bahá'í Administration: A Compilation*, pp. 87-88

Diversity Of Thought, Temperament And Character Is Desirable

22. Consider the flowers of a garden. Though differing in kind, color, form, and shape, yet, inasmuch as they are refreshed by the waters of one spring, revived by the breath of one wind, invigorated by the rays of one sun, this diversity increaseth their charm, and addeth unto their beauty. How displeasing to the eye if all the flowers and plants, the leaves and blossoms, the fruits, the branches and the trees of that garden were all of the same shape and color! Diversity of hues, form and shape, enricheth and adorneth the garden, and heighteneth the effect thereof. In like manner, when divers shades of thought, temperament and character, are brought together

under the power and influence of one central agency, the beauty and glory of human perfection will be revealed and made manifest. Naught but the celestial potency of the Word of God, which ruleth and transcendeth the realities of all things, is capable of harmonizing the divergent thoughts, sentiments, ideas, and convictions of the children of men. Verily, it is the penetrating power in all things, the mover of souls and the binder and regulator in the world of humanity.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Tablets of the Divine Plan*, p. 103: *Selections ... ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, pp. 291-292

Seek Truth No Matter What One’s Personality

23. We must adore the sun itself and not merely the place of its appearance. In the same way men of enlightened heart worship truth on whatever horizon it appears. They are not bound by personality, but they follow the truth, and are able to recognize it no matter from whence it may come. It is this same truth which helps humanity to progress, which gives life to all created beings, for it is the Tree of Life!

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Paris Talks*, p. 128

24. It means, also, that we must be willing to clear away all that we have previously learned, all that would clog our steps on the way to truth; we must not shrink if necessary from beginning our education all over again. We must not allow our love for any one religion or any one personality to so blind our eyes that we become fettered by superstition! When we are freed from all these bonds, seeking with liberated minds, then shall we be able to arrive at our goal.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *Paris Talks*, p. 137

Do Not Cling To The Promptings of Your Nature; Obey The Statutes of God

25. “Say: O concourse of monks! Seclude not yourselves in your churches and cloisters. Come ye out of them by My leave, and busy, then, yourselves with what will profit you and others. Thus commandeth you He Who is the Lord of the Day of Reckoning. Seclude yourselves in the stronghold of My love. This, truly, is the seclusion that befitteth you, could ye but know it. He that secludeth himself in his house is indeed as one dead. It behooveth man to show forth that which will benefit mankind. He that bringeth forth no fruit is fit for the fire. Thus admonisheth you your Lord; He, verily, is the Mighty, the Bountiful. Enter ye into wedlock, that after you another may arise in your stead. We, verily, have forbidden you lechery, and not that which is conducive to fidelity. Have ye clung unto the promptings of your nature, and cast behind your backs the statutes of God? Fear ye God, and be not of the foolish. But for man, who, on My earth, would remember Me, and how could My attributes and My names be revealed? Reflect, and be not of them that have shut themselves out as by a veil from Him, and were of those that are fast asleep. He that married not (Jesus Christ) could find no place wherein to abide, nor where to lay His head, by reason of what the hands of the treacherous had wrought. His holiness consisted not in the things ye have believed and imagined, but rather in the things which belong unto Us. Ask, that ye may be made aware of His station which hath been exalted above the vain imaginings of all the peoples of the earth. Blessed are they that understand.

Bahá’u’lláh: *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, pp. 49-50

26. Does not the history of primitive Christianity and of the rise of Islam, each in its own way, offer a striking parallel to this strange phenomenon the beginnings of which we are now witnessing in this, the first century of the Bahá'í Era? Has not the Divine Impulse which gave birth to each of these great religious systems been driven, through the operation of those forces which the irresistible growth of the Faith itself had released, to seek away from the land of its birth and in more propitious climes a ready field and a more adequate medium for the incarnation of its spirit and the propagation of its cause? Have not the Asiatic churches of Jerusalem, of Antioch and of Alexandria, consisting chiefly of those Jewish converts, whose character and temperament inclined them to sympathize with the traditional ceremonies of the Mosaic Dispensation, been forced as they steadily declined to recognize the growing ascendancy of their Greek and Roman brethren? Have they not been compelled to acknowledge the superior valor and the trained efficiency which have enabled these standard-bearers of the Cause of Jesus Christ to erect the symbols of His world-wide dominion on the ruins of a collapsing Empire? Has not the animating spirit of Islam been constrained, under the pressure of similar circumstances, to abandon the inhospitable wastes of its Arabian Home, the theatre of its greatest sufferings and exploits, to yield in a distant land the fairest fruit of its slowly maturing civilization?

Shoghi Effendi: *World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 74

The Word of God Is A Binding Force

27. Such is the binding force of the Word of God, which uniteth the hearts of them that have renounced all else but Him, who have believed in His signs, and quaffed from the Hand of glory the Kawthar of God's holy grace. Furthermore, how numerous are those peoples of divers beliefs, of conflicting creeds, and opposing temperaments, who, through the reviving fragrance of the Divine springtime, breathing from the Ridvan of God, have been arrayed with the new robe of divine Unity, and have drunk from the cup of His singleness!

Bahá'u'lláh: *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, pp. 112-113

Souls Receive Grace From The Bounty Of The Holy Spirit, Not From The Personality Of The Manifestation

28. It is evident that the souls receive grace from the bounty of the Holy Spirit which appears in the Manifestations of God, and not from the personality of the Manifestation. Therefore, if a soul does not receive grace from the bounties of the Holy Spirit, he remains deprived of the divine gift, and the banishment itself puts the soul beyond the reach of pardon.

'Abdu'l-Bahá: *Some Answered Questions*, p. 128

Bahá'ís Must Learn To Forget Personalities

29. The Bahá'ís must learn to forget personalities and to overcome the desire--so natural in people--to take sides and fight about it. They must also learn to really make use of the great principle of consultation. There is a time set aside at the 19 Day Feasts for the Community to express its views and make suggestions to its Assembly; the Assembly and the believers should look forward to this happy period of discussion, and neither fear it nor suppress it. Likewise the

Assembly members should fully consult, and in their decisions put the interests of the Cause first and not personalities, the will of the majority prevailing.

Shoghi Effendi: *Light of Divine Guidance* Vol.1, p. 152

30. Today the confirmations of the Kingdom of Abhá are with those who renounce themselves, forget their own opinions, cast aside personalities and are thinking of the welfare of others. Whosoever has lost himself has found the universe and the inhabitants thereof. Whosoever is occupied with himself is wandering in the desert of heedlessness and regret. The "master-key" to self-mastery is self-forgetting. The road to the palace of life is through the path of renunciation.

'Abdu'l-Bahá (Star of the West, vol. 17, no. 2, p. 348)

Teach Own Self Before Teaching Others

31. Whoso ariseth among you to teach the Cause of his Lord, let him, before all else, teach his own self, that his speech may attract the hearts of them that hear him. Unless he teacheth his own self, the words of his mouth will not influence the heart of the seeker. Take heed, O people, lest ye be of them that give good counsel to others but forget to follow it themselves . . .

Bahá'u'lláh (Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 277)

Consider One's Own Personality When Presenting The Message

32. In teaching the Cause, much depends on the personality of the teacher and on the method he chooses for presenting the message. Different personalities and different classes and types of individuals need different methods of approach. And it is the sign of an able teacher to know how to best adapt his methods to various types of people whom he happens to meet. There is no one method one can follow all through. But there should be as many ways of approach as there are types of individual seekers. Flexibility and variety of method is, therefore, an essential prerequisite for the success of every teaching activity.

Shoghi Effendi: *Guidelines for Teaching*, p. 308

Consider The Differences Among People When Teaching The Faith

33. Shoghi Effendi feels that he can lay down no rule as to when one should introduce the names of the Báb, Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá in one's teaching. Much depends on the temperament and aptitude both of the teacher and the one taught....

We must look to the example of the Master and follow our "Inner Light", adapting our message as best we can to the capacity and "ripeness" of the one we are seeking to teach....

Man's spiritual digestive powers have similar laws to those that govern physical digestion. When people are spiritually hungry and thirsty they must be given wholesome and suitable spiritual food, but if we give too much at a time or too rich food for the digestive powers, it only causes nausea and rejection or malassimilation.

Shoghi Effendi: *Guidelines for Teaching*, p. 306

34. Nor should any of the pioneers, at this early stage in the upbuilding of Bahá'í national communities, overlook the fundamental prerequisite for any successful teaching enterprise, which is to adapt the presentation of the fundamental principles of their Faith to the cultural and

religious backgrounds, the ideologies, and the temperament of the divers races and nations whom they are called upon to enlighten and attract. The susceptibilities of these races and nations, from both the northern and southern climes, springing from either the Germanic or Latin stock, belonging to either the Catholic or Protestant communion, some democratic, others totalitarian in outlook, some socialistic, others capitalistic in their tendencies, differing widely in their customs and standards of living, should at all times be carefully considered, and under no circumstances neglected.

Shoghi Effendi: *Citadel of Faith*, p. 25

35. As so much will depend upon the nature and general presentation of the theme, rather than upon the personality of the reader or speaker, I feel that, first and foremost, our attention should be concentrated on the choice and thorough preparation of the subject matter as well as on the proper drafting and the form of the paper itself, which might possibly have to be submitted afterwards to the authorities of the conference.

Shoghi Effendi: *Bahá'í Administration*, p. 58

36. As to the policy that should be adopted with regard to these Conferences and other Bahá'í activities in general, it appears increasingly evident that as the Movement grows in strength and power the National Spiritual Assemblies should be encouraged, if circumstances permit and the means at their disposal justify, to resort to the twofold method of directly and indirectly winning the enlightened public to the unqualified acceptance of the Bahá'í Faith. The one method would assume an open, decisive and challenging tone. The other, without implying in any manner the slightest departure from strict loyalty to the Cause of God, would be progressive and cautious. Experience will reveal the fact that each of the methods in its own special way might suit a particular temperament and class of people, and that each in the present state of a constantly fluctuating society, should be judiciously attempted and utilized.

Shoghi Effendi: *Bahá'í Administration*, pp. 124-125

Carefully Consider Personality of Bahá'í Chosen To Teach People of Prominence

37. The personality of the Bahá'í who accepts this invitation should be carefully considered, because to be a guest of people in a different climate and environment, of a different nationality and speaking a different language, so far away, might be a little trying, and of course the impression that this Bahá'í creates will be of infinite importance to the Faith in its future development in Greenland. Whether ... makes the sacrifice and goes, or some other individual is chosen, he urges your Assembly to above all consider this matter tactfully and from the human standpoint, rather than the religious one, if one can put it that way.

Shoghi Effendi: *Messages to Canada*, p. 28

Draw Upon Hidden Springs Of Celestial Strength, Not Upon Force Of Human Personality

38. That the Cause associated with the name of Bahá'u'lláh feeds itself upon those hidden springs of celestial strength which no force of human personality, whatever its glamour, can replace; that its reliance is solely upon that mystic Source with which no worldly advantage, be it wealth, fame, or learning can compare; that it propagates itself by ways mysterious and utterly at variance with the standards accepted by the generality of mankind, will, if not already apparent,

become increasingly manifest as it forges ahead towards fresh conquests in its struggle for the spiritual regeneration of mankind.

Shoghi Effendi: *World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 51-52

Thorough Preparation of The Subject Matter For Teaching Is Also Important

39. As so much will depend upon the nature and general presentation of the theme, rather than upon the personality of the reader or speaker, I feel that first and foremost our attention should be concentrated on the choice and thorough preparation of the subject matter as well as on the proper drafting and the form of the paper itself, which might possibly have to be submitted afterwards to the authorities of the conference.

I feel the necessity of entrusting this highly important and delicate task to a special committee, to be appointed most carefully by the National Spiritual Assembly of America, and consisting of those who by their knowledge of the Cause, their experience in matters of publicity, and particularly by their power of expression and beauty of style will be qualified to produce a befitting statement on the unique history of the Movement as well as its lofty principles.

Shoghi Effendi: *Unfolding Destiny*, p. 21

No Limitations of Personality And Temperament Are Placed On Believers When Choosing Members For Administrative Institutions

40. I greatly value your suggestions, but 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 Election*, p. 317

The Cause Must Not Be Allowed To Center Around Any Bahá'í Personality

41. "Regarding the principle that the Cause must not be allowed to center around any Bahá'í personality, the Guardian wishes to make it clear that it was never intended that well qualified individual teachers should not receive from local Assemblies every encouragement and facilities to address the public. What the Guardian meant was that the personality and popularity of such a speaker should never be allowed to eclipse the authority or detract from the influence of the body of the elected representatives in every local community. Such an individual should not only seek the approval, advice and assistance of the body that represents the Cause in his locality, but should strive to attribute any credit he may obtain, to the collective wisdom and capacity of the Assembly under whose jurisdiction he performs his services. Assemblies and not individuals constitute the bedrock on which the Administration is built. Everything else must be subordinated to, and be made to serve and advance the best interests of these elected custodians and promoters of the laws of Bahá'u'lláh."

Shoghi Effendi: *Directives of the Guardian*, p. 71

42. We should respect the National Spiritual Assembly and the Local Spiritual Assembly because they are institutions founded by Bahá'u'lláh. It has nothing to do with personality, but is far above it. It will be a great day when the friends, on and off the Assemblies, come to fully grasp the fact that it is not the individuals on an Assembly which is important, but the Assembly as an institution.

Shoghi Effendi, *National Spiritual Assembly*, p. 96

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