

Does it make a difference that the local House of Justice is called, for the present, a Spiritual Assembly? Will its functions change when its name is changed to House of Justice?

The discussion began with a Tablet from Abdu'l-Baha:

The signature of that meeting should be the Spiritual Gathering (House of Spirituality) and the wisdom therein is that hereafter the government should not infer from the term "House of Justice" that a court is signified, that it is connected with political affairs, or that at any time it will interfere with governmental affairs.

Hereafter, enemies will be many. They would use this subject as a cause for disturbing the mind of the government and confusing the thoughts of the public. The intention was to make known that by the term Spiritual Gathering (House of Spirituality), that Gathering has not the least connection with material matters, and that its whole aim and consultation is confined to matters connected with spiritual affairs. This was also instructed (performed) in all Persia

(Abdu'l-Baha, Tablets of Abdu'l-Baha v1, p. 5)

From: Sen & Sonja <sen.sonja@casema.NL>
Subject: Tablet of the House of Justice
Copies to: tarikh
Date sent: Fri, 19 Oct 2007 14:18:36 +0200

> By the logic I think Sen is following, the term local spiritual
> assembly was chose to prove permanently that the body was
> permanently spiritual and has nothing to do with political affairs.

Nope, that is not my logic at all.

Never mind the names, look at the *functions* which Abdu'l-Baha attributes to the assembly/House of Justice in this tablet. Look at the functions that Baha'u'llah ascribes to them. Look throughout the Writings: there must be several hundred texts that describe the purposes and functions of the House/assembly. There is not ONE text

that says they have the function of government. There are several that say they have nothing to do with politics, may not discuss political affairs, must be obedient to government, may not be the executive, and so on.

The idea that the House of Justice is some sort of government is just a confusion that arose, partly out of polemic claims from enemies of the Faith, partly because of the name of the institution - House of Justice. Shoghi Effendi at least understood quite clearly that the change of name does NOT imply any change of function. In WOB he addresses the kind of argument you make (that the assemblies may not be a government but the Houses of Justice are something different and they are a government) and says: "That the Spiritual Assemblies of today will be replaced in time by the Houses of Justice, and are to all intents and purposes identical and not separate bodies, is abundantly confirmed by 'Abdu'l-Baha Himself.

(Shoghi Effendi, The World Order of Baha'u'llah, p. 6)

- > logic, a switch back to the original name would indicate they might
- > or could start tackling non-spiritual, political business. And the
- > names will switch back some day.

I think you've completely missed the point of Abdu'l-Baha's tablet. He is not changing the name to conceal the institution's true function, he is changing it (for now) because the correct name has lead to misunderstanding and will allow "enemies" to make UNTRUE assertions that the House of Justice is a form of government or court or will interfere in politics.

- > I could see making the argument Sen has made if there is another
- > text backing it up clearly. This text strikes me as, at best, a
- > supporting text. And I gather most of us are still unconvinced that
- > the proof texts are really to be found.

LOL !! This is a bit like asking if there's anything in the Bahai writings about this covenant idea.

Compilations on email are tedious, and I avoid loading my emails with quotes, but you asked for it. For those who don't need convincing, the remainder below is just a compilation without comments, so you can hit delete right

[[here](#)]

Shoghi Effendi wrote:

"Theirs is not the purpose, while endeavoring to conduct and perfect the administrative affairs of their Faith, to violate, under any circumstances, the provisions of their country's constitution, much less to allow the machinery of their administration to supersede the government of their respective countries." (The World Order of Baha'u'llah 66.)

Abdu'l-Baha wrote:

"Should they place in the arena the crown of the government of the whole world, and invite each one of us to accept it, undoubtedly we shall not condescend, and shall refuse to accept it." (Tablets of the Divine Plan 51)

and

"The signature of that meeting should be the Spiritual Gathering (House of Spirituality) and the wisdom therein is that hereafter the government should not infer from the term "House of Justice" that a court is signified, that it is connected with political affairs, or that ****at any time it will interfere with governmental affairs.**** Hereafter, enemies will be many. They would use this subject as a cause for disturbing the mind of the government and confusing the thoughts of the public." (Tablets of Abdu'l-Baha Abbas vol. 1, page 5, also printed with minor editorial changes in Baha'i World Faith 405).

This is just what has happened: the Bahais were and are being attacked by enemies who accuse them of planning to set up a world theocratic state. And the Bahais do not know what side they are on!! It is monstrous, and absurd. Abdu'l-Baha complains:

"One of their many calumnies was that this servant had raised aloft a banner in this city, had summoned the people together under it, had established a new sovereignty for himself, ... and, God forbid, had purposed to cause the gravest breach in the mighty power of the Crown.

May the Lord protect us from such atrocious falsehoods! According to the direct and sacred command of God ... We must obey and be the

well-wishers of the governments of the land, regard disloyalty unto a just king as disloyalty to God Himself and wishing evil to the government a transgression of the Cause of God. With these final and decisive words, how can it be that these imprisoned ones should indulge in such vain fancies; incarcerated, how could they show forth such disloyalty!" (Will and Testament, pages 7-8)

In the Lawh-e Ashraf, Baha'u'llah writes:

"The one true God, exalted be His glory, hath ever regarded, and will continue to regard, the hearts of men as His own, His exclusive possession. All else, whether pertaining to land or sea, whether riches or glory, He hath bequeathed unto the Kings and rulers of the earth. From the beginning that hath no beginning the ensign proclaiming the words "He doeth whatsoever He willeth" hath been unfurled in all its splendor before His Manifestation. What mankind needeth in this day is obedience unto them that are in authority, and a faithful adherence to the cord of wisdom. The instruments which are essential to the immediate protection, the security and assurance of the human race have been entrusted to the hands, and lie in the grasp, of the governors of human society. This is the wish of God and His decree.... ." (Gleanings, CII 206-7)

and in the Epistle to the Son of the Wolf:

Every nation must have a high regard for the position of its sovereign, must be submissive unto him, must carry out his behests, and hold fast his authority. The sovereigns of the earth have been and are the manifestations of the power, the grandeur and the majesty of God. This Wronged One hath at no time dealt deceitfully with anyone. Every one is well aware of this, and beareth witness unto it. Regard for the rank of sovereigns is divinely ordained, as is clearly attested by the words of the Prophets of God and His chosen ones. He Who is the Spirit (Jesus) -- may peace be upon Him -- was asked: "O Spirit of God! Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar or not?" And He made reply: "Yea, render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things 90 that are God's." He forbade it not. These two sayings are, in the estimation of men of insight, one and the same, for if that which belonged to Caesar had not come from God, He would have forbidden it. And likewise in the sacred verse: "Obey God and obey the Apostle, and those among you invested with authority." By "those invested with authority" is meant primarily and more especially the Imams -- the blessings of God rest upon them! They, verily, are

the manifestations of the power of God, and the sources of His authority, and the repositories of His knowledge, and the daysprings of His commandments. Secondly these words refer unto the kings and rulers -- those through the brightness of whose justice the horizons of the world are resplendent and luminous. We fain would hope that His Majesty the Shah will shine forth with a light of justice whose radiance will envelop all the kindreds of the earth. It is incumbent upon every one to beseech the one true God on his behalf for that which is meet and seemly in this day.

(Baha'u'llah, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, p. 89)

Let none, however, mistake or unwittingly misrepresent the purpose of Baha'u'llah. ... His teachings embody no principle that can, in any way, be construed as a repudiation, or even a disparagement, however veiled, of the institution of kingship. ... Indeed if we delve into the writings of the Author of the Baha'i Faith, we cannot fail to discover unnumbered passages in which, in terms that none can misrepresent, the principle of kingship is eulogized, the rank and conduct of just and fair-minded kings is extolled, the rise of monarchs, ruling with justice and even professing His Faith, is envisaged, and the solemn duty to arise and ensure the triumph of Baha'i sovereigns is inculcated. To conclude from the above quoted words, addressed by Baha'u'llah to the monarchs of the earth, to infer from the recital of the woeful disasters that have overtaken so many of them, that His followers either advocate or anticipate the definite extinction of the institution of kingship, would indeed be tantamount to a distortion of His teaching.

I can do no better than quote some of Baha'u'llah's Own testimonies, leaving the reader to shape his own judgment as to the falsity of such a deduction. In His "Epistle to the Son of the Wolf" He indicates the true source of kingship: "Regard for the rank of sovereigns is divinely ordained, as is clearly attested by the words of the Prophets of God and His chosen ones. He Who is the Spirit [Jesus] -- may peace be upon Him -- was asked: 'O Spirit of God! Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not?' And He made reply: 'Yea, render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.'

(Shoghi Effendi, The Promised Day is Come, p. 71)

in the slow and hidden process of secularisation invading many a Government department under the courageous guidance of the Governors of outlying provinces -- in all of these a discerning eye can easily

discover the symptoms that augur well for a future that is sure to witness the formal and complete separation of Church and State. (Shoghi Effendi, *The Unfolding Destiny of the British Baha'i Community*, p. 76)

The instruments which are essential to the immediate protection, the security and assurance of the human race have been entrusted to the hands, and lie in the grasp, of the governors of human society. This is the wish of God and His decree.... as translated by Shoghi Effendi in *Gleanings CII*. More literally:

'The reins of protection, security and assurance in outward matters are in the mighty grasp of the government. This is the wish of God and His decree....'

But the Babi chiefs composed treatises ... they regarded interpretation as the truth of revelation and the essence of true exegesis: thus, for instance, they interpreted the sovereignty of the Qa'im as a mystical sovereignty, and His conquests as conquests of the cities of hearts, adducing in support of this the meekness and defeat of the Chief of Martyrs (may the life of all being be a sacrifice for him). For he was the true manifestation of the blessed verse "And verily our host shall overcome for them,"* yet, notwithstanding this, he quaffed the cup of martyrdom with perfect meekness, and, at the very moment of uttermost defeat, triumphed over his enemies and became the most mighty of the troops of the Supreme Host. (Abdu'l-Baha, *A Traveller's Narrative*, p. 17)

Mulla Husayn pleaded with the Prince, and the formal assurance he gave him, disclaiming, in no uncertain terms, any intention on his part or that of his fellow-disciples of usurping the authority of the Shah (Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 39)

... a similar categorical repudiation, on the part of the Babis, of any intention of interfering with the civil jurisdiction of the realm, or of undermining the legitimate authority of its sovereign. (Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 42)

Baha'u'llah, Who Himself was an active figure in those days and was regarded one of the leading exponents of the Faith of the Bab, states clearly His views in the *Ḥqan* that His conception of the sovereignty of the Promised Qa'im was purely a spiritual one, and not a material

or political one...

(Shoghi Effendi, *The Unfolding Destiny of the British Baha'i Community*, p. 425)

God, verily, hath prescribed to thee to submit unto Him Who is His Remembrance, and unto His Cause, and to subdue, with the truth and by His leave, the countries, for in this world thou hast been mercifully invested with sovereignty, and wilt, in the next, dwell, nigh unto the Seat of Holiness, with the inmates of the Paradise of His good-pleasure...

(The Bab, *Selections from the Writings of the Bab*, p. 42)

Le Bayan Arabe 137-8 (Vahid IV); 148-9, 155-6 (Vahid V); 173, 175 (Vahid VII), 197-8 (Vahid IX), and 239 (Vahid XI), 213 (Vahid X, Bab 16), 215-6 (Vahid X, Bab 17). - I don't have this electronically, sorry

I have no desire to seize thy property, even to the extent of a grain of mustard, nor do I wish to occupy thy position.

(*Selections from the Writings of the Bab*, letter to Muhammad Shah p. 26)

We have enjoined upon all mankind to establish the Most Great Peace -- the surest of all means for the protection of humanity. The sovereigns of the world should, with one accord, hold fast thereunto, for this is the supreme instrument that can ensure the security and welfare of all peoples and nations. They, verily, are the manifestations of the power of God and the daysprings of His authority.

(*Baha'u'llah, Tablets of Baha'u'llah*, p. 125)

Yea, the sovereignty attributed to the Qa'im and spoken of in the scriptures, is a reality, the truth of which none can doubt. This sovereignty, however, is not the sovereignty which the minds of men have falsely imagined.

... by sovereignty is meant the all-encompassing, all-pervading power which is inherently exercised by the Qa'im whether or not He appear to the world clothed in the majesty of earthly dominion. ... You will readily recognize that the terms sovereignty, wealth, life, death, judgment and resurrection, spoken of by the scriptures of old, are not what this generation hath conceived and vainly imagined. Nay, by sovereignty is meant that sovereignty which in every dispensation resideth within, and is exercised by, the person of the Manifestation,

the Day-star of Truth. That sovereignty is the spiritual ascendancy which He exerciseth to the fullest degree over all that is in heaven and on earth, and which in due time revealeth itself to the world in direct proportion to its capacity and spiritual receptiveness, ... (Iqan 106-8)

... how many are the Sovereigns who bow the knee before His name! How numerous the nations and kingdoms who have sought the shelter of His shadow, who bear allegiance to His Faith, and pride themselves therein! ... Such is His earthly sovereignty, the evidences of which thou dost on every side behold. This sovereignty must needs be revealed and established either in the lifetime of every Manifestation of God or after His ascension unto His true habitation in the realms above. ... That spiritual ascendancy, however, which is primarily intended, resideth within, and revolveth around Them from eternity even unto eternity. It can never for a moment be divorced from Them. Its dominion hath encompassed all that is in heaven and on earth. (Iqan 110-111)

Our purpose in setting forth these truths hath been to demonstrate the sovereignty of Him Who is the King of kings. Be fair: Is this sovereignty which, through the utterance of one Word, hath manifested such pervading influence, ascendancy, and awful majesty, is this sovereignty superior, or is the worldly dominion of these kings of the earth who, despite their solicitude for their subjects and their help of the poor, are assured only of an outward and fleeting allegiance, while in the hearts of men they inspire neither affection nor respect? Hath not that sovereignty, through the potency of one word, subdued, quickened, and revitalized the whole world? What! Can the lowly dust compare with Him Who is the Lord of Lords? What tongue dare utter the immensity of difference that lieth between them? (Iqan 123-4)

Were sovereignty to mean earthly sovereignty and worldly dominion, were it to imply the subjection and external allegiance of all the peoples and kindreds of the earth - whereby His loved ones should be exalted and be made to live in peace, and His enemies be abased and tormented - such form of sovereignty would not be true of God Himself, the Source of all dominion, Whose majesty and power all things testify. For, dost thou not witness how the generality of mankind is under the sway of His enemies? Have they not all turned away from the path of His good-pleasure? Have they not done that which He hath forbidden, and left undone, nay repudiated and opposed, those things which He hath commanded? Have not His friends ever been the victims of

the tyranny of His foes? All these things are more obvious than even the splendour of the noon-tide sun (Iqan 125)

Were the verse "And verily Our host shall conquer" to be literally interpreted, it is evident that it would in no wise be applicable to the chosen Ones of God and His hosts, inasmuch as Husayn, whose heroism was manifest as the sun, crushed and subjugated, quaffed at last the cup of martyrdom in Karbila ...

... the purpose of these verses is not what they have imagined. Nay, the terms "ascendancy," "power," and "authority" imply a totally different station and meaning. For instance, consider the pervading power of those drops of the blood of Husayn which besprinkled the earth. What ascendancy and influence hath the dust itself, through the sacredness and potency of that blood, exercised over the bodies and souls of men! So much so, that he who sought deliverance from his ills, was healed by touching the dust of that holy ground, and whosoever, wishing to protect his property, treasured with absolute faith and understanding, a little of that holy earth within his house, safeguarded all his possessions. These are the outward manifestations of its potency. ... Furthermore, call to mind the shameful circumstances that have attended the martyrdom of Husayn. ... And yet, behold how numerous, in this day, are those who from the uttermost corners of the earth don the garb of pilgrimage, seeking the site of his martyrdom, that there they may lay their heads upon the threshold of his shrine! Such is the ascendancy and power of God! Such is the glory of His dominion and majesty! (Iqan 126-9)

The just king is the shadow of God in the earth; all should take refuge under the shadow of his justice and rest in the shade of his favor.

(Abdu'l-Baha, A Traveller's Narrative, p. 65)

Let them willingly subject themselves to every just king, and to every generous ruler be good citizens. Let them obey the government and not meddle in political affairs, but devote themselves to the betterment of character and behaviour, and fix their gaze upon the Light of the world.

(Selections from the Writings of Abdu'l-Baha, p. 318)

One of their many calumnies was that this servant had raised aloft a banner in this city, had summoned the people together under it, had established a new sovereignty for himself, ... had purposed to cause

the gravest breach in the mighty power of the Crown. May the Lord protect us from such atrocious falsehoods! According to the direct and sacred command of God ... We must obey and be the well-wishers of the governments of the land, regard disloyalty unto a just king as disloyalty to God Himself and wishing evil to the government a transgression of the Cause of God. (Abdu'l- Baha, The Will and Testament, p. 7)

The divines must needs unite with His Majesty, the Shah, and cleave unto that which will insure the protection, the security, the welfare and prosperity of men. A just king enjoyeth nearer access unto God than anyone.

(Baha'u'llah, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, p. 91)

Should we become intoxicated with this cup, the sovereignty of this globe of earth will become lower in our estimation than children's play. Should they place in the arena the crown of the government of the whole world, and invite each one of us to accept it, undoubtedly we shall not condescend, and shall refuse to accept it.

(Abdu'l-Baha, Tablets of the Divine Plan, p. 50)

Know thou that We have annulled the rule of the sword, as an aid to Our Cause, and substituted for it the power born of the utterance of men. Thus have We irrevocably decreed, by virtue of Our grace. Say: O people! Sow not the seeds of discord among men, 304 and refrain from contending with your neighbor, for your Lord hath committed the world and the cities thereof to the care of the kings of the earth, and made them the emblems of His own power, by virtue of the sovereignty He hath chosen to bestow upon them. He hath refused to reserve for Himself any share whatever of this world's dominion. To this He Who is Himself the Eternal Truth will testify. The things He hath reserved for Himself are the cities of men's hearts, that He may cleanse them from all earthly defilements, and enable them to draw nigh unto the hallowed Spot which the hands of the infidel can never profane.

(Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, p. 303)

We, of a certainty, have had no purpose in this earthly realm save to make God manifest and to reveal His sovereignty; sufficient unto Me is God for a witness.

(Baha'u'llah, The Kitab-i-Aqdas, p. 82)

He Who is the Day-star of Truth and Revealer of the Supreme Being holdeth, for all time, undisputed sovereignty over all that is in heaven and on earth, though no man be found on earth to obey Him. He verily is independent of all earthly dominion, though He be utterly destitute.

(Baha'u'llah, The Kitab-i-Iqan, p. 93)

Thereupon Jesus lifted up His head and said: "Beholdest thou not the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power and might?" These were His words, and yet consider how to outward seeming He was devoid of all power except that inner power which was of God and which had encompassed all that is in heaven and on earth.

(Baha'u'llah, The Kitab-i-Iqan, p. 132)

Certain of the Jews, standing by, protested saying: "Who can forgive sins, but God alone?" And immediately He perceived their thoughts, Jesus answering said unto them: "Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, arise, and take up thy bed, and walk; or to say, thy sins are forgiven thee? that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins." [1] This is the real sovereignty, and such is the power of God's chosen Ones! All these things which We have repeatedly mentioned, and the details which We have cited from divers sources, have no other purpose but to enable thee to grasp the meaning of the allusions in the utterances of the chosen Ones of God,

(Baha'u'llah, The Kitab-i-Iqan, p. 132)

God hath committed into your hands the reins of the government of the people, that ye may rule with justice over them, safeguard the rights of the down-trodden, and punish the wrong-doers. If ye neglect the duty prescribed unto you by God in His Book, your names shall be numbered with those of the unjust in His sight. (Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, CXVI, 247.)

Ye perpetrate every day a fresh injustice, and treat Me as ye treated Me in times past, though I never attempted to meddle with your affairs. At no time have I opposed you, neither have I rebelled against your laws. ... Know for a certainty, however, that whatever your hands or the hands of the infidels have wrought will never, as they never did of old, change the Cause of God or alter His ways.

Give heed to My warning, ye people of Persia! If I be slain at your hands, God will assuredly raise up one who will fill the seat made vacant through My death, for such is God's method carried into effect of old, and no change can ye find in God's method of dealing. (Letter to Persian Ambassador, Gleanings, CXIII 224.)

The one true God, exalted be His glory, hath ever regarded, and will continue to regard, the hearts of men as His own, His exclusive possession. All else, whether pertaining to land or sea, whether riches or glory, He hath bequeathed unto the Kings and rulers of the earth. From the beginning that hath no beginning the ensign proclaiming the words "He doeth whatsoever He willeth" hath been unfurled in all its splendor before His Manifestation. What mankind needeth in this day is obedience unto them that are in authority, and a faithful adherence to the cord of wisdom. The instruments which are essential to the immediate protection, the security and assurance of the human race have been entrusted to the hands, and lie in the grasp, of the governors of human society. This is the wish of God and His decree.... . (The Lawh-e Ashraf, in Gleanings, CII 206-7.)

In the Epistle to the Romans Saint Paul hath written: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God." And further: "For he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." He saith that the appearance of the kings, and their majesty and power are of God.

(Baha'u'llah, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, p. 91)

Dispute not with any one concerning the things of this world and its affairs, for God hath abandoned them to such as have set their affection upon them. Out of the whole world He hath chosen for Himself the hearts of men -- hearts which the hosts of revelation and of utterance can subdue. Thus hath it been ordained by the Fingers of Baha, upon the Tablet of God's irrevocable decree, by the behest of Him Who is the Supreme Ordainer, the All-Knowing.

(Baha'u'llah, Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, p. 278)

Among the people are those who say "that youth desires only to perpetuate his name" and others say "he seeks the world (dunya) for himself," although I have not found any secure place in my days, on which I might stand. (Kitab-e Mubin 62-3 (my trans.)

Abandon thy kingdom unto the kings, ... Exhort the kings and say:
'Deal equitably with men. Beware lest ye transgress the bounds fixed
in the Book.' ... Verily, the day of ingathering is come, and all
things have been separated from each other. He hath stored away that
which He chose in the vessels of justice, and cast into fire that
which befitteth it. (Tablet to the Pope)

"its Author – at once the Judge, the Lawgiver, the Unifier and
Redeemer of mankind – announces to the kings of the earth the
promulgation of the 'Most Great Law;' pronounces them to be His
vassals; proclaims Himself the 'King of Kings;' disclaims any
intention of laying hands on their kingdoms; reserves for Himself the
right to 'seize and possess the hearts of men...'" (Shoghi Effendi re
the Aqdas, in God Passes By)

K95: None must contend with those who wield authority over the
people; leave unto them that which is theirs, and direct your
attention to men's hearts.

K82: Ye are but vassals, O kings of the earth! He Who is the King of
Kings hath appeared, arrayed in His most wondrous glory, and is
summoning you unto Himself ... Arise, and serve Him Who is the Desire
of all nations, Who hath created you through a word from Him, and
ordained you to be, for all time, the emblems of His sovereignty.

K83: By the righteousness of God! It is not Our wish to lay hands on
your kingdoms. Our mission is to seize and possess the hearts of men.
Upon them the eyes of Baha are fastened. To this testifieth the
Kingdom of Names, could ye but comprehend it. Whoso followeth his Lord
will renounce the world and all that is therein; how much greater,
then, must be the detachment of Him Who holdeth so august a station!
Forsake your palaces, and haste ye to gain admittance into His
Kingdom. This, indeed, will profit you both in this world and in the
next ...

K91: ... [God] shall, if it be His Will, bless [Tehran's] throne with
one who will rule with justice, who will gather together the flock of
God which the wolves have scattered. Such a ruler will, with joy and
gladness, turn his face towards, and extend his favours unto, the
people of Baha. He indeed is accounted in the sight of God as a jewel
among men. ... K 93: ... Erelong will the state of affairs within thee
[i.e., Tehran] be changed, and the reins of power fall into the hands

of the people. ...

...arrangements are being made for a constitutional (mashrutih) government that is in accord with the divine Law, in conformity with the explicit command of the Most Holy Book. ... This became a cause for great happiness. The constitutional government is, according to the unequivocal divine Text, sanctioned (mashrucih) by the revealed Law, and it is a cause of the might and prosperity of the State, to which allegiance is owed, and of the progress and liberty of the respected citizenry. (Abdu'l-Baha, Translated by Juan Cole, 'Letter [to Jinab-i Aqa Mirza Ahmad] on the establishment of a civil parliament.' [Http:// www-personal.umich.edu/ ~jrcole/ abconst.htm.](http://www-personal.umich.edu/~jrcole/abconst.htm))

K 88: Hearken ye, O Rulers of America and the Presidents of the Republics therein, Adorn ye the temple of dominion with the ornament of justice and of the fear of God, and its head with the crown of the remembrance of your Lord, the Creator of the heavens. O concourse of rulers! ... Bind ye the broken with the hands of justice, and crush the oppressor who flourisheth with the rod of the commandments of your Lord, the Ordainer, the All-Wise.

For is it not your clear duty to restrain the tyranny of the oppressor, and to deal equitably with your subjects, that your high sense of justice may be fully demonstrated to all mankind? God hath committed into your hands the reins of the government of the people, that ye may rule with justice over them, safeguard the rights of the down-trodden, and punish the wrong-doers. (Suriy-ye Muluk, in Summons, paragraph 21; Gleanings, CXVI 247)

K172 We, of a certainty, have had no purpose in this earthly realm save to make God manifest and to reveal His sovereignty; sufficient unto Me is God for a witness.

This passage, now written by the Pen of Glory, is accounted as part of the Most Holy Book: The men of God's House of Justice have been charged with the affairs of the religious community (‘amuur-e mellat). They, in truth, are the Trustees of God among His servants and the daysprings of authority in His countries.

O my followers (hezb-e allah)! That which traineth the world is Justice, for it is upheld by two pillars, reward and punishment. These

two pillars are the sources of life to the world. Inasmuch as for each day there is a new problem and for every problem an expedient solution, such affairs should be referred to the House of Justice that the members thereof may act according to the needs and requirements of the time. They that, for the sake of God, arise to serve His Cause, are the recipients of divine inspiration from the unseen Kingdom. It is incumbent upon all to be obedient unto them. All matters of policy (amuur-e siyaasiyyah) should be referred to the House of Justice, but acts of worship must be observed according to that which God hath revealed in His Book. (8th Ishraq, I modified Taherzadeh's translation to reflect the original at the points marked)

According to the fundamental laws which We have formerly revealed in the Kitab-i-Aqdas and other Tablets, all affairs are committed to the care of just kings and presidents and of the Trustees of the House of Justice. ... The system of government which the British people have adopted in London appeareth to be good, for it is adorned with the light of both kingship and of the consultation of the people.
(Baha'u'llah, Tablets of Baha'u'llah, p. 92)

The Pen of the Most High exhorteth, at this moment, the manifestations of authority and the sources of power, namely the kings, the sovereigns, the presidents, the rulers, the divines and the wise, and enjoineth them to uphold the cause of religion, and to cleave unto it. (Tablets of Baha'u'llah 63)

"Not only with regard to publication, but all matters without any exception whatsoever, regarding the interests of the Cause in that locality ... should be referred exclusively to the Spiritual Assembly ... unless it be a matter of national interest, in which case it shall be referred to the national body. ... By national affairs is not meant matters that are political in their character, for the friends of God the world over are strictly forbidden to meddle with political affairs in any way whatever, but rather things that affect the spiritual activities of the body of the friends in that land." (Unfolding Destiny 8)

If any person wishes to speak of government affairs, or to interfere with the order of Governors, the others must not combine with him because the Cause of God is withdrawn entirely from political affairs; the political realm pertains only to the Rulers of those matters: it has nothing to do with the souls who are exerting their utmost energy to harmonizing affairs, helping character and inciting (the people) to

strive for perfections. Therefore no soul is allowed to interfere with (political) matters, but only in that which is commanded.
(Abdu'l-Baha, Baha'i World Faith - Abdu'l-Baha Section, p. 407)

By the righteousness of God, my Well-Beloved! I have never aspired after worldly leadership. My sole purpose hath been to hand down unto men that which I was bidden to deliver by God, the Gracious, the Incomparable, that it may detach them from all that pertaineth to this world, and cause them to attain such heights as neither the ungodly can conceive, nor the froward imagine.
(Baha'u'llah, Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, p. 108)

And, now that this all-important Work may suffer no neglect, but rather function vigorously and continuously in every part of the Baha'i world; that the unity of the Cause of Baha'u'llah may remain secure and inviolate, it is of the utmost importance that in accordance with the explicit text of the Kitab-i-Aqdas, the Most Holy Book, in every locality, be it city or hamlet, where the number of adult (21 years and above) declared believers exceeds nine, a local "Spiritual Assembly" be forthwith established. To it all local matters pertaining to the Cause must be directly and immediately referred for full consultation and decision. The importance, nay the absolute necessity of these local Assemblies is manifest when we realize that in the days to come they will evolve into the local Houses of Justice, and at present provide the firm foundation on which the structure of the Master's Will is to be reared in future.
(Shoghi Effendi, Baha'i Administration, p. 37)

But ...the most expert doctors of the capital [said] "That this person, without regarding [the fact] that he is at variance with the Perspicuous Religion, is a meddler with custom and creed, and a troubler of kings and emperors. ..." This answer was not approved before the [Royal] Presence, for the contents of this epistle had no obvious discordance with the Law or with reason, and did not meddle with political or administrative matters, nor interfere with or attack the Throne of Sovereignty.
(Abdu'l-Baha, A Traveller's Narrative, p. 59)

O ye beloved of the Lord! It is incumbent upon you to be submissive to all monarchs that are just and to show your fidelity to every righteous king. Serve ye the sovereigns of the world with utmost truthfulness and loyalty. Show obedience unto them and be their well-

wishers. Without their leave and permission do not meddle with political affairs, for disloyalty to the just sovereign is disloyalty to God Himself.

(Abdu'l-Baha, The Will and Testament, p. 15)

Our hope is that the world's religious leaders and the rulers thereof will unitedly arise for the reformation of this age ... Let them ... take counsel together and, through anxious and full deliberation, administer to a diseased and sorely-afflicted world the remedy it requireth (Lawh-e Maqsuud)

The beginning of Wisdom and the origin thereof is to acknowledge whatsoever God hath clearly set forth, for through its potency the foundation of statesmanship, which is a shield for the preservation of the body of mankind, hath been firmly established. Ponder a while that ye may perceive what My most exalted Pen hath proclaimed in this wondrous Tablet. (Laweh-e Hikmat)

O ye the beloved of the one true God! ... Forbear ye from concerning yourselves with the affairs of this world and all that pertaineth unto it, or from meddling with the activities of those who are its outward leaders.

(Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, p. 241)

Most imagine that this Servant hath the intention of establishing a full-blown government on earth – even though, in all the tablets, He hath forbidden the servants to accept such a rank. ... Kings are the manifestations of divine power, and our intent is only that they should be just. If they keep their gaze upon justice, they are reckoned as of God. (translated in Cole, Modernity 35.)

If you refer to history, you would find countless examples of this [negative] sort, all based on the involvement of religious leaders in political matters. These souls are the fountainhead of the interpretation of God's commandments (tashrii`), not of implementation (tanfiidh). That is, when the government requests an explanation concerning the requirements of the Law of God and the realities of the divine ordinances ... they must explain what has been deduced of the commands of God, and what is in accordance with the law of God. Apart from this, what awareness do they have of questions of leadership and

social development, the administration and control of weighty matters, the welfare and prosperity of the kingdom, the improvement of procedures and codes of law, or foreign affairs and domestic policy? (Abdu'lBaha, Sermon on the Art of Governance)

True civilization will unfurl its banner ... whenever a certain number of its distinguished and high-minded sovereigns ... [shall arise] ... to establish the Cause of Universal Peace. They must make the Cause of Peace the object of general consultation, and seek by every means in their power to establish a Union of the nations of the world. They must conclude a binding treaty and establish a covenant, the provisions of which shall be sound, inviolable and definite. They must proclaim it to all the world and obtain for it the sanction of all the human race. ... In this all-embracing Pact the limits and frontiers of each and every nation (har daulati) should be clearly fixed, the principles underlying the relations of governments towards one another definitely laid down, and all international agreements and obligations ascertained. ... SDC 64-5

... as the government of America is a republican form of government, it is necessary that all the citizens shall take part in the elections of officers and take part in the affairs of the republic (Letter to Thornton Chase, Tablets of cAbdu'l-Baha Abbas 342-43)

it became clear and obvious even to statesmen that the fundamental intentions and ideas of this sect were things spiritual, and such as are connected with pure hearts; that their true and essential principles were to reform the morals and beautify the conduct of the human race, and that with things material they had absolutely no concern. (Traveler's narrative p 39)

... this sect have no worldly object nor any role in political matters. The fulcrum of their motion and rest and the pivot of their cast and conduct is restricted to spiritual things and confined to the doctrine of the unity of the prophets; it has no role to play in the affairs of the government nor any connection to the seat of sovereignty. Its principles are the proclamation of the praises of God, the investigation of signs, the education of souls, the reformation of characters, the purification of hearts, and illumination with the gleams of enlightenment. ... [the Bahai scriptures] are entirely taken up with the prohibition of

sedition, and with upright conduct amongst mankind, obedience, submission, loyalty, obeying the law, the acquisition of laudable qualities, and encouragements to become endowed with praiseworthy accomplishments and characteristics.

They play absolutely no role in political questions, and do not raise opposition in matters which could cause disturbance or sedition. Under these circumstances the government cannot justly offer excuses, and possesses no pretext [for further persecuting this sect] except [a claim to the right of] interference in thought and conscience, which are the private possessions of the heart and soul. ... (SDC 86-88)

The sacred and youthful branch, the Guardian of the Cause of God, as well as the Universal House of Justice to be universally elected and established, are both under the care and protection of the Abha Beauty, under the shelter and unerring guidance of the Exalted One (may my life be offered up for them both). Whatsoever they decide is of God. Whoso obeyeth him not, neither obeyeth them, hath not obeyed God; whoso rebelleth against him and against them hath rebelled against God;

(Abdu'l-Baha, The Will and Testament, p. 11)

... that the surface of the earth may become heavenly, that contention and conflict amidst peoples, kindreds, nations and governments may disappear, that all the dwellers on earth may become one people and one race, that the world may become even as one home. Should differences arise, they shall be amicably and conclusively settled by the Supreme Tribunal ((mahakame-ye umuumii), that shall include members from all the governments and peoples (duval wa milaal) of the world.

(Abdu'l-Baha, The Will and Testament, p. 13)

For example, the question of universal peace, about which Baha'u'llah says that the Supreme Tribunal must be established: although the League of Nations has been brought into existence, yet it is incapable of establishing universal peace. But the Supreme Tribunal which Baha'u'llah has described will fulfil this sacred task with the utmost might and power. And His plan is this: that the national assemblies of each country and nation – that is to say parliaments – should elect two or three persons who are the choicest men of that nation, and are well informed concerning international laws and the relations between governments ... The number of these representatives should be in proportion to the number of inhabitants of that country. The election of these souls who are chosen by the national assembly, that is, the parliament, must be confirmed by the upper house, the congress and the

cabinet and also by the president or monarch so these persons may be the elected ones of all the nation and the government. From among these people the members of the Supreme Tribunal will be elected, and all mankind will thus have a share therein, for every one of these delegates is fully representative of his nation. When the Supreme Tribunal gives a ruling on any international question ... there will no longer be any pretext for the plaintiff or ground of objection for the defendant. In case any of the governments or nations, in the execution of the irrefutable decision of the Supreme Tribunal, be negligent or dilatory, the rest of the nations will rise up against it, because all the governments and nations of the world are the supporters of this Supreme Tribunal. (SWAB 305-7)

And now, concerning the House of Justice which God hath ordained as the source of all good and freed from all error, it must be elected by universal suffrage, that is, by the believers. ... By this House is meant the Universal House of Justice, that is, in all countries a secondary House of Justice must be instituted, and these secondary Houses of Justice must elect the members of the Universal one. Unto this body all things must be referred. It enacteth all ordinances and regulations that are not to be found in the explicit Holy Text. By this body all the difficult problems are to be resolved and the Guardian of the Cause of God is its sacred head and the distinguished member for life of that body. (Will and Testament 14) ... By this House is meant that Universal House of Justice which is to be elected from all countries, that is from those parts in the East and West where the loved ones are to be found, after the manner of the customary elections in Western countries such as those of England (Will and Testament 20)

This House of Justice enacteth the laws and the government enforceth them. The legislative body (tashrii`) must reinforce the executive (tanfidh), the executive must aid and assist the legislative body so that through the close union and harmony of these two forces, the foundation of fairness and justice may become firm and strong . . . (Will and testament 14-15)

O concourse of the Kingdom of Abha! Two calls to success and prosperity are being raised ... The one is the call of civilization, of the progress of the material world. This pertains to the world of phenomena, it promotes the principles of material achievement, and is the trainer for the physical accomplishments of mankind. It comprises the laws, regulations, arts and sciences through which the world of

humanity has developed, which are the outcome of lofty ideals and the result of sound minds, and have been achieved through the efforts of the wise and cultured, among the noble founders and their successors. The propagator and active power (naafidh) of this call is just government.

The other is the soul-stirring call of God and the sacred spiritual teachings, which are safeguards of the everlasting glory, the eternal happiness and illumination of the world of humanity, and cause attributes of mercy to be revealed in the human world and the life beyond. This second call is founded upon the instructions and exhortations of the Lord and the admonitions and altruistic emotions belonging to the realm of morality which, like a brilliant light, brighten and illumine the lamp of the realities of mankind. Its active power (n fidh) is the Word of God.

However, until material achievements, physical accomplishments and human virtues are reinforced by spiritual perfections, luminous qualities and characteristics of mercy, no fruit or result shall issue therefrom, nor will the happiness of the world of humanity, which is the ultimate aim, be attained. (Ma'ida-ye Asmani V:109-110, my translation, adapted from Selections from the Writings of Abdu'l- Baha 282-4)

The signature of that meeting should be the Spiritual Gathering (House of Spirituality) and the wisdom therein is that hereafter the government should not infer from the term "House of Justice" that a court is signified, that it is connected with political affairs, or that at any time it will interfere with governmental affairs. Hereafter, enemies will be many. They would use this subject as a cause for disturbing the mind of the government and confusing the thoughts of the public. The intention was to make known that by the term Spiritual Gathering (House of Spirituality), that Gathering has not the least connection with material matters, and that its whole aim and consultation is confined to matters connected with spiritual affairs. This was also instructed (performed) in all Persia. (Tablets of Abdu'l-Baha Abbas vol. 1, page 5)

It is very acceptable for you to present to them the excellent praises which the Blessed Perfection hath made in behalf of these two governments, the exhortations which He hath delivered for obedience to them and the prayers He hath written for the confirmation and protection of His Imperial Majesty the Shah. Likewise, the advices and recommendations that this servant [Abdul-Baha] hath written in Tablets to Persia and America; also the irrefutable command that the Blessed

Perfection hath given in Tablets that the believers must obey the kings with the utmost sincerity and fidelity, and He hath forbidden them to interfere at all with political problems. He hath even prohibited the believers from discussing political affairs. (Tablets of Abdu'l-Baha Abbas, vol. 3, pages 497-8.)

Tonight you have spoken of politics, but we are not accustomed to speak about politics. ... Politics is a coercive matter (amr-e ijbaarii), but eternal happiness cannot be found in a coercive matter. Coercion with happiness is impossible. What is meant by happiness? It means that the people should live according to both the most perfect virtues of the world of humanity, and the power of the divine kingdom. This is one discourse (hikaayat) and that is another discourse. (Khitabat-e Abdu'l-Baha 429-30 (roman) my translation)

My intention, with these words, is not that religion (diin) has any business in politics (siyaasat). Religion has no jurisdiction or involvement in political matters, for religion is related to spirits and to ecstasy, while politics relates to the body. Therefore the leaders of religions (ru's '-ye adyaan) should not be involved in political matters, but should busy themselves with rectifying the morals of the community (mellat). They admonish, and excite the desire and appetite for piety. They sustain the morals of the community. They give spiritual understanding to the souls. They teach the [religious] sciences, but they have no involvement with political matters, for all time (abadan). Baha'u'llah has commanded this. In the Gospels it is said, "Render to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's." (Khitabat-e Abdu'l-Baha 182. my translation)

Thus it has been demonstrated with the clearest of proofs that human society requires the training and cultivation of a true master, and that human souls need a governor, one who binds and restrains, prohibits and encourages, one who impels and leads. For the garden of his creation cannot attain beauty, delicacy and plenty except through the training of the kindly gardener, the overflowing bounty from the realm of unicity, and the just governance provided by the government.

*** 5 ***

Now this prohibition and prevention, rules and restraints, leading and impelling, is divided into two types. The first protector and restrainer is the power of governance that is related to the physical world, a power that guarantees happiness in the external aspects of human existence. It safeguards human life, property and honour, and the exalted quality and refined virtues of the social life of this

illustrious race. Just monarchs, accomplished representatives, wise ministers, and intrepid military leaders constitute the executive centre in this power of governance, the axis of the wheel of these divine favours.

*** 6 ***

The second type of educator and governor of the human world is sacred and spiritual power: the heavenly Books that have been sent down, the Prophets of God, and spiritual souls and devout religious leaders. For those in whom revelation descends and divine inspiration arises are the educators of hearts and minds, the correctors of morals. They beautify conduct and encourage the faithful. That is, these holy souls are like spiritual powers. They have freed human souls from the odours of an ignoble character, the darkness of wicked qualities, and the coarseness of the worlds of being. They illuminate the realities of human nature with the lights of the virtues of the human world, with divine distinctions and the virtues and excellencies of the Kingdom, so that the radiant reality of Blessed be God, the best of creators, and the virtue of We have created man according to the best pattern might be realised in the hallowed human person. Thus, through the glorious effulgences of these dawning places of the divine verses, the pure and subtle reality of humanity becomes a focus for manifestations of the holiness of the world of God. These sacred duties are rooted in spiritual, divine matters, and in ethical considerations. They have not been linked with material honours, political affairs or worldly matters. On the contrary, the sacred power of these pure and excellent persons is at work within the reality of the soul and conscience, in the inner heart and spirit, and not in water and clay. The banners of the signs of these pure realities are raised in the open spaces of the soul, where the spirit takes wing, not in this world of dust. They have never had any role to play in questions of the government and the governed, of ruling and being ruled. They are ones chosen by the sweet-scented breezes of God, the ones closest to the overflowing waters of the spirit of eternity. They do not seek any role in other matters, and they do not urge the steed of ambition in the arena of greed and power. For matters of politics and government, of the kingdom and of subjects have a specified source and a respected place to which they refer, while guidance, religion, insight, education, and the promotion of the morals and virtues of humanity have a sacred centre and designated spring. These souls have nothing to do with political affairs, nor do they seek any involvement. Now, in this most great cycle, when the world has reached the age of discretion and maturity, this matter has been made indisputable in the book of God: it is like a firm foundation. According to this incontrovertible text

and this brilliant proof, all must be humble and submit to the commands of the government, all should be compliant and obedient before the throne of sovereignty. That is, in their obedience and servitude to rulers, they should be sincere subjects and willing servants. This is what the Beauty of God, whose decree is decisive, whose dawn is clear, and whose morn is true and shining, has commanded in the book of the covenant and the pledge, the eternal pact. The indisputable command is this:

O ye the loved ones and the trustees of God! Kings are the manifestations of the power, and the daysprings of the might and riches, of God. Pray ye on their behalf. He hath invested them with the rulership of the earth and hath singled out the hearts of men as His Own domain. Conflict and contention are categorically forbidden in His Book. This is a decree of God in this Most Great Revelation. It is divinely preserved from annulment and is invested by Him with the splendour of His confirmation. Verily He is the All-Knowing, the All-Wise. It is incumbent upon everyone to aid those daysprings of authority and sources of command who are adorned with the ornament of equity and justice.

*** 8 ***

The same is found in an unambiguous treatise that he addressed to one of the religious leaders. One choice citation from that blessed treatise is this:

*** 9 ***

It is now incumbent upon His Majesty the Shah -- may God, exalted be He, protect him -- to deal with this people with loving-kindness and mercy. This Wronged One pledgeth Himself, before the Divine Kaaba, that, apart from truthfulness and trustworthiness, this people will show forth nothing that can in any way conflict with the world-adorning views of His Majesty. Every nation must have a high regard for the position of its sovereign, must be submissive unto him, must carry out his behests, and hold fast his authority. The sovereigns of the earth have been and are the manifestations of the power, the grandeur and the majesty of God. This Wronged One hath at no time dealt deceitfully with anyone. Every one is well aware of this, and beareth witness unto it. Regard for the rank of sovereigns is divinely ordained, as is clearly attested by the words of the Prophets of God and His chosen ones. He Who is the Spirit (Jesus) --

may peace be upon Him -- was asked: "O Spirit of God! Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar or not?" And He made reply: "Yea, render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's." He forbade

it not. These two sayings are, in the estimation of men of insight, one and the same, for if that which belonged to Caesar had not come from God, He would have forbidden it. And likewise in the sacred verse: "Obey God and obey the Apostle, and those among you invested with authority." By "those invested with authority" is meant primarily and more especially the Imams -- the blessings of God rest upon them! They, verily, are the manifestations of the power of God, and the sources of His authority, and the repositories of His knowledge, and the daysprings of His commandments. Secondly these words refer unto the kings and rulers -- those through the brightness of whose justice the horizons of the world are resplendent and luminous. We fain would hope that His Majesty the Shah will shine forth with a light of justice whose radiance will envelop all the kindreds of the earth. It is incumbent upon every one to beseech the one true God on his behalf for that which is meet and seemly in this day.

O God, my God, and my Master, and my Mainstay, and my Desire, and my Beloved! I ask Thee by the mysteries which were hid in Thy knowledge, and by the signs which have diffused the fragrance of Thy loving-kindness, and by the billows of the ocean of Thy bounty, and by the heaven of Thy grace and generosity, and by the blood spilt in Thy path, and by the hearts consumed in their love for Thee, to assist His Majesty the Shah with Thy power and Thy sovereignty, that from him may be manifested that which will everlastingly endure in Thy Books, and Thy Scriptures, and Thy Tablets. Hold Thou his hand, O my Lord, with the hand of Thine omnipotence, and illuminate him with the light of Thy knowledge, and adorn him with the adornment of Thy virtues. Potent art Thou to do what pleaseth Thee, and in Thy grasp are the reins of all created things. No God is there but Thee, the Ever-Forgiving, the All-Bounteous.

In the Epistle to the Romans Saint Paul hath written: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God." And further: "For he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." He saith that the appearance of the kings, and their majesty and power are of God.

Moreover, in the traditions of old, references have been made which the divines have seen and heard. We beseech God - blessed and glorified be He - to aid thee, O Shaykh, to lay fast hold on that which hath been sent down from the heaven of the bounty of God, the Lord of the worlds. ... Gracious God! Shall a people who are not able to manage their own little nests, or to instruct their own households, who are unaware of domestic and foreign affairs, shall these interfere in the weighty affairs of the kingdom and its subjects, and raise opposition in the complexities of political matters? If you refer to history, you would find countless examples of this sort, all based on the involvement of religious leaders in political matters. These souls are the fountainhead of the interpretation of God's commandments, not of implementation. That is, when the government requests an explanation concerning the requirements of the Law of God and the realities of the divine ordinances, in principle or in a specific case, they must explain what they have deduced from the commands of God and what is in accordance with the law of God. Apart from this, what awareness do they have of questions of leadership and social development, the administration and control of weighty matters, the welfare and prosperity of the kingdom, the improvement of procedures and codes of law, or foreign affairs and domestic policy? ... Let us return to the main topic:

The religious law is like the spirit of life,
the government is the locus of the force of deliverance.
The religious law is the shining sun,
and government is the clouds of April.
These two bright stars are like twin lights in the heavens of the
contingent world,
they have cast their rays upon the people of the world.
One has illuminated the world of the soul,
the other caused the earth to flower.
One sowed pearls in the oceans of conscience,
while the other made the surface of the earth a garden of paradise.
It has turned this mound of dust into the envy of the heavens,
and made this dark house of shadows the cynosure of the world of
lights.
The cloud of mercy rose, the gentle rain of benevolence came down,
the fragrant breeze of grace diffused musk and ambergris.
The dawn breeze blows, wafting the perfume that quickens the soul.
The face of the earth has become like heaven on high,
the agreeable season of spring has arrived.

The showers of the heavenly spring have conferred
a wondrous freshness on the garden of the world.
The sun of ancient grandeur has lavished new radiance
on the horizon of the contingent world.
The tawny dust has been turned into sandalwood and ambergris.
The blackened furnace has become
the rose arbour of the Merciful,
the flowering garden of illumination.

The point is this, that each of these two signs of grandeur is the aid
and assistant of the other, like milk and honey, or the twins of
Gemini in the sky. Thus, contempt for one is betrayal of the other,
and any negligence in obedience to one is sinful rebellion against the
other.

*** 19 ***

The divine Law (which is the life of existence, the light of the
visible world, and is consistent with the purpose of creation) needs
an effective power and decisive means. A clearly identifiable champion
is required, a resolute propagator is needed. There is no doubt that
the institutions of government and the sword of sovereignty are the
source of this mighty power. When the one has been strong and
victorious, the other was manifest and refulgent. Whenever the first
is elevated and radiant, the second has been resplendent and widely
diffused. Thus, a just government is government in accordance with the
divine law, and a well-ordered realm is a universal blessing. The
royal throne is encompassed with divine confirmations, and the royal
crown is adorned with the gems of heavenly bounty. In the Qur'an it is
clearly written, "Say: O God, Lord of sovereignty, you grant
sovereignty to whoever you will, and you take it from whoever you
please." Therefore, it is clear and evident that this bestowal is a
divine gift and a favour from the Lord. Likewise, it is clearly said
in an authentic tradition that "The king is the shadow of God on
earth." Given the existence of these texts, which are like a solid
foundation, any other talk, of the king being "an usurper who imposes"
is evidently futile speculation and sheer imagination without argument
or proof.

Note that in the scriptural verse and the clear tradition, the
statements are absolute and not bounded: it is a general reference and
not a specific matter. (From the Sermon on the Art of Governance)

Let them proclaim that in whatever country they reside, and however advanced their institutions, or profound 66 their desire to enforce the laws, and apply the principles, enunciated by Baha'u'llah, they will, unhesitatingly, subordinate the operation of such laws and the application of such principles to the requirements and legal enactments of their respective governments. Theirs is not the purpose, while endeavoring to conduct and perfect the administrative affairs of their Faith, to violate, under any circumstances, the provisions of their country's constitution, much less to allow the machinery of their administration to supersede the government of their respective countries.

(Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Baha'u'llah*, p. 65)

This Administrative Order, unlike the systems evolved after the death of the Founders of the various religions, is divine in origin, rests securely on the laws, the precepts, the ordinances and institutions which the Founder of the Faith has Himself specifically laid down and unequivocally established, and functions in strict accordance with the interpretations of the authorized Interpreters of its holy scriptures.

... The Faith which this order serves, safeguards and promotes, is, it should be noted in this connection, essentially supernatural, supranational, entirely non-political, non-partisan, and diametrically opposed to any policy or school of thought that seeks to exalt any particular race, class or nation. (Shoghi Effendi, statement to a UN committee)

two simultaneous processes ... each clearly defined, each distinctly separate, yet closely related and destined to culminate, in the fullness of time, in a single glorious consummation.

One of these processes is associated with the mission of the American Baha'i Community, the other with the destiny of the American nation. The one serves directly the interests of the Administrative Order of the Faith of Baha'u'llah, the other promotes indirectly the institutions that are to be associated with the establishment of His World Order. (*The Citadel of Faith* 31-2) [the other] It assumed a definite outline through the birth of the United Nations at the San Francisco Conference. ... It must ... lead, through a series of victories and reverses, to the political unification of the Eastern and Western Hemispheres, to the emergence of a world government and the establishment of the Lesser Peace, as foretold by Baha'u'llah and foreshadowed by the Prophet Isaiah. It must, in the end, culminate in the unfurling of the banner of the Most Great Peace, in the Golden Age of the Dispensation of Baha'u'llah. (*Citadel of Faith* 32-33)

Unification of the whole of mankind is the hall-mark of the stage which human society is now approaching. Unity of family, of tribe, of city-state, and nation have been successively attempted and fully established. World unity is the goal towards which a harassed humanity is striving. Nation-building has come to an end. The anarchy inherent in state sovereignty is moving towards a climax. A world, growing to maturity, must abandon this fetish, recognize the oneness and wholeness of human relationships, and establish once for all the machinery that can best incarnate this fundamental principle of its life. ...The unity of the human race, as envisaged by Baha'u'llah, implies the establishment of a world commonwealth in which all nations, races, creeds and classes are closely and permanently united, and in which the autonomy of its state members and the personal freedom and initiative of the individuals that compose them are definitely and completely safeguarded. This commonwealth must, as far as we can visualize it, consist of a world legislature, whose members will, as the trustees of the whole of mankind, ultimately control the entire resources of all the component nations, and will enact such laws as shall be required to regulate the life, satisfy the needs and adjust the relationships of all races and peoples. A world executive, backed by an international Force, will carry out the decisions arrived at, and apply the laws enacted by, this world legislature, and will safeguard the organic unity of the whole commonwealth. A world tribunal will adjudicate and deliver its compulsory and final verdict in all and any disputes that may arise between the various elements constituting this universal system. ... A world federal system, ruling the whole earth and exercising unchallengeable authority over its unimaginably vast resources, blending and embodying the ideals of both the East and the West ... a system in which Force is made the servant of Justice, whose life is sustained by its universal recognition of one God and by its allegiance to one common Revelation – such is the goal towards which humanity, impelled by the unifying forces of life, is moving.

(Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Baha'u'llah*, p. 202-4)

To promote knowledge is thus an inescapable duty imposed on every one of the friends of God. It is incumbent upon that Spiritual Assembly, that assemblage of God, to exert every effort to educate the children, so that from infancy they will be trained in Baha'i conduct and the ways of God, and will, even as young plants, thrive and flourish in the soft-flowing waters that are the counsels and admonitions of the

Blessed Beauty. (Abdu'l-Baha, Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Baha, p. 126)

So long as the mother faileth to train her children, and start them on a proper way of life, the training which they receive later on will not take its full effect. It is incumbent upon the Spiritual Assemblies to provide the mothers with a well-planned programme for the education of children, showing how, from infancy, the child must be watched over and taught.

(Abdu'l-Baha, Selections from the Writings of Abdu'l-Baha, p. 138)

To organize assemblies is praiseworthy and acceptable, but these must be established for certain matters. For example: Assemblages for teaching (the Truth), gatherings for the spread of the fragrances of God, gathers for the relief of the orphans, gatherings for the protection (i. e., feeding, etc.,) of the poor, assemblages for the spread of learning and, in a word, there must be gatherings for matters which concern the well-being of men, such as organizations of a society of commerce, societies for the expansion of agriculture. To be brief, similar societies are very acceptable and praiseworthy and concern all in general and not a particular number.

(Abdu'l-Baha, Tablets of Abdu'l-Baha v2, p. 394)