

## Infallibility of the Universal House of Justice

(Translation from Persian)

Extract from a letter dated 20 May 2007 to the Friends in Iran from the Department of the Secretariat

Your letter dated 15 January 2007, containing two questions, one regarding the correspondence received from the Bahá'í World Centre and the other concerning the infallibility of the Universal House of Justice, has been received and submitted to the House of Justice. We have been asked to convey the following.

As to whether there is a distinction between correspondence from the World Centre that has been signed "The Universal House of Justice" and that signed on behalf of the Department of the Secretariat, in brief, the manner in which each of these letters is prepared depends upon the contents of the letter. On some occasions the Universal House of Justice communicates directly over its own signature. It generally communicates with the institutions of the Faith and the believers through its Secretariat on the basis of decisions and policies determined in its consultations. Hence, communications conveyed over the signature of the Department of the Secretariat are authorized by the House of Justice.

You have stated that believers have asked, "Are the decisions of the Universal House of Justice free from error even if incorrect information has been provided to it?" The infallibility of the House of Justice, like that of the Guardian, is "conferred", as distinct from the infallibility of the Manifestation of God, which is "innate". The House of Justice, like the Guardian, is not omniscient; when called upon to make a decision, it wants to receive information and facts and at times consults experts on the subject. Like him, it may well change its decision when new facts emerge or in light of changed conditions.

In the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá on this matter, there is no reference to the nature and extent of the information to which the House of Justice should have access when making its decisions. 'Abdu'l-Bahá states,

*Let it not be imagined that the House of Justice will take any decision according to its own concepts and opinions. God forbid! The Supreme House of Justice will take decisions and establish laws through the inspiration and confirmation of the Holy Spirit.*

Again, He says:

*Whatever will be its decision, by majority vote, shall be the real truth, inasmuch as that House is under the protection, unerring guidance, and care of the one true Lord. He shall guard it from error and will protect it under the wing of His sanctity and infallibility.*

Bahá'ís, of course, may seek the views of the House of Justice about its decisions if they feel they have new information or that conditions have changed but in doing so should avoid the temptation to use this as an excuse to evade their obligation to obey and thus deprive themselves of the bounty of full obedience.