

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE
DEPARTMENT OF THE SECRETARIAT

6 August 2007

Transmitted by email:

Dear Bahá'í Friend,

Your email letters of 13, 18 and 23 May 2007 have been received by the Universal House of Justice, which has asked us to respond as follows.

The pressure of work at the Bahá'í World Centre does not permit it to continue to provide a detailed response to your questions. You are advised to turn to your Spiritual Assembly or a knowledgeable believer in your area for assistance in this regard.

Responses to several of your questions are set out in the enclosed memorandum prepared by the Research Department. Concerning questions 1, 3, 5 and 7 in your 13 May 2007 letter, we have been asked to provide the following information. The passage on childhood was mistakenly attributed to 'Abdu'l-Bahá; it was authored by the Hand of the Cause of God George Townshend and published in his book *The Mission of Bahá'u'lláh and other literary pieces* (Oxford: George Ronald, 1952, 1976 printing). The World Centre does not have an authentic photograph or drawing of Mullá Ḥusayn. No complete list of sites for future Bahá'í Houses of Worship has been published. No additional information is available about the passages quoted from the "Mathnavi" of Rúmí.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

Enclosure

MEMORANDUM

To: The Universal House of Justice

Date: 6 August 2007

From: Research Department

Prayer of the Báb, Jungle Story, Statement Concerning Persepolis, Psychic Powers

At the instruction of the Universal House of Justice, the Research Department has studied the questions on the above-mentioned subjects posed by Mr. . . . in his email letters of 13, 18 and 23 May 2007 received at the Bahá'í World Centre. We provide the following response.

Prayer of the Báb

Mr. . . . refers to Velda Piff Metelmann's book entitled *Lua Getsinger, Herald of the Covenant* (Oxford: George Ronald, 1997). He indicates that in this book, it is stated that "Lua used to say a certain prayer that the Báb had given to Ṭáhirih." Mr. . . . wishes to know which particular prayer Lua used. From a preliminary perusal of Mrs. Metelmann's book, the Research Department has located several brief references to Ṭáhirih on pages 55 and 56, page 189, and pages 277 and 278, none, however, relate specifically to Lua's recitation of a prayer by the Báb. If Mr. . . . could provide the precise page reference, it might be possible for the Department to undertake an additional search.

Story about a person in a jungle

With regard to the enquiry about "a story about someone trying to get out of a jungle, but repeatedly being put back by a hand to the middle of the jungle, unable to reach the city", the Research Department has found no information about this subject in the authoritative Writings of the Faith.

Statement concerning Persepolis

Mr. . . . refers to a statement of 'Abdu'l-Bahá which indicates that "Persepolis would be rebuilt in the future as a Bahá'í House of Worship". He enquires about its source and whether it might possibly be a pilgrim's note. A statement concerning Persepolis as a future site of a House of Worship is found in a talk delivered by 'Abdu'l-Bahá on 18 July 1915. The talk, which deals generally with Iranian civilization prior to Islam and the prospect of its resurgence, has not, to date, been translated into English. It is published in the original language in Abdu'l-Ḥamíd Ishráq Khávarí's *Rahíq-i-Makhtúm* (Ṭíhrán: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 131 B.E.), volume 2, pages 499–503.

Psychic Powers

Mr. [redacted] cites the following extract from a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi which appears as section 1735 in *Lights of Guidance: A Bahá'í Reference File*:

What 'Abdu'l-Bahá always pointed out in this matter is that these psychic powers were not to be used in this world, and that, indeed, it was dangerous to cultivate them here. They should be left dormant, and not exploited, even when we do so with the sincere belief we are helping others. We do not understand their nature and have no way of being sure of what is true and what is false in such matters.

Mr. [redacted] provides a long list of subjects, categorized in an encyclopedia as “psychic powers” and seeks clarification concerning whether, from a Bahá'í perspective, these subjects might also be regarded as “psychic powers”. In addition, he enquires about the Bahá'í view of such practices as “Reiki, aura reading, developing chakra's, [*sic.*] healing with hands etc.”

As to what constitutes “psychic powers”, the Universal House of Justice, in a letter dated 13 June 1982 written on its behalf to a National Spiritual Assembly, provided the following guidance in response to an earlier question on this subject:

The Universal House of Justice does not wish to go into the various definitions and distinctions that you list under the heading “Psychic Powers, Spiritualism etc.” It is clear that what 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi had in mind when warning the believers against meddling with psychic forces were those that spiritualists believe come from a deliberate effort on the part of individuals to establish communication with the departed.

Given Mr. [redacted]'s interest in this subject, he might find it useful to refer to chapter XLII, entitled “Psychic Phenomena” in *Lights of Guidance: A Bahá'í Reference File*. This chapter contains extracts from the authoritative Writings of the Faith, which will, no doubt, help to further his understanding of this topic.

With regard to the Bahá'í view of reiki, aura reading, and developing chakras, the Research Department was not able to locate any information concerning these practises in the authoritative Bahá'í Writings. For Mr. [redacted]'s information, we provide the following extract from a letter dated 17 August 2004, written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer who enquired about the appropriateness of studying various approaches to natural therapy:

As you may know, no specific school of medicine is endorsed in the Bahá'í Teachings. You should, therefore, weigh the various possibilities open to you in the light of the general teachings found in the Writings and reach your own conclusions about their acceptability.

Finally, in relation to the Bahá'í perspective on “healing with hands” in the following statement taken from a letter dated 8 June 1948 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, certain broad principles are set out to guide a believer who had enquired about the acceptability of a kind of healing which involved the channelling of healing power through the healer's hands. The letter states:

The Guardian knows nothing about your kind of healing, nor would he care to go into the question in detail, as he has no time for such matters. But he can lay down for your guidance certain broad principles: there is no such thing as Bahá'í healers or a Bahá'í type of healing. In His Most Holy Book (the Aqdas) Bahá'u'lláh says to consult the best physicians, in other words doctors who have studied a scientific system of medicine; He never gave us to believe He Himself would heal us through "healers", but rather through prayer and the assistance of medicine and approved treatments.

Now, as long as your healing is in no opposition to these principles, as long as you do not try and take the place of a regular doctor in trying to heal others, but only give them your kind of help through constructive suggestion—or whatever it may be—and do not associate this help with being a channel of the direct grace of Bahá'u'lláh, the Guardian sees no harm in your continuing your assistance to others. But you must conscientiously decide whether, in view of the above, you are really justified in continuing.

In addition, Mr. . . . may wish to peruse Chapter 72 of *Some Answered Questions*.