

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE
DEPARTMENT OF THE SECRETARIAT

15 December 2020

Transmitted by email:

U.S.A.

Dear Bahá'í Friend,

The Universal House of Justice has received your email letter of 25 November 2020 asking how to reconcile statements appearing in an extract of a letter dated 14 May 2008 written on behalf of the House of Justice regarding vaccination. We have been requested to convey the following.

The 14 May letter—in the part to which you may not have had access—quoted the following passage from a letter dated 22 January 1944 written on Shoghi Effendi's behalf to an individual believer: "Regarding your question about vaccination: these are technical matters which have not been specifically mentioned in the teachings, and consequently the Guardian cannot make any statement about them." Because vaccination is not addressed in the Bahá'í writings, the House of Justice has, absent other factors, left to individuals the decision whether to be vaccinated. However, if a Bahá'í is faced with a governmental mandate of vaccination, the Bahá'í writings would not provide him or her justification for refusing to comply with such a legal requirement. Therefore, a religious exemption could not be claimed. Of course, if the law itself provided another applicable exemption, a believer would be free to decide, including for family members for whom he or she is responsible, whether to invoke such an exemption.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat