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The International Fund

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WE HAVE ALL BEEN OVERWHELMED with the beauty and sheer magnificence of the newly-opened Terraces on Mount Carmel and with the elegance of the buildings on the Arc. We are thrilled that we have witnessed “the ultimate completion of this stupendous undertaking” which, as Shoghi Effendi tells us, marks “the culmination of the development of a worldwide divinely-appointed Administrative Order” and which synchronises “with two no less significant developments – the establishment of the Lesser Peace and the evolution of Bahá’í national and local institutions”. (*Messages to the Bahá’í World*, p. 74)



Tour guide Yohai Devir, a student at Haifa's Technion university, takes questions from tour participants (Photo: © BWNS)

At the same time, we have been overwhelmed in another direction. We have witnessed the terrible events in North America, felt a great rush of love and sympathy for all those caught up in them and pondered in our hearts the implications of these events, just as we turn to the writings of our Faith for understanding and guidance about the processes unfolding before us.

One practical way we can respond to both these two developments is to assist the Universal House of Justice in its ever-increasing work by contributing to the International Fund. You will have seen from the August 5, 2001 letter of the House of Justice that the Arc Fund is now closed, so if you have been making earmarked donations to this Fund, please now consider changing your earmarking to the International Fund. With the completion of the Mount Carmel projects and changes in the economic condition of the world, the calls on the International Fund are greatly increased.

Many Bahá’ís do not know what the International Fund does or, indeed, how to contribute to it. Some do not realise that they have an individual responsibility to contribute to this Fund, thinking that their donation to the local or national fund will take care of this. Perhaps the information below will assist you in this!

What is the International Fund?

It is the Bahá’í fund administered by

the Universal House of Justice to enable the work of the Faith at the international level to begin, develop and continue.

What work does the International Fund support? Among other things, the International Fund

- maintains the Terraces and the buildings on the Arc; provides guides for the 35,000 weekly visitors to the Terraces and provides adequate security measures there
- supports the staff members, who give their time voluntarily, at the Bahá'í World Centre
- preserves our precious archives
- assists National Spiritual Assemblies with few resources to start their work and to develop it appropriately (you might recall our own Bahá'í community called on the International Fund for a loan to undertake the refurbishment of our National Hazíratu'l-Quds – now paid back!)
- assists national communities to meet the new opportunities that are opening up in the fields of external affairs (again, our own national community was the beneficiary of these funds not so long ago!)
- assists national communities to meet the new opportunities for the growth of the Faith

Staff members, who give their time voluntarily, at the Bahá'í World Centre, are supported by the International Fund

Who should support the International Fund?

The International Fund is supported by:

- the individual Bahá'í, either as a donation to the National Fund (using Gift Aid, if you are a taxpayer) and earmarked for the International Fund, or directly to the World Centre, made payable to the Bahá'í International Fund
- the local community, either as a donation to the National Fund, earmarked for the International Fund, or directly to the World Centre
- the National Spiritual Assembly, directly to the World Centre, as part of its national budget

It sounds so complicated! If I contribute to my local fund and it contributes to the International Fund, is that my job done?

No, you have a personal obligation to contribute to the International Fund, as well as to the local fund (so that the local fund can contribute to the International Fund, as well as do everything else) and to the National Fund (so that the National Fund can contribute to the International Fund, as well as do everything else).

So, I have to contribute to all the funds, including the International Fund, myself. How do I do that?

There are many possibilities:

- set up a standing order with your bank for a certain amount to go every month to the National Fund. Let the Finance Department know how you want this money distributed, e.g. so much for the International Fund, so much for the National Fund, so much for the Continental Fund (more about this another time!), so much for your local fund. You need only do this once. If you are a taxpayer, fill out the Gift Aid form (again, you only do this once for all time) and send it to the Finance Department. We take care of the rest!
- send a cheque or postal order to the Finance Department, stating which funds the contribution is for and using the Gift Aid form if you are a taxpayer
- give your donation to your local treasurer and ask him or her to forward it to the Finance Department on your behalf – again, be sure to specify which funds you wish it to go to
- send your contribution for the International Fund directly to the World Centre, made payable to the Bahá'í International Fund: P.O. Box 155, Haifa, 31-001,

Israel. You will need to consult your bank about the best way to do this.

Does the National Spiritual Assembly itself contribute to the International Fund?

Yes, there is a budget every year for this. The budget comes from your donations to the National Fund, NOT from your earmarked donations to the International Fund. Just as individuals and local communities have to budget and plan their expenditure wisely and moderately so that they can contribute generously to the International Fund, so the National Spiritual Assembly must do this too. This fiscal year (February 1, 2001 – January 31, 2002) the National Spiritual Assembly will contribute £3,600 to the International Fund.

The International Fund needs our sacrificial support more than ever. Let us remember these words of Shoghi Effendi as we ponder our responsibilities and respond to this call of the Universal House of Justice: “It is only through . . . a spirit of devotion and sacrifice that the Cause can prosper and its message embrace the whole world”.¹

With loving greetings

Wendi Momen, Treasurer, National Spiritual Assembly

1 Shoghi Effendi: Funds, Compilation of Compilations, p. 536



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