

Development of Bahá'í Scholarly Activities

The Universal House of Justice

24 April 2008

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

Your email letter dated ... has been received by the Universal House of Justice, which has asked us to respond as follows.

The House of Justice is fully committed to fostering the development of Bahá'í scholarly activity in all parts of the Bahá'í world. Through their scholarly endeavours believers are able to enrich the intellectual life of the Bahá'í community, to explore new insights into the Bahá'í teachings and their relevance to the needs of society, and to attract the investigation of the Faith by thoughtful people from all backgrounds. Far from being a diversion from the worldwide effort to advance the process of entry by troops, Bahá'í scholarship can be a powerful reinforcement to that endeavour and a valuable source of new enquirers.

The hope of the House of Justice is that, as the Bahá'í community develops in each country, the concerned National Spiritual Assembly will encourage those so inclined to embark on Bahá'í scholarly activities. When the number of believers involved reaches a sufficient size, an Association for Bahá'í Studies may well come into being and act as a focus for support and encouragement; in due course, such an association may be moved to launch, under the aegis of its National Spiritual Assembly, a journal by which the findings of those engaged in this pursuit can be shared with others. Such associations are generally formed at a national level, although the situation in Europe is such that transnational associations have, at this time, been permitted within that continent. In time the House of Justice will give consideration to whether or not the objectives of the Faith would best be served by the formation of some international organization to coordinate

the work of the associations and to stimulate the creation of new ones in other countries and whether an international journal should be brought into being.

When there are relatively few believers engaged in Bahá'í scholarly activity in a country, the formation of an association there is not viable. However, believers from any part of the world are free to submit papers to Bahá'í journals being published in other countries or to seek to make presentations at meetings arranged by the existing associations elsewhere.

...The individuals having an interest in Bahá'í scholarship are, of course, free to pursue their own scholarly endeavours and to submit their conclusions to existing journals in Europe, North America or elsewhere. They should also be advised to consider means by which they can participate in the work of existing associations.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat