

M E M O R A N D U M

To: The Universal House of Justice

Date: 21 December 1997

From: Research Department

"Diagram Illustrating the True Story of Evolution"

In an email message of 31 October 1997, Mr. Theodore A. Cope, who is preparing for an article on "Neoplatonism and Bahá'í philosophy", asks about the authenticity of a diagram depicting "an Arc of Descent and Ascent". Mr. Cope supplies the text accompanying the diagram, which asserts that the diagram was given to Mrs. Lua Getsinger by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and that it illustrates "the true story of evolution". We reply as follows.

Although we cannot positively identify the diagram from the description given by Mr. Cope, it seems to be a variation of a chart attributed to Mrs. Lua Getsinger herself. In response to a question regarding the authenticity of the latter diagram, the following has been written in a letter on behalf of the Universal House of Justice:

...the chart entitled "Cycle of Life" is attributed to Mrs. Lua Getsinger, and the beloved Guardian has clearly stated that it was not revealed by either Bahá'u'lláh or the Master. It should, therefore, not be officially regarded as an authentic Bahá'í chart, or circulated as such among the believers, although there is no objection to individual believers' using it, if they wish. It is assumed that the other chart enclosed is, as you say, another version of the one entitled "Cycle of Life".

As to the use of charts generally for demonstrating spiritual truths, the beloved Guardian pointed out the limitation of charts and diagrams in expressing spiritual realities and even, in certain cases, discouraged their use.

(5 January 1981 to an individual believer)

Moreover, we note in the above statement the guidance regarding the "limitation of charts and diagrams in expressing spiritual realities", which is further amplified in the following extract from a letter on behalf of Shoghi Effendi:

...we should be very careful not to consider geometrical figures as expressing in an absolutely true form what is in reality spiritual relations and beyond our comprehension. The charts may be helpful to state some primary facts but surely the reality has elements far beyond what they can express.

(24 January 1933 to an individual believer)