

YOUTH AND ENTRY BY TROOPS

A. ENTRY BY TROOPS

1. What is entry by troops? Where does this phrase originate from? What does this phrase imply?
2. Why doesn't entry by troops already take place in the countries we are from? How can we overcome the obstacles which hinder this process?
3. What are the qualities which are required by the individual to advance the process of entry by troops? How can these qualities be attained?
4. What are the qualities which are required by the institutions to advance in the process of entry by troops? How can these qualities be attained?

B. YOUTH MOVEMENT

1. What are the characteristics of youth? What is a youth movement?
2. How does a youth movement relate to the expansion of the Faith?
3. How can such a movement be created and supported?
4. What can the institutions do to create and maintain a movement on the local and national level?

The role of the individual is of unique importance in the work of the Cause. It is the individual who manifests the vitality of faith upon which the success of the teaching work and the development of the community depend. Bahá'u'lláh's command to each believer to teach His Faith confers an inescapable responsibility which cannot be transferred to, or assumed by, any institution of the Cause. The individual alone can exercise those capacities which include the ability to take initiative, to seize opportunities, to form friendships, to interact personally with others, to build relationships, to win the cooperation of others in common service to the Faith and society, and to convert into action the decisions made by consultative bodies. It is the individual's duty to „consider every avenue of approach which he might utilize in his personal attempts to capture the attention, maintain the interest, and deepen the faith, of those whom he seeks to bring into the fold of his Faith.“

(The Universal House of Justice, Ridván 1996, passage 20)

To optimize the use of these capacities, the individual draws upon his love for Bahá'u'lláh, the power of the Covenant, the dynamics of prayer, the inspiration and education derived from regular reading and study of the Holy Texts, and the transformative forces that operate upon his soul as he strives to behave in accordance with the divine laws and principles. In addition to these, the individual, having been given the duty to teach the Cause, is endowed with the capacity to attract particular blessings promised by Bahá'u'lláh. „Whoso openeth his lips in this Day,“ the Blessed Beauty asserts, „and maketh mention of the name of his Lord, the hosts of Divine inspiration shall descend upon him from the heaven of My name, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise. On him shall also descend the Concourse on high, each bearing aloft a chalice of pure light.“

(The Universal House of Justice, Ridván 1996, passage 21)

For such an expansion to be stimulated and accommodated, the Spiritual Assemblies must rise to a new stage in the exercise of their responsibilities as channels of divine guidance, planners of the teaching work, developers of human resources, builders of communities, and loving shepherds of the multitudes. They can realize these prospects through increasing the ability of their members to take counsel together in accordance with the principles of the Faith and to consult with the friends under their jurisdiction, through fostering the spirit of service, through spontaneously collaborating with the Continental Counsellors and their auxiliaries, and through cultivating their external relations. Particularly must the progress in the evolution of the institutions be manifest in the multiplication of localities in which the functioning of the Spiritual Assembly enhances the individual believers' capacity to serve the Cause and fosters unified action. In sum, the maturity of the Spiritual Assembly must be measured not only by the regularity of its meetings and the efficiency of its functioning, but also by the continuity of the growth of Bahá'í membership, the effectiveness of the interaction between the Assembly and the members of its community, the quality of the spiritual and social life of the community, and the overall sense of vitality of a community in the process of dynamic, ever-advancing development.

(The Universal House of Justice, Ridván 1996, passage 24)

The House of Justice has often reminded the Bahá'í world that the mobility of young believers, together with their enthusiasm and eagerness to serve, enables them to act as potent instruments for the advancement of the Faith and the propagation of its teachings. Moreover, when properly directed, they can lend the much-needed energy and drive to the planned schemes and enterprises of the institutions. The House of Justice has presented the youth with a number of challenges that they must meet in their endeavours. Among these are: to develop and show the effect of the high moral standards called for by the Faith; to infuse dynamic and positive qualities into the Bahá'í community; and to remove obstacles preventing international co-operation. As the youth focus on these aims, their lives are transformed and their ability to lead their peers towards a world civilization is greatly enhanced.

(International Teaching Centre, Keeness of Vision, page 117)

For the full potential of the youth to be realized, however, conditions have to be created in every national community to foster the participation of the youth in meaningful service to the Faith. Some of the attitudes of parents and Bahá'í communities towards the youth need to change, and appropriate support mechanisms have to be devised so that young believers can arise and make their distinctive contributions to the progress of the Cause. The challenge to the institutions is to help a sufficiently large number of youth transform their lives, so that their combined forces will have a notable effect on the unfoldment of events in mankind's immediate future.

(International Teaching Centre, Keeness of Vision, page 117)

A vibrant band of Bahá'í youth on the European continent, committed to the promotion of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh and the upholding of His laws and principles, determined to work in harmony and unity with their fellow believers of all ages and classes, can revolutionize the progress of the Cause.

(The Universal House of Justice, 4 July 1983, passage 3)

... If the younger Bahá'í generation, in whom Shoghi Effendi has great hopes, take the pain of studying the Cause deeply and thoroughly, read its history, find its underlying principles and become both well informed and energetic, they surely can achieve a great deal. It is upon their shoulders the Master has laid the tremendous work of teaching. They are the ones to raise the call of the Kingdom and arouse the people from slumber. If they fail the Cause is doomed to stagnation ...

(Letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, Lights of Guidance, Nr. 2129)