

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE
DEPARTMENT OF THE SECRETARIAT

8 August 2014

Transmitted by email: bahai.lady.19@gmail.com

Anonymous
Philippines

Dear Bahá'í Friend,

The Universal House of Justice was sorry to learn from your email letter dated 4 June 2014, of the serious personal difficulties you have endured as a result of the behaviour of your parents and extends to you its loving concern. Although it is not generally the practice at the Bahá'í World Centre to respond to anonymous communications, in light of the personal nature of your situation and your evident sincerity, your letter has been forwarded to our Department for response.

Abuse such as that which you report is indeed reprehensible and a betrayal of trust between a parent and a child, and it is understandable that you would have found such experiences profoundly traumatic. The House of Justice wishes to assure you that you are a spiritual being on whom God has engraved His image—an image that no physical act, no matter how repulsive, can succeed in erasing—and that your soul is in no way tarnished as a consequence. The Bahá'í Teachings assure us that the soul exists independently of the impediments of this world and that they cannot damage its splendour or hinder its progress. The spirit of man, 'Abdu'l-Bahá said, “is changeless, indestructible”. May the following counsel of Bahá'u'lláh be a balm to your spirit and a solace to your heart:

The healer of all thine ills is remembrance of Me, forget it not. Make My love thy treasure and cherish it even as thy very sight and life.

(The Hidden Words, from the Persian, number 32)

With respect to how to move forward in light of your situation, such matters are best addressed by Bahá'í institutions in the area concerned, and you are lovingly encouraged to turn to your National Spiritual Assembly, to whom you have also sent a copy of your letter, as it is in the best position to become acquainted with the particulars of your circumstances and to offer you appropriate guidance and support. Concerning your specific request that, because of their behaviour, the rights of your parents to give consent to your marriage in future be removed, the House of Justice has, for the most part, refrained from legislating on the matter of sundering the rights and duties of parents towards children and children towards parents; it has preferred to deal with these issues only when circumstances arise to necessitate such a decision, such as the need for marital consent. Situations have indeed arisen where, because of incest, rape or sexual abuse, it was decided that a parent had forfeited the right to give consent. However, each case needs to be determined in light of its specific circumstances and raised by the child with the relevant Local or National Spiritual Assembly at the time he or she wishes to marry.

Rest assured of the supplications of the House of Justice at the Sacred Threshold that you may be immersed in the ocean of Bahá'u'lláh's healing grace and sustained and strengthened by His loving care and protection.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

cc: National Assembly of the Philippines