

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE
DEPARTMENT OF THE SECRETARIAT

3 January 2021

Transmitted by email:

Dear Bahá'í Friend,

The Universal House of Justice has received your email letter of 16 June 2020 enquiring about the usage of the word “Negro” in *The Advent of Divine Justice* and other writings of Shoghi Effendi. We have been asked to convey the following and regret the delay in our reply, on account of the pressure of work at the Bahá'í World Centre.

People of African descent in the United States have referred to themselves using various terms, which have changed over time. These have included, for example, “Negro”, “African American”, “Black”, and others. The Guardian wrote his works from the 1920s to the 1950s. During this period, “Negro” was considered the proper English-language term when referring to those of African origin. For instance, “Negro” was used by major leaders of the civil rights movement in the United States up to the 1960s. It was later replaced by other terms, so it is now generally viewed as being out of date, and some may even find the term offensive. When publicly making reference to the passages from the Guardian that contain this term, Bahá'ís can prevent misunderstandings by selectively quoting relevant portions, summarizing the key concepts, or providing the historical context if using the exact text.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

bc: International Teaching Centre
Board of Counsellors in the Americas
National Assembly of Canada
National Assembly of the United States