

# DARG Data Session – 26.2.2025

## Session Details: Exploring Openings in Bahá'í Consultation

Participants with experience in the principles of Bahá'í consultation apply them in various settings

Bahá'í consultation is a form of collective decision-making that emphasizes unity, detachment from personal opinions, and the shared search for truth. It involves open and respectful dialogue, where individuals contribute their perspectives without insisting on their own views, and the group strives to reach consensus through mutual understanding. **A distinctive feature of many Bahá'í consultations is that they begin with a period of prayer, aiming to create a reflective and unified atmosphere before deliberation begins.**

In this session, we will examine an opening of a Bahá'í consultation to explore how it is framed by the interactants.

The data is drawn from a collection of recorded Bahá'í consultations, part of the PhD research of Jean-Marie Nau (Educational Sciences, Faculty of Humanities, Education and Social Sciences, University of Luxembourg), supervised by Assoc. Prof. Patrick Sunnen. This research investigates the question:

**“How are principles of unity & collective inquiry interactionally accomplished in Bahá'í consultations, and what do these reveal about the wider applicability of this consultation model in diverse settings?”**

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The extract is taken from a collection of 11 recorded Bahá'í consultations.

**Extract 1:** Opening 3N&S (0-1:39)

**Key:** Mik: Male who recently moved to Europe to marry Sus, Sus: Female, living in Europe, Lia: Sus' two year old daughter

**Context:** Mik is at home and Sus is in the car driving home with her 2 year old girl Lia.

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1 Mik hello:o ((possibly an echo of Mik's hello))
2 Sus hello can you hear me=
3 Mik =yeah I can hear you ((feedback noise))
4 Alláh-u-Abhá
5 Lia ((echoes the Bahá'í greeting of Alláh-u-Abhá))=
6 Mik =okay coo:l ehm (2.0)
7 so do you want to say a prayer before we consult
8 Sus (1.5) yes
9 Mik okay I can offer one
10 Lia (...)=
11 Mik =oh god [guide me protect me
12 Lia [(o god)
13 Mik make of me a shining lamp and a brilliant star (.5) thou art
14 the mighty (.) and the powerful
15 (12.0)
16 Lia (dada)
17 Mik hm so:o (1.5) my mom had asked about the programme for the
18 reception in the States on the 19th (.) and said I would we
19 would get back to her I would we would get back to her ehm
20 (1.5) an then as soon as we cou:ld and so no::w we're gonna
21 consult about I guess the programme for the day off (3.0)
22 do you have any thoughts (.5) (at the) (content)
23 Sus ehmm (2.5) yeah I think my initial thoughts are that they said
24 that (.5) they wanted to do like a whole day (1.0) 10 to 10
25 something like that and I think it's: too long=
26 Mik =ok=
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## Transcript Annotations

**Line 4:** *Alláh-u-Abhá* is an Arabic phrase meaning “God the All-Glorious” and is commonly used as a greeting among some Bahá'ís. While it holds devotional significance in Bahá'í practice, its use as a greeting is not universal among Bahá'ís. Guidance from Bahá'í institutions encourages mindfulness of cultural and social contexts when using it in diverse settings. In this interaction, its usage may serve as a marker of affiliation, solidarity, or a routine greeting, depending on how participants orient to it in the sequential environment.

**Lines 11-14:** Mik is saying a short and well-known Bahá'í prayer for children.

**Line 16:** Lia calls Mik often ‘dada’