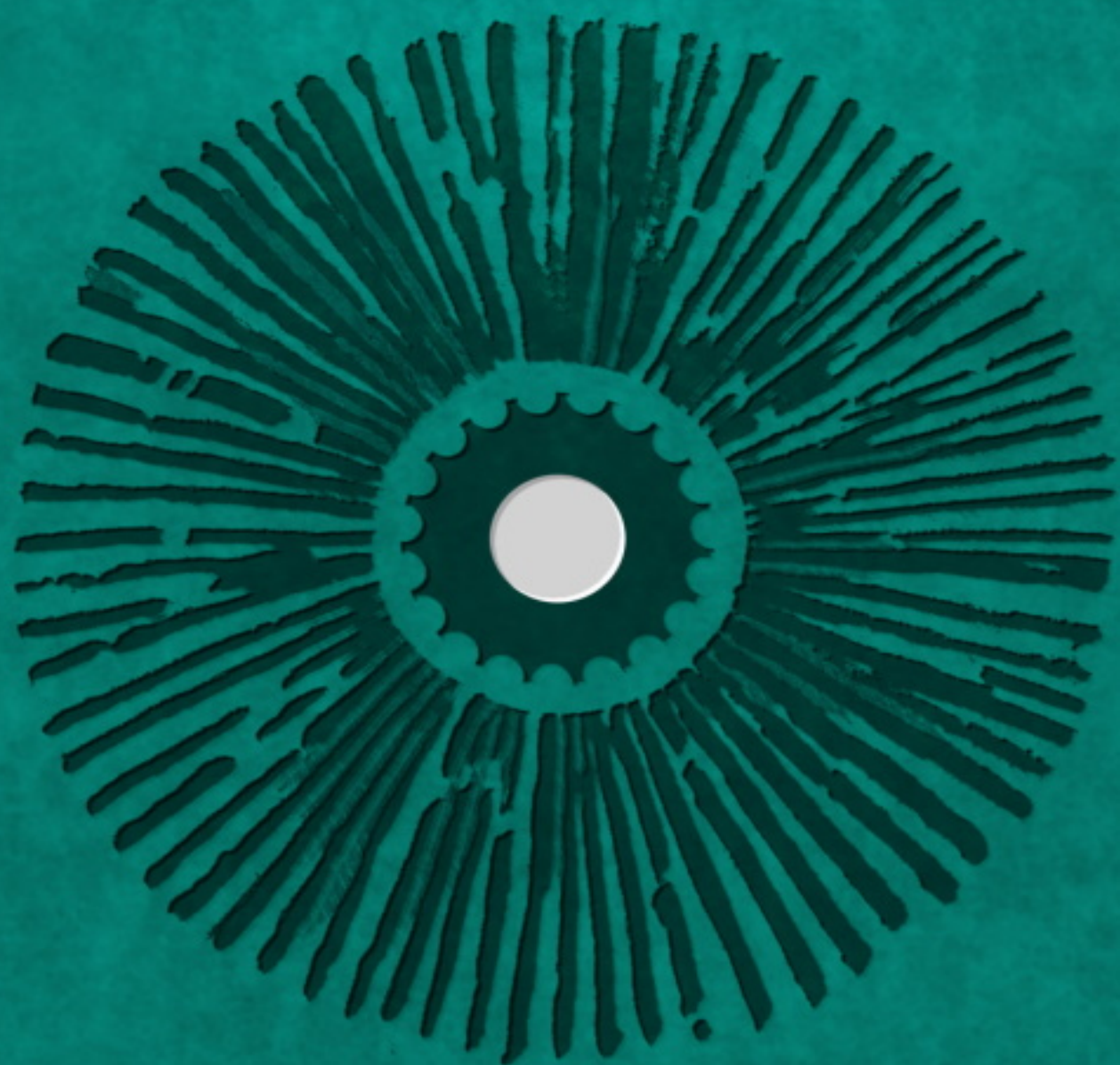


THE PRICELESS PEARL



RÚḤÍYYIH RABBANI

THE PRICELESS PEARL



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Shoghi Effendi, 'Abdu'l-Bahá's eldest grandson

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Rúhíyyih Rabbani

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I

THE CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH OF SHOGHI EFFENDI

Salutation and praise, blessing and glory rest upon that primal branch of the Divine and Sacred Lote-Tree, grown out, blest, tender, verdant and flourishing from the Twin Holy Trees; the most wondrous, unique and priceless pearl that doth gleam from out the Twin Surging Seas.

Like a cloud-break in a stormy sky these words, even as a mighty shaft of sunlight, broke through the gloom and tempest of dangerous years and shone from on high upon a small boy, the grandson of a prisoner of the Sultan of Turkey, living in the prison-city of Akka in the Turkish province of Syria. The words were written by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in the first part of His *Will and Testament* and referred to His eldest grandchild, Shoghi Effendi.

Although already appointed the hereditary successor of his grandfather, neither the child, nor the ever-swelling host of followers of Bahá’u’lláh throughout the world, were made aware of this fact. In the Orient, where the principle of lineal descent is well understood and accepted as the normal course of events, there was hope no doubt, that even as Bahá’u’lláh Himself had demonstrated the validity of this mysterious and great principle of primogeniture, so would ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, His son and successor, do likewise. Many years before His passing, in answer to a question from some Persian believers as to whether there would be one person to whom all should turn after His death, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had written: “. . . *Know verily that this is a well-guarded secret. It is even as a gem concealed within its shell. That it will be revealed is predestined. The time will come when its light will appear, when its evidences will be made manifest, and its secrets unravelled.*”

More light is thrown on this subject by the diary of Dr Yunis Khan, who spent three months in Akka with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá during 1897, and returned in 1900 for a stay of many years. From his words we infer that, perhaps due to news having reached the West that a grandson had been born to the Master, a believer in America had written to Him that in the Bible is mentioned that after ‘Abdu’l-Bahá “a little child shall lead them” (Isaiah II:6) and does this mean a real, live child who exists? Dr Yunis Khan was not aware, in 1897, that this question had been put and that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had revealed the following Tablet in answer to it:

O Maidservant of God!

Verily, that child is born and is alive and from him will appear wondrous things that thou wilt hear of in the future. Thou shalt behold him endowed with the most perfect appearance, supreme capacity, absolute perfection, consummate power and unsurpassed might. His face will shine with a radiance that illumines all the horizons of the world; therefore forget this not as long as thou dost live inasmuch as ages and centuries will bear traces of him.

Upon thee be greetings and praise

‘Abdu’l-Bahá ‘Abbás

It may seem surprising that such an important Tablet was not known in the East but we must remember that there was practically no contact between the Bahá'ís of the West and East in those days and Tablets were circulated among the American friends by copy or word of mouth. When Yunis Khan received a letter from America, at a time when the dark clouds of Covenant-breaking were gathering ever thicker about the Master, he was therefore wholly unaware of the background which might have brought about the question this friend now asked him to put to 'Abdu'l-Bahá; indeed he states in his diary that it was not until many years later he heard of this Tablet's existence. Yunis Khan writes: "'Abdu'l-Bahá was walking in front of the khan [the building where many believers used to stay in Akka]; I approached and told Him 'someone has written to me from America that we have heard the Master has said that the one whose appearance will follow me has recently been born and is in this world. If this is so we are answered, but if this is not so then—?' After waiting a moment, with a look full of meaning and secret exaltation, He said: 'Yes, this is true.' Hearing this glad tidings my soul rejoiced; I felt assured that the Covenant-breaking will come to naught and the Cause of God triumph throughout the world and this world become the mirror of the heavenly world. However, to understand what He meant by 'appearance', as we Bahá'ís conceive its meaning, was very difficult for me, and remained in my mind a mystery; seeking further information I thereupon asked Him: 'Does this mean a revelation?' If He had replied with 'yes' or 'no' this would have created more complications and aroused more questions, but fortunately His answer was conclusive and such as to silence any questioner, and in even clearer words He said: 'The triumph of the Cause of God is in his hands!'" Yunis Khan then goes on to state that he wrote this answer to the believer in America but did not share it for many years with anyone and even in his own mind refused to contemplate its implications or ask himself if that child was in Akka or somewhere else. He explains this reserved attitude on his part as due to the words of Bahá'u'lláh in the book of His Covenant in which He says that all eyes must be focused on the Centre of the Covenant ('Abdu'l-Bahá), and to the defections, machinations and mischief which for two generations disrupted the family of the Manifestation of God.

In another part of his diary Yunis Khan describes his first glimpse of the Master's eldest grandson: "For many days the occupants of the Pilgrim House had begged the Afnan [Shoghi Effendi's father] to see Shoghi Effendi. One day, unexpectedly, this child of four months was brought to the *biruni* [reception room of the Master]. The believers approached him with joy and I too had this privilege, but I said to myself 'only look upon him as a Bahá'í child'. However I could not control my feelings because an inner force obliged me to bow low before him and for a moment I was bewitched by the beauty of this suckling child. I kissed the soft hair of his head and sensed such a power in him that I can find no words to express it, but only say he looked like the babe one sees in the arms of the Blessed Virgin. For several days the face of this child was before me, then gradually I forgot it. Two other times I had these same feelings, once when he was nine years old and once when he was eleven years old."

Yunis Khan also records that after he had observed in Shoghi Effendi's babyhood and early childhood inner and outer evidences of his great spirituality and unique character he could contain himself no longer and confided to an old and trustworthy believer those memorable words he had heard from 'Abdu'l-Bahá regarding a child in whose hands would be the triumph of the Cause of God.

Be this at it may, the fact remains that until the Master passed away in November 1921, and His *Will and Testament* was found in His safe and opened and read, no one in the Bahá'í world knew that Shoghi Effendi was the "unique pearl", and just how unique and glorious a pearl it was that 'Abdu'l-Bahá left behind Him no one really understood until November 1957 it was recalled to the Seas from which it had been born.

On the 27th day of Ramadán, 1314 of the Muslim calendar, Shoghi Effendi was born. This was Sunday, 1 March 1897 of the Gregorian calendar. These dates have been found in one of Shoghi Effendi's notebooks which he kept during his boyhood, written in his own hand. He was the eldest grandchild and first grandson of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, born of His eldest daughter, Díyá'íyyih Khánum, and her husband Mírzá Hádí Shírází, one of the Afnans, a relative of the Báb. He was invariably addressed by his grandfather as "Shoghi Effendi"; indeed, He gave instructions that he should at all times have the "Effendi" added and even told Shoghi Effendi's own father he must address him thus and not merely as "Shoghi". The word "Effendi" signifies "sir" or "mister" and is added as a term of respect; for the same reason "Khánum", which means "lady" or "madame", is added to a woman's name.

At the time of Shoghi Effendi's birth 'Abdu'l-Bahá and His family were still prisoners of the Sultan of Turkey, Abdu'l Hamid; it was not until the revolution of the Young Turks, in 1908, and the consequent release of political prisoners, that they were freed from an exile and bondage that, for Him and His sister at least, had lasted for over forty years. In 1897 they were all living in a house known as that of Abdullah Pasha, a stone's throw from the great Turkish military barracks where Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and the company of believers who were with Them, had been incarcerated when they first landed in Akka in 1868. It was in this home that the first group of pilgrims from the Western World visited the Master in the winter of 1898-9, and many more of the early believers of the West; travelling along the beach in an omnibus drawn by three horses they would proceed from Haifa to Akka, enter the fortified walls of the prison-city, and be welcomed as His guests for a few days in that house. It was from this home that 'Abdu'l-Bahá left to reside in freedom in Haifa, twelve miles away on the other side of the Bay of Akka. Entering through a passage across which the upper story of the building ran, one came upon a small enclosed garden where grew flowers, fruit trees and a few tall palms, and in one corner of which a long stairway ran up to the upper floor and opened on an inner, unroofed court from which doors led to various rooms and to a long corridor giving access to other chambers.

To catch even a glimpse of what must have transpired in 'Abdu'l-Bahá's heart when this first grandson was born to Him at the age of fifty-three, one must remember that He had already lost more than one son, the dearest and most perfect of them, Husayn, a beautiful and very dignified little boy, having passed away when only a few years old. Of the four surviving daughters of 'Abdu'l-Bahá three were to bear Him thirteen grandchildren, but it was this oldest one who bore witness to the saying "the child is the secret essence of its sire", not to be taken to mean in this case the heritage of his own father, but rather that he was sired by the Prophets of God and inherited the nobility of his grandfather 'Abdu'l-Bahá. The depths of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's feelings at this time are reflected in His own words in which He clearly states that the name Shoghi—literally "the one who longs"—was conferred by God upon this grandson:

. . . O God! This is a branch sprung from the tree of Thy mercy. Through Thy grace and bounty enable him to grow and through the showers of Thy generosity cause him to become a verdant, flourishing, blossoming and fruitful branch. Gladden the eyes of his parents, Thou Who giveth to whomsoever Thou wilt, and bestow upon him the name Shoghi so that he may yearn for Thy Kingdom and soar into the realms of the unseen!

By the signs Shoghi Effendi showed from earliest childhood and by his unique nature, he twined himself ever more deeply into the roots of the Master's heart. We are fortunate, indeed, to possess, from one of the earliest western believers, Ella Goodall Cooper, her own account of a meeting she witnessed between 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi at the time of her pilgrimage in March 1899, in the house of Abdullah Pasha:

One day . . . I had joined the ladies of the Family in the room of the Greatest Holy Leaf for early morning tea, the beloved Master was sitting in His favourite corner of the divan where, through the window on His right, He could look over the ramparts and see the blue Mediterranean beyond. He was busy writing Tablets, and the quiet peace of the room was broken only by the bubble of the samovar, where one of the young maidservants, sitting on the floor before it, was brewing the tea.

Presently the Master looked up from His writing with a smile, and requested Ziyiyi Khanum to chant a prayer. As she finished, a small figure appeared in the open doorway, directly opposite ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Having dropped off his shoes he stepped into the room, with his eyes focused on the Master’s face. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá returned his gaze with such a look of loving welcome it seemed to beckon the small one to approach Him. Shoghi, that beautiful little boy, with his cameo face and his soulful, appealing, dark eyes, walked slowly toward the divan, the Master drawing him as by an invisible thread, until he stood quite close in front of Him. As he paused there a moment ‘Abdu’l-Bahá did not offer to embrace him but sat perfectly still, only nodding His head two or three times, slowly and impressively, as if to say —“You see? This tie connecting us is not just that of a physical grandfather but something far deeper and more significant.” While we breathlessly watched to see what he would do, the little boy reached down and picking up the hem of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s robe he touched it reverently to his forehead, and kissed it, then gently replaced it, while never taking his eyes from the adored Master’s face. The next moment he turned away, and scampered off to play, like any normal child . . . At that time he was ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s only grandchild . . . and, naturally, he was of immense interest to the pilgrims.

How great must have been the struggle of the grandfather to keep within bounds His love for this child lest the very blaze of that love endanger his life through the hatred and envy of His many enemies, ever seeking an Achilles heel to bring about His downfall. Many times when Shoghi Effendi spoke of the past and of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá I felt not only how boundless and consuming had been his own love for the Master, but that he had been aware of the fact that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá leashed and veiled the passion of His love for him in order to protect him and to safeguard the Cause of God from its enemies.

Shoghi Effendi was a small, sensitive, intensely active and mischievous child. He was not very strong in his early years and his mother often had cause to worry over his health. However, he grew up to have an iron constitution, which, coupled with the phenomenal force of his nature and will-power, enabled him in later years to overcome every obstacle in his path. The first photographs we have of him show a peaky little face, immense eyes and a firm, beautifully shaped chin which in his childhood gave a slightly elongated and heart-shaped appearance to his face. Already in these earliest pictures one sees a sadness, a wistfulness, a haunting predilection for suffering that is like a shadow on the wall—the shadow of a child magnified to the stature of a man. Fine-boned, even as a mature man, shorter than his grandfather had been, Shoghi Effendi was more akin physically to his great-grandfather, Bahá’u’lláh. He told me himself that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s sister, the Greatest Holy Leaf, would sometimes take his hand in hers and say, “These are like the hands of my father”. They were what I call intellectual hands, more square than tapering, strong, nervous, the veins standing out, very expressive in their gestures, very assured in their motions. Amelia Collins, who lived in Haifa many years, always said that to her all the suffering of the Guardian’s life was reflected in those hands. His eyes were of that deceptive hazel colour that sometimes led people who did not have the opportunity to look into them as often as I did to think they were brown or blue. The truth is they were a clear hazel which sometimes changed to a warm and luminous grey. I have never seen such an expressive face and eyes as those of the Guardian; every shade of feeling and thought was mirrored in his visage as light and shadow are reflected on water. When he was happy and enthusiastic over something he had a peculiar habit of opening his eyes wide enough to let the upper rim of the iris show and this

always made me think of two beautiful suns rising above the horizon, so brilliant and sparkling was their expression. Indignation, anger and sorrow could be equally clearly reflected in them, and alas, he had cause to show these too in his life, so beset with problems and sorrows. His feet were as beautiful as his hands, small like them, high arched, and giving that same impression of strength.

It may sound disrespectful to say the Guardian was a mischievous child, but he himself told me he was the acknowledged ringleader of all the other children. Bubbling with high spirits, enthusiasm and daring, full of laughter and wit, the small boy led the way in many pranks; whenever something was afoot, behind it would be found Shoghi Effendi! This boundless energy was often a source of anxiety as he would rush madly up and down the long flight of high steps to the upper story of the house, to the consternation of the pilgrims below, waiting to meet the Master. His exuberance was irrepressible and was in the child the same force that was to make the man such an untiring and unflinching commander-in-chief of the forces of Bahá'u'lláh, leading them to victory after victory, indeed, to the spiritual conquest of the entire globe. We have a very reliable witness to this characteristic of the Guardian, 'Abdu'l-Bahá Himself, Who wrote on a used envelope a short sentence to please His little grandson: "Shoghi Effendi is a wise man—but he runs about very much!"

It must not be inferred, however, that Shoghi Effendi was mannerless. Children in the East—how much more the children of 'Abdu'l-Bahá—were taught courtesy and manners from the cradle. Bahá'u'lláh's family was descended from kings and the family tradition, entirely apart from His divine teachings which enjoin courtesy as obligatory, ensured that a noble conduct and politeness would distinguish Shoghi Effendi from his babyhood.

In those days of Shoghi Effendi's childhood it was the custom to rise about dawn and spend the first hour of the day in the Master's room, where prayers were said and the family all had breakfast with Him. The children sat on the floor, their legs folded under them, their arms folded across their breasts, in great respect; when asked they would chant for 'Abdu'l-Bahá; there was no shouting or unseemly conduct. Breakfast consisted of tea, brewed on the bubbling Russian brass samovar and served in little crystal glasses, very hot and very sweet, pure wheat bread and goat's milk cheese. Dr Zia Baghdadi, an intimate of the family, in his recollections of these days records that Shoghi Effendi was always the first to get up and be on time—after receiving one good chastisement from no other hand than that of his grandfather!

He also tells us the story of Shoghi Effendi's first Tablet from 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Dr Baghdadi states that when Shoghi Effendi was only five years old he was pestering the Master to write something for him, whereupon 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote this touching and revealing letter in His own hand:

He is God!

O My Shoghi, I have no time to talk, leave me alone! You said "write"—I have written. What else should be done? Now is not the time for you to read and write, it is the time for jumping about and chanting "O My God!", therefore memorize the prayers of the Blessed Beauty and chant them that I may hear them, because there is no time for anything else.

It seems that when this wonderful gift reached the child he set himself to memorize a number of Bahá'u'lláh's prayers and would chant them so loudly that the entire neighbourhood could hear his voice; when his parents and other members of the Master's family remonstrated with him, Shoghi Effendi replied, according to Dr Baghdadi, "The Master wrote to me to chant that He may hear me! I am doing my best!" and he kept on chanting at the top of his voice for many hours every day. Finally his parents begged the Master to stop him, but He told them to let

Shoghi Effendi alone. This was one aspect of the small boy's chanting. We are told there was another: he had memorized some touching passages written by 'Abdu'l-Bahá after the Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh and when he chanted these the tears would roll down the earnest little face. From another source we are told that when the Master was requested by a western friend, at that time living in His home, to reveal a prayer for children He did so, and the first to memorize it and chant it was Shoghi Effendi who would also chant it in the meetings of the friends.

The childhood nurse of Shoghi Effendi used to recount that when he was still a baby the Master was wont to call one of the Muslims who chanted in the mosque to come at least once a week and chant to the child, in his melodious voice, the sublime verses of the Qur'án. The Master Himself, the Guardian's mother and many others in the household had fine voices. All of this must have deeply affected Shoghi Effendi, who continued to chant to the end of his life. He had an indescribable, full voice, neither very high nor very low, clear, with a beautiful cadence in speaking, whether in English or Persian. To me it always had that lamenting quality of a dove that coos to itself alone on the branches of a tree. It used to wring my heart—that something sad and plaintive under the assured, swelling tones of the chanting, and the strange thing was the marked difference in the quality of his voice when, after chanting in the Báb's Shrine, he would go into the Master's Shrine and recite there the prayer of 'Abdu'l-Bahá: "*Lowly and tearful I raise my suppliant hands . . .*" Into the Guardian's voice would come a tenderness and longing that one did not hear anywhere else; this distinction never failed, never changed, was always there.

In his recollections of those early years one of the Bahá'ís has written that one day Shoghi Effendi entered the Master's room, took up His pen and tried to write. 'Abdu'l-Bahá drew him to His side, tapped him gently on the shoulder and said, "Now is not the time to write, now is the time to play, you will write a lot in the future." Nevertheless the desire of the child to learn led to the formation of classes in the Master's household for the children, taught by an old Persian believer. I know that at one time in his childhood, most likely while he was still living in Akka, Shoghi Effendi and other grandchildren were taught by an Italian, who acted as governess or teacher; a grey-haired elderly lady, she came to call shortly after I was married.

Although these early years of Shoghi Effendi's life were spent in the prison-city of Akka, enclosed within its moats and walls, its two gates guarded by sentries, this does not mean he had no occasion to move about. He must have often gone to the homes of the Bahá'ís living inside the city, to the khan where the pilgrims stayed, to the Garden of Ridván and to Bahjí. Many times he was the delighted companion of his grandfather on these excursions. We are told that sometimes he spent the night in Bahjí in the house now used as a pilgrim house; 'Abdu'l-Bahá would Himself come and tuck him in bed, remarking, "I need him." He also was taken to Beirut, the only large city in the entire area and one often visited by members of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's family. Dr Baghdadi recounts how, on one of these visits when Shoghi Effendi, a child of five or six years of age, accompanied his parents, the Greatest Holy Leaf and other members of the family there, he spent most of his time in Dr Baghdadi's room, looking at the pictures in his medical books and asking questions. It seems Shoghi Effendi wanted to see something actually dissected; he was not satisfied with just pictures. This zeal for knowledge (and no doubt those large eyes, so insistent and intelligent) quite won over the young medical student, who had a victim provided—a large wildcat—and proceeded to cut it up in front of Shoghi Effendi, one of his aunts and the servant who had shot it. They watched in absorbed silence. When it was over, and Dr Baghdadi was asking himself how such a small child could have understood what it was all about, he was astonished to hear Shoghi Effendi recapitulating word for word the salient points of what he had described during his dissection. "I said to myself," Dr Baghdadi then writes, "this is not an ordinary child, verily this is a precious and darling angel!" As one of Shoghi Effendi's subjects in 1916 was zoology, he must have recalled his first early lesson in anatomy. Dr

Baghdadi goes on to recount that, in addition to this great capacity to learn, Shoghi Effendi had a heart so tender and a nature so sweet that if he had offended any playmate—even though he would never do so unless the child had cheated or schemed—he would not go to sleep before he had embraced him and left him happy; he always urged his little companions to make up their differences before they went to bed.

Shoghi Effendi was sometimes subject to vivid and significant dreams, both pleasant and unpleasant. It is reported that in his babyhood he woke one night crying and the Master told his nurse to bring Shoghi Effendi to Him so that He could comfort him; the Master said to His sister, the Greatest Holy Leaf, “See, already he has dreams!”

There are very few records of what any non-Bahá’í may have thought of this grandson of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. One of them, however, deserves to be quoted at some length. It is the reminiscences of a German woman physician, Dr J. Fallscheer, who lived in Haifa and attended the ladies of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s household. It should be borne in mind that her highly interesting account was not set down until at least eleven years after the event she relates, but nevertheless it has great significance:

When I returned to my house, on August 6, 1910, from a professional visit on Mt. Carmel our old servant Hadtschile said to me: “Just now a servant of Abbas Effendi was here and said that the doctor should come at ‘asser’ (3 o’clock) to the ladies quarters of the Master as one of the maids has a very bad finger.” I did not very much like to start my visits so early on Saturday afternoon. But as I knew the Master would never call me out of hours without some urgent reason I decided to go on time . . . When it was all over, finger, hand and arm bandaged and put in a sling, Behia Khanum sent the little sufferer to bed and invited me to take refreshment with her and the ladies of the household. As we were sipping coffee and talking Turkish, which was easier for me than Arabic, a servant came and said: “Abbas Effendi wants the doctor to come to Him in the *selamlık* (drawing room) before she leaves”. . . The Master asked me to report to Him how the finger of the young girl was and if the danger of blood poisoning had passed. I could give Him a reassuring report. At this moment the son-in-law (the husband of the eldest daughter of Abbas Effendi) entered the room, evidently for the purpose of taking leave of the Master. At first I did not notice that behind the tall, dignified man his eldest son, Shoghi Effendi, had entered the room and greeted his venerable grandfather with the oriental kiss on the hand. I had already seen the child fleetingly on a few other occasions. Behia Khanum had recently informed me that this young boy of perhaps twelve years of age was the oldest direct male descendant of the family of the Prophet and destined to be the only successor and representative (*vazir*) of the Master. As Abbas Effendi spoke in Persian regarding some matter to Abu Shoghi (the father of Shoghi Effendi), who was standing in front of Him, the grandson, after greeting us politely and also kissing the hand of his great aunt, remained near the door in a most respectful attitude. At this moment a number of Persian gentlemen entered the room and greetings and leave-takings, comings and goings, took place for a quarter of an hour. Behia Khanum and I withdrew to the right near the window and in lowered voices continued our conversation in Turkish. However, I never removed my eyes from the still very youthful grandson of Abbas Effendi. He was dressed in European summer clothes, with short pants but long stockings that came up above his knees and a short jacket. From his height and build one would have taken him to be thirteen or fourteen . . . In the still childish face the dark, already mature, melancholy eyes struck me at once. The boy remained motionless in his place and submissive in his attitude. After his father and the man with him had taken their leave of the Master, his father whispered something to him as he went out, whereupon the youth, in a slow and measured manner, like a grown up person, approached his beloved grandfather, waited to be addressed, answered distinctly in Persian

and was laughingly dismissed, not however, without being first permitted the respectful kiss on the hand. I was impressed by the way the youth walked backwards as he left the room, and how his dark, true-hearted eyes never for a moment wavered from the blue, magical glance of his grandfather.

Abbas Effendi rose and came over to us and we immediately stood up, but the Master urged us to take our seats again and Himself sat down informally on a stool near us, or rather facing us. As usual, in silence we waited for Him to speak to us, which He did shortly: "Now my daughter," He began, "How do you like my future Elisha?" "Master, if I may speak openly, I must say that in his boy's face are the dark eyes of a sufferer, one who will suffer a great deal!" Thoughtfully the Master looked beyond us into space and after a long time turned His gaze back to us and said: "My grandson does not have the eyes of a trailblazer, a fighter or a victor, but in his eyes one sees deep loyalty, perseverance and conscientiousness. And do you know why, my daughter, he will fall heir to the heavy inheritance of being my Vazir (Minister, occupant of a high post)?" Without waiting for my reply, looking more at His dear sister than at me, as if He had forgotten my presence, He went on: "Bahá'u'lláh, the Great Perfection—blessed be His words—in the past, the present and forever—chose this insignificant one to be His successor, not because I was the first born, but because His inner eye had already discerned on my brow the seal of God.

"Before His ascension into eternal Light the blessed Manifestation reminded me that I too—irrespective of primogeniture or age—must observe among my sons and grandsons whom God would indicate for His office. My sons passed to eternity in their tenderest years; in my line, among my relatives, only little Shoghi has the shadow of a great calling in the depths of his eyes." There followed another long pause, then the Master turned again to me and said: "At the present time the British Empire is the greatest and is still expanding and its language is a world language. My future Vazir shall receive the preparation for his weighty office in England itself, after he has obtained here in Palestine a fundamental knowledge of the oriental languages and the wisdom of the East." Whereupon I ventured to interject: "Will not the western education, the English training, remould his nature, confine his versatile mind in the rigid bonds of intellectualism, stifle through dogma and convention his oriental irrationality and intuition so that he will no longer be a servant of the Almighty but rather a slave to the rationality of western opportunism and the shallowness of every day life?" Long pause! Then Abbas Effendi 'Abdu'l-Bahá rose and in a strong and solemn voice said: "I am not giving my Elisha to the British to educate. I dedicate and give him to the Almighty. God's eyes watch over my child in Oxford as well—Inshallah!"

Without farewell, without another word the Master left the room.

I took leave of Behia Khanum and as I went out saw the Master standing in the garden, where, apparently sunk in deepest thought, he was looking at a fig tree laden with fruit.

In November 1921, while staying in Lugano, I learned of the passing of Abbas Effendi 'Abdu'l-Bahá in Haifa and my thoughts and memories turned back to that long-ago hour in August 1910, and I wish Elisha—Shoghi well, and everything that is good—Inshallah.

As many years later 'Abdu'l-Bahá requested His friend, Lord Lamington, a distinguished Scottish peer and a man who deeply respected and admired Him, to use his good offices in getting Shoghi Effendi admitted to a

college in Oxford University, it is not impossible that He mentioned such a plan to Dr Fallscheer, but, of course, we have no corroborative evidence to support her words.

When ‘Abdu’l-Bahá first moved into the new home in Haifa (which was in use by members of His family in February 1907, if not earlier) the rooms were occupied by all the members of His family; eventually the families of two of His daughters moved to homes of their own near His, but the house was always crowded with relatives, children, servants, pilgrims and guests. In later years, when Shoghi Effendi was home from school, his room was a small one next to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s. As electricity was not installed until just before ‘Abdu’l-Bahá passed away and not connected until after His Ascension, the family used lamps. Many times the Master would see Shoghi Effendi’s light still shining late at night and get up and go to his door, saying, “Enough! Enough! Go to sleep!” But this serious-mindedness of Shoghi Effendi pleased Him greatly. The Guardian told me once the Master came to him in the drawing room, where he was working, and stood and looked out of the window into the garden, His back to Shoghi Effendi; the laughing and chattering voices of the family could be heard in another room. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá turned to Shoghi Effendi and said, “I do not want you to be like them—worldly.” Another time, Shoghi Effendi told me, he remembered the Master turning to His wife and saying, “Look at his eyes, they are like clear water.” Shoghi Effendi also recalled how the Master, Who had evidently been standing in a window facing the main gate, had observed Shoghi Effendi enter briskly and come up the steps. He sent for him and told him: “Don’t walk like that, walk with dignity!” This was at the time when Shoghi Effendi was already grown up and serving the Master in many capacities. In those days before he left for England, he wore long robes, a sash or cummerbund and a red fez on his head. Photographs often show this pushed well back on his head, a wave of his soft dark brown, almost black hair showing, his forehead wide and unfurrowed, his face filled out and always the beautiful, firm chin and large eyes that gave the impression of being dark. He had a mouth which had the peculiar characteristic of the lower lip appearing to be almost like an imprint of the upper one, both distinctly red in hue. After his boyhood he always wore a small, trim dark moustache.

Before the Master undertook His journeys to the West the household was much more oriental in its habits. Gradually some western habits were introduced when He returned. I have recorded the following in my diary: “Shoghi Effendi has just been giving me a very vivid sketch of lunch time in the Master’s days. He says that about 11 A.M. the Master would come into the big hall and ask Am Quli, ‘*Saat chaneh?*’ [What time is it?] The function of Am Quli was to give the time. The maids would place a cloth on the floor of the old tea room and bowl in from the corridor, where it was kept, a huge round table with low legs; this they placed on the cloth and on this they put some of the old type plates of metal [probably enamel] and some spoons—never enough to go round, just at random—they also would scatter bread over the table and at the top place a few napkins . . . The Master would enter and seat Himself and call, ‘*biya benshnid*’ [come and sit down] to whoever was there—His sons-in-law, His uncle, His cousin, etc., etc. . . . and He would eat, sometimes with a spoon, sometimes with His hand. He would also sometimes serve the others, rice etc., with His own hand. When He was about half through Khánúm [the Greatest Holy Leaf] would come in from the kitchen and change her slippers at the entrance of the corridor . . . and with a plate of tidbits go and sit by the Master; her place was always kept for her. Gradually some of the others would come, women guests, children, the daughters of the Master, etc. [The Master and the men having eaten first would leave the room.] Shoghi Effendi says then bedlam would break out, the children crying, shouting, everyone talking, general confusion. He says what the grandchildren used to watch for [himself included] was the mouthful of Khánúm’s food that she would give to this or that one, as it always tasted best. They called it ‘the mouthful of Khánúm’; the Guardian usually got it as he was a favourite of hers! After the ladies of the household had eaten, the women servants would all sit at the same table and eat . . . After the Master returned from the West, gradually more western ways of eating were introduced, china, chairs, cutlery and so on.”

But let us return to Akka and the earlier years of Shoghi Effendi. Although there is no doubt that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá did everything to ensure Shoghi Effendi had as happy and carefree a childhood as possible, it must have been out of the question to hide from so sensitive and intelligent a child the fact that great dangers threatened his beloved grandfather in those years immediately preceding the overthrow of the Sultan of Turkey. The visits of Turkish authorities, sent to investigate the poisonous accusations against ‘Abdu’l-Bahá made by the Covenant-breakers, their constant machinations against His very life, the threat of separation and a new exile to Libya, must have created an atmosphere of anxiety and great tension in the Master’s family and cannot have left Shoghi Effendi untouched. It was a time of violent Covenant-breaking; the community of believers who had come into exile with Bahá’u’lláh, with the exception of a handful of faithful souls, were, for the most part, infected with the germ of this deadly disease, some openly joining ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s rebellious half-brother, Muhammad ‘Alí, some overtly sympathizing with him. It was during these years that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá told Shoghi Effendi never to drink coffee in the homes of any of the Bahá’ís. He was afraid this precious grandchild might be poisoned! Shoghi Effendi told me this himself, and when one remembers that he was only a young boy at the time, one realizes how great were the dangers surrounding them all in those days.

Perhaps because of this situation, constantly worsening, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá sent Shoghi Effendi to live in Haifa with his nurse, where already some of the believers resided; at what date this occurred I am unaware, but it was while he was still a young child. French was his first foreign language and although in later years he was reluctant to speak it officially, as he felt his fluency in it was rusty through disuse, he retained, at least to my ears, a perfect command of it and invariably did all his addition, like lightning, in French. By 1907 he was living with this same nurse, Hájir Khátún, who had always been with him from his infancy, in the newly constructed house of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, which became His last home and later the home of the Guardian. It was here that Shoghi Effendi had a very significant dream which he recounted to me and which I wrote down. He said that when he was nine or ten years old, living with his nurse in this house and attending school in Haifa, he dreamed that he and another child, an Arab schoolmate, were in the room in which ‘Abdu’l-Bahá used to receive His guests in the house in Akka, where the Master was living and where Shoghi Effendi had been born. The Báb entered the room and then a man with a revolver appeared and shot at the Báb; then he told Shoghi Effendi, “Now it is your turn”, and began to chase him around the room to shoot him. At this Shoghi Effendi woke up. He repeated this dream to his nurse, who told him to tell it to Mirza Asadullah and ask him to tell the Master. Mirza Asadullah wrote it all down and sent it to the Master, Who replied by revealing for Shoghi Effendi this Tablet. The strange thing, Shoghi Effendi said, is that it was just about this time that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was in great danger and wrote one of His Wills in which He appointed Shoghi Effendi as Guardian.

He is God

Shoghi Mine

This dream is a very good one. Rest assured that to have attained the presence of His Holiness the Exalted One, may my soul be a sacrifice to Him, is a proof of receiving the grace of God and obtaining His most great bounty and supreme favour. The same is true of the rest of the dream. It is my hope that you may manifest the outpourings of the Abhá Beauty and wax day by day in faith and knowledge. At night pray and supplicate and in the day do what is required of you.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá

Shoghi Effendi was particularly attached to this nurse, who is mentioned in a letter ‘Abdu’l-Bahá wrote to His sister, in which He says: “Kiss the flower of the garden of sweetness, Shoghi Effendi, and convey greetings to Hájar Khátún”. In my diary I recorded: “Shoghi Effendi was telling me tonight how sad he was when his nurse, who had brought him up, died in Alexandretta. He said his mother was determined to get rid of her when she got older and he felt it and resented it bitterly although he was only nine or ten. When the news came that she had died he was in Carm, his father’s garden. He said he went away in the dark and cried for her—he was about twelve then. His devotion to his nurse was a byword in the family.”

Shoghi Effendi entered the best school in Haifa, the *Collège des Frères*, conducted by the Jesuits. He told me he had been very unhappy there. Indeed, I gathered from him that he never was really happy in either school or university. In spite of his innately joyous nature, his sensitivity and his background—so different from that of others in every way—could not but set him apart and give rise to many a heartache; indeed, he was one of those people whose open and innocent hearts, keen minds and affectionate nature seem to combine to bring upon them more shocks and suffering in life than is the lot of most men. Because of his unhappiness in this school ‘Abdu’l-Bahá decided to send him to Beirut where he attended another Catholic school as a boarder, and where he was equally unhappy. Learning of this in Haifa the family sent a trusted Bahá’í woman to rent a home for Shoghi Effendi in Beirut and take care of and wait on him. It was not long before she wrote to his father that he was very unhappy at school, would refuse to go to it sometimes for days, and was getting thin and run down. His father showed this letter to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Who then had arrangements made for Shoghi Effendi to enter the Syrian Protestant College, which had a school as well as a university, later known as the American College in Beirut, and which the Guardian entered when he finished what was then equivalent to the high school. Shoghi Effendi spent his vacations at home in Haifa, in the presence as often as possible of the grandfather he idolized and Whom it was the object of his life to serve. The entire course of Shoghi Effendi’s studies was aimed by him at fitting himself to serve the Master, interpret for Him and translate His letters into English.

Shoghi Effendi told me that it was during these early years of study in Haifa that he asked ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to give him a name of his own so he would no longer be confused with his cousins, as they were all called Afnan. The Master then gave him the surname of Rabbani, which means “divine”, and this was also used by his brothers and sisters. In those days there were no surnames, people were called after their city, their eldest son or a prominent person in their family.

It is very difficult to trace the exact course of events in these years. All eyes were fixed on the grandfather and much as people loved and respected the eldest grandson, when the sun shines the lamp is ignored! Some pilgrims’ accounts, like that of Thornton Chase, the first American believer, who visited the Master in 1907, mention meeting “Shoghi Afnan”. Indeed Chase published a photograph of Shoghi Effendi in what must have been his usual costume in those days, short pants, long dark stockings, a fez on his head, a jacket and a huge sailor’s collar covering his shoulders. But there is not enough material available at present to fill in all the gaps. Even those who accompanied ‘Abdu’l-Bahá on His journeys to the West, and kept careful diaries, did not think to record very much about the comings and goings of a child who was only thirteen when ‘Abdu’l-Bahá set forth on His historic visits to Europe and America.

No sooner had ‘Abdu’l-Bahá been freed from His long imprisonment and taken up His permanent residence in Haifa, than He began to contemplate this journey. A report published in America in *Bahá’í News*, 1910, states: “You have asked for an account of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s departure for the land of Egypt. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá did not inform anyone that He was going to leave Haifa . . . within two days He summoned to His presence M. N., Shoghi Effendi and K. and this servant.” One of the Bahá’ís recalls that a little before sunset, on that September

afternoon when ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s ship set sail for Port Said in Egypt, Shoghi Effendi was seated on the steps of the Master’s house, disconsolate and forlorn, and remarked: “The Master is now on board the ship. He has left me behind, but surely there is a wisdom in this!”, or words to this effect. Well knowing, no doubt, what was passing in the heart of His grandson, the loving Master lost no time in sending for the child to soften the blow of this first, serious separation from Him; but more reference than this to that event has not been found. We know the Master stayed about a month in Port Said, later proceeding to Alexandria rather than to Europe, which was His original intention. How long Shoghi Effendi stayed with Him on that occasion in Egypt we do not know but as school opened in early October one presumes he returned to Syria. What we do know is that in April 1911 Shoghi Effendi was again with the Master, in Ramleh, a suburb of Alexandria, for a visiting Bahá’í from America, Louis Gregory, the first Negro Hand of the Cause, mentions meeting, on 16 April, “Shogi”, a beautiful boy, a grandson of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, and says he showed great affection for the pilgrims. In August of that same year the Master left on His first visit to Europe, returning in December 1911. How long it was before He again sent for His eldest grandson to join Him we do not know, but we do know that He now had a plan—perhaps influenced by His own impressions of Europe, perhaps because of the degree to which He had missed Shoghi Effendi—which was none other than to take Shoghi Effendi with Him to America.

The Guardian himself told me how the Master had ordered for him long robes, and two turbans, one green and one white like His own, for Shoghi Effendi to wear in the West; when these were delivered and Shoghi Effendi dressed himself in them to show ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, he said the Master’s eyes shone with pride and pleasure. What this journey to the West in the presence of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá would have meant to Shoghi Effendi is incalculable, but it was prevented by the machinations of one who later became a perfidious and despicable Covenant-breaker, Dr Amin Fareed, the nephew of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s wife, who caused Him such constant distress that Shoghi Effendi said when the Master returned at length to His home in Haifa on 5 December 1913, He proceeded at once to the room of His wife, sat down and said with a feeble voice, accompanied by a gesture of His hand, “Doctor Fareed has ground me down!” There was never any doubt in Shoghi Effendi’s mind that it was due to Fareed that he was prevented from making this historic journey.

On 25 March 1912 ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Shoghi Effendi and various secretaries and servants sailed for Europe from Alexandria on the S.S. *Cedric* of the White Star Line. When the boat docked at Naples the Italian health inspectors declared that the eyes of one of the secretaries, one of the servants and Shoghi Effendi were diseased and they were ordered to return to the Middle East. In his diary, Mirza Mahmud records these facts and says that in spite of every effort exerted by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, by those who accompanied Him and by American friends, these three were denied landing privileges and that the authorities stated that even if they permitted them to go on, in America the health authorities would send them back. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá spent an entire day during which He did everything possible to change this decision, but in the evening, after a sorrowful leave-taking, He was forced to embark on His ship and sail for America. The words which He addressed that night to those who accompanied Him make it quite clear He did not believe Shoghi Effendi was sent back on any other than a trumped-up pretext: “These Italians thought we were Turks and they reported us as such. They have stopped three of us. One was the secretary and one was the cook; this was not important. But this child, Shoghi Effendi, was helpless, why were they so strict with him? They have ill-treated us in this way, but I have always given support and assistance to their community whether in Alexandria or in Haifa . . .”

Shoghi Effendi told me that there was nothing the matter with his eyes (he always had very strong eyes) but Dr Fareed had insisted to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá that he must be sent back, raising all kinds of arguments in support of what the Italian doctor said. He attributed the whole thing to Fareed’s own intervention in the situation, so typical of his boundless ambition and the endless intrigues within oriental families. One can well imagine what heartbreak

this brought to a boy of fifteen, setting out on the first great adventure of his life, how much more to Shoghi Effendi, so attached to his grandfather, so excited over the trip on a big ship, the great journey to the West in a day when such long voyages were relatively rare and eventful! He always remembered this episode with sadness, but in a touching spirit of submissiveness to the constant blows he received all his life. It is easy to say it was the Will of God—but who knows how often the next step, planned by God, is diverted into another, less perfect path, by the evil plotting of men? There is no doubt the Master was greatly grieved by this event, but had to keep His own counsel, lest the secret of Shoghi Effendi's future be prematurely revealed and worse befall him through the malice and envy of others.

We have a letter written by Shoghi Effendi about six months later to one of the secretaries of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in America telling him that although he has subscribed to the *Star of the West* some copies have not been received and will he please make sure that he gets all the copies giving reports of the Master's travels in America. He gives his address from October as that of the Syrian Protestant College in Beirut, Syria, which, he writes, he will be shortly entering. He signs his name "Choki Rabbani". He seems, in his early years, to have spelt his name this way, also sometimes "Shawki" or "Shogi". It eventually became "Shoghi", which conveyed more clearly its correct pronunciation in English. In a notebook of these Beirut days he has written his name out with its complete transliteration, Shawqí Rabbání, showing he was aware of this rendering—but he never used it for his own name.

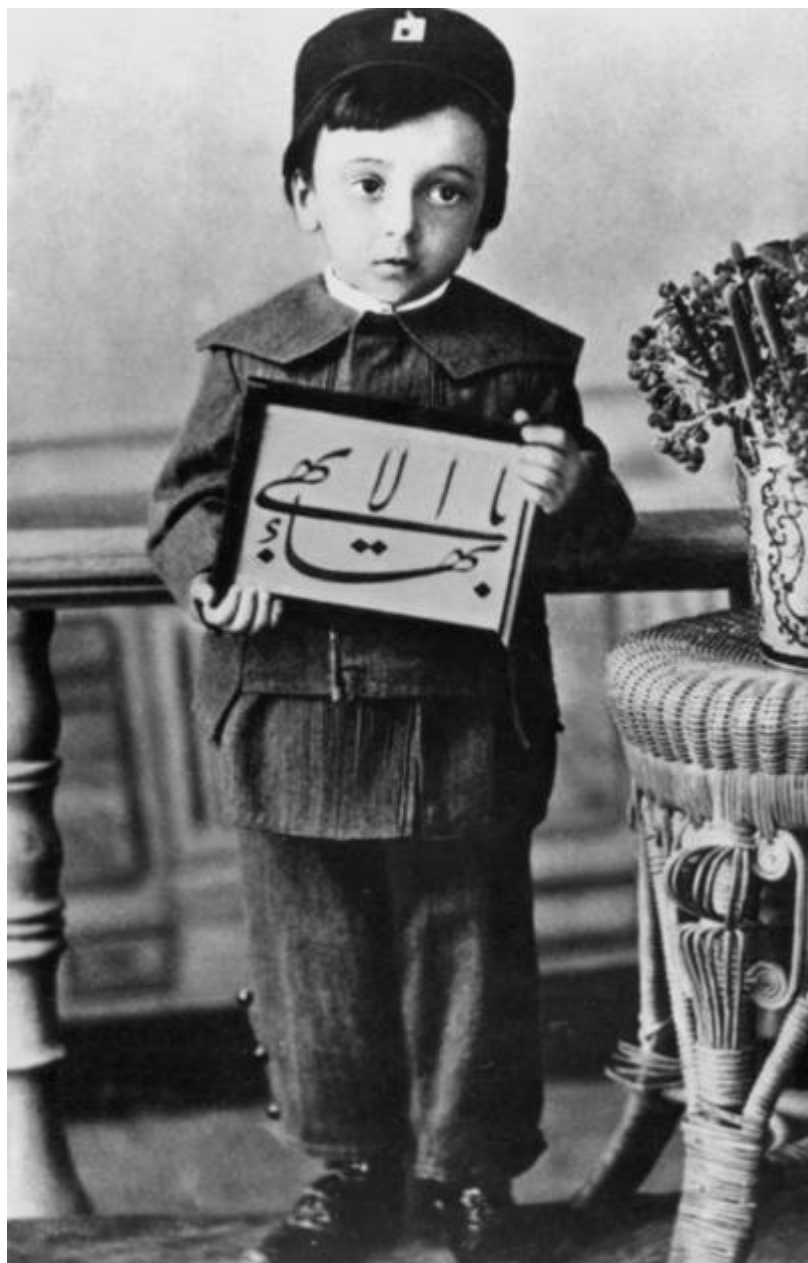
'Abdu'l-Bahá's thoughts, in spite of the arduous nature of His daily preoccupations during those exhausting months in America and later in Europe, must have often gone to His beloved grandson. We find mention of Shoghi Effendi in three of the letters the Master wrote to His sister, the Greatest Holy Leaf, Bahíyyih Khánum, during His travels, showing His anxiety over Shoghi Effendi and revealing His great love for him: "Write to me at once about Shoghi Effendi's condition, informing me fully and hiding nothing; this is the best way." "Kiss the light of the eyes of the company of spiritual souls, Shoghi Effendi." "Kiss the fresh flower of the garden of sweetness, Shoghi Effendi." Such references clearly indicate His anxiety over a child who had not always been well and who, He well knew, missed Him terribly and suffered. We also have a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá addressed to Shoghi Effendi, expressing His concern about his health, but at what period it was written I do not know:

He is God!

Shoghi Effendi, upon him be the glory of the All-Glorious! O thou who art young in years and radiant of countenance, I understand you have been ill and obliged to rest; never mind, from time to time rest is essential, otherwise, like unto 'Abdu'l-Bahá from excessive toil you will become weak and powerless and unable to work. Therefore rest a few days, it does not matter. I hope that you will be under the care and protection of the Blessed Beauty.

At last the long journey was over and the Master, sixty-nine years old and exhausted from His herculean labours, returned to Egypt on 16 June 1913. His family hastened to His presence there, among them Shoghi Effendi, who joined Him about six weeks after His arrival. If one wonders why he did not get there sooner, one must remember that school was not out until after the first week of July and then Shoghi Effendi most probably had to take ship for Haifa from Beirut (the alternative being to come overland with a caravan, which was a cheaper but longer and more arduous method of getting there), where he joined some of his family and then sailed from Haifa to Egypt, arriving in the company of the Greatest Holy Leaf and others on 1 August in Ramleh, where 'Abdu'l-Bahá had once again rented a villa. So many times Shoghi Effendi would say "the Master was like an ocean", meaning He could receive everything and give forth no sign of disturbance. This immense self-control is

nowhere better shown than in the diarist's report that 'Abdu'l-Bahá, after hearing of the arrival of the two people He loved best in the world, sat for an hour with Bahá'ís and friends before returning home to greet them! On 2 August the diary notes: "Today the beloved did not come to see us in the morning because He was entertaining the 'Greatest Holy Leaf' and the rest of the friends who had come with her." When one imagines the joy of the reunion and reads this trite indication of it one realizes something of the dignity and reserve which always surrounded the family of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Nevertheless we have some indication of Shoghi Effendi's life there: the old custom of prayers in the presence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá was resumed and Shoghi Effendi would chant too, with his lovely young voice, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá would sometimes correct and instruct him. There was nothing unusual in this; I myself often heard older members of the family correct the tune or the pronunciation of someone who was reciting verses or poems out loud; no doubt the Master must have done this many times over the years to Shoghi Effendi. Intensely active and always capable, Shoghi Effendi, during the months he was with 'Abdu'l-Bahá, before he returned to his studies in Beirut, made himself constantly useful to the Master, taking down His letters to the Persian believers, which He would dictate to him as he sat in the garden of His villa, where He was wont to drink His tea and receive His guests, waiting on Him, doing errands for Him, being sent by Him with others to receive visitors or meet them at the railway station. We are told how 'Abdu'l-Bahá sent Shoghi Effendi to show some of the friends the famous park and zoo of Alexandria, how he visited Cairo—where one imagines he lost no time in visiting the pyramids, for Shoghi Effendi had an adventurous spirit and longed to visit distant places, as witnessed by the keen interest it is recorded he showed in some "Travel" magazines sent from America.



THAT CHILD IS BORN

"Verily, that child is born and is alive and from him will appear wondrous things . . . in the future."

Abdu'l-Bahá



BIRTHPLACE OF THE GUARDIAN

In this house Shoghi Effendi was born in 1897, in the prison-city of 'Akká



SHOGHI EFFENDI AND HIS SISTER

Taken in the prison-city of 'Akká circa 1902



SHOGHI EFFENDI, TAKEN DURING HIS
EARLY SCHOOL YEARS



“O God! This is a branch sprung from the tree of Thy mercy . . . bestow upon him the name Shoghi so that he may yearn for Thy Kingdom . . .

‘Abdu’l-Bahá



THE YOUNG SCHOLAR AT HIS EASE



'ABDU'L-BAHÁ ON THE STEPS OF HIS HOME

The future Guardian is standing in the first row, third from the right; circa 1914

There was tremendous movement about ‘Abdu’l-Bahá; pilgrims arriving from East and West, amongst them such famous old Bahá’ís as Lua Getsinger and Mirza Abul Fazl, who were to eventually rest, in Egypt, under the same tombstone, many, many years later; believers departing for India to spread the Message of Bahá’u’lláh; delegations of young Bahá’í students from Beirut and Persia; interviews accorded by the Master to press representatives and people of distinction and standing. One of His secretaries who had been with Him in America wrote at this time of what infinite joy and bounty these precious days in the Master’s presence were. And if this registered itself so vividly on his mind and heart, then what must have been the effect on Shoghi Effendi, so disappointed when he had been denied the bounty of accompanying ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to the West, so starved for His presence and news of Him during almost fifteen months of separation? The heart at sixteen is capable of a kind of joy that seldom repeats itself later in life; in spite of the war years so soon to come, I believe that this period, up until the Master’s passing in 1921, was the happiest of Shoghi Effendi’s entire life.

I remember two stories associated with the days Shoghi Effendi spent in Egypt with the Master, which he himself recounted to me. He said that one day, after partaking of a particularly rich repast, the Master had recalled the days in Baghdad when His Father had returned from His self-imposed exile in the mountains of Sulaimaniya, when they had all been so poor—the days, however, when from Bahá’u’lláh’s pen had streamed such a torrent of exalted writings which night after night until dawn the believers gathered to hear chanted, in ecstasy at this wonderful Revelation—and the Master said that the taste of the dry bread and dates of those days had been sweeter than all the other food in the world. The other story surprised me—and enlightened me—very much; I heard it more than once: Shoghi Effendi said that one day he was driving back from Alexandria to Ramleh with the Master in a rented carriage, accompanied by a Pasha who was going to the Master’s house as His guest; when they arrived and got out and the Master asked the strapping big coachman how much He owed him, the man asked an exorbitant price; ‘Abdu’l-Bahá refused to pay it; the man insisted and became abusive to such an extent that he grasped the Master by the sash around His waist and pulled Him roughly back and forth, insisting on this price. Shoghi Effendi said this scene in front of the distinguished guest embarrassed him terribly. He was too small to do anything himself to help the Master and felt horrified and humiliated. Not so ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Who remained perfectly calm and refused to give in. When the man finally released his hold, the Master paid him exactly what He owed him, told him his conduct had forfeited the good tip He had planned to give him, and walked off followed by Shoghi Effendi and the Pasha! There is no doubt that such things left a lifelong imprint on the Guardian’s character, who never allowed himself to be browbeaten or cheated, no matter whether or not this embarrassed or inconvenienced him, and those who were working for him.

The character we saw in Shoghi Effendi as Guardian was already there in his youth and adolescence. In a letter written by him from Beirut on 8 March 1914 to one of the Master’s secretaries in Haifa, whom he knew well, he rebukes him for neglecting to write to him: “A long time elapsed during which I have had neither any news from Haifa nor a word from you. Indeed I never expected this. I hope that the rarity of correspondence will be changed to numerous letters full of glad-tidings of the Holy Land.” The seventeen-year-old boy is firm and princely. He goes on to hope that “Our Lord and Master is in perfect health” and asks that any and all talks and references made by the Master, and information His correspondent may have regarding the question of a Supreme Tribunal be sent to him before 20 March. The keenness with which he was following the talks and thoughts of the Master is reflected in this letter as well as the one requesting all copies of *Star of the West* covering ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s visit to America. But there is a still more illuminating sidelight on Shoghi Effendi’s interests and nature in this same letter: “I have pretty near finished the map of the United States of America. It is a very picturesque and beautiful

map. Please send me the list of the cities of the United States visited by our Lord in order, one after the other. I will be then able to locate them in the map.” The great map-maker of the Bahá’í world was already busy!

In notebooks of Shoghi Effendi from the year 1917, we find he has checked off the days ice was delivered to the house he lived in, in Beirut—so typical of the methodical nature of all his work. To the end of his life he was wont to keep track by date of the receipt of his paper, *The Times* of London, which he no doubt formed the habit of subscribing to when he lived in England—probably the best English-language daily paper in the whole world and the only newspaper addressed by Bahá’u’lláh, by name, in one of His Tablets. These notebooks also contain a detailed enumeration of the Bahá’í calendar, the basic principles of the Faith, notes on the period of the Hebrew Prophets in French, solar and lunar calculations, measurements, weights, copies of Tablets and data showing he had mastered the Abjad system of numerology, as well as sundry other things. The essential characteristics of the Guardian were all there in the boy.

Shoghi Effendi was always active in corresponding with Bahá’í friends through personal letters. We learn from one of these, addressed to “Syed Mustafa Roumie” in Burma, and dated “Caiffa, Syria, July 28, 1914”, in which he says he is much pleased with the “glad tidings of the rapid progress of the Cause in the Far East”, that he shared this letter with the Master and “a Holy tender smile ran over his radiant Face and his heart overflowed with joy. I then came to know that the Master is in good health for I recollected his sayings which I quote now. ‘Whenever and wherever I hear the glad tidings of the Cause my physical health is bettered and ameliorated.’ I therefore tell you that the Master is feeling very well and is happy. Convey this happy news to the Indian believers. I do hope that this will double their courage, their firmness, and their zeal in spreading the Cause.”

Shoghi Effendi also played a dominant role in the activities of the Bahá’í students studying in Beirut, through which passed so many of the pilgrims from Persia and the Far East on their way to and from Haifa. He writes, in another letter to that same correspondent, headed “Syrian Protestant College, Beirut, Syria, May 3rd, 1914”: “Going back to our college activities our Bahá’í meetings, which I have spoken to you about, are reorganized and only today we are sending letters, enclosing glad tidings of the Holy Land, to the Bahá’í Assemblies of various countries.”

In February 1915 Shoghi Effendi won first prize in the Freshman-Sophomore Prize Contest—what for is not stated—awarded by the Students’ Union. He was a good student, but he himself never claimed he had been considered a brilliant or outstanding scholar. There is a very great difference between a deep, wide, far-seeing and logical mind and the quality of brain, spurred on more often than not by ambition and conceit, which wins acclaim from faculty and fellow-students. There was never any conceit in Shoghi Effendi’s nature and no ambition. He was fired by a supreme motive—to serve ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and lift some of the load of work and cares from His shoulders. In a letter dated 15 January 1918, addressed to Him from Beirut by Shoghi Effendi, he puts this in his own words: “I have resumed my studies, directing and concentrating all my efforts on them and doing my utmost to acquire that which will benefit and prepare me to serve the Cause in the days to come.” Shoghi Effendi had just returned to Beirut from Haifa, evidently after the Christmas vacation period, and “arrived”, he wrote, “happily and safely in the university” after weathering cold and rain on the way. Shoghi Effendi pours out, in every revealing phrase of this letter, “my love and longing for you” and ends: “I have sent you by post a piece of cheese, hoping it will be acceptable to Thee.” He signed it “Thy lowly and humble servant Shoghi”. When one remembers that during the war tens of thousands were estimated to have died of starvation in the Lebanon, this gift of a piece of cheese assumes different proportions.

That the war years, during which Shoghi Effendi was studying in Beirut to obtain his Bachelor of Arts degree at the American University, cast a deep shadow of anxiety upon him, in spite of his naturally buoyant and joyous nature, is evinced in a passage of one of his letters written in April 1919, in which he refers to the “long and dismal years of war, bloodshed, famine, and pestilence, when the Holy Land was isolated from the different regions of the world and was undergoing the utmost and severest degree of repression, tyranny and devastation . . .” They were years of ever-increasing danger for his beloved grandfather, years of dire starvation for much of the population, of privations shared by all, including his own family. As the world struggle approached its end the threat of a bombardment of Haifa by the Allies reached such proportions that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá removed His family to a village at the foot of the hills on the other side of the Bay of Akka where they lived for some months and where He, too, spent some of His time. But the greatest threat to the Master’s life and to His family came at the moment when the Turkish Commander-in-Chief, “the brutal, the all-powerful and unscrupulous Jamal Pasha, an inveterate enemy of the Faith”, as Shoghi Effendi described him, contemplated crucifying the Master and His whole family, according to Major Tudor Pole, who was an officer in General Allenby’s victorious army which entered Haifa in August 1918, and who states this hideous act was due to take place two days before their entry, but was frustrated by the rapidity of the British advance and the consequent hasty retreat of the Turkish forces. We assume Shoghi Effendi had completed his studies in Beirut, and was with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá at this time and shared the agonizing uncertainty of those days. It seems strange to me, as I write this, to realize how little Shoghi Effendi ever mentioned personal events in his life; he hated anecdotes and had no time for reminiscences when they referred to himself. His tired mind and spirit were, during the period I was privileged to be with him, wholly preoccupied with the work of the Cause, the immediate task to be accomplished then, right before him, waiting, weighing on him each day.

It was in 1918 that Shoghi Effendi received his Bachelor of Arts degree. In a letter to a friend in England dated 19 November of that year, he wrote: “I am so glad and privileged to be able to attend to my Beloved’s services after completing my course of Arts and Sciences in the American University in Beirut. I am so anxious and expectant to hear from you and of your services to the Cause for by transmitting them to the Beloved I shall make him happy, glad and strong. The past four years have been years of untold calamity, of unprecedented oppression, of indescribable misery, of severe famine and distress, of unparalleled bloodshed and strife, but now that the dove of peace has returned to its nest and abode a golden opportunity has arisen for the promulgation of the Word of God. This will be now promoted and the Message delivered in this liberated region without the least amount of restriction. This is indeed the Era of Service.” Nothing could be more revealing of the character of the future Guardian than these lines, in which his devotion to the work of the Master, his consuming longing to make Him happy and well, his concise summary of where his own life now stands in relation to this service, his analysis of what the war’s end signifies for the immediate future of Bahá’í work are all clearly shown. His nascent rhetorical style, still hampered by an imperfect command of the English language, but already showing the bare bones of its future greatness is reflected in passages such as this: “the friends . . . are all . . . large and small, old and young, healthy and sick, at home and abroad, glad of the events that have recently transpired; they are all one soul in different bodies, united, agreed, serving and aiming to serve the oneness of humanity.”

Shoghi Effendi was now twenty-one years old. His personal relationship to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was made clear in some of these early letters, for the most part written in 1919, in which he refers to “my grand-father, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá” and signs himself “Shoghi Rabbani (grandson of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá)”. One must remember that in the immediate months after the war ended, when contact was being re-established between the Master and the believers in so many countries which had been cut off from Him during the long years of hostilities, it was highly desirable that Bahá’ís and non-Bahá’ís alike should know who this “Shoghi Rabbani” was who was now acting as the Master’s secretary and right-hand man. The *Star of the West*, in its issue of 27 September 1919, publishes a

full-length photograph of Shoghi Effendi, entitled, “Shoghi Rabbani, Grandson of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá”, and states he is the translator of recent Tablets and his Diary Letters begin in this issue. Personally I believe, knowing from experience how completely Shoghi Effendi directed even minutiae at the World Centre, that it is probable the Master Himself directed him to make clear their family relationship.

The work of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá increased from day to day as floods of letters, reports and eventually pilgrims poured into Haifa. This is reflected in Shoghi Effendi’s personal letters to various Bahá’í friends: “. . . this interruption of correspondence with you on my part has been solely due to a great pressure of work in connection with the dictation and translation of Tablets . . . The whole afternoon has been spent in translating for him only the contents of a part of the supplications from London.” He ends up by saying, “I enclose, out of my Bahá’í and particular affection for you, two photographs . . .” “My head is in a whirl, so busy and so eventful was the day. No less than a score of callers from prince and pasha to a simple private soldier have sought interview with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.” “The Beloved from morn till eve, even at midnight is engaged in revealing Tablets, in sending forth his constructive, dynamic thoughts of love and principles to a sad and disillusioned world.” “As I am writing these lines, I am again moved to present myself in his presence and take down his words in response to the recently arrived supplications.” Every word reflects the boundless energy, devotion and enthusiasm of this princeling at the side of the old king, serving and supporting Him with all the vitality of his youth and the singular eagerness of his nature.

Shoghi Effendi frequently accompanied the Master to the steadily increasing number of official functions to which He was invited. This included visits to the British Military Governor of Haifa and interviews with the Commander-in-Chief, Sir Edmund Allenby, the General who had led the Allied forces in Palestine and who later became Lord Allenby and was largely responsible for ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s receiving a knighthood from the British Government. Shoghi Effendi wrote: “This was the second time ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had called on the General and this time the conversation centered around the Cause and its progress . . . He is a very gentle, modest and striking figure, warm in affection, yet imposing in his manners.” In these circles the grandson of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was now becoming known. An official letter, from the Military Governor to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, says: “Your Eminence: I have today received from your grandson the sum of ____”. This was in response to Shoghi Effendi’s having called upon him with a further contribution from the Master to the “Haifa Relief Fund”. Shoghi Effendi also spent much time with the pilgrims, not only in the presence of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, during which he eagerly obtained information from them about the progress of Bahá’í activities in various countries.

Although the Master’s work had now increased to such an extent that many people were engaged in constantly serving and assisting Him, there can be no doubt that no one compared with Shoghi Effendi. I remember the Guardian telling me of how (I believe it must have been in early 1920) one of the old American Bahá’ís had sent a gift to the Master of a Cunningham automobile; notice of its arrival at the quayside in port came just as the weekend commenced and the Master gave Shoghi Effendi instructions to see that it was cleared and delivered to the house. Shoghi Effendi told me that although the next day there were no high officials in the port and it was not a business day, he succeeded in getting the car delivered, and when it arrived he went to the Master and informed Him it was outside the door. He said the Master was very surprised and immensely pleased and asked him how he had succeeded in doing this. Shoghi Effendi told Him he had taken the papers and gone to the homes of various officials, asking them to sign the documents and give the necessary orders for the car of Sir ‘Abdu’l-Bahá ‘Abbás to be delivered to Him at once. This was typical of the way Shoghi Effendi did his work throughout his entire life. He always wanted everything done at once, if not sooner, and everything he had any personal control over progressed at that speed.

Wherever ‘Abdu’l-Bahá went, as often as possible the beloved grandson went with Him. This constant companionship, which lasted for about two years, must have been a deep satisfaction to them both and have exerted a profound and decisive influence on Shoghi Effendi. During these years, when the star of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s fame was rising locally, as well as internationally, Shoghi Effendi had the opportunity of observing how the Master dealt with high officials and the numerous men of distinction drawn to one Whom many regarded as little less than an oriental prophet and the greatest religious figure in Asia, as well as how the Master conducted Himself in the face of the ever-present envy and intrigue of His enemies and ill-wishers. The lessons learned were to be reflected in the thirty-six years of Shoghi Effendi’s own ministry to the Faith of Bahá’u’lláh.

In a letter to a friend dated 18 February 1919 Shoghi Effendi writes he is in Bahjí with the Master and begins: “Greetings with sweetest remembrances to you, my far-off friend, from this hallowed spot!” He goes on to describe the peacefulness of Bahjí, after the increasing activity in the city of Haifa and says, “The air over there was filled with gases and vapors which steam and motor engines continuously discharge, while the atmosphere here is as pure, as clear and as fragrant as it can be.” When we remember that as late as 1923 I went to Bahjí in the horse-drawn carriage of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, and that in 1918 automobile traffic was practically non-existent in post-war Palestine, we must assume that Shoghi Effendi was inordinately fond of nature—which, indeed, he was! His description of the Master, visiting the Holy Shrine twice a day, and walking in the flowering wilderness, reflects his joy in these precious days, close to his best-beloved. But the end of this blessedness for Shoghi Effendi was rapidly approaching. It had been decided he should now go to England and enter Oxford University, his avowed purpose being to perfect his English in order to better translate the Tablets of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, as well as the other Sacred Writings, into this language.

The decision of Shoghi Effendi to leave ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, after less than two years spent constantly in His service, and at a time when the Master’s vast post-war correspondence was steadily increasing, was based on a number of factors: if he intended to pursue his studies the sooner he did so the better; ‘Abdu’l-Bahá now had a number of people acting as His secretaries; Shoghi Effendi’s eldest cousin had finished his studies in Beirut and was now at home; the Master’s own condition and plans were propitious and, above all, His health had been steadily improving. In 1918 Tudor Pole, who was with Allenby’s conquering army in Palestine, wrote: “. . . the Master is vigorous and more healthy than when He was in London.” Shoghi Effendi, in letters of his own, written respectively during April and August 1919, bears this out: “The Beloved is in perfect health, strong and vigorous, happy and joyous . . .” “The Beloved Master is indeed in the best of health, physically strong, ever active, revealing hundreds of Tablets a week, perusing innumerable supplications, receiving many visitors and pilgrims and often waking up at midnight for meditation and prayer.” During this same period Shoghi Effendi, in letters to friends in England and in Burma, conveys the startling news that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was seriously considering another very long journey: “What is significant and alluring is the intimation of the Beloved himself that he is planning and thinking of such a journey across the Indian Ocean. He even declared that, God willing, he wishes to undertake a voyage to India, and thence to Indo-China, Japan and the Hawaiian Islands, from there across the American Continent to your beloved city of London, to France, Germany and Egypt. Oh! how fervent, how deep and how sincere is our hope that such a great journey which he himself has fixed its duration to be four or five years, will be undertaken. Let us hope and prepare for it.” “The Beloved, has intimated of late his intention to travel to India and we hope this will be soon realized, and India, through the unity and energy of the friends, will acquire the capacity to receive him.”

Very few of us, least of all when we are twenty-three years old, imagine our loved ones dying, how much less when they are in the best of health and planning such a journey as this! So it is not surprising that Shoghi Effendi should have left ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, some time in the spring of 1920, with a tranquil conscience, fully believing he

would return to His side better equipped to serve Him, and, I have no doubt, confident in his own heart that this time he would certainly accompany his grandfather on such a marvellous voyage, and be privileged to serve Him day and night for many years to come. In anticipation of such years as these that seemed to stretch ahead of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Shoghi Effendi ignored His age (the Master was now seventy-six) and ignored that factor that so often dashes our hearts and hopes forever—the obscure intervention of Providence in our plans and lives. How terrible the blow was for the young Guardian when it suddenly fell upon him is reflected in his own anguished words in a letter he wrote in February 1922, a few months after his grandfather’s death, to a distant cousin: “Ah bitter remorse of having missed Him—in His Last Days—on this earth, I shall take with me to the grave no matter what I may do for Him in future, no matter to what extent my studies in England will repay His wondrous love for me.”

It is a significant sidelight on his life as Guardian, and on his early death at the age of sixty, that although Shoghi Effendi was still little more than a boy in 1920 when ‘Abdu’l-Bahá sent him abroad for his studies, in the company of Lotfullah Hakim, who was returning to England after his first pilgrimage to Haifa, the Master insisted that on his way to England he should go first to a sanatorium and take a good rest. It shows how depleted Shoghi Effendi’s nervous strength must have been, after the long years of war and attendant strain, and the heavy post-war work and intense activity in the Master’s service, and how solicitous for his health his grandfather was at this time. Shoghi Effendi took the rest that had been enjoined upon him in a sanatorium in Neuilly, a suburb of Paris. He was not ill, but run down; he associated with the believers there, played some tennis, went sight-seeing, becoming familiar with a city that is in itself so beautiful and houses one of the world’s greatest museums, visited some Bahá’ís in the town of Barbizon, stayed about two months and then proceeded to England in July.

He was received there by the many devoted friends of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá with genuine warmth and affection. Some of them he already knew personally, such as Dr J. E. Esslemont, who had recently been in Haifa and collaborated with him and other friends in the translation of an important Tablet of the Master; Major W. Tudor Pole, who had met ‘Abdu’l-Bahá during His stay in London and had been in Palestine with the British Army of Occupation, rendering the believers every assistance within his power; and Lord Lamington.

Shoghi Effendi was the bearer of letters from his grandfather to some of His English friends, as is attested in a letter he wrote shortly after his arrival to the wife of Ali Kuli Khan in France:

July 28, 1920

My dearest Bahá’í sister:

I have been fearfully busy since I stepped on British soil and so far the progress of my work has been admirable. Equipped with the Tablets of the Master for Lady Blomfield, Lord Lamington and Major Tudor Pole, I have through them come in close touch with eminent professors and Orientalists whether of Oxford or London University. Having secured introductions and recommendations from Sir Denison Ross, and Professor Ker, to Sir Walter Raleigh—professor of and lecturer on English literature at Oxford—and Prof. Margoliouth—the remarkable Arabic scholar and Orientalist of the same University, I hastened to Oxford after a busy week stay in London. In fact before leaving for Oxford, I had a letter from Margoliouth saying that he would do all in his power to be of help to a relative of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. With this man and the Master of Balliol College—a College from which great men such as Lord Grey, Earl Curzon, Lord Milner, Mr. Asquith, Swinburne and Sir Herbert Samuel have graduated—I had the opportunity of speaking about the Cause and clearing up some points that to these busy scholars had hitherto been uncertain and confused.

Do pray for me, as I have requested you on the eve of my departure, that in this great intellectual center I may attain my object and achieve my end . . .

Of particular interest is a letter written a few days later by Lord Lamington to the Master:

8th August 1920

My dear Friend

I was glad to get your letter at the hands of Shoghi Rabbani and to know from him that you are well. He himself seemed in good health, and I was again impressed by his intelligence and open honest manner.

I hope he will manage to get the training he seeks at Oxford. He came to the House of Lords two or three days, but none of the occasions were I fear of any great interest . . .

The above correspondence gives us an indication of when Shoghi Effendi was in London; as he was the bearer of a letter from 'Abdu'l-Bahá to Lord Lamington we may surmise he lost no time in presenting it to him and can also imagine that the eagerness of the young man to see the workings of the Mother of Parliaments could not be hidden from the kindly and experienced peer, who would see to it that Shoghi Effendi was admitted to some of the sessions of the House of Lords and the House of Commons present. I remember that after our marriage, when we first went to London together, he took me to the House of Commons and we sat in the visitors' gallery during one of the sessions. If this was a big experience for me—still so dazed and overcome by the recent honour of being permitted to be so near to the Sign of God on earth—one can imagine how much it thrilled and impressed Shoghi Effendi as a young man. He became very familiar with London during this period in England and visited its famous sites. On more than one occasion, when we went to such places together as Westminster Abbey, St Paul's, the Tower of London, the British Museum, the National Gallery, the Victoria and Albert Museum, the City, Kew Gardens and so on, I realized how many associations this famous city had left him from his student days. He also no doubt saw as much of England as he could on his very modest student's allowance which he received from 'Abdu'l-Bahá. That he practised many economies I know from things he told me, such as that he had bought an electric iron with which to press his clothes!

Shoghi Effendi visited Dr Esslemont more than once at his private sanatorium in Bournemouth. A photograph shows the two of them, heads close, in front of the building, and a letter of Shoghi Effendi to a Dr Hall, written after Esslemont died, eloquently expresses what these visits meant to him: "I shall ever recall the happy and restful days I spent at Bournemouth in the company of our departed friend John Esslemont and I will not forget the pleasant hours we spent together while taking our meals in the sanatorium." While he was in that part of England Shoghi Effendi also visited the seaside resort of Torquay. Many years later we were to go there together, and I was shown the famous Babbacombe Downs by the Guardian and we walked in the park he had visited so long before—a park with deep red-coloured paths which I believe were the very ones that impressed upon his mind the beauty of red paths and green lawns and ornamental vases in conjunction, and inspired him years later to duplicate them in his own beautiful gardens at Bahjí and on Mt Carmel.

The remembrance of those student days never really died out in Shoghi Effendi. I can remember his once telling an English pilgrim, during the last years of his life, how good the thick slices of brown bread, raspberry jam and Devonshire cream had tasted to him.

During his stay in England he was particularly close to one of the old and trusted Persian believers who lived in London, Ziaollah Asgarzadeh, as well as to Dr Esslemont, Lady Blomfield and others, and some of the Manchester Bahá'ís. In spite of the fact that he spent most of his time at Oxford, and concentrated on his studies, he was closely associated with the British Bahá'í Community and shared in its activities. In a letter dated 5 May 1921, written by an Indian believer who was in England, we find that "On Wednesday evening I went to attend the usual Bahá'í meeting at Lindsay Hall. Mr. Shoghi Rabbani read a paper dealing with the economic problems and their solution. His paper was beautifully worded and was very good. . . ." It seems his reading of papers was not confined to Bahá'í meetings for in a letter from Balliol College to one of the believers he states: "I shall also later send you a paper on the Movement which I read some time ago at one of the leading societies in Oxford."

Oxford and Cambridge are still words to conjure with; in 1920 they shone in even more splendid academic isolation than they do in these days when universities and university education have become more prevalent. Balliol, to which Shoghi Effendi was admitted, had a very high standing, being one of Oxford's oldest colleges. Here too I was conducted, years later, by the Guardian, to see the streets he had passed through, the Bodleian Library, the placid river in its greensward surroundings beyond the wrought-iron gates, to thousand-year-old Christ Church with its vast kitchen and fairy web of Gothic arches, to Magdalen and its beauties and to the peaceful quad inside the walls of Balliol, which Shoghi Effendi crossed to his studies, to the dining hall where he ate, and to gaze on the narrow entrance that led to the room he had once lived in as a student. It all, obviously, held many memories for him, but I think few of them were really happy ones.

Many years ago one of the Bahá'ís wrote to the Guardian of a conversation with A. D. Lindsay, who had at that time become Master of Balliol, and who in Shoghi Effendi's days had been his tutor. I kept a copy of his words; one must remember they were voiced in a short informal conversation, not in a special interview. "Shoghi Effendi's idea of education was to discover somebody whose opinions he valued and then question him. When Shoghi Effendi got his answers he wrote them all in a small black book. I had posted my *schedule* (as we say in England, *skedule*, as you say in America); Shoghi Effendi came to me asking, 'What do you do between seven and half past eight?' 'Why man,' I cried, 'I dine!' 'Oh', said Shoghi Effendi with obvious disappointment, 'but must you have all that time?' I had not found so much eagerness for knowledge at Oxford. So I gave him another quarter-hour and went with less dinner. So it was—I suffered for him." This incident had arisen out of the fact that Shoghi Effendi wanted his tutor to give him more than the time already allotted to him. In spite of the above remarks, which are kindly in intent, there is no evidence that this learned man had the faintest inkling of the fact that his only real distinction in the eyes of posterity will be that he tutored Shoghi Effendi. Though everyone at college, how much more this tutor, knew why Shoghi Effendi had broken off his studies and returned to Palestine, there is no letter to be found expressing the slightest personal feeling for his pupil.

There was, however, an exchange of letters between them for in 1927 Shoghi Effendi wrote to Dr Lindsay C.B.E. saying he was sending him the Bahá'í Year Book "showing the character of the work I have been engaged in ever since my sudden and deeply-regretted recall from Balliol." He goes on to say, "The invaluable assistance I have received under your tutorship has proved of great benefit in my arduous and responsible task and I welcome this opportunity to express my grateful appreciation of all that you have done for me." Over two years later Lindsay, in an appeal to all old members for funds for something to do with the College, thanks him for the book. Shoghi Effendi replied the next day, enclosed a £20 contribution, and thanked him for his letter which "served to remind me of the happy and valuable days I spent under your tutorship at Balliol." Great as was the station of the Guardian, his modesty and sense of justice, as well as his courtesy, always impelled him to give credit wherever he felt credit was due. In 1923 in a letter to Professor Dodge at the American University in Beirut he referred to "this great educational institution in the Near East, to which I feel so deeply indebted . . ."

The attitude of Professor D. S. Margoliouth and his wife was quite different, for in 1930 she, in thanking Shoghi Effendi for a book he has sent them, writes: "We like to be reminded of the pleasure that we had in welcoming you in this house during your all too short sojourn in Oxford." This was not the only home that we know received him for we have a letter of his to a Mrs Whyte, five years after he left England, in which he says: "I shall always remember, with the liveliest and most pleasant recollection your most valuable help to me as well as your generous hospitality during my stay in Oxford . . . Always your grateful and affectionate friend Shoghi".

From the college register of 1920 we discover that the Guardian has designated himself, in his own handwriting, as Shawqí Hádí Rabbání 1st son of Mírzá Hádí Shírází, aged 23. From a notebook he kept we find the following list, which he had carefully made out, and which shows the dates he began his studies in 1920:

Oct. 14, 1920 Political Science: - Rev. Carlyle

Oct. 15, 1920 Social and Political Problems: - Mr. Smith (Master of Balliol)

Oct. 13, 1920 Social and Industrial Questions: - Rev. Carlyle

Oct. 12, 1920 Political Economy: - Sir T. H. Penson M.A.

Oct. 16, 1920 English Economic History since 1688: - Sir Penson

Oct. 11, 1920 Logic: - Mr. Ross M.A.

Oct. 12, 1920 Eastern Question: - F. F. Urquhart M.A.

Oct. 19, 1920 Relations of Capital and Labour: - Clay, New College

He kept notes of some of these classes, at least those for his first attendances. The Guardian's own idea of why he was at Oxford was quite clear; fortunately we have an expression of this in a letter he wrote to an oriental believer on 18 October 1920: "My dear spiritual friend . . . God be praised, I am in good health and full of hope and trying to the best of my ability to equip myself for those things I shall require in my future service to the Cause. My hope is that I may speedily acquire the best that this country and this society have to offer and then return to my home and recast the truths of the Faith in a new form, and thus serve the Holy Threshold." There is no doubt he was referring to his future translation of the teachings into the perfect English for which he laid the foundation during his sojourn in England.

On 22 November 1921, in a letter to one of the English believers, the advances made by Shoghi Effendi in his work at Oxford are clearly reflected; one senses a new mastery and self-assurance: ". . . I have been of late immersed in my work, revising many translations and have sent to Mr. Hall my version of Queen Victoria's Tablet which is replete with most vital and significant world counsels, so urgently needed by this sad and disillusioned world! If you have not yet perused it be sure to obtain it from Mr. Hall as it is in my opinion one of the most outstanding and emphatic pronouncements of Bahá'u'lláh on world affairs." He goes on to say he is enclosing extracts "some new and some old" which he has made "in the course of my readings at the Bodleian on the Movement". In a Persian letter of this same period, written to a friend in London, he refers to the fact that "I am engaged in this land, day and night, in perfecting myself in the art of translation . . . I do not have a moment's rest. Thank God that to some extent at least the results are good." He states that his preoccupations and

studies, as well as college regulations, are such that he is only free on Sundays and can his friend come and see him on Sunday at 45 Broad Street.

From his Beirut days until practically the end of his life Shoghi Effendi had the habit of writing vocabularies and typical English phrases in notebooks. Hundreds of words and sentences have been recorded and these clearly indicate the years of careful study he put into mastering a language he loved and revelled in. For him there was no second to English. He was a great reader of the King James version of the Bible, and of the historians Carlyle and Gibbon, whose style he greatly admired, particularly that of Gibbon, whose *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* Shoghi Effendi was so fond of that I never remember his not having a volume of it near him in his small room and usually with him when he travelled. There was a small Everyman's copy of part of it next to his bed when he died. It was his own pet bible of the English language and often he would read to me excerpts from it, interrupting himself with exclamations such as "Oh what style; what a command of English; what rolling sentences; listen to this." With his beautiful voice and pronunciation—in the direction of what we call an "Oxford accent", but not exaggeratedly so—the words fairly glowed with colour and their value and meaning came out like shining jewels. I particularly remember one peaceful hour (so rare, alas) when we sat on a bench facing the lake on a summer afternoon in St James' Park in London and he read me Gibbon out loud. He revelled in him and throughout Shoghi Effendi's writings the influence of his style may clearly be seen, just as the biblical English is reflected in his translations of Bahá'u'lláh's Prayers, *The Hidden Words* and Tablets.

I know Shoghi Effendi was at Oxford at the same time as Anthony Eden; they were acquainted but not friends, indeed I never heard him mention any person as having been a friend; his ties remained with some of his professors but he seems to have kept himself aloof from others, perhaps because of a shyness that was not easily detectable in the majesty of the Guardian, but was a strong characteristic of the human nature of the man. He belonged to a debating society and liked to play tennis, but details of his days in Oxford are singularly lacking. This whole episode in his life was so overshadowed by the Master's passing, so utterly devastating in the effect it produced on his life, that the only real record we have of it is in the influence it produced on his writings and his character. Even so short a stay in a university with the atmosphere and quality of Oxford shaped and sharpened his already clear and logical mind, heightened his critical faculties, reinforced his strong sense of justice and reasoning powers, and added to the oriental nobility which characterized Bahá'u'lláh's family those touches of the culture we associate with the finest type of English gentleman.

II

THE PASSING OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

The address of Major Tudor Pole, in London, was often used as the distributing point for cables and letters to the Bahá’ís. Shoghi Effendi himself, whenever he went up to London, usually called there. On 29 November 1921 at 9.30 in the morning the following cable reached that office:

Cyclometry London

His Holiness ‘Abdu’l-Bahá ascended Abhá Kingdom. Inform friends.

Greatest Holy Leaf

In notes he made of this terrible event and its immediate repercussions Tudor Pole records that he immediately notified the friends by wire, telephone and letter. I believe he must have telephoned Shoghi Effendi, asking him to come at once to his office, but not conveying to him at that distance a piece of news which he well knew might prove too much of a shock. However this may be, at about noon Shoghi Effendi reached London, went to 61 St James’ Street (off Piccadilly and not far from Buckingham Palace) and was shown into the private office. Tudor Pole was not in the room at the moment but as Shoghi Effendi stood there his eye was caught by the name of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá on the open cablegram lying on the desk and he read it. When Tudor Pole entered the room a moment later he found Shoghi Effendi in a state of collapse, dazed and bewildered by this catastrophic news. He was taken to the home of Miss Grand, one of the London believers, and put to bed there for a few days. Shoghi Effendi’s sister Rouhangeze was studying in London and she, Lady Blomfield and others did all they could to comfort the heart-stricken youth.

Dr Esslemont immediately responded to his need; his first thought, on hearing the news, was evidently of Shoghi Effendi. In a letter written on 29 November he says:

The Home Sanatorium

Bournemouth

Dearest Shoghi,

It was indeed a “bolt from the blue” when I got Tudor Pole’s wire this morning: “Master passed on peacefully Haifa yesterday morning” . . . It must be very hard for you, away from your family and even away from all Bahá’í friends. What will you do now? I suppose you will go back to Haifa as soon as possible. Meantime you are most welcome to come here for a few days . . . Just send me a wire . . . and

I shall have a room ready for you . . . if I can be of any help to you in any way I shall be so glad. I can well imagine how heart-broken you must feel and how you must long to be at home and what a terrible blank you must feel in your life . . . Christ was closer to His loved ones after His ascension than before, and so I pray it may be with the beloved and ourselves. We must do our part to shoulder the responsibility of the Cause and His Spirit and Power will be with us and in us.

After a few days in Miss Grand's home Shoghi Effendi roused himself to wind up his affairs and return immediately to the Holy Land. Tudor Pole, in a letter to the American Bahá'ís dated 2 December, wrote: "Shoghi Rabbani and his sister will be returning to Haifa towards the end of the present month and they will be accompanied by Lady Blomfield . . ." We presume that Shoghi Effendi was in Oxford on 3 December, as Professor Margoliouth expressed his condolences to him on that date and invited him to "look in". We also know, from a letter he wrote to a Bahá'í student in London, alas, undated, that he accepted Dr Esslemont's invitation for he writes:

The terrible news has for some days so overwhelmed my body, my mind and my soul that I was laid for a couple of days in bed almost senseless, absent-minded and greatly agitated. Gradually His power revived me and breathed in me a confidence that I hope will henceforth guide me and inspire me in my humble work of service. The day had to come, but how sudden and unexpected. The fact however that His Cause has created so many and such beautiful souls all over the world is a sure guarantee that it will live and prosper and ere long will compass the world! I am immediately starting for Haifa to receive the instructions He has left and have now made a supreme determination to dedicate my life to His service and by His aid to carry out His instructions all the days of my life.

The friends have insisted on my spending a day or two of rest in this place with Dr. Esslemont after the shock I have sustained and tomorrow I shall start back to London and thence to the Holy Land.

The stir which is now aroused in the Bahá'í world is an impetus to this Cause and will awaken every faithful soul to shoulder the responsibilities which the Master has now placed upon every one of us.

The Holy Land will remain the focal centre of the Bahá'í world; a new era will now come upon it. The Master in His great vision has consolidated His work and His spirit assures me that its results will soon be made manifest.

I am starting with Lady Blomfield for Haifa, and if we are delayed in London for our passage I shall then come and see you and tell you how marvellously the Master has designed His work after Him and what remarkable utterances He has pronounced with regard to the future of the Cause. . . .

With prayer and faith in His Cause, I am your well-wisher in His service,

Shoghi

This is little short of an astonishing letter to have been written before the provisions of the Master's Will were known or circulated, although it seems clear Shoghi Effendi had been informed there was awaiting his arrival in Haifa an envelope addressed to him by the Master. Truly it seems as if the spirit of the Master as it winged its way on its eternal flight had passed by England and dropped His mantle on the scion of His house in passing! One of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's daughters wrote, on 22 December 1921: "He has written His last instructions enclosed in

an envelope addressed to Shoghi Effendi—therefore we cannot open it until he arrives, which will be, we hope, about the end of this month, as he is now on his way here.”

The high office so soon to be made known to him, the long years of training by his beloved grandfather, all seem to have poured spiritual strength into Shoghi Effendi at the most tragic hour of his life. He found time, in the midst of his agony, to comfort others as witnessed by this moving letter written to him on 5 December by E. T. Hall, one of the old believers of Manchester:

Your loving, tender and noble letter, full of encouragement and fortitude came when we were very sad but resolute, very shocked but thoroughly understanding; and it turned the tide of our feelings into a flood-tide of peace and patience in the Will of God. . . . Your noble letter uplifted us all and renewed our strength and determination; for if you could gather yourself together and rise above such grievous sorrow and shock, and comfort us, we, too, must do no less; but arise and serve the Cause which is our Mother . . . I know you have a thousand things to see to ere you start for the Holy Land. But we all love you dearly and we are all united and stronger than ever. Go with our love and sympathy and all our hearts to that Hallowed Spot, for we are one with you always.

Owing to passport difficulties Shoghi Effendi cabled Haifa he could not arrive until the end of the month. He sailed from England on 16 December, accompanied by Lady Blomfield and Rouhangeze, and arrived in Haifa by train at 5.20 P.M. on 29 December from Egypt where his boat from England had docked. Many friends went to the station to bring him home; it is reported he was so overcome on his arrival that he had to be assisted up the steps. Awaiting him in the house was the only person who could in any measure assuage his suffering—his beloved great-aunt, the sister of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. She had already—so frail, so quiet, so modest at all times—shown herself in these past weeks to be a strong rock to which the believers clung in the midst of the tempest that had so suddenly burst upon them. The calibre of her soul, her breeding, her station, fitted her for the role she played in the Cause and in Shoghi Effendi’s life during this extremely difficult and dangerous period.

When ‘Abdu’l-Bahá so unexpectedly and quietly passed away, after no serious illness, the distracted members of His family searched His papers to see if by chance he had left any instructions as to where He should be buried. Finding none, they entombed Him in the centre of the three rooms adjacent to the inner Shrine of the Báb. They discovered His Will—which consists of three Wills written at different times and forming one document—addressed to Shoghi Effendi. It now became the painful duty of Shoghi Effendi to hear what was in it; a few days after his arrival they read it to him. In order to understand even a little of the effect this had on him we must remember that he himself stated on more than one occasion, not only to me, but to others who were present at the table of the Western Pilgrim House, that he had had no foreknowledge of the existence of the Institution of Guardianship, least of all that he was appointed as Guardian; that the most he had expected was that perhaps, because he was the eldest grandson, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá might have left instructions as to how the Universal House of Justice was to be elected and he might have been designated the one to see these were carried out and act as Convenor of the gathering which would elect it.

In that house, so empty now, so terribly empty, where every step reminded him of the Master’s presence now gone forever, he did indeed sink under the waters of darkest grief and despair. “Moments of gloom”, he writes to Mrs Whyte, “of intense sadness, of agitation I often experience for wherever I go I remember my beloved grandfather and whatever I do I feel the terrible responsibility He has so suddenly placed upon my feeble shoulders.” In this letter, written on 6 February 1922, a little over one month after his return, he pours out his heart to his friend: “How intensely I feel the urgent need of a thorough regeneration to be effected within me, of

a powerful effusion of strength, of confidence, of the Divine Spirit in my yearning soul, before I rise to take my destined place in the forefront of a Movement that advocates such glorious principles. I know that He will not leave me to myself, I trust in His guidance and believe in His wisdom, but what I crave is the abiding conviction and assurance that He will not fail me. The task is so overwhelmingly great, the realization of the inadequacy of my efforts and myself so deep that I cannot but give way and droop whenever I face my work . . .” This noble woman had evidently written to Shoghi Effendi such inspiring letters that he informs her that as he read them he was “moved to tears” and goes on to cry out, “Oh how much in my youth and frailty, I need every now and then a vigorous appeal, a powerful reminder, a word of cheer and comfort!” He ends his letter with a very significant phrase, telling her that many times he has told the ladies of the household of her wise counsel “make not of the Movement a sect”, and signs himself “I am yours very affectionately”.

That same month, in another letter, he writes: “. . . the pain, nay the anguish of His bereavement is overwhelming . . .” Yet in the midst of this torture the young man of twenty-four found that he was not only designated “*the blest and sacred bough that hath branched out from the Twin Holy Trees*”, whose shade “*shadoweth all mankind*”, but that he was “*the Sign of God, the chosen branch, the Guardian of the Cause of God, he unto whom all the Aghsán,^[1] the Afnán,^[2] the Hands of the Cause of God and His loved ones must turn*”. We can only hope that the revelation of the fact that he had been designated for this role when he was still a small child was of some comfort to him. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Will consists of three parts; years later Shoghi Effendi was to write that “its first section” had been “composed during one of the darkest periods of His incarceration in the prison-fortress of Akka”. It was in that first section that the Guardian’s stupendous station had been conferred upon him, but then kept a closely guarded secret by his grandfather, who had written on the Will in His own hand that “this written paper hath for a long time been preserved under ground . . . the Holy Land being sorely agitated it was left untouched.”

Shoghi Effendi likewise discovered that he was “*the expounder of the words of God*”, and that anyone who opposed, contended or disputed with, or disbelieved in him had done this to God; that anyone who deviated, separated himself or turned aside from him had done this to God, and that the Master had evoked the wrath, the fierce indignation and the vengeance of God upon such a one! He also learned that he was the irremovable head for life of the Universal House of Justice and that he and that Body would unerringly be guided by the Báb and Bahá’u’lláh and that what they decided would be from God; anyone disobeying him or them, anyone rebelling against him or them, would be disobeying and rebelling against God. He found he was to choose during his lifetime his eldest son, or failing the manifestation of the necessary qualities in him, demonstrating that “*The child is the secret essence of its sire*”, another branch to succeed him. He found the Master had remembered him tenderly: “*O ye faithful loved ones of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá! It is incumbent upon you to take the greatest care of Shoghi Effendi . . . that no dust of despondency may stain his radiant nature, that day by day he may wax greater in happiness, in joy and spirituality, and may grow to become even as a fruitful tree.*” It is relatively easy to accept that someone is going to lift the world on his shoulders—but it is very difficult to accept the fact that you are the one who is going to do it. The believers accepted Shoghi Effendi, but his crucifixion was to try to accept himself.

There is no doubt that the Greatest Holy Leaf, and probably a selected few of the Master’s family, knew, before Shoghi Effendi reached Haifa, the gist at least of what was in the Will because it had been examined to see if He had made any provisions for His own burial. That this is so is borne out by cables sent to the Persian and to the American believers, by the Greatest Holy Leaf, on 21 December 1921. The one to America read as follows: “Memorial meeting world over January seven. Procure prayers for unity and steadfastness. Master left full instructions in His Will and Testament. Translation will be sent. Inform friends.” But the provisions of the Will

were not made known until it was first read to Shoghi Effendi and, indeed, until it was officially read on 3 January 1922.

That Shoghi Effendi and all the Master's family passed through a period of unbearable suffering during these days, and indeed during the immediate years that followed, I have no doubt. Many times, when he was intensely distressed I saw him, in later years, go to bed, refusing to eat or drink, refusing to talk, rolled under his covers, unable to do anything but agonize, like someone beaten to the ground by heavy rain; this condition sometimes lasted for days, until forces within himself would adjust the balance and set him on his feet again. He would be lost in a world of his own where no one could follow. Once he said to me: "I know it is a road of suffering; I have to tread this road till the end; everything has to be done with suffering."

The sense of abandonment, of unworthiness, of passionate longing for his grandfather that assailed Shoghi Effendi so strongly during the early years of his Guardianship is made even more heartbreaking when we remember a fact that was recounted to me and some Persian ladies by his mother, and is referred to by one of the American Bahá'ís who was present at the time the Master passed away, in a letter written a few days later. It seems that a few weeks before 'Abdu'l-Bahá died, suddenly He came into the room where Shoghi Effendi's father was and said, "Cable Shoghi Effendi to return at once." His mother told us that on hearing this she consulted with her mother and it was decided that to cable risked shocking Shoghi Effendi unnecessarily and so they would write to him the Master's instruction; the letter arrived after He had ascended. She said as the Master had been perfectly well they had never dreamed He was going to pass away. No doubt the motive was a good one, but so typical of the interference of a family in what they considered a family matter, too short-sighted to realize that 'Abdu'l-Bahá was always right and should always be obeyed. There is no doubt that this tragically human element caused untold harm in the days of Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi. In any case, it effectively prevented Shoghi Effendi from seeing his grandfather again and many times he said that he felt if he had done so the Master might have given him some special words of advice or instruction, not to mention the infinite comfort it would have afforded him just to see His face once again in this world.

After his arrival in Haifa Shoghi Effendi occupied his old room, next to that of 'Abdu'l-Bahá; however, a few days later he moved to a room in the home of one of his aunts, next door, and while he was in Haifa continued to stay there until the Greatest Holy Leaf, in the summer of 1923, had two rooms and a small bath built for him on the roof of the Master's home. There were no doubt many reasons for his decision to stay for the time being in another home: the terrible agony of memory the old room brought to him, the crowds of people constantly coming and going in the Master's house and another factor, typical of Shoghi Effendi, which was his deep feeling of justice, that as his own family had received so much honour through having one of its sons raised to so high a position he must now shower honour and kindness on his aunts, uncles and cousins to redress, in some measure, the balance.

In the midst of such a home-coming Shoghi Effendi had no opportunity to recover from the blows he had received ever since he stood in Tudor Pole's office and read the fateful cable informing him of the Master's passing. In spite of his condition, the rank now conferred on him by the Master's *Will and Testament* had saddled him with a responsibility which, until the last moment of his life, could no more be shared with any individual or body than could have been the responsibility placed on the Master when, at the time of Bahá'u'lláh's ascension, His Will made it clear that 'Abdu'l-Bahá was His successor. Decisions had to be made. The first of these was the manner in which the Will should be made public knowledge.

From different sources we gather that on the morning of 3 January 1922 Shoghi Effendi visited the Shrine of the Báb and the Tomb of his grandfather; later that same day, in the home of his aunt, but not in his presence, the Master's *Will and Testament* was read aloud to nine men, most of them members of the family of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and its seals, signatures and His writing throughout, in His own hand, shown to them. The Guardian gave instructions that a true copy should then be made by one of those present—a believer from Persia. In a letter written by Shoghi Effendi himself to an old Bahá'í a few weeks later, he states: "'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will was read on the 7th of January, 1922, at his house in the presence of Bahá'ís from Persia, India, Egypt, England, Italy, Germany, America and Japan . . ." This gathering was not attended by the Guardian either, no doubt for reasons of ill health as much as delicacy on his part. In conformity with the local customs to hold a memorial gathering on the fortieth day after the death of a person, some Bahá'ís and many notables, including the Governor of Haifa, gathered in the hall of the Master's home, were first served lunch and then held a large meeting in that same hall, at which speeches were made in honour of the departed Master and the provisions of His Will were announced. The guests were most anxious to have Shoghi Effendi address them a few words and one of the friends carried this message to him; Shoghi Effendi, who was with the Greatest Holy Leaf in her room, said he was too distressed and overcome to comply with their request and instead hastily wrote a few words to be read on his behalf in which he expressed the heartfelt gratitude of himself and 'Abdu'l-Bahá's family for the presence of the Governor and the speakers who by their sincere words "have revived His sacred memory in our hearts . . . I venture to hope that we his kindred and his family may by our deeds and words, prove worthy of the glorious example he has set before us and thereby earn your esteem and your affection. May His everlasting spirit be with us all and knit us together for evermore!" He begins this message: "The shock has been too sudden and grievous for my youthful age to enable me to be present at this gathering of the loved ones of beloved 'Abdu'l-Bahá."

It was befitting that the Greatest Holy Leaf, and not Shoghi Effendi himself, should announce to the Bahá'í world the provisions of the Master's Will. On 7 January she sent two cables to Persia as follows: "Memorial meetings all over the world have been held. The Lord of all the worlds in His Will and Testament has revealed His instructions. Copy will be sent. Inform believers." and "Will and Testament forwarded Shoghi Effendi Centre Cause." It is significant to recall that 'Abdu'l-Bahá—no doubt in anticipation of events He clearly foresaw—had, in answer to a query from the Tehran Assembly written to them: "You have asked in whose name the real estate and buildings donated should be registered with the Government and the legal deeds issued: they should be registered in the name of Mirza Shoghi Rabbani, who is the son of Mirza Hadi Shirazi and is in London." However great the grief and shock the Master's ascension produced in Persia, it is unlikely that the news of Shoghi Effendi's appointment came as much of a surprise to the more informed amongst the friends there, especially after having so recently received such an illuminating instruction from 'Abdu'l-Bahá. To the United States the Greatest Holy Leaf cabled on 16 January: "In Will Shoghi Effendi appointed Guardian of Cause and Head of House of Justice. Inform American friends." In spite of the fact that from the very beginning Shoghi Effendi exhibited both a tactful and masterful hand in dealing with the problems that continually faced him, he leaned very heavily on the Greatest Holy Leaf, whose character, station and love for him made her at once his support and his refuge.

Immediately after these events Shoghi Effendi selected eight passages from the Will and circulated them among the Bahá'ís; only one of these referred to himself, was very brief and was quoted as follows: "O ye the faithful loved ones of 'Abdu'l-Bahá! It is incumbent upon you to take the greatest care of Shoghi Effendi . . . For he is, after 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the guardian of the Cause of God, the Afán, the Hands (pillars) of the Cause and the beloved of the Lord must obey him and turn unto him." Of all the thundering and tremendous passages in the Will referring to himself, Shoghi Effendi chose the least astounding and provocative to first circulate among the Bahá'ís. Guided and guiding he was from the very beginning.

These early years of his Guardianship must be seen as a continual process of being floored and rising to his feet again, often staggering from the terrible blows he had received, but game to the core. It was his love for ‘Abdu’l-Bahá that always carried him through: “Yet I believe”, he cries out, “and firmly believe in His power, His guidance, His ever-living presence . . .” In a letter written in February 1922, to Nayir Afnan, a nephew of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, the agony of his soul is clearly reflected: “Your . . . letter reached me in the very midst of my sorrows, my cares and afflictions . . . the pain, nay the anguish of His bereavement is so overwhelming, the burden of responsibility He has placed on my feeble and my youthful shoulders is so overwhelming . . .” He goes on to say: “I am enclosing for you personally the copy of the dear Master’s Testament, you will read it and see what He has undergone at the hands of His kindred . . . you will also see what a great responsibility He has placed on me which nothing short of the creative power of His word can help me to face . . .” This letter is not only indicative of his feelings but in view of the fact that the one he wrote it to belonged to those who had been the enemies of the Master in the days after Bahá’u’lláh’s ascension and were of that breed of kindred He had so strongly denounced in His Will, shows how courageously Shoghi Effendi holds up the mirror of the past and at the same time appeals for his support and loyalty in the new situation which exists.

His earliest letters reveal Shoghi Effendi’s characteristic strength, wisdom and dignity. To one of the professors of the American University in Beirut he wrote, on 19 March 1922, clearly and unequivocally stating his own position: “Replying to your question as to whether I have been officially designated to represent the Bahá’í Community: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in his testament has appointed me to be the head of the universal council which is to be duly elected by national councils representative of the followers of Bahá’u’lláh in different countries . . .”

It must not be thought, however, that the act of promulgating the Master’s Will solved all problems and ushered in a new era in the Cause with the greatest of ease. Far from it. Before Shoghi Effendi reached Haifa the Greatest Holy Leaf had been obliged to cable America on 14 December: “Now is period of great tests. The friends should be firm and united in defending the Cause. Nakeseens [Covenant-breakers] starting activities through press other channels all over world. Select committee of wise cool heads to handle press propaganda in America.” Grave as the events indicated in this cable were, they cannot be considered apart from the serious situation which existed in America when ‘Abdu’l-Bahá died. He had been deeply concerned over Covenant-breaking in that country for some time, even having predicted in a letter written some years before that a storm would arise after His passing and praying for the protection of the believers. On 8 November 1921 He cabled Roy Wilhelm, His trusted correspondent, “How is situation and health friends?” to which Mr Wilhelm, the next day, was obliged to reply: “Chicago, Washington, Philadelphia agitating violation centering Fernald, Dyer, Watson. New York, Boston refused join, standing solidly constructive policy.” An immediate reply was cabled back by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá on 12 November, in the strongest language, and clearly indicating His distress: “*He who sits with leper catches leprosy. He who is with Christ shuns Pharisees and abhors Judas Iscariot. Certainly shun violators. Inform Goodall, True and Parsons telegraphically.*” That same day the Master in a second cable to Roy Wilhelm said: “*I implore health from divine bounty*”. These were the last messages America ever received from Him.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s sudden passing did nothing to remedy this situation. It was the awareness of its gravity that undoubtedly inspired the cable sent by the Greatest Holy Leaf informing the American friends the Master had left full instructions in His Will. The perpetual agitation of Muhammad ‘Alí, ever since the ascension of Bahá’u’lláh, had not abated and his henchmen in the United States were vigilant and active. At that time the magazine *Reality* was a Bahá’í organ and in its columns was published news of the Covenant-breakers and their activities; this greatly distressed the wiser and more experienced believers, particularly those who had had the privilege of knowing ‘Abdu’l-Bahá personally, but left the young, inexperienced and “liberal” minded unperturbed and unaware of their danger. It was because of this sickly and equivocal attitude that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

had written less than two months before His passing a Tablet, published in the *Star of the West*, in which He sought to make clear to the friends that they ran grave risks in such matters as these by taking them lightly, that Bahá'u'lláh had warned His followers that a foul odour would be spread and they should shun it and that this foul odour was none other than the violators. This situation Shoghi Effendi now inherited.

One of the oldest and most staunch of the American believers wrote to Shoghi Effendi on 18 January 1922, less than two weeks after the public announcement of the provisions of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will: "As you know we are having great troubles and sorrows with violators in the Cause in America. This poison has penetrated deeply among the friends . . ." In many reports, in great detail, accusations and facts poured in upon the newly-made Guardian. There was, of course, another aspect. With touching pureheartedness and trust the Bahá'ís of East and West rallied round their young leader and poured out avowals of their love and loyalty: "We long to assist the Guardian in every way and our hearts are responsive to the burdens upon his young shoulders . . ." "Word has reached us here in Washington that our beloved Master has placed the guidance and protection of the Holy Cause in your hands and that He named you as the head of the House of Justice. I write you these few lines responding with all my heart to the sacred instructions of our Beloved Lord and assuring all the support and fidelity of which I am capable . . ." "Beloved of our beloved," he was addressed by two pillars of the Faith in America, "How our hearts sang with joy at the news that the Master had not left us comfortless but made you, His beloved, the centre of the unity of His Cause, so that the hearts of all the friends may find peace and certainty." "Our lives have been in utter darkness until the blessed cablegram of the Greatest Holy Leaf arrived with the first ray of light, and that is your appointment by the Merciful Lord as our Guardian and our Head as well as the Guardian of the Cause of God and the Head of the House of Justice." "Whatever the Guardian of the Cause wishes or advises these servants to do, that is likewise our desire and intention." In a letter to the Greatest Holy Leaf one of the old believers, recently returned from Haifa, writes in August 1922: "The friends are greatly attached to Shoghi Effendi, and they desire naught but to follow our Lord's injunctions that we should all support the Guardian of this Holy Cause . . ." Another old believer wrote about the same time to Shoghi Effendi and assured him that although "we still have many difficulties and some sore spots but I sense the healing power and believe that in general the Cause never was more healthy or deep in America than at present . . ." Such messages were no doubt a great consolation, but in comparison to the number of believers in the West and to the heart-break of the Guardian they seem to have been pitifully few in number. It is a sad fact that many of those who rallied most firmly to his support, themselves later left the Cause and even turned against it. The tornado uproots the big trees but leaves the humble grass unaffected.

There is no doubt that the Bahá'ís everywhere were swept by a great wave of love and loyalty on hearing of the provisions of the Master's Will. Its effect on the Covenant-breakers, however, was to stir them to violent action. Like a hydra-headed monster, each head hissing more venomously than the other, they reared up and struck at the young successor of the Master. 'Abdu'l-Bahá's half-brother Muhammad 'Alí, his brother, his sons and his henchmen; the perennial enemies of the Faith in Persia; the disaffected, the lukewarm, the ambitious—wherever they were and whoever they were—began to stir up trouble. On 16 January two veteran American Bahá'ís serving in Tehran wrote to the Master's family giving a picture of what was going on there; not the least significant fact which emerges from their letters is that 'Abdu'l-Bahá had sent to Persia a letter in which He enclosed, for the edification of the friends, a letter of Shoghi Effendi to Him, giving news of the Cause in England. This letter arrived after His passing, but it shows the Master's pride in His grandson and taken in conjunction with the news of His ascension and the appointment of the Guardian, so soon to follow, seems to be more than mere coincidence. These letters go on to say: ". . . a hue and cry is raised against the Cause . . . but the sheep were not scattered and forgotten and are firm and constant, and rallying to the support of the brave young leader with whom the Beloved has blessed us. Shoghi Effendi has always been a household word with us and

the whole Bahá'í nation extends welcome and greeting to him today. 'Blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord' . . ." " . . . I wish you might hear the grateful expressions of the believers: 'Now we are comforted. Now we are content. The Cause has become young.'"

On 16 January the Guardian wrote his first letter to the Persian Bahá'ís encouraging them to remain steadfast and protect the Faith and sharing with them in moving terms his grief at the passing of the beloved Master. On 22 January Shoghi Effendi cabled the American Bahá'ís: "Holy Leaves comforted by Americans' unswerving loyalty and noble resolve. Day of steadfastness. Accept my loving cooperation." The day before he had written his first letter to them, beginning: "At this early hour when the morning light is just breaking upon the Holy Land, whilst the gloom of the dear Master's bereavement is still hanging thick upon the hearts, I feel as if my soul turns in yearning love and full of hope to that great company of His loved ones across the seas . . ." Already he had placed his hand on the tiller and sees the channels he must navigate clearly before him: "the broad and straight path of teaching", as he phrased it, unity, selflessness, detachment, prudence, caution, earnest endeavour to carry out the Master's wishes, awareness of His presence, shunning of the enemies of the Cause—these must be the goal and animation of the believers. Four days later he is writing his first letter to the Japanese Bahá'ís: "Despondent and sorrowful though I be in these darksome days, yet whenever I call to mind the hopes our departed Master so confidently reposed in the friends in that Far-Eastern land, hope revives within me and drives away the gloom of His bereavement. As His attendant and secretary for well nigh two years after the termination of the Great War, I recall so vividly the radiant joy that transfigured His face whenever I opened before Him your supplications . . ."

During these days Shoghi Effendi was also busy translating his grandfather's Will into English. Emogene Hoagg, who had been living in Haifa for some time prior to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's passing, wrote on 24 January: "Before long the Will of the dear Master will be ready for America and elsewhere. Shoghi Effendi is translating it now."

While Shoghi Effendi was thus occupied and was gathering his powers and beginning to write letters such as these to the Bahá'ís in different countries, he received the following letter from the High Commissioner for Palestine, Sir Herbert Samuel, dated 24 January 1922:

Dear Mr. Rabbani,

I have to acknowledge receipt of your letter of Jan. 16., and to thank you for the kind expression it contains.

It would be unfortunate if the ever to be lamented death of Sir 'Abdu'l-Bahá were to interfere with the completion of your Oxford career, and I hope that may not be the case.

I am much interested to learn of the measures that have been taken to provide for the stable organization of the Bahá'í Movement.

Should you be at any time in Jerusalem it would be a pleasure to me to see you here.

Yours sincerely,
Herbert Samuel

However friendly its tone, it demanded on the part of His Majesty's Government to be informed of what was going on. And this is not in the least surprising in view of the activities of Muhammad 'Alí. Shortly after 'Abdu'l-Bahá's ascension, this disgruntled and perfidious half-brother had filed a claim, based on Islamic law (he who pretended he had still a right to be the successor of Bahá'u'lláh!), for a portion of the estate of 'Abdu'l-Bahá which he now claimed a right to as His brother. He had sent for his son, who had been living in America and agitating his father's claims there, to join him in this new and direct attack on the Master and His family. Not content with this exhibition of his true nature, he applied to the civil authorities to turn over the custodianship of Bahá'u'lláh's Shrine to him on the grounds that he was 'Abdu'l-Bahá's lawful successor. The British authorities refused on the grounds that it appeared to be a religious issue; he then appealed to the Muslim religious head and asked the Mufti of Akka to take formal charge of Bahá'u'lláh's Shrine; this dignitary, however, said he did not see how he could do this as the Bahá'í teachings were not in conformity with Shariah law. All other avenues having failed, he sent his younger brother, Badiullah, with some of their supporters, to visit the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh where, on Tuesday, 30 January, they forcibly seized the keys of the Holy Tomb from the Bahá'í caretaker, thus asserting Muhammad 'Alí's right to be the lawful custodian of his Father's resting-place. This unprincipled act created such a commotion in the Bahá'í Community that the Governor of Akka ordered the keys to be handed over to the authorities, posted guards at the Shrine, but went no further, refusing to return the keys to either party.

It does not require much imagination to conceive that this was another terrible shock to Shoghi Effendi, the news arriving after dark, by a panting and excited messenger, all the believers aroused and distressed beyond words at the thought that for the first time in decades the Most Sacred Remains had fallen into the hands of the inveterate enemy of the Centre of His Covenant. One of the American believers, who visited the Shrine with Shoghi Effendi himself during March 1922, describes this situation in his diary: "Upon each of my three very recent visits to Behje we were able to penetrate only as far as the court of the tomb—the inner sanctuary being sealed . . . And as yet no one can foresee how the affair will come out. Shoghi Effendi is much troubled over the matter." In spite of his personal feelings, Shoghi Effendi followed faithfully the example of the Master in other days of attack and storm, giving instructions calmly as to where the lights should be placed inside and outside the Shrine, as it was in process of being illuminated.

This same informant went on to record that while he was in Haifa telegrams were sent out by the Guardian to King Feisal of Iraq, appealing against the action of his government in seizing the blessed House of Bahá'u'lláh (the prescribed site of pilgrimage for the Bahá'ís of all lands), and arrangements were made by him for similar messages to be sent from other Bahá'í communities. This was another terrible blow to Shoghi Effendi; in the space of a few months he had received four, any one of which was calculated to place an unbearable strain on his entire being.



THE SUCCESSOR OF THE MASTER

This was probably taken about the period when 'Abdu'l-Bahá began His great journeys to the Western World



STUDY YEARS IN BEIRUT

Standing, in the front row (third from left), is Shoghi Effendi with his class at the Syrian Protestant College; circa 1914



SHOGHI EFFENDI IN ORIENTAL ROBES

Before he went to study in England the Guardian used to dress in this manner



SHOGHI EFFENDI IN HIS EARLY TWENTIES



THE MASTER'S SECRETARY

Shoghi Effendi at his small typewriter, on the balcony of the room he occupied next to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's, probably working on the translation of his grandfather's Tablets; circa 1919



THE SAMOVAR

Shoghi Effendi (second from left) on the roof of the barn at 'Abdu'l-Bahá's home in Haifa



SHOGHI EFFENDI WITH HARRY RANDALL

Taken in the Garden of Ridván, near 'Akká, 1919



SHOGHI EFFENDI BEFORE HE BECAME GUARDIAN



‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ’S ELDEST GRANDSON, SHOGHI EFFENDI

“Look at his eyes, they are like clear water” said ‘Abdu’l-Bahá



SOME DISTINGUISHED BAHÁ'ÍS WITH 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ

Shoghi Effendi, His successor (second from left), Agnes Parsons (behind 'Abdu'l-Bahá), J. E. Esslemont and Lotfullah Hakim (top row, right to left).

Taken before Shoghi Effendi left for England in March, 1920

The situation in which Shoghi Effendi now found himself was truly crushing. Although the body of the believers was loyal, the Cause was being attacked from all sides by enemies emboldened by and rejoicing over the death of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. We are informed by one of the old Bahá’ís, who was himself a secretary to the Governor of Haifa at that time, that the Guardian was commonly referred to by the local authorities as “the Boy”. Aside from his extreme youth, the beardless Oxford student, however dignified in his manner, refused to even pretend he was like the bearded patriarch everyone knew so well as one of the features of Haifa—much loved or much hated as the case might be—but always respected as its most outstanding notable. Shoghi Effendi refused to wear a turban and the long oriental robes the Master had always worn; he refused to go to the mosque on Friday, a usual practice of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá; he refused to spend hours with visiting Muslim priests, who were wont to pass the time of day with the Master, and who no doubt now were eager to assess the stripling He had placed in His seat as Head of the Faith. The Guardian, when members of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s family remonstrated with him for not following in the ways of the Master, would reply he must devote himself undividedly to the work of the Cause. All this must have added to his suffering and caused much alarm within the family and local community. Some of them secretly suspected that Shoghi Effendi did not really know what he should do, that he needed older and wiser heads about him, and that the sooner the Universal House of Justice was formed the better for the Cause and all concerned.

There is no doubt that in his deep distress, alternately worshipped, adored, advised, questioned, admonished and challenged, he felt the need for support and consultation. During March 1922 he gathered in Haifa a group of representative and well-known Bahá’ís: Lady Blomfield had returned with him from England, Emogene Hoagg had been living in Haifa; to these were added Miss Rosenberg from England, Roy Wilhelm, Mountfort Mills and Mason Remy from America, Laura and Hippolyte Dreyfus-Barney of France, Consul and Alice Schwarz from Germany, and Major Tudor Pole. Two well-known Bahá’í teachers from Persia, Avarih and Fazel, had likewise been summoned to Haifa, but owing to complications their arrival was long delayed; at a later date the Guardian sent them on long teaching missions to Europe and North America, respectively. Siyyid Mustafa Roumie of Burma, and Corinne True and her daughter, Katherine, from the United States arrived later on. Other pilgrims came and went during those early months. But the significant fact is that not only many of the older Bahá’ís believed that the next step to be taken was the formation of the Universal House of Justice, but that the Governor of Haifa, in a conversation with one of the Bahá’ís Shoghi Effendi had sent for, broached this subject himself, saying that he felt that when the House of Justice was established, and the Bahá’í Holy Places registered in its name, the whole issue would be removed from the status of a family quarrel and placed on the firm legal basis of a permanent religious organization. This opinion, held by not only a British official but some believers and members of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s family as well, reflects very clearly the attitude of some of them towards the Guardian. His youth, his own condition at the beginning of his ministry, inclined them to the belief that he needed the other members of the Body of which he was permanent Head to help and advise him, as well as to secure a firmer legal foundation on which to fight the claims being made by the enemies in Palestine and in Iraq according to Muslim Shariah law, to the Bahá’í Holy Places in these countries.

The reaction of Shoghi Effendi to the trend of these opinions and the consultations he was holding with the Bahá’ís he had summoned, however crushed he may have often felt personally, was always that of a brilliant general, seeing all battles in the round, never becoming blinded by details or emergencies. The above-mentioned diary records: “During the early days of my visit Shoghi Effendi was occupied much of the time in consultation with Mountfort Mills, Roy Wilhelm, the Dreyfus-Barneys, Lady Blomfield, and Major Tudor Pole, and then later

when they came the Schwarzes, about the foundation of the Universal House of Justice. I heard in a general way of the matters they discussed. It seems that before the Universal House can be established the Local and National Houses must be functioning in those countries where there are Bahá'ís. I understand that Shoghi Effendi has called certain friends from Persia and from India for this conference, but they did not arrive in time to meet with these friends from the West whom I have mentioned."

The upshot of these discussions seems to have been that the Guardian instructed the Schwarzes to return to Germany and work towards the formation of local bodies and a national body; Roy Wilhelm and Mountfort Mills were to convey to America, at its forthcoming Convention, that the Executive Board—the national body of the North American Bahá'ís—was to become a legislative one in function, guiding all national affairs rather than merely implementing decisions and recommendations arrived at in the Annual Convention by delegates in consultation. No doubt the British Bahá'ís present were to convey the same over-all concept to their own Community. What this really amounts to is that Shoghi Effendi, a little over two months after he became Guardian, began to lay his foundations for the erection of the Administrative Order of the Faith as set forth in the Will of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

But the strain of this was more than he could bear. He appointed a body of nine people to act tentatively as an Assembly and we find that on 7 April 1922 this body enters in its records that a letter has been received from the Greatest Holy Leaf in which she states that "the Guardian of the Cause of God, the chosen Branch, the Leader of the people of Bahá, Shoghi Effendi, under the weight of sorrows and boundless grief, has been forced to leave here for a while in order to rest and recuperate, and then return to the Holy Land to render his services and discharge his responsibilities." She goes on to say that in accordance with his letter, which she encloses, he has appointed her to administer, in consultation with the family of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and a chosen Assembly, all Bahá'í affairs during his absence. Shoghi Effendi had already left Haifa for Europe, on 5 April, accompanied by his eldest cousin. This decision, and the Guardian's letter, were communicated by the Greatest Holy Leaf to the editors of the *Star of the West* and published by them in translation and with facsimiles of her own and Shoghi Effendi's original Persian letters. No doubt a similar communication was sent to other key Bahá'í centres. In her letter to the *Star of the West* the Greatest Holy Leaf explains that she has organized an Assembly of those whom Shoghi Effendi has appointed. The Guardian's letter reads as follows:

He is God!

This servant, after that grievous event and great calamity—the ascension of His Holiness 'Abdu'l-Bahá to the Abhá Kingdom—has been so stricken with grief and pain and so entangled in the troubles (created) by the enemies of the Cause of God, that I consider my presence here, at such a time and in such an atmosphere, is not in accordance with the fulfillment of my important and sacred duties.

For this reason, unable to do otherwise, I have left for a time the affairs of the Cause, both at home and abroad, under the supervision of the Holy Family and the headship of the Greatest Holy Leaf—may my soul be a sacrifice to her—until, by the Grace of God, having gained health, strength, self-confidence and spiritual energy, and having taken into my hands, in accordance with my aim and desire, entirely and regularly the work of service, I shall attain to my utmost spiritual hope and aspiration.

The servant of His Threshold,
Shoghi

On 8 April the Greatest Holy Leaf wrote a general letter to the friends. She first acknowledges the letters of allegiance they have sent and says Shoghi Effendi is counting upon their cooperation in spreading the Message; the Bahá'í world must from now on be linked through the Spiritual Assemblies and local questions must be referred to them. She then goes on to say: "Since the ascension of our Beloved 'Abdu'l-Bahá Shoghi Effendi has been moved so deeply . . . that he has sought the necessary quiet in which to meditate upon the vast task ahead of him, and it is to accomplish this that he has temporarily left these regions. During his absence he has appointed me as his representative, and while he is occupied in this great endeavour, the family of 'Abdu'l-Bahá is assured that you will all strive to advance triumphantly the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh . . ." The typewritten letter in English is signed in Persian "Bahá'íyyih" and sealed with her seal.

It all looked very calm on paper but behind it was a raging storm in the heart and mind of Shoghi Effendi. "He has gone", the Greatest Holy Leaf wrote, "on a trip to various countries". He left with his cousin and went to Germany to consult doctors. I remember he told me they found he had almost no reflexes, which they considered very serious. In the wilderness, however, he found for himself a partial healing, as so many others had found before him. Some years later, in 1926, to Hippolyte Dreyfus, who had known him from childhood and whom he evidently felt he could be open with as an intimate friend, he wrote that his letter had reached him "on my way to the Bernese Oberland which has become my second home. In the fastnesses and recesses of its alluring mountains I shall try to forget the atrocious vexations which have afflicted me for so long . . . It is a matter which I greatly deplore, that in my present state of health, I feel the least inclined to, and even incapable of, any serious discussion on these vital problems with which I am confronted and with which you are already familiar. The atmosphere in Haifa is intolerable and a radical change is impractical. The transference of my work to any other centre is unthinkable, undesirable and in the opinion of many justly scandalous . . . I cannot express myself more adequately than I have for my memory has greatly suffered."

In the early years after 'Abdu'l-Bahá's passing, although Shoghi Effendi often travelled about Europe with the restless interest of not only a young man but a man haunted by the ever-present, towering giants of his work and his responsibility, he returned again and again to those wild, high mountains and their lofty solitude.

Copies of correspondence in French with a German Swiss in whose home Shoghi Effendi lodged for many summers are most revealing of his nature, his love of what he called "good, simple people", and the tender feelings that so often characterized his friendships:

Dec. 22, 1923

Dear Mr. Hauser,

I have received your kind card and the mere view of the Jungfrau, with the admirably depicted town of Interlaken awoke in me the unforgettable memory of your friendliness, kindness and hospitality during my delightful sojourn with you. All this I shall never forget and I shall treasure always this memory with a feeling of tenderness and gratitude.

I am sending you a few postage stamps which I hope will interest you.

I wish you from all my heart, dear Mr. Hauser, a happy New Year and a long, prosperous and happy life.

Hoping to see you again, and never forgetting you,

Your very devoted

Shoghi

The next year, on 26 September, he again writes to him:

My dear Mr. Hauser,

I am back and on my return to my home the first letter I want to write is to my unforgettable and dear Hauser under whose roof I tasted the pleasures of picturesque Switzerland and the charms of a hospitality which will never be effaced from my memory.

Recalling my experiences and my exhausting adventures followed by the repose offered me by the comfortable and modest Chalet Hoheweg, the charm of which I shall never forget, I often feel in myself the strong desire to see you one day in the bosom of my family, in our home, showing you the evidences of my gratitude and friendship! And if that is impossible I hope you will always remember my gratitude and affection.

I have just received by mail some new Persian stamps with the portrait of the new Shah, which I hope will interest you.

I wish you with all my heart a long, joyous and prosperous life, and hope to see you one day again in Interlaken, in the heart of that beloved country.

I remain your faithful friend

On 18 December he is thanking this friend for his postcards, sending him “a modest souvenir of the city of Haifa, so different and inferior to the beautiful sites in your picturesque Switzerland”, and wishes his “dear and unforgettable friend” a prosperous New Year.

This man was an old Swiss guide in whose house on the main street Shoghi Effendi had rented a tiny room, the attic under the eaves, for which he paid about one franc a night. The ceiling was so low that when his uncle-in-law, a big man, came to see him, he could not stand upright. There was a small bed, a basin and a pitcher of cold water to wash with. Interlaken is in the heart of the Bernese Oberland and the starting point for innumerable excursions into the surrounding mountains and valleys. Often long before sunrise Shoghi Effendi would start out, dressed in knee breeches, a Norfolk jacket and black wool puttees on his legs, sturdy mountain boots, and a small cheap canvas rucksack on his back and carrying a cane. He would take a train to the foot of some mountain or pass and begin his excursion, walking often ten to sixteen hours, usually alone, but sometimes accompanied by whichever young relative was with him; they could seldom stand the pace and after a few days would start making their excuses. From here he also climbed some of the higher mountains, roped to a guide. These expeditions lasted practically up to the time of his marriage. I remember when we first went to Interlaken, in the summer of 1937, Shoghi Effendi took me to Hauser’s house, wanting to introduce his wife to the old man to whom he had been so attached and who had listened with so much interest to the enthusiastic account of his day’s walk or climb, marvelling at the indefatigable energy and determination of the young man, but we found he

had died. The Guardian went to the peaceful little mountain cemetery to visit his grave, taking me with him. Shoghi Effendi often told me these stories of his early years in the mountains and showed this or that peak he had climbed, this or that pass he had been over on foot. His longest walk, he said, was forty-two kilometres over two passes. Often he would be caught by the rain and walk on until his clothes dried on him. He had a deep love of scenery and I believe these restless, exhausting hour after hour marches healed to some extent the wounds left so deep in his heart by the passing of the Master.

Shoghi Effendi would tell me of how he practically never ate anything until he got back at night, how he would go to a small hotel (he sometimes took me there to the same simple restaurant) and order *pommes sautées*, fried eggs and salad as these were cheap and filling, go home to his little room under the eaves and fall into bed exhausted and sleep, waking to drink a carafe of the cold mountain water, and sleep again, until, driven by this terrible soul-restlessness, he arose and set out again before daybreak. There was something strange and deeply touching about the way that last summer of his life he went back to all the places he loved most to see them once again, as if one of the long mountain shadows was reaching out towards him. Those early years were the years when he was not only most distressed but hardest on himself. He had a rigid discipline he applied to himself and those who were with him. A sum, less than modest in amount, was set aside for the summer and whether he was alone with one of his relatives acting as companion and secretary, or, as sometimes happened, joined by other members of his family, this sum had to suffice and was not added to. The economy would be greater if there were more people. He never travelled other than third class, even when he was a middle-aged man. I can remember very few occasions when we went anywhere in a train first or second class, and that only when the train was too filthy or too full to make third class possible. If he travelled by night he would sleep on the hard wooden benches, his head on his rucksack, more than those who travelled with him could stand. He had two standards, one for himself as Head of the Faith identified before the public gaze with the honour of the Cause which was synonymous with his honour; one as an individual person, incognito, and thus not demanding a personal appearance in any other form than that of a naturally modest, conscientious man, who was reluctant to spend on luxury the funds his high office placed at his disposal. He was not accountable to anyone in the world, no Bahá'í on earth would question anything he chose to do, but he questioned himself and he was a difficult taskmaster.

As his age increased and the burden he carried wore him down more and more, I brought as much pressure to bear as I dared to get him to be a little less harsh to himself, a little less exacting, to at least accept the modest comforts of a decent hotel, to sometimes take a cure for his health, to have a room with a bath, to eat food, as he only ate once a day, more nourishing and of better quality. This slight change he only accepted because Milly Collins, in her great love for him, formed the habit of offering him a sum of money before his “rest” began and begging him to use it for himself, for whatever he wanted. It was only through vehement appeals on my part that he should accept what Milly gave with such tender love and concern for him personally, that he would use a small portion of it for his own use—the rest was spent on purchases for the gardens, Holy Places and Archives; but this gave him real pleasure, so Milly’s intention was fulfilled in one way or another.

During one or two of those summers early in Shoghi Effendi’s ministry he told me he had bought a bicycle and cycled over many passes. I have often wondered how, with his verve, audacity and lack of mechanical sense, he arrived home safely, which he invariably did! He had very little feeling for machines, being a typical intellectual, though he could do with his hands, when he desired to, very dainty things.

In spite of his withdrawal—for that is really what this first absence from the Holy Land amounted to—the forces Shoghi Effendi had set in motion were bearing fruit. One of the returning pilgrims informed the American Bahá'í Convention, held in April 1922, that: “our visit was at the summons of Shoghi Effendi. At Haifa we met Bahá'ís

from Persia, India, Burma, Egypt, Italy, England and France . . . On arrival the impression that came strongly over me was that God is in His Heaven and all is well with the world . . . We met Shoghi Effendi, dressed entirely in black, a touching figure. Think of what he stands for today! All the complex problems of the great statesmen of the world are as child's play in comparison with the great problems of this youth, before whom are the problems of the entire world . . . No one can form any conception of his difficulties, which are overwhelming . . . the Master is not gone. His Spirit is present with greater intensity and power . . . In the center of this radiation stands this youth, Shoghi Effendi. The Spirit streams forth from this young man. He is indeed young in face, form and manner, yet his heart is the center of the world today. The character and spirit divine scintillate from him today. He alone can . . . save the world and make true civilization. So humble, meek, selfless is he that it is touching to see him. His letters are a marvel. It is the great wisdom of God in granting us the countenance of this great central point of guidance to meet difficult problems. These problems, much like ours, come to him from all parts of the world. They are met and solved by him in the most informal way . . . The great principles laid down by Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá now have their foundation in the external world of God's Kingdom on earth. This foundation is being laid, sure and certain, by Shoghi Effendi in Haifa today." Another of those who had been called to Haifa for consultation said: "When one reaches Haifa and meets Shoghi Effendi and sees the workings of his mind and heart, his wonderful spirit and grasp of things, it is truly marvelous." They reported how in Haifa they heard Shoghi Effendi had retired at 3 A.M. and arisen at 6 A.M. and once worked forty-eight hours without food or drink. To the friends gathered at the Convention Shoghi Effendi had sent a bunch of violets by one of the returning pilgrims and his love to all the believers. The Convention report stated: "It became apparent to all that the time of the organization of the Divine Kingdom on earth has come . . ." It was as a result of the instructions given to the American Bahá'ís who had visited Haifa in the early months of 1922 that this Convention elected a National Spiritual Assembly, replacing the older Executive Board of Bahá'í Temple Unity and setting the work of the Faith in North America on an entirely new basis.

In the autumn of 1922 the Greatest Holy Leaf, deeply distressed by Shoghi Effendi's long absence, sent members of his family to find him and plead with him to come back to the Holy Land. In the street of a small village in the mountains, as he returned in the evening from one of his all-day walks, Shoghi Effendi, to his great surprise, found his mother looking for him; she had come all the way from Palestine for this purpose, accompanied by another member of the Master's family; with tears she informed him of the distress of Bahíyyih Khánum, the family and friends and persuaded him to return and assume his rightful place.

A notice in the Bahá'í News of America, the *Star of the West*, stated: "Shoghi Effendi . . . returned to Haifa on Friday afternoon, December 15, in radiant health and happiness and resumed 'the reins of the office' of Guardian of the Bahá'í Cause, committed to him in the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá." The Guardian's own letters and cables reflect the change in his condition. Two days after his return he wrote to the believers in Germany: "To have been unable, owing to sad circumstances over which I had no control, to keep in close and constant touch with you . . . is to me a cause of sad surprise and deep and bitter regret . . ." but, he goes on to say, he has now "returned to the Holy Land with renewed vigour and refreshed spirit". The same day he wrote to the French Bahá'ís: "Now that refreshed and reassured I resume my arduous duties" and also to the Japanese Bahá'ís: "Having brought to an end my long hours of retirement and meditation"; he says he never doubted "that my sudden withdrawal from the field of active service . . . would never damp your tender hopes". He also made it quite clear that for him this "sudden disappearance" had been necessary: "Prolonged though this period has been," he wrote to America on 16 December 1922, "yet I have strongly felt ever since this New Day has dawned upon me that such a needed retirement, despite the temporary dislocations it might entail, would far outweigh in its results any immediate service I could have humbly tendered at the Threshold of Bahá'u'lláh". In his seclusion Shoghi Effendi had commemorated the first anniversary of the passing of the Master; to face such an occasion in

Haifa, in the tomb of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, was probably more than he could have borne in the first year of his Guardianship.

“With feelings of joyful confidence”, as he expressed it, Shoghi Effendi now threw himself into his work. Something of his original nature, which had led one of the Bahá’ís to write to him, as a student in Beirut, “Your smiling face is ever before me” had returned to him. This is clearly reflected in the sheaf of cables he dispatched on 16 December 1922, the day after his arrival, to practically the entire Bahá’í world, the exact copy of which I quote from his own files:

PERSIA

“That the Lord of Hosts may, upon my re-entry to the field of Service, bestow a fresh blessing upon His valiant warriors of that favoured Land is indeed my earnest prayer.”

AMERICA

“The onward march of the Cause hath not been nor can it ever be stayed. I pray the Almighty that my efforts, now refreshed and renewed, may with your undiminished support lead it to glorious victory.”

GREAT BRITAIN

“Solaced and strengthened, I now join my humble strivings to your untiring exertions for the Cause of Bahá’u’lláh.”

GERMANY

“United thus far with you in my thoughts and meditations I now gladly and hopefully add the further bond of active participation in a life-long service at the Threshold of Bahá’u’lláh.”

INDIA

“May our reunion in the glorious arena of service prove in the spiritual field of that land the herald of triumphal victories.”

JAPAN

“Refreshed and reassured I now stretch to you across the distant seas my hand of brotherly cooperation in the Cause of Bahá.”

MESOPOTAMIA

“With zeal unabated and with strength renewed I now await your joyful tidings in the Holy Land.”

TURKEY

“Back to these hallowed surroundings I extend towards you my hand of fellowship and service in the Cause of Bahá’u’lláh.”

FRANCE

“Awaiting your joyful tidings in the Holy Land.”

On 18 December he cabled:

SWITZERLAND

“Pray convey my Swiss friends assurance of my unfailing cooperation on my happy return to the Holy Land.”

And on 19 December he sent the two following cables:

ITALY

“Convey Italian friends my best wishes on my return Holy Land.”

to DUNN

“Awaiting lovingly glad-tidings of Australian friends in Holy Land.”

Shoghi Effendi also sent telegrams to some of his relatives, which clearly reflect his determination, his eagerness and a touch of youthful exuberance that pierces one’s heart with sympathy for him. On 18 December he wired one of his aunts, who was visiting Egypt, “Holding fast and definitely reins of office. Missing you terribly. Assure me your health”. To his cousin he wired, the same day, “Have reentered field of service. Trusting your unfailing cooperation”, and to another distant cousin, the next day “. . . confidently trusting your brotherly cooperation.”

Being by nature very methodical, Shoghi Effendi in these early years kept fairly complete records and copies of letters sent; later, pressure of work and problems prevented him from doing this, with the exception of his cables which, until the end of his life, he kept copies of, by number and year. He lists 67 centres that he wrote to, East and West, during the months he was in the Holy Land in 1922. From 16 December 1922 to 23 February 1923 he records 132 places he wrote to, some more than once. In a letter dated 16 December 1922 he wrote “ . . . I shall now eagerly await the joyful tidings of the progress of the Cause and the extension of your activities and will spare no effort in sharing with the faithful, here and in other lands, the welcome news of the progressive march of the Cause.” The correspondence of this period covers 21 countries and 67 cities, but he does not seem to have written to more than a score of individuals, many of whom were not Bahá’ís. The countries he corresponded with at the very outset of his ministry included Persia, Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Switzerland, United States, Canada, Australia, Pacific Islands, Japan, India, Burma, Caucasus, Turkistan, Turkey, Syria, Mesopotamia, Palestine and Egypt.

With the enthusiasm and conscientiousness so typical of his nature, Shoghi Effendi sat down the day after his arrival in that December of 1922 and wrote to his friends in Britain:

My dearest brethren and sisters in the Faith of God!

May I at the very outset of this, my very first letter to you, convey to your hearts in words, however inadequate but assuredly deeply felt and sincere, a measure of my burning impatience during my days of retirement to return speedily and join hands with you in the great work of consolidation that awaits every earnest believer in the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh. Now that happily I feel myself restored to a position where I can take up with continuity and vigour the threads of my manifold duties, the bitterness of every disappointment felt time and again in the course of the past weary months at my feeling of unpreparedness, have been merged in the sweetness of the present hour when I realize that spiritually and bodily I am better equipped to shoulder the responsibilities of the Cause . . . I need hardly tell you how grateful and gratified I felt when I heard of the news of the formation of a National Council whose main object is to guide, coordinate and harmonize the various activities of the friends . . .

He ends this letter by assuring them that with “abiding affection and renewed vigour” he eagerly awaits their news, signing himself very simply “Your brother Shoghi”. In a further letter, dated the 23rd of that same month, he tells them: “I have during the last few days been waiting eagerly for the first written messages of my Western friends, sent to me since they have learned of my return to the Holy Land.” He states that the first letter to come from the West was from an English believer and goes on to say: “I very sincerely hope that now I have fully reentered upon my task I may be enabled to offer my humble share of assistance and advice in the all-important work which is now before you.” In a personal letter to a relative, written on 20 December, he voices his inmost feelings: “True, my task is immense, my responsibilities grave and manifold, but the assurance which the words of the all-wise Master give me in my work is my shield and support in the career which is now unfolding itself to my eyes.”

In his first letter to the newly elected National Assembly of America he writes, on 23 December, that: “To have been unable, owing to unforeseen and unavoidable circumstances, to correspond with you ever since you entered upon your manifold and arduous duties is to me a cause of deep regret and sad surprise.” These are the words of a man coming up from the depths of nightmare and reflect how deep had been the abyss of affliction into which he had fallen during the past year of his life. “I am however”, he goes on to say, “assured and sustained by the conviction, never dimmed in my mind, that whatever comes to pass in the Cause of God, however disquieting in its immediate effects, is fraught with infinite Wisdom and tends ultimately to promote its interests in the world.”

In these early letters he invites the Assemblies to write to him, and he asks them to inform him of their “needs wants and desires, their plans and their activities”, so that he may “through my prayers and brotherly assistance contribute, however meagrely to the success of their glorious mission in this world.” He is deeply grateful for the manner in which “my humble suggestions” have been carried out, and assures the friends of his “never-failing brotherly assistance.”

The Bahá'ís having learned from his cables that the Guardian had returned to Haifa, a flood of correspondence poured in upon him from all parts of the world. Reassuring as this was, it placed Shoghi Effendi in a serious quandary which he set forth clearly in a letter to a distant cousin, written during the first years of his ministry: “One of my most pressing problems is that of individual correspondence. To copy the Master, is presumptuous on my part, and in view of the rapid extension of the Movement, impracticable. To correspond in person with some and not write to others, I am sure you realize will lead gradually to friction, discouragement and even animosity, as you know fully well the considerable number of friends who expect much and do little. To do away

utterly with individual correspondence, and rely on indirect written messages, penned by my helpers and associates, whilst I would devote my time to direct correspondence with the Assemblies throughout the world, is also a difficult problem. I would indeed value your views on this thorny problem. The latter course has the obvious objection of severing all personal relationships with the individual friends.” In January 1923 the Guardian wrote to the German believers that in view of the “marvellously rapid expansion of the Movement all over the world” he could not correspond individually with all the believers in the East and the West as it would “entail so much time and energy on my part as to prevent me from paying adequate attention to my other duties that are so urgent and vital in these days. I shall therefore very reluctantly have to content myself with direct correspondence with every Bahá’í group in each locality, be it a city or hamlet . . . and coordinating their . . . activities through the National Assembly . . .” In November 1923 the problem is still worrying him. He writes to the British National Assembly that he is giving it “his careful and undivided attention” and assures them that “No written message however unimportant, will first be opened and read by anyone save myself”; in 1926 he writes: “I am so perplexed and preoccupied that I find hardly any time for direct correspondence”.

For many years, indeed for thirty-six, this question of how to find time to cope with his mail worried the Guardian; finally he decided not to give up answering individual letters, particularly in the West, and in countries where there were new believers, as he discovered through painful experience that the Assemblies were not wise enough to always deal with human beings in a way that healed their wounds and kept them active in the Faith. This correspondence with individuals was not invariably well received on the part of a national body who, when it found an individual was the recipient of an important fact, felt it should be the official filter of such information. In a letter written on the Guardian’s behalf by his secretary in 1941 to a National Assembly we find his own explanation of his policy in such matters: “Shoghi Effendi has repeatedly stated, to believers in every part of the world, that the Bahá’ís are entirely free to write to him on any matter they please; naturally he is equally free to answer in any manner he pleases. At the present time, when the Institutions of the Cause are just beginning to function, he considers it essential to keep up this large correspondence, much as it adds to his many other burdens. It is sometimes the case that the very first intimation he receives of some important step influencing the interest of the Faith, one way or another, comes from an individual’s letter instead of from an Assembly; it would naturally be preferable for the information to come from an Administrative body, but whatever the source, the Guardian is solely concerned with the welfare of the Faith, and when he deems a certain step detrimental he states his views in his reply. This he is at entire liberty to do.”

“I am now”, Shoghi Effendi wrote to Tudor Pole in 1923, “fully restored to health and am intensely occupied with my work at present.” Correspondence, however, was far from being his only activity; he was also “engaged in the service of the various pilgrims that visit in these days this sacred Spot.” It was customary for him, in these early days of his ministry, to hold regular meetings in the home of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. In December 1922, five days after his return, he writes: “I have shared fully your news with those loving pilgrims and resident friends in the Holy Land whom I meet regularly in what was the audience chamber of the Master.” In addition to attending to the welfare of his guests, having a meal with the western pilgrims in their Pilgrim House opposite ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s home, and visiting the Shrines of the Báb and the Master with the oriental friends and often having a cup of tea with them in the adjacent Oriental Pilgrim House, Shoghi Effendi was already devoting considerable time and attention to improving and enlarging the World Centre of the Faith. On 9 April 1922 work was commenced on the new Western Pilgrim House, plans for which had been made in ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s lifetime but which Shoghi Effendi now vigorously implemented. On the first of Ridván, although Shoghi Effendi himself had left Haifa, the Shrines of both Bahá’u’lláh and the Báb were electrically illuminated for the first time, pursuant to arrangements made before the Master’s ascension, but, again, supervised by Shoghi Effendi himself. Already, during the visit in March 1922 of Mr Remey, Shoghi Effendi had discussed with him at length various possibilities for the

ultimate construction of a tomb for ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, the site of the future Bahá’í Temple on Mt Carmel and a general landscaping plan for the Bahá’í properties there.

These might be described as the more pleasant phases of his work in the discharge of his high office, though they exacted from him a great deal of time and energy. But what really burdened him beyond all endurance was the activities of the Covenant-breakers. The day after his return to Haifa he had written: “Already . . . the awful promises of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá regarding the Covenant-breakers have been strikingly fulfilled!” The situation was becoming more grave all the time; in February 1923 he felt it necessary to cable America: “Register all mail. Inform friends”, showing a definite concern about his post reaching him safely. In January he wrote to Hussein Afnan: “I presume you have gathered from past experience that I stand for absolute sincerity, scrupulous justice in all matters pertaining to the Cause, and an uncompromising attitude with regard to the enemies of the Movement, the Nakezeens, whose vile and unceasing efforts God alone shall frustrate.” The man to whom this was written, a grandson of Bahá’u’lláh and a nephew of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, became himself a notorious Covenant-breaker not long afterwards; it was his three brothers who married three granddaughters of the Master—two of them the two sisters of the Guardian himself—and thus wove such an inextricable web of family feeling, disloyalty and hatred that in the end the entire family of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was involved and Shoghi Effendi lost all his relatives. We see here, shining through the innocent-minded young Guardian, the steel of the statesman, the great overshadowing Protector of the Faith and Defender of the Faithful whom ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had left to His followers as His greatest gift, His most cherished possession. Towards the end of that same letter Shoghi Effendi assures him: “With a pure heart, I eagerly look forward to those signs that will unmistakably reveal your desire and resolve to stand by the Will of the Master and avoid in every way the breakers of the Covenant.” It was, in Shoghi Effendi’s own words, “amidst the heat and dust which the attacks launched by a sleepless enemy precipitated” that he had to carry on his work.

The position of the Faith necessitated the cultivation of careful relations with the Mandatory authorities. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had been well known and highly esteemed, though it is unlikely that anyone in Palestine had the faintest inkling of the vast implications of the “Movement”, as it was so often referred to in the early days, of which they accepted Him as Head. On 19 December 1922 Shoghi Effendi had wired to the High Commissioner for Palestine in Jerusalem: “Pray accept my best wishes and kind regards on my return to Holy Land and resumption of my official duties.” As there must have been a considerable buzz of gossip, ardently fed no doubt by the Covenant-breakers, about his eight months’ withdrawal, this was a carefully calculated move on Shoghi Effendi’s part as well as an act of courtesy.

The matter which concerned Shoghi Effendi most, however, was the Shrine of Bahá’u’lláh at Bahjí. The keys of the inner Tomb were still held by the authorities; the right of access to other parts of the Shrine was accorded Bahá’ís and Covenant-breakers alike; the Bahá’í custodian looked after it as before, and any decision seemed in a state of abeyance. Shoghi Effendi never rested until, through representations he made to the authorities, backed by insistent pressure from Bahá’ís all over the world, he succeeded in getting the custody of the Holy Tomb back into his own hands. On 7 February 1923 he wrote to Tudor Pole: “I have had a long talk with Col. Symes and have fully explained to him the exact state of affairs, the unmistakable and overwhelming voice of all the Bahá’í Community and their unshakeable determination to stand by the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Recently he sent a message to Muhammad ‘Alí requiring from him the sum of £108. for the expenses of the policeman, contending that he being the aggressor is liable to this expense. So far he has not complied with this request and I await future developments with deep anxiety.”

The following day Shoghi Effendi received this telegram from his cousin, who was in Jerusalem:

His Eminence Shoghi Effendi Rabbani, Haifa.

Letter received. Immediate steps taken. The final decision by the High Commissioner is in our favour. The key is yours.

The letter referred to was one the Chief Secretary of the Palestine Administration, Sir Gilbert Clayton, had written to the High Commissioner. Shoghi Effendi, in another letter to Tudor Pole, informed him that he was on very warm terms with the Governor of Haifa, Colonel G. Stewart Symes, and had met Sir Gilbert; it was no doubt due to these contacts that the authorities decided in favour of the Guardian and the key was officially returned to the legitimate Bahá'í keeper of the Shrine, from whom it had been wrested by force over a year before.

Though the safety of the Qiblih of the Bahá'í world was now assured once and for all time, the house Bahá'u'lláh had occupied in Baghdad was still in the hands of the Shi'ah enemies of the Faith, and continues to be so until the present day; the battle to get it back into Bahá'í custody was to worry and to exercise Shoghi Effendi for many years.

Every time one goes into the details of any particular period in the Guardian's life one is tempted to say "this was the worst period", so fraught with strain, problems, unbearable pressures was his entire ministry. But there is a pattern, there are themes, higher and lower points were reached. The pattern of 1922, 1923 and 1924 reveals itself, insofar as his personal life is concerned, as an heroic attempt to come to grips with this leviathan—the Cause of God—he had been commanded to bestride. Again and again he was thrown. Torn by agonies of doubt as to his own worthiness to be the successor of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, struggling with himself as had so many Prophets and Chosen Ones before him, he argued in the depths of his soul with his destiny, remonstrated with his fate, appealed to his God for relief—but it availed him naught. He was firmly caught in the meshes of the Master's mighty *Will and Testament*. He hints at this many times in his letters: "the storm and stress that have agitated my life since 'Abdu'l-Bahá's passing . . ." "I, for my part, as I look back . . . to the unfortunate circumstances of ill-health and physical exhaustion that have attended the opening years of my career of service to the Cause, feel hardly gratified, and would be truly despondent but for the sustaining memory and inspiring example of the diligent and ceaseless efforts which my fellow-workers the world over have displayed during these two trying years in the service of the Cause." In another letter he wrote: ". . . looking back upon those sullen days of my retirement, bitter with feelings of anxiety and gloom . . . I can well imagine the degree of uneasiness, nay of affliction, that must have agitated the mind and soul of every loving and loyal servant of the Beloved during these long months of suspense and distressing silence . . ."

That his own condition, and what he considered his failure to rise to the situation the Master's passing had placed him in, distressed him more than anything else for a number of years is reflected in excerpts from his letters. As late as September 1924 he wrote: "I deplore the disturbing effect of my forced and repeated withdrawals from the field of service . . . my prolonged absence, my utter inaction, should not, however, be solely attributed to certain external manifestations of inharmony, of discontent and disloyalty—however paralyzing their effect has been upon the continuance of my work—but also to my own unworthiness and to my imperfections and frailties." His hardest task, from the very beginning, was to accept himself.

In the early summer of 1923 Shoghi Effendi again left Haifa and sought some restoration of health and solace in the solitude of the high mountains of Switzerland. But, unlike later years, when he continued to keep in constant touch with the work of the Cause by cable and letter, this was once more a complete break, a fleeing into the

wilderness, a soul-searching, a communion with himself and his destiny in order to find the strength to go back and assume the duties of his high office. He returned in November 1923, and the letter he wrote to the American believers on the 14th of that month, in which he says he has returned from a “forced” absence, contains a sentence that gives a clue to what must have been passing in his mind during that period. He says the “remarkable revelations of the Beloved’s Will and Testament, so amazing in all its aspects, so emphatic in its injunctions, have challenged and perplexed the keenest minds . . .” Can one doubt that they perplexed his mind too? With the greatest humbleness of nature on one hand and the great faith and confidence in the Master on the other that so strongly characterized Shoghi Effendi, he must indeed have devoted much thought to the implications of that Will and at what his own course must be now that he was returning “after a long and unbroken silence” to take up once again “my work of service to the Cause of Bahá’u’lláh”.

This time he made it a point to arrive before the commemoration of the second anniversary of the Master’s ascension. That it moved him very deeply is reflected in the cables he sent to different countries at that time, referring to the “poignant memories”, the “grief and agony” that this anniversary evoked. To Persia he cabled: “May tonight’s darkest hour of anguish usher in the dawn of a new day for well beloved Persia.” For many years, in many messages, he stresses this anniversary and its associations; it always evoked deep and tragic memories for him. I remember after the thirty-fifth anniversary of the passing of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, many times Shoghi Effendi said “Do you realize I have been carrying this load thirty-six years? I am tired, tired!”

With the passing of 1923 one could almost say the winged Guardian emerged from the chrysalis of youth, a new being; the wings may not yet be fully stretched, but their beat gains steadily in sweep and assurance as the years go by until, in the end, they truly cast a shadow over all mankind. In his early writings one sees this mastery unfolding, in style, in thought, in power. Let us pick certain facts and quotations at random and see how clearly they substantiate this evolution that was taking place. From the very beginning he turned to the believers, with that inimitable trusting and confiding touch that won all hearts, and asked them to pray for him, that he might, in collaboration with them, achieve the “speedy triumph of the Cause of God” in every land. His questions are challenging, his thoughts incisive: “Are we to be carried away by the flood of hollow and conflicting ideas, or are we to stand, unsubdued and unblemished, upon the everlasting rock of God’s Divine Instructions?” “. . . are we to believe that whatever befalls us is divinely ordained, and in no wise the result of our faint-heartedness and negligence?” Already in 1923 he sees the world and the Cause as two distinct things, not to be mixed up in our minds into one sentimental and haphazard lump. The Will of God he asserts is “at variance with the shadowy views, the impotent doctrines, the crude theories, the idle imaginings, the fashionable conceptions of a transient and troublous age.”

Over and over in the letters of these early years Shoghi Effendi mentions the need to “arise to offer your share of service to this heedless and suffering world.” In a letter to one of the friends he makes a highly revealing distinction: “The time has come for the friends . . . to think not as to how they should serve the Cause, but how the Cause should be served.” We might well continue to this day to ponder these words. What are its needs, what its direction, what its goals?

Shoghi Effendi’s interest in the Pacific and his awareness of the future development of the Cause in that area is manifested in the first years of his Guardianship. He wrote to the Pacific Islands, in delightfully romantic terms, in January 1923, that “their very names evoke within us so high a sense of hope and admiration that the passing of time and the vicissitudes of life can never weaken or remove”, and addressed a letter in January 1924 “To the dearly-beloved ones of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá throughout Australia, New Zealand, Tasmania, and the adjoining islands of the Pacific. Friends and heralds of the Kingdom of Bahá’u’lláh! A fresh breeze laden with the perfume of your

love and devotion to our beloved Cause was wafted again from your distant Southern shores to the Holy Land and has served to remind us one and all of that unquenchable spirit of service and self-sacrifice which the passing of our Beloved has in these days kindled in almost every corner of the world.”

The words he wrote to one of the American Assemblies in December 1923 sound almost like a soliloquy: “The inscrutable wisdom of God has so decreed that we, who are the chosen bearers of the world’s greatest Message to suffering humanity, should toil and promote our work under the most trying conditions of life, amidst unhelpful surroundings, and in the face of unprecedented trials, and without means, influence or support, achieve, steadily and surely, the conquest and regeneration of human hearts.” Many of these early letters to various Spiritual Assemblies have this quality, not of disquisition, but of voicing his own innermost considerations. That same month he wrote: “. . . True, the progress of our work, when compared to the sensational rise and development of an earthly cause, has been painful and slow, yet we firmly believe and shall never doubt that the great spiritual Revolution which the Almighty is causing to be accomplished, through us, in the hearts of men is destined to achieve, steadily and surely, the complete regeneration of all mankind.” “However great our tribulation may be, however unexpected the miseries of life, let us bear in mind the life He [the Master] has led before us, and, inspired and grateful, let us bear our burden with steadfastness and fortitude, that in the world to come, in the divine Presence of our loving Comforter, we may receive His true consolation and reward of our labours.” “Whatever may befall us, and however dark the prospect of the future may appear, if we but play our part we may rest confident that the Hand of the Unseen is at work, shaping and moulding the events and circumstances of the world and paving the way for the ultimate realization of our aims and hopes for mankind.” “Our primary duty is to create by our words and deeds, our conduct and example, the atmosphere in which the seeds of the words of Bahá’u’lláh and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, cast so profusely during well-nigh eighty years, may germinate and give forth those fruits that alone can assure peace and prosperity to this distracted world.” “. . . let us arise to teach His Cause with righteousness, conviction, understanding and vigour . . . let us make it the dominating passion of our life. Let us scatter to the uttermost corners of the earth, sacrifice our personal interests, comforts, tastes and pleasures, mingle with the divers kindreds and peoples of the world, familiarize ourselves with their manners, traditions, thoughts and customs.” The tone of some of these sounds like his great messages during the prosecution of the Divine Plan, but they were written in the winter of 1923–4. He had set himself the task of seeing that the Faith emerged into “the broad daylight of universal recognition”, a term he used that same year.

Steeped in the Teachings from his infancy, privileged to hear, read and write so many of the Master’s words during his youth, Shoghi Effendi firmly guided the friends in East and West along their destined course. Already in March 1922, in one of his first letters to the American believers, he had stated: “the friends of God the world over are strictly forbidden to meddle with political affairs”. He is using the term “pioneer” in his earliest letters, and in 1925 is keeping a list of Bahá’í centres throughout the world!

In spite of what he described as the “thorny path of my arduous duties”, in spite of the “oppressive burden of responsibility and care which it is my lot and privilege to shoulder”, he was clear in expressing and brilliant in understanding the needs of the Cause and the tasks facing the believers. He was equally clear in defining what relationship he wished the Bahá’ís to have with him and in what manner they should regard him. On 6 February 1922 he wrote to one of the Persian Bahá’ís: “I wish to be known, to realize myself however far I may proceed in future, as one and only one of the many workers in His Vineyards . . . whatever may betide I trust in His [‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s] wondrous love for me. May I in no wise by my deeds, thoughts or words, impede the stream of His sustaining Spirit which I sorely need in facing the responsibilities He has placed on my youthful shoulders . . .” and on 5 March he added the following postscript to a letter to the American friends: “May I also express my heartfelt desire that the friends of God in every land regard me in no other light but that of a true brother, united

with them in our common servitude to the Master's Sacred Threshold, and refer to me in their letters and verbal addresses always as Shoghi Effendi, for I desire to be known by no other name save the one our Beloved Master was wont to utter, a name which of all other designations is the most conducive to my spiritual growth and advancement." In 1924 he cabled India clearly and succinctly: "My birthday should not be commemorated". In 1930 his secretary wrote on his behalf: "Concerning Shoghi Effendi's station: he surely has none except what the Master confers upon him in His Will and that Will also states what Shoghi Effendi's station is. If anyone misinterprets one part of the Will he misinterprets all the Will." When Shoghi Effendi wrote the general letter known as *The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh* he made clear, once for all, his own position, disassociating himself categorically from the prerogatives and station Bahá'u'lláh conferred upon 'Abdu'l-Bahá: "In the light of this truth to pray to the Guardian of the Faith, to address him as lord and master, to designate him as his holiness, to seek his benediction, to celebrate his birthday, or to commemorate any event associated with his life would be tantamount to a departure from those established truths that are enshrined within our beloved Faith." In 1945 his secretary wrote on his behalf: "... he has never gone so far as to forbid the friends to have pictures of himself in their possession; he merely would rather they placed the emphasis on the beloved Master."

III

EARLY YEARS OF THE GUARDIANSHIP

It is time to ask ourselves what manner of man this was who wrote such things about himself, what impressions did he create, how did he appear to others?

From the diary of one of the American believers whom Shoghi Effendi called to Haifa, in March 1922, we have the following description: “. . . Shoghi Effendi appeared and greeted me most kindly and affectionately. I had not seen him for eight years, and of course I was surprised at the change and development in him, for instead of the boy I had known then was now a man very young in years but premature in poise and depth of spirit and thought . . .” Shoghi Effendi gave him a typed copy of the Master’s Will to read and he records his reaction to its provisions as follows: “never have I read anything which gave me the joy and inspiration that this Holy document produced in my heart. It . . . gave me a fixed direction toward which to turn and a continuous center about which we are all to revolve so long as we are in this land . . . a King of Kings ruling the world giving protection alike to Kings, aristocracies and people.” He goes on to describe his impressions of Shoghi Effendi: “As I used to sit at table looking at Shoghi Effendi, I was struck by his resemblance to the Master. In the shape and poise of his head, his shoulders, his walk and his general bearing. Then I felt the terrible weight and responsibility which had been placed upon that young boy. It seemed overwhelming that he, whose life was just starting, so to speak from the human worldly standpoint, should have had this great responsibility thrust upon him, a weight which would so consume him and place him aside by himself as to eliminate from his life the freedom and joy of the human side of life, which, though not eternal, has a certain call for each of us human beings.”

In 1929 an Indian Bahá’í pilgrim wrote of Shoghi Effendi: “We must understand Shoghi Effendi in order to be able to help him accomplish the stupendous task he has entrusted to us. He is so calm and yet so vibrant, so static and yet so dynamic.” This is little short of a brilliant characterization of one aspect of the Guardian. The impression he created on the first American Bahá’í to be called to Haifa after the second World War, in 1947, reveals other aspects of his nature: “My first impression was of his warm, loving smile and handclasp, making me feel instantly at ease . . . In the course of these interviews, I was to become increasingly conscious of his many great qualities,—his nobility, dignity, fire and enthusiasm,—his ability to run the scale from sparkling humor to deep outrage, but always, always putting the Bahá’í Faith ahead of everything . . . In his practical, logical manner, Shoghi Effendi made me feel both a welcome guest and a needed helper, he outlined some of my duties which started the very next day! His advice, given me on that initial visit, was to overshadow all my efforts on his behalf; he said he wanted me to follow his instructions explicitly, if I was unsuccessful, or ran into difficulties, to report to him precisely and he would give me a new plan of action . . . For the Bahá’ís working at the International Center, during this period at least, there was no special day of rest. It was then that one learned that each moment belonged to the Faith . . .” She then tells of those evenings when Shoghi Effendi shared with us at the dinner table special plans, cables and messages he was sending out, and occasionally precious documents in his possession: “. . . Sparkling with excitement and new plans, he would produce messages and

letters from his pockets, oftentimes pushing his dinner plate away untouched, calling for paper and pencil and thrill us all with his new ideas and hopes for the Bahá'ís to carry out . . . The beloved Guardian disliked very much to have his picture taken, therefore any photographs extant do not reflect his true 'image'. In the first place, the emotions flowed so rapidly over his features that one would need a series to catch his many moods. It was a delight to see and hear him laugh . . . he seemed to twinkle like a star when some plan had been successfully brought to a conclusion. His sense of humor was a joy! He was like a high mountain, strong, always there, but never conquered, filled with unexpected heights and depths . . . he was extremely thorough and taught us all a new sense of perfection and attention to detail . . . he was in close touch with the expenditure of all funds . . . He was enthusiastically concerned with Bahá'í statistics . . . We could never appreciate his grasp of all affairs connected with activities at the 'grass roots' right up to the World Center . . ."

Her husband, who likewise had the privilege of serving at the World Centre, expressed in a letter to one of the American Bahá'ís, written in 1948, his own impression of the Guardian as a man: "From what little I have seen I would say there are not a great many Easterners that could stand the pace Shoghi Effendi sets. One can only marvel at the scope of his mind and the strength of him. Yet, tho' he is fire and steel, he is the most loveable, understanding, compassionate and considerate person I have ever known. He is without peer. There is no one like him. How I wish other Bahá'ís could know him as Gladys and I have been privileged to know him. In writing as I have, I am not writing of his station as Guardian, that is quite beyond my pen. How all Bahá'ís should work for this great figure! His burden is great."

In 1956 a pilgrim recorded, accurately and shrewdly, her impressions of the Guardian: "His face is beautiful, as it is so pure in expression and so impersonal, yet at the same time tender and majestic . . . I saw large grey-blue eyes . . . His nose is a combination of what it was in the pictures of him as a little boy—he still looks much like that!—and the sort of ridged nose of the Master. His years seem no more than forty-eight instead of sixty. He had a small, greying moustache, tightly clipped. His mouth is firm and pure, his teeth white and beautiful. His smile is a precious bounty . . . He is completely simple and direct. He himself does not demand all this deference, but just to be in his presence makes one feel absolutely 'weak and lowly'. The Guardian is ever courteous and does not lose patience with questions of the immature. However, he is not reticent about letting people know which questions are important, and which are not, and which will be answered later by the International House of Justice . . ." She said Shoghi Effendi presided over the table "so simply and yet with kingly mien—as only a great king can be simple! . . . I felt as if he were like a great powerful locomotive, pulling behind him a long, long string of cars, laden—not with dead-weight exactly—but sometimes pretty dead! This weight is the believers who have to be pushed, or pulled, or cajoled, or praised at every moment to get them into action. The beloved Guardian sees far in advance the needs, the lack of time, the obstacles and problems. He is actually hauling us all along behind his guiding and powerful light. Like a locomotive too—he can go straight ahead, fast, or slow down, but he CANNOT deviate his course, he MUST follow the track which is his divine Guidance. He gives one the sense of being a perfect instrument—very impersonal, but hypersensitive to every thought, or atmosphere. He cannot be swayed in his thought. He is not influenced in the least by friendship, preference, money, hurting or not hurting feelings. He is absolutely above all that . . . The Guardian also made it very clear that now is not the time to dwell on the esoteric part of the teachings—on the contrary, we must be ACTIVE and positive, and get the Ten Year Crusade completed . . . He talks and comments, and then arrives at the end and suddenly folds his napkin neatly, rises from his chair . . . impossible to describe or convey in the least the luminosity and beauty of the Guardian. If he smiles at you—or looks with that swift penetrating gaze—it is a thrilling and soul-stirring feeling . . . always his discourse is about the Cause, and it stays with the theme of getting the Ten Year Crusade accomplished. He shows elation when there is good news, and goes into a deep depression when there is bad or evil news . . . Although he loves appreciation expressed in regard to the beauty

of the Gardens and the Shrines and their planning, the Guardian seemed to shun personal praise or being thanked for anything . . . we were trying desperately to fix his beloved countenance for all time in our memories, and not to lose one single shading of his expression, always impersonal, sudden and varied and surprising . . . Alas, Shoghi Effendi's 'radiant nature' has all too often been clouded over and saddened by the unwisdom of the friends, or their flagrant disobedience, or disregard of his instructions. Frantically one wonders who has not failed him in one way or another!"

I have quoted these passages because they seem to me to so graphically describe the Guardian as I too saw him. Not remembering 'Abdu'l-Bahá myself I cannot vouch for the likeness, but many of the old Bahá'ís said they saw it in him clearly. I will now quote from my own diaries various impressions of the Guardian of the Cause of God.

"Temperamentally Shoghi Effendi is a doer, a builder, an organizer, and loathes abstractions! . . . No one, observing Shoghi Effendi, could doubt for a moment that he was not perfectly equipped for this phase of the Cause and I believe he was created for it to do just what he is doing. He is the most extraordinarily unidirectional person I have ever seen. His whole nature and tastes and likes and dislikes are intense. He is like something travelling at high speed in one direction, which gives him almost infinite driving power. His persistence is irresistible; there is no dissipation of his forces. He only wants one thing, he wants it passionately, immediately, completely, perfectly. The Temple built—or a flight of steps here in the garden. He descends on it like a hurricane and never lets up until it is done. He drives ahead. It is extraordinary. He likes green lawns, red paths and white paths, red geraniums, cypress trees, and of course, a few other things—but I mean he does not like or want every tree and every flower. No, only just those few and in just such a place. The same is true of foods, the same of colours, of clothes—just a few things, he likes them passionately, he does not want anything else, he never tires of them! It is this almost narrow insistence on one or two themes that has enabled him to build in twenty years such a foundation in the Cause. A man of more catholic tastes and temperament could never have done it!"

"The Guardian is more sensitive than a seismograph, something in him, far deeper than intelligence or any outward information he may have, registers the state of the individual, registers things even the individual may not yet be aware of. I believe we should use him as our index and if he finds fault with some subtle attitude in us we should search ourselves till we find out what it is." We might well ask ourselves if this should not always be our guide and whether, if we read his writings carefully we cannot find there the indications of our individual, our national and our racial shortcomings and be warned and guided accordingly. Shoghi Effendi, I wrote, "rings true like the very tuning fork of the teachings . . ." "He is the Guardian and the nature of his relation to God is naturally a mystery. He can grasp any mystery, he can interpret the most mystical passages of the Faith, he can write things that are of a profoundly mystical nature—he is motivated to do so."

"Bahá'u'lláh was the Prophet. He did everything and said everything that was necessary for the world at present. The Master was the embodiment of His powers and teachings. He put an ingredient into the world of service in the true sense, of goodness, and a religious life in its highest form which is imperishable. Then something else was needed; this is where . . . a lot of people, including members of the Master's family and some of the Bahá'ís, have fallen down in their perspective of things. They wanted a second 'Abdu'l-Bahá—a series of patriarchal repeats in the form of the Guardians. But God seems to have had another idea. The strongest impression I always get of Shoghi Effendi is of an object travelling unidirectionally with terrific force and speed. If Bahá'u'lláh shone like the sun, and the Master gently went on radiating His light, like the moon, Shoghi Effendi is an entirely different phenomenon, as different as an object hurtling towards its goal is from something stationary and

radiating. Or one could liken him to a chemical. Bahá'u'lláh assembled everything that we needed, the Master mixed everything together and prepared it; then God adds to it one element, a sort of universal precipitant, needed to make the whole clarify and go on to fulfil its nature—this is the Guardian . . . he is made exactly to fulfil the needs of the Cause—and consequently of the planet itself—at this time.”

Although Shoghi Effendi must forever be a mystery in his essence to every being in this world—until the day comes when a new Manifestation of God, being superior, may choose to interpret him to us who are so far inferior—nevertheless we know much of him and have the right to preserve the memory tenderly, if inadequately.

In those first years of his ministry, in spite of his sorrow and agony, the exuberant, boyish side of what was still, after all is said, a very young man, could not be entirely hidden. He was always eager by nature—a characteristic he never lost till the end of his life—but in those days it overflowed transparently into his letters and telegrams, as well as into one's personal contacts with him.

His one single personal hobby was photography; he took superlatively artistic pictures of the scenery in Switzerland and other places during those early years, and we find a copy of a letter to a photographer in a small Swiss town written in 1924 telling him (in French) that “I am waiting impatiently for the photographs which I sent you . . . I hope you received them. They are very dear to me. Please instantly reassure me by post card on this subject. I hope they all came out well . . . Thanking you in advance, I am yours devotedly”. Even the copy is signed with a flourishing “Shoghi”, though it was in the handwriting of someone else!

His desire to get things done expeditiously is no less manifest in the field of horticulture; he was determined to have lawns in front of the Shrine of the Báb, and in other places on Bahá'í property. In May 1923 he cabled an old Bahá'í friend in Paris: “What of our lawn project?” and, receiving no reply, again cabled ten days later: “Letter still unanswered. What of lawn seeds?” They eventually arrived but the result seems to have been unsatisfactory, for when Shoghi Effendi returned to Haifa in the autumn he appears to have inaugurated a regular campaign in this direction—despite the bigoted assurances of ‘Abdu'l-Bahá's gardener that lawns would not grow in Palestine! On 29 September Shoghi Effendi informed a cousin in Egypt: “Our grass seeds apparently unsatisfactory. Can you send me thirty kilos of best quality seeds available Egypt and suitable to our climate with particulars.” A week later he had apparently received a reply he did not understand and wired back: “Surprised. Explain please by mail.” The explanation seems to have been as unsatisfactory this time as before and Shoghi Effendi gave up dealing with relatives and friends and wrote directly himself, on 18 December, to four different firms of nurserymen and seed merchants—one in France and three in England—ordering grass seeds, flower seeds, bulbs and cuttings. He writes he is “awaiting eagerly” the reply! During that summer, or the preceding one, he must have already arranged for some shrubs to reach Haifa because he cabled the Dreyfus-Barneys in Paris, in December, “Carmel awaits you both with roses of Orleans”.

One gathers that Shoghi Effendi got on friendly terms with some of his dealers, for in a letter written in French, in January 1925, he stated: “I am sending you herewith the sum of _____ asking you to kindly send me immediately rye grass seeds for lawn. I am very satisfied with the results of the lawn which you sent me before and I hope to receive the seeds as soon as possible. Thanking you in advance for sending these I assure you, dear Sir, of my most affectionate sentiments. Shoghi Rabbani”. I understand these lawns were the first to be grown in Palestine on a large scale. Shoghi Effendi wrote to an English firm of horticulturists near Norwich, that “. . . I am a lover of flowers and gardens. I am enclosing another one pound for any pictorial plant you may think suitable to my purpose.”

I doubt if Shoghi Effendi ever planted anything during his entire life, or ever had the desire to do so. He was not interested in gardening but in gardens, and never missed an opportunity to visit a beautiful or famous one; I cannot say how many gardens we visited together in twenty years. It seemed as if wherever there was one, we went, and often we returned year after year to the same one, as to an old friend. In the first ten years or so of his ministry Shoghi Effendi did everything in his power to ensure that the effects produced by those plants he admired in other countries should be reproduced in his own gardens in the Holy Land; he ordered thousands of bulbs from Holland one year, hundreds of rose bushes from France another; he even had tree ferns sent him from the Antipodes, but the calibre of his gardeners (combined in some cases with a natural unsuitability of the plant, such as the tree ferns, daffodils, hyacinths, crocuses, rhododendrons and so on) foiled every effort he made and in the end he gave up importing anything but grass seeds.

In the days of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, when water was a major problem, He had created, both in Bahjí and on Mt Carmel, small gardens next to the Holy Tombs, consisting mostly of citrus trees and flowers. Shoghi Effendi altered, extended and formalized these gardens. I remember in 1923 when I came with my mother on my first pilgrimage she remarked on the already formal layout of the small area of garden adjoining the Báb’s Shrine and said it was a symbol of the Administrative Order the Guardian was building up all over the world. I am sure this idea had not occurred to Shoghi Effendi, but pattern and order were innate in him; there was no other way he could work.

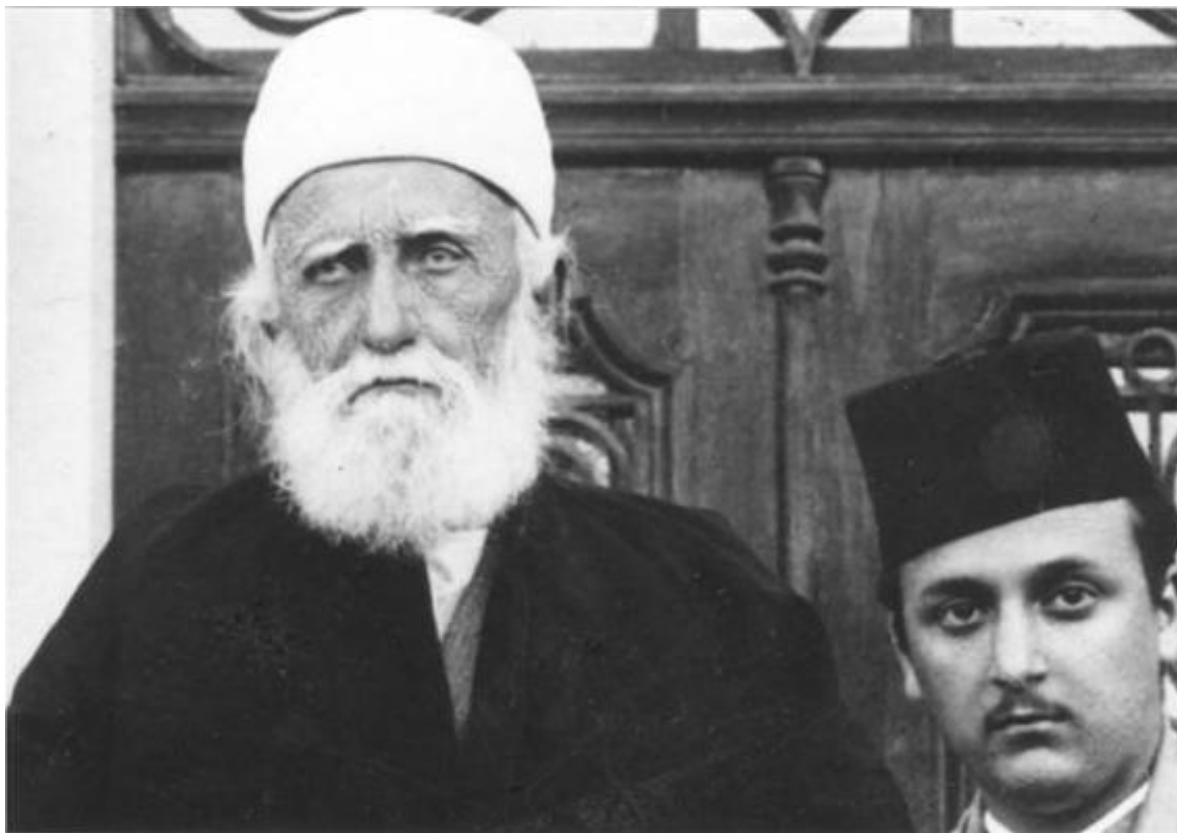
Professor Alaine Locke of Howard University in Washington, who was one of the Bahá’í pilgrims to visit Haifa during the first years of Shoghi Effendi’s Guardianship, describes the impressions he received as he walked with Shoghi Effendi in the gardens of the Báb’s Shrine: “Shoghi Effendi is a master of detail as well as of principle, of executive foresight as well as of projective vision. But I have never heard details so redeemed of their natural triviality as when talking to him of the plans for the beautifying and laying out of the terraces and gardens. They were important because they all were meant to dramatize the emotion of the place and quicken the soul even through the senses.”

Shoghi Effendi continually added to these gardens and their fame increased steadily. By the end of his life as many as 90,000 people a year were visiting them and the Shrine of the Báb. What one visitor wrote to him in 1935 expressed in the simplest terms the impression such a visit creates on many people; she had been “deeply impressed by the reticent beauty of the Shrines and by the happiness of the gardens.”

It was his practice each year to enlarge the cultivated area around the Shrines of the Báb and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. No doubt the very first impulse in this direction came from his ever-conscious desire to follow in every field the wishes of his departed Master. He knew ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had planned a series of terraces from the old German Colony up to the Báb’s Sepulchre; indeed the Master had begun developing the first terrace. Shoghi Effendi set himself, over the years, to finish these and in the course of studying this plan he no doubt evolved a concept of his gardens around the Shrine—for gardens they are, not one garden. To understand and appreciate the extraordinarily beautiful effect Shoghi Effendi has created on Mt Carmel and in Bahjí one must know his method.

Almost every day he was in Haifa he went up to the Shrine area, often visiting the Shrine of the Báb and that of the Master alternately, but on Feast Days always successively. As he looked at what was before him his creative mind suggested developments and improvements. He knew ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had planned the Shrine to have nine rooms and he undertook the erection of the last three of these, on the south side of the Tomb. He had the two walls of the eastern and western sides of the inner Shrine of the Báb, where there had been previously two ordinary wooden doors, broken into and sweeping arches made, thus creating a vista through the Holy of Holies

and greatly beautifying the interior. Over the years he changed about the ornaments of the Shrine, adding to them without ever losing a certain feeling of simplicity and informality that greatly enhances the charm of this Sacred Spot. While he was making these improvements—which reached their culmination in the erection of the great superstructure of the Shrine—Shoghi Effendi studied the surrounding barren mountainside and began to develop, piece by piece, year after year, separate sections. With the exception of the terraces, it must be borne in mind that he never had an over-all plan. This is what gives the gardens on Mt Carmel their unique character. As he walked about Shoghi Effendi would get an idea for a piece of garden that fitted the topography of the land. With no fuss, no advice and no help except the unskilled farmers who did duty as gardeners, he would make his plan for this “piece”. If necessary he would have the spot surveyed and curves or long lines laid out, but very often he dispensed with this and did it all himself.



'ABDU'L-BAHÁ AND SHOGHI EFFENDI

The Centre of the Covenant and the future Guardian taken in Haifa on the steps of the Master's house during the last years they were together



SHOGHI EFFENDI IN ALEXANDRIA, EGYPT

This was taken on March 21, 1920, shortly before he sailed for Europe; Shoghi Effendi is shown seated (third from the right); behind him is standing Lotfullah Hakim

From Shoghi Effendi's animated description of what he had found and planned to do, which he would tell me about when he came home, I gathered that his method was to look, as he walked about the property, at the land he planned to develop; a pattern would suggest itself to his mind and he would study this, not only on the spot through observation of his area, but through drawings he made himself. Though many ideas in all fields of his work came to Shoghi Effendi in a flash, and although he may sometimes have seen at a glance the over-all design he planned to use for a garden, he worked out the dimensions and details painstakingly in his drawings, which were not made to scale—as this would have taken a great deal of extra time—but on which all dimensions were calculated and indicated. For example: his main path was going to be, let us say, 25 metres long and 2 metres wide; beside this he allowed 25 centimetres for a border, a strip 1.20 metres wide for cypress trees, which were to be planted 1.50 metres apart, and so on. When he had it all planned he would go and stand and instruct the gardeners how to lay it out. Through string tied to pegs, giving long lines, a peg and string acting as compass for circles, using the span (the space between thumb and little finger when fully stretched apart) as measurement of distance between trees, having light-coloured soil poured out to indicate a line, and other such simple methods he would, often in a single afternoon, have an entire section of garden laid out in full detail. Usually, knowing exactly what he intended to do, Shoghi Effendi would call other gardeners to follow along behind those that were laying out the design, so that as the plan was measured out on the ground, holes for cypress trees were dug, trees planted and flower beds set out and borders planted, all while Shoghi Effendi advanced with his measuring process in front of them! There is a proverb among the Arabs that whoever wears King Solomon's ring, when he turns it everything in the twinkling of an eye will be changed. Some of the Arab workers used to say Shoghi Effendi had found King Solomon's ring!

It is hard to understand why most people do things so slowly when Shoghi Effendi did them so fast. Just to twitter faithfully that he was "guided by God" does not seem to me a sufficient explanation. I believe great people see things in great dimensions, little people get tripped up by little details. Shoghi Effendi, being truly great, having clearly in mind what he wanted to do, saw no reason why a lot of puny details—such as that one usually gave instructions to subordinates and let them go their own pace in carrying them out—should prevent him from getting the whole thing done, under his own eyes, in one operation. He organized it perfectly and it was accomplished immediately and perfectly; anything he could do himself was always done this way. The delays and frustrations usually occurred when he had to refer his work to others.

Shoghi Effendi had a faultless sense of proportion. He always himself said he could not visualize; in other words the artist's capacity to close his eyes and see it all before him as it would look when finished was not one of his gifts. But when he saw a drawing, or had worked out himself his dimensions, studying his terrain, his proportions were absolutely perfect. It is the combination of this sense of proportion, and an originality unhampered by tradition or too much information, that made his gardens so unique, so fascinating and beautiful. If he (so he claimed) lacked the power of visualizing a thing completed, he possessed to a strong degree the other creative faculty of the true artist, the capacity to let a thing shape up under his hands, to receive an inspiration rather than be tied to the preconceived idea.

Nowhere was this more manifest than in his development of the grounds surrounding the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh at Bahjí. His original plan was to have the Holy Tomb and the adjacent Mansion the hub of a great wheel. He started, after the final transactions were completed with the State of Israel and over 145,000 square metres of land were secured around the Holy Tomb in 1952, to level the section of wilderness, constituting about one-

quarter of a vast circle, that faced the Shrine. A bulldozer was hired and for many days Shoghi Effendi took up his residence in Bahjí, in order to personally direct the work.

There was a ruined one-room building on the perimeter of operations and Shoghi Effendi, anxious to get some perspective on the land, climbed up on to it. He found this added height made such a difference that he had the walls and roof repaired, a wooden stair placed outside, leading to the roof, and furnished the interior which he used as an office and place to answer his mail. Observing and directing the work from this new vantage point he obtained an entirely different perspective of the Shrine property which is located in the middle of a flat plain. This gave him a new idea; as a great deal of earth was being scraped up in the levelling process, he instructed that this should all be pushed to the east, and a high embankment was raised there, enabling anyone standing on it to see the whole area stretched before him like a beautiful patterned carpet. The success of this plan pleased the Guardian so much that he built not one but two stepped-back terraces, amounting in height to a small hill.

It was typical of the entire attitude of the Guardian towards the Cause of God, of which he had been made the Protector, that when at last this new area was completed, the lawns and flower beds planted, and the lamp posts lining the beautiful red path erected, he should have immediately moved his meeting out to the perimeter of the new development, seating the guests along the semicircular path facing the Shrine, at a distance of almost 100 metres from where he had been wont to sit in the past. I did not know this arrangement had been contemplated and that evening, when I returned after the meeting to Haifa, asked Shoghi Effendi about it. He said that “out of respect for the Shrine” he had moved the meeting further away from it. From then on all meetings held in Bahjí, including the one commemorating the Ascension of Bahá’u’lláh, which takes place after midnight, were held in this new position.

After his passing, in fulfilment of his own expressed intention, a third terrace was raised on the other two, placing the final touch on his magnificent arrangement of the Shrine gardens. This new concept meant that his original cart-wheel design of gardens was entirely abandoned, for the system of converging paths on a common centre was no longer feasible. Many times Shoghi Effendi would alter his plan because his eye, on the spot, revealed to him something he felt was more beautiful and worthy.

Shoghi Effendi—like the Master before him—was a great lover of light. He hated gloomy interiors. This love of bright light was so pronounced that I used to remonstrate with him for working with a powerful desk lamp practically shining in his eyes as I was afraid it was too much for them. His own room was always brilliantly lit, the Shrines were all full of lights, large and small, and one of his first acts as Guardian was to have placed over the door of the Báb’s Shrine that faces the terraces and the straight avenue at the foot of the mountain that leads to the sea, a bright light. I can remember how, in 1923, the townspeople made fun of this and asked why it should be there at all. No doubt it was this that provoked a fanatical Christian named Dumit to erect, some years later, on the roof of his building, which stood not far from the Tomb of the Báb, a large illuminated cross, an object which, far from irritating Shoghi Effendi, he described as a flower in the button-hole of the Shrine!

Gradually the gardens in both Haifa and Bahjí were all illumined with beautiful four-branched wrought-iron lamp posts, ninety-nine of them being erected in Bahjí alone. When the night came that these were lighted for the first time, on the occasion of the Ridván Feast in 1953, and we approached Bahjí by car the sky glowed as if we were approaching a small city! The Guardian told the Persian pilgrims that it had always been light, but now it was “light upon light”. (In the original there is a beautiful play upon words alluding to Bahá’u’lláh as light.) In addition to this the Shrine in Haifa was illumined at night by floodlights, as were the resting-places of the

Greatest Holy Leaf, and those of the mother and brother of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, and high-powered reflectors were ordered to illumine the International Archives Building.

In everything he did the Guardian was painstakingly exact, leaving nothing to chance and very little to the judgement of his co-workers. Just one of innumerable examples of this is the thoroughness with which he always ascertained the exact day a Bahá’í commemoration would occur in Haifa. As there is a difference in lunar dates — which depend on the hour of the rising of the new moon in some cases — Shoghi Effendi was very careful to ascertain this as well as the exact time of the spring equinox, which, if it occurs before a certain hour, means that the Bahá’í New Year falls on 20 March instead of 21 March. We find telegrams such as this, sent in 1923, to his cousin in Beirut: “Ascertain and wire exact time vernal equinox”. He no doubt considered more scientific information would be forthcoming from the American University than locally. In 1932 he cabled his brother, then studying in the same university: “Ascertain approximate population Roman Empire during two first centuries after Christ . . .” He was not only accurate and exact, but he realized, with the acumen of a really great writer, that facts quoted in the right place can have the effect that precious stones produce on a piece of jewellery — they set off the entire creation. Take for instance the use of the prosaic information that McMurdo Sound is 77° latitude south on the Ross Sea; but when Shoghi Effendi informed the believers that Bahá’í books had been sent to the American Antarctic Expedition whose base was at McMurdo Sound, and added its exact latitude, it suddenly all came alive and became romantic and thrilling!

In 1924 Shoghi Effendi made a determined effort to solve one of the problems facing him. He had already made it clear to his ill-wishers that he was neither weak nor, in spite of the condition he had been plunged into after the Master’s passing, lacking in direction and judgement. In one of his letters he had written: “It is difficult to break with some of the customs and traditions of the past, and familiarize the vast number of Bahá’ís, so diverse in their outlook and conception, with the necessary changes and requirements of this new phase in the history of the Cause.” Nevertheless he was doing it and doing it very successfully. What he urgently needed in Haifa was more helpers. His own father knew very little English; of his three uncles-in-law, two were in business in Haifa and the third lived in Egypt. The older of his cousins as well as his own brother were either working or studying. Although he received assistance from various members of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s family, the work of the Cause was steadily expanding and Shoghi Effendi had already begun to translate many of the Writings into English and send them to the West. Moreover, his correspondence was growing in volume and posing a real problem. In January 1923 he wrote to the London Bahá’ís: “The presence of a competent assistant in my translation work at present in Haifa would be most welcome, and highly desirable and I submit this matter to the members of the Council that they may consider the matter of sending for a time one of the English friends who would attend with me to this all-important work.”

The person who seems to have responded to this appeal was none other than Shoghi Effendi’s beloved Dr Esslemont. He lived in Haifa, working with and serving Shoghi Effendi, until his untimely death on 22 November 1925. His health had not been good for some time, and already, after the Master’s passing, we find him cabling Shoghi Effendi in February 1922: “Convalescing satisfactorily testament received yours devotedly”. The bond between the two was very close and when Esslemont died, very unexpectedly, Shoghi Effendi cabled his relatives: “Overwhelmed with sorrow at passing dearly-beloved Esslemont. All devoted efforts unavailing. Be assured of heartfelt sympathy condolences myself and Bahá’ís world over. Letter follows”. Four days later he wrote to them: “It is no exaggeration to say that I find no words to express adequately the sense of personal loss I feel at the passing of my dear collaborator and friend John Esslemont.” Esslemont was not only a distinguished international figure in the Bahá’í world, the author of a book which Shoghi Effendi said “would inspire generations yet unborn” (*Bahá’u’lláh and the New Era*, now translated into about a hundred languages), but had

been to him personally “the warmest of friends, a trusted counsellor, an indefatigable collaborator, a lovable companion” whose close association with him, in which he had “placed the fondest hopes” was now so suddenly ended. The Guardian wept for this friend of his student days, but as usual, was forced by his position, and in spite of his personal grief, to carry on his functions as Guardian. He immediately cabled England, America, Germany, Persia and India to cable their sympathy to Esslemont’s relatives—none of whom were Bahá’ís—and to hold special remembrance meetings. He also raised him posthumously to the rank of Hand of the Cause.

This coming of Dr Esslemont to Haifa, far from solving Shoghi Effendi’s own problem, had only served to add fresh grief to a heart already sorely afflicted. In January 1926 Shoghi Effendi complains of the “oppressive burden of responsibility and care which it is my lot and privilege to shoulder” and goes on to speak of “my unceasing toil, my afflictions, and perplexities” and the “thorny path” of “my arduous duties”. Four months later he wrote to Horace Holley: “I have often felt the extreme desirability of having a collaborator like you working by my side here in Haifa. The loss of Dr. Esslemont is keenly felt by me and my hope is that the conditions here and abroad will enable me to establish the work in Haifa upon a more systematic basis. I am waiting for a favourable time.” This was written in May. In September he again writes to Horace, praising his services and reiterating “How much I feel the need for a similar worker by my side in Haifa, as competent, as thorough, as methodical, as alert as yourself. You cannot and should not leave your post for the present. Haifa will have to take care of itself for some time.”

It was during the interval between these two letters, when Shoghi Effendi was in Switzerland, that he wrote to Hippolyte Dreyfus-Barney on 30 June 1926: “I stand in need of a capable, trustworthy, hard-working, methodical, experienced secretary who will combine the gift of literary expression with a recognized standing in the Bahá’í world. Dr. Esslemont was a most suitable companion, unhampered, painstaking, devoted, lowly and capable. I mourn his loss . . . A capable, painstaking secretary, wholeheartedly devoted to his work, and two chief advisers who would represent the Movement on specific occasions, with dignity and devotion, together with two Eastern associates, mentally awake and expert in knowledge, would I feel set me on my feet and release the forces that will carry the Cause to its destined liberation and triumph . . . I cannot express myself more adequately than I have for my memory has greatly suffered.”

Although these letters were written to individuals he made no secret of his needs; in October 1926 he wrote to America that the “growing significance and complexity of the work that has to be necessarily conducted from the Holy Land, have all served to strengthen the feeling of absolute necessity for the formation in Haifa of some sort of an International Bahá’í Secretariat, which both in an advisory and executive capacity will have to aid and assist me in my vast and exacting labours.” He goes on to say that he has “anxiously considered this important matter” and has requested three representatives from America, Europe and Persia to come to the Holy Land and take counsel with him upon the measures needed to meet the demands of the present hour; he states that it would not only assist him and strengthen the ties binding the International Centre to the world at large, but would provide the preliminary steps that would lead to the establishment of the “First International House of Justice”. Already in May he had written to one of those whom he had in mind: “I wonder whether you could join me next fall with H_____ in my work here in Haifa. There are most complex and delicate problems before me and I feel the need for competent, fearless and trusted collaborators . . . I must stop for I can hardly collect my thoughts.”

The collaboration envisaged by Shoghi Effendi in this letter never materialized, in spite of all his efforts; ill health, events in the Cause, family and business complications involving those he had in mind, all conspired to leave him as destitute of competent helpers as he had been since 1922 when he began to function in his office of Guardian. To one of those he had chosen, in February 1927, he wrote: “. . . hope you will be able to join me in

my arduous labours as soon as it is possible and convenient.” In September he is again writing to this friend, whom illness has kept at home, “I look forward to the work this winter with concern as I realize the magnitude of the work and my single-handedness in the face of my stupendous task. As I have already observed, conferences won’t do, what I need is close, continuous collaboration, in order to initiate and execute the measures that are necessary for the spread and consolidation of the Cause. Meanwhile I will have to pursue my present line of work which I feel is secondary in importance and could easily be undertaken by a secretariat . . .” Again he writes to this same Bahá’í, in October, that “I am alone at present and am doing the very best I can.” And in January 1928: “All other matters are at a standstill and I await the attention and aid of competent, devoted and experienced assistants.”

The picture this gives us of the Guardian is heart-breaking. He is no longer a very young man and no longer as completely crushed with grief as in the early years of his ministry; he sees the needs of the Cause, the possibilities if he has more help and is thus himself freer to devote his time to essentials—but it is useless, the kind of helpers he needs are simply not able or willing to give up everything and come to settle in Haifa. In a letter written by a pilgrim from India the situation is made crystal clear, and there is no doubt the person that made it so clear was Shoghi Effendi himself, for he was in the habit of speaking very freely with the Bahá’ís who visited the Holy Land. This believer wrote on 15 June 1929: “Shoghi Effendi wants to have an international secretariat in Haifa before we can have any other International Organization but the idea has not been realized due to lack of sufficient number of capable and trustworthy Bahá’ís . . .”

This subject fell into abeyance until the International Bahá’í Council was formed in 1951. Shoghi Effendi came to grips with the harsh fact that he was to all intents and purposes alone and he placed increased reliance on himself. He set himself to do all the work and did it, using as secretaries various members of the Master’s family, facing an ever-increasing spirit of disaffection on their part, resigning himself to the unending drudgery of petty tasks as well as major ones, accepting his fate with resignation, often with despair, always with loyalty and fortitude. It can truly be said of him that single-handed he effected the world-wide establishment of the Faith of his Divine Forefathers and proved that he belonged to that same sovereign caste.

It was during these years, when Shoghi Effendi was trying so hard to gather about him a group of competent co-workers, that a crisis of unprecedented dimensions burst upon him. The sea of the Cause of God, whipped by the winds of both destiny and chance which blow upon it from the outside world, was now lashed into a storm whose waves beat remorselessly upon Shoghi Effendi’s mind, his strength, his nerves and his resources. The blessed House occupied by Bahá’u’lláh in Baghdad, and ordained by Him, in Shoghi Effendi’s words, as a “sacred, sanctified and cherished object of Bahá’í pilgrimage and veneration” had already in the days of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá been seized by the Shí’ahs, after a series of nefarious manoeuvres, but had been returned by the British authorities to its legitimate custodians. When news of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s passing reached the inveterate enemies of the Faith, they once again renewed their attack and laid claim to the House. In 1922 the government took over the keys of the House in spite of the assurance King Feisal had given that he would respect the claims of the Bahá’ís to a building that had been occupied by their representatives ever since Bahá’u’lláh’s departure from Baghdad; His Majesty, for political reasons, now went back on his word and in 1923 the keys were most unjustly delivered once again to the Shí’ahs. From shortly after the passing of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá until November 1925 there was a continuous struggle on the part of the Bahá’ís to protect the Most Holy House. The Shí’ahs had first taken the case to their own religious court from which it was speedily lifted out to the Peace court and then brought before the local Court of First Instance, which decided in favour of the rights of the Bahá’ís. This decision was then taken to the Court of Appeals, the Supreme Court of Iraq, which gave its verdict in favour of the Shí’ahs.

When the Guardian was informed of this flagrant miscarriage of justice he immediately mustered the Bahá'í world to take action: he sent nineteen cables to various individuals and national bodies comprising the believers in Persia, the Caucasus, Turkistan, Iraq, Japan, Burma, China, Turkey, Moscow, India, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the United States, Germany, Austria, France, Great Britain and the Pacific Islands. His instructions were that the Bahá'ís should cable and write their protest at this decision to the British High Commissioner in Iraq. Persia and North America—where the Bahá'í communities were numerically strong—were informed that in addition to every local Assembly voicing its protest directly, the National Assembly should not only contact the High Commissioner, but protest directly to both King Feisal of Iraq and the British authorities in London. The Assembly of India and Burma was likewise to protest to the King himself, but not to London. In places where the Bahá'ís were few in number, such as France and China, Shoghi Effendi advised that the protest should go over the signature of individuals. All these instructions markedly display the strategist in Shoghi Effendi. In his cables to the Bahá'í world he stated the situation was “perilous” and the “consequences of the utmost gravity”; all must request “prompt action to safeguard spiritual claims of Bahá'ís to this dearly-beloved Spot”, “this sanctified abode”, “Bahá'u'lláh's Sacred House”. He put the proper phrases into the mouths of those he advised, the eastern friends being told to “fervently and courteously”, “in firm considerate language”, earnestly appeal “for consideration of their spiritual claims to its possession” and to the “British sense of justice”, while the western believers were informed that “effective prompt action urgently required . . . protesting vigorously against Court's glaring injustice, appealing for redress to British sense fairness, asserting spiritual claims of Bahá'ís . . . declaring their unfailing resolve to do their utmost to vindicate their legitimate and sacred rights.” With his usual thoroughness Shoghi Effendi advised America that the messages sent by the local Assemblies “should not be identical in wording.”

The exchange, during a six-month period, of well-nigh a hundred cables, in addition to a continual correspondence with various agents working to safeguard the Most Holy House, testify in bulk and substance to Shoghi Effendi's preoccupation with this problem. One of his first acts, on receiving the news of the decision of the Supreme Court, was to cable the High Commissioner in Baghdad that: “The Bahá'ís the world over view with surprise and consternation the Court's unexpected verdict regarding the ownership of Bahá'u'lláh's Sacred House. Mindful of their longstanding and continuous occupation of this property they refuse to believe that Your Excellency will ever countenance such manifest injustice. They solemnly pledge themselves to stand resolutely for the protection of their rights. They appeal to the high sense of honour and justice which they firmly believe animates your Administration. In the name of the family of Sir 'Abdu'l-Bahá 'Abbás and the whole Bahá'í Community Shoghi Rabbani”. On the same day he cabled the heart-broken Keeper of Bahá'u'lláh's House: “Grieve not. Case in God's hand. Rest assured.”

During the ensuing months many cables from Shoghi Effendi included such phrases as “House case should be strenuously pursued.” He cabled a number of prominent non-Bahá'ís, and constantly coordinated the efforts of his lieutenants in different parts of the world. When over a month had passed Shoghi Effendi cabled various National Assemblies, instructing them to inquire in “courteous terms” from the High Commissioner “results of investigation” which the British Authorities had promised to undertake. It was a losing battle, for the political and religious elements in Iraq had common cause and refused to bow to the pressure brought upon them, including that of the British Government.

Shoghi Effendi, however, did not accept defeat so lightly and never rested until the case of the Holy House was brought before the League of Nations Permanent Mandates Commission, in November 1928; the Mandatory Power had upheld the right of the Bahá'ís to the possession of the House, and the Mandates Commission recommended to the Council of the League of Nations that it request the British Government to make

representations to the Iraqi Government to redress the denial of justice to the Bahá'ís in this case. The Bahá'ís continued to press the matter, from 1928 until 1933, but to no avail because the instruments for enforcing the decision were lacking and the power of the Shi'ahs inside Iraq was such as to cause the entire question to be dropped by the Iraqi Government, whenever that decision was pressed upon it.

A brief résumé of events such as these conveys none of the day-to-day suspense that attends them, the fluctuations between hope and despair, the good news and bad news that alternate with each other and wear away the heart and strength. The first impact of the Supreme Court's decision had scarcely been received when Dr Esslemont suddenly died. Coming at such a time of crisis, the loss of his friend was a doubly grievous blow to the Guardian.

A bare week before this event Shoghi Effendi had sent messages to the Bahá'í world which reflected another keen point of anxiety occupying his mind at this time. Rumours had been bruited about that the remains of a certain prominent leader of Zionism might be brought to the Holy Land to be buried befittingly on Mt Carmel. In view of this Shoghi Effendi appealed to the believers to contribute funds for the immediate purchase of land in the vicinity of the Báb's Tomb, particularly overlooking it, in order to safeguard this Holy Spot. So overwhelming was their response that a little over a month later he could inform them that their generous and splendid support had achieved its purpose, but there can be no doubt that for a time at least this had also greatly added to the back-breaking burden of his cares.

So heavy was this burden that in February 1926 he wrote to one of the believers: "I am submerged in a sea of activities, anxieties and preoccupations. My mind is extremely tired and I feel I am becoming inefficient and slow due to this mental fatigue." This condition became so acute that he was forced to go away for a brief rest. "The overwhelming burden of pressing cares and responsibilities", he wrote towards the end of March, "necessitated my departure at a time when . . . I was most anxious to receive my friends and co-workers from various parts of the world." He must have been ill, indeed, to have absented himself from Haifa and his guests, but whatever his condition in February and March it was mild compared to that into which he was plunged by a wire from Persia, sent on 11 April, from Shiraz, which baldly stated: "Twelve friends in Jahrom martyred agitation may extend elsewhere", to which he replied the same day: "Horried sudden calamity. Suspend activities. Appeal central authorities. Convey relatives tenderest sympathy". He also wired that same day to Tehran a message so significant of the spirit of the Faith that its conjunction with the events in Jahrum cannot be ignored: "I earnestly request all believers Persia Turkistan Caucasus participate whole-heartedly in renewal Spiritual Assemblies election. No true Bahá'í can stand aside. Results should be promptly forwarded Holy Land through central assemblies communicate immediately with every centre. Proceed cautiously. Imploring Divine assistance." The following day, having received a more detailed wire from Shiraz advising that the chief instigator of the agitation there had been arrested and giving certain suggestions, Shoghi Effendi telegraphed Tehran: "Griefstricken Jahrom martyrdom. Convey His Majesty on behalf all Bahá'ís and myself our profound appreciation his prompt intervention and our earnest entreaty to inflict immediate punishment on perpetrators of such atrocious crime. Urge all Persian Assemblies send similar message." It is a slight, but significant, indication of his mental state that in the first cables he spells "Jahrom" phonetically, but later switches to the transliterated "Jahrum".

What all this meant to Shoghi Effendi is expressed by him in a letter to one of his co-workers, written on 24 April. After acknowledging receipt of his many letters, he explains that his delay in answering them has been due to "my unfortunate illness, amounting almost to a breakdown, combined with the receipt of the most distressing news from Persia reporting the martyrdom of twelve of our friends in the town of Jahrum, south of Shiraz. I have

wired for full particulars and will communicate them to the various Bahá'í centres immediately I receive detailed information. Political considerations and personal rivalries appear to have played no small part . . . I have transmitted a message to the Shah through the Persian National Spiritual Assembly . . . I have also requested foreign Assemblies to give in an unoffensive language full publicity to these reports in their respective newspapers, but have thought it premature for them to get into direct relation with the Shah . . . It is sad and annoying to reflect that the Bahá'ís, pressed as they are by so many afflicting and humiliating circumstances, seem at the present time quite impotent and helpless in their efforts to secure the needed assistance from recognized authorities. There must surely be some wisdom underlying this apparent futility of their strenuous efforts." In a cable to this same individual, sent two weeks later, Shoghi Effendi says he is "deeply afflicted".

On 21 May, again writing to this same Bahá'í, he opens his heart and says: "I myself am too tired to do any effective work at present. I have become slow, impatient, inefficient . . . I am trying to get away if no sudden crisis again takes place. I have had so many of them during the last few months . . ." Yet in this state Shoghi Effendi managed to do what he thought could be done: "I feel that with patience, tact, courage and resource we can utilize this development to further the interests and extend the influence of the Cause." He had mustered the forces of the Bahá'í world in defence of the oppressed Persian Community, ensured that wide publicity in the foreign press be given to these martyrdoms and constantly directed various National Assemblies in the action they should take in this respect as well as in the case of the Most Holy House.

Such is the tale of one period of the Guardian's life; how many blows rained on him in a little over six months, at a time when he was still struggling to get the load that had been placed on his shoulders at the time of the Master's passing properly balanced so that he could carry it!

IV

MARTHA ROOT AND QUEEN MARIE OF RUMANIA

Shoghi Effendi used to remark that out of his sufferings something always seemed to be born. He would go through these ordeals by fire—for indeed he seemed to fairly burn with suffering—and then some rain from heaven, in the form of good news, would shower upon him and help to revive him. I am afraid the mystery of sacrifice still remains a mystery to me, but certainly the Holy Ones of this world buy their victories dearly.

It was at this time, when affliction was literally engulfing the Guardian, that, on 4 May, the *Toronto Daily Star* published a highly appreciative statement made by Queen Marie of Rumania on the Bahá'í Faith, a statement, followed by others during the course of her visit to the United States and Canada, which was printed in about two hundred newspapers and constituted some of the widest and most spectacular publicity the Faith has ever received. In a confidential letter written on 29 May the Guardian refers to this as “this most astonishing and highly significant event in the progress of the Cause”.

The acceptance of Bahá'u'lláh's station by the Rumanian Queen—the first crowned head to embrace the Faith—is a chapter in itself in the life of Shoghi Effendi and is inextricably bound up with the services of Martha Root, that “star-servant of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh” as Shoghi Effendi called her, and the part she played in his life—indeed no account of his life could ever be complete without mention of the relationship of this noble soul to him. Miss Martha Root was a journalist by profession and came of a distinguished American family. She met the Master during His visit to the United States, and, fired by His *Tablets of the Divine Plan*, arose in 1919 and commenced her historic travels in the service of the Cause, not only travelling longer and farther than any single Bahá'í has ever done since its inception, but often, as the Guardian said, “in extremely perilous circumstances”. At the time of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's ascension she was already forty-nine years old, a plain, not to say homely, woman, but with singularly beautiful, frank blue eyes and a unique degree of faith which convinced her that Bahá'u'lláh could do anything, and would do everything if, as she used to put it, one just stood aside and let Him. It was her great teaching journeys—four of which took her entirely round the world—combined with her truly outstanding qualities, that so endeared her to Shoghi Effendi and led him to call her the “archetype of Bahá'í itinerant teachers”. The services of no other believer ever afforded him the satisfaction that her singular victories brought him. Of her Shoghi Effendi wrote in October 1926: “In her case we have verily witnessed in an unmistakable manner what the power of dauntless faith, when coupled with sublimity of character, can achieve, what forces it can release, to what heights it can rise.”

From the inception of Shoghi Effendi's ministry she not only turned her great loving heart to him but constantly sought his advice as to her plans. It would not be exaggerating to say they had a partnership in all her undertakings, marked by a mutual love and confidence all too rare in the harassed life of the Guardian. They kept in close touch, a flow of letters and cables apprising him of her plans, her needs, her victories, her requests for guidance and his unfailing answers giving encouragement and advice. We find in his letters to her, whom he characterized, in 1923, as that “indomitable and zealous disciple of 'Abdu'l-Bahá”, over and over again phrases such as these, in which he expresses the warmth of his feelings, that he has read her letters with “pride and gratitude”, that they “have as usual gladdened my heart”, that “It is always a joy to hear from you, beloved

Martha.” He wrote to her in July 1926, when she was making so many contacts with the royalty of Europe: “. . . write me fully and frequently for I yearn to hear of your activities and of every detail of your achievements. Assuring you of my boundless love for you . . .”, and in August he says: “I hunger for every minute detail of your triumphal advance in the field of service . . . I am enclosing a copy of my letter to the Queen. Do not share its contents with anyone.” But he had hastened to share it himself with her who had taught that Queen. In September he wrote, “I am glad to share with you the contents of the Queen of Rumania’s answer to my letter. I think it is a remarkable letter, beyond our highest expectations. The change that has been effected in her, her outspoken manner, her penetrating testimony and courageous stand are indeed eloquent and convincing proof of the all-conquering Spirit of God’s living Faith and the magnificent services you are rendering to His Cause.”

The bond of confidence between Shoghi Effendi and Martha is clearly illustrated by this exchange of cables in October 1926: “Love do you approve that I continue original plan starting Portugal late November please wire” she cabled him. Nothing could be more tender and revealing of Martha’s nature than that intense term of endearment “love” at the beginning, which frequently slipped out so naturally and unself-consciously to the Guardian she adored. He replied: “Do as Divine guidance inspires you. Tenderest love”. Shortly after this he sends her £50 “as my modest contribution towards the splendid work you are doing for our beloved Cause.” This was not an isolated act; every now and then we find he has sent her a sum for “your exemplary work in the Divine Vineyard”, to help with “your extensive travels, your increasing expenditures and your stupendous work”, as he put it, and once, at least, when news reached him that she was ill. He also sent her money to help in the translation and publication of various foreign editions of Dr Esslemont’s book—which Shoghi Effendi referred to as the textbook of the Faith—a work in which she was actively engaged and one he was constantly urging her to promote, and more occasionally for some other purpose. The gifts were not one-sided by any means. We find Shoghi Effendi writing: “I have received the gold ring which you sent me . . . and have offered it, after wearing it myself, to the Greatest Holy Leaf . . . you cannot realize what a moral assistance, what comfort and inspiration you are bestowing upon our harassed and sorely-stricken brethren in Persia. Great indeed will be your reward in the world to come! More power to your elbow!” In the postscript to this letter of February 1929 he adds: “I have received the beautiful handkerchief you have sent me and I am making full use of it as a cherished remembrance of your dear self.” So typical of Shoghi Effendi, that he should suddenly think, as he had given the ring away, that Martha might be hurt and hasten to assure her about the handkerchief! They seem to have sent many things back and forth; he used to send her books for distribution, and in one letter he writes to her in 1931 that he is sending two packages of stationery stamped with the Greatest Name “for your correspondence with distinguished people”. We find her on one occasion remitting to him \$19 to cover the cost of cables he sent her in reply to questions she had asked him.

One of Martha’s cables to Shoghi Effendi says: “Tenderest love longing hear from you”; one of Shoghi Effendi’s letters to her says: “. . . Generations yet unborn will exult in the memory of one who has so energetically, so swiftly and beautifully paved the way for the universal recognition of the Faith of Bahá’u’lláh.” He calls her the “peerless herald of the Cause”. What her services and her letters meant to Shoghi Effendi during the first ten years of his ministry, at a time when he himself wrote to her that the response of the believers to the needs in the teaching field was “so inadequate and scanty!”, is indescribable. “Your letters . . .”, he wrote to her on 10 July 1926, “have given me strength, joy and encouragement at a time when I felt depressed, tired and disheartened.” In 1927, in June, he assures her that correspondence with her is not a burden to him, “. . . on the contrary it refreshes my weary soul and revives in me the spirit of hope and confidence which oppressive cares and manifold anxieties at times tend to darken.” In December of that same year, when a copy of Princess Ileana’s letter to her was forwarded to Haifa, Shoghi Effendi assures Martha it had “brought tears of joy to the eyes of the Greatest Holy Leaf . . . I am sure you do not realize what you are doing for the Cause of God!” In another letter,

written in September 1928, beginning: “My dearest and most precious Martha”, Shoghi Effendi, after mentioning how sad he is over the situation of the Faith in Russia, goes on to say: “I assure you that but for your letters I would feel unable to write more as my nerves are shaken and tired. Your sad but grateful brother.” In November he acknowledges five letters from her—which gives us some idea of how often she wrote to him—and says: “It is such a comfort and encouragement to me in my work to be constantly reminded by your beautiful letters of the all-conquering power of Bahá’u’lláh shining forth through you in all your vast and sacred endeavours . . .”, and he sends her nine ring stones “to give to those whom you feel should possess them” and £30 “so unworthy and inadequate when compared to your stupendous efforts . . .”

She turned to him at all times, unhesitatingly making requests of him which she felt were in the interests of the Faith. The Guardian was well aware of both the purity of her motives and her good judgement and almost invariably acceded to these requests, which ranged from letters of encouragement to individuals to cabled messages to figures of great prominence. “I am enclosing, according to your request, the letters you have asked me to write”, he informs her. He in turn made many requests of her, using her as an ever-willing instrument to promote the interests of the Faith, and to defend it from its enemies, encouraging her to attend, indeed sending her, sometimes, as his own representative to various international congresses and conferences whose interests and animating purposes were similar to those of the Bahá’ís. An example of this is his letter of 12 June 1929 addressed “To the Third Biennial Conference on the World Federation of Educational Associations” held in Geneva: “My dear co-workers for humanity: I am sending Miss Martha L. Root, American journalist and international Bahá’í speaker and teacher, as an international Bahá’í representative to your Congress in July. She will present to you my letter of greetings to your great Congress. With all best wishes for you in your noble undertaking, I am, your brother and co-worker, Shoghi.” Many of these were Esperanto congresses, Martha Root being an accomplished speaker in that language. Cables such as this one, sent in April 1938, were not infrequent: “Martha Root, Bombay, Convey All Faiths League expression my best wishes for success deliberations. May Divine Guidance enable assembled representatives achieve their high purpose and extend range their meritorious activities.”

In March 1936 she cabled him that the sister of Queen Marie had died; on the following day the Guardian cabled her: “. . . Assure beloved Queen deepest sympathy . . .” Both he and she were always keenly aware of the proper, the kind, the wise way of doing things. Martha was a natural, unaffected, warm and charming woman. No doubt it was this genuineness, this simplicity and nobility of nature that endeared her alike to Bahá’u’lláh’s king, the Guardian, and to the first Queen to accept the Faith. In one of her cables to Shoghi Effendi, in 1934, she says “Our Marie sends you love thanks wonderful interviews.”

On one occasion she cabled the Guardian: “. . . perhaps you will think wise send me immediately greetings President Hoover”, to which Shoghi Effendi replied by cable the following day: “Kindly convey President Hoover on behalf followers Bahá’u’lláh world over expression their fervent prayers for success his unsparing efforts in promoting cause of international brotherhood and peace—a cause for which they have steadfastly laboured well nigh a century”. Exactly one year before, during a visit to Japan in November 1930, we find a similar exchange of cables taking place; Martha’s said: “Love beautiful you cable me greetings Emperor”, to which Shoghi Effendi replied, the same day: “Kindly transmit His Imperial Majesty Emperor of Japan on behalf myself and Bahá’ís world over expression of our deepest love as well as assurance our heartfelt prayers for his well-being and prosperity his ancient realm.” Love begets love. Martha’s great love for Shoghi Effendi called forth his love and his responses the way the capacity of a diamond to reflect light captures its rays and casts them back brilliantly.

In March of 1927 Shoghi Effendi wrote to Martha: “. . . I assure you, dearest Martha that wherever you be, in Scandinavia, Central Europe, Russia, Turkey or Persia, my fervent and continued prayers will accompany you and I trust that you may be protected, strengthened and guided to fulfil your unique and unprecedented mission as the exemplary advocate of the Bahá’í Faith.”

Although it was never possible for Martha to go to Russia, she did go to Persia for the visit the Guardian so much desired. On 22 January 1930 Shoghi Effendi cabled her: “May Beloved sustain you throughout triumphal progress Persia.” In the beginning of April, when she had reached India, we find Shoghi Effendi writing to her, in acknowledgement of no less than twelve letters: “You fully deserved all the honour, the love and the hospitality which the Persian friends have so remarkably shown towards you. I have been so busy after my long and severe illness, that I have felt unable to answer promptly your letters, you have, however, been always in my thoughts, particularly during those hours when I visit the Holy Shrines and place my head on the sacred threshold.” The years rolled by and Martha Root continued, white-haired, frail and indomitable, her ceaseless journeys, until she was stricken by “a deadly and painful disease”, as Shoghi Effendi wrote, and in Honolulu on 28 September 1939 she passed away. She had been on fire with pain during the last weeks of a tour of the Antipodes and, on her way back to America, to assist in the prosecution of the first Seven Year Plan, she literally dropped in her tracks, yielding up a life the Guardian said might well be regarded as the fairest fruit the Formative Age of the Dispensation of Bahá’u’lláh had yet produced.

I well remember the day the cable conveying the news of her death reached Shoghi Effendi. He himself was very ill with sand fly fever, had a high temperature (1040 Fahrenheit) and, alas, should never have had to receive such news in such a condition! But there was no way we could withhold it from him. He was the Guardian, it was Martha Root who had died. Against the strong remonstrances of his mother, his brother and myself, he pulled himself up to a sitting position in his bed, white, terribly weak, and very shaken by this sudden news, and dictated a cable to America announcing her death. He said what else could he do—the whole Bahá’í world was waiting to hear what he would say. In that long message he said, amongst other things: “Martha’s unnumbered admirers throughout Bahá’í world lament with me earthly extinction her heroic life . . . Posterity will establish her as foremost Hand . . . first Bahá’í Century . . . first finest fruit Formative Age Faith . . .” He said he was impelled to share the expenses of building her grave with the American National Assembly, the grave of one whose “acts shed imperishable lustre American Bahá’í Community.” It was the last money spent in that unique partnership that had lasted eighteen years. To the friend in whose home she had passed away he cabled: “. . . rejoice her assumption seat Supreme Concourse . . .”

But in reality Shoghi Effendi had long since paid his finest tribute to the “incomparable” Martha Root, the “leading ambassadress of Bahá’u’lláh’s Faith”, as he had called her, in a general letter to the Bahá’ís of the West, written in 1929: “And in conclusion, I wish, in a few words, to pay a tribute, however inadequate, to the magnificent services rendered by the exemplary and indefatigable teacher of the Cause, our dearly-beloved sister, Miss Martha Root. Her international travels on behalf of the Bahá’í Faith, so wide in their range, so extensive in their duration, so inspiring in their results, will adorn and enrich the annals of God’s immortal Faith. Her earliest journeys to the southernmost limits of the American continent, to India and to South Africa, to the eastern confines of Asia, to the islands of the Southern Seas and the Scandinavian countries of the North; her more recent contact with the rulers and crowned heads of Europe and the impression which her undaunted spirit created in royal circles in the Balkan Countries; her close affiliation with international organizations, peace societies, humanitarian movements and Esperanto circles; and her latest victories in the university circles in Germany—all constitute a compelling evidence of what the power of Bahá’u’lláh can achieve. These historic labours, pursued single-handed and in circumstances of financial stringency and ill-health, have been

characterized throughout by a spirit of fidelity, of self-effacement, of thoroughness and vigour that none has excelled.” She had been the “nearest approach to the example set by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá Himself to His disciples in the course of His journeys throughout the West”.

Martha Root was firmly convinced that in her possession was the most priceless gem the world had ever seen—the Message of Bahá’u’lláh. She believed that in showing this gem and offering it to anyone, king or peasant, she was conferring the greatest bounty upon him he could ever receive. It was this proud conviction that enabled her, a woman of no wealth or social prestige, plain, dowdily dressed and neither a great scholar nor an outstanding intellectual, to meet more kings, queens, princes and princesses, presidents and men of distinction, fame and prominence and tell them about the Bahá’í Faith than any other Bahá’í in the history of this Cause has ever done. As this story is concerned with the Guardian of the Faith and his life and not with others, it is impossible to go into the details, amply provided elsewhere in Bahá’í writings, of Martha Root’s many interviews and the reactions of these prominent people to the Message she brought them. Our primary concern must be with the relationship of Queen Marie to Shoghi Effendi.

Martha Root reported to Shoghi Effendi the account of the first of her eight interviews with Queen Marie of Rumania, which took place on 30 January 1926 in Controceni Palace in Bucharest, at the request of the Queen herself, after she had received Dr Esslemont’s book, *Bahá’u’lláh and the New Era*, sent to her by Martha. The Queen had evidently been attracted to the Teachings and when it was bruited about that she might visit North America Shoghi Effendi wrote to the American National Spiritual Assembly the following instructions, conveyed in the writing of his secretary, on 21 August 1926: “We read in *The Times* that Queen Marie of Rumania is coming to America. She seems to have obtained a great interest in the Cause. So we must be on our guard lest we do an act which may prejudice her and set her back. Shoghi Effendi desires, that in case she takes this trip, the friends will behave with great reserve and wisdom, and that no initiative be taken on the part of the friends except after consulting the National Assembly.”

It was during this visit that Her Majesty, her heart deeply stirred by the teachings of the Faith which she had been studying, testified, “in a language of exquisite beauty”, as Shoghi Effendi put it, “to the power and sublimity of the Message of Bahá’u’lláh, in open letters widely circulated in newspapers of both the United States and Canada”. As a result of the first of these letters Shoghi Effendi was “moved by an irresistible impulse” to write to the Queen of the “joyous admiration and gratitude” of himself and the Bahá’ís of both the East and the West for her noble tribute to the Faith. On 27 August 1926 the Queen responded to this first communication from the Guardian and wrote to him what he described as a “deeply touching letter”:

Bran August 27th 1926

Dear Sir,

I was deeply moved on reception of your letter.

Indeed a great light came to me with the message of Bahá’u’lláh and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. It came as all great messages come at an hour of dire grief and inner conflict and distress, so the seed sank deeply.

My youngest daughter finds also great strength and comfort in the teachings of the beloved masters.

We pass on the message from mouth to mouth and all those we give it to see a light suddenly lighting before them and much that was obscure and perplexing becomes simple, luminous and full of hope as never before.

That my open letter was balm to those suffering for the cause, is indeed a great happiness to me, and I take it as a sign that God accepted my humble tribute.

The occasion given me to be able to express myself publically, was also His Work, for indeed it was a chain of circumstances of which each link led me unwittingly one step further, till suddenly all was clear before my eyes and I understood why it had been.

Thus does He lead us finally to our ultimate destiny.

Some of those of my caste wonder at and disapprove my courage to step forward pronouncing words not habitual for Crowned Heads to pronounce, but I advance by an inner urge I cannot resist.

With bowed head I recognize that I too am but an instrument in greater hands and rejoice in the knowledge.

Little by little the veil is lifting, grief tore it in two. And grief was also a step leading me ever nearer truth, therefore do I not cry out against grief!

May you and those beneath your guidance be blessed and upheld by the sacred strength of those gone before you.

Marie

Among the things Queen Marie, who was not only a famous beauty but an authoress and a woman of character and independence wrote, in her “open letters” published during 1926, on 4 May and 28 September in the *Toronto Daily Star* and 27 September in the *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, were words such as these: “A woman brought me the other day a Book. I spell it with a capital letter because it is a glorious Book of love and goodness, strength and beauty . . . I commend it to you all. If ever the name of Bahá’u’lláh or ‘Abdu’l-Bahá comes to your attention, do not put their writings from you. Search out their Books, and let their glorious, peace-bringing, love-creating words and lessons sink into your hearts as they have into mine. One’s busy day may seem too full for religion. Or one may have a religion that satisfies. But the teachings of these gentle, wise and kindly men are compatible with all religion, and with no religion. Seek them, and be the happier.” “At first we all conceive of God as something or somebody apart from ourselves . . . This is not so. We cannot, with our earthly faculties entirely grasp His meaning—no more than we can really understand the meaning of Eternity . . . God is all, Everything. He is the power behind all beginnings. He is the inexhaustible source of supply, of love, of good, of progress, of achievement. God is therefore Happiness. His is the voice within us that shows us good and evil. But mostly we ignore or misunderstand this voice. Therefore did He choose His Elect to come down amongst us upon earth to make clear His Word, His real meaning. Therefore the Prophets; therefore Christ, Muhammad, Bahá’u’lláh, for man needs from time to time a voice upon earth to bring God to him, to sharpen the realization of the existence of the true God. Those voices sent to us had to become flesh, so that with our earthly ears we should be able to hear and understand.”

Shoghi Effendi wrote to Martha Root on 29 May, after he had just received from Canada a copy of the first of the Queen’s “open letters”, that this was “a well deserved and memorable testimony of your remarkable and

exemplary endeavours for the spread of our beloved Cause. It has thrilled me and greatly reinforced my spirit and strength, yours is a memorable triumph, hardly surpassed in its significance in the annals of the Cause.” In that same letter he asks her to ponder the advisability of approaching Her Majesty with the news of the Jahrum martyrdoms and possibly enlisting her sympathy in the cause of the Persian persecutions. That this consideration influenced the Queen in making her further courageous statements on the Faith there can be no doubt, as her letter to Shoghi Effendi indicates that this was the case. The news of this victory had reached Shoghi Effendi on the eve of the commemoration of the passing of Bahá’u’lláh in Bahjí, at a time when, as he described it in one of his general letters, “. . . His sorrowing servants, had gathered round His beloved Shrine supplicating relief and deliverance for the down-trodden in Persia” and Shoghi Effendi goes on to say: “With bowed heads and grateful hearts we recognize in this glowing tribute which Royalty has thus paid to the Cause of Bahá’u’lláh an epoch-making pronouncement destined to herald those stirring events which, as ‘Abdu’l-Bahá has prophesied, shall in the fullness of time signalize the triumph of God’s Holy Faith.”

This marked the inception of a relationship not only with the Queen, but with other crowned heads and royalty in Europe on the part of Martha Root, and in a few instances of Shoghi Effendi himself. He not only greatly encouraged and guided her in these relationships but, always staying within the bounds of dignity and good breeding, always sincere in the human relationship, he nevertheless used these contacts to serve the interests of the Cause through heightening its prestige in the eyes of the public and through seeing that they were pointedly brought to the attention of the enemies of the Faith.

Until the time of the Queen’s death, in 1938, Martha Root kept in close touch with her, keeping her informed of Bahá’í activities and receiving from her letters, written in her own hand, that were both friendly and reflected her attachment to the Teachings of Bahá’u’lláh. There was also an exchange of letters and cables between Shoghi Effendi and the Queen; but more often he sent her messages through Martha, which was a more intimate way of contacting her and less demanding of the high position both he and the Queen occupied in their respective spheres. There was another factor that could not be lightly put aside and this was the constant pressure on the Queen, who occupied such an exalted rank in her nation—a nation so storm-tossed politically during her own reign and during her period as Dowager Queen, from both ecclesiastical and political factions—to keep silent about a religion which was not then widely known as it is today, which was viewed by the ignorant as Islamic in nature, and her open sponsorship of which they not only heartily disapproved but considered impolitic in the highest degree.

The Queen herself mentions, in her very first letter to the Guardian, that “Some of those of my caste wonder at and disapprove my courage to step forward pronouncing words not habitual to Crowned Head to pronounce . . .” It required outstanding courage and deep sincerity for her to repeatedly write testimonials of her personal feelings on the subject of the Bahá’í Faith and grant permission for these to be made public—indeed Her Majesty wrote some of these deliberately for publication in *The Bahá’í World*. On 1 January 1934 she wrote to Martha, enclosing one of her precious tributes and giving personal news of herself and her family: “Will this do for Vol. V? The difficulty is to not repeat myself . . .”

In 1927, on 25 October, Shoghi Effendi wrote to Martha: “I am in receipt of your most welcome letters . . . and I am thrilled by the news they contained, particularly your remarkable and historic interview with the Queen and princess. I am sending you a number of Bahá’í stones . . . to be presented by you on my behalf to the Queen, the princess and any other member of the Royal Family whom you think would appreciate and prize them . . . Please assure the Queen and princess of our great love for them, of our prayers for their happiness and success and of our warm and cordial invitation to visit the Holy Land and be received in the Beloved’s home.”

Behind this interview with the Queen, which Shoghi Effendi refers to in the above letter, undoubtedly lay his own influence and the confirmations which flowed from his instruction to Martha in a letter written on 29 June of that same year in which he said: "I hope you will succeed in meeting not only the Rumanian Queen but her daughter the Queen of Serbia and King Boris of Bulgaria as well, and I trust you will not hesitate to send me all particulars and details regarding your work in such an important field." That the Queen of Rumania received the gift of the ringstones and the invitation of the Guardian to visit Haifa is evidenced in her cable to him, sent from Sinaia Palace on 27 July 1927:[3]

Shoghi Effendi Haifa

Grateful thanks you and all yours with whom I feel spiritually so closely in touch.

Marie

Martha Root succeeded also in following the other instruction of Shoghi Effendi, for in May 1928 he writes to her: ". . . Your marvellous and historic interviews with members of the Rumanian and Serbian Royal Families have inspired and thrilled us all . . ."

Earlier, in April, Queen Marie and her daughter Ileana were on a visit to Cyprus and the Guardian says, in his letter to Martha Root, that the papers have published the news that the Queen intended to visit Haifa and he wonders "whether they had in mind such a visit and whether these premature disclosures deterred them from accomplishing their intended pilgrimage . . ." During the Queen's visit to Cyprus the Guardian cabled Sir Ronald Storrs, the Governor of Cyprus, with whom the royal party was staying, the following message: "Kindly convey to Her Majesty Queen of Rumania and Her Royal Highness Princess Ileana on behalf 'Abdu'l-Bahá's family and friends our heartfelt appreciation of the noble tribute paid by them both to the ideals that animate the Bahá'í Faith. Pray assure them of our best wishes and profound gratitude." Sir Ronald transmitted the appreciative reply of the Queen and Princess to Shoghi Effendi.

The following draft, in the Guardian's own hand, of a long letter he wrote to the Queen is of historic interest:

Haifa, Palestine,
December 3, 1929

Her Majesty
The Dowager Queen Marie of Rumania
Bucarest
Your Majesty

I have just received through the intermediary of my dear Bahá'í sister Miss Martha Root, the autograph portrait of Your Majesty, bearing in simple and moving terms, the message which Your Majesty has graciously been pleased to write in person. I shall treasure this most excellent portrait, and I assure you, that the Greatest Holy Leaf and the Family of 'Abdu'l-Bahá share to the full my feelings of lively satisfaction at receiving so strikingly beautiful a photograph of a Queen whom we have learned to love and admire.

I have followed during the past few years with profound sympathy the disturbed course of various happenings in your beloved country, which I feel must have caused you much pain and concern. But

whatever the vicissitudes and perplexities which beset Your Majesty's earthly path, I am certain that even in your saddest hours, you have derived abundant sustenance and joy from the thought of having, through your glowing and historic utterances on the Bahá'í Faith as well as by your subsequent evidences of gracious solicitude for its welfare, brought abiding solace and strength to the multitude of its faithful and long suffering adherents throughout the East. Yours surely, dearly beloved Queen, is the station ordained by Bahá'u'lláh in the realms beyond to which the strivings of no earthly power can ever hope to attain.

I have immediately upon the publication of the second volume of the Bahá'í World, by the American Bahá'í Publishing Committee, forwarded directly to Bucarest, to the address of Your Majesty and that of Her Royal Highness Princess Ileana, copies of this most recent and comprehensive of Bahá'í publications. I will take the liberty of presenting in the course of the coming year the III Volume of this same publication which I trust will prove of interest to Your Majesty.

May I, in closing, reiterate the expression of profound appreciation and joy which the Family of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Bahá'ís in every land universally feel for the powerful impetus which Your Majesty's outspoken and noble words have lent to the onward march of their beloved Faith.

The Family also join me in extending to Your Majesty, as well as to Her Royal Highness Princess Ileana, a most cordial welcome should Your Majesty ever purpose to visit the Holy Land to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's home in Haifa as well as to those scenes rendered so hallowed and memorable by the heroic lives and deeds of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

Shoghi

In 1930 her Majesty visited Egypt with her daughter Ileana. Shoghi Effendi, having had the unfortunate experience of indiscreet publicity during her visit to Cyprus, wired Alexandria on 19 February: "Advise Assembly in case Queen visits Egypt convey only written expression of welcome and appreciation on behalf Bahá'ís. Letter should be briefly carefully worded. No objection sending flowers. Individual communications should be strictly avoided. Inform Cairo."

In the hope that at last the Queen would be able to visit the Bahá'í Holy Places in Palestine the Guardian had had Bahá'u'lláh's Tablet to her grandmother, Queen Victoria, copied in fine Persian calligraphy, and illuminated in Tehran. On 21 February he cabled Tehran: "Illuminated Tablet Queen Victoria should reach Haifa not later than March tenth on one or several pages." This was to be his gift to Her Majesty. Hearing no news of the Queen's plans once she had reached Egypt he wired to her direct on 8 March: "Her Majesty, the Dowager Queen Marie of Rumania, aboard Mayflower, Aswan. Family of 'Abdu'l-Bahá join me in renewing the expression of our loving and heartfelt invitation to your gracious Majesty and Her Royal Highness Princess Ileana to visit His home in Haifa. Your Majesty's acceptance to visit Bahá'u'lláh's Shrine and prison-city of 'Akká will apart from its historic significance be a source of immeasurable strength joy and hope to the silent sufferers of the Faith throughout the East. Our fondest love, prayers and best wishes for Your Majesty's happiness and welfare."

Receiving no reply to this communication Shoghi Effendi sent another wire on 26 March to the Queen at the Hotel Semiramis in Cairo: "Fearing my former letter and telegram in which Family of 'Abdu'l-Bahá joined me in extending invitation to Your Majesty and Her Royal Highness Princess Ileana may have miscarried, we are pleased to express anew the pleasure it would give us all should Your Majesty find it feasible to visit Bahá'u'lláh's and 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Shrines and the prison-city of 'Akká. Deeply regret unauthorized publicity

given by the Press.” Two days later the Rumanian Minister in Cairo wired Shoghi Effendi: “Her Majesty regrets that not passing through Palestine she will not be able to visit you.”

The reaction this situation produced on the Guardian is recorded by him in a letter he wrote to Martha Root on 2 April 1930 in which he says: “I am now writing to you quite confidentially regarding the projected visit of the Queen to Haifa. Unfortunately it did not materialize. The reason, I absolutely ignore.” He goes on to say that in spite of his written invitation to her, and his two telegrams sent to her in Egypt (which he quotes in full) all he received was the wire from the Rumanian Minister (which he also quotes). It seems that the unauthorized publicity mentioned by Shoghi Effendi in his telegram to the Queen had been wide-spread, appearing in Palestine, England and America. He informs Martha that: “Reporters who called on me representing the United Press of America telegraphed to their newspapers just the opposite I told them. They perverted the truth. I wish we could make sure that she would at least know the real situation! But how can we ensure that our letters to Her Majesty will henceforth reach her. I feel that you should write to her, explain the whole situation, assure her of my great disappointment.” He requests her to regard all this as strictly confidential and says: “I cherish the hope that these unfortunate developments will serve only to intensify the faith and love of the Queen and will reinforce her determination to arise and spread the Cause.” Obviously the Guardian was very distressed over this unhappy event, but he comforts Martha: “Be not sad or distressed, dearest Martha. The seeds you have so lovingly, so devotedly and so assiduously sown will germinate . . .”

The cancellation of the visit of the Queen and her daughter to the Bahá’í Holy Places, which she had definitely set her heart upon, was a source of deep disappointment not only to the Guardian but also to the Queen herself. Behind the scenes there must have taken place a real struggle between the courageous and independent Queen and her advisers for, after a long silence, she wrote to Martha Root, in her own hand, describing at least a little of what had taken place. In a letter dated 28 June 1931 she stated: “Both Ileana and I were cruelly disappointed at having been prevented going to the holy shrines and of meeting Shoghi Effendi, but at that time were going through a cruel crisis and every movement I made was being turned against me and being politically exploited in an unkind way. It caused me a good deal of suffering and curtailed my liberty most unkindly. There are periods however when one must submit to persecution, nevertheless, however high-hearted one may be, it ever again fills one with pained astonishment when people are mean and spiteful. I had my child to defend at that time; she was going through a bitter experience and so I could not stand up and defie the world. But the beauty of truth remains and I cling to it through all the vicissitudes of a life become rather sad . . . I am glad to hear that your traveling has been so fruitful and I wish you continual success knowing what a beautiful message you are carrying from land to land.” This letter ends with a sentence, after Her Majesty’s signature, that was perhaps more significant of her attitude and character than anything else: “I enclose a few words which may be used in your Year Book.” On receipt of this letter Martha immediately cabled Shoghi Effendi the gist of its contents and he cabled back he was delighted and to send him the letter.

I remember Shoghi Effendi a number of times describing to me how the Greatest Holy Leaf had waited, hour after hour, in the Master’s home to receive the Queen and her daughter—for Her Majesty had actually sailed for Haifa, and this news encouraged Shoghi Effendi to believe she was going to carry out the pilgrimage she had planned; time passed and no news came, even after the boat had docked. Later the Guardian learned that the Queen and her party had been met at the boat, informed her visit was impolitic and not permissible, been put in a car and whisked out of Palestine to another Middle Eastern country. It is no wonder she wrote to Martha that people had been “mean and spiteful”.

The loyalty of this “royal convert”, as Shoghi Effendi styled her, in the face of her increasing isolation, advanced age and the political trends in Europe which were gradually to engulf so many of her royal kin, deeply touched Shoghi Effendi. In 1934, on 23 January, he wrote to her again:

Your Majesty,

I am deeply touched by the splendid appreciation Your Majesty has graciously penned for the Bahá'í World, and wish to offer my heartfelt and abiding gratitude for this striking evidence of Your Majesty's sustained interest in the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh.

I was moved to undertake its translation in person, and feel certain that the unnumbered followers of the Faith in both the East and the West will feel greatly stimulated in their unceasing labours for the eventual establishment of the Most Great Peace foretold by Bahá'u'lláh.

I am presenting to Your Majesty, through the care of Miss Martha Root, a precious manuscript in the handwriting of Bahá'u'lláh, illumined by a devoted follower of His Faith in Tihiran.

May it serve as a token of my admiration for the spirit that has prompted Your Majesty to voice such noble sentiments for a struggling and persecuted Faith.

With the assurance of my prayers at the threshold of Bahá'u'lláh for Your Majesty's welfare and happiness,

I am yours very sincerely,

Shoghi

After sending the Queen a copy of his recently translated *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, and receiving from her a letter conveying her “most grateful thanks”, which she ends by saying “May the Great Father, be with us in spirit, helping us to live and act as we should”, Shoghi Effendi wrote to her as follows:

Haifa, Feb. 18, 1936

Your Majesty,

Miss Root has transmitted to me the original copy of the appreciation penned by Your Majesty for the forthcoming issue of Bahá'í World. I am deeply touched, and feel truly grateful for this further evidence of Your Majesty's sustained interest in and admiration for the Bahá'í Teachings.

Bahá'í Communities the world over will ever recall, with feelings of pride and gratitude, these beautiful, impressive and historic testimonies from the pen of Your Majesty—testimonies that will no doubt greatly inspire and hearten them in their continued labours for the spread of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh.

I am so pleased and encouraged to learn that Your Majesty has derived much benefit from the reading of the *Gleanings* and I feel that my efforts in translating these extracts are fully rewarded.

I am presenting to Your Majesty through the kindness of Mrs. McNeill the latest photograph recently received from America showing the progress in the construction of the Bahá'í House of Worship in

Wilmette.

May the Spirit of Bahá'u'lláh ever bless and sustain Your Majesty in the noble support you are extending to His Cause.

With deepest affection and gratitude,

Shoghi

The Mrs McNeill mentioned in this letter lived near Akka in the Mansion at Mazra'ih once occupied by Bahá'u'lláh. She had known the Queen as a child in Malta and when she learned through the Guardian of the Queen's interest in the Faith she informed her of her own interest and the associations of the house she lived in. The Queen had written to her: "It was indeed nice to hear from you, and to think that you are of all things living near Haifa and are, as I am, a follower of the Bahá'í teachings . . . the house you live in . . . made precious by its associations with the Man we all venerate . . ."

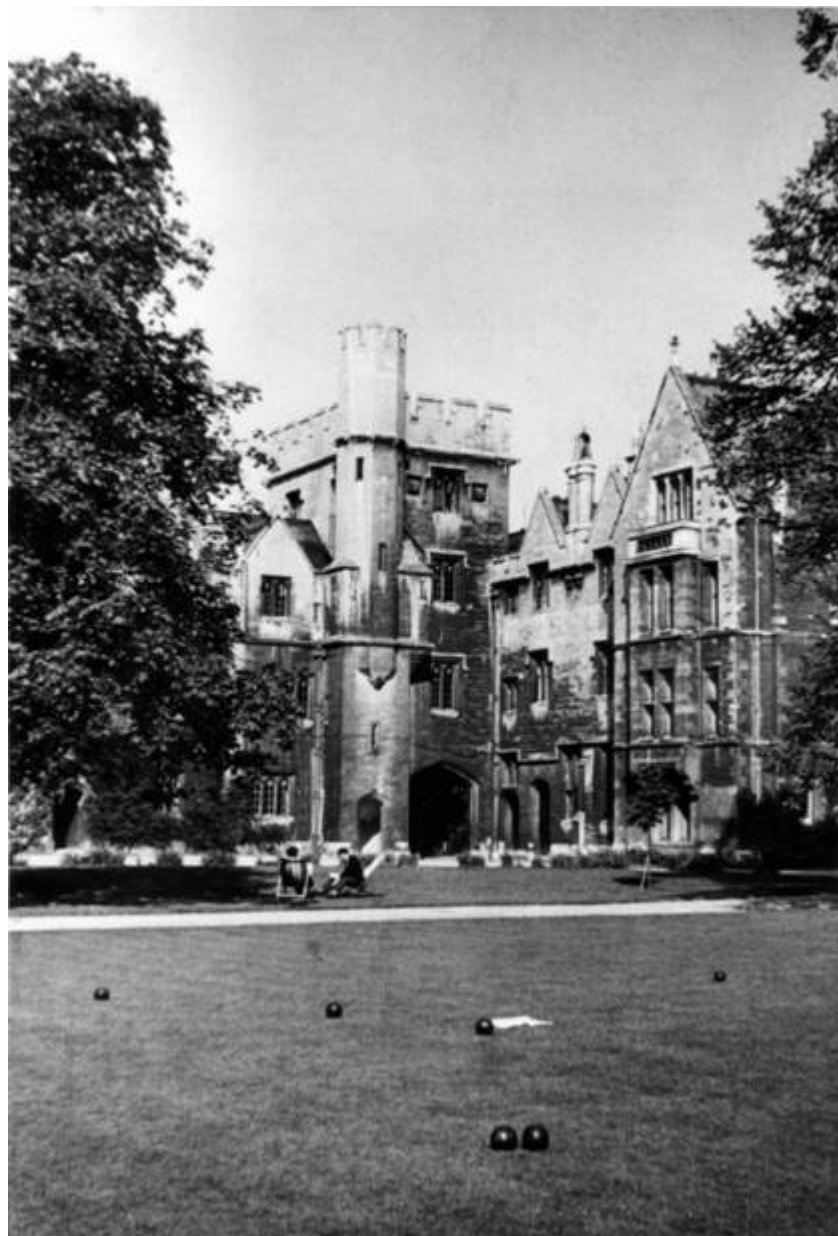
Her Majesty's last published tribute to the Faith, in 1936, two years before she died, seemed to aptly describe what Bahá'u'lláh's Message had meant to her: "To those searching for light, the Bahá'í teachings offer a star which will lead them to deeper understanding, to assurance, peace and good will with all men." She had won for herself, Shoghi Effendi, wrote, "imperishable renown . . . in the Kingdom of Bahá'u'lláh" through her "bold and epochal confession of faith in the Fatherhood of Bahá'u'lláh" "this illustrious Queen may well deserve to rank as the first of those royal supporters of the Cause of God who are to arise in the future, and each of whom, in the words of Bahá'u'lláh Himself, is to be acclaimed as *'the very eye of mankind, the luminous ornament on the brow of creation, the fountainhead of blessings unto the whole world.'*"

One sees from all this, which began early in 1926, that the severe crises which followed upon the inception of Shoghi Effendi's Guardianship, released, as ever, the spiritual forces inherent in the Faith and brought about such victories as the conversion of the first Bahá'í Queen.

THE PRINCIPLE OF LIGHT AND SHADOW

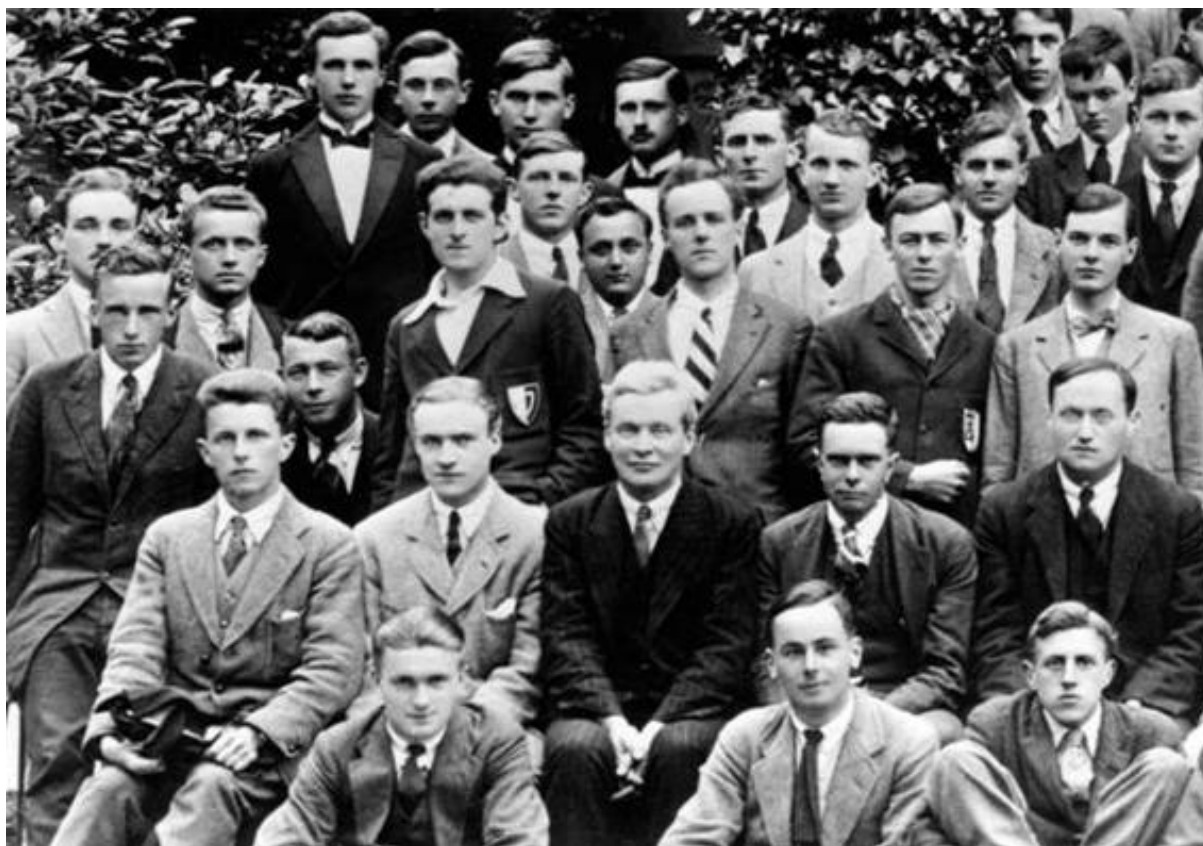
No proper picture of Shoghi Effendi's life can be obtained without reference to the subject of Covenant-breaking. The principle of light and shadow, setting each other off, the one intensifying the other, is seen in nature and in history; the sun casts shadows; at the base of the lamp lies shadow; the brighter the light the darker the shadow; the evil in men calls to mind the good, and the greatness of the good underlines the evil. The entire life of the Guardian was plagued and blighted by the ambition, the folly, the jealousy and hatred of individuals who rose up against the Cause and against him as Head of the Cause and who thought they could either subvert the Faith entirely or discredit its Guardian and set themselves up as leaders of a rival faction and win the body of believers over to their own interpretation of the Teachings and the way in which they believed the Cause of God should be run. No one ever succeeded in doing these things, but a series of disaffected individuals never ceased to try. The ringleaders misled the fools, the excommunicated tried to pervert the faithful.

To the seizure of the keys of Bahá'u'lláh's Shrine by those who broke the Covenant during the ministry of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, there followed in the course of the earliest years of Shoghi Effendi's ministry the defection in Egypt of Faeg, the founder of a "Scientific Society" which he now sought to bring forward as a rival to the Administration of which Shoghi Effendi was the head. Shoghi Effendi, particularly after reading the denunciation of the old Covenant-breakers in the Will of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, was prepared for their attacks, but the sudden stirring up of so much mischief and opposition in so unexpected a quarter left him shocked and greatly disturbed. I shall never forget how he looked when he called my mother and me to his bedroom, in 1923; we stood at the foot of his bed, where he lay, obviously prostrated and heart-broken, with great black shadows under his eyes, and he told us he could not stand it, he was going away. It must have been terribly difficult for so young a man to find himself the centre of so many attacks and to realize it devolved upon him to exercise his right and perform his duty of excommunication in order to protect the Faith and keep the flock safe from the wolves prowling around it.



BALLIOL COLLEGE, OXFORD UNIVERSITY

Showing buildings much frequented by Shoghi Effendi as a student



BALLIOL COLLEGE, JUNIOR COMMON ROOM, 1920, OXFORD

Shoghi Effendi, standing centre, amidst some of his classmates. (Detail from a larger photograph)



SHOGHI EFFENDI WITH DR. J. E. ESSELMONT

Taken at Dr. Esslemont's sanatorium in Bournemouth, England,
during a visit of Shoghi Effendi; they were devoted friends



A GATHERING IN MANCHESTER, ENGLAND

Shoghi Effendi (second row, third from left) often visited the Manchester Bahá'ís while studying at Oxford



THE FUTURE HEAD OF THE FAITH

Though still a student the qualities of leadership are stamped upon Shoghi Effendi



THE INHERITOR OF
THE BURDENS OF 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ
Shoghi Effendi aged 22 years



SHOGHI EFFENDI IN THE EARLY 1920'S



THE FIRST FLIGHT?

Shoghi Effendi was a great believer in travel by air, even as early as 1920-1921

Covenant-breaking always made Shoghi Effendi ill; it was as if he were the Cause, in some mysterious way, and any attack on its body affected him who was its heart. In 1930, the attacks of a thoroughly foolish American believer, who claimed the Will of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was a forgery, were at their height. Shoghi Effendi wrote to Tudor Pole that: “the most powerful and determined opponents of the Faith in the East, who have challenged the very basis of Bahá’u’lláh’s Message, . . . have not even hinted at the possibility of the Will being a forged document. They have vehemently attacked its provisions, but never questioned its authenticity. I feel that the greater the publicity given this vital issue, even if it should involve any government, the better for the Cause . . .” He went on to say that: “I feel pity rather than alarm at the efforts Mrs. White is exerting . . . so great and weighty an issue which she raises, involving as it does the honour of the Cause, is bound sooner or later to be verified . . . I am convinced that the stir she may create will be not detrimental but advantageous to the Faith.” He also stated “that the Will is authentic is beyond the faintest shadow of doubt.” Mrs White’s prolonged and strenuous efforts which covered a field sufficiently wide to include the United States Postmaster General, to whom she wrote asking him to prohibit the American National Assembly from using the United States mails “to spread the falsehood that Shoghi Effendi is the successor of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and Guardian of the Bahá’í Cause”, and the civil authorities in Palestine, whom she requested to take legal action to declare the Will a forgery—and who curtly refused her request—produced yet another period of needless anxiety for Shoghi Effendi and necessitated increased vigilance and increased effort on his part at a time when he was already overburdened and “immersed in my endless work”. All Mrs White ever achieved was to stir up a temporary and insignificant cloud of dust. At the time when her agitation was at its height the British National Assembly wrote to the German Bahá’í communities, through their National Assembly, assuring them that the British Bahá’ís were loyally behind the administration of the Guardian. However, Herrigel, one of the founders of the German Community, turned against the Faith as administered by the Guardian and left it.

An interesting aftermath of this whole affair was that Mrs White’s husband, in 1941, cabled Shoghi Effendi he was “profoundly sorrowing and repentant pleading forgiveness . . .” It seemed he had never really agreed with her. Shoghi Effendi wrote to him, opening the door for his return, but even at this late date it proved impossible for him to disentangle himself from his redoubtable and unrepentant wife, so that his change of heart could not produce a change of status.

Already Avarih, the well-known Persian teacher, whom Shoghi Effendi had sent to Europe after the Master’s passing to strengthen the faith of the believers, and whom he was later forced to call a “shameless apostate”, had left the Cause and begun writing books (and continued for years to write books) against it, attacking not only the Guardian but in the end the Master and Bahá’u’lláh Himself in the foulest terms. It is significant that his wife, unlike Mr White, entirely severed herself from him and remained a devoted and much-praised Bahá’í because of her courageous act of faith.

Ahmad Sohrab, who had been closely associated with the Master, had acted as His secretary, and had had the privilege of being with Him during His visit to centres in the United States and Canada, puffed up with self-importance and ambition, founded the “New History Society” and progressively became alienated from his fellow Bahá’ís through his own acts, not the least of which was his habit of quoting in public lectures from the words of Bahá’u’lláh and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as if they were his own. A book could easily be written on the course of this one man’s defection, quoting the innumerable cables and letters of the Guardian in his efforts at first to save

him from his own acts and later to expose him and protect the American Bahá'ís from his distortions of the truth, his open lies and his efforts to undermine the Administrative Order established by the Master in His Will. Again, it is of interest to note that his Bahá'í wife and daughter completely severed all relations with him, indeed so humiliated and disgusted were they by his conduct that they changed their surname.

Of such crises as these which arose in the course of time, Shoghi Effendi wrote: "We should also view as a blessing in disguise every storm of mischief with which they who apostatize their faith or claim to be its faithful exponents assail it from time to time. Instead of undermining the Faith, such assaults, both from within and from without, reinforce its foundations, and excite the intensity of its flame. Designed to becloud its radiance, they proclaim to all the world the exalted character of its precepts, the completeness of its unity, the uniqueness of its position, and the pervasiveness of its influence."

But the tale of defections such as these does not convey the true picture of what Covenant-breaking signified in the ministry of Shoghi Effendi. To understand that one must understand the old story of Cain and Abel, the story of family jealousies which, like a sombre thread in the fabric of history, runs through all its epochs and can be traced in all its events. Ever since the opposition of the younger brother of Bahá'u'lláh, Mírzá Yahyá, the poison of Covenant-breaking, which is opposition to the Centre of the Covenant, entered the Faith and remained. It is difficult for those who have neither experienced what this disease is, nor devoted any consideration to the subject, to grasp the reality of the power for destruction it possesses. All the members of the family of Bahá'u'lláh grew up in the shadow of Covenant-breaking. The storms, separations, reconciliations, final sundering of ties, which are involved when a close, distinguished and often dear relative is dying spiritually of a spiritual disease, are inconceivable to one who has not experienced them. The weakness of the human heart, which so often attaches itself to an unworthy object, the weakness of the human mind, prone to conceit and self-assurance in personal opinions, involve people in a welter of emotions that blind their judgement and lead them far astray. In the East, where the sense of family to this day is still strongly clannish, its members cling to each other much more intensely than in the West. No matter what Yahyá had done there was a lingering feeling in the family that, after all, some reason must be on his side, not all justification in a family matter was necessarily on Bahá'u'lláh's side. One can readily see that if even the faintest trace of such an attitude existed amongst members of Bahá'u'lláh's own family the children would not grow up to see Covenant-breaking in its true proportions. The flaw would be there, the most dangerous of all human doubts, that after all the Perfect One might not under all circumstances be perfect, but sometimes just a little prone to error in judging others. When this doubt enters, the germs are present in one's own system, perhaps to lie dormant forever, perhaps to flare up into disease. It has always seemed to me that the division which took place in Bahá'u'lláh's family after His ascension, and the successive disaffections two generations later of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's entire family from Shoghi Effendi, had begun in an attitude of mind that developed in the Baghdad days before Bahá'u'lláh had even declared His Mission. The root was back there, the poisonous fruit garnered eighty years later.

Faith and obedience are the most important factors in one's relation to God, to His Manifestation, to the Head of the Faith. One must believe even if one does not see, and even if one does not believe one must obey. The Covenant-breaking inside the family of Bahá'u'lláh was like a vine, it entwined the tree and strangled it; wherever its tendrils reached out it plucked up what it wound itself about and destroyed that too. This is why so many of the minor relatives, the secretaries, the members of the community surrounding the Centre of the Cause, became involved in the periodic disaffections of various members of the family, and every time one of these diseased members was lopped off, some blinded sympathizers went too.

It looks simple on paper. But when year after year a house is torn by heart-breaking emotions, shaken by scenes that leave one's brain numb, one's nerves decimated and one's feelings in a turmoil, it is not simple, it is just plain hell. Before a patient lies on the operating table and the offending part is removed there is a long process of delay, of therapeutic effort to remedy the disease, of hope for recovery. So it is with Covenant-breaking; the taint is detected; warning, remonstrance, advice follow; it seems better; it breaks out again, worse than before; convulsive situations arise—repentance, forgiveness follow—and then all over again, the same thing, worse than before, recommences. With infinite variations this is what took place in the lifetimes of Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi.

It is all history now and there is no use recapitulating it case by case. But I believe one thing should be made clear. Whereas we ordinary human beings react in one way, these extraordinary human beings react in an entirely different way. They are, in such matters—however great the difference in their own stations—entirely different from us. I used to wonder, in the early years of my life with the Guardian, why he got so terribly upset by these happenings, why he reacted so violently to them, why he would be prostrated from evidences of Covenant-breaking. Gradually I came to understand that such beings, so different from us, have some sort of mysterious built-in scales in their very souls; automatically they register the spiritual state of others, just as one side of a scale goes down instantly if you put something in it because of the imbalance this creates. We individual Bahá'ís are like the fish in the sea of the Cause, but these beings are like the sea itself, any alien element in the sea of the Cause, so to speak, with which, because of their nature, they are wholly identified, produces an automatic reaction on their part; the sea casts out its dead.

Shoghi Effendi, forced often to announce publicly the spiritual downfall of not only well-known Bahá'ís but the members of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's own family, refers to the latter as “those whose acts proclaim their severance from the Holy Tree and their forfeiture of their sacred birthright.” His heart, he said, was oppressed by the “repeated defections” of the “unworthy kindred” of the beloved Master, defections which, he made clear, were a “process of purification whereby an inscrutable Wisdom chose from time to time to purge the body of His chosen followers of the defilement of the undesirable and the unworthy . . .” Shoghi Effendi pointed out that those who are inimical to the Faith always seize upon evidences of this purification process as a symptom of oncoming schism which they hopefully anticipate will bring about its downfall. But which never has.

Even though this phenomenon of Covenant-breaking seems to be an inherent aspect of religion, this does not mean it produces no damaging effect on the Cause. On the contrary, as Shoghi Effendi cabled the Bahá'ís after the death of a relative: “time alone will reveal extent havoc wreaked this virus violation injected fostered over two decades 'Abdu'l-Bahá's family”. It does not mean that much of it could not be avoided through greater individual effort and loyalty. Above all it does not mean that a devastating effect is not produced on the Centre of the Covenant himself. Shoghi Effendi's whole life was darkened by the vicious personal attacks made upon him. I personally am convinced that the main reason the heart of the Guardian was sufficiently undermined physically for it to stop in 1957 was because of the unbearable strain thirty-six years of interminable struggle with a series of Covenant-breakers had placed upon it. It is only necessary to add that it was the death of his own brother-in-law that provided the occasion for sending the above-quoted cable, for us to catch a glimpse of what Shoghi Effendi repeatedly passed through during his ministry.

On one occasion he cabled a believer who was very close to him, and who, he had recently learned, had been very badly treated by a near relative: “Heart overflowing sympathy your sufferings so courageously endured. Would have instantly communicated had I known. Both you I tasted cup disillusionment treatment nearest

relatives. Feel close to you realization your sorrows memory your superb continued imperishable services. Praying fervently Holy Shrines Deepest love.”

Perhaps these words from my diary, written between 1940 and 1945, under the influence of what I saw Shoghi Effendi going through in the long and shattering crisis that deprived him of his relatives, can better convey the effect of Covenant-breaking: “He goes on, but it is like a man in a blizzard who cannot sometimes even open his eyes for the blinding snow.” “He is like a man whose skin has been burned off . . . it is a miracle he can keep going.” “I feel sure the tide will turn. But oh, never, never to find Shoghi Effendi as he was! I don’t think anything in this world will ever be able to efface what these last years have done to him! Time is a great healer but it cannot remove scars.” “It seems it is all irretrievably broken.”

That these repeated crises greatly interfered with his work for the Cause there can be no doubt. As early as 1926 he had written to a lukewarm believer, who later became a most despicable Covenant-breaker: “You know I am not and never was a sentimental person. I thirst for work and my thoughts are intent upon accomplishing important tasks if circumstances permit and I am free from attacks from within and from without.”

The patience of Shoghi Effendi in handling these terrible situations that arose in his own family is shown by the fact that on one occasion he held for eight months a cable excommunicating his brother while he tried—vainly—to remedy the situation and obviate the necessity of sending a message that was so heart-breaking to him.

So disastrous is the effect of Covenant-breaking on the Cause that one of the last acts of Shoghi Effendi’s ministry was to inform the Hands of the Cause that they should appoint a second group of Auxiliary Board members for the purpose of protecting the Faith.

VI

FACETS OF SHOGHI EFFENDI'S PERSONALITY

That Shoghi Effendi was stern in all matters affecting the protection of the Faith does not mean he could not be gentle and kind also. He was fundamentally a very tender-hearted person and when left sufficiently at peace within himself expressed this innate kindness and tenderness not only to those who surrounded him but to the believers personally in many ways. There are numerous examples of this in his cable files. Over and over, when disaster struck in some country where there were Bahá'ís, he would send an inquiry such as this one to Persia: "Wire safety friends. Anxious earthquake reports Persia Turkistan". Very often this would be followed by financial help for those who were in desperate need. When an American Bahá'í, stricken in Persia by infantile paralysis, was returning with his wife to the United States, Shoghi Effendi cabled the friends in Beirut, Alexandria and New York, requesting that they meet his boat and assist in every way they could. The Guardian sent seven wires, in a short space of time, in connection with a single Bahá'í who had various difficulties in getting to Haifa and leaving after her pilgrimage was over. His thoroughness in such matters, as well as his consideration, are delightfully reflected in this telegram to Egypt: "Dewing New Zealand Bahá'í arriving tonight Cairo for one day. Urge meet him station. He wears helmet. If missed meet him next morning Cooks office nine o'clock. Extend utmost kindness." On another occasion we find Shoghi Effendi cabling, in connection with a Bahá'í who for some reason had not been able to land in Haifa, to "comfort him my behalf". On learning through a cable from a husband that his wife was "completely unbalanced believes lost your love message would calm her", Shoghi Effendi cabled immediately: "Assure . . . undiminished love confidence." To a believer in the Near East whose relatives lived in Palestine he wired: "Most welcome advise bring children with you relieve longing their grandmother." A cable sending a message to a prominent new Bahá'í says: "Cable princess my loving best wishes. May Bahá'u'lláh's almighty arms ever encircle her."

Dagmar Dole, one of the devoted pioneers, died and was buried in Switzerland. Once, when I was confined to bed for some days, I remember how deeply moved and surprised I was when Shoghi Effendi came to me and told me he had been to visit her grave, a short train journey away from where we were staying.

He was moved sometimes, above and beyond the usual encouragement and general instructions he gave the Bahá'ís, to intervene in a direct way with their plans; a boy of seventeen wanted to go to Latin America, in the first Seven Year Plan, but was advised he was too young and should wait until he was older and had finished more of his studies; Shoghi Effendi cabled the American National Assembly to reconsider letting him go and Shoghi Effendi would mention with pride this young man's response to the need for pioneers. An old woman, a cripple, longed to go to North Africa and pioneer; Shoghi Effendi encouraged her to do so and the place where Ella Bailey died is marked with a gold star on one of his maps! I remember a pilgrim at the table telling Shoghi Effendi she had her husband's permission to offer themselves as pioneers and did he have any suggestions as to where they should go? Shoghi Effendi immediately said "Africa"; "Any particular place in Africa?" she asked; "South Africa" he replied. A little taken aback at these rapid-fire monosyllables she said "Any particular city?", to which he replied "Johannesburg", and thus her destiny and that of her family were settled in four words.

Sometimes the spirit animating a Bahá'í was such as to persuade Shoghi Effendi to change his own instructions. An instance of this is the case of Marion Jack, whom 'Abdu'l-Bahá called "General Jack" and the Guardian called an "immortal heroine", saying she was a shining example to pioneers of present and future generations in both the East and the West, and that no one had surpassed her in "Constancy, dedication, self-abnegation, fearlessness" except the "incomparable Martha Root". Jackie—as she was usually called—lived in Sofia, Bulgaria, and when war broke out Shoghi Effendi, concerned over her dangerous position, wired her: "Advise return Canada wire whether financially able". She replied: ". . . how about Switzerland" but assured him of her implicit obedience. Shoghi Effendi then wired: "Approve Switzerland" but she still did not want to leave her pioneer post and begged to be allowed to remain in Bulgaria, to which the Guardian replied: "Advise remain Sofia love."

There is a great mystery involved in the levels of service. Shoghi Effendi always advised the friends to pursue a moderate and wise course, but if they did not, and chose to rise to heights of heroism and self-sacrifice, he was immensely proud of them. After all, there is nothing either wise or moderate in being martyred—yet our crowning glory as a religion is that our first Prophet was martyred and twenty thousand people followed in His footsteps. I have tried to understand this mystery, moderation on one side and Bahá'u'lláh's words on the other: "*. . . then write with that crimson ink that hath been shed in My path. Sweeter indeed is this than all else, . . .*" and it seems to me that the best example is an aeroplane: when it trundles along the ground on its wheels it is in the dimension of the ground, going along steadily on an earthly plane, but when it soars into the air and folds its wheels away and leaps forward at dazzling speeds, it is in a celestial realm and the values are different. When we are on the ground we get good sound earthly advice, but if we choose to spurn the soil and leap into the realms of higher service and sacrifice we do not get that kind of advice any more, we win immortal fame and become heroes and heroines of God's Cause.

Shoghi Effendi worked through everything; everything that he encountered, individual, object or piece of land, that could be turned to an advantageous use for the Faith he seized upon and used. Although in general he worked through Assemblies and Committees, he also worked directly through individuals. An example of this is Victoria Bedekian, known as "Auntie Victoria". For years she wrote letters, widely circulated in the West and the East, and the Guardian encouraged her in this activity and even told her what she should emphasize in her communications.

He was not fussy about sources of information; by this I mean he did not always wait until official channels corroborated the arrival of a pioneer at his post or some other piece of good news which had been conveyed to him through a personal letter or by a pilgrim, but would incorporate this encouraging information in his messages. This latitude which Shoghi Effendi allowed himself meant that the whole work of the Faith was bowled forward at a far faster pace than if he had done otherwise. Like all great leaders, he possessed something of the quality of a good press man who realizes that the time factor in conveying news is of great importance and that speed itself has an impact and stimulates the imagination. This practice of his should not, however, mislead us into thinking that he was not extraordinarily thorough. The exactitude with which he compiled statistics, sought out historic facts, worked on every minute detail of his maps and plans was astonishing.

The Guardian had a few personal relationships, above and beyond his usual affection and good will towards all the believers who were really worthy of the name Bahá'í. On one occasion when he had been ill Philip Sprague cabled him expressing his concern over this and ending with the words: "heart full of love." Shoghi Effendi cabled back: "Have recovered. Fully reciprocate your great love." He very frequently had occasion to cable his agent Dr Giachery in Italy for various things required at the World Centre and many of those cables were similar

to this: “Kindly order twentyfour additional lamp posts identical those ordered love.” Such cables were far from being the usual practice of the Guardian.

But there was another aspect to his cables. If some were very loving, and most of a routine nature, others could be extremely sharp. There are many cables to National Assemblies like this one to America sent in 1923: “Expecting frequent comprehensive reports . . .” and many others to various people, with much stronger phrases such as these: “Beware disobedience my wishes”; “Warn you again”; “beware neglect”, and so on. It is impossible to find verbose and unexplicit cables. “Send with sister ten Corona ribbons colour black” he wired his brother in Beirut. To the first Bahá’í to ask permission to come to Haifa after the end of the war when the pilgrimage was at last reopened Shoghi Effendi cabled quite simply what he meant in one word “Welcome”.

The whole of Shoghi Effendi’s life activity as Guardian, his mind and his feelings, his reactions and instructions, can be found reflected in miniature in his cables and telegrams; often they were more intimate, more powerful and revealing than the thousands of letters he wrote to individuals because in his letters his secretary usually dealt with details and thus the words are not the Guardian’s own words, except for the postscripts which he wrote himself and which most of the time conveyed the assurance of his prayers, his encouragement and his statement of general principles.

Shoghi Effendi, like his grandfather and great-grandfather before him, had a delightful sense of humour which was ready to manifest itself if he were given any chance to be happy or enjoy a little peace of mind. His eyes would fairly dance with amusement, he would chuckle delightedly and sometimes break out into open laughter. To a young pilgrim, who had expressed his interest in getting married, Shoghi Effendi remarked: “Don’t wait too long and don’t wait for someone to fall from the sky!” In a telegram to some young relatives in Beirut we find him saying, in 1923, “When will my two unruly secretaries terminate their period of medical treatment. Wire.” Inside his family, with those he was familiar with, he liked to tease. I was often the victim and knowing that anything he said I was likely to believe, he took advantage of this and enjoyed fooling me. For instance, I remember during the war coming into his room and finding him looking very solemn, his eyes round with concern. This alone attracted my attention and I became anxious. He then said something terrible had happened. I, of course, became even more anxious and asked what had happened. With a deeply concerned expression he solemnly informed me Churchill had died. As this was the most dangerous period of the war I became very excited and upset over this news and asked him what would happen to the Allies now, with their great leader dead, etc. etc. Shoghi Effendi stood my distress as long as he could and then burst out laughing! He played such tricks on me very often, as he found me an ideal subject—but gradually my gullibility wore off and after twenty years he said it was getting very difficult to fool me. Sometimes, feebly, I would try to play this game with him, but I could never act it out as well as he could and almost never succeeded in catching him.

On one side so majestic, on the other so engagingly confiding, innocent-hearted and youthful, such was our Guardian! One of my tasks, once Shoghi Effendi knew I could paint a little, was to colour various things for him and one of these was a map showing the plots owned by the Bahá’í Community on Mt Carmel. One day when I was adding colour to some newly acquired areas Shoghi Effendi told me to paint them lighter. I asked why. Why, he said, to show they are a “recent acquisition”. It was such a clear reflection of the joy these newly purchased plots afforded him. I can remember on another occasion spending hours and hours colouring for him photographs of different sizes showing an architect’s elevation drawing depicting the monument of the Greatest Holy Leaf with the two monuments to mark the graves of her mother and brother on either side.

This recalls another aspect of Shoghi Effendi's richly endowed personality. He was very tenacious of his purposes, very determined, but never unreasonable. Although he never changed his objectives, he sometimes changed the course he had planned to take to reach them. The drawing of the monuments which I coloured is a good example of this. When he conceived the idea of moving the remains of Bahíyyih Khánúm's mother and brother from Akka to Mt Carmel he immediately ordered two beautiful marble monuments in Italy, similar to that marking the grave of the Greatest Holy Leaf. As this happened during his absence from Haifa he had the idea of putting these two flanking her resting-place and ordered a drawing made showing him how this would look; but when he returned to Haifa and studied his plan on the spot he decided it would not be as beautiful as to put the two, as a pair, off by themselves and on the same axis, which he eventually did.

All through the Guardian's ministry we see the light of Divine Guidance shining on his path, confirming his decisions, inspiring his choice. But there are always unforeseeable factors in every plan. Acts of God, and the sum of human endeavour, constantly change plans, little or big. This has always happened to the greatest as well as the smallest human beings, and the words of the Prophets themselves attest it. Shoghi Effendi was subject to such forces, but he also frequently modified his own plans. Examples of this are many and interesting: at one time he conceived the idea of placing the Mausoleum of Bahá'u'lláh on Mt Carmel, but later gave this up entirely and fixed its permanent place in Bahjí; what became known as the World Crusade or Ten Year Plan was at first announced as a Seven Year Plan; one Temple to be built during this Plan became three Temples; the original eight European goal countries became ten; and so on. If outside forces over which the Guardian had no control frustrated some plan of his—as opposed to his modifying or expanding some plan of his own in the light of circumstances—he immediately compensated, so that the Cause, if a temporary defeat or humiliation was inflicted upon it, came out in the end with an augmented victory, a richer endowment.

Shoghi Effendi might be deflected from his course but he was never defeated in his purpose and his ingenuity was remarkable. A good example of this is the way he arranged for two of the three great new Continental Bahá'í Temples of the Ten Year Plan to be built. He extracted from the architect he had at hand the designs he felt were suitable for the Sydney and Kampala Houses of Worship. These were dignified, pleasing in proportion, conservative in style and relatively modest in cost. Since the architect was not in a position to carry out the detailed drawings or supervise the actual construction, Shoghi Effendi, not making a great circumstance of what to a fussy and small-minded man would have imposed an insuperable obstacle, proceeded to instruct the two National Assemblies involved to get local architectural firms to carry out the details and erect the buildings. Shoghi Effendi himself modified the expensive suggestions these firms at first made and got both Temples built within what he considered a reasonable price for the Cause to pay. Over and over his shrewdness and sound judgement saved the money of the Faith so that it could be spent on the many all-important tasks and not create temporary bankruptcy through the unwise prosecution of a single project.

Economy was a very rigid principle with Shoghi Effendi and he had very stern ideas on money matters. He more than once refused to permit an individual to make the pilgrimage who he knew was in debt, saying he must first pay his debts. I never saw the Guardian settle a bill he had not first carefully added up, whether it was for a meal or a payment of thousands of dollars! If there was an overcharge he pointed it out—and also if there was an undercharge. Many times I went to astonished people and called to their attention that their addition was wrong and they should do it again or they would be the losers. He also was a determined bargainer, never paying what he felt was too much for a thing. More than once, when a beautiful ornament for the Shrines, Archives, or gardens was too expensive, and the seller could not or would not meet the Guardian's price, he would not buy it even though he wanted it and had the money. He just considered it wrong and would not do it. Although Shoghi Effendi for many years had had a private automobile and chauffeur (like 'Abdu'l-Bahá before him), because

spare parts were not procurable for it during the worst years of the war he had it sold and used taxis. I have no doubt that, as with sufficient money one can usually buy anything, he could have procured another car, but it never entered his mind. He was against extravagance, ostentation and luxury as such, denying himself and others many things because he felt they were either not justified or not appropriate.

Another of the strongly marked characteristics of the Guardian was his openness. The believers were his confidants. Freely, majestically, aloof but with a most endearing and heart-captivating confidence, he would share with the pilgrims who were his guests not only his ideas and his interpretations of the Teachings but his projects and plans. There were no privileged communicants who received his thought as of right. In spite of the fact that the National Assemblies were his channels through which he passed on his great Plans and the bodies by which they were prosecuted, he was wont to share these Plans in almost full detail with those he met, to such an extent that many a returning pilgrim was in possession of nearly all the details that were soon to be communicated to the Bahá'í world officially. The same was true of his work at the World Centre. So complete was his frankness that he sometimes drew little sketches at the table to illustrate what he was doing in the gardens on Mt Carmel, how the "arc" would be, what buildings might be erected on it, and so on.

Each new thing he was setting in motion, nationally or internationally, one might almost say followed the same pattern as the dawn of a day: the first light, feelers of vision, would be discerned in his words to visiting pilgrims, or lie half-hidden in his communications to the Bahá'í world; then would come the glimmering of goals beginning to take shape as the sun of his concept rose higher and he focused the brilliant energy of his mind upon it; finally, in a clear burst of illumination, would come the whole idea in all its splendour—a Seven Year Plan, a Ten Year Plan, the warnings and promises in some new and wonderful general letter, the complete instructions regarding such major projects as the completion of the Shrine of the Báb, the International Archives, one of the great new Houses of Worship, or the exposition of certain fundamental themes contained in such books as *The Advent of Divine Justice* and *The Promised Day Is Come*.

The relationship of Shoghi Effendi to the pilgrims, his courtesy as a host, his kindness shown to them in so many little ways, the things he so openly discussed with them, had a tremendous effect on the work the Bahá'ís were accomplishing in so many countries, for when these fortunate believers returned to their own communities they acted as a leaven, stimulating their fellow Bahá'ís to greater efforts, making the Guardian a more real person to those who had not been privileged to meet him face to face, creating a sense of nearness both to him and to the World Centre that by any other method would have been hard to achieve. In his conversations with the pilgrims he was able to convey, often in a more fluent and forceful language than he would have used in writing, his strong feelings on certain subjects. During our pilgrimage in 1937 I had been privileged to make notes of what he said to my mother and me at the table, but later I very seldom did this. However, on a few occasions I did write down what he said as he said it, and one of these was in 1954 when he was speaking very forcibly to the pilgrims present on the subject of the urgent needs of the World Crusade and the attitude of the Bahá'ís towards pioneering: "I can warn them, I can urge them, but I cannot create the spirit—it is unhappiness for me and danger for the believers that really results . . ." "The Cause triumphs in spite of the inaction of a large number of its supporters, in a mysterious way it works." And as he touched upon some places where the friends were acting as teachers in schools he said: "They bring into the schools the American mode of life instead of driving it out and establishing the Bahá'í mode of life." But in spite of all he showered upon the pilgrims—from providing for their physical comfort as his guests to tearing the veils from their eyes and educating them in their Faith—whenever one of them would seek to express his or her deep gratitude for the honour of meeting him, he would instantly turn this aside, saying the purpose of the pilgrimage was to visit the Holy Shrines.

So many memories come back to me when I think of the pilgrims, myself included, such as that dawn in 1923, when I was a child and was driving back in the automobile of the Guardian from Bahjí where we had all gone to commemorate the ascension of Bahá'u'lláh. I insisted on sitting up on the edge of the folded-back top of the touring car instead of on the seat. Shoghi Effendi remonstrated with me and warned me not to fall out, and I assured him I would not do so. I was too intoxicated with the morning and all the bounties showered upon me to be afraid. In those days there was no proper road and we drove over the beach between Akka and Haifa on the wet strip of sand between the sea and the dunes. Hundreds of little white crabs fled before the car for the safety of their holes in a never-ending ripple before us. The sun had just risen and the whole world was fresh and rosy and clean. Shoghi Effendi began to tell me about how much he longed to see the Rocky Mountains in Canada, and of his love for mountains and mountaineering. He always followed with the keenest interest, till the end of his life, any account of the assaults made on Mt Everest. His love of scenic beauty was very great and if he had been a free individual I am sure much of his time would have been spent in visiting the natural wonder spots of the world.

The last year of the Guardian's life two Swiss pilgrims came to Haifa. Their presence stirred up all his memories of Switzerland and his love for their country poured out in a manner wholly unlike his usual reserve about his personal life and feelings. I had been ill in bed and not present at dinner in the Pilgrim House but when Shoghi Effendi came home he told me he had "said everything"—about the mountains he had climbed, the walks he had taken, the scenes he loved so much. It was very atypical of him, very rare and a clear index of something deep in his own heart.

I remember another occurrence which happened in Switzerland itself as we were leaving Zermatt one evening. In all the years we travelled together Shoghi Effendi did not form any personal relationships and very rarely spoke to strangers. This was not my own nature and sometimes I would slip out of our compartment in the train, or on some other occasion, and get into animated conversation with a fellow passenger. He always knew (and never minded) when this happened. I think he could tell from a flushed and tentative expression on my face when I rejoined him what I had been doing and with twinkling eyes would ask me what I had been up to. On this particular occasion, however, it was he who held a long conversation as we sat on the hard wooden seats of our third-class train compartment. A young man, a truly lovely and gentlemanly boy, the child of White Russians living in America, was seated opposite us. He was travelling for the first time in Switzerland and the Guardian, with that same kindness and animation that so often characterized his conversation, proceeded to advise him in great detail about what places he should not miss seeing in the limited time at his disposal. He even got out the Swiss railway guide and showed him what trains to take, where to go and when. I sat back and listened, watching the fine face of the youth, so courteous, so pleased at the attention he was receiving from this stranger, and of course prayed in my heart that this bounty he was receiving—which I could in no way indicate to him—would somehow, some day, lead him to the Faith of which this stranger was the Head!

But to return to Shoghi Effendi's remarks to the Swiss pilgrims in Haifa. He was moved to inform them that he wished Switzerland to have its own Temple site, which was to be situated near the capital city of Bern and have a clear view of the Bernese Alps, where he had spent so many months of his life walking and climbing. On 12 August 1957 he communicated to what was then the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Italy and Switzerland his wishes in this matter. His secretary wrote: "As he explained to _____, he is very anxious for Switzerland to purchase a plot, however small in size, and modest a beginning it may be, for the future Mashriqu'l-Adhikár of that country. He feels this should be in the outskirts of Bern, overlooking the Bernese Oberland; and he is very happy to be able to present this land himself to the Swiss Community. No publicity whatsoever should be given to this matter lest an opposition resembling that which has arisen in Germany should

be provoked amongst the orthodox element in Bern. Whenever the committee responsible for finding this land has located a suitable plot, he would like your Assembly to inform him of the details.” This was a gift of a unique nature, no other community in the Bahá’í world having been thus honoured. The plot of land, almost 2,000 square metres in area, on the outskirts of Bern, overlooks the Gürbetal and from it can be seen the famous Finsteraarhorn, Mönch, Eiger and Jungfrau mountains, the scene of many of the Guardian’s mountaineering exploits, the scene also of many of the most agonizing hours he passed after the ascension of his grandfather.

On one occasion a pilgrim from Canada had informed the Guardian that in teaching the Faith to the Eskimo people it was very difficult for them to understand the meaning in such similes as the nightingale and the rose because these things were entirely unknown to them. The reaction of Shoghi Effendi to this was typical. When he said good-bye to this friend he gave her a small vial of the Persian attar of rose, the quintessence of what a rose is, and told her to anoint the Eskimos with it, saying that perhaps in this way they would get an inkling of what Bahá’u’lláh meant when He wrote of the rose.

Another incident comes to my mind. Among the last pilgrims to leave Haifa before Shoghi Effendi himself left in June 1957, never to return, were two American Negro believers. As long as I live I will never forget the look on the face of one of them as she sat opposite the Guardian at the Pilgrim House table. One could see that in meeting him—who met all men as the creation of God, with no other feeling than pleasure that they were as God had made them—the hurts and sorrows of a lifetime were melted away. She looked at him with a combination of the great loving heart of a mother and the reverence due him in his glorious station that I think must be the look on the faces of the angels in Paradise as they gaze upon their Lord.

Those who had the privilege of being near the Guardian, no matter how much experience they had had or how long they had been Bahá’ís—some, like myself, from birth—were constantly having their concept of the greatness of this Cause expanded by Shoghi Effendi’s words, his reactions and his example. I remember my surprise when, in his long Ridván Message to the Bahá’í world in 1957, he mentioned (obviously with pride or he would not have included it) the “recently converted Bahá’í inmates” in Kitalya Prison in Uganda. It had never occurred to me that one would mention a Bahá’í being in prison without shame! But here he was proclaiming that we had a group of the followers of Bahá’u’lláh in a prison. He often referred to this in his talks to the pilgrims and as I pondered over this and the things he said about it I realized that as this Faith is for all men, the saints and the sinners, there were two principles involved. One was the fact that society must be governed by laws, protected by laws and men punished through laws; and the other was that belief in the Manifestation of God should be universal and include everyone, because the act of faith is the spark that sets the soul alight and gives it eternal awareness of its God, and this was something each soul had a right to, no matter what his sins might be. In more than one letter, at different times to different people, Shoghi Effendi encouraged the Bahá’ís to teach in prisons.

The sympathy which all the Prophets of God have shown towards the down-trodden, the meek, the poor and the outcast, singling them out for particular succour, protection and loving encouragement, was always manifested in the Guardian’s acts and words. But we must not confuse this attitude with the fundamental truth that many groups of people who at present fall into these categories not only deserve to receive special attention but have within themselves reserves of power and spiritual greatness needed by the entire world. Take, for example, the Indians of the Western Hemisphere. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had written: *“You must attach great importance to the Indians, the original inhabitants of America. For these souls may be likened unto the ancient inhabitants of the Arabian Peninsula, who prior to the Revelation of Muhammad, were like savages. When the Muhammadan Light shone forth in their midst, they became so enkindled that they shed illumination upon the world. Likewise, should these*

Indians be educated and properly guided, there can be no doubt that through the Divine teachings they will become so enlightened that the whole earth will be illumined.” Throughout his ministry Shoghi Effendi never forgot these words and repeatedly urged the believers throughout Canada and the Americas to enlist these souls under the banner of Bahá’u’lláh. Some of the last letters he wrote, in July 1957, to various National Assemblies in the Western Hemisphere, again forcibly stressed this subject and referred to the “long overdue conversion of the American Indians”. I quote excerpts from his instructions written by his secretary on his behalf:

“The paramount task is, of course, the teaching work; at every session your Assembly should give it close attention, considering everything else of secondary importance. Not only must many new Assemblies be developed, as well as groups and isolated centers, but special attention must be focused on the work of converting the Indians to the Faith. The goal should be all-Indian Assemblies, so that these much exploited and suppressed original inhabitants of the land may realize that they are equals and partners in the affairs of the Cause of God, and that Bahá’u’lláh is the Manifestation of God for them.”

“He was particularly happy to see that some of the Indian believers were present at the Convention. He attaches the greatest importance to teaching the original inhabitants of the Americas the Faith. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá Himself has stated how great are their potentialities, and it is their right, and the duty of the non-Indian Bahá’ís, to see that they receive the Message of God for this day. One of the most worthy objectives of your Assembly must be the establishment of all-Indian Spiritual Assemblies. Other minorities should likewise be especially sought out and taught. The friends should bear in mind that in our Faith, unlike every other society, the minority, to compensate for what might be treated as an inferior status, receives special attention, love and consideration . . .

“As you formulate the goals which must receive your undivided attention during the coming years he urges you to bear in mind the most important one of all, namely the multiplication of the Spiritual Assemblies, the groups and the isolated centres; this will ensure both breadth and depth in the foundations you are laying for the future independent national bodies. The believers should be urged to consider individually the needs in their immediate region, and to go forth to pioneer in near and distant cities and towns. They must be encouraged by your Assembly to remember that small people, often poor and obscure people, have changed the course of human destiny more than people who started out with wealth, fame and security. It was the Sifter of Wheat who, in the early days of our Faith, arose and became a hero and martyr, not the learned priests of his city!”

He expressed similar sentiments as regards another people of another race. In a letter dated 27 June 1957 he wrote to the newly formed New Zealand National Assembly: “As you formulate your plans and carry them out for the work entrusted to you during the next six years, he wishes you to particularly bear in mind the need of teaching the Maoris. These original discoverers of New Zealand are of a very fine race, and they are a people long admired for their noble qualities; and special effort should be made, not only to contact the Maoris in the cities, and draw them into the Faith, but to go to their towns and live amongst them and establish Assemblies in which at least the majority of the believers will be Maoris, if not all. This would be indeed a worthy achievement.”

To a pilgrim belonging to the Mongolian race the Guardian stated that as the majority of the people in the world were not white there was no reason why the majority of Bahá’ís inside the Faith should be white; on the contrary, the Cause should reflect the situation existing in the world. To Shoghi Effendi differences were not something to be eliminated but rather the legitimate, necessary, indeed fascinating, ingredients that made the whole so much more beautiful and perfect.

Not only did Shoghi Effendi constantly inculcate in the Bahá'ís the respect due to people of different ethnic backgrounds, he also taught them what respect, and above all what reverence, as qualities needed to round out a noble human character, really are. Reverence for holy things is sadly lacking in the Western World today. In an age when the mistaken idea of equality seems to imply that every blade of grass must be exactly the same height, the Guardian's own profound respect for those above himself in rank was the best example one could find. The extreme reverence he showed to the twin Manifestations of God and to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, whether in his writings, his speech or the manner in which he approached Their resting-places, provides a permanent pattern for all Bahá'ís to follow. Whenever Shoghi Effendi was near one of the Shrines one could sense his awareness of this in his whole being. The way he walked as he neared it, the way he quietly and with great dignity and reverence approached the threshold, knelt and placed his forehead upon it, the way he never turned his back when inside the Shrine on that spot where one of these infinitely holy and precious beings was interred, the tone of his voice, his dignified lack of any levity on such occasions, all bore witness to the manner in which man should approach a holy of holies, going softly on sacred ground. It is really with the soul that man has to do in this life for it is all he will take with him when he leaves it. It is this fundamental concept—so obscured and forgotten in present-day philosophies—that endows even the dust of noble beings with a mystic potency. So strong is the perfume of some roses that even years after they have withered and dried out one can still smell the rose in them. This is a feeble example of the power which remains in the very dust that has been associated with the towering spirits of divine souls when they were in this world.

This wonderful emotion of reverence—which seems when it sweeps over us to blow away so much of the dross in our immature natures—was a deep characteristic of the Guardian, who learned it in his childhood as he sat on his heels, arms crossed on breast, before his exalted grandfather. I remember an incident that occurred after my parents returned to Canada in 1937 and sent me my books and bookcase and other things from my home. I had carefully arranged my books in the same relation to my bed as they had been in my room before, and placed the same photograph of 'Abdu'l-Bahá on them, which meant that it was parallel with the end of my bed. When Shoghi Effendi noticed this he exclaimed: "You put the Master at your feet!" I was startled, to say the least, by the intensity of this remark and said I had always put Him there so I could see His face when I awakened in the morning. Shoghi Effendi said this was not proper. I must put the Master at my head, out of respect, not at my feet. Before this it had never occurred to me that a room has a top and a bottom, and that so sacred are the associations with such things as the photograph of the Centre of the Supreme Manifestation of God's Covenant and the reproduction of the Greatest Name, that their place, even in a room, must be a high one. An example of this attitude of the Guardian is contained in the words his secretary wrote on his behalf to the American National Assembly in 1933: "As regards the Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh to the Greatest Holy Leaf, Shoghi Effendi feels it would be rather disrespectful to reproduce the facsimile of the Tablet in the handwriting of Bahá'u'lláh in the proposed pamphlet. He had these reproduced to have them illuminated and sent as gifts to the different National Assemblies to be cherished and kept in their National archives."

There are other examples of this same thing. As early as 1923 Shoghi Effendi cabled that same Assembly: "Dignity of Cause requires restraint in use and circulation of Master's voice record". This referred to a recording of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's chanting which had been made during his visit to the United States. On another occasion Shoghi Effendi instructed that Assembly: "In the conduct of any social activity at the National Office, however, great care should be taken to maintain strictly the dignity of the place, particularly in view of its proximity to the House of Worship, which makes it doubly essential for all the believers to conform to those standards of conduct, and of social intercourse set up in the Bahá'í Teachings."

It is not a ritualistic thing that is at stake here. There are no rituals in the Bahá'í Faith. It is an attitude. Although the Guardian was wont to prostrate himself before the thresholds of the Holy Tombs, he was at pains to explain to the pilgrims that they were free to do so or not. He did it because it was a custom in the part of the East from which his ancestors came. But the reverence was another matter; one thing was a form of expression the individual could choose for himself, the other was the proper spirit that should dwell in the heart of a devotee as he approaches those things that are most sacred in this world.

It was the custom of the Guardian, following in the footsteps of the Master Who had claimed for Himself the station of the Servant of the servants of God, to stand beside the door of the Shrine and anoint, with rose water or attar of rose, the believers as they passed him to enter the Shrine. He would then enter last. Yet, in the midst of this sincere servitude and humility, the proper proportions, the inherent difference in ranks that is part of human society, were not lost sight of. It was he who led the faithful in prayer; it was those who ranked highest in Haifa who led the way into the Shrine, who followed after the Guardian as he walked before, or were privileged to drive with him in his car when he went to a Bahá'í commemoration in Bahjí. Courtesy, respect, reverence, each had its proper place in the scheme of things.

Shoghi Effendi, in keeping with this deep sense of reverence he had for the Central Figures of our Faith, was very vigilant in defending Them from any slight or insult. An example of this occurred in January 1941. The Municipality named a short street opposite 'Abdu'l-Bahá's home and the Western Pilgrim House "Baha Street". Shoghi Effendi was very indignant and sent his secretary immediately to see the Mayor and protest that as this was the name of the Founder of our Faith we considered it not only inappropriate but insulting. The municipal authorities met and changed the name to "Iran Street". I remember the Guardian was so exercised over this at the time that he said if they did not remove the sign at once he would go and tear it down with his own hands if necessary, even if it led to his being put in jail! I was very upset by this prospect, as I did not want him to go to jail without me and did not see what I could do to get in jail with him.

No picture of Shoghi Effendi's personality would ever be complete that did not depict the truly extraordinary artistic sense he possessed. This does not mean he could have been a painter; he was a writer *par excellence*. But he certainly had a painter's and an architect's eye. This was coupled with that fundamental quality without which I cannot see how anyone can achieve greatness in any of the arts or the sciences—a perfect sense of proportion, a sense of proportion measured in millimetres rather than centimetres. It was he who fixed the style of the Shrine of the Báb through his instructions—mostly not in detail but in principle—to my father. It was he who set the design for the International Archives Building, to such an extent that its architect would invariably state it was Shoghi Effendi's design, not his. The Guardian, with no help and no advice, laid out his superb gardens in Bahjí and Haifa, every measurement being his own. But what people do not perhaps realize is that the appearance of the Shrine interiors, the Mansion of Bahá'u'lláh, the House of 'Abbúd, the Mansion at Mazra'ih, was not created by anyone, however slight the detail, except the Guardian himself. He not only steadily added to the ornaments, photographs, lamps and furnishings that make these places so beautiful, but everything was placed where it was under his supervision. Not a picture hung on the walls that was not placed exactly where it was, to within a centimetre, by him. He not only created the effect of beauty that meets the eye as one enters those places, but he produced it all at a minimum cost, buying things not so much because of their style and period but because they were inexpensive and could achieve an effect regardless of their intrinsic worth. His visits to the Shrines and gardens were my only opportunities to have his room cleaned. How often I remember how, in spite of my efforts and the maid's to get the many objects on his desk back into their exact positions, he would enter his bedroom, in which he did all his work, go to his desk, cast an eye over it automatically, reach out his hand and give an almost infinitesimal twist to the different objects which he detected were slightly out of the position he liked them to be

in, though I am sure the difference was practically invisible to any eye but his. Needless to add that all this went with a neatness and tidiness that was phenomenal.

Shoghi Effendi loved ornate things, ornate things that were beautifully proportioned, not just because they were ornate. In the course of the years I learned what some of his favourite buildings and styles of architecture were: he was very fond of the Greek style, particularly as exemplified in the unsurpassed proportions of the Parthenon; his second favourite was Gothic architecture, the finest examples of which, though so entirely different from the Greek expression, moved him to great admiration of their soaring arches and lacy trceries in stone; many times we visited in England Gothic cathedrals and in his own rooms he placed a large framed photograph of the cathedral of Milan. He also had photographs, some in his own home, some which he placed in the Mansion at Bahjí, of the Alhambra in Granada, which he considered very beautiful. There was another edifice, very different in feeling and proportion to these, that Shoghi Effendi loved and that was the Signoria in Florence. Nothing could be a clearer indication of the depth of his artistic feeling and the soundness of his instinct in such matters than that this massive Italian building, so different from other favourites, should have been so deeply enjoyed and appreciated by him.

Unhampered by tradition in matters of taste, Shoghi Effendi was extremely original and ingenious in the way he achieved his effects. He did things no over-instructed authority on a series of do's and don't's would ever have attempted. Take for instance the interior decoration of the Greek style Archives Building. In order to acquire more space as a single giant hall in which to exhibit the many objects, sacred or otherwise, with which he intended to furnish it, Shoghi Effendi had two narrow balconies built, running its full length on either side, which were protected by a purely renaissance, excellent in style, wooden balustrade. Most of the cabinets he chose to line the walls of the hall downstairs were Japanese lacquer or Chinese carved teak wood. The six great chandeliers suspended from the ceiling were of cut crystal and purely European in design. When I asked the Guardian what furniture he would place on the balconies he said he would use some of the cabinets from the previous Archives, which were really of no style at all but just modern veneer furniture such as people have in their homes these days. Yet this strange assortment of things representing different periods and different countries, including innumerable *objets d'art*, have combined to create an impression of beauty, of dignity, of richness and splendour it would be hard to equal anywhere.

Another example of the extreme ingenuity of the Guardian was the little garden he built, two floors above the ground, in a small open courtyard of the House of 'Abbúd in Akka. Not asking any advice—and consequently not being advised not to—he proceeded, with extra tiles, a little cast cement work, an old wooden pedestal, a metal peacock and a few plants, to create a tiny square of garden that was not only charming but drew the wandering inhabitants of Akka—who visited the house on the days it was open to the public—to stare at it open-mouthed, a new and unheard of thing, and yet another purveyor of the fame of the Bahá'í community.

The Guardian was truly an extraordinary man. There is no end to the examples that come to mind when one thinks of his nature and his achievements. He had a heart so faithful to those who were faithful to him that its counterpart could scarcely be found. In the gardens, on the terrace in front of the Shrine of the Báb, there stands a small cement room, little larger than a big box. This was the room of Abu'l Kasim, a keeper of the Shrine dearly loved by Shoghi Effendi for his devotion and his character. The night before this man died, Shoghi Effendi told me he had had a strange, twice-repeated dream in which the green covering of verdure on the Shrine had withered away as if it had been burned off. He was much puzzled by this, for he felt it had a significance. When news was brought to him some hours later that the keeper of the Shrine was dead he at once understood the dream's meaning. At different times, over a period of many years, when the Guardian was building the

Shrine and extending the terrace in front of it, he destroyed this room, but each time, rebuilt it, a little farther to the west, because of the association it had with this devoted soul.

VII

THE DEEPEST TIES

However faithful and tender Shoghi Effendi's relationships were throughout his life with those closest to him, his supreme relationship was with the Greatest Holy Leaf. When she passed away in 1932 the news reached him in Interlaken, Switzerland. Although he was well aware of her condition, which he described in 1929 when he wrote that the Greatest Holy Leaf was "Now in the evening of her life, with deepening shadows caused by failing eyesight and declining strength swiftly gathering about her"; although he had had a premonition of her swiftly approaching death, when he wrote in March 1932 to the American believers urging them to press on with the completion of the dome of "our beloved Temple" and said that "my voice is once more reinforced by the passionate, and perhaps, the last, entreaty, of the Greatest Holy Leaf, whose spirit, now hovering on the edge of the Great Beyond, longs to carry on its flight to the Abhá Kingdom . . . an assurance of the joyous consummation of an enterprise, the progress of which has so greatly brightened the closing days of her earthly life"; although she was now eighty-six years old—none of this softened the blow or mellowed the grief that overwhelmed the Guardian. On 15 July he cabled America announcing that her spirit had taken its flight to that Great Beyond, bewailing the "sudden removal of my sole earthly sustainer, the joy and solace of my life" and informing the friends that "So grievous a bereavement necessitates suspension for nine months throughout the Bahá'í world every manner religious festivity"; memorial meetings were to be held everywhere, locally and nationally, for her, the "last remnant of Bahá'u'lláh".

But it was on 17 July that he wrote to the American and Canadian believers a letter that provides a glimpse of what was passing in the surging sea of his heart and in which he eulogizes the life, station and deeds of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's sister, pouring forth his love in an unforgettable torrent of words.

Dearly-beloved Greatest Holy Leaf! Through the mist of tears that fill my eyes I can clearly see, as I pen these lines, thy noble figure before me, and can recognize the serenity of thy kindly face. I can still gaze, though the shadow of the grave separate us, into thy blue, love-deep eyes, and can feel, in its calm intensity, the immense love thou didst bear for the Cause of thine Almighty Father, the attachment that bound thee to the most lowly and insignificant among its followers, the warm affection thou didst cherish for me in thine heart. The memory of the ineffable beauty of thy smile shall ever continue to cheer and hearten me in the thorny path I am destined to pursue. The remembrance of the touch of thine hand shall spur me on to follow steadfastly in thy way. The sweet magic of thy voice shall remind me, when the hour of adversity is at its darkest, to hold fast to the rope thou didst seize so firmly all the days of thy life.

Bear thou this my message to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, thine exalted and divinely-appointed Brother: If the Cause for which Bahá'u'lláh toiled and laboured, for which Thou didst suffer years of agonizing sorrow, for the sake of which streams of sacred blood have flowed, should, in the days to come, encounter storms more severe than those it has already weathered, do Thou continue to overshadow, with Thine all-encompassing care and wisdom, Thy frail, Thy unworthy appointed child.

What the Greatest Holy Leaf had done for Shoghi Effendi at the time of the Master's passing and in the years that followed is beyond calculation. She had played, as he said, a unique part throughout the tumultuous stages of Bahá'í history, not the least of which had been the establishment of Shoghi Effendi's own ministry after the death of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. "Which of the blessings am I to recount," wrote Shoghi Effendi, "which in her unflinching solicitude she showered upon me, in the most critical and agitated hours of my life?" He said that to him she had been an incarnation of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's all-encompassing tenderness and love. As her life had waned his had waxed. With what deep satisfaction she must have seen, as the tide of her own life receded from the shores of this world, that Shoghi Effendi was become strong in his Guardianship, able to face the incessant blows he received with the fortitude of a man now fully grown into his stupendous task.

After the passing of the Master Shoghi Effendi had become Bahíyyih Khánum's all in all, the very centre of her life—for him she had always been, next to his grandfather, the most beloved person in the world. I recall how, on one occasion during my 1923 pilgrimage with my mother, there was a large meeting attended by the Bahá'í men in the central hall of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's home; my mother and Edith Sanderson were seated there beside the Guardian but I had joined the women in a room opening on to it. We sat in the dark so that we could leave the door open (in those days the eastern men and women, following the custom of the country, were entirely sequestered) and hear a little of what was going on. It seems that some oriental believer, suddenly overcome by emotion, had got up and flung himself at the feet of Shoghi Effendi; we in our room could not see what had happened but only hear a great hubbub going on outside. The Greatest Holy Leaf, so slender and frail, jumped to her feet with a loud cry, fearing that something had happened to the young Guardian. She was quieted when someone brought news that nothing serious had occurred, but her anguish had been so evident the scene imprinted itself on my mind forever.

Until the time of her death it was Shoghi Effendi's custom to have his one meal a day alone with her, served on a small table in her bedroom. He told me that often, when she saw how upset he was, she used to tell him he should not eat when he was in this condition as it was very bad for his health. Another story he told me of her was how, when he had insisted she receive as an inheritance from 'Abdu'l-Bahá a small sum of money, she had offered a large part of it to defray the expense of building the next terrace in front of the Shrine of the Báb in fulfilment of her Brother's cherished plan.

So close was the communion between Shoghi Effendi and his great-aunt that over and over, in cables and other communications, particularly during the early years of his Guardianship, he included her with himself in such phrases as "assure us", "the Greatest Holy Leaf and I", "we", and so on. In a cable sent in 1931 he even signs it "Bahíyyih Shoghi". Nothing could be more revealing of this intense love he had for her than the fact that on the day we were married it was to her room, where everything was preserved as it was in her days, standing beside her bed, that the Guardian went to have the simple Bahá'í marriage ceremony of hand in hand performed and we each repeated the words in Arabic: "We will all, verily, abide by the Will of God."

This love the Guardian had for the Greatest Holy Leaf, who had watched over him for thirty-five years as far more than a mother, continued to be demonstrated for the remainder of his life. When the news of her death reached him in Switzerland his first act was to plan for her grave a suitable memorial, which he hastened to Italy to order. No one could possibly call this exquisitely proportioned monument, built of shining white Carrara marble, anything but what it appears—a love temple, the embodiment of Shoghi Effendi's love. He had undoubtedly conceived its design from buildings of a similar style and, under his supervision, an artist now incorporated his concept in the monument he planned to erect on her resting-place. Shoghi Effendi used to compare the stages in the Administrative Order of the Faith to this monument, saying the platform of three steps

was like the local Assemblies, the pillars like the National Assemblies, and the dome that crowned them and held them together like the Universal House of Justice, which could not be placed in position until the foundations and pillars were first firmly erected. After the Greatest Holy Leaf's monument had been completed in all its beauty, he had a photograph of it sent to many different Assemblies, as well as to a special list of individuals to whom he wished to present so tender a memento.

The armchair he had always sat in in her room he moved to the place where he often sat for a respite in his work and continued to use it until the end of his life; his bedroom was filled with photographs of her, at different stages of her life, and more than one picture showing her monument. In a strongly moving cable, sent to America seven months after her passing, in which he praises the loyalty and self-sacrifice of the champion-builders of the World Order, he adds "Founder of our Faith well pleased tokens their wise stewardship 'Abdu'l-Bahá proud of their valour Greatest Holy Leaf radiant with joy their fidelity". He wrote that her memory would remain an "ennobling influence . . . amid the wreckage of a sadly shaken world." He adorned the Archives with the illuminated Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá addressed to her, placed photographs of her and her monument in them, and some of her personal belongings and mementos. The day he told me that he had chosen me to be his wife he placed on my finger the simple gold ring engraved with the symbol of the Greatest Name which the Greatest Holy Leaf had given him years before as his Bahá'í ring; he told me this should not be seen by anyone for the time being and I wore it around my neck on a chain until the day of our marriage.

In every act of his life he associated the Greatest Holy Leaf with his services to the Faith. When he entombed the remains of the mother and brother of Bahíyyih Khánum on Mt Carmel he cabled: ". . . cherished wish Greatest Holy Leaf fulfilled", referring to her often expressed desire to be buried near them. On that momentous occasion he said he rejoiced at the privilege of pledging one thousand pounds as his contribution to the Bahíyyih Khánum Fund designed to inaugurate the final drive connected with the completion of the American Temple. He wrote that this transfer and reburial were events of "capital institutional significance". He said "the conjunction of the resting-place of the Greatest Holy Leaf with those of her brother and mother incalculably reinforces the spiritual potencies of that consecrated Spot" which was "destined to evolve into the focal centre of those world-shaking, world-embracing, world-directing Administrative institutions, ordained by Bahá'u'lláh . . ."

When 'Abdu'l-Bahá's mantle, as Head of the Faith, fell on Shoghi Effendi's shoulders a great change came over him. What the nature of that change was spiritually is not possible for us—so infinitely remote in both station and stature—to grasp or to define. Many times he used to tell me: "when they read the Master's Will to me, I ceased to be a normal human being." The always personable and noble young man, now, and ever increasingly as the years went by, had the stamp of kingship in his face, his manner, his walk and gestures. It was not assumed, it was never an imitation of his grandfather, it was almost one might say an endowed change. Shoghi Effendi was never really intimate with anyone except the closest members of his family and, in the early days, those who acted as his help-mates and secretaries. As years went by and his burdens increased, even this intimacy grew less, so that by the time the members of the International Bahá'í Council came to Haifa it was very rarely that he ever saw one of its western members alone, usually to say good-bye when they were going away, or to give the Hands some instructions when they were going to represent him at a conference. The one who was most favoured in this respect was Milly Collins, whose unique love for and devotion to the Guardian had greatly endeared her to him; after my father passed away during a visit to his home in Canada, the Guardian invited Milly to come and live in the Master's house, in the room my father had occupied, because her own room in the Western Pilgrim House was damp and she suffered greatly from arthritis; with the exception of Lotfullah Hakim, the members of the International Bahá'í Council were all lodged in this building and Shoghi Effendi did all his

business with the Council members at the dinner table in that Pilgrim House or through messages conveyed to it by his liaison.

This does not mean that his kindness was not frequently showered on the Council members, particularly Milly. She was the only one, except the single person in charge of his mail, who ever had his address when we were away from Haifa (except, of course, my father) and who therefore had constant access to him. So great and tender was her love for Shoghi Effendi—whom she had first met shortly after the Master's passing—that she almost never wrote to him directly but addressed her letters to me in order to spare him the necessity of writing to her direct. Well she knew that some believers had, in their innocent egotism, amassed as many as fifty, sixty or more letters from that overburdened pen! She was determined never to add her share to such a weight and her every thought was directed to sparing him, in any way she could, the slightest extra effort and to serving him in any way that could bring some happiness to his heart. So great was her concern in these matters that, although she lived in his house, when the time came for him to go out or come in she would return to her room so as not to oblige him to expend a moment of his overtaxed time to talk to her for a few minutes. Sometimes her age and ailments would confine her to her room and then the Guardian would pay her a visit for a few moments, often bringing her a gift. I remember he came one evening when she was ill and took from his own neck the soft warm cashmere shawl a Bahá'í had given him and placed it himself about hers. It became her most treasured possession and she could never forget the touch of the warmth of his neck on hers.

But such relationships were very rare in the Guardian's life. One such, however, was with my father. It has often seemed to me that of the many undeserved blessings in my life this was one of the greatest that God in His infinite mercy showered upon me—the great love between Shoghi Effendi and my father. The background of this bond goes back to the days of the beloved Guardian's marriage. Until the last decade of my father's life it had always been my mother who was the famous Bahá'í; she had come with the first group of pilgrims from the West to visit 'Abdu'l-Bahá in Akka in the winter of 1898-9; she had been the first Bahá'í on European soil, the mother of the Bahá'í communities of both France and Canada, one of the Master's earliest and most distinguished disciples and greatly loved by Him. I mention this because Shoghi Effendi once said to her, one night when he came to dinner in the Western Pilgrim House after our union, that had I not been May Maxwell's daughter he would not have married me. This does not mean it was the only reason, but it was evidently a very powerful one, for in the cable he sent on 3 March 1940 officially announcing her death, which had taken place two days before, he said: "To sacred tie her signal services had forged priceless honour martyr's death now added. Double crown deservedly won." These words clearly indicate her relationship to his marriage. In a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá to one of her spiritual children He had written: "her company uplifts and develops the soul". Until I came under the direct influence of the Guardian, through being privileged to be with him for over twenty years, I can truly say that my character, my faith in Bahá'u'lláh and whatever small services I had so far been able to render Him, were entirely due to her influence. From these facts it will be seen that when I arrived with my mother, on my third pilgrimage to Haifa, in January 1937, the status of my father inside the Faith can best be described as being "Mrs Maxwell's husband".

My mother was the one who had first known Shoghi Effendi as a child, when she came to the Holy Land at the end of the last century; she had come again, in 1909, with my father but I do not know how much contact, if any, they had at that time with Shoghi Effendi. Following the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá she suffered a complete breakdown in health caused by the shock of His death, the news of which was broken to her very suddenly over the telephone, and for a year we did not know if she would live or die or lose her mind. My father felt that the only hope of dispelling the grief and dark thoughts that obsessed her—that she would never, because of her unworthiness, see the beloved Master in the next world—was for her to make a pilgrimage to Haifa again, this

time to see the young successor of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. In April 1923 we arrived in Haifa and it was Shoghi Effendi who literally resurrected a woman who was so ill she could still not walk a step and could move about only in a wheel chair. From that time the love of my mother’s heart became entirely centred in the Guardian and when she was able to return to America, after we had spent two long periods in Haifa (with a break in between in Egypt while Shoghi Effendi was away in Europe), she once more served the Cause very actively. I myself again made the pilgrimage three years later with two of my mother’s Bahá’í friends and so, when we arrived in 1937, it was not as strangers but as two people reaching the zenith of their love.



THE GUARDIAN BECAME A MOUNTAINEER

Shoghi Effendi (wearing goggles) with a party of climbers and their guides in the Swiss Alps



THE INDOMITABLE ENTHUSIAST

Shoghi Effendi straddling an ice ridge on one of his climbs in the Swiss Alps



SHOGHI EFFENDI AND HIS GUIDE

A very happy young Guardian on top of a Swiss Alp with his guide; Shoghi Effendi carried his own camera with him, no doubt a member of the climb took this photograph



MOUNTAIN HAZARDS

Shoghi Effendi surveys a glacial crevice in the Swiss Alps



ON TOP OF THE WORLD

His bicycle – the poor man's car – became a favourite of Shoghi Effendi. He sometimes climbed the highest passes in Switzerland, pushing it up and riding down



A PHOTOGRAPH BY SHOGHI EFFENDI

Shoghi Effendi had a particular fondness for waterfalls and for taking artistic photographs. This is his picture of the Falls of the Rhine at Schaffhausen, Switzerland



THE YOUNG GUARDIAN IN SWITZERLAND

Shoghi Effendi enjoying the famous springtime fields of wild narcissus flowers above Lac Léman



INTERLAKEN, SWITZERLAND

The weary Guardian, who often spent 10 hours walking in the mountains, surveys his beloved Alpine scenery

Surely the simplicity of the marriage of Shoghi Effendi—reminiscent of the simplicity of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s own marriage in the prison-city of Akka—should provide a thought-provoking example to the Bahá’ís everywhere. No one, with the exception of his parents, my parents and a brother and two sisters of his living in Haifa, knew it was to take place. He felt strongly urged to keep it a secret, knowing from past experience how much trouble any major event in the Cause invariably stirred up. It was therefore a stunning surprise to both the servants and the local Bahá’ís when his chauffeur drove him off, with me beside him, to visit the Holy Tomb of Bahá’u’lláh on the afternoon of 24 March 1937. His heart drew him to that Most Sacred Spot on earth at such a moment in his life. I remember I was dressed, except for a white lace blouse, entirely in black for this unique occasion, and was a typical example of the way oriental women dressed to go out into the streets in those days, the custom being to wear black. Although I was from the West, Shoghi Effendi desired me to fit into the pattern of the life in his house—which was a very oriental one—as naturally and inconspicuously as possible and I was only too happy to comply with his wishes in every way. When we arrived at Bahjí and entered the Shrine he requested me to give him his ring, which I was still wearing concealed about my neck, and this he placed on the ring-finger of my right hand, the same finger that corresponded to the one of his own on which he himself had always worn it. This was the only gesture he made. He entered the inner Shrine, beneath the floor of which Bahá’u’lláh is interred, and gathered up in a handkerchief all the dried petals and flowers that the keeper of the Shrine used to take from the threshold and place in a silver receptacle at the feet of Bahá’u’lláh. After he had chanted the Tablet of Visitation we came back to Haifa, and in the room of the Greatest Holy Leaf our actual marriage took place, as already mentioned. Except for this visit, the day he told me he had chosen to confer this great honour on me, and one or two brief moments in the Western Pilgrim House when he came over for dinner, I had never been alone with the Guardian. There was no celebration, no flowers, no elaborate ceremony, no wedding dress, no reception. His mother and father, in compliance with the laws of Bahá’u’lláh, signified their consent by signing our marriage certificate and then I went back to the Western Pilgrim House across the street and joined my parents (who had not been present at any of these events), and Shoghi Effendi went to attend to his own affairs. At dinner-time, quite as usual, the Guardian appeared, showering his love and congratulations on my mother and father. He took the handkerchief, full of such precious flowers, and with his inimitable smile gave them to my mother, saying he had brought them for her from the inner Shrine of Bahá’u’lláh. My parents also signed the marriage certificate and after dinner and these events were over I walked home with Shoghi Effendi, my suitcases having been taken across the street by Fujita while we were at dinner. We sat for a while with the Guardian’s family and then went up to his two rooms which the Greatest Holy Leaf had had built for him so long ago.

The quietness, the simplicity, the reserve and dignity with which this marriage took place did not signify that the Guardian considered it an unimportant event—on the contrary. Over his mother’s signature, but drafted by the Guardian, the following cable was sent to America: “Announce Assemblies celebration marriage beloved Guardian. Inestimable honour conferred upon handmaid of Bahá’u’lláh Rúhíyyih Khánum Miss Mary Maxwell. Union of East and West proclaimed by Bahá’í Faith cemented. Ziaiyyih mother of the Guardian.” A telegram similar to this was sent to Persia. This news, so long awaited, naturally produced great rejoicing amongst the Bahá’ís and messages flooded in to Shoghi Effendi from all parts of the world. To that received from the National Assembly of the Bahá’ís of the United States and Canada Shoghi Effendi replied: “Deeply moved your message. Institution Guardianship, head cornerstone Administrative Order Cause Bahá’u’llah, already ennobled through its organic connection with Persons of Twin Founders Bahá’í Faith, is now further reinforced through direct association with West and particularly with American believers, whose spiritual destiny is to usher in

World Order of Bahá'u'lláh. For my part desire congratulate community American believers on acquisition tie vitally binding them to so weighty an organ of their Faith.” To innumerable other messages his practically universal answer was merely an expression of loving appreciation for their felicitations. But even in these cables we find his reactions were always attuned to the quality and sincerity of the sender. When an individual whom he neither particularly liked nor trusted cabled his congratulations (in what appeared a wholly blameless manner), the Guardian expressed no appreciation but stated: “praying for you Holy Shrines”, as much as to say: “I do not need your congratulations but you certainly are in need of my prayers”! One of the most touching exchanges of cables at that time took place between the Ishqabad Bahá'ís and the Guardian. Through an intermediary Shoghi Effendi cabled: “Kindly wire Ishqabad Bahá'ís greatly value message praying continually protection”. When John and Louise Bosch cabled him: “Illustrious nuptial thrilled the universe”, the Guardian in his reply revealed a little of how deeply the loving messages that poured in stirred him: “Inexpressibly appreciate thrilling message deepest love”. Another particularly warm reply was sent to the Antipodes: “Assure loved ones Australia New Zealand profound abiding appreciation”.

The most significant point, however, associated with the Guardian's marriage is the stress he laid on the fact that it had drawn the Occident and the Orient closer to each other. It had not only done this but other ties had also been reinforced and established. In reply to an inquiry from the American Assembly: “Request advice policy concerning announcement marriage”, Shoghi Effendi stated: “Approve public announcement. Emphasize significance institution Guardianship union East West and linking destinies Persia America. Allude honour conferred British peoples”—a direct allusion to my Scots-Canadian father.

All this had such an effect on the American Community that its national body informed the Guardian it was sending \$19 from each of its seventy-one American Assemblies “for immediate strengthening new tie binding American Bahá'ís to institution Guardianship”—truly a most unusual, pure-hearted wedding gift to the Cause itself!

The work of Shoghi Effendi, after our marriage, went on exactly as before. For over two months my parents stayed in Palestine, mostly at the Western Pilgrim House; although the Guardian went over almost every night for dinner with them, there was no opportunity for any deep personal intimacy to develop. At last the time came for them to leave and one day my mother said to me, “Mary, do you think the Guardian will kiss me good-bye?” (although everyone referred to me by the new Persian name Rúhíyyih Khánum which the Guardian had given me, my own family were naturally allowed to call me Mary, the name they had used all my life). I had never thought of this and I repeated her remark to Shoghi Effendi, but of course did not ask him to do anything about it! My parents were leaving in the afternoon and after lunch the Guardian went alone to my mother's room in the Pilgrim House to see her. When he had left I went to her room and she said, with her eyes shining like two stars, “He kissed me.”

The years passed, and in 1940 my mother, animated by a passionate desire to render the Cause some service in thanks for the infinite blessings bestowed upon her by the Master, the last of which had been this totally unexpected union of her daughter with her beloved Guardian, decided to go to South America and help in teaching the Faith in Argentina, which was just beginning to form a Bahá'í community. The deep bond which developed between my father and Shoghi Effendi really began at this time. Although the Guardian had liked my father and had been drawn to his sterling qualities when he was in Haifa, there had been neither time nor opportunity to form an intimate relationship. Now, when my mother, who was seventy years old and had been in frail health most of her life, set out for the end of the world, the Guardian sensed what this meant to her husband. He cabled him on 22 January 1940: “Profoundly appreciate noble sacrifice dearest love”. He cabled my mother

that same day, when she was sailing, that he was “proud noble resolve”. The Guardian, my father and I had consented to this long journey, but at such an age, and with a heart very far from sound, it was a risk, to say the least.

The reason I record all these personal things is because behind them, in them, pervading them was the spirit of the Guardian and his tender heart, his own dedication to the service of the Cause, his impartial tributes as Head of the Faith, which were all reflected in the events that followed. My mother reached Buenos Aires and died almost immediately of a heart attack. The three cables that came, one from her asking for his prayers, one from my father saying she was very ill and to prepare me, and one from my cousin Jeanne Bolles, who had accompanied her, saying she had died, were all handed by me to Shoghi Effendi. As he read them I saw his face change and he looked at me with an expression of intense anxiety and concern. Then of course, gradually, he had to tell me she was dead. I cannot conceive that any human being ever received such pure kindness as I did from the Guardian during that period of shock and grief. His praises of her sacrifice, his descriptions of her state of joy in the next world, where, as he said in his cable to the Iraq National Assembly informing the friends of her death, “the heavenly souls seek blessings from her in the midmost paradise”, his vivid depiction of her as she wandered about the Abhá Kingdom making a thorough nuisance of herself because all she wanted to talk about was her beloved daughter on earth!—all combined to lift me into a state of such happiness that many times I would find myself laughing with him over the things he seemed to be actually divining.

It was her death that really brought about the relationship between the Guardian and Sutherland Maxwell that raised him to the heights of service he was able to attain before he, too, passed away. On 2 March Shoghi Effendi cabled Daddy: “Grieve profoundly yet comforted abiding realization befitting end so noble career valiant exemplary service Cause Bahá’u’lláh. Rúhíyyih though acutely conscious irreparable loss rejoices reverently grateful immortal crown deservedly won her illustrious mother. Advise interment Buenos Aires. Her tomb designed by yourself erected by me spot she fought fell gloriously will become historic centre pioneer Bahá’í activity. Most welcome arrange affairs reside Haifa. Be assured deepest loving sympathy.”

It was this message that brought my father to Haifa and enabled him, through his deep professional knowledge and experience, to become the instrument of fulfilling the plans of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá by designing a suitable superstructure around the Holy Tomb of the Báb which the Master Himself had commenced. During the war years, Shoghi Effendi, increasingly afflicted by the crisis in his relationship to the members of his family, developed an affection for and intimacy with Sutherland which compensated to some extent for all the sufferings we were going through. It is not easy to be the intimate of one infinitely above you in station and not lose, through familiarity, the respect and esteem due that exalted person. But my father never failed in this. Sometimes, when he had brought a new sketch to show Shoghi Effendi, and the Guardian was sitting in bed, propped up on his pillows looking at it, he would invite Daddy to come sit beside him so they could better go over the details together. One can imagine what it meant to me to see those two beloved heads so close, one white, the other going grey at the temples! Such fleeting moments of peace and family pleasure in the stormy atmosphere of our lives sweetened what was often a very bitter cup of woe.

When my father fell desperately ill in the winter of 1949–50 his condition was despaired of by his doctors. He reached a point where he seemed to have no conscious mind left, could not recognize me, his only and idolized child, at all, and had no more control over himself than if he were six months old. If I had needed any convincing on the subject of whether man has a soul or not I received conclusive proof of its existence at that time. When Shoghi Effendi would come in to see my father, although he could not speak, and gave no conscious sign whatever of the Guardian’s nearness, a flutter, a tremor, some reaction wholly ephemeral but nevertheless visible,

would pass over him because of the very presence of Shoghi Effendi. It was so extraordinary and so evident that his nurse (the best in Haifa) also noticed it and was greatly puzzled by it. It went against all laws of the mind, which, as it fades, remembers the distant past more vividly than the immediate past. Shoghi Effendi determined my father should not die. At his insistence, when no one, including me, had the slightest hope, we took him with his nurse to Switzerland, where he rapidly recovered under the care of our own doctor, a recovery so complete that a few weeks later, when his new Swiss nurse and I took him for his first drive and he caught sight of a café in the midst of a garden, he promptly invited us to go in and have tea with him—an offer I accepted with feelings of wonder and gratitude that are indescribable. It was after this healing had taken place that the Guardian, in a message to America sent in July 1950, reporting progress in the construction of the Shrine of the Báb, was moved to allude to these events: “My gratitude is deepened by the miraculous recovery of its gifted architect, Sutherland Maxwell, whose illness was pronounced hopeless by physicians.”

I often marvelled, during the years my father survived this illness which left him very frail and which manifested itself in recurring gall bladder attacks, one of which brought about his death, at the marvellous gentleness and patience Shoghi Effendi showed this old man. It was a revelation of another side of the Guardian's nature, for by temperament he was impatient, always pressed by his never-ending work. There is no adjective to describe the degree to which my father adored him. His feelings were not only based on his deep faith as a Bahá'í, the respect and obedience he owed him as Guardian of his Faith, but also on his love for him as a man he profoundly admired in every way, and of course because of the personal human relationship which he felt very deeply. I remember when my father's only living sister died in 1942, Shoghi Effendi told him that he must not consider Montreal his first home now, and this his second home, but vice versa. He also told him that now that he was increasingly helping him, he could not spare him. The attitude of Shoghi Effendi to my father's non-Bahá'í relatives (only one sister, who died many years before, had been a believer) was very indicative of his whole nature. I remember at the time of my marriage, when these relatives wrote their warm congratulations to me, they sent their love to “Shoghi”. I was a little embarrassed and undecided about how to convey this message to the Sign of God on earth, but finally decided I should do so and read him the passage from my aunt's letter. He listened carefully, and after a moment said in the sweetest way, “convey my love to them too”. Throughout the years such messages were exchanged. How gracious, noble and unaffected he was in all his acts!

One of the ways Shoghi Effendi would show kindness to my father was by sometimes enthusiastically rubbing some attar of rose perfume on him. In the East there is no foolish prohibition against men using perfume and the Guardian was very fond of this wonderful fragrance. It was really worth seeing to watch the expression on my Scottish father's face! He came of a background and a part of the world where the use of scent for men is anathema. He never even used a scented lotion. Alarm at the thought he was now going to smell very strongly, combined with the pure joy at this loving attention being paid to him by his beloved Guardian, produced a most extraordinary expression on his face!

In 1951 the Guardian again decided to take my father to Switzerland with us; when the time came for our return to the Holy Land we were informed that the food situation was so difficult there that it would be practically impossible to give him the diet of strictly fresh things so essential to prevent a relapse in his health; he himself was anxious to visit his home and see his family after over eleven years of absence. The Guardian therefore decided to send him to Canada with his same devoted Swiss nurse who had cared for him the previous year and was now again with us. It was there, in his old home and the city of his birth, that the news of his elevation by the Guardian to the rank of Hand of the Cause reached him, at a time when his life was rapidly ebbing away.

There had truly been no room at all in the life of Shoghi Effendi for the ordeal which my father's long illness, his recovery, the recurring attacks of his ailment and his final death imposed upon him. When news came in March 1952 that he was so ill I must hasten at once to Montreal if I hoped to see him alive, it was another terrible shock. As I prepared hastily to leave, my one prayer was that if he were going to die he would pass away before I left, so that I would not leave Shoghi Effendi in the midst of all his work only to be present at a time when my father would not even know I was there. This prayer was answered and the news came that he had been released from this world. The grief of Shoghi Effendi was so intense that I had no time to stop and think that, after all, it was my own father who had died. I mention all this because it shows the factors involved in the life of the Guardian and the waves of feeling, of trial and misfortune that beat upon the very fabric of his heart and wore it away.

After Mrs Collins and I had attended the Intercontinental Conference held in Chicago in 1953, with the Guardian's approval we went to Montreal so that I could visit my father's grave, arrange my affairs and, in compliance with his and my mother's wish, present the Canadian National Assembly with our house—the only home in Canada 'Abdu'l-Bahá had visited during His travels in North America. Shoghi Effendi did not forget those he loved; his faithfulness in all his relationships was very strong. After himself cabling to the Bahá'í Assembly of Montreal, he cabled to me the following on 9 May 1953: "Instructed Montreal Assembly gather friends grave Sutherland pay tribute memory. Advise place blossoms Shrine also purchase hundred dollars choicest flowers mostly blue cover grave my behalf. Attach following inscription grateful memory Sutherland Maxwell Hand Cause talented dearly loved architect superstructure Báb's sepulchre Shoghi. Bring copies large size photograph friends assembled grave. Cable date time gathering for remembrance Shrine". The thing that was most touching is that he should have not only given me in Haifa a vial of attar of rose to sprinkle on the grave, and flowers from the threshold of the Shrine of the Báb to place there, but should specify that he wanted me to buy for him mostly blue flowers, remembering that blue was the colour Sutherland always wore. When I returned to Haifa Shoghi Effendi took the many photographs I had brought, looked at them a long time, and kept them for himself.

VIII

INTIMATE GLIMPSES

In seeking to convey even a glimpse of what the beloved Guardian's life was like—the side of his life so little known to anyone but his immediate family—I have decided to quote some excerpts from my own diaries. It must be borne in mind that these were not regularly kept throughout the years, were, like most diaries, only a sketchy picture of events that would have taken hours to record in detail and in later years were practically given up entirely by me owing to lack of strength and time. The references to people in them are not cited for any individual reason but just because they happen to be woven into the background, at that moment, of something going on in Shoghi Effendi's daily life. There is something about the words written down in moments of deep feeling or keen observation that is never quite recovered when one goes over them later on; it is to recapture this feeling of urgency, of poignancy, that I have ventured to publish these few quotations, making no attempt at elaboration or explanation, just lifting the veil a little on an ocean of daily work and sorrow.

[1939] "I sometimes feel that this intense objectiveness of Shoghi Effendi is one of the factors God has endowed him with. He is an absolutely unself-conscious instrument. His impulses are violent and no one (I mean no disinterested observer) could doubt the tremendous achievements of his for the Cause, all carried out on these unhesitating impulses. That is all his decisions—but of course he revolves things for weeks, sometimes years in his mind before acting. All the thought in the world is there but when he feels the urge he never waits five seconds!"

[1939] "The Master gave us a Trust. That Trust is the Guardian. He said 'that no dust of despondency may stain his radiant nature.' Dust of despondency! He has been so abused and tortured by those who should have sustained and encouraged him that his radiant nature is as rare as rare can be now. Sometimes I see it like a sun in his dear face shining through—he suffers so much that many times he has to go to bed because of it, literally prostrated!"

[1939] He suffered: "so often and so inordinately in connection with sending the community away from Haifa."

[8-8-39] "Got up at six today and went to get us the necessary visas (always providing we can get out of Switzerland) and have been on the road just 18 hours! And this is not the first day of rushing . . . and this is typical of my life. No time for anything . . ."

[6-9-39] "Back in the Middle East . . . an utterly exhausting trip, most of the time without sleepers. One night we slept an hour and a half! It does not seem real at all that war has come to the world. Passing through blackened towns—seeing troop trains moving up—waiting to hear the radio news . . . Shoghi Effendi's way has been opened as it always will be—the scene seemed to crash behind us, but we were safely through."

[5-10-39] "He says he feels like a broken reed. No doubt partly due to his having been very ill for ten days with an awful fever—a few times reaching 104 degrees! Z_____ and I have nursed him day and night and to say we have been through a kind of hell is no exaggeration. To be alone with the Guardian so ill and a strange doctor was such a strain and responsibility! I think we slept at most 4 hours a night for a week!"

[22-1-40] “The Guardian and the Cause are invulnerable. I often long to say to the Bahá’ís ‘follow him through hell or heaven, dark or light, life or death, blindly or seeing, cleave to him, he is your only salvation.’ Tonight a man came here. He entered the house a Bahá’í. He left it a Covenant-Breaker. (He refused to obey the Guardian flatly.) He stood a long time at the gate. I wanted to cry out to him ‘Do you leave your soul behind so easily?’ After all these years, reared in the Faith, he throws it away so lightly! And what else has life to offer man except his soul? And the most precious gift of God he drops by the wayside because it is inconvenient and difficult to obey at the moment . . . If the friends only knew how the Master and the Guardian both suffered through the calibre of the local Bahá’ís. Some of them were good. But some were rotten. It’s as if, when someone was unsound in the Covenant, they attacked the very body of the Manifestation, or the Exemplar, or the Guardian. I have seen this. It is like poison. He recovers from it, but it causes him untold suffering and it was from such things that the Master described Himself in His Will as ‘this broken-winged bird.’ It is profoundly organic. It has nothing to do with sentiment at all.”

[*Remark of Shoghi Effendi*] “You cannot be a hero without action. This is the touchstone. Not movement, coming and going, but in the evidences of your character. Jacky [Marion Jack] is a heroine because of her conduct, the heroic spirit reveals itself in her. Martha [Martha Root] had the heroic action. She went ‘til she dropped.”

[*Remarks of Shoghi Effendi*] “The object of life to a Bahá’í is to promote the oneness of mankind”; “Our aim is to produce a world civilization which in turn will react on the character of the individual.” [*Remark of Shoghi Effendi*] “I know it is a road of suffering. I have to tread this road ‘til the very end. Everything has to be done through suffering.”

[2-1-42] “He says maybe this is not the last war before the Lesser Peace, perhaps there will be a stalemate, or a truce, and then it will burst out again, or continue, worse than ever before. Of course he is not dogmatic in this belief, he just says ‘Maybe, it is quite possible.’”

[5-1-42] “They [the family] have all gotten out of tune with the all-pervading melody of this house—the Guardian—and consequently cannot possibly adjust themselves as Bahá’ís when the main thing is dislocated.”

[7-1-42] “All this causes the Guardian agony. I am really concerned about his heart. Last night it was beating so fast, far, far too fast! And sometimes, for hours almost, he breathes heavily and quickly from being too upset . . . there is something in the Guardian like a barometer. It registers your spiritual pressure, so to speak; nothing outward would explain how it is he gets so upset sometimes over a thing he does not yet know! I have seen this happen loads of times. He reacts instinctively and immediately. Often, later, the cause comes to light and one sees a glimpse of the workings of it all. In the end it will kill him. How and when no doubt will be according to the wisdom of God. He will always be triumphant—as he always has been. But gradually, little by little, the incessant problems, the eternal struggle, first with one and then another member of the family, are wearing him down. He is bent. His heart is nervous. His nerves are exhausted . . .”

[16-3-42] “They [the Master’s family] have gone a long way to crushing every ounce of spirit out of the Guardian. By nature he is cheerful and energetic and has a unique and marvellous brightness of nature that is capable of making him fairly scintillate when he is happy or enthused over something. But the perpetual strife of life with the Master’s family, the blows he has sustained in the course of being Guardian (from various crises in the Cause) . . . have all clouded over . . . him. Whenever (during the last 5 years I have been able to observe him) he has begun to brighten, someone would come along and plump down some weight of care or misery on him

and that would be that! It is criminal! How many times I have heard him say: ‘If I were only happy, if they would only make me happy, you would see what I would do for this Cause!’ He is like a spring. Every time it begins to bubble and flow, something comes along and plugs it up again! When one realizes that all the work he has done for the Cause has been in spite of his sufferings and persecutions, and never because he was free and happy and at rest within himself, one realizes how great the accomplishment is and also one wonders what it might have been if he had been happy. Shoghi Effendi has been abused. That is the only word for it, abused, abused, abused. By now he has reached the point of a man fighting with his back to the wall. He says he will fight it out to the last round . . .”

[20-3-42] As Shoghi Effendi sat working on *God Passes By* two army fighter planes in practice flight touched wings, lost control and crashed, one coming down over the roof of our house so low I thought it would sheer through the ceiling of Shoghi Effendi’s room. It landed and burst into flames not 100 yards away at the foot of the street.

[26-4-42] “Shoghi Effendi has been talking to me about his own miseries. He says those around Him killed ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as they killed Bahá’u’lláh—he even says ‘They will kill me too.’ He told me that Haji Ali told him that a few days before His ascension Bahá’u’lláh called him to His room (to speak to him about something or other). He kept pacing back and forth, He was too upset to speak and finally dismissed Haji Ali with a gesture. Haji Ali could see how angry He was though He did not tell Haji Ali why. Then the Guardian said Bahá’u’lláh must have suffered terribly as He could of course foresee how Muhammad ‘Alí would turn against the Master in the future. But He kept it all within Him.”

[18-5-42] “Shoghi Effendi says so often the Master would tell them (His family) that after Him they ‘would all be abased.’”

[4-7-42] “Then there is the invasion of Egypt. He is wondering which is worse—to stay or to go, that is if things get very bad here. This indecision is very trying. But the truth is we are so used to trouble that it almost ceases to trouble us!”

[3-1-43] “Anyone who knew the true story of Shoghi Effendi’s life would weep—weep for his goodness, weep for his pure, simple heart, weep for his labours and his cares, weep for the long, long years in which he has toiled ever more alone, ever more persecuted by those around him! . . . Just the other day he came into my room, all upset over his work. I asked him why he did not read books by other authors of a similar nature to the one he is writing [it was *God Passes By*] so as to be stimulated . . . He said: ‘I have no time, no time. For twenty years I have had no time!’”

[30-1-43] “I am really worried over Shoghi Effendi. When he used to get so very distressed and upset in the past it affected him, but not as it does now. Sometimes I think it will lead to his premature death . . . he breathes so hard, almost like one who has been running, and he has such huge shadows under his eyes. He forces himself to go on and finish the letters he has had piled for days on his desk—but he reads a thing sometimes ten minutes over and over because he can’t concentrate! I think no suffering is worse than seeing someone you love suffer. And I can’t remedy it. All I wonder is how God can stand to see him suffer so.”

[29-11-43] “Although the summer was peaceful in the sense there were no horrible crises . . . I don’t think the Guardian ever worked so hard during his ‘vacation’ before, and I am sure I didn’t! He often says ‘this book is killing me’ to which I invariably answer ‘me too’. In other words the way he has worked on this Centennial

Review [*God Passes By*] is really cruel; for two years he has literally slaved over it—along with all his other work and cares . . .” [Shoghi Effendi had received a particularly dry and feelingless letter from a National Assembly and I was angry over this] “. . . the driest, coldest letters I have ever seen. Why doesn’t he learn from the Guardian who writes people that even are mentally deficient with loving kindness? The Bahá’ís don’t deserve a Guardian and all I hope is God will not change them for another people.”

One of the family had died and the widow came to the house and wanted Shoghi Effendi to accept the terms of his Will and receive money for the Cause, also to receive from her the extremely precious seals of Bahá’u’lláh entrusted to her care by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá when He went on His travels to the West. As she was in contact with the excommunicated members of the family Shoghi Effendi would accept neither . . . I reported to him her conversation (he would not see her, but had sent me in his place):

[26-12-43] “All of this I repeated to Shoghi Effendi at great length and brought him the seals and the Will of _____. He said to tell her he did not want a million seals or the whole of Mt. Carmel, he wanted sincerity and loyalty and that unless she cut herself entirely from _____’s family . . . in her heart, he could do nothing for her, and to keep the seals and the Will . . . the Guardian would have liked very much to have had the seals—so precious—for the Archives, but, as he told me, he could not very well take the seals and put her out of the house! The thing that puzzles me is that it is now 23 years since the Master died, couldn’t she once during those 23 years, many of which she was very close to the Guardian, give him those precious relics which she says were never given her but only entrusted to her! She wanted me to take them when she saw the Guardian would not accept them but I said I would not do that as it would not be Shoghi Effendi’s wish that I should do so. . . .”

“All day Shoghi Effendi types his manuscript [*God Passes By*] and I read the copy before mailing it to Horace [Horace Holley, Secretary of the American National Assembly] to be sure the last mistakes are ironed out, and he and I spend hours reading the original and correcting the pages and putting in the interminable accents!

“I have not even recorded that Daddy, at the Guardian’s request, has made a design for the Shrine of the Báb. Today the minarets or spires (suggested by the Guardian) met with his approval and Dad is to go ahead and work out the details and a final drawing can be unveiled or shown on the Centenary and also provide for a model. The model will be the crucial test—if the Guardian likes it he will announce to the Bahá’í world the plan.

“It seems too utterly marvelous that Daddy should be given this inestimable blessing of designing the Báb’s Shrine. If he succeeds it will be the purest bounty of God and if it is not to be we cannot be surprised for we have already been blessed far beyond our desserts in every possible way as a family!”

[5-7-44] “Shoghi Effendi is by nature an administrator and builder, *par excellence*. The two things we need most just now. How petty man’s vision of things compared to God’s Plan! I think if we praised God a million years, morning, noon and night, we would not get beyond the first ‘T’ of thanks!—and yet we are so blind to our blessings!”

[24-7-44] “Shoghi Effendi cannot stand much more. I am very worried over him . . . they are wearing him away. He was in a terrible condition today and wept. I cannot write about it. I can’t stand it! I wonder how God can endure to see him so.”

[18-12-44] “These are certainly the years. I don’t think Shoghi Effendi will ever face a second crisis like this in his lifetime [the disaffection of family, local community and servants]. I hope not! I am wondering how his

health and nerves can be expected to survive this one!”

[30-1-45] “I can’t go into details now but I must say the degree of incompetent fools—if not rascals—Shoghi Effendi has around him is appalling. He suffers so much! He only sleeps 5 or 6 hours a night. If I could worry any more I would . . .”

[27-2-45] “I feel sure the tide will turn. But oh never, never to find Shoghi Effendi as he was! I don’t think anything in this world will ever be able to efface what these last years have done to him! Time is a great healer of wounds but it cannot remove scars.”

[13-4-45] “. . . Whenever I want to be sure how loyal a Bahá’í is to him [Shoghi Effendi] I look around and see who hates him—if he is well hated by the family I can be quite sure he is the essence of loyalty to the Guardian!”

[6-7-45] “Ali Askar went to the hospital . . . he had declined terribly the last 3 or 4 days . . . all this is so wearing. But I don’t mind anything except to see the great blow this is to the Guardian . . . they don’t die, nor do so many other wretched useless enemies—only Ali Askar. As Shoghi Effendi said the ‘most precious’ person he has! But God will help him. He will, He will, I know He will. He will raise him up in glory—and I was thinking last night that after all one drop of God’s love can compensate for a thousand years of pain . . . Shoghi Effendi went to see him while I was there today. He is now planning a bang-up funeral for him because he (Shoghi Effendi) desires it and because the enemies require it. But all this is so hard, so hard for him . . . Shoghi Effendi said ‘All I had left was you and your father and Ali Askar and now God takes Ali Askar!’”

[8-7-45] “I went up to the hospital at 4 P.M. and stayed ’til 8. Shoghi Effendi told me to tell Ali Askar he had revealed a telegram about him for the Persian friends in which he described him as the ‘lion of the jungle of the love of God’ and mentioned all his long services, etc. When I told this to Ali Askar—who was fully conscious only very weak—the cutest little tickle of a smile of happiness went over his face . . . I told him he had gone to heaven before leaving this world—the heaven of the Guardian’s love, good-pleasure and praise. He kept silent for some time (except for some signs of muttered appreciation) and then, evidently perfectly grasping the fact that such a telegram meant that he is going to die, collected himself and said the book he had ordered . . . he wanted . . . given from him to Shoghi Effendi . . . When I came and reported all about Ali Askar to Shoghi Effendi and said how he wanted the book bound for the Guardian, his eyes filled with tears! Poor beloved Shoghi Effendi he is the most abused man on earth! Everyone should rejoice over Ali Askar—he died like a king. . . . Today he told the women—he called them to the drawing room—that Ali Askar had served in such a manner that in the end the pilgrims wrote him and signed themselves ‘the servant of the servant of the house’! He said he was like the words in the Tablet of Ahmad—a river of life to the loved ones and a flame of fire to the enemies. Then as he left he said ‘He is in the Supreme Concourse, conversing with its inmates’! Well, what more does any man want of this life? Then he went to the Shrine this afternoon and after visiting told _____ to bring all the flowers from both thresholds. He went in alone to Ali Askar, anointed him with two bottles of attar of rose, laid the flowers on his body—wept for him—what does any man want of this world more than that! . . . Shoghi Effendi told me something so touching when he came back last night, that when he was alone with the body he remembered ‘How that man had served me’, that . . . he went and pulled down the sheet and looked at him and said he wanted to say ‘Ali Askar wake up, get up!’ because it seemed he could not be dead, he looked so natural . . .”

[11-7-45] “The funeral was perfect. Shoghi Effendi spoke of him; then he called for the coffin to be brought up to the upper room of the Pilgrim House, where he sits; then he and all stood for the Prayer for the Dead; then he

sprinkled attar of rose on it; then raised it; then followed it to the door, gave instructions and seated the first two taxis . . . a twenty-five car funeral . . . then they all left and Shoghi Effendi visited the Shrine and had _____ gather all the flowers and take them from the threshold to the grave . . . Well Ali Askar must be in Seventh Heaven—everyone is sighing and wishing they were he!—including me.”

[14-7-45] “Now Shoghi Effendi is ill. He has had an attack of indigestion from, I should say, utterly exhausted over-strained nerves. It is not the first time he has it either. The wonder is he is alive . . . and he has a fever now—I hope to God he has not got something serious . . . I just took his temperature—it’s 103–3/5!”

[15-7-45] “I am so tired of the frights Dr. _____ gives me! Now he says this may be appendicitis and dysentery, visions of rushing madly to Jerusalem in an ambulance [there was then no surgeon we could trust so precious a patient to in Haifa] with Shoghi Effendi and Dad—but I can’t believe it will come to that . . . just rush, rush, and as to the worry my brain feels just transfixed! . . . every hour I take his temperature. He is so sweet—what a crime he has been so treated by those around him . . . thank God I don’t think he has or will get appendicitis . . .”

[17-7-45] “Better, but ah so nervous and tired! . . .”

[20-7-45] “I wouldn’t wish on the devil the sufferings Shoghi Effendi and I pass through. I could never describe them—mental and nervous anguish . . . alone . . . work, work, work, all day long. Buying land, problems, letters, questions, mischief, ill-will, suspicion, ad infinitum.”

[11-4-46] “Shoghi Effendi told Dad to set plans in motion for building the first unit of the Shrine—Hallelujah!”

[20-4-46] “. . . It is all too much for the Guardian . . . and yet he has written a marvelous Convention cable with a new Seven Year Plan and is starting on the Shrine. But he suffers too much, too much!”

[25-5-46] “Shoghi Effendi and I have no one left now but Daddy [and two loyal Bahá’ís, one almost 80], he is everything and does everything: he attends to all the banking, mails all the letters, sends all the telegrams, does all the errands that are confidential—for visas, Government matters, City Hall, etc.—and consults and designs, etc., all at the age of 71. He is doing the work of Ali Askar, Riaz and Hussein. He never complains . . . Shoghi Effendi and I have been talking about our plans; he says we must go . . . it seemed so terribly hard to leave Daddy, old and tired once again, with all the work of the Cause and no rest or respite. But when I talked to him about it today he was marvelous, said he can manage everything, not to worry over him, that everything will be all right. I can’t put it into words, being so very tired (I’ve had 3 good cries today) how wonderful his spirit is, so unassuming, yet so noble and heroic.”

[18-7-47] “She [Gladys Anderson] arrived on the 30th of March . . . She does all Daddy’s work now, thank Heaven! . . . she does banking affairs, sends mail and cables, runs errands, sees people . . . The end of April Daddy went to Cyprus—first vacation in 7 years—and spent 6 weeks. It did him a lot of good and now he is starting on the working drawings of the Shrine of the Báb.”

[12-2-48 *From a letter of Rúhíyyih Rabbani*] “I used to be able to get a Jewish stenographer to help me but now no Jew will come to this street if he can help it as it is in the Arab part of town. That is, it is in the old German colony and in our neighborhood are mostly Arabs and English people. It may seem unbelievable to you to think that we live in a street where a man could be murdered in cold blood just for walking down it, but that is Palestine today. Of course there are a few brave fatalists who take a chance and come down ninety miles an hour,

but they are considered foolhardy to say the least. . . . It is all so tragic. And saddest of all is the way the human mind adapts itself to such an atmosphere. Where once a gun shot would have made your blood run cold and filled you with indignation, you soon, from endless repetition, just get used to it, curse whoever is doing it and the other side too, for good measure, and go on about your business. Later you hear who and how was shot by those bullets. It's really disgusting, unspeakably disgusting, that such a condition in the Holy Land should have been allowed to develop through intrigue and negligence . . . Rage is my primary emotion these days. The senseless wanton murder infuriates me. Most people want nothing more than to be left alone. The bloodthirsty are the exception, not the rule. But they do exist, alas. Why doesn't someone shoot them? They always shoot the wrong people, in all fighting, as far as I can see!"

[1-3-48] "Arms are sold openly in Arab quarters. The Bahá'ís here, in Akka, from Tiberius, etc., all testify to this . . . Hassan said he and his cousin Muhammad were sitting in a cafe in Tiberius; they heard a boy hawking, he was crying 'Grenade, grenade!' Hassan could not believe his ears so he called him over and asked him what he was selling? He said bombs. He had a sack on his back. This he obligingly dumped on the ground and unloaded a pile of hand grenades! (Mills bombs) 'How much are they each?' asked Hassan. 'Seventy-five piastres' said the peddler! Needless to say he did not buy . . . I saw a man from my own bedroom window a few days ago with a revolver in his hand and a crowd of Arabs around him. He wanted to make sure it was working so he came over to our garden wall, fired two shots at it, and headed off for the town, probably to do his bit of murder."

[11-4-48] "Dad and Ben [Ben Weeden, Gladys Anderson's husband] left in an armoured taxi for Tel Aviv! They are supposed to go by plane on the 13th from Lydda on to Rome to place contracts for the Shrine columns and ornamentation if possible."

"Gladys will now sleep over at this house . . . so we can have her near us as the shooting is too much for her to be all alone in the Pilgrim House at night . . . Besides it is dangerous for anyone to come and go across the street after dark . . . we told Ben we would bring her over here, so he won't worry."

[21-4-48] "We could not visit Bahjí owing to circumstances and visited the Shrine here. Afterwards the car could not get up to the Gardens or leave them, rather, because of the shooting on the road and its being closed off. So Shoghi Effendi walked home down the steps near the Gardens and so did Gladys and I."

[23-4-48] "As I am tired unto death this will be short . . . The battle of Haifa is something well reported, I guess, everywhere, so I will only report my days and nights. The battle itself was constant and real war. That night for me it was like sleeping at the bottom of a stagnant pool which someone constantly was stirring. I was so tired I did sleep sometimes, but then dream and firing and bombs became all one torpid mixture which was almost worse than sleeping or waking. All these days Shoghi Effendi has been frightfully upset with the A_____, with M_____ and about other problems."

[25-4-48] "I am still trying to get to the main point of this memorandum: On the 23rd, the day after the battle for Haifa, Dr. Weinshall [the Guardian's lawyer] phoned me and asked how we were? I said we were all well and keeping at home. He said 'I hope you are not leaving?' I said of course not, we have no intention of leaving, why should we leave? He said no reason on earth, he was glad to hear it. Then I said, we know the Jews and the Jews know us, we have nothing to fear from them. He said that was certainly true and that all had the greatest respect for us. He also asked if any of our servants were leaving and I said no, of course not. Then after a little mutual exchange of thought on how foolish the mass exodus of the Arabs was he asked me to give his very kindest regards to Shoghi Effendi. When the Guardian heard this he told me to go and thank him and tell him he felt he

wanted him to know something for his own information and then I told him all about Monib's marriage to Jamal Husseini's daughter, etc. He was very surprised and wrote down his and Hassan's name. I also told him about Ruhi being out and that as he might have wondered at the dissension in our own family the real reason was not only religious but on grounds of political affiliations and so on. I told him we would send him (this was yesterday in another conversation) the cable the Guardian sent, for him to see it . . .

"Today I again phoned Weinshall and told him that we wanted to give him the names of those people who had no claim on us if they pretended to be Bahá'ís. I said Shoghi Effendi naturally resents very much that people who for ten or fifteen years have been put out of our community . . . should now seek to make good their relation to the Jews by claiming to be Bahá'ís, when we ourselves don't know what they have been doing all these years."

[27-4-48] "Yesterday we had a moment of mad excitement as suddenly the maid rushed up and knocked and said the Haganah wanted to get in. Fortunately I was dressed . . . and went down as quickly as I could for it seemed first our dumb bunny . . . went to the door, when she saw a gang of Jews with tommy guns and revolvers she nearly had a fit and went to call Banu, Banu came and the Jews said 'Open the door', she said she had to call the lady of the house and meantime was rushing looking for B___ who was not there and then to call me and they said 'If you don't open it we'll break it in!' At this juncture I arrived and immediately let them in. They were five, all young men. I asked if they spoke English and one said he spoke a little. I asked him if he knew whose house this was, the Head of the Bahá'í Community, and he said yes, but somehow I think they did not know and were attracted there for one of two reasons, either because shortly before a truck load of Arabs stopped for a while in front of our door and they thought we had Arabs here or because of our car, for one of their first questions was 'Whose car is that in the garage?' When I told them they were satisfied. It turned out one of them spoke Persian as he said his mother was a Persian though he was from 'Yerushalim' so I talked to him in Persian all the time. They did not seem keen on searching the house, were very decent and polite and told me, at first, not to be afraid, to which I replied I certainly was not! After a very brief look about, and refusing to go downstairs or into the kitchen etc., they left. . . .

"Gladys and I go and come, as we have been doing uninterruptedly for months, in good times and in bad, to the Jewish quarter. I think this has been very wise, though when all the Arabs were sniping the Jews and we had our own Arab guards here in this very street, it was a risky thing to do and we went less often, but we went. This has shown the many Jews who know us that we are not fair weather friends who stay away the moment it gets ticklish. Our car was always searched each time by Jewish guards and often, to those who did not know us, we had to show our American passports. Indeed one day last week, as we came back from the Jewish quarter and slowed down at the barrier a Jewish car shot in front of us and began to talk to the guards. We could not get by and he did not move so I asked the guard if he could not pull forward. He was a little embarrassed and said that they say they have seen this car with an Arab driving it. I said 'That is quite true, do you know whose car it is? It belongs to Shoghi Effendi the Head of the Bahá'í Faith and we have an Arab taxi driver who comes every afternoon and drives him up to the Bahá'í Gardens and back home, otherwise we always drive ourselves. If you watch, in a quarter of an hour you will see this same car come by on Mountain Road going to get him with the Arab driving it.' As this was the truth he seemed to recognize it as such and we had no more trouble. . . .

"B___ told me something amusing: I asked if our Arab neighbours were going. . . . He said every day they ask me 'Is Shoghi Effendi leaving? They say when he does they will. He said the Palestine policeman now living in K___'s house asked him when he should go and K___ told him: 'When you see Shoghi Effendi leave, grab your coat, lock the door and follow him!' The man also said . . . 'If you don't tell me Shoghi Effendi is planning

to go, if he does, you are responsible for my life.' The sudden esteem in which our neighbours hold us is rather funny after 25 years ignoring the Cause and the Guardian!"

[4-5-48] "Today the car was stolen! [A gift to Shoghi Effendi from Roy Wilhelm. The Guardian had had no car for years as the old one was sold during the war owing to no spare parts.] My God what a day! At 2:30, as Gladys and I sat over our coffee at lunch, the girl came and said a Jew was at the door. Gladys went to see what he wanted. To make a long story short he was our local Haganah chief, Mr. Friedman, with about 20 armed men, who said they had been called by the Haganah Guard (2 are on duty in our street) as 5 armed men were hovering about our garage door and when he pointed his revolver at them and said to get going they turned their guns on him and told him to move fast so 5 to 1 he went for help. They had had a jeep and when the reinforcement got back they were gone. But although the padlock on our door was sawn through, the door was closed from the inside so they thought it was still there. I looked through the keyhole and what a ghastly emptiness—no Buick! Poor Gladys rushed around to the little door at the back and, indeed, no Buick! The Haganah Guard implied Jews had taken it (or English) but would not say outright. Well Friedman notified the Haganah. Gladys and Mansoor notified the army and Stanton St. Police. I phoned Dr. Weinshall, who advised us to go to the Hadar Hacarmel Police Station. Shoghi Effendi was calmer than anyone else, and only said 'How it will rejoice my enemies!' I guess none of us hoped to really see the car again—but how sad it was to have our big lovely Buick, just received after so long a time, gone! With some difficulty I got a Jewish taxi for the Guardian. The driver said 'If Jews have taken your car you'll get it back again!' I went with Gladys to the Police Station and waited outside while she made a report, then we left for Weinshall a description of the car as he had said to give him one so he could help. Then our nice taxi driver took us to another Haganah place and we again reported. Then a strange thing happened! We were walking home tired and dispirited, and in the window of a cosmetic shop on Herzl Street she saw a hand lotion I had tried several times to get. I thought I would not bother, but then I decided to get it and went in. The proprietor has known Dad and me for years so he asked about Daddy and I enquired about his old father, etc. I was not going to say anything about the car as I felt humiliated about it but after paying for my things I started out without them. That looked so foolish that I apologized and said 'I am very upset because our car has just been stolen!' The man said 'But I saw your car today at about 2:15 in the new Business Center! And I was surprised because I wondered how you could sell such a beautiful new car!' It seems he had seen Gladys and me driving by the day before and remembered the car vividly and the U.S. license plates! He said Jews had been in it and a Jew driving it and it was just around the corner from the Savoy Hotel. He also said please not to give his name as a witness, but I said then it won't help us, so he weakened and said we could. Of course we rushed back to the police station and reported what he had said and when I got home I found Mr. Friedman had left his number for me so I called him and told him and he said 'That's all I need to know. Now I know they brought it into our part of town I can get them!' Some time later the Hadar Police Station called and said 'Your car has been located and you will get it back tomorrow so don't worry.' Mr. Friedman also phoned and said the same thing, and sure enough, about 11 A.M. the 4th he phoned and said he could come get Gladys to get the car and she drove up to Hadar Police Station and got it! My Goodness, we were all happy! The funny thing is, on our way home, before going to that store I had been saying only a miracle could get it back!

"But it now seems that the 5 young armed Jews (written of separately) who came here just after the Jews took Haifa, and who claimed to be Haganah men, and the young fellows in a jeep (the jeep appears all along the line so I think it forms a connecting link) who B_____ one night found trying to break into the garage and he told them he would open it, they need not break the door in, and they went in and circled the car and he finally said 'If you want to know all about whose car this is come and phone your superiors, come phone Dr. Weinshall' and then they hastily departed—anyway we all now believe they were always the same men and probably Irgun Zvi Leumi men, certainly not Haganah!"

[14-5-48] “Tonight the Mandate ends at midnight! War starts, is raging already, what does the future hold? . . . Daddy and Ben are supposed to get back tomorrow! I am tired!”

[15-5-48] “Dad comes home! I could hear heavy fire in the hills between here and Nakura, the Lebanese frontier. Yesterday too, when the Jews took Akka, we heard heavy firing, but now all the time the rattle of machine guns is clearly audible. It reminds me of the days when the British took the Lebanon during the war—only then we were sure the battle would go away from us. Now, who knows? And the distances in Palestine are so tiny—ten miles can change the whole course of a battle, success or defeat . . .

“Dad and Ben, met by Gladys, got up to the house by 1:30 P.M. They came on the S.S. Argentina, got here last night, two days ahead of schedule as they skipped both Alexandria and Tel Aviv. Their trip has been marvelously successful in every way. How can one ever thank God for His miracles and mercies?”

[3-7-48] “Today, as Shoghi Effendi said to Daddy who had come over this evening to see him after dinner, ‘Well, the historic decision to commence work on the Shrine has been taken at 10:15 (P.M.) today!’ and he shook hands with him! . . . P.S. 11:30 P.M. I can hear explosions in the distance. God help this poor country!”

[6-7-48] “Shoghi Effendi is greatly concerned that maybe on Friday war will start again. What a terrible prospect. As he told Ben and Gladys and me the worst threat is to the Shrine of Bahá’u’lláh. Now that Majdi-d-din and Shoah Bahá’í are living in the Mansion—if the Arabs come, the consequences are only too clear—oh dear, so many burdens, so many problems . . . if it were not for faith where would we be?

“He praised Dad very highly to Ben and Gladys, said everyone loves him, he has a very pure heart and that aside from all that he chose him for his qualifications as an architect.”

[28-12-48] “I feel so exhausted. I don’t seem this year to have any resistance left to life . . . it feels serious, but maybe it is not. I hope not, for poor as I am, I am still needed, still better than nothing . . .

“Tonight Solel Boneh’s bid came in for building the Arcade £18,000. Terrible! Shoghi Effendi is very distressed and discouraged; now the stones are here and coming; he has torn up the tiling, put in the foundation, torn down the curve of the mountain behind the Shrine! He says he will not pay anywhere near this price—oh dear! So many problems, problems. God give me strength to serve and keep my poor nerves going—”

[20-1-49] “This will be a sort of short-hand noting of news. The weather has been foul—just when we have 80 odd cases still in the port to take up to the Shrine. I just can’t sleep for listening to the rain. It wakes me up because I know it is delaying the work . . . just one thing after another all the time. We all seem to run faster and faster this year, owing to the Shrine work.”

[21-1-49] “What a day, what a day. Days like this should be against the law. Last night an invitation to meet the Prime Minister at the Municipal Reception was received by the Guardian. He decided to send Daddy and Ben. Today the loading at the port, after four days rain, was to begin again. It has all been bedlam . . .

“Just now, at four fifteen, the Mayor phones me in person and says he has ‘done his duty’ and arranged for the Guardian to call on Ben Gurion at 7:15 tonight at Mr. D_____’s house on the top of the mountain . . . It may all seem like nothing on paper—but it just about kills those who live through it all. Everything here is done the hard way. But I am very glad the Guardian is going to meet the Prime Minister. Last night, when he decided it would

be very inappropriate to go himself to the reception, he told me he would be willing to make a concession and call on the Prime Minister himself, but not be lost in a crowd or not be treated as befits his position. So I begged him to let me phone the Mayor and he did and this is the result.

“It is now 7 o’clock and the Guardian and Daddy, driven by Ben, have just left . . . As Shoghi Effendi has been trying for twenty-five years to get the Cause here to be recognized as not a local community but a world centre, and he not a local or national head, but a world head, this opportunity to meet the Prime Minister is very important. No doubt Ben Gurion feels he is being very condescending—if only he knew what an honour is being conferred on him and how condescending God is being to him tonight! Such is the smallness of men’s lives and the vanity of the world.

“Well, the interview is over. Lasted about 15 minutes. When they got there the Guardian found the front door ajar, he went in, saw no one, knocked on the door, went further and found Ben Gurion and wife and host finishing their dessert in one of these small houses where alcoves divide the rooms . . . Ben Gurion got up and took the Guardian into the neighbouring . . . room and courteously offered him the best seat, and so on. Then he asked some questions about the Cause, said he knew about it, that it is a ‘social movement’, whereupon the Guardian said it was much more than that, divinely inspired from God, etc. He put it not too strongly. Ben Gurion also asked his exact relation to the Faith and was told.

“The Guardian did not want to keep him from his dinner and after a short interview rose to go. Ben Gurion took him to the other door and a servant to the car and opened the door. . . .

“Ben Gurion asked the Guardian if there was a history of the Cause he could read and Shoghi Effendi said he would be pleased to send him a book. [He sent him *God Passes By*.] He also said he would be happy to show him the Shrines if ever he had the opportunity, but the Prime Minister said he was terribly busy, which can be taken as a refusal, I guess . . . It was obviously very courteous of a man as rushed as Ben Gurion two days before the general election, to fit an interview in and I think it was a really friendly act on Mayor Levy’s part to arrange it. The first thing the Guardian said was that he wished to reaffirm in person the sentiments he had expressed in his letter which the Prime Minister remembered receiving. Ben Gurion said yes, of course, . . . The Guardian was very warm to him, he told me, and I am sure his wonderfully clear, sincere and frank personality must have impressed a man who must be a shrewd judge of human nature . . .”

[8-2-48] “At 3 in the morning the lighter sank with all our stones on it! Just one more nice happening. When I told Shoghi Effendi he said ‘I don’t care anymore!’ This was all that remained—as far as we can see! The weather, the eternal complications, and now this! They can salvage it—so I hear.”

[11-2-48] “Shoghi Effendi is almost all day, every day, up in the Gardens due to the excavations behind the Shrine, etc., which he is directing personally to economize.”

[5-4-49] “Shoghi Effendi saw Gladys and Ben (and me) in the drawing room, as he does sometimes when he has time. I saw he had mud on his coat and asked what he had been doing? He said ‘I had a fight with General Mud, only he won!’ Then he explained he had fallen down again, it was so slippery from the rain—but we all had a good laugh.”

[3-4-52] “I doubt if I have time or strength to keep a diary anymore—which is a pity as I see and know so much of the inner workings here . . .”

[15-9-55] “I suppose there are as many hells as there are people. But not many, I hope, live in the particular hell Shoghi Effendi and I do. If someone should ask me to define it I would say that though there are so many kinds, in principle there are two divisions: hell without responsibility and hell with responsibility . . .” [For those who may not understand the English usage of the word “hell” as employed here, I mean agony, intense, burning suffering.]

[14-11-55] “Word reached the Guardian Varqa has died. Shoghi Effendi said ‘He was the finest man we had.’ Of course it was expected for a long time, but he feels the loss as there are so few outstanding, capable Bahá’ís.”

IX

WAR

In reading over my diaries—so very little of which I have quoted out of hundred of pages written off and on throughout the years—it seems strange to me there is practically no reference to the World War raging everywhere during almost six years and constituting such a dire threat to the safety of the World Centre of the Faith and particularly to the Guardian himself as Head of that Faith. Nothing could more eloquently testify to the internal upheavals he was going through during all those years than this blank. The day-to-day pressures and the work, worry and mental exhaustion were so great that it crowded mention of this constant threat and anxiety into the background. Shoghi Effendi was the keenest observer of political events and kept abreast of all happenings. His intelligence and analytical faculties did not permit him to lull himself into any false complacency, induced by the rather childish idea people sometimes have of what “faith” means. He well knew that to have faith in God does not mean one should not use one’s mind, appraise dangers, anticipate moves, make the right decisions during a crisis.

It is with great reluctance that I refer to the Guardian’s private life, so blameless, so full of trials. Two considerations prompt me to do so at all; the first is that unless one catches at least a glimpse of what he went through as an individual human being one cannot truly appreciate the grandeur of his achievements; and the second is that any famous person is the subject, throughout the centuries, of intense historical research into details; many things will come to light in records gathered here and there and if there is no witness to explain them they are likely to be grossly misinterpreted and all sorts of foolish tales spun out of pure imagination.

At the time when my father was invited by the Guardian, after my mother’s unexpected death in Argentina in March 1940, to come and live with us, Shoghi Effendi had decided, for reasons of his own, to go to England. For those who were not in the Middle East-European theatre of war it is almost impossible to convey any picture of the infinite difficulties involved in such a move at such a moment in history. In spite of the prestige and influence of the Guardian, the fact remained that no visa for England could be granted by the authorities in Palestine and our application was therefore forwarded to London. Shoghi Effendi also appealed to his old friend Lord Lamington and requested him to use his good offices in ensuring a visa was granted, but by the time it became imperative for us to leave at once for England if we were ever to reach there, no answer had yet been received by the Palestine authorities and Lord Lamington’s reply was long delayed in reaching us. Impelled by the forces which so mysteriously animated all his decisions, the Guardian decided to proceed to Italy, for which country we had obtained a visa, and we therefore left Haifa on 15 May in a small and smelly Italian aquaplane, with the water sloshing around under the boards our feet rested on as if we were in an old row-boat. A few days later we arrived in Rome and I went to Genoa to meet my father who arrived on the last sailing the S.S. *Rex* ever made as a passenger ship. As soon as we returned the Guardian sent my father and me to the British Consul to inquire if our visa had by any chance been transferred from Palestine, but there was no news and the Consul said he was absolutely powerless to give us a visa as all authorizations had to come from London and he was no longer in a position to contact his government! We returned with this heart-breaking news to the Guardian. He sent us back again. Of course we obeyed him implicitly because he was the Guardian but neither my father nor I could see what more there was we could possibly do than we had already done. Nevertheless we found ourselves again seated opposite the Consul and saying very much the same things all over again, with the exception that I

happened to mention that Shoghi Effendi was the successor and grandson of Sir ‘Abdu’l-Bahá ‘Abbas. I had already, of course, said he was the Head of the Bahá’í Faith and so on. The Consul looked at me and said “I remember ‘Abdu’l-Bahá . . .” and went on to recount some contact he had had with the Master; he was obviously deeply touched by this memory. He took our passport, stamped a visa for England in it and said he had no right whatsoever to do so and that it was not worth the paper it was stamped on, but it was all he could do; if we wished to try to enter England with it, that must be our own decision and we risked being refused. With this we immediately left Italy for France, passing through Menton on 25 May and proceeding to Marseilles. Within a few days Italy entered the war against the Allies.

It is hard to describe the period that followed. The whole episode was like a brilliantly lit nightmare—a personal nightmare for us and a giant nightmare in which the whole of Europe was involved. As our train made its way to Paris every station was crowded with thousands of refugees fleeing before the rapidly crumbling Allied front in the North. There was no way of getting any accurate information, chaos was descending. In Paris we discovered to our dismay that all ports to England were closed and the last hope of reaching that country—a hope diminishing hourly—was to go down to the little port of St Malo and see if we could still get a boat from there. We, and hundreds of other people trying to get home to England, had to wait a week before at last two boats succeeded in calling at St Malo. I never saw the Guardian in the condition he was during those days. From morning to night he would mostly sit quite still, immobile as a stone image, and I had the impression he was being consumed with suffering, like a candle burning itself away. Twice a day he would send my father and me to the boat company in the port to inquire if there was any news of a ship, and twice a day we had to come back and say “no news”. It may seem strange to others that he should have been terribly concerned, but a mind like his was so infinitely better equipped to understand the danger to the Cause of our situation than we were—and God knows I was ill with worry too. Both my father and I were still feeling the great shock of my mother’s sudden death from a heart attack and this, combined with everything else, made him, at least, almost numb. Not so the Guardian, who realized that if he fell into the hands of the Nazis, who had already banned the Cause in their own country and were closely associated with the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem—who was actively engaged in Arab politics and the avowed enemy of the Guardian—he would very likely be imprisoned, if not worse, and the Cause itself be left with no leader and no one to encourage and guide the Bahá’í world at such a time of world chaos. It seems to me the situation was very similar to those days in Akka when the Master had been in danger of being taken off to a new place of exile and when He too had waited for news of a ship. At last we embarked on the first of the two boats that came during the night of 2 June to evacuate the people stranded in St Malo and we sailed in total darkness for Southampton, where we arrived on the following morning. It was the day after we left, as I remember, that the Germans marched into St Malo.

We had almost as much difficulty getting out of England as we had had in getting into it. It was the time of the great “evacuate the children” drive which had top priority and it was only due to the position of Shoghi Effendi, and my father’s friendship with the man who was Canadian High Commissioner in London, that we succeeded in getting passage for South Africa, sailing for Cape Town on the S.S. *Cape Town Castle* on 28 July. It was a fast ship and once we had left the shores of England in a large convoy we were on our own; I remember how I used to watch the strange zigzag wake of the ship on the sea as she pursued an erratic course in order to make her a less vulnerable target for submarines. As Italy’s entry into the war had closed the Mediterranean to Allied ships the route through Africa was the only way open to us to get back to Palestine. Although Shoghi Effendi had crossed Africa once before, early in his Guardianship—sailing from England in September 1929 and proceeding, mostly overland, from Cape Town to Cairo—he had not been able at that time to obtain a visa for the Belgian Congo, which for some reason always fascinated him. His venturesome spirit, his love of scenic beauty, attracted him to the high mountains and deep jungles of the world and had led him to make his previous trip. Now, by

some strange miracle, in the very middle of the war, we were able to get a visa for the Congo. When we reached Stanleyville and made an excursion into the deep virgin jungle, I realized that it was Shoghi Effendi's love of natural beauty that had been one of the reasons which had led him there; he wanted to see the flowering jungle. Alas, it was neither the place nor the season for this and we went on our way disappointed.

Shoghi Effendi was too concerned over my father's health (he was sixty-six and frail) to let him accompany us overland and so we had deposited him safely in a hotel in Durban pending his ability to secure air passage. The waiting list was long and non-government and non-military people were constantly off-loaded in favour of those with top priority. It was during these weeks of waiting that he designed my mother's tombstone which incorporated not only his and my ideas but a valuable suggestion for its beautification made by Shoghi Effendi himself.

After a three-day drive from Stanleyville to Juba, in the Sudan, followed by a trip down the Nile by boat, the Guardian and I arrived in Khartoum—as far as I am concerned the hottest place on earth—and as we sat on the porch of our hotel after dinner, up out of the dark came a group of air passengers to spend the night, and with them Mr W. S. Maxwell! It was a strange fluke indeed that brought us together in the heart of Africa and it was also very reassuring as neither of us had the faintest idea where the other was and no way whatsoever of getting in touch. In Durban Shoghi Effendi had simply instructed my father to go to Palestine, to a hotel in Nazareth and wait for us there, when we could all three return to Haifa together.

To our surprise, the Governor-General, Sir Stewart Symes, invited us to lunch with him at the Palace on 1 October and after this renewal of such an old acquaintanceship, we proceeded on our way to Cairo and Palestine, meeting my father as planned and returning to Haifa about six months after our departure. It may well be imagined that a journey such as this, fraught from beginning to end with uncertainty, suspense and danger, was in itself a tremendous and completely exhausting experience. Although Shoghi Effendi never visited the Western Hemisphere and never went farther east than Damascus, it is interesting to note he twice traversed Africa from south to north.

How astonished the hard-pressed British Bahá'ís would have been, if, in conjunction with his cable to their National Assembly of 27 December 1940 “wire safety London Manchester friends constantly praying loving admiration” they had been informed that he himself had escaped the great blitz on London by a narrow margin and had only recently succeeded in getting back to the Holy Land!

The years that followed our return to Palestine witnessed grave dangers for the Holy Land—dangers which also threatened the World Centre of the Faith and its Guardian, as well as Bahá'ís in many countries.

Steeped in the Teachings from his childhood, the alert and observant companion of his beloved grandfather, Shoghi Effendi seems to have always been aware of what he called “the initial perturbations of the world-shaking catastrophe in store for an unbelieving humanity”. Though he saw another war coming, he did not live in a constant state of false emergency. He reassured Martha Root, who in 1927 wrote to him from Europe about her fears: “As to the matter of an eventual war that may break out in Europe, do not feel in the least concerned or worried. The prospect is very remote, the danger for the near future is non-existent”—even though that same year he had stated that the inevitability of another deadly conflict was becoming increasingly manifest. Over and over he prepared the minds of the Bahá'ís to face the fact that a world conflagration was coming. In 1938 he wrote: “The twin processes of internal disintegration and external chaos are being accelerated and every day are inexorably moving towards a climax. The rumblings that must precede the eruption of those forces that must

cause ‘*the limbs of humanity to quake*’ can already be heard. ‘*The time of the end*’, ‘*the latter years*’, as foretold in the Scriptures, are at long last upon us.” And in *The Advent of Divine Justice*, which he wrote at the end of December 1938, he clearly anticipated the war: “Who knows”, he asked, “but that these few remaining, fast-fleeting years, may not be pregnant with . . . conflicts more devastating than any which have preceded them.” And in April 1939 he had written: “the sands of a moribund civilization are inexorably running out”.

As the long shadow of war descended on Europe I remember well the almost tangible feeling of catastrophe that enveloped me when Shoghi Effendi wrote, from the very heart of that continent, the poetic and powerful words that opened his cable of 30 August 1939: “shades night descending imperilled humanity inexorably deepening . . .” A week before Shoghi Effendi sailed from England in July 1940, he had cabled via Haifa (through which all his cables and letters were invariably relayed during his absence from home) that the fires of war “. . . now threaten devastation both Near East Far West respectively enshrining World Centre chief remaining citadel Faith Bahá’u’lláh . . .” It seems unbelievable that in the midst of so many anxieties and after half-a-year’s absence during which we seemed to be racing all the time on the tip of a tidal wave (first to get away from Haifa in time and then to get back to Haifa in time) the Guardian should have had the mental power and physical strength upon his return to the Holy Land to sit down and write such a book as *The Promised Day Is Come*—a book in which he made it quite clear that the “retributory calamity” which had overtaken mankind, whatever its political and economic causes might be, was primarily due to its having ignored for a hundred years the Message of God for this day.

The dangers and problems which the war brought to us in Haifa and to the Bahá’í world in general were faced by Shoghi Effendi with remarkable calm. This does not mean he did not suffer from them. The burden of responsibility was always there; he could never lay it down for a single moment. I remember on one occasion, when I was frantic because he always had to have everything referred to him for decision, even when he was ill, he said that other leaders, even Prime Ministers, could delegate their powers for at least a short time if they were forced to, but that he could not delegate his for a single moment as long as he was alive. No one else was divinely guided to fulfil his function and he could not delegate his guidance to someone else.

Although World War II did not actually reach the Holy Land, for years we lived in the imminent danger that it might do so at any time. We, like so many other countries of the world, had a complete blackout. As the buildings that comprise the Master’s house have almost one hundred windows, this alone created quite a problem; of course it was not necessary or possible to black them all out, but it meant a great deal of wandering around in the dark and frequent calls from irate air-raid wardens. Haifa, being a major port with a large oil refinery, was an important point strategically. The city had various anti-aircraft guns protecting it, two of them about a mile from the Guardian’s home. There were a few bombs dropped but the damage was negligible—indeed the protection miraculous—but we often had air raids, and shrapnel from the big anti-aircraft guns would be sprinkled about. This was an added worry to Shoghi Effendi because a piece of shrapnel the size of a grape could easily have irreparably damaged one of the beautiful marble monuments marking the resting-places of the Master’s family; large pieces were often found near them, but never actually fell on them. We had to build an air-raid shelter but the Guardian and I never went into it. Sometimes when the alert came at night Shoghi Effendi would get up and look out of the window, but usually he did not even do that. The greatest activity was when the British invaded the Lebanon and then for a week we could hear heavy fire, and the port, half a mile from our house, was frequently dive-bombed by the Vichy forces.

But all these things were never very grave or very dangerous. In November 1941 Shoghi Effendi, in a cabled message, had forecast the future and characterized the years immediately before us: “. . . as fury destructiveness

tremendous world ordeal attains most intensive pitch . . .” In spite of what lay ahead of the world, we in Palestine had already, during 1941, passed through what for us were the most agonizing months of the entire war, months which had caused the Guardian intense anxiety. It was during that year that the abortive revolution of the anti-ally Rashid Ali took place in Iraq; the British forces were persistently driven back by General Rommel in Libya and the Germans eventually (in 1942) reached the gates of Alexandria; the Nazi forces occupied Crete—a second springboard for their contemplated conquest of the Middle East; and British and French forces invaded the Lebanon and ousted the regime controlled by the Vichy Government in that country. In addition to these all-too-palpable dangers, the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, the enemy of both the Faith and the Guardian, was the firm ally of the Nazi Government. It does not require much imagination to picture what would have happened to Shoghi Effendi and the Shrines, the World Centre records and archives material, if a victorious German army, accompanied by the scheming and vituperative Mufti, had taken Palestine. Many times Shoghi Effendi said that it was not so much a question of what the Germans would do as the fact that there were so many local enemies who, combining with the Mufti, could completely poison the minds of the Germans against him and thus aggravate a situation already dangerous enough since our Bahá’í ideas were in many respects so inimical to the Nazi ideology.

For months Shoghi Effendi watched the ever-approaching tide of war with the deepest anxiety, weighing in his mind what course to take if an invasion took place, how best to protect in every way the Faith of which he himself was the living emblem.

Throughout the years of the war Shoghi Effendi was in a position to maintain his contact with the mass of the believers in those countries where some of the oldest and most populous Bahá’í communities existed, such as Persia, America, India and Great Britain, as well as the new and rapidly growing centres in Latin America. The relatively small communities in Japan, the European countries, Burma, and for a time Iraq, were the only ones cut off from him—a severance that grieved him and caused him much concern for their fate. Because of this little-short-of-miraculous manner in which contact was maintained with the body of believers throughout the Bahá’í world, Shoghi Effendi was able not only to send his directives to the various National Assemblies but to indicate what this great war signified to us as Bahá’ís. In his epistle known as *The Promised Day Is Come* he stated that “God’s purpose is none other than to usher in, in ways He alone can bring about, and the full significance of which He alone can fathom, the Great, the Golden Age of a long-divided, a long afflicted humanity. Its present state, indeed even its immediate future, is dark, distressingly dark. Its distant future, however, is radiant, gloriously radiant—so radiant that no eye can visualize it . . . The ages of its infancy and childhood are past, never again to return, while the Great Age, the consummation of all ages, which must signalize the coming of age of the entire human race, is yet to come. The convulsions of this transitional and most turbulent period in the annals of humanity are the essential prerequisites, and herald the inevitable approach, of that Age of Ages, ‘*the time of the end*’, in which the folly and tumult of strife that has, since the dawn of history, blackened the annals of mankind, will have been finally transmuted into the wisdom and the tranquility of an undisturbed, a universal, and lasting peace, in which the discord and separation of the children of men will have given way to the world-wide reconciliation, and the complete unification of the divers elements that constitute human society . . . It is this stage which humanity, willingly or unwillingly, is resistlessly approaching. It is for this stage that this vast, this fiery ordeal which humanity is experiencing is mysteriously paving the way.”

So great was the relief and joy of the Guardian when the European phase of the war ended in May 1945 that he cabled America: “Followers Bahá’u’lláh throughout five continents unanimously rejoice partial emergence war torn humanity titanic upheaval” and expressed what lay so deeply in his heart: “gratefully acclaim signal

evidence interposition divine Providence which during such perilous years enabled World Centre our Faith escape . . .” and went on to express an equal thanksgiving for the manner in which other communities had been miraculously preserved, recapitulating the truly extraordinary victories won for the Faith during and in spite of the war. On 20 August 1945 he again cabled: “Hearts uplifted thanksgiving complete cessation prolonged unprecedented world conflict” and urged the American believers to arise and carry on their work, hailing the removal of restrictions which would now enable them to launch the second stage of the Divine Plan. Nothing could provide a better example of the determination, the enthusiasm and the brilliant leadership of the Guardian than these messages sent on the morrow of the emergence of the world from the worst war in its entire history.

Whatever the state of the rest of the world, the internal situation in Palestine continued to worsen in every respect. The holocaust that had engulfed European Jewry; the bitterness induced amongst the Palestine Jews by British policy in regard to Jewish immigration, which was strictly limited and controlled; the burning resentment of the Arabs against that same policy—all served to increase local tensions and hatred. Many of the hardships from which other countries were beginning to slowly emerge, such as severe food rationing, we were now entering. Everything was difficult. We were no longer in danger of being invaded or bombed, but the outlook for this small but sacred country grew steadily blacker as we entered that period which was characterized by Shoghi Effendi as “the gravest turmoil rocking the Holy Land in modern times.”

Shoghi Effendi was exhausted from the strain of the war years, years during which he had not only written *The Promised Day Is Come* and *God Passes By*, but during which he had prosecuted—for who can deny that his was the ceaseless output of enthusiasm, encouragement and energy that galvanized the Bahá’ís into action?—five years of the first Seven Year Plan, during which he had comforted, inspired and held the Bahá’í world together, during which he had steadily enlarged the periphery of the Cause and deepened and expanded the life of its national communities, during which the unique project of building the superstructure of the Báb’s Shrine had been initiated, and during which the family of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, including his own family, had been hopelessly lost to him. He was now approaching fifty, his hair whitening at the temples, his shoulders bent from so much stooping over his desk, his heart not only saddened by all he had gone through but, I firmly believe, wearing out because of it.

As the British Mandate approached its end on 14 May 1948 the situation in Palestine grew steadily worse. The entire country boiled with apprehension and hatred, and acts of terrorism increased steadily. The Arabs, the Jews and the British were all involved; all three of them were well aware of the complete aloofness of the Guardian from the political issues at stake and it is no exaggeration to say he was universally respected—and let alone. This is a fact of major importance, for during the years, and particularly the months, preceding the end of the Mandate there was practically no neutral ground left; Jews paid for the defence of the Jewish community and Arabs paid for the defence of the Arab community. That the Guardian should have been able to steer the small Bahá’í community safely through the dangerous rapids of those days and that he himself should not have been approached for funds to support the cause of his fellow Orientals (who all knew he had been born and bred in the country) testify to the high reputation he had established as a man of unbending principle and iron determination.

Because, however, the Guardian was let alone does not mean he was not exposed to danger or that the Cause itself was not in a grave situation. The large unbuilt-on properties surrounding the Shrine of the Báb were the greatest source of worry because they were flanked by areas occupied by Arabs. Any open space, any place of vantage was a source of fear to both elements of the population who were such frequent victims of sniping, bomb attacks and the throwing of hand grenades. It was therefore a shock to Shoghi Effendi to discover one day, in looking through his binoculars at the Shrine area, that British soldiers had erected a machine gun on our property,

overlooking a road, from which point they evidently felt they would be in a good position to fire on anyone attacking in the vicinity. They removed it, but the alarm it caused was there, the terrible danger that we might in some way become inadvertently involved in the side-taking and killing going on all around us.

I remember another occasion when a Jew who often did some special work for us had just left the Shrine property and some Arabs came and inquired where he was—he might have been killed if he had been found—and the repercussions would have been terrible for a community so passionately against the bloodshed that was taking place all the time, so completely neutral in the political struggle going on. There was often shooting all around the home of the Master, amounting sometimes to minor battles; no one ever shot at us or attacked us, but the danger of being hit was not to be underestimated. As the terrorism increased, certain areas, including our own, were voluntarily blacked out at night with no street lights at all; there were often daytime curfews imposed, when pitched battles or major acts of terrorism took place and only the British forces moved about, their great tanks howling down the abandoned streets, often firing random bursts from their machine guns as they rolled by. The wailing noise of their sirens was a most eerie, unpleasant sound, but at night it was really terrifying to an already nerve-racked population living on the edge of a volcano which might explode any time.

During all this Shoghi Effendi went up Mt Carmel every day as usual, attending to his own business, supervising the work in the gardens, visiting the Shrines and coming home before dark. During this entire period I remember only one or two occasions when, because of the situation, a curfew had been imposed and he was not able to do so. One day, as he was being driven by Mrs Weeden up to the Shrines (our Arab chauffeur had left the country), a car was firing at the car ahead of it, which suddenly passed that of the Guardian and he was thus between the two. The other car soon overtook his and went on with its private war, but one can imagine our feelings when we heard of this incident later on! Yet there was nothing we could do. Everyone who has lived through such experiences knows that there are only two things in such circumstances one can do—go away, or carry on as usual. We just carried on. The following excerpt from one of my diaries, dated 22 February 1948, best illustrates the atmosphere we lived in at that time: “We know Bahá’u’lláh will watch over us. But being human we have our moments of anxiety, such as when shooting flares up all over town and the beloved Guardian has not yet come down from the Shrines, and the road is closed, and he has to come home on foot—then we just know it’s up to Bahá’u’lláh . . . it is no exaggeration to say a night without shooting just isn’t any more. Sometimes it goes on, off and on, all night. But you soon sleep through it except for a bomb . . .”

It was not, however, such dangers as these that caused Shoghi Effendi sleepless nights. His great concern was for the protection of the Twin Holy Shrines. As the Mandate ended and the Arab-Jewish war broke out, a very real danger threatened them and caused him acute anxiety. Bahjí was only about fifteen miles from the frontier, over which an invading army might pour at any moment. This was one worry; the other worry, in a way even more intense, was caused by the mooted plan, at one time seriously considered, of placing the frontiers of the new Jewish State in such a way that its northern one would divide Haifa and Akka and thus the World Centre would be split in two, its Administrative Centre situated in one country and the Holiest Spot on earth, the Qiblih of the Faith, situated in another, hostile to it and hostile to the Faith itself.

Should anyone wonder why the divinely guided Guardian worried so much over such things, I would like to give an explanation, out of my own understanding. It seems to me there are three factors involved in most situations: the Will of God in which His Beneficence, Omnipotence and the destiny He has ordained for man are all involved—and which ultimately rights all wrongs; the element of accident, which ‘Abdu’l-Bahá says is inherent in nature; and the element of individual free will and responsibility. Bearing in mind these factors it is not surprising the Guardian should be deeply concerned over any situation that affected the interests and protection

of the Faith, and should anxiously ponder the problems facing him, seeking to ensure that the right solution was found, the best opportunity seized, the greatest benefit for the Cause obtained.

Many times Shoghi Effendi referred to the miraculous protection the World Centre received during the disturbed and dangerous period of the end of the British Mandate and the firm establishment of the Jewish State. The very list of the dangers avoided and the achievements witnessed during this period—which he enumerated in a cable sent to the American Bahá'í Convention on 25 April 1949—is sufficient to enable us to glimpse the keenness of the anxiety he had experienced and the gravity of the problems with which he had been faced. The published version of this cable pointed out how great had been the “evidences divine protection vouchsafed World Centre Faith course third year second Seven Year Plan” and went on to say: “Prolonged hostilities ravaging Holy Land providentially terminated. Bahá'í Holy Places unlike those belonging other faiths miraculously safeguarded. Perils no less grave than those threatened World Centre Faith under Abdu'l-Hamid Jamal Pasha and through Hitler's intended capture Near East averted. Independent sovereign State within confines Holy Land established recognized marking termination twenty-century-long provincial status. Formal assurance protection Bahá'í holy sites continuation Bahá'í pilgrimage given by Prime Minister newly emerged State. Official invitation extended by its government historic occasion opening State's first parliament. Official record Bahá'í marriage endorsed Bahá'í endowments exempted responsible authorities same State. Best wishes future welfare Faith Bahá'u'lláh conveyed writing by newly elected Head State in reply congratulatory message addressed him assumption his office.”

In the post-war years, as the victories the Bahá'ís were winning multiplied and the United Nations—the mightiest instrument for creating peace that men had ever devised—emerged, many of us no doubt hoped, and wishfully believed, that we had left the worst phase of humanity's long history of war behind us and that we could now discern the first light of that dawn we Bahá'ís are so firmly convinced lies ahead for the world. But the sober, guided mind of the Guardian did not see events in this light. Until the end of his life he continued to make the same remark, based on Bahá'u'lláh's own words, that he had so often made before the war: “The distant future is very bright, but the immediate future is very dark.”

Among the encouraging messages he so frequently sent to the Bahá'ís all over the world, his praises of the wonderful services they were rendering, his plans which he devised in such detail for them to prosecute, ever and anon the note of foreboding and warning would recur. In 1947 he stated that the Bahá'ís had thus far been graciously aided to follow their course “undeflected by the cross-currents and the tempestuous winds which must of necessity increasingly agitate human society ere the hour of its ultimate redemption approaches . . .” In that communication, urging the American Community to press forward with the supremely important work of its second Seven Year Plan, he spoke of the future: “As the international situation worsens, as the fortunes of mankind sink to a still lower ebb . . . As the fabric of present-day society heaves and cracks under the strain and stress of portentous events and calamities, as the fissures, accentuating the cleavage separating nation from nation, class from class, race from race, and creed from creed, multiply . . .” Far from having rounded the corner and turned our backs forever on our unhappy past, there was “a steadily deepening crisis”. In March 1948 he went still further in a conversation I recorded in my diary: “Tonight Shoghi Effendi told me some very interesting things: roughly, he said that to say there was not going to be another war, in the light of present conditions, was foolish, and to say that if there was another war the Atom Bomb would not be used was also foolish. So we must believe there probably will be a war and it will be used and there will be terrific destruction. But the Bahá'ís will, he felt, emerge to form the nucleus of the future world civilization. He said it was not right to say the good would perish with the bad because in a sense all are bad, all humanity is to blame for ignoring and repudiating Bahá'u'lláh after He has repeatedly trumpeted to everyone His Message. He said the saints in the

monasteries and the sinners in the worst flesh pots of Europe are all wicked because they have rejected the Truth. He said it was wrong to think, as some of the Bahá'ís do, that the good would perish with the evil, all men are evil because they have repudiated God in this day and turned from Him. He said we can only believe that in some mysterious way, in spite of the terrible destruction, enough will be left over to build the future."

In November of that same year, again encouraging the American believers to persevere with their Plan, he wrote: "As the threat of still more violent convulsions assailing a travailing age increases, and the wings of yet another conflict, destined to contribute a distinct, and perhaps a decisive, share to the birth of the new Order which must signalize the advent of the Lesser Peace, darken the international horizon . . . Rumbblings of catastrophes yet more dreadful agitate with increasing frequency a sorely stressed and chaotic world . . . so must every aggravation in the state of a world still harassed by the ravages of a devastating conflict, and now hovering on the brink of yet more crucial struggle, be accompanied by a still more ennobling manifestation of the spirit of this second crusade . . ." In that same month he referred to "The deepening crisis ominously threatening further to derange the equilibrium of a politically convulsed, economically disrupted, socially subverted, morally decadent and spiritually moribund society". He went on to speak of the "premonitory rumbblings of a third ordeal threatening to engulf the Eastern and Western Hemispheres" and said "the world outlook is steadily darkening." He urged the Bahá'ís to "forge ahead into the future serenely confident that the hour of their mightiest exertions, and the supreme opportunity for their greatest exploits, must coincide with the apocalyptic upheaval marking the lowest ebb in mankind's fast-declining fortunes."

It went on and on. The victories we won, the praise, encouragement, joy of the Guardian—and the warnings. In 1950 he told the Bahá'ís they should be "undaunted" by the perils of a "progressively deteriorating international situation" and in 1951 informed the European Teaching Conference that the "perils" confronting that "sorely tried continent" were "steadily mounting". But it was really in a most grave and thought-provoking letter, written in 1954, that Shoghi Effendi expatiated on this subject of a future conflict, its causes, its course, its outcome and its effect on America, in more detail and in a more forceful language than he had ever before used. He associates the "crass" and "cancerous materialism" prevalent in the world today with the warnings of Bahá'u'lláh and states He had compared it "to a devouring flame" and regarded it "as the chief factor in precipitating the dire ordeals and world-shaking crises that must necessarily involve the burning of cities and the spread of terror and consternation in the hearts of men." Shoghi Effendi goes on to say: "Indeed a foretaste of the devastation which this consuming fire will wreak upon the world, and with which it will lay waste the cities of the nations participating in this tragic world-engulfing contest, has been afforded by the last World War, marking the second stage in the global havoc which humanity, forgetful of its God and heedless of the clear warnings uttered by His appointed Messenger for this day, must, alas, inevitably experience."

The letter in which these appalling predictions are expressed was addressed to the American Bahá'ís and in it the Guardian points out that the general deterioration in the situation of a "distracted world" and the multiplication of increasingly destructive armaments, to which the two sides engaged in a world contest were contributing—"caught in a whirlpool of fear, suspicion and hatred" as they were—were ever-increasingly affecting their own country and were bound, if not remedied, "to involve the American nation in a catastrophe of undreamed-of dimensions and of untold consequences to the social structure, the standard and conception of the American people and government . . . The American nation . . . stands, indeed, from whichever angle one observes its immediate fortunes, in grave peril. The woes and tribulations which threaten it are partly avoidable, but mostly inevitable and God-sent . . ." He went on to point out the changes which these unavoidable afflictions must bring about in the "obsolescent doctrine of absolute sovereignty" to which its government and people still clung and which was so "manifestly at variance with the needs of a world already contracted into a neighbourhood and

crying out for unity” and through which this nation will find itself purged of its anachronistic conceptions and prepared to play the great role ‘Abdu’l-Bahá foretold for it in the establishment of the Lesser Peace. The “fiery tribulations” to come would not only “weld the American nation to its sister nations in both hemispheres” but would cleanse it of “the accumulated dross which ingrained racial prejudice, rampant materialism, widespread ungodliness and moral laxity have combined, in the course of successive generations, to produce, and which have prevented her thus far from assuming the role of world spiritual leadership forecast by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s unerring pen—a role which she is bound to fulfill through travail and sorrow.”

During the last winter of his life, as if already weary of his long struggle with our weaknesses, his years of unremitting toil and complete dedication, the Guardian spoke more strongly on this subject than I had ever heard him before. His theme was not only a warning of what the future held in store but a stern appraisal of the failure of the Bahá’ís—all of them, East and West—to go forth in numbers adequate to their great task and teach the Cause of God, far and wide, in the newly opened territories and islands of the globe, while there was yet time and opportunity to do so and thus, through a vast increase in the followers of the Faith, create those spiritual nuclei which could offset the forces of destruction at work in human society today and constitute the seed beds of the future World Order which we so firmly believe can and must emerge out of the present chaos.

Alarmed we should be, but not paralysed. In one of his last letters to a European National Assembly, in August 1957, his secretary wrote on his behalf: “He does not want the friends to be fearful, or to dwell upon the unpleasant possibilities of the future. They must have the attitude that, if they do their part, which is to accomplish the goals of the Ten Year Plan, they can be sure that God will do His part and watch over them.” The policy of the Bahá’ís, in this time of world crisis, was expressed in another of his letters, written a month earlier to one of the African National Assemblies, and expressed on his behalf by his secretary: “As the situation in the world, and in your part of it is steadily worsening, no time can be lost by the friends in rising to higher levels of devotion and service, and particularly of spiritual awareness. It is our duty to redeem as many of our fellow-men as we possibly can, whose hearts are enlightened, before some great catastrophe overtakes them, in which they will either be hopelessly swallowed up or come out purified and strengthened, and ready to serve. The more believers there are to stand forth as beacons in the darkness whenever that time does come, the better; hence the supreme importance of the teaching work at this time.”

Shoghi Effendi had already pointed out, at an earlier period, that “However severe the challenge, however multiple the tasks, however short the time, however sombre the world outlook, however limited the material resources of a hard-pressed adolescent community, the untapped sources of celestial strength from which it can draw are measureless, in their potencies, and will unhesitatingly pour forth their energizing influences if the necessary daily effort be made and the required sacrifices be willingly accepted.” So much depended on us; what depended on God we could confidently leave to Him, once we had made our own supreme effort.

If we, the generation of the twilight before the sun of this new day rises, ask ourselves why such catastrophes should be facing us in these times, the answers all are there, made crystal clear by the Guardian in his great expositions of the meaning and implications of our teachings. Two factors, he taught us, are involved. The first is contained in those words of Bahá’u’lláh: “*Soon will the present-day order be rolled up, and a new one spread out in its stead.*” To tear off the time-honoured protective covering of innumerable societies, each embedded in its own customs, superstitions and prejudices, and apply to them a universal new frame of existence is an operation only Almighty God can perform and of necessity a very painful one. This is made even more painful by the state of men’s souls and minds; some societies are the victims of “a flagrant secularism—the direct offspring of irreligion”, some are in the grip of “a blatant materialism and racialism” which have, Shoghi Effendi stated,

“usurped the rights of God Himself”, but all—all the peoples of the earth—are guilty of having, for over a century, “refused to recognize the One Whose advent had been promised to all religions, and in Whose Faith alone, all nations can and must eventually, seek their true salvation.” Fundamentally it was because of this new Faith, this “priceless gem of Divine Revelation enshrining the Spirit of God and incarnating His Purpose for all mankind in this age” as Shoghi Effendi described it, that the world was “undergoing such agonies”. Bahá’u’lláh Himself had said: *“The world’s equilibrium hath been upset through the vibrating influence of this most great, this new World Order”. “The signs of impending convulsions and chaos can now be discerned, inasmuch as the prevailing Order appeareth to be lamentably defective.” “The world is in travail and its agitation waxeth day by day. Its face is turned towards waywardness and unbelief. Such shall be its plight that to disclose it now would not be meet and seemly. Its perversity will long continue. And when the appointed hour is come, there shall suddenly appear that which shall cause the limbs of mankind to quake. Then, and only then, will the Divine Standard be unfurled, and the Nightingale of Paradise warble its melody.” “After a time, all the governments on earth will change. Oppression will envelope the world. And following a universal convulsion, the sun of justice will rise from the horizon of the unseen realm.”*

So thrilling, however, is the vision of the future which Shoghi Effendi painted for us in his brilliant words, that it wipes away all fear and fills the heart of every Bahá’í with such confidence and joy that the prospect of any amount of suffering and deprivation cannot weaken his faith or crush his hopes. “The world is, in truth,” Shoghi Effendi wrote, “moving on towards its destiny. The interdependence of the peoples and nations of the earth, whatever the leaders of the divisive forces of the world may say or do, is already an accomplished fact.” The world commonwealth, “destined to emerge, sooner or later, out of the carnage, agony, and havoc of this great world convulsion” was the assured consummation of the working of these forces. First would come the Lesser Peace, which the nations of the earth, as yet unconscious of Bahá’u’lláh’s Revelation, would themselves establish; “This momentous and historic step, involving the reconstruction of mankind, as the result of the universal recognition of its oneness and wholeness, will bring in its wake the spiritualization of the masses, consequent to the recognition of the character, and the acknowledgement of the claims, of the Faith of Bahá’u’lláh—the essential condition to the ultimate fusion of all races, creeds, classes, and nations which must signalize the emergence of His New World Order.” He goes on to state: “Then will the coming of age of the entire human race be proclaimed and celebrated by all the peoples and nations of the earth. Then will the banner of the Most Great Peace be hoisted. Then will the world-wide sovereignty of Bahá’u’lláh . . . be recognized, acclaimed, and firmly established. Then will a world civilization be born, flourish, and perpetuate itself, a civilization with a fullness of life such as the world has never seen nor can as yet conceive . . . Then will the planet, galvanized through the universal belief of its dwellers in one God, and their allegiance to one common Revelation, . . . be . . . acclaimed as the earthly heaven, capable of fulfilling that ineffable destiny fixed for it, from time immemorial, by the love and wisdom of its Creator.”

THE WRITINGS OF THE GUARDIAN

In an age when people play football with words, kicking them right and left indiscriminately with no respect for either their meaning or correct usage, the style of Shoghi Effendi stands out in dazzling beauty. His joy in words was one of his strongest personal characteristics, whether he wrote in English—the language he had given his heart to—or in the mixture of Persian and Arabic he used in his general letters to the East. Although he was so simple in his personal tastes he had an innate love of richness which is manifest in the way he arranged and decorated various Bahá'í Holy Places, in the style of the Shrine of the Báb, in his preferences in architecture, and in his choice and combination of words. Of him it could be said, in the words of another great writer, Macaulay, that “he wrote in language . . . precise and luminous.” Unlike so many people, Shoghi Effendi wrote what he meant and meant exactly what he wrote. It is impossible to eliminate any word from one of his sentences without sacrificing part of the meaning, so concise, so pithy is his style. A book like *God Passes By* is a veritable essence of essences; from this single hundred-year history, fifty books could easily be written and none of them would be superficial or lacking in material, so rich is the source provided by the Guardian, so condensed his treatment of it.

The language in which Shoghi Effendi wrote, whether for the Bahá'ís of the West or of the East, has set a standard which should effectively prevent them from descending to the level of illiterate literates which often so sadly characterizes the present generation as far as the use and appreciation of words are concerned. He never compromised with the ignorance of his readers but expected them, in their thirst for knowledge, to overcome their ignorance. Shoghi Effendi chose, to the best of his great ability, the right vehicle for his thought and it made no difference to him whether the average person was going to know the word he used or not. After all, what one does not know one can find out. Although he had such a brilliant command of language, he frequently reinforced his knowledge by certainty through looking up the word he planned to use in Webster's big dictionary. Often one of my functions was to hand it to him and it was a weighty tome indeed! Not infrequently his choice would be the third or fourth usage of the word, sometimes bordering on the archaic, but it was the exact word that conveyed his meaning and so he used it. I remember my mother once saying that to become a Bahá'í was like entering a university, only one never finished learning, never graduated. In his translations of the Bahá'í writings, and above all in his own compositions, Shoghi Effendi set a standard that educates and raises the cultural level of the reader at the same time that it feeds his mind and soul with thoughts and truth.

From the beginning of my life with the Guardian until the end, I was almost always present when he translated or wrote his books, long letters and cables in English. There was nothing unusual in this; he liked to have someone in the room on these occasions to listen to what he was writing. His method of composition was new and fascinating to me. He wrote out loud, speaking the words as he put them down. I think this habit in English was carried over from Persian; good Persian and Arabic composition not only can be, but should be chanted. One remembers the Báb revealing the *Qayyúmu'l-Asmá'* out loud, and Bahá'u'lláh revealing His Tablets in the same way. This was the Guardian's custom in English as well as in Persian and I believe it is because of this that even his long and involved sentences sound even more flowing and intelligible when read aloud. The length of some of these sentences was at times a cause of comment on my part; Shoghi Effendi would raise his head and look at me, with those wonderful eyes whose colour and expression changed so frequently, with a hint of defiance and

rebelliousness in them—but did not shorten his sentence! I can recall only one occasion when he admitted, ruefully, that it was a long sentence; but he still did not change it. It said what he wanted it to as he wanted it to; it was too bad it was so long. On the other hand he liked to use a structure sometimes of very short sentences that followed each other one after the other like the cracks of a whip. He would call my attention to this variation in style, pointing out how each method was effective, how the combination of the two enriched the whole and achieved different ends. He was very fond of the device of alliteration, much used in oriental languages but now no longer so common in English. An excellent example of his use of this is provided by this sentence reiterating words beginning with “p” from one of his cables: “Time pressing opportunity priceless potent aid providentially promised unfailing.”

Shoghi Effendi’s method of composition was like that of a mosaic artist at work, who creates his picture with clearly defined and separate pieces; each word had its own place and if he struck a difficult sentence he would not change it around so as to accommodate a thought that grammatically could not fit into the sentence structure but would stick to it, sometimes literally for hours, until I at least was worn out by his verbal repetition of the phrase as he battled to subjugate it and fit it in the way he wished to, typing one piece of his mosaic after another, until he had solved his problem. I seldom remember his ever abandoning a sentence and starting over in a new form. Another characteristic in his choice of words was that because of popular misuse or abuse of a thought which a word conveyed he saw no reason to abandon or shun it, but used it in its proper and exact meaning. He was not afraid to speak of “conversion” of people to the Faith, or to call them “converts”; he lauded the “missionary zeal” of pioneers in “foreign mission fields”, at the same time making it plain we have no priests, no missionaries and do not proselytize.

I remember once Shoghi Effendi giving me an article to read from a British newspaper which called attention to the bureaucratic language which is developing, particularly in the United States, in which more and more words are used to convey less and less, and merely produce confusion confounded. Shoghi Effendi heartily supported the article! Words were very precise instruments to him. I also recall a particularly beautiful distinction he made in speaking to some pilgrims in the Western Pilgrim House. He said: “we are orthodox, but not fanatical.”

Many times the language of the Guardian soared to great poetic heights. Witness such passages as these that shine with the brilliance of cathedral glass: “We behold, as we survey the episodes of this first act of a sublime drama, the figure of its Master hero, the Báb, arise meteor-like above the horizon of Shiraz, traverse the sombre sky of Persia from south to north, decline with tragic swiftiness, and perish in a blaze of glory. We see His satellites, a galaxy of God-intoxicated heroes, mount above that same horizon, irradiate that same incandescent light, burn themselves out with that self-same swiftiness, and impart in their turn an added impetus to the steadily gathering momentum of God’s nascent Faith.” He called the Báb “that youthful Prince of Glory” and describes the scene of His entombment on Mt Carmel: “When all was finished, and the earthly remains of the Martyr-Prophet of Shiraz were, at long last, safely deposited for their everlasting rest in the bosom of God’s holy mountain, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Who had cast aside His turban, removed His shoes and thrown off His cloak, bent low over the still open sarcophagus, His silver hair waving about His head and His face transfigured and luminous, rested His forehead on the border of the wooden casket, and, sobbing aloud, wept with such a weeping that all those who were present wept with Him.” “The second period . . . derives its inspiration from the august figure of Bahá’u’lláh, pre-eminent in holiness, awesome in the majesty of His strength and power, unapproachable in the transcendent brightness of His glory.” “Amidst the shadows that are increasingly gathering about us we can discern the glimmerings of Bahá’u’lláh unearthly sovereignty appearing fitfully on the horizon of history.” Or these words addressed to the Greatest Holy Leaf: “In the innermost recesses of our hearts, O Thou exalted Leaf of the Abhá Paradise, we have reared for thee a shining mansion that the hand of time can never undermine, a

shrine which shall frame eternally the matchless beauty of thy countenance, an altar whereon the fire of thy consuming love shall burn for ever.” Or these words painting a picture of the punishment of God in this day: “On the high seas, in the air, on land, in the forefront of battle, in the palaces of kings and the cottages of peasants, in the most hallowed sanctuaries, whether secular or religious, the evidences of God’s retributive act and mysterious discipline are manifest. Its heavy toll is steadily mounting—a holocaust sparing neither prince nor peasant, neither man nor woman, neither young nor old.” Or these words concerning the attitude of the true servants of the Cause: “Of such men and women it may be truly said that to them ‘every foreign land is a fatherland, and every fatherland a foreign land’. For their citizenship . . . is in the Kingdom of Bahá’u’lláh. Though willing to share to the utmost the temporal benefits and the fleeting joys which this earthly life can confer, though eager to participate in whatever activity that conduces to the richness, the happiness and peace of that life, they can at no time forget that it constitutes no more than a transient, a very brief stage of their existence, that they who live it are but pilgrims and wayfarers whose goal is the Celestial City, and whose home the Country of never-failing joy and brightness.”

The descriptive power of Shoghi Effendi’s pen is nowhere better seen than in the gem-like phrases he chose in English to depict the station of Bahá’u’lláh. All the following words are quoted from the Guardian’s writings, chosen from different sources, but put together here to convey their extraordinary range and power: “the Everlasting Father, the Lord of Hosts, the Most Great Name, the Preserved Treasure, the Most Great Light, the Most Great Ocean, the Supreme Heaven, the Pre-existent Root, the Day Star of the Universe, the Judge, the Law-giver, the Redeemer of all mankind, the Organizer of the entire planet, the Unifier of the children of men, the Inaugurator of the long-awaited millennium, the Creator of a new World Order, the Establisher of the Most Great Peace, the Fountain of the Most Great Justice, the Proclaimer of the coming of age of the entire human race, the Inspirer and Founder of a world civilization.” Or take the masterly translation Shoghi Effendi made of titles such as these referring to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “the Mainspring of the Oneness of Humanity”, “the Ensign of the Most Great Peace”, “the Limb of the Law of God”.

As ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s American followers arose to carry out His Plan, Shoghi Effendi said they were “compassing thereby the whole earth with a girdle of glory” and going forth to “emblazon on their shields the emblems of new victories”. In the Ridván Message of 1956 to the Bahá’í world he exhorts Bahá’u’lláh’s followers in words of unique splendour: “Putting on the armour of His love, firmly buckling on the shield of His mighty Covenant, mounted on the steed of steadfastness, holding aloft the lance of the Word of the Lord of Hosts, and with unquestioning reliance on His promises as the best provision for their journey, let them set their faces towards those fields that still remain unexplored and direct their steps to those goals that are as yet unattained, assured that He Who has led them to achieve such triumphs, and to store up such prizes in His Kingdom, will continue to assist them in enriching their spiritual birthright to a degree that no finite mind can imagine or human heart perceive.”

There are so many aspects to Shoghi Effendi’s literary life. I can name on one hand the books (other than his beloved Gibbon) he read for recreation during the twenty years I was with him, though he had read during his youth very extensively on many subjects. This is no doubt because of the fact that by 1937, when I took up my new life in Haifa, he was already overwhelmed by the ever-increasing amount of material he had to read in connection with his work, such as news-letters, National Assembly minutes, circulars and mail. By the end of his life if he did not read at least two or three hours a day he could no longer keep up with his work at all; he read on planes, trains, in gardens, at table when we were away from Haifa, and in Haifa hour after hour at his desk, until he would get so tired he would go to bed and sit up reading there. He assiduously kept abreast of the political news and trends of the world, through his *Times*, *The Jerusalem Post* and sometimes the well-known European

dailies *Journal de Genève* and the Paris edition of the *New York Herald Tribune*. Before the war he subscribed to an English magazine, *The Nineteenth Century*, which had many articles on current affairs, and was the only one I ever knew him to read, but found its standard had declined after the war and gave it up. The word “eliminate” was often on his lips; he would eliminate non-essentials, get rid quickly of secondary matters, push away the trivial debris of life. He used to carry this process of elimination into his newspaper. He knew exactly which pages of *The Times* had the news he wanted to look at—the leaders, the world news, and above all, the editorials—and he would scan these quickly and then proceed to rip out with his fingers the articles he wanted to look at or read carefully and throw the rest away—he had eliminated it! It does not require much acumen to understand that this, aside from being efficient, was the reflection of a very deeply tired-out mind, trying to push away so many burdens. Even an extra piece of paper had become a burden. It was with great difficulty I ever got a chance to see an entire newspaper or read anything but the long streamers of clippings that the Guardian would hand me, saying, “Read this, it’s interesting”, and I would find myself with a debate in the House of Commons or some astute article on the political situation, the economic or social trends of the times, religious issues, and so on, all in a large untidy handful which I stuffed into my purse or pocket, awaiting a distant moment when I could find time to read them.

The Guardian’s method of writing was interesting: he did not like large pieces of paper and usually wrote all his books and long communications on small lined pads. He did all his composition by hand; if the first draft was too written-over he sat down patiently and copied it all over. He typed, on a very small portable machine, by the two-finger method, all his own manuscripts, making any further changes as he went along. It is not surprising therefore that by this method he should have produced such highly polished works as we have from his pen. In Persian he would give a clean original, written by him, to his secretary to copy in fine penmanship and this Shoghi Effendi then sent to Tehran. It has always interested me to note how, after he became Guardian his writing in English developed into a slight back-hand; it was always strong, well rounded and legible. His Persian hand was exquisite. There are a number of styles of calligraphy in Persian and Arabic but his is a variation of “*Shikastih Nasta’liq*”; it has a charm and originality, a grace and strength all its own. One should remember that calligraphy was the highest of the graphic arts in Islamic countries and beautiful writing was the distinction *par excellence* for the cultivated man to possess. The Báb, Bahá’u’lláh, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá all had wonderful handwriting and Shoghi Effendi in this too proved himself worthy of his heritage.

Withal, however, he was not fussy; when he went over the many pages of my sometimes long letters to National Assemblies, he would put in a series of “X’s” and “XX’s” and even “XXX’s” in the margins for me to add a word or thought left out. Then at the end of the secretary’s part he would start his postscript in his own writing and usually go around and around his margins, in truly oriental style, from page to page. What I am trying to say is that if there were corrected mistakes all through the text of an important English letter it did not disturb him in the least as long as the thought was there, crystal clear.

The supreme importance of Shoghi Effendi’s English translations and communications can never be sufficiently stressed because of his function as sole and authoritative interpreter of the Sacred Writings, appointed as such by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in His Will. There are many instances when, owing to the looseness of construction in Persian sentences, there could be an ambiguity in the mind of the reader regarding the meaning. Careful and correct English, not lending itself to ambiguity in the first place, became, when coupled with Shoghi Effendi’s brilliant mind and his power as interpreter of the Holy Word, what we might well call the crystallizing vehicle of the teachings. Often by referring to Shoghi Effendi’s translation into English the original meaning of the Báb, Bahá’u’lláh, or ‘Abdu’l-Bahá becomes clear and is thus safeguarded against misinterpretation in the future. He was meticulous in translating and made absolutely sure that the words he was using in English conveyed and did

not depart from the original thought or the original words. One would have to have a mastery of Persian and Arabic to correctly understand what he did. For instance, in reading the original one finds that one word in Arabic was susceptible of being translated into two or more words in English; thus Shoghi Effendi, in the construction of his English sentences, might use “power”, “strength” and “might” alternatively to replace this one word, choosing the exact nuance of meaning that would fit best, do away with reiteration and lend most colour to his translation without sacrificing the true meaning, indeed, thereby enhancing the true meaning. He used to say that Arabic synonyms usually meant the same thing but that English ones always had a slight shade of difference which made it possible to be more exact in rendering the thought. He also said he believed a few of the highly mystical and poetical writings of Bahá’u’lláh could never be translated as they would become so exotic and flowery that the original beauty and meaning would be completely lost and convey a wrong impression. Once—only once, alas, in our busy, harassed life—Shoghi Effendi said to me that I now knew enough Persian to understand the original and he read a paragraph of one of Bahá’u’lláh’s Tablets and said, “How can one translate that into English?” For about two hours we tried, that is, he tried and I feebly followed him. When I would suggest a sentence which did convey the meaning, Shoghi Effendi said, “Ah, but that is not translation! You cannot change and leave out words in the original and just put what you think it means in English.” He pointed out that a translator must be absolutely faithful to his original text and that in some cases this meant that what came out in another language was ugly and even meaningless. As Bahá’u’lláh is always sublimely beautiful in His words this could not be done. In the end he gave it up and said he did not think it could ever be properly translated into English, and this passage was far from being one of the more abstruse and mystical works of Bahá’u’lláh.

I only know of one instance in which Shoghi Effendi said he had slightly modified something that existed in the original and that was when he translated, immediately after the passing of the Master, His Will. The sentence in question reads, referring to the Universal House of Justice, “the guardian of the Cause of God is its sacred head and the distinguished member for life of that body.” Shoghi Effendi said the actual word, for which he substituted the milder “member for life”, was “irremovable”. Nothing could be more revealing of his profound humility than this toning down of his own relationship to the Universal House of Justice.

The Guardian was exceedingly cautious in everything that concerned the original Word and would never explain or comment on a text submitted to him in English (when it was not his own translation) until he had verified it with the original. He was very careful of the words he used in commenting on various events in the Faith, refusing, for instance, to designate a person a martyr—which is a station—just because they were slain, and sometimes designating as martyrs people who were not killed but the nature of whose death he associated with martyrdom.

Another highly important aspect of the divinely conferred position Shoghi Effendi held of interpreter of the Teachings was that he not only protected the Sacred Word from being misconstrued but that he also carefully preserved the relationship and importance of different aspects of the Teachings to each other and safeguarded the rightful station of each of the three Central Figures of the Faith. An interesting example of this is reflected in a letter of A. L. M. Nicolas, the French scholar who translated the *Bayán* of the Báb into French and who might correctly be described as a Bábí. For many years he was under the impression that the Bahá’ís had ignored the greatness and belittled the station of the Báb. When he discovered that Shoghi Effendi in his writings exalted the Báb, perpetuated His memory through a book such as *Nabíl’s Narrative*, and repeatedly translated His words into English, his attitude completely changed. In a letter to one of the old believers in France he wrote: “Now I can die quietly . . . Glory to Shoghi Effendi who has calmed my torment and my anxiety, glory to him who recognizes the worth of Siyyid ‘Alí Muhammad called the Báb. I am so content that I kiss your hands which

traced my address on the envelope which brought me the message of Shoghi. Thank you Mademoiselle, thank you from the bottom of my heart.”

Shoghi Effendi was tolerant and practical in his approach to his own work. For years he sent his translations and manuscripts to George Townshend, whose command and knowledge of English he greatly admired. In one of his letters to him Shoghi Effendi wrote: “I am deeply grateful to you for the very valuable, detailed and careful suggestions you have given me . . .” Horace Holley titled many of Shoghi Effendi’s general letters to the West and also inserted sub-titles throughout the text, picking up phrases in the writing of the Guardian which were most descriptive of the general subject. If this facilitated the reading of his works, and made them more intelligible to the average American believer, Shoghi Effendi saw no objection. Horace was a writer himself and the titles he gave to the Guardian’s communications not only served to identify them but dramatized their message and captured the imagination.

One of the earliest acts of Shoghi Effendi’s ministry was to begin circulating his translations of the holy Writings; one year and ten days after the reading of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Will we find him writing to the American National Assembly: “It is a great pleasure for me to share with you the translation of some of the prayers and Tablets of our beloved Master . . .” and he goes on to add that he trusts “that in the course of time I will be enabled to send you regularly correct and reliable translations . . . which will unfold to your eyes a new vision of His Glorious Mission . . . and give you an insight into the character and meaning of His Divine Teachings.” Over and over in his earliest letters to different countries he mentions the enclosed translation of something he is sending for the Bahá’ís. A month later, in another letter to America, he says: “I am also enclosing my revised translation of *The Hidden Words* of Bahá’u’lláh, both Arabic and Persian, and hope to send you more of His Words and Teachings in future.” On 27 April of that same year Shoghi Effendi again writes to the American National Assembly: “I am also enclosing my rendering of various passages of the *Kitabu’l-Aqdas* which you may feel at liberty to circulate among the friends.” The following November, he wrote once more to that same Assembly that he was forwarding “Transliterated Oriental Terms . . . confident that the friends will not feel their energy and patience taxed by scrupulous adherence to what is an authoritative, though arbitrary code for the spelling of Oriental terms.” There is no doubt that transliteration is irksome and often confusing, but what the average person does not realize is that through transliteration the exact word is nailed down and those who are familiar with the system know immediately what the original word was because they can reconstruct it in Arabic or Persian. For scholars and critics of the Faith this accuracy is very important. It also serves the purpose of doing away with multiple and confusing spellings of the same word.

It is interesting to note that Shoghi Effendi himself, in the above quotation, spells *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* more or less phonetically as he had not yet introduced the system of transliteration he later adopted. A word should be said about this Most Holy Book, for, although it is the source of the Laws of Bahá’u’lláh, it is a small volume and mostly contains other subjects. By the time he passed away Shoghi Effendi had already given to the Bahá’ís of the West, in excellent English, most of the passages it contains as well as all the laws he felt were applicable at this time to Bahá’ís living in non-Bahá’í societies. He not only translated and circulated passages from the teachings; he also ensured that the believers, through excess of zeal and lack of foresight, should not go too far in the manner in which they edited and printed Bahá’í compilations. In replying to certain proposals one of the friends had made regarding the printing of a comprehensive book of prayers, he wrote to the man who had conveyed this suggestion to him: “I agree with him provided the classification is not carried beyond what Bahá’u’lláh prescribes, otherwise we shall plunge into a hard and fast creed.”

The writing, translation and promulgation of Bahá'í books were one of the Guardian's major interests, one he never tired of and one he actively supported. The ideal situation is for local and national communities to pay for their own activities, but in this Formative Age of our Faith the Guardian fully realized this was not always possible and from the funds at his disposal he assisted substantially throughout the years in financing the translation and publication of Bahá'í literature. In periods of emergency, when the attainment of cherished goals was at stake, Shoghi Effendi would fill the breach; thus we find that in one year alone he assisted the Indian National Assembly in its translation and publication programme with contributions of over two thousand pounds. The moment the American Intercontinental Conference, which opened the Ten Year Crusade, was over, we find Shoghi Effendi cabling the American National Assembly: "Urge immediate steps publication pamphlets languages allocated America." Two days later he is cabling the European Teaching Committee the same thing, only mentioning "European languages". Similar messages went to India and Britain and he assures the latter he will send one thousand pounds to assist them. He was constantly concerned with the wide diffusion of Bahá'í literature in different languages from the first days of his ministry, and alone was responsible for the majority of translations undertaken during the thirty-six years of his Guardianship. He seized every opportunity. A letter to a Pole, who was studying the teachings in Poland, is typical: Shoghi Effendi tells him he is sending him the words of Queen Marie of Rumania about the Faith and asks him if he will translate these into Polish and send them back to him! This was in 1926, but the same enthusiasm and perseverance characterized his labours in this field up to the end of his life.

In addition to this he devoted much attention, during the early years of his Guardianship, when Esperanto was rapidly spreading, particularly in Europe, to encouraging the publication of a Bahá'í Esperanto Gazette, explaining to its editor that his interest was due to "my great desire to promote in such parts of the Bahá'í world as present circumstances permit the study of an international language".

Literature in all languages the Guardian collected in Haifa, placing books in his own library, in the two Pilgrim House libraries, in the Mansion of Bahá'u'lláh in Bahjí and in the International Archives. In this connection it is interesting to note how he placed them, for I never saw it done before: he would have, say, a lot of rather dull bindings, of some inexpensive edition, in grey and a lot more in blue or some other colour. With these he would fill his bookshelves in patterns, five red, two blue, five red and so on, using the variation in colour and number to add charm to the general effect of a bookcase that otherwise would have presented a monotonous and uninteresting appearance.

In a letter to Martha Root in 1931 he tells her: "I have now in my room copies of seven printed translations" (these were Dr Esslemont's textbook) and urges her to press on with further translations, saying: "I shall be only too glad to help in their eventual publication." A year later, writing to Siyyid Mustafa Roumie in Burma, the Guardian shows clearly what a satisfaction to him these new publications were. He says he is "... enclosing the sum of 9 pounds in order to assist and hasten the completion of the translation of the book into Burmese. Sixteen 16 printed translations have been already gathered together and placed in the Mansion of Bahá'u'lláh at Bahjí close to His sacred shrine and the book is now being translated into sixteen 16 additional languages including the Burmese." By 1935 he is in a position to inform this same friend that "there are thirty-one printed versions of it in circulation already throughout the Bahá'í world."

There are innumerable cables in Shoghi Effendi's records such as these to Asgarzadeh in London: "Kindly wire minimum cost printing Esslemont's book in Russian"; having evidently received a reply he cables again: "Mailing forty pounds. Feel five hundred sufficient. First part of Russian manuscript mailed today. Rest mailing soon. Deeply appreciate your collaboration continued services." To Ouskouli in Shanghai he cabled: "Wire date

publication Esslemont's book. Mail fifty copies. Love". Every now and then, in his busy preoccupied life, Shoghi Effendi would take stock and decide some aspect of the work needed an immediate and energetic shove. An example of this is four cables written down one after the other on the same day in 1932, to Martha Root in Europe, and to America, New Zealand and Burma: "Feel strongly necessity prompt translation Esslemont's into Czech, Hungarian, Rumanian, Greek as preliminary intensive teaching campaign Europe. Eager assist financially awaiting estimates. Love." "Feel strongly desirability undertaking promptly translation Esslemont's into Braille. Kindly cable if feasible. Love." "Inform B_____ ensure prompt translation Esslemont's book Maori." "Urge undertake promptly translation Esslemont's book into Burmese. Love". Getting impatient with the lack of results in various projects he had set afoot, he cables later on that year: "Is French Esslemont published cable." "Eagerly awaiting Kurdish version Esslemont's book".

Shoghi Effendi encouraged various Bahá'ís to write about the Faith. To an English believer, Miss Pinchon, he cabled in 1927: "Your book admirable in presentation, exquisite in style. Urge speedy publication sending nineteen pounds"; to Horace Holley he cabled in 1926: "Kindly mail hundred copies your book. Affectionately". Shoghi Effendi not only paid to publish Bahá'í books, he often ordered them as well. He cabled America: "Kindly mail immediately for fifty dollars cheapest edition Esslemont's book. Mailing check."

Facts and events are more or less useless unless seen in the proper perspective, unless vision is applied to their interpretation. One of the marked aspects of Shoghi Effendi's genius was the way he plucked the significance of an occurrence, an isolated phenomenon, from the welter of irrelevancies associated with the international development of the Cause and set it in its historical frame, focusing on it the light of his appraising mind and making us understand what was taking place and what it signified now and forever. This was not a static thing, a picture of shapes and forms, but rather a description of where a leviathan was moving in an ocean—the leviathan of the co-ordinated movements inside the Community of Bahá'u'lláh's followers moving in the ocean of His Dispensation. An Assembly was formed, someone died, a certificate was granted by some obscure governmental body—in themselves isolated facts and events—but to Shoghi Effendi's eyes they were part of a pattern, and he made us see this pattern being woven before our eyes too. In the volumes of *The Bahá'í World* the Guardian did this not only for the believers but the public at large. He dramatized the progress of the Faith, and a mass of scattered facts and unrelated photographs was made to testify to the reality of the claim of that Faith to be world-wide and all-inclusive.

It is interesting to note that the actual suggestion for a volume along the lines of *The Bahá'í World* came to Shoghi Effendi from Horace Holley in a letter he wrote in February 1924—though I have no doubt that it was the breadth of vision of the young Guardian and the shape he was already giving to the work of the Cause in his messages to the West that, working on Horace's own creative mind, stimulated him to this concept. Shoghi Effendi seized on this idea and from then on Horace became Shoghi Effendi's primary instrument, as a gifted writer, and in his capacity as Secretary of the American National Spiritual Assembly, in making of *The Bahá'í World* the remarkable and unique book it became. Volume One, published in 1925 and called *Bahá'í Year Book*—which covered the period from April 1925 to April 1926 and comprised 174 pages—received its permanent title, in Volume Two, of *The Bahá'í World, A Biennial International Record*, suggested by that National Assembly and approved by Shoghi Effendi. At the time of the Guardian's passing twelve volumes had appeared, the largest running to over 1,000 pages. Although these were prepared under the supervision of the American National Assembly, published by its Publishing Committee, compiled by a staff of editors and dedicated to Shoghi Effendi, it would be more in conformity with the facts to call them Shoghi Effendi's Book. He himself acted as Editor-in-Chief; the tremendous amount of material comprised in each volume was sent to him by the American Assembly, with all photographs, before it appeared and his was the final decision as to what should go

in and what be omitted. As six of these books were published during the period I was privileged to be with him I was able to observe how he edited them. With his infinite capacity for work Shoghi Effendi would go over the vast bundles of papers and photographs forwarded to him, eliminating the poorer and more irrelevant material; the various sections, following the Table of Contents, which he himself had arranged, would then be prepared and set aside until the entire manuscript was ready to be mailed back to America for publication. He always deplored the fact that the material was not of a higher standard. It is due solely to his determination and perseverance that the *Bahá'í World* volumes are as brilliant and impressive as they are. The editors (some of whom he had nominated himself), struggling against the forces of inertia that beset any body trying to achieve its ends through correspondence with sources thousands of miles away, and seeking to work through often inexperienced and inefficient administrative organs, would never have been successful in assembling the material required without the drive and authority of the Guardian behind their efforts. An interesting sidelight on this work is that Shoghi Effendi, after the book was published, had all the original manuscripts returned to Haifa and stored at the World Centre.

As soon as one volume was published, he began himself to collect material for the next one. In addition to the repeated reminders he sent to the American National Assembly to do likewise, he sent innumerable letters and cables to different Assemblies and individuals. In one day, for instance, he cabled three National Assemblies: "National Assembly photograph for Bahá'í World essential"; he cabled such an isolated and out-of-the-way outpost as Shanghai for material he wanted. "Bahá'í World manuscript mailed. Advise speedy careful publication" was not an unusual type of message for the American Assembly to receive. It was Shoghi Effendi who arranged the order of the volume, had typed in Haifa the entire Table of Contents, had all the photographs titled, chose all the frontispieces, decided on the colour of the binding of the volume to appear, and above all gave exact instructions, in long detailed letters, to Horace Holley, whom he himself had chosen as the most gifted and informed person to write the International Survey of Current Bahá'í Activities, to which he attached great importance. "Detailed letter mailed for International Survey confident your masterly treatment collected data" he cabled him. An example of how comprehensive and painstaking Shoghi Effendi's letters on this subject were is provided by the following excerpts from a letter to Horace, written by Shoghi Effendi's secretary, but I have little doubt dictated by the Guardian himself: "This material Shoghi Effendi has carefully examined, altered, arranged, enriched by adding fresh material that he has collected, put them in their final form and will mail the entire manuscript to your address before the end of this month . . . He has devoted considerable time to its minute examination and arrangement and has found the work very exacting and arduous . . . He wishes to stress the importance of adhering strictly to the order he has adopted. He hopes that, unlike the previous volume, nothing will be misplaced."

What Shoghi Effendi himself thought of *The Bahá'í World* he put down in writing. As early as 1927, when only one volume had been published, he wrote to a non-Bahá'í: "I would strongly advise you to procure a copy of the Bahá'í Year Book . . . which will give you a clear and authoritative statement of the purpose, the claim and the influence of the Faith." In a general letter addressed, in 1928, "To the beloved of the Lord and the hand-maids of the Merciful throughout the East and West", and entirely devoted to the subject of *The Bahá'í World*, Shoghi Effendi informs them: "I have ever since its inception taken a keen and sustained interest in its development, have personally participated in the collection of its material, the arrangement of its contents, and the close scrutiny of whatever data it contains. I confidently and emphatically recommend it to every thoughtful and eager follower of the Faith, whether in the East or in the West . . ." He wrote that its material is readable, attractive, comprehensive and authoritative; its treatment of the fundamentals of the Cause concise and persuasive, and its illustrations thoroughly representative; it is unexcelled and unapproached by any other Bahá'í publication of its kind. This book Shoghi Effendi always visualized as being—indeed he designed it to be—eminently suitable for

the public, for scholars, to place in libraries and as a means, as he put it, of “removing the malicious misrepresentations and unfortunate misunderstandings that have so long and so grievously clouded the luminous Faith of Bahá’u’lláh.”

It was a book that he himself often gave as a gift to royalty, to statesmen, to professors, universities, newspaper editors and non-Bahá’ís in general, mailing it to them with his simple personal card “Shoghi Rabbani” enclosed. The reaction of one of these—an American professor—conveys very clearly the impression the gift Shoghi Effendi had sent him produced: “Two copies of Bahá’í World have reached us . . . I cannot tell you how much I appreciate being able to study the book, which is exceedingly interesting and inspiring in every way . . . I congratulate you especially for developing the literature, and keeping alive such a wholesome spirit amongst the persons of many different groups who look to you for leadership.” But perhaps the greatest tribute to the calibre of this publication, into which Shoghi Effendi poured throughout the years so much time and care, was that a proud Queen should write for it special tributes to the Faith and consent that these and her own photograph should appear as frontispieces in its various volumes. “No words”, Shoghi Effendi wrote to Martha Root in 1931, upon receiving from her one of Queen Marie’s specially written tributes, “can adequately express my pleasure at the receipt of your letter enclosing the precious appreciation which will constitute a valuable and outstanding contribution to the forthcoming issue of the Bahá’í World.”

It is difficult to realize, looking back upon Shoghi Effendi’s achievements, that he actually wrote only one book of his own, as such, and this was *God Passes By*, published in 1944. Even *The Promised Day Is Come*, written in 1941, is a 136-page-long general letter to the Bahá’ís of the West. This fact alone is a profound indication of the deeply modest character of the man. He communicated with the Bahá’ís because he was appointed to guide them, because he was the Custodian of the Faith of Bahá’u’lláh; he was impelled by forces stronger than himself over which he had no control. Aside from the stream of letters of moderate length that constantly flowed from him to the Bahá’ís of the West and their National Assemblies, there are certain general letters of a different nature, some addressed to the Bahá’ís of the United States and Canada, some to the Bahá’ís of the West, which have been gathered together in one volume under the title of *The World Order of Bahá’u’lláh*. *The World Order of Bahá’u’lláh* and *The World Order of Bahá’u’lláh Further Considerations* were written in 1929 and 1930 respectively; they were designed to clarify for the believers the true meaning and purpose of their Faith, its tenets, its implications, its destiny and future, and to guide the unfolding and slowly maturing Community in North America and in the West to a better understanding of its duties, its privileges and its destiny. This was followed in 1931 by a letter known as *The Goal of a New World Order*, which, with a new mastery and assurance in its tone, rises above the level of a letter to co-workers in a common field and begins to reflect the extraordinary power of exposition of thought that must characterize a great leader and a great writer. In a letter of the Guardian written in January 1932 his secretary, obviously referring to *The Goal of a New World Order*, states: “Shoghi Effendi wrote his last general letter to the Western friends because he felt that the public should be made to understand the attitude the Bahá’í Faith maintains towards prevailing economic and political problems. We should let the world know what the real aim of Bahá’u’lláh was.” Shoghi Effendi associated this letter with the tenth anniversary of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s passing and in it dwells at length on the condition of the world and the change which must be brought about between its component parts in the light of the teachings of Bahá’u’lláh and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

The Golden Age of the Cause of Bahá’u’lláh followed in 1932 and was a masterly exposition of the Divinity of His Faith which, Shoghi Effendi wrote, feeds itself upon “hidden springs of celestial strength”. Once again he clarified the relationship of this Dispensation to those of the past and to the solution of the present problems facing the world. In 1933 he gave the North American Bahá’ís *America and the Most Great Peace*, which dealt

largely with the role this part of the world has been destined by God to play during this period in history, recalled the self-sacrificing journeys and services of the Master in the West and recapitulated the victories already won for the Faith by this favoured Community. The weighty treatise known as *The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh*, written in 1934, burst upon the Bahá'ís like a blinding white light. I remember when I first read it I had the most extraordinary feeling as if the whole universe had suddenly expanded around me and I was looking out into its dazzling star-filled immensity; all the frontiers of our understanding flew outwards; the glory of this Cause and the true station of its Central Figures were revealed to us and we were never the same again. One would have thought that the stunning impact of this one communication from the Guardian would kill puniness of soul forever! However Shoghi Effendi felt in his inmost heart about his other writings, I know from his remarks that he considered he had said all he had to say, in many ways, in the *Dispensation*.

In 1936 he wrote *The Unfoldment of World Civilization*; once again, as he so often did, Shoghi Effendi links this to the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. It was a further exposition of the state of the world, the rapid political, moral and spiritual decline evident in it, the weakening of both Christianity and Islam, the dangers humanity in its heedlessness was running, and the strong, divine, hopeful remedy the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh had to offer. Important and educative as these wonderful letters of the Guardian were they provided, in their wealth of apposite quotations from Bahá'u'lláh's own words which the Guardian had translated and lavishly cited, spiritual sustenance for the believers, for we know that the Word of the Manifestation of God is the food of the soul. They also contained innumerable beautifully translated passages from the beloved Master's Tablets. All this bounty the Guardian spread for the believers in feast after feast, nourished them and raised up a new strong generation of servants in the Faith. His words fired their imagination, challenged them to rise to new heights, drove their roots deeper in the fertile soil of the Cause.

It is really during the 1930's that one sees a change manifest in Shoghi Effendi's writings. With the rapier of his pen in hand he now stands forth revealed as a giant. Where before one could trace a certain diffidence, an echo of the affliction of soul he had passed through after the ascension of the Master and his assumption of his high office, the crying out of his heart in its longing for the departed beloved of his life, now the tone changes and a man speaks forth his assurance with great confidence and strength. The warrior now knows what war is. He has been surprised, beset, wounded by vicious and spiritually perverse enemies. Something of the tender and trusting youth has gone forever. This change is manifest not only in the nature and power of his directives to the Bahá'í world, the fashion in which he is shaping the administration East and West and welding into a whole the disparate and diversified communities of which it is composed, but in a beauty and assurance in his style that steadily gathers glory as the years go by.

Concurrent with the period when these first illuminating letters on such major subjects were streaming from the pen of Shoghi Effendi, he undertook the translation of two books. In a letter written on 4 July 1930 Shoghi Effendi says: "I feel exceedingly tired after a strenuous year of work, particularly as I have managed to add to my labours the translation of the *Íqán*, which I have already sent to America." This was the first of his major translations, Bahá'u'lláh's great exposition on the station and role of the Manifestations of God, more particularly in the light of Islamic teachings and prophecies, known as the *Kitáb-i-Íqán* or *Book of Certitude*. It was an invaluable adjunct to the western Bahá'ís in their study of the Faith they had embraced and infinitely enriched their understanding of Divine Revelation.



THE NEW GUARDIAN

Shoghi Effendi at the time he became Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith in 1921, taken in the garden of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's home in Haifa



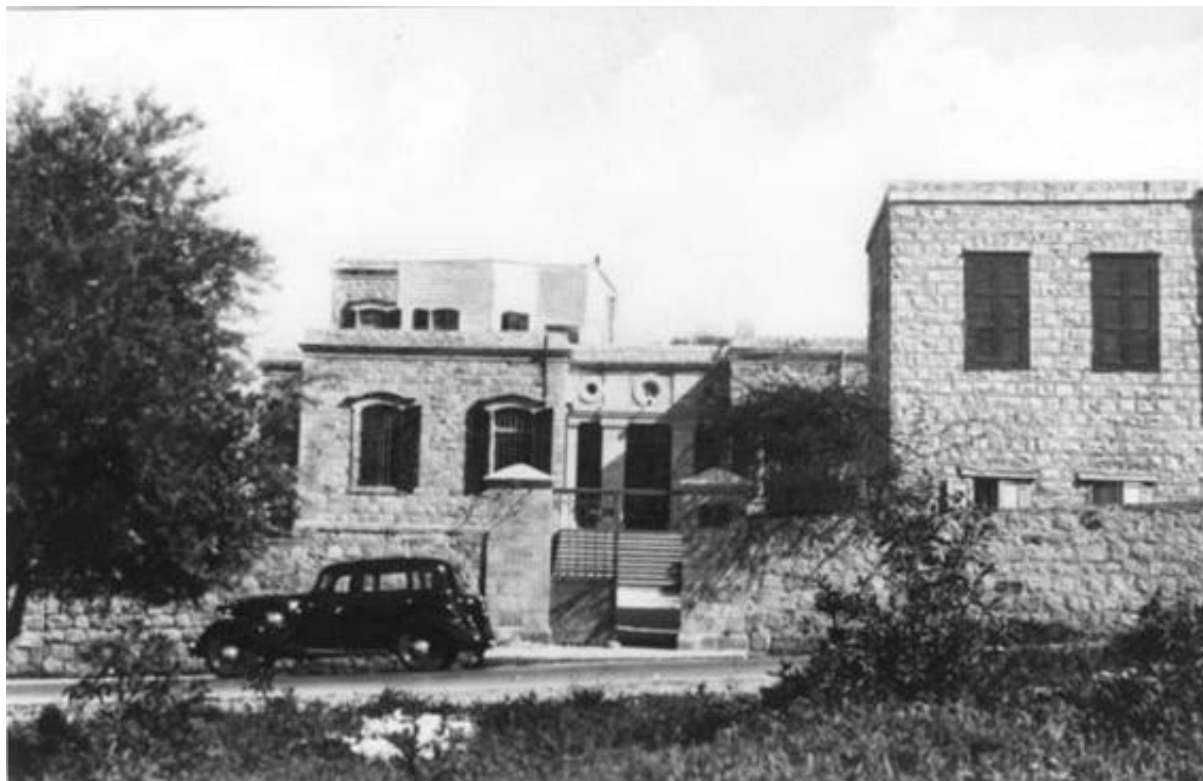
THE GUARDIAN AND BAHÍYYIH KHÁNUM

Probably taken in 1919, before Shoghi Effendi left to study in England



THE GUARDIAN'S HANDWRITING IN PERSIAN

Shoghi Effendi informs the Bahá'ís, through a letter to the *Star of the West*, that “unable to do otherwise, I have left for a time the affairs of the Cause both at home and abroad, under . . . the headship of the Greatest Holy Leaf”. Circa April, 1922



‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ’S HOME

Showing the extra rooms (on the left) built on the roof for Shoghi Effendi’s use by the Greatest Holy Leaf in 1923



THE TOMB OF THE BÁB

A photograph taken by Shoghi Effendi from his own room on the roof of the Master's home, showing the bright light he placed on the Shrine



Brothers and fellow-mourners in the Faith of Bahá'í

A sorrow, reminiscent in its poignancy, of the devastating grief caused by Bahá'u'lláh's sudden removal from our midst, has stirred the Bahá'í world to its foundations. The Greatest Holy Leaf, the well-beloved and treasured Remnant of Bahá'u'lláh, entrusted to our frail and unworthy hands by our departed Master, has passed to the Great Beyond, leaving a legacy that time can never dim.

The Community of the Most Great Name, in its entirety and to its core, feels the sting of this cruel loss. Inevitable though this calamitous event appeared to us all, however acute our apprehensions of its steady approach, the full consciousness of its final consummation at this terrible hour leaves us, we whose souls have been impregnated by the everglowing influence of his love, prostrated and disconsolate.

How can my lonely pen, so utterly inadequate to glorify so exalted a station, so impotent to portray the experiences of so sublime a life, so disqualified to recount the blessings she showered upon

a heavenly Father? For me no less than for the shining masses of the ardent lovers who have borne undying allegiance to the Remnant, whose souls have been nourished by the everglow of his love, whose conduct has been moulded by the inspiring example of his life, and whose imaginations are fired by the innumerable evidences of his lively faith, thy matchless constancy, thy invincible serenity, thy great renunciation.

Whatever trials we, however distressing the vicissitudes which the nascent Faith of God may yet experience, we place ourselves, before the mercy-seat of thy glorious Father, to have an unimpaired and undivided, to generations yet unborn, the glory of thy tradition of which thou hast been the most brilliant exemplar.

In the imminent recesses of our hearts, O thou exalted Leaf of the Alpha Paradise, we have reared for thee a shining mansion that the hand of time can never undermine, a shrine which shall thence eternally be marked with beauty of thy countenance, and wherein the fire of thy consuming love shall burn for ever.

Shoghi

The Herald of the Lord and the handmaid of the Merciful throughout the West.
July 17, 1932.

THE HANDWRITING OF SHOGHI EFFENDI IN ENGLISH

Facsimile of the first and last pages of his letter in English concerning the passing of the Greatest Holy Leaf



THE RESTING-PLACE OF THE GREATEST HOLY LEAF



THAT SACRED SPOT

Left to right: the monuments marking the resting-place of the brother, mother, wife and sister of 'Abdu'l-Bahá above which, facing an arc-shaped path, will cluster the International Administrative Institutions of the Faith

During that same year the Guardian began work on the second book published during this period, a work that was neither a translation of Bahá'u'lláh's words nor one of Shoghi Effendi's general letters, but which must be considered a literary masterpiece and one of his most priceless gifts for all time. This was the translation of the first part of the narrative compiled by a contemporary follower of both the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh known as Nabíl, which was published in 1932 under the title *The Dawn-Breakers*. If the critic and sceptic should be tempted to dismiss the literature of the Bahá'í Faith as typical of the better class of religious books designed for the initiate only, he could not for a moment so brush aside a volume of the quality of *Nabíl's Narrative*, which deserves to be counted as a classic among epic narratives in the English tongue. Although ostensibly a translation from the original Persian, Shoghi Effendi may be said to have re-created it in English, his translation being comparable to Fitzgerald's rendering of Omar Khayyam's *Rubaiyat*, which gave to the world a poem in a foreign language that in many ways far exceeded the merits of the original. The best and most descriptive comments on this masterpiece of the Guardian are to be found in the words of prominent non-Bahá'ís. The playwright Gordon Bottomley wrote: ". . . living with it has been one of the salient experiences of a lifetime; but beyond that it was a moving experience both in itself and through the psychological light it throws on the New Testament narrative." The well-known scholar and humanitarian, Dr Alfred W. Martin of the Ethical Culture Society, in his letter of thanks to Shoghi Effendi for sending him *Nabíl's Narrative* wrote: "Your magnificent and monumental work . . . will be a classic and a standard for all time to come. I marvel beyond measure at your ability to prepare such a work for the press over and above all the activities which your regular professional position devolves upon you." One of his old professors, Bayard Dodge of the American University of Beirut, after receiving the gift of *Nabíl's Narrative* from the Guardian wrote to him: ". . . The last book—*The Dawn-Breakers*—is an especially valuable contribution. I congratulate you heartily for publishing it. You must have worked very hard to produce such a splendid translation, with such very interesting notes and photographs." At a later date he commented at length upon this unique volume:

I have profited by the leisure of the summer to read *Nabíl's Narrative* . . . Everyone interested in religion and also in history owes you a very great debt of gratitude for publishing such a fine piece of work. The deeper side of the work is so impressive, that it seems hardly fitting to compliment you upon some of the practical matters connected with the translation. However, I cannot refrain from telling you how much I appreciate your taking the time from a busy life to accomplish such a large task.

The quality of the English and the delightful ease of reading the translation are extraordinary, as usually a translation is difficult to read. You have been splendid in making the book so neutral and in adding the footnotes, which make the work more a matter of scientific history than anything like propaganda. The force of the book is very great, because the translation is so scientific and the original authorship so spontaneous, that the whole work must seem genuine, even to the most cynical critic.

From the point of history, the work is of the greatest possible value. It is also tremendously useful, as it explains the psychology which lies back of our great movements of religious revelation. Of course the chief value is the light that is thrown upon the early history of the Bahai Movement. The lives of the first converts are tremendously inspiring.

I am loaning my copy to Prof. Crawford and Prof. Seelye and hope that many of our professors and students will find time to read such an instructive and stimulating book.

Although such an understanding appreciation of what his work represented from such a source must have pleased and touched Shoghi Effendi, there can be no doubt that the letter which Sir E. Denison Ross, the well-known Orientalist, wrote to him from the School of Oriental Studies of the University of London was the most highly prized tribute he received:

27th April, 1932

My dear Shoghi Effendi,

It was most kind of you to remember me and send me copies of your two latest works, which I am very proud to possess, especially as coming from such a quarter. The *Dawn Breakers* is really one of the most beautiful books I have seen for many years; the paper, printing, and illustrations are all exquisite, and as for your English style, it really could not be bettered, and never does it read like a translation. Allow me to convey my warmest congratulations on your most successful achievement of what you set out to do when you came to Oxford, namely, to attain a perfect command of our language.

Apart from all this, Nabil's narrative will be of the utmost service to me in the lectures I deliver here every Session on the Bab and the Baha.

Trusting you are in good health,

I remain,

Yours very sincerely,

E. Denison Ross

Director

Shoghi Effendi himself, in a letter to Martha Root written on 3 March 1931, described what *The Dawn-Breakers* is and what its production had meant to him: "I have just completed, after eight months of continuous and hard labour, the translation of the history of the early days of the Cause and have sent the manuscript to the American National Assembly. The work comprises about 600 pages and 200 pages of additional notes that I have gleaned during the summer months from different books. I have been so absorbed in this work that I have been forced to delay my correspondence . . . I am now so tired and exhausted that I can hardly write . . . The record is an authentic one and deals chiefly with the Báb. Parts of it have been read to Bahá'u'lláh and been revised by 'Abdu'l-Bahá . . . I am so overcome with fatigue caused by the long and severe strain of the work I have undertaken that I must stop and lie down."

In anticipation of its forthcoming appearance Shoghi Effendi cabled America in October 1931: "Urge all English-speaking believers concentrate study Nabil's immortal narrative as essential preliminary to renewed intensive Teaching Campaign necessitated by completion *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár*. Strongly feel widespread use of its varied rich and authentic material constitutes most effective weapon to meet challenge of a critical hour. Unhesitatingly recommend it to every prospective visitor of Bahá'u'lláh's native land."

The volume Shoghi Effendi recommended to the study of the believers is 748 pages long and contains over 150 photographs; it has a detailed genealogy of the Báb prepared by the Guardian in his own hand and reproduced in facsimile; in addition to the text, based on the original of Nabíl but transfigured through the brilliant handling it received as it passed through the mind and vocabulary of Shoghi Effendi, the copious footnotes he appended, in English and French, collected from innumerable sources, cast an illumination on the events it records which greatly enhances its historical interest and validity. A signed and numbered *édition de luxe* of 300 copies was published with the general edition. It took Shoghi Effendi almost two years of research, compilation and translation to complete this remarkable volume. In the course of 1930 he sent an Australian Bahá'í photographer to Persia to painstakingly retrace the footsteps of the Báb in His native land, the scenes of His and His followers' martyrdoms and many historic sites. Had Shoghi Effendi not done this all visual trace of many of these places in more or less their original state would have been lost forever. In addition to selecting the photographs for *Nabíl's Narrative*, Shoghi Effendi made very careful arrangements to send to America what he described as a "priceless trust", no less than the original Tablets of the Báb to His nineteen disciples, and the infinitely precious one addressed to Bahá'u'lláh as "*Him Who Will Be Made Manifest*"; these were reproduced in full in faultless facsimiles. He chose as his frontispiece a coloured reproduction of the interior of the Shrine of the Báb. At last the Guardian had a worthy gift entirely his own to bestow upon the one he had loved best:

To

The Greatest Holy Leaf

The Last Survivor of a Glorious and Heroic Age

I Dedicate This Work

in Token of a

Great Debt of Gratitude and Love

The Bahá'ís of the West emerged from the experience of reading this history of the life and times of the Báb transfigured; it was as if some of the precious blood of those early martyrs had been spattered upon them. They caught a glimpse of the tradition behind them, they saw that this was a Faith for which one carried one's life in one's hand, they understood what Shoghi Effendi was talking about and what he expected from them when he called them the spiritual descendants of the Dawn-Breakers. The seeds this book planted in the hearts of the western followers of Bahá'u'lláh grew and matured in the Ten Year Crusade, and its harvest will continue to be garnered ever more abundantly as the Divine Plan of 'Abdu'l-Bahá goes on unfolding in its conquest of the entire globe.

In 1935 Shoghi Effendi again presented the western Bahá'ís with a magnificent gift, published under the title *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, which the Guardian himself described, in a letter to Sir Herbert Samuel, as "consisting of a selection of the most characteristic and hitherto unpublished passages from the outstanding works of the Author of the Bahá'í Revelation." Remembering the scanty pages of the New Testament, the reputed words of Buddha and the mere handful of sayings of some other Divine luminaries, which nevertheless have transfigured for centuries the lives of millions of men, the *Gleanings* alone seems to provide a

source of guidance and inspiration sufficient for the spiritual Dispensation of any Prophet. Professor Norman Bentwich, in thanking Shoghi Effendi for a copy of the *Gleanings* he had sent him, said: "I prize it with the other fruits of your industrious piety"—truly a beautiful description of the nature of Shoghi Effendi's work to bring to the Western World the words of the Manifestation of God in this day. But surely the most treasured tribute to this book was that of Queen Marie of Rumania, who told Martha Root: "even doubters would find a powerful strength in it, if they would read it alone, and would give their souls time to expand." To Shoghi Effendi himself the Queen wrote, in January 1936, after receiving from him a copy, "May I send you my most grateful thanks for the wonderful book, every word of which is precious to me, and doubly so in this time of anxiety and unrest"; to which the Guardian replied that he felt his efforts in translating it had been fully rewarded as she said she had derived benefit from reading it.

This was followed by the translation in 1936–7 of what might almost be termed a companion volume, comparable in richness and complementary in material, namely, *Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh*. Again we find the Guardian's former professor, Bayard Dodge, writing to him with a shrewd appraisal of what such a work involves: "The translation of deep and poetic thoughts, such as those in the *Prayers and Meditations*, requires an enormous amount of hard work . . . I have told you before how much I marvel when I see the quality of English that you use." When he had received the *Gleanings* Professor Dodge had written to the Guardian: "You have mastered English in such a remarkable way that I am sure the sayings do not lose their meaning and charm because of translation." And when Shoghi Effendi's translation of *The Hidden Words* reached him he had written, again with singular insight into what such a work signifies: "I realize how exceedingly difficult it is to translate beautiful Oriental thoughts into English and I congratulate you for the quality of the language which you have used."

Immediately after the publication of this diamond-mine of communion with God, unsurpassed in any religious literature of the world, Shoghi Effendi set to work on a longer general letter than he had ever before written, which appeared in 1939 under the title of *The Advent of Divine Justice*. It was written during the year the Guardian remained in Europe owing to terrorist activities in Palestine, and was addressed to the Bahá'ís throughout the United States and Canada. In it Shoghi Effendi set forth, as never before, the role this Community was destined to play in the unfolding destiny of man on this planet. It defined the objectives of the recently opened Seven Year Plan, the first step in implementing the provisions of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Divine Plan, and pointed out that upon the success of this greatest joint enterprise ever undertaken by Bahá'u'lláh's followers must depend the fate of all future activities in the promulgation of His World Order throughout the other continents of the globe. With a kind but firm hand Shoghi Effendi held up before the face of the North American Community the mirror of the civilization by which they were surrounded and warned them, in terms that riveted the eye and chilled the heart, against its evils, pointing out to them a truth few of them had ever pondered, namely, that the very evils of that civilization were the mystic reason for their homeland having been chosen by God as the Cradle of His World Order in this day. As the warnings contained in *The Advent of Divine Justice* are an integral part of the vision and guidance Shoghi Effendi gave to the faithful throughout his ministry, they cannot be passed over in silence if we are to obtain any correct understanding of his own mission. In no uncertain terms he castigated the moral laxity, political corruption, racial prejudice and corrosive materialism of their society, contrasting it with the exalted standards inculcated by Bahá'u'lláh in His Teachings, and enjoined by Him upon His followers. It warned them of the war so soon to come and admonished them to stand fast, in spite of every trial that might in future afflict them and their nations, and discharge their sacred trust by prosecuting to a triumphal outcome the Plan they had so recently inaugurated throughout the Western Hemisphere.

Another general letter—this time addressed to the body of the Bahá'ís throughout the West—appeared in print in 1941. It was called *The Promised Day Is Come* and, together with *The Advent of Divine Justice*, sets forth the root-decay of the present-day world. In it, written during the second year of the war, Shoghi Effendi thunders his denunciations of the perversity and sinfulness of this generation, using as his missiles quotations from the lips of Bahá'u'lláh Himself: “*The time for the destruction of the world and its people hath arrived.*” “*The promised day is come, the day when tormenting trials will have surged above your heads, and beneath your feet, saying: ‘Taste ye what your hands have wrought!’*” “*Soon shall the blasts of His chastisement beat upon you, and the dust of hell enshroud you.*” “*And when the appointed hour is come, there shall suddenly appear that which shall cause the limbs of mankind to quake.*” “*The day is approaching when its (civilization’s) flame will devour the cities, when the Tongue of Grandeur will proclaim: ‘The Kingdom is God’s, the Almighty, the All-Praised!’*” “*The day will soon come, whereon they will cry out for help and receive no answer.*” “*We have fixed a time for you, O people! If ye fail, at the appointed hour, to turn towards God, He, verily, will lay violent hold on you, and will cause grievous afflictions to assail you from every direction. How severe indeed is the chastisement with which your Lord will then chastise you!*” “*O ye peoples of the world! Know verily that an unforeseen calamity is following you and that grievous retribution awaiteth you. Think not the deeds ye have committed have been blotted from My sight. By My Beauty! All your doings hath My pen graven with open characters upon tablets of chrysolite.*”

The Guardian paints a terrible, terrifying and majestic picture of the plight to which the human race has been reduced through its steadfast rejection of Bahá'u'lláh. The “world-afflicting ordeal that has laid its grip upon mankind” is, he wrote, “primarily a judgement of God pronounced against the peoples of the earth, who, for a century, have refused to recognize the One Whose advent had been promised to all religions”. Shoghi Effendi recapitulates the sufferings, the persecution, the calumny and cruelty to which the Báb, Bahá'u'lláh and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá were subjected and recounts the tale of Their blamelessness, Their patience and fortitude in the face of these trials and Their final weariness with this world as they gathered Their skirts about Them and repaired to the Celestial Realms of Their Creator. Shoghi Effendi enumerates the sins of mankind against these Sinless Ones and points the finger of blame at the leaders of mankind, at its kings, its highest ecclesiastical personages and rulers to whom the twin Manifestations of God had directed the full force of Their Message and because of whose neglect of their supreme duty to pay heed to the Call of God, Bahá'u'lláh Himself stated: “*From two ranks amongst men power hath been seized: kings and ecclesiastics.*”

So fascinating, profuse and vast in subject matter are the writings of Shoghi Effendi that when one starts to even touch upon a book like *The Promised Day Is Come* one finds one’s self wandering away down this great trail of thought he blazed and forgetting that the purpose of these pages is not to review his books but to attempt a review of the many facets of his life and accomplishments. Nevertheless I cannot resist quoting from a letter a very humble Bahá'í wrote to him when this book was published: “The Promised Day has Come is a peach of a book for me, I love it, now all I need is the clear understanding in my heart. Thank you, Shoghi Effendi for your kindness, you can’t know how much you did for me . . . What is it we ever did for you? You did everything for us . . .”

Between these two so-called general letters—*The Advent of Divine Justice* and *The Promised Day Is Come*—Shoghi Effendi gave the western believers his fifth and last book of translations of the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, undertaken during the winter of 1939–40, at another of the most difficult and hazardous periods of his life, and mailed to America for publication on the eve of his departure for Europe in the teeth of the European war. The *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf* was Bahá'u'lláh’s last major work and contains a selection from His own Writings made by Himself (surely a unique occurrence in religious history!) during the last two years of His life and has

therefore a special position of its own in the literature of our Faith. In a cable shortly prior to its publication Shoghi Effendi said: “Devoutly hope its study may contribute further enlightenment deeper understanding verities on which effective prosecution teaching administrative undertakings ultimately depend . . .”

From an entry in my own diary, dated 22 January 1944, I quote: “Today the very last corrections of *Prospect and Retrospect*, the last instalment of Shoghi Effendi’s book, were made and tomorrow it will be mailed to Horace. It has been almost two years—or maybe it is more!—since the Guardian started. It has meant almost continuous work for him and been a terrible burden and strain, but it is certainly worth it! It is a marvelous book.” With such small recordings are the great events of a life often noted by those who participate in them and arrive, exhausted, at the end, too tired to be anything but trite and circumstantial! Also, at this point too tired to remember that it had actually taken over two years to write what Shoghi Effendi and I referred to as “the book”—it received its beautiful title at the end.

God Passes By, the most brilliant and wondrous tale of a century that has ever been told, is truly a “Mother” of future histories, a book wherein every word counts, every sentence burgeons with thought, every thought leads the way to a field of its own. Packed with salient facts, it has the range and precision of snowflake crystals, each design perfect in itself, each theme brilliant in outline, co-ordinated, balanced, self-contained, a matrix for those who follow on and study, evaluate and elaborate the Message and Order of Bahá’u’lláh. It was one of the most concentrated and stupendous achievements of Shoghi Effendi’s life, the only true book we have from his pen—because all his other communications were, no doubt due to his profound modesty and humility, in the nature of letters addressed to a specific community or section of the Bahá’í world.

The method of Shoghi Effendi in writing *God Passes By* was to sit down for a year and read every book of the Bahá’í Writings in Persian and English, and every book written about the Faith by Bahá’ís, whether in manuscript form or published, and everything written by non-Bahá’ís that contained significant references to it. I think, in all, this must have covered the equivalent of at least two hundred books. As he read he made notes and compiled and marshalled his facts. Anyone who has ever tackled a work of an historical nature knows how much research is involved, how often one has to decide, in the light of relevant material, between this date given in one place and that date given in another, how back-breaking the whole work is. How much more so then was such a work for the Guardian who had, at the same time, to prepare for the forthcoming Centenary of the Faith and make decisions regarding the design of the superstructure of the Báb’s Shrine. When all the ingredients of his book had been assembled, Shoghi Effendi commenced weaving them into the fabric of his picture of the significance of the first century of the Bahá’í Dispensation. It was not his purpose, he said, to write a detailed history of those hundred years, but rather to review the salient features of the birth and rise of the Faith, the establishment of its administrative institutions, and the series of crises which had propelled it forward in a mysterious manner, through the release of the Divine power within it, from victory to victory. He revealed to us the panorama of events which, he wrote, “the revolution of a hundred years . . . has unrolled before our eyes” and lifted the curtain on the opening acts of what he asserted was one “indivisible, stupendous and sublime drama, whose mystery no intellect can fathom, whose climax no eye can even dimly perceive, whose conclusion no mind can adequately foreshadow.”

How many hundreds of hours Shoghi Effendi spent on reading his sources and compiling his notes, how many days and months in painstakingly writing out in longhand—and often rewriting—the majestic procession of his chapters, how many more wearisome days he sat at his small portable typewriter, hammering away with a few fingers, sometimes ten hours on end, as he typed the final copy of his work! And how many more hours we spent late into the night, when the daily typing was over, seated side by side at his big table in his bedroom, each with

three copies of the typescript before us, proof-reading, making corrections, putting in by hand the thousands of accents on transliterated words which Shoghi Effendi would read aloud, until his eyes were bloodshot and blurred, his back and arms stiff with exhaustion, as we worked on to finish the entire chapter or part of a chapter he had typed that day. It had to be done. There was no possibility of working at a slower pace. He was racing against time to present the Bahá'ís of the West with this inimitable gift on the occasion of the one hundredth anniversary of the inception of their Faith. In spite of the fact that he mailed off to America the corrected manuscript in instalments, conditions in the United States delayed the publication and the book was not off the press until the middle of November 1944.

It was not enough to say "See what the man has done." One must ask how and under what circumstances he did it. 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote the *Tablets of the Divine Plan* when He was old, worn out and in great danger at the end of World War I. Shoghi Effendi, already crushed and overburdened from the weight of twenty years of Guardianship, when the tides of World War II threatened to sweep over the Holy Land and engulf him and the World Centre of the Faith in one catastrophic flow, during a period when his home was convulsed by the repercussions of Covenant-breaking now affecting his family, set himself the task of appraising for all time the significance of the events of the first century of the Bahá'í Era. On rare occasions it was my misfortune during these years to see him weep as if his heart would break—so great was his agony, so overwhelming the pressures that bore down upon him!

Not content with the history he had just completed in English, Shoghi Effendi now turned his thoughts to the loving and loyal Community of Bahá'u'lláh's long-suffering and persecuted followers in His native land and began the composition of another memorial to the first hundred years of the Bahá'í Faith in Persian. This was a comparable, though shorter version of the same subject, different in nature but no less splendid in both the facts it presented and the brilliancy of its language. Whereas I had sat through most of his writing of *God Passes By* in English, there was no point in my doing so for this epistle. The difference between the style of Shoghi Effendi's letters and discourse in Persian—liberally sprinkled with Arabic—and every-day Persian is comparable to the difference between Shakespearian English and modern journalese! My command of Persian and ignorance of Arabic were such that I could not catch more than three or four words out of ten. Nevertheless, he would read to me, or rather chant to me, some of its passages, and the majestic flow of his words, their perfection and power, were evident to me even though I could not fully follow their meaning. I remember how, as I approached his room, I would hear his voice chanting his composition to himself as he wrote, infinitely plaintive, infinitely beautiful. It was also fascinating: he would chant the sentence he was writing until he struck a bump, a word that would not fit smoothly, the lovely voice, unconscious of itself, would stop, then go back to the beginning of the sentence and start off again up to the same point; if he did not get over it that time this would be repeated until he did! It was like some wonderful bird trying out its melodies to itself, lost in its own world. This epistle ran to a hundred pages in fine handwriting and is another of Shoghi Effendi's masterpieces. These two reviews of a hundred years were the Guardian's priceless Centenary gifts to the Bahá'ís, wrought with great cost to his strength and health, and devised during years when the world was rocked by its greatest war.

For the next thirteen years Shoghi Effendi neither translated nor wrote any more books. It is our great loss that he no longer had the time to do so. The international community of the Faith he had been at such pains to build up since 1921 had now reached such proportions that it consumed his time and strength and left little of either for the intensely creative work he was so richly endowed by nature to produce. However, he continued to pour forth his guidance to the believers and their national bodies through letters, and particularly through long cables. By 1941 Shoghi Effendi had already begun to enumerate the victories the Bahá'ís were winning throughout the

world. Out of this type of message ultimately developed the thrilling Ridván reviews of the work accomplished each year, reviews which made the believers see their labours in every country as part of a great whole.

Since the inception of his ministry Shoghi Effendi had increasingly used the medium of telegrams and cablegrams, not only because they saved time but because, as he explained to me, of their psychological effect; a cable conveys a sense of urgency and drama and is often a better way of driving home one's point. Shoghi Effendi developed what one might call the language of cables to such a high degree that they became a literary accomplishment. Not infrequently he sent cables the length of letters. He thought in the abbreviated form when he wrote them. It was not a question of expressing a thought in the normal style of composition and then eliminating all the words that could be left out and still convey the meaning; from the beginning he did not think those words into his text at all and thus the style is very graphic, powerful and dramatic. It loses in style—and often in correct meaning—when someone interpolates it with all the “if’s” and “and’s” and “of’s” and “the’s” and so on he thinks should be there to make it clear. To insert such interpolations without parentheses is an unwarranted interference in the texts of our Faith, as it means some editor has inserted into Shoghi Effendi's own sentences words that he thinks will clarify what Shoghi Effendi meant; on the other hand to insert anything at all, even in parentheses, seems to imply the reader is a fool and not able to understand for himself what the Guardian meant.

Until the end of his days Shoghi Effendi continued to inspire the Bahá'í world with his instructions and thoughts; words of great power and significance, equal in bulk to a number of volumes, flowed from his pen. But an epoch had ended with the close of the war and the increase in administrative activity all over the world. Although his driving power never left him, and the hours of work he spent on the Cause of God each day never diminished until he passed away, Shoghi Effendi was deeply tired.

The life work of Shoghi Effendi might well be divided into four major aspects: his translations of the Words of Bahá'u'lláh, the Báb, ‘Abdu'l-Bahá and Nabíl's narrative; his own writings such as the history of a century, published as *God Passes By*, as well as an uninterrupted stream of instructive communications from his pen which pointed out to the believers the significance, the time and the method of the building up of their administrative institutions; an unrelenting programme to expand and consolidate the material assets of a world-wide Faith, which not only involved the completion, erection or beautification of the Bahá'í Holy Places at the World Centre but the construction of Houses of Worship and the acquisition of national and local headquarters and endowments in various countries throughout the East and West; and, above all, a masterly orientation of thought towards the concepts enshrined in the teachings of the Faith and the orderly classification of those teachings into what might well be described as a vast panoramic view of the meaning, implications, destiny and purpose of the religion of Bahá'u'lláh, indeed of religious truth itself in its portrayal of man as the apogee of God's creation, evolving towards the consummation of his development—the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth.

XI

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS OF THE FAITH

The development of the World Centre of the Faith under the aegis of the Guardian represents one of the major achievements of his life and can only be compared in importance to the spread and consolidation of the Cause itself throughout the entire globe. Of the unique significance of this Centre Shoghi Effendi wrote that it was: “. . . the Holy Land—the Qiblih of a world community, the heart from which the energizing influences of a vivifying Faith continually stream, and the seat and centre around which the diversified activities of a divinely appointed Administrative Order revolve”.

When in 1921 Shoghi Effendi assumed the responsibilities conferred upon him in the *Will and Testament* of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, the Bahá’í holdings in Haifa and Akka consisted of the Shrine of Bahá’u’lláh in Bahjí, which was situated in a house belonging to the Afnan heirs of the daughter of Bahá’u’lláh, in whose home He had been interred after His Ascension; the Shrine of the Báb on Mt Carmel, surrounded by a few plots of land, purchased during the lifetime of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, on one of which stood the Oriental Pilgrim House; the house of ‘Abbúd, where Bahá’u’lláh had resided for many years in Akka and in which He revealed the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*; the Ridván and adjacent gardens; and the house of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in Haifa. The Mansion of Bahá’u’lláh, adjoining His Shrine, was occupied by the Arch-Covenant-breaker Muhammad ‘Alí; and the title to almost all the Bahá’í properties was registered either in the names of various members of the family or in those of a few Bahá’ís. So insecure was the entire legal position of the Faith and its properties that the work Shoghi Effendi accomplished during his ministry in safeguarding and adding to these Holy Places, in extending the lands surrounding them, in registering these lands, in many instances in the names of locally incorporated Palestine Branches of various National Bahá’í Assemblies, and in securing exemption from municipal and national taxes for them, is little short of miraculous. When we remember that his position in 1922 was so precarious that Muhammad ‘Alí was emboldened to seize the keys of Bahá’u’lláh’s Holy Tomb, that many Muslim and Christian elements, jealous of the universal favour ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had enjoyed at the end of His life, were only too anxious to discredit His young successor in the eyes of the authorities, and that Shoghi Effendi himself had been immediately overwhelmed by grave problems of every conceivable nature, within and without the Cause, we cannot but marvel anew at the wisdom and statesmanship that characterized his conduct of affairs at the World Centre.

The Heroic Age of the Faith had passed. What Shoghi Effendi termed the Formative Age dawned with his own ministry, and was shaped for all time by him. Fully realizing that neither his own station nor his capacities were the same as those of his beloved Master, Shoghi Effendi refused to imitate Him in any way, in dress, in habits, in manner. To do so would have been, he believed, completely lacking in both judgement and respect. This was to be the era of emancipation of the Faith, of recognition of its independent status, of the establishment of its Order, of the up-building of its institutions. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had come to the Holy Land a prisoner and exile; although He could proclaim, during His travels in the West and through His letters, the independent character of the Cause of His Father, locally He could not, at the end of His life, break through the chrysalis of common custom that had bound Him so long to the predominantly Muslim community; to do things ungracefully and hurtfully was no part of the Bahá’í Teachings. But Shoghi Effendi, returning from his studies in England, young, western in training

and habit, was now in a position to do this. However much loved and esteemed ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had been, He was not viewed as the Head of an independent world religion but rather as the saintly protagonist of a great spiritual philosophy of universal brotherhood, a distinguished notable among other notables in Palestine. By sheer force of personality He had dominated those around Him. But Shoghi Effendi knew he could never do this in the circumstances surrounding him at the outset of his Guardianship, neither had he any desire to do so. His function everywhere—but particularly at the World Centre—was to win recognition of the Cause as a world religion entitled to the same status and prerogatives that other religions, such as Christianity, Islam and Judaism, enjoyed.

From the very beginning he appreciated the fact that if he was to establish the World Centre on a proper basis during the years in which the Bahá’í Faith must inevitably expand abroad, then locally his own position—which was not that of a local or national Head but the World Head of that Faith—must be put on an entirely different footing. Palestine, although it was sacred to these three great World Faiths, was not at one and the same time the spiritual and administrative heart of any one of them, and therefore no one in the country held a comparable position to his own. He, however, because he was the Head of a comparable Faith, and resided at both its spiritual and administrative heart, should enjoy the right of precedence over all other religious Heads in the country. Although Shoghi Effendi, from the outset of his ministry, understood this, he was wise enough to realize he had no hope at that time of winning others over to this view. He displayed his brilliance by not entering into the activities of the Master, and not mingling freely at various social functions, official or otherwise. He well knew that among the local pundits he could not hope to receive the right of precedence his position deserved and that should he be relegated as the Bahá’í representative to a secondary position, owing to his youth and the power the large Muslim community wielded, the situation would crystallize about this precedent and it would be almost impossible later to assume his rightful place as Head of a World Religion. Primarily because of this, for thirty-six years, with one or two exceptions, Shoghi Effendi avoided all government and municipal functions and took no part in social life whatsoever, constantly, albeit tactfully, insisting that he or whomsoever he chose to send in his stead should receive the precedence he deserved; by the end of his life he had practically won this long battle and although the Bahá’í representative was not always accorded the priority Shoghi Effendi desired, he effectively prevented that representative from being allocated a permanently minor position at official functions. On the rare occasions he himself attended state functions in Israel, he received his due as the Head of a World Faith. In view of his constant preoccupation with his work, the repeated crises that rocked him all his life and the demands pilgrims made upon his time, to give up all social life was no great deprivation for Shoghi Effendi. But it did add to his isolation and deprived him effectively of any intellectual companionship and stimulation he might have derived from meeting men of calibre and significance.

During the first two decades of his ministry, however, Shoghi Effendi had more or less close personal contact with various High Commissioners and District Commissioners and through this he was able to win back the keys of Bahá’u’lláh’s Tomb and assert his undisputed right to its custody, to obtain possession of the Mansion of Bahá’u’lláh, to receive permission to bury ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s closest relatives in the vicinity of the Báb’s Shrine, in the centre of a residential district on Mt Carmel, to have the Bahá’í Marriage Certificate accepted by the Government on the same footing as that of Jews, Christians and Muslims and, above all, through his persistent efforts, to succeed in impressing upon the British authorities the sacred nature of the Bahá’í holdings in Palestine and in winning from them the exemption from taxes, both municipal and national, which he sought.

Bahjí was always Shoghi Effendi’s first preoccupation and he was determined to safeguard not only the Shrine where Bahá’u’lláh lay buried but the last home He had occupied in this world and the buildings and lands that adjoined it. From the time Bahá’u’lláh passed away in 1892 until 1929 Muhammad ‘Alí and his relatives had been in possession of this home, known as the “Qasr”, or “Palace”, of ‘Údí Khammar, a building unique in

Palestine for its majestic style of architecture and which had been purchased for Bahá'u'lláh towards the end of His life. This Mansion was now falling into a serious and pitiful state of disrepair, stained, rainworn, its roof caving in, its once lovely rooms abandoned or used as store rooms. In November 1927 Shoghi Effendi wrote to one of the friends that "The Qasr is still occupied by Muhammad 'Alí and Majdiddin [his cousin] has sent a message requesting us to repair the roof which may collapse at any time. He has been told emphatically that we shall not proceed with any repair unless and until they evacuate the entire building." Eventually it seems the situation of the Mansion reached a point where the Covenant-breakers had no alternative and were forced to comply with Shoghi Effendi's demand. On 27 November 1929, the day before the eighth anniversary of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's passing, Shoghi Effendi cabled a relative: ". . . Qasr evacuated. Restoration commenced", and on 5 December he wrote to one of the friends: ". . . the Mansion of Bahá'u'lláh, occupied for about forty years by Muhammad 'Alí and his followers, has at last been evacuated and the enclosed photograph will indicate in what a state they have left it! Restorative work has commenced and the pilgrims are already visiting the room where Bahá'u'lláh passed away and where He passed the most peaceful and happiest days of His life." Two years later the work was completed. Shoghi Effendi had had the building renovated and refurbished in all its original beauty. He brought one of the Bahá'ís who had often been there in his youth, and was capable and conscientious, to supervise the work. The roof, the woodwork, the frescoes on the balcony, the intricate stencilled decoration on the walls of all the rooms on the upper floor, the fine wooden-beam ceilings—all were restored to their original state. Having done this, Shoghi Effendi proceeded to carpet it with valuable rugs sent by the Bahá'ís in Persia, to hang rare illuminations in the writing of the famous Bahá'í calligrapher, Mishkin Qalam, on its walls, to furnish it with bookcases filled with the translations of Bahá'í literature in many languages, to place innumerable photographs and documents of historic interest in its various rooms and then to invite the British High Commissioner to come and see it, he himself accompanying him on this tour of inspection. When all had been viewed Shoghi Effendi asked His Excellency if he did not feel that such a place as this, so sacred in its associations to Bahá'ís the world over, far transcended the right to be considered any individual's private residence and should be preserved as a place of pilgrimage and an historical museum. His Excellency, no doubt as much impressed by the advocate as by the testimony, agreed, and the Mansion remained in Shoghi Effendi's hands. By April 1932 the pilgrims were privileged to sleep overnight in this historic and sacred spot and its doors were opened to non-Bahá'í visitors as well, who wandered through its beautiful rooms and gazed on the impressive array of testimonials to the world-wide nature of the Cause, on the innumerable photostatic copies of Bahá'í Assembly incorporations, marriage licenses and other historical material as well as photographs of the martyrs and pioneers of the Faith.

I remember how, in spite of the fact that Shoghi Effendi had possession of the Mansion, he was constantly irked, until the very end of his life, by the fact that Covenant-breakers still occupied the adjacent house. The night of the Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh, when the Guardian, at the head of the Bahá'í men, would proceed to His Shrine after visiting the room in the Mansion in which He had passed away, he was obliged to pass in front of the room where the Covenant-breakers were keeping their own vigil and often they would make audible comments on him as he passed, adding to the distress of a night that was already distressing enough in its associations. It was not until June 1957 that he was able to cable the Bahá'í world: "With feelings profound joy exultation thankfulness announce morrow sixty-fifth anniversary Ascension Bahá'u'lláh signal epoch-making victory won over ignoble band breakers His Covenant which course over six decades has entrenched itself precincts Most Holy Shrine Bahá'í world".

From the time, in January 1923, when he had written to the eldest son of Bahá'u'lláh's daughter requesting him to make a definite pronouncement that whatever the legal rights of these Afnans might be, the Shrine at Bahjí, because of its nature, belonged to the Bahá'í Movement, until the end of his life, Shoghi Effendi struggled to

place on an unshakable foundation the legal position of this Sacred Spot, in spite of the opposition of that tainted band of relatives who resisted his every effort for over thirty years. It was due to the mysterious workings of Providence that after the War of Independence, through the mass exodus of the Arabs, including many enemies of the Faith, Shoghi Effendi was able to at last emerge triumphant from this long struggle. In 1952 the long-coveted lands surrounding the Tomb and Mansion of Bahá'u'lláh, amounting to over 145,000 square metres, were obtained. As early as 1931 Shoghi Effendi had endeavoured to get the government to requisition part of this land—which had originally belonged to the Mansion property but had been usurped by the Muslim friends and supporters of Muhammad 'Alí—but it had refused to intervene and the asking price was over ten times the market value of the land. The Guardian had to wait over twenty years until the fortunes of war brought it back to its rightful owners. In addition to this, both the Pilgrim House, which had been under the control of 'Abdu'l-Bahá since the Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh, and a building known as the Tea House of the Master, where He often entertained the believers—including the first group of pilgrims from the West—were acquired by the Guardian during the last years of his life. In 1952 the Government of Israel lifted from the civil court in Haifa a case brought against the Guardian by the Covenant-breakers in connection with the demolition of a house in Bahjí, and supported his contention that the issue was a religious one, thus enabling him to emerge once more triumphant in his struggle with the entrenched enemies of 'Abdu'l-Bahá who had never relinquished their jealously guarded base near Bahá'u'lláh's Holy Shrine. Finally, in 1957, again through the co-operation of the State authorities, Shoghi Effendi was able to secure an expropriation order, on the grounds of their nearness to a sacred place of pilgrimage, for the houses occupied by what he termed the “wretched remnants” of the Covenant-breakers and thus at long last bring about what he described as the cleansing of the Haram-i-Aqdas of this spiritual defilement. So hotly was this expropriation order, which involved their eviction from Bahjí, contested by the Covenant-breakers that they took it before the Supreme Court of Israel, lost their case and were obliged to leave once and for all.

It had been the expressed desire of the Guardian himself to supervise the demolition of these houses that abutted on the Mansion and were right next to the Shrine, but he never returned to the Holy Land. When, in fulfilment of his own plan, they were pulled down, a few months after his passing, it was found that the large formal garden he had made in front of them was so accurately measured out and planned that it could be continued—I am tempted to say rolled out like a carpet—with complete accuracy right over the place where they had stood and up to the very wall of the Mansion.

Ever mindful of what was to him the deepest trust of his Guardianship—to fulfil to the letter in so far as lay within his power every wish and instruction of his beloved Master—Shoghi Effendi's second greatest concern at the World Centre was the Shrine of the Báb. The work connected with this second holiest Shrine of the Bahá'í Faith had two aspects: the completion of the building itself and the protection and preservation of its surroundings. The first involved the construction of three additional rooms as well as a superstructure—an entire building in itself—which is undoubtedly one of the most beautiful edifices on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea, and the second the gradual purchase, during a third of a century, of a great protective belt of land surrounding the Shrine and reaching from the top to the bottom of Mt Carmel. This area of over fifty acres is best discerned at night, as it lies a huge unlighted “V” in the heart of the city, in whose centre seems pinned a golden brooch, the flood-lit Shrine of the Báb, resting majestically on the bosom of the mountain, set off by the velvety black space of its gardens and lands. For thirty-six years Shoghi Effendi devoted himself to the development of this Sacred Spot in the midst of God's Holy Mountain; so impressive, so unique and of such vast proportions was his work there that it seems to me some of his very essence must be incorporated in its stones and soil.

It took more than one hundred years for Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi to finally discharge the sacred trust which the Báb's remains represented for them, a trust which lasted from the day of His martyrdom in 1850 until the final completion of His Shrine in 1953. From the moment when He was apprised of the execution of the Báb until He ascended in 1892 Bahá'u'lláh had watched over that Sacred Dust, supervising its removal from one place of concealment to another. During a visit to Mt Carmel He had pointed out to 'Abdu'l-Bahá with His own hand where the Báb's body was to rest forever, instructing Him to purchase this piece of land and bring the hidden remains from Persia and inter them there. 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Himself a prisoner, succeeded in having the small wooden box containing the remains of the Báb and His martyred companion conveyed, by caravan and boat, from Persia to Akka. When the first group of western pilgrims visited the prison-city in the winter of 1898–9, this precious casket was already concealed in the Master's home, its presence a carefully guarded secret.

One day in 1915, as 'Abdu'l-Bahá stood on the steps of His home and looked up at the Báb's Tomb, He remarked to one of His companions: "The sublime Shrine has remained unbuilt. Ten–twenty thousand pounds are required. God willing it will be accomplished. We have carried its construction to this stage." To a pilgrim He had said: "The Shrine of the Báb will be built in the most beautiful and majestic style", and had even gone so far as to order a Turk in Haifa to make him a sketch of how it would appear when completed. But in spite of the clear concept He had of the nature of the Shrine He desired so much to build for the Forerunner of the Faith, the ultimate task was to fall to Shoghi Effendi.

In 1928 he had work started on the excavation of the solid rock of the mountain behind the existing building in order to make place for the three extra, massive, vaulted and high-ceilinged rooms required to complete the ground floor. By 14 February 1929 we find him cabling one of the Afans: "Work on Maqám started" ("Maqám" was the Persian term used for the Báb's Shrine), and in December of that same year he informs a friend: "The construction of the three additional chambers contiguous to the Shrine on Mt. Carmel will soon be completed and the plan of the Master of having nine chambers as the ground floor of the Mausoleum of the Báb realized." It is interesting to note that the completion of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's original structure, in itself a major undertaking, and the costly and exacting restoration of the Mansion of Bahá'u'lláh were undertaken during the same year and took about the same length of time.

In everything Shoghi Effendi did he was guided by what he knew to be the desire of the Master. 'Abdu'l-Bahá had succeeded, by 1907, in completing only six of the nine rooms which would compose a square, in the centre of which the body of the Báb would repose, and already during that year meetings were held in the ones facing the sea. In 1909, with His own hands, He had laid the remains of the Martyr-Herald of the Faith away in their final resting-place. The next year He set out on His western journeys, the war ensued and He passed away. He had, however, expressed His concept of the finished structure: it should have an arcade surrounding the original nine rooms He had planned and be surmounted by a dome. The thought of this plan of the Master never left Shoghi Effendi but its realization seemed very indefinite. Where and when would he find the architect to design such a Shrine and the money to build it?

The answer came in a most unexpected way. In 1940 my mother died in Buenos Aires and my father was left entirely alone, as I was his only child. With that kindness of his which was so incomparable, Shoghi Effendi said to me one day that now my mother was dead, my father's place was with us. He invited him to join us and in spite of the war, whose arena was rapidly spreading, my father was able to do so. For years any construction work Shoghi Effendi had undertaken on the Bahá'í properties he had carried out with the occasional help of a local architect or an engineer. In addition to the three rooms added to the Báb's Shrine, the erection of the large and distinctive monuments over the graves of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's immediate family and the restoration of the

Mansion, Shoghi Effendi had built a handsome entrance to the resting-place of the Greatest Holy Leaf, had demolished Dumit's house when he succeeded in purchasing it and used the stones, doors and window frames to construct an annex to the Oriental Pilgrim House, and had built a bridge over a street to carry one of the terraces in front of the Shrine. In 1937 my father had designed a few additional rooms to be added to the ones occupied by the Guardian on the roof of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's home. With the exception of such things as these, which had required professional help, Shoghi Effendi invariably worked out for himself the dimensions of stairs and minor entrances he placed in the gardens. I had had no experience myself of such things and I can remember how, when he once wanted to build a more pretentious flight of steps, flanked by two piers, leading to the Báb's Shrine at the end of a new path, we worked for hours on the proportions and I finally made him a paper model to scale which we viewed with considerable misgivings! The finished product, however, was not only interesting but satisfactory. The point is that the Guardian was not a professional and did not wish to spend money unnecessarily on an architect for such small things, which posed a problem for him and consumed his time for nothing. One day, when he came home from the Shrine gardens, he asked me how I thought such and such dimensions for a flight of steps would look. I asked him why, when he had one of Canada's best architects living across the street in the Western Pilgrim House, he did not ask Daddy to work it out for him. I remember he looked at me in surprise and asked if I thought he could. I assured him that for my father it was child's play to design such a thing and he could do it at once. It was not that Shoghi Effendi lacked confidence in him as an architect; he had already sent to him in Montreal photographs of an iron gate he had ordered for the bottom terrace of the Shrine and asked him to incorporate this gate in a design for its completion; indeed, he had liked the plan of my father very much, but could not come to an agreement with the City about the conjuncture of his terrace and the municipal property and so the scheme was never carried out. It was just that it never occurred to him, after years of struggle with such problems alone, that he now had someone who could do these things for him. This marked the beginning of a beautiful partnership. I have never known two people who had such a perfect sense of proportion as Shoghi Effendi and my father, and of the two the Guardian's was the finer.

It seems to me, in looking back on Shoghi Effendi's life, that aside from the great sweep of the Faith, whose victories meant so much to him, Martha Root in one way and Sutherland Maxwell in another brought him more deep personal satisfaction than any other believers. They were very much alike in some ways, saintly and modest souls who adored Shoghi Effendi and gladly gave him the best they had in service and loyalty. Though Martha's services were far more important for the Cause, the talents of Sutherland became a medium through which Shoghi Effendi could express at last with ease the great creative and artistic side of his own nature and this gave him both satisfaction and happiness. Until the end of his life my father designed for him stairs, walls, pillars, lights and various entrances to the gardens on Mt Carmel. In addition to being an experienced architect, he drew and painted beautifully and could model and carve anything with his hands. I remember one night, after Shoghi Effendi had asked him to design for him a main entrance to the Shrine property, incorporating the ironwork already executed for the above-mentioned, uncompleted last terrace of the Shrine, I brought this design to him. He was sitting in bed, and when I handed him the small coloured drawing he gazed at it fixedly in silence and then said, "It's not fair!" I was considerably taken aback by this and asked him what he meant. "Why", he said, "no one can resist anything when it looks as beautiful as this!" He not only built the entrance but had the sketch framed and hung on the wall beside his bed.

Having tried my father on various small projects and found him far from wanting, suddenly—I think it was towards the end of 1942—Shoghi Effendi told him he wished him to make for him a design for the superstructure of the Shrine of the Báb. The Builder had at last been given the vehicle whereby he could realize the plan of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

In looking back upon the months that followed I marvel that Shoghi Effendi, completely absorbed by his work on *God Passes By*—which he was so pressed for time to complete before the approaching Centenary of the Faith—should have been able to devote any attention to this other major project. At the outset, Shoghi Effendi had given Sutherland only a few brief indications of what was required; he told him that the Shrine must have a dome and an arcade, must be neither purely western nor purely eastern in style and not look like a mosque or a church; he left him free to conceive his own design. The first one he made showed a structure with an arcade and a clerestory section, surmounted by a pyramid-shaped dome, which Shoghi Effendi did not like; he discussed the dome with Sutherland and said he would like it to resemble in shape that of St Peter's in Rome, which he considered the most beautiful dome in the world. If God had provided Shoghi Effendi with an architect, He had also in His infinite mercy bestowed upon that architect not only an incalculable spiritual blessing but an opportunity rare in the life of any professional man—the chance to pour out the mature wine of his talent and life-long experience in a worthy expression of his genius. The second drawing my father made Shoghi Effendi considered too European in emphasis—though he was satisfied with its proportions—and asked my father to change it. My father was delighted by this suggestion and reverted to the style of dome he had used in his design for the American Bahá'í Temple which he had entered in the original competition for that building, and which showed a marked Indian influence in some of its details. This last design greatly pleased the Guardian, with the exception of the treatment of the upper part of the clerestory which he felt needed some height at the eight corners. For weeks and weeks Sutherland submitted to him sketch after sketch until the present highly original minarets were approved by him on 25 December 1943. His suggestions had also influenced the four corners of the arcade, which he felt needed to be more pointed and which were accordingly modified. Although Shoghi Effendi liked very much the design in its final form, as shown in the coloured elevation my father had drawn, he said he wished to have a scale model made before reaching a final decision on a subject of such tremendous importance as in that way he could better visualize the structure as it would appear when built; should this meet with his approval he planned to officially unveil it on the occasion of the one hundredth anniversary of the Declaration of the Báb during the Centenary festivities that were to be held in Haifa.

It was extremely difficult in those days to find anyone capable of executing such a model and though nominally someone undertook to do the work, in practice most of it devolved on my father himself, who was extremely pressed for time to get it completed. In May the model was delivered. After carefully studying it, Shoghi Effendi came to his decision and on 22 May the press was informed that the design for the completed Shrine of the Báb had been chosen and would be built as soon as circumstances permitted. In the Oriental Bahá'í Pilgrim House, during the afternoon meeting on 23 May when the Bahá'í men were gathered in the presence of the Guardian—including many visitors from neighbouring countries—to commemorate the dawn of their Faith a hundred years earlier, Shoghi Effendi had the model brought out and placed on a table for all to see. Two days later he cabled America: “. . . Announce friends joyful tidings hundredth anniversary Declaration Mission Martyred Herald Faith signalized by historic decision complete structure His sepulchre erected by 'Abdu'l-Bahá site chosen by Bahá'u'lláh. Recently designed model dome unveiled presence assembled believers. Praying early removal obstacles consummation stupendous Plan conceived by Founder Faith and hopes cherished Centre His Covenant.”

When this announcement was made the world was approaching the end of the most terrible war in history; the Bahá'ís of the Western Hemisphere had strained themselves to the utmost in order to win the goals of their first Seven Year Plan; the believers were affected by the general economic depletion prevailing in most countries. It was no doubt because of this, and because the Guardian made no effort to inaugurate a Shrine fund, that his project slipped relatively noiselessly into existence and no more was heard of it until on 11 April 1946 Shoghi

Effendi instructed Mr Maxwell to set plans in motion for building the first unit of the Shrine and later himself wrote to the municipal authorities:

Haifa

Dec. 7th, 1947.

Haifa Local Building and Town Planning Commission.

To the Chairman

Dear Sir:

In connection with the accompanying drawings and application for permission to build, I wish to add a word of explanation.

The Tomb of the Báb, and of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, so well known to the people of Haifa as 'Abbas Effendi, is already in existence on Mt. Carmel in an incomplete form. In its present state, in spite of the extensive gardens surrounding it, it is a homely building with a fortress-like appearance.

It is my intention to now begin the completion of this building by preserving the original structure and at the same time embellishing it with a monumental building of great beauty, thus adding to the general improvement in the appearance of the slopes of Mt. Carmel.

The purpose of this building will, when completed remain the same as at present. In other words it will be used exclusively as a Shrine entombing the remains of the Báb.

As you will see from the accompanying drawings the completed structure will comprise an arcade of twenty-four marble or other monolith columns surmounted by an ornamental balustrade, on the first floor or ground floor of the building. It is this part of the building that we wish to begin work on at once, leaving the intermediary section and the dome, which will surmount the whole edifice when completed, to be carried on in the future, if possible at an early date after the completion of the ground floor arcade.

The Architect of this monumental building is Mr. W. S. Maxwell, F.R.I.B.A., F.R.A.I.C., R.C.A., the well-known Canadian architect, whose firm built the Chateau Frontenac Hotel in Quebec, the House of Parliament in Regina, the Art Gallery, Church of the Messiah, various Bank buildings, etc., in Montreal. I feel the beauty of his design for the completion of the Báb's Tomb will add greatly to the appearance of our city and be an added attraction for visitors.

Yours truly,

Shoghi Rabbani

I have quoted this letter in full as it demonstrates the masterly, tactful and clear manner in which Shoghi Effendi dealt with the authorities and which secured for him the necessary permission to build. On 15 December Shoghi

Effendi cabled America: "Happy announce completion of plans and specifications for erection of arcade surrounding the Báb's Sepulchre constituting first step in process destined to culminate in construction of the Dome anticipated by 'Abdu'l-Bahá and marking consummation of enterprise initiated by Him fifty years ago according to instructions given Him by Bahá'u'lláh."

The first historic steps had been taken but the obstacles in the way of the realization of this plan grew to what seemed insurmountable proportions. The British Mandate was nearing its end; Palestine was rocked by civil strife and was soon to be engulfed in a local war. Inquiries showed that the quarries from which suitable stone could be procured for the Shrine locally lay so near the Lebanese frontier that the owners could give no idea of when they could start deliveries. In addition to this, the tremendous amount of carved material on the building would require a corps of expert workers and such labour was practically unavailable in the country. In view of this, Shoghi Effendi came to another decision which was typical of his practical and audacious mind: he would see if part of the work could be done in Italy.

It is impossible to go into all the details, so fascinating in every way, that comprise the saga of the building of the Shrine. A letter, dated 6 April 1948, which I wrote on behalf of the Guardian to Dr Ugo Giachery, conveys very clearly the situation at that time: ". . . Mr. Maxwell . . . because of various difficulties . . . has not been able to place any contracts for the actual work to be carried out here in Palestine. However, he has been in touch with an Italian firm in Carrara about placing contracts for the granite columns which will surround the building on the first floor. He is now proceeding to Italy primarily to place the contract for these, and, if suitable stone, matching the Palestinian stone which will be used here, can be found, to also place additional contracts for the capitals and certain pieces of the carved ornamentation . . . Mr. Benjamin Weeden . . . will accompany Mr. Maxwell to both take care of him and facilitate in expediting the work there . . . As conditions in this country are extremely disturbed and the immediate future most uncertain, the Guardian is very anxious to have the contracts placed in Italy as soon as possible and have Mr. Maxwell and Mr. Weeden return here before they might possibly be cut off from us temporarily. He would therefore greatly appreciate your giving as much time as you can to assisting them, translating for them and seeing that they are in touch with reliable Italian firms and dealt with fairly . . . Unfortunately, owing to the fact that practically all communication with Jerusalem is cut off . . . Mr. Weeden was not able to contact the Italian Consulate there and obtain his visa. He will, if you and he cannot arrange for a visa in Rome when his plane comes in, have to go on with the same plane to Geneva . . . and return to join Mr. Maxwell . . . as Mr. Maxwell is now 74, though in the best of health, we hope you will take good care of him . . . Things are so acute here that it is extremely important that they get through with their business and return to Palestine . . ."

On the 15th of that same month I wrote, on behalf of the Guardian, to Horace Holley, Secretary of the American National Assembly, informing him of this trip to Italy in detail and explaining that as funds of the Guardian were blocked in Palestine because of strict currency regulations, "He therefore has in mind asking the friends, those in a position financially to do so, to raise a loan in order to place these contracts . . . he himself wishes to be considered the guarantor in this matter and will repay the loan at the earliest possible moment. He is very anxious to have no misunderstanding on this point. He is financing this work from the international funds of the Cause and will only consider an arrangement by which he will repay this temporary loan . . . As our situation here is so uncertain that any day we may find mail and even cables suspended temporarily he is hastening to get this information off to you . . . if suitable arrangements can be made and contracts signed Mr. Giachery will have to act as representative in this matter, receiving the sums from the States which you will send, keeping an eye on the work in Italy, and generally assuming responsibility there if we all get cut off from each other . . . He has urged Mr. Maxwell and Mr. Weeden to be back here in Palestine in three weeks if possible as he is afraid that we

might be entirely cut off from them . . . It is wonderful to know that the actual work on the Shrine is now so far advanced as to see the possibility of building operations being begun some time soon. But tremendous obstacles must be overcome, and, he feels confident, will be overcome.”

In such a storm yet another step in the unbelievably troubled history of the Báb’s remains and the building of His Tomb was undertaken. It was not reassuring, the following day, 16 April, to see my father and Mr Weeden off in a taxi entirely covered with armour-plate, a slit half an inch wide providing the visibility for the driver. Until they cabled from Italy we had no idea of what their fate had been. Half-way to the airport they had been forced to descend from the taxi and walk some hundreds of metres, carrying their heavy suitcases, to reach another taxi, a wholly unnecessary hardship typical of what the people of the country had to pass through in those days. Theirs was one of the last planes out of Lydda Airport before it was stormed and taken and all plane services suspended for some time. During their absence the War of Independence was fought and the country lapsed into the uneasy days of an armed truce.

During 1948 Shoghi Effendi himself undertook—for the second time in twenty years—the excavation of rock behind the Shrine in order to enlarge the area sufficiently to enable the arcade to be built. This was a tremendous work, involving the removal of hundreds of square metres of stone. The ingenuity of the Guardian was continually displayed as this work proceeded: he had a second-hand set of rails and a cart purchased, laid down on the path which ran parallel with the Shrine and in front of it, and the excavated material, directed down wooden chutes, carted off to the easternmost point of the terrace and dumped as fill for the extension of the terrace itself. From early morning until dark, often more than eight hours on his feet, day after day and month after month he directed the work. It was certainly not his work to do this, but he was determined to ensure it was done not only quickly, but economically, and there was no one else with the will power and stamina it required to take his place. It was in ways such as this, with indefatigable determination and unflagging perseverance, that Shoghi Effendi made of the Holy Places at the World Centre what we see before us today.

I have a note in my diary dated Tuesday, 24 February 1949 which reads: “Sunday M_____ [the contractor] starts on the southeastern and western corners foundations. A week later on the placing of the threshold stones—so the work is going to really start at last.” The long months of the Guardian’s toil were at an end; the edifice could now rise! Relentlessly Shoghi Effendi built the Shrine, which he said was “the consummation of Bahá’u’lláh’s irresistible Purpose of erecting a lasting and befitting memorial to His Divine Herald and Co-Founder of His Faith.” He not only built it, he dramatized it until it became a living experience for all Bahá’ís, a project to which their hearts, as well as the Guardian’s heart, were linked. He made thrilling the commonplace work of erecting a building. When he would announce the arrival of a new shipment of stones from Italy, and give the number of tons received, or report the erection of a new unit, or inform us that the dome had two hundred and fifty square metres of surface, or describe the beauty of some detail, his magic of words and the enthusiasm they reflected swept us away on tides of joy and raised us out of ourselves, making us feel we were co-sharers in something infinitely great and thrilling, so that what would have normally been a dull fact in a dull world reported to dull people fired our imaginations and identified us more deeply with our Faith. Small wonder that the believers, preoccupied with their national affairs in the post-war world, rallied round him and assisted him to complete, in five years, a three-quarters-of-a-million-dollar, truly “world-wide enterprise”.

Originally Shoghi Effendi had contemplated the possibility of erecting only the arcade of the Shrine and leaving the actual superstructure for a later date, but the remarkable response of the Bahá’ís all over the world in rallying to support this sacred edifice, the general worsening of the international situation, economic trends leading to increased costs, and the fact that the same highly efficient and skilled labourers who had executed the work on

the arcade so perfectly were still available at the company which had contracted for the stonework in Italy decided him to go on uninterruptedly with its construction.

Such an undertaking, lasting over so many years, was time-consuming and fraught with many heartaches and difficulties. Negotiations with the supervising engineer and the contractor—at all of which I represented the Guardian—were frequently exceedingly difficult as no one could either mislead or cheat Shoghi Effendi; whenever an estimate quoted was too high he flatly refused it and even stated on one occasion he would stop work on the Shrine indefinitely as he had no intention of paying what he felt was an exorbitant price. He battled his way through every obstacle and I often found, to my great surprise, that I was his sword! Not only was all the stonework imported from Italy but for a time even the cement and steel had to be procured from there owing to acute local shortages, and this also was a source of endless complications and worry.

In addition to problems of this nature, there was another that preoccupied him for a long time, and even caused him to delay the construction of the actual superstructure of the Shrine, for it must be remembered that the arcade merely embraces the original building and is not built on it. In order to build the remainder of the Shrine, eight reinforced concrete piers had to be sunk through eight of its interior walls to reach bedrock. This was a source of great concern to the Guardian because the exact dimensions of the chamber in which ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s remains are interred are not known and there was a very real danger that in going down through one of the walls they might break into the tomb itself. I learned more about what reverence, dignity and sanctity really imply through the Guardian’s attitude towards this problem than in the entire rest of my life. Shoghi Effendi said if we broke into the vault, the body of the Master would have to be removed. To me this seemed very simple; He would just be removed temporarily to somewhere else. How wonderfully Shoghi Effendi spoke then! I wish I could remember his exact words. He said the remains of the Master could never be treated so unceremoniously. They must be befittingly removed, with great ceremony, and laid befittingly in some other place, and then with equal reverence be re-interred. Where would he find, Shoghi Effendi asked, the people to be present on such solemn and sacred occasions, with a lukewarm local community, composed mostly of servants, and all the doors to neighbouring countries closed? And above all, where would he find a suitable place for the sacred remains of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to rest temporarily pending the completion of the work in the interior of His Shrine? His very voice breathed awe. I understood a great deal more about religion after that event. Finally, after my father and the engineer had exhaustively percussed the floors and walls a number of times, and old Bahá’ís present at the funeral of the Master had given their recollection of where the vault was, it seemed most unlikely that any of the piers, set as near the outer walls as possible, would break into the actual tomb, and so the work was begun.

In March 1952 Sutherland Maxwell died after two years of illness. Though his death could not impair the fulfilment of the design he had conceived for the Shrine, it deprived the dome section of the benefit of large-scale drawings made by him and hence of that blush of ultra-perfection which his own detailed treatment of his work always produced. In recognition of the services which both he and Dr Giachery had rendered the Shrine of the Báb, Shoghi Effendi called the two as yet unnamed doors of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s original building after them, and at a later date the door to the octagon after Mr Ioas, who supervised the construction of the drum and dome.

When the Shrine he had erected with so much love and care was completed, Shoghi Effendi, recognizing in it an essentially feminine quality of beauty and purity, called it the “Queen of Carmel”. He described it as “enthroned on God’s Holy Mountain, crowned with glowing gold, robed in shimmering white and girdled with emerald green, a sight enchanting every eye, whether viewed from the air, the sea, the plain or the hill.” Of the innumerable passages in which Shoghi Effendi extolled and explained the profound spiritual significance of this Spot, none is more striking and more powerful than that in which he visualizes the remains of the Martyr-Herald

of the Faith as the centre of a spiritual vortex. The Báb, Whom Bahá'u'lláh Himself had described as “*The Point round Whom the realities of the Prophets and Messengers revolve*” in the realm of the spirit, is, Shoghi Effendi said, in the Sacred Dust of His physical form left upon earth, the heart and centre of nine concentric circles: the outermost of these circles is the planet itself; inside this lies the Most Holy Land, described by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as “*the Nest of the Prophets*”; inside this Nest is the Mountain of God, the Vineyard of the Lord, the Retreat of Elijah Whose Return the Báb Himself symbolized; contained on this Mountain are the sacred precincts, the international endowment lands of the Faith; it is their gardens and terraces which constitute the Most Holy Court; within this Court, standing in all its exquisite beauty, is the Mausoleum of the Báb, the Shell; within this Shell is the Pearl of Great Price, the Holy of Holies, the original Tomb built by the Master Himself; preserved inside this Holy of Holies is the Vault or Tabernacle, the central chamber of the Shrine; within this Vault is the alabaster Sarcophagus, the Most Holy Casket “in which”, Shoghi Effendi wrote, “is deposited that inestimable Jewel, the Báb’s Holy Dust.”

The Shrine, Shoghi Effendi said, was an “institution” and too much emphasis could not be laid on the role which this institution was destined to play in the “unfoldment of the World Administrative Centre of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh and in the efflorescence of its highest institutions constituting the embryo of its future World Order.” As the superstructure rose in all its majesty Shoghi Effendi revealed more and more of the true significance of the Shrine; it was, he wrote, not only the first and most holy edifice reared at the World Centre of the Faith but was “the initial international institution heralding the establishment of the Supreme Legislative Body of the World Administrative Centre . . .”

Bahá'u'lláh’s Dust, the “Point of Adoration” or “Qiblih” of the faithful, was too sacred in its essence, His station too infinitely exalted, to act as the spiritual dynamo galvanizing the institutions of His World Order. The Dust of the Báb, however—Who had described His own station in relation to Bahá'u'lláh as that of “*a ring upon the hand of Him Whom God shall make manifest*,” Who “*turneth it as He pleaseth, for whatsoever He pleaseth, and through whatsoever He pleaseth*”—had been chosen by Bahá'u'lláh Himself to be the Centre around which His Administrative Institutions would cluster and under Whose shadow they would function through His act in choosing the site on Mt Carmel where the Báb’s remains were to rest and instructing ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to purchase that spot and bring the remains from Persia and inter them there. We must remember that long before the declaration by Bahá'u'lláh of His station, it was the Báb Who raised the clarion call of the “New Order”. What then more appropriate and significant than the choice of His remains for this purpose? Shoghi Effendi made this distinction clear when he referred to the twin nature of so many buildings at the World Centre, the Twin Shrines, the Twin Administrative and Spiritual Centres of the Faith.

There can be little doubt that upon reading the *Will and Testament* of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá Shoghi Effendi’s first thought was the speedy establishment of the Supreme Administrative Body of the Bahá’í Faith, the Universal House of Justice. One of his earliest acts, in 1922, had been to summon to Haifa old and key believers to discuss this matter with him. He repeatedly mentioned it in his communications—indeed in his first letter to Persia, written on 16 January 1922, he refers to it and states that he will announce to the friends later the preliminary arrangements for its election. There was never any question in his mind as to its function and significance; in March 1923 he had described it as “that Supreme Council that will guide, organize and unify the affairs of the Movement throughout the world”. There can be no doubt that two forces were at work in the Guardian in those first days of his ministry; one was his youthful eagerness to speedily carry out all the instructions of his beloved Master, which included the establishment of the Universal House of Justice; and the other was the Divine guidance and protection promised him in the Will; the latter modified the former. Over and over again Shoghi Effendi essayed to put in motion at least the preliminaries for electing this Supreme Body—and over and over

again the Hand of Providence manipulated events in such a way that premature action became impossible. At the consultations he held in 1922 it must have suddenly become apparent to him that, however highly desirable even a preliminary stage in the formation of the Universal House of Justice might be, it was dangerous to take such a step at that time. The firm administrative foundation required to elect and support it was lacking, as well as a sufficient reservoir of qualified and well-informed believers to draw from.

Having discovered that the door to the formation of the Universal House of Justice was not open, Shoghi Effendi set about trying to establish at least the preliminary forms that might precede its election. When he sought, in the first years of his ministry, to draw to Haifa people who would assist him in his work he had in mind the formation of a definite body at the World Centre. This is borne out by his own words. On 30 August 1926 he wrote to one of the Bahá'ís: "I am anxiously considering ways and means for the formation of some sort of efficient, competent Secretariat in Haifa . . . I have thought of it a great deal and I am still exploring and searching for a competent, reliable, methodical, and trained associate who, untrammelled and unhampered, can devote . . . continuous months to such a delicate and responsible task. When this is achieved I cherish the brightest hopes for the strengthening of the vital bonds that bind the Centre in Haifa with all the Assemblies in the Bahá'í world." On 7 December of that same year he informed a relative that two of the prominent Bahá'ís had joined him in Haifa and "we hope to form some sort of international Bahá'í Secretariat . . ." However, the true significance this Secretariat had in the mind of Shoghi Effendi is clearly stated in a letter of his, written two weeks later, in which he introduced these same two Bahá'ís to Mr Abramson, the Commissioner for the Northern District of Palestine, and, after mentioning their names, wrote that these "two representative Bahá'ís . . . I have asked to come here to consider with me and with other Bahá'ís from the East the formation of an International Bahá'í Secretariat as a preliminary step to the establishment of the International Bahá'í Council."

From an Indian pilgrim's notes in a letter to a friend, written in Haifa on 15 June 1929, we find the following: "Shoghi Effendi says . . . so long as the various National Assemblies do not have stabilized, well organized positions, it would be impossible to establish even an informal House of Justice. He wants us to at once draw up a constitution of the National Assembly on the lines of the American Trust and get it registered with the Government of India, if possible as a religious body, otherwise as a commercial body . . . Shoghi Effendi has urged in his recent letters to Eastern countries to have National Assemblies recognized as Religious Courts of Justice by local Governments . . ."

It is of interest to note that in a letter to Mrs Stannard, who was in charge of the International Bahá'í Bureau in Geneva—an office designed to promote in Europe the affairs of the Faith as well as to stimulate its international functions throughout the world and which was constantly encouraged and directed by the Guardian in its work—Shoghi Effendi writes, in August 1926, that he wishes the Bahá'í Bulletin it publishes to be "in the three dominant languages in Europe i.e. English, French and German . . . I have expressed in my cable to you my readiness to extend regular and financial assistance to you in order to ensure that the proposed circular will be published in the three recognized official languages of the western section of the Bahá'í world . . . Your Centre in Switzerland and the Bahá'í Esperanto Magazine published at Hamburg are both destined to shoulder some of the functions and responsibilities which will in future be undertaken by the International Bahá'í Assembly when formed."

In many such references, particularly in the first ten years of his ministry, Shoghi Effendi reveals that he is constantly anticipating the formation of some kind of International Secretariat or Council pending the election of the Universal House of Justice itself, the functions, significance and importance of which were growing in his mind. Some time during the summer of 1929 the Guardian conceived the idea of the Bahá'ís holding an

International Conference, at which the friends would informally gather to discuss ways and means of hastening the formation of oriental National Bahá'í Assemblies as well as the subject of the Administration in general as he was developing it, and thus hasten the day when the House of Justice could be elected as envisaged by 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Some of the old Bahá'ís had a different concept of what should take place at this conference, wishing to see some form of interim body elected. When Shoghi Effendi became apprised of this fact he immediately cabled, on 12 December 1929, to two of the men most concerned in arranging this conference and peremptorily cancelled it as he said it would be "a source of confusion, misunderstanding and even controversy". He recoiled before the great danger he foresaw of immature people, not yet steeped in understanding of the Administrative Order he was unfolding and building, assuming a rank and power they were certainly incapable of safely holding. For over twenty years the whole idea was left in abeyance and the repeated mention of the formation of the Universal House of Justice, which is to be found in Shoghi Effendi's earlier letters, ceased until he created an International Council, composed of members he himself nominated. There is no doubt in my mind, from things he told me at different times, that in the opening years of his Guardianship he sensed from certain prominent believers a desire to be on a body such as the House of Justice or some interim institution, and that he felt a belittling of his judgement and capacity on their part and a trend to seize the reins of the Cause of God; these were men old enough to be his father, who, whatever their thoughts about the Master's Will, looked upon him in some ways as an inexperienced young man.

From the very beginning Shoghi Effendi concentrated on multiplying and strengthening the "various Assemblies, local and National". As early as 1924, he stated they constituted "the bedrock upon the strength of which the Universal House is in future to be firmly established and raised." Almost invariably, in later years, when he called for the formation of new national bodies, the Guardian used phrases such as the following in his cable to the Fourth European Teaching Conference in 1951: ". . . Future edifice Universal House of Justice depending for its stability on sustaining strength pillars erected diversified communities East West, destined derive added power through emergence three National Assemblies . . . awaits rise establishment similar institutions European mainland . . ." In anticipation of the election of that august Body Shoghi Effendi made statements that, added to the words of its Founder, Bahá'u'lláh, and the clear and unmistakable powers and prerogatives conferred upon it by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in His *Will and Testament*, cannot but buttress the strength and facilitate the tasks of that Universal House for at least a thousand years. Shoghi Effendi said the Universal House of Justice would be the "nucleus and forerunner" of the New World Order; he said "that future House" was a House "posterity will regard as the last refuge of a tottering civilization"; it would be "the last unit crowning the structure of the embryonic World Order of Bahá'u'lláh"; it was "the highest legislative body in the administrative hierarchy of the Faith" and its "supreme elective institution". The Guardian stated: "To the Trustees of the House of Justice" Bahá'u'lláh "assigns the duty of legislating on matters not expressly provided in His Writings, and promises that God will *'inspire them with whatsoever He willeth.'*" and wrote that ". . . the powers and prerogatives of the Universal House of Justice, possessing the exclusive right to legislate on matters not explicitly revealed in the Most Holy Book; the ordinance exempting its members from any responsibility to those whom they represent, and from the obligation to conform to their views, convictions or sentiments; the specific provisions requiring the free and democratic election by the mass of the faithful of the Body that constitutes the sole legislative organ in the world-wide Bahá'í Community—these are among the features which combine to set apart the Order identified with the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh from any of the existing systems of human government."

Quite suddenly, one day in Switzerland in November 1950, at the time when my father had, as Shoghi Effendi announced, "miraculously" recovered from a severe illness, the Guardian sat down and, to my great astonishment, sent cables inviting the first of that group who later became members of the International Bahá'í Council to come to Haifa. Like almost everything he did, first it began to dawn and later the sun of the finished

concept rose above the horizon. After our return to the Holy Land, when Lotfullah Hakim (the first to arrive), Jessie and Ethel Revell, followed by Amelia Collins and Mason Remey were all gathered at table one day in the Western Pilgrim House, with Gladys Weeden and her husband Ben who were already living there, the Guardian announced to us his intention of constituting, out of that group, an International Council, we were all overcome by the unprecedented nature of this step he was taking and the infinite bounty it conferred upon those present as well as the entire Bahá'í world. It was not, however, until 9 January 1951 that he released this news through an historic cable: "Proclaim National Assemblies East West weighty epoch-making decision formation first International Bahá'í Council forerunner supreme administrative institution destined emerge fullness time within precincts beneath shadow World Spiritual Centre Faith already established twin cities Akka Haifa."

The fulfilment of the prophecies of both Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, through the establishment of an independent Jewish State after the lapse of two thousand years, the unfoldment of the portentous historic undertaking associated with the construction of the superstructure of the Báb's Shrine, the now adequate maturity of the nine vigorously functioning National Assemblies, had all combined to induce him to make this historic decision, which was the most significant milestone in the evolution of the Administrative Order during thirty years. In that cable Shoghi Effendi went on to say that this new institution had a three-fold function: to forge links with the authorities in the newly emerged State, to assist him in building the Shrine (only the arcade of which had then been completed), and to conduct negotiations with the civil authorities as regards matters of personal status. Further functions would be added as this first "embryonic International Institution" developed into an officially recognized Bahá'í Court, was transformed into an elected body and reached its final efflorescence in the Universal House of Justice; this in turn would find its fruition in the erection of many auxiliary institutions, constituting the World Administrative Centre. This message, so thrilling in portent, burst upon the Bahá'í world like a clap of thunder. Like a skilled engineer, locking the component parts of his machine together, Shoghi Effendi had now buckled into place the frame that would eventually support the crowning unit—the Universal House of Justice.

Fourteen months later, on 8 March 1952, Shoghi Effendi, in a long cable to the Bahá'í world, announced the enlargement of the International Bahá'í Council: "Present membership now comprises Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih chosen liaison between me and Council. Hands Cause Mason Remey, Amelia Collins, Ugo Giachery, Leroy Ioas, President, Vice-President, Member-at-Large, Secretary-General respectively. Jessie Revell, Ethel Revell, Lotfullah Hakim, Treasurer, Western and Eastern Assistant Secretaries." The original membership had been changed through the departure of Mr and Mrs Weeden for reasons of health, the arrival of Mr Ioas, who had offered his services to the Guardian, and the inclusion of Dr Giachery, who continued to reside in Italy and supervise the construction of the Shrine—every single stone of which was quarried, cut and carved in that country and then shipped to Haifa and the golden tiles of whose dome were ordered in Holland—and to act as the agent of Shoghi Effendi in ordering and purchasing many other things required in the Holy Land. In May 1955 the Guardian announced that he had raised the number of members of the International Bahá'í Council to nine through the appointment of Sylvia Ioas. In its functions the International Bahá'í Council acted as that Secretariat the Guardian, so many years earlier, had desired to establish; its members received their instructions from him individually, in the informal atmosphere of the dinners at the Pilgrim House table, and not formally as a body; its meetings were infrequent as all its members were kept constantly busy with the many tasks allotted to them by the Guardian himself. Skilfully Shoghi Effendi used this new institution to create in the minds of government and city officials the image of a body of an international character handling the administrative affairs at the World Centre. It was no concern of the public how much or how little that body had authority; we who were on it knew Shoghi Effendi was everything; the public, however, began to see an image which could evolve later into the Universal House of Justice.

Between the first and second messages Shoghi Effendi sent informing the Bahá'í world of the formation and membership of the International Bahá'í Council, he took another fundamental step in the historic development of the World Centre of the Faith through the official announcement of the appointment, on 24 December 1951, of the first contingent of the Hands of the Cause of God, twelve in number, and equally allocated among the Holy Land, the Asiatic, American and European continents. The people raised by the Guardian at that time to this illustrious rank were Sutherland Maxwell, Mason Remey and Amelia Collins who became Hands of the Cause of God in the Holy Land; Valíyu'lláh Varqá, Tarázu'lláh Samandarí and 'Alí-Akbar Furútan in Asia; Horace Holley, Dorothy Baker and Leroy Ioas in America; George Townshend, Hermann Grossmann and Ugo Giachery in Europe. Two months later, on 29 February 1952, Shoghi Effendi announced to the friends in the East and West that he had raised the number of the Hands of the Cause of God to nineteen through nominating Fred Schopflocher in Canada, Corinne True in the United States, Dhikru'lláh Khádém and Shu'á'u'lláh 'Alá'í in Persia, Adelbert Mühlischlegel in Germany, Músá Banání in Africa and Clara Dunn in Australia. In making these two appointments of Hands of the Cause Shoghi Effendi said that the hour was now ripe for him to take this step in accordance with the provisions of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Testament and that it was paralleled by the preliminary measure of the formation of the International Bahá'í Council, destined to culminate in the emergence of the Universal House of Justice. He announced that the august body of the Hands was invested, in conformity with 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Testament, with the two-fold sacred function of the propagation of the Faith and the preservation of its unity.

In Shoghi Effendi's last message to the Bahá'í world, dated October 1957, he announced he had designated "yet another contingent of the Hands of the Cause of God . . . The eight now elevated to this exalted rank are: Enoch Olinga, William Sears and John Robarts, in West and South Africa; Hasan Balyuzi and John Ferraby in the British Isles; Collis Featherstone and Rahmatu'lláh Muhájir, in the Pacific area; and Abu'l-Qásim Faizí in the Arabian Peninsula—a group chosen from four continents of the globe, and representing the Afnan, as well as the black and white races and whose members are derived from Christian, Muslim, Jewish and Pagan backgrounds."

The Guardian, in a two-month period in 1952, created a body of one Váhid (nineteen) of Hands of the Cause and he kept them at this number until 1957, when he added eight more, thus bringing them to three multiples of nine. Whenever one of the original nineteen passed away, Shoghi Effendi appointed another Hand. Two of the Hands thus appointed were raised to the position occupied by their fathers, thus the "mantle" of my father fell on my shoulders, on 26 March 1952, after the death of Sutherland Maxwell; and 'Alí-Muhammad Varqá was appointed to succeed his father on 15 November 1955 and also became the Trustee of the Huqúq in his place. After Dorothy Baker was killed in an accident, Paul Haney was made a Hand of the Cause on 19 March 1954, and following the passing of Fred Schopflocher, Jalál Kházeh was elevated to the same rank on 7 December 1953; not long after George Townshend's death the Guardian appointed Agnes Alexander on 27 March 1957; thus the number of nineteen was maintained by him until the third contingent of Hands was nominated in his last great message at the midway point of the World Crusade.

Between 9 January 1951 and 8 March 1952, remarkable and far-reaching changes took place in the Administrative Order of the Faith at its World Centre, changes which, Shoghi Effendi wrote, at long last signified the erection of "the machinery of its highest institutions", "the supreme Organs of its unfolding Order" which were now, in their "embryonic form" developing around the Holy Shrines. In his writings he had pointed out to the believers that the progress and unfoldment of Bahá'u'lláh's World Order was guided by the directives and the spiritual powers released through three mighty "charters", which he said had set in motion three distinct processes, the first given to us by Bahá'u'lláh Himself in the *Tablet of Carmel*, and the other two from the pen of the Master, namely, His *Will and Testament* and His *Tablets of the Divine Plan*. The first operated "in a land

which”, Shoghi Effendi stated, “geographically, spiritually and administratively, constitutes the heart of the entire planet”, “the Holy Land, the Centre and Pivot round which the divinely appointed, fast multiplying institutions of a world-encircling, relentlessly marching Faith revolve”, “the Holy Land, the Qiblih of a world community, the heart from which the energizing influences of a vivifying Faith continually stream, and the seat and centre around which the diversified activities of a divinely appointed Administrative Order revolve”. The hub of this *Tablet of Carmel* was those words of Bahá’u’lláh that “*ere long will God sail His Ark upon thee and will manifest the people of Bahá who have been mentioned in the Book of Names*”; the “*people of Bahá*”, Shoghi Effendi explained, signified the members of the Universal House of Justice.

Whereas the Charter of the *Will and Testament* of the Master operated throughout the world through the erection of those administrative institutions He had so clearly defined in it, and the Charter of His *Tablets of the Divine Plan* was concerned with the spiritual conquest of the entire planet through the teachings of Bahá’u’lláh and likewise had the globe itself as its theatre of operations, the *Tablet of Carmel* cast its illumination and its bounties literally upon Mt Carmel, upon “that consecrated Spot which,” Shoghi Effendi wrote, “under the wings of the Báb’s overshadowing Sepulchre . . . is destined to evolve into the focal Centre of those world-shaking, world-embracing, world-directing administrative institutions, ordained by Bahá’u’lláh and anticipated by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, and which are to function in consonance with the principles that govern the twin institutions of the Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice.”

The significance of the “unfolding glory” of these institutions at the World Centre was reflected in many messages sent by Shoghi Effendi during the last years of his life, messages which stirred a man like George Townshend to write to him, in a letter dated 14 January 1952, sent at the time he thanked the Guardian for the bounty of being made a Hand: “Permit me to pay you a humble tribute of the utmost admiration and gratitude for the nearing vision of the Victory of God which you almost by your sole might now have spread before the astonished Bahá’í world.”

In the course of these messages Shoghi Effendi revealed both the station and some of the functions of his newly created body of Hands. He hailed the unfoldment, during the “opening years” of the second epoch of the Formative Age of this Dispensation, of that “august institution” which Bahá’u’lláh Himself had not only foreshadowed but a few members of which He had already appointed during His own lifetime and which ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had formally established in His *Will and Testament*. In addition to the support the Hands of the Cause in the Holy Land had already given him, through erecting the Báb’s Shrine, reinforcing the ties with the State of Israel, extending the international endowments in the Holy Land and initiating preliminary measures for the establishment of the Bahá’í World Administrative Centre, they had also taken part in the four great Intercontinental Teaching Conferences held during the Holy Year, from October 1952 to October 1953, at which they represented the Guardian of the Faith, and after which, at his request, they had travelled extensively in North, Central and South America, Europe, Asia and Australia. This body, Shoghi Effendi said in April 1954, was now entering upon the second phase of its evolution, signalized by the forging of ties between it and the National Spiritual Assemblies engaged in the prosecution of the Ten Year Plan; the fifteen Hands who resided outside the Holy Land should, during the Ridván period, appoint in each continent separately, from among the believers of that continent, Auxiliary Boards whose members would act as “deputies”, “assistants” and “advisers” to the Hands and increasingly assist in the promotion of the Ten Year Crusade. These Boards were to consist of nine members each in America, Europe and Africa, seven in Asia and two in Australia. The Boards were responsible to the Hands of their respective continents; the Hands, on their part, were to keep in close contact with the National Assemblies in their areas and inform them of the activities of their Boards; they were also to keep in close touch with the Hands of the Cause in the Holy Land, who were destined to act as the liaison

between them and the Guardian. At this time Shoghi Effendi inaugurated Continental Bahá'í Funds for the work of the Hands, opening these Funds by himself contributing one thousand pounds to each.

A year later Shoghi Effendi nominated the thirteen Hands of the Cause he wished to attend as his representatives the thirteen Conventions to be held in 1957 to elect new National Assemblies; from the time he formally appointed Hands of the Cause until his death he constantly used them for this purpose. In 1957, exactly four months before he passed away, Shoghi Effendi, in a lengthy cable, informed the believers that the “triumphant consummation series historic enterprises” and the “evidences increasing hostility without” and “persistent machinations within” foreshadowing “dire contests destined range Army Light forces darkness both secular religious” necessitated a closer association between the Hands in five continents and the National Assemblies to jointly investigate the “nefarious activities internal enemies adoption wise effective measures counteract their treacherous schemes” in order to protect the mass of the believers and to arrest the spread of the evil influence of these enemies. At the beginning of this cable Shoghi Effendi points out that the Hands, in addition to their newly assumed responsibility of assisting the National Spiritual Assemblies in the prosecution of the World Spiritual Crusade, must now fulfil their “primary obligation” of watching over and protecting the Bahá'í World Community, in close collaboration with the National Assemblies. He ends this portentous message with these words: “Call upon Hands National Assemblies each continent separately establish henceforth direct contact deliberate whenever feasible frequently as possible exchange reports to be submitted by their respective Auxiliary Boards National Committees exercise unrelaxing vigilance carry out unflinchingly sacred inescapable duties. Security precious Faith preservation spiritual health Bahá'í Communities vitality faith its individual members proper functioning its laboriously erected institutions fruition its world-wide enterprises fulfilment its ultimate destiny all directly dependent befitting discharge weighty responsibilities now resting members these two institutions occupying with Universal House of Justice next institution Guardianship foremost rank divinely ordained administrative hierarchy World Order Bahá'u'lláh.”

The last great message of Shoghi Effendi's life—dated October, but actually conceived in August—again reinforced the significance and importance of the institution of the Hands of the Cause. In it Shoghi Effendi not only appointed his last contingent of Hands but took the highly significant step of inaugurating a further Auxiliary Board in each continent: “This latest addition to the band of the high-ranking officers of a fast evolving World Administrative Order, involving a further expansion of the august institution of the Hands of the Cause of God, calls for, in view of the recent assumption by them of their sacred responsibility as protectors of the Faith, the appointment by these same Hands, in each continent separately, of an additional Auxiliary Board, equal in membership to the existing one, and charged with the specific duty of watching over the security of the Faith, thereby complementing the function of the original Board, whose duty will henceforth be exclusively concerned with assisting the prosecution of the Ten Year Plan.”

It is almost impossible to imagine what state the Bahá'í world would have been plunged into after Shoghi Effendi's death if he had not referred in these terms to the Hands of the Cause, and if he had not so clearly charged the National Assemblies to collaborate with the Hands in their primary function as protectors of the Faith. Can we not discern, in these last messages, a black cloud the size of a man's hand on the horizon?

It was the duty and right of Shoghi Effendi, explicitly stated in the Master's Will, to appoint the Hands of the Cause. With one exception he made only posthumous appointments during the first thirty years of his ministry. It was the highest honour he could confer on a believer, living or dead, and he so named many Bahá'ís, East and West, after their death; the most outstanding of these was Martha Root, whom he characterized as the foremost Hand raised up in the first century of the Faith since the inception of its Formative Age. The one exception was

Amelia Collins. He cabled her on 22 November 1946: “Your magnificent international services exemplary devotion and now this signal service impel me inform you your elevation rank Hand Cause Bahá’u’lláh. You are first be told this honour in lifetime. As to time announcement leave it my discretion”. It was the custom of Shoghi Effendi to inform each Hand of his elevation to this position at the time he made public his choice. Three of them, Fred Schopflocher and Músá Banání, who were in Haifa as pilgrims at the time he made his announcement, and myself, he informed to our faces. To try to describe with what feelings of stupefaction, of unworthiness and awe the news of this honour overwhelmed the recipients of it would be impossible. Each heart received it as a shaft that aroused an even greater love for and loyalty to the Guardian than that heart had ever held before.

The long years of preparation—outside in the body of the Bahá’í world through the erection of the machinery of the Administrative Order, inside its heart through the erection of the superstructure of the Shrine of the Báb and the general consolidation of the World Centre—had involved the creation of a Spot suitable to form the “focal centre”, as Shoghi Effendi termed it, of the mightiest institutions of the Faith. This Spot was no less than the resting-places of the mother, sister and brother of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, those “three incomparably precious souls”, as he called them, “who, next to the three Central Figures of our Faith, tower in rank above the vast multitude of the heroes, Letters, martyrs, hands, teachers and administrators of the Cause of Bahá’u’lláh.”

It had long been the desire of the Greatest Holy Leaf to lie near her mother, who was buried in Akka, as was her brother, Mihdí. But when Bahíyyih Khánum passed away in 1932 she had been befittingly interred on Mt Carmel near the Shrine of the Báb. Shoghi Effendi conceived the idea of transferring the remains of her mother and brother, so unsuitably buried in Akka, to the vicinity of her resting-place and in 1939 he ordered in Italy twin marble monuments, similar in style to the one he had erected over her own grave. Fortunately these reached Haifa safely in spite of the war. Far from being a simple procedure “the consummation of this long, this profoundly cherished hope” proved to be extremely difficult. I will quote from my own published account of these events as I was, of course, present in Haifa at the time: “Whilst their tombs were still in process of excavation from the solid rock of the mountain, the Guardian had learned that the Covenant-breakers were protesting against the right of the Bahá’ís to remove the mother and brother of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to new graves, actually having the temerity to represent to the government their so-called claim as relatives of the deceased. As soon, however, as the civil authorities had the true state of facts made clear to them—that these same relatives had been the arch-enemies of the Master and His family, had left the true Cause of Bahá’u’lláh to follow their own devices, and had been denounced by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in His *Will and Testament*—they approved the plan of the Guardian and immediately issued the necessary papers for the exhumation of the bodies. Without risking further delay Shoghi Effendi, two days later, himself removed the Purest Branch and his mother to Mount Carmel”.

After daybreak, accompanied by a few Bahá’ís, Shoghi Effendi went to Akka, opened one grave after the other, and brought the remains to Haifa. He later told me about it; it had been a nerve-racking experience for him in every way. In the first place, there was a very real risk that the Covenant-breakers might decide to come with a party of supporters to the cemeteries and try to prevent by force the exhumations; in this they would have had the sympathy of the Muslims who believe that to open a grave is the greatest desecration, and indeed open graves just for the purpose of inflicting this greatest of all insults. Aside from this danger, to stand while a grave is being opened, no matter how noble the purpose for doing it may be, is a very harrowing experience; how much more so for a sensitive person like Shoghi Effendi! When the earth was removed from the coffin of the Master’s mother he discovered the wood was still intact, except for the bottom which had rotted away, and so he instructed them to gently remove the top. He told me the figure of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s mother, wound in her shroud, lay there

so clearly outlined that one could almost discern her features, but it collapsed in dust and bones at the first touch. He descended into the grave and with his own hands helped to place the skeleton in the new coffin prepared for it; this was then closed, loaded on a waiting vehicle, and they all proceeded to the second Arab cemetery where the Purest Branch was buried and there opened his grave. As he had been buried two decades longer than his mother, and the interment had been hastily carried out in the days when Bahá'u'lláh was so strictly confined in the prison barracks of Akka, the coffin had entirely disintegrated and Shoghi Effendi again gathered up himself the few bones and dust that remained and again placed them himself in the second coffin that lay beside the grave to receive them. Although all this was carried out successfully it took many harrowing hours of strain and anxiety to accomplish before Shoghi Effendi, with his precious trust, could return to Haifa. I will again quote from what I wrote at the time as it is so much more vivid than anything I could rewrite at this distance from the event: "Twilight has fallen on Mount Carmel and the veils of dusk have deepened over the bay of 'Akká. A group of men stand waiting by the gate, beneath the steps. Suddenly there is a stir, the gardener runs to illumine the entrance and amidst the white shafts of light a procession appears. A man clothed in black rests the weight of a coffin on his shoulder. It is the Guardian of the Cause and he bears the mortal remains of the Purest Branch, Bahá'u'lláh's beloved son. Slowly he and his fellow bearers mount the narrow path and in silence approach the house adjacent to the resting-place of the Greatest Holy Leaf. A devoted servant speeds ahead with a rug and candelabra from the Holy Shrines and swiftly prepares the room. The gentle, strong face of the Guardian appears as he enters the door, that precious weight always on his shoulder, and the coffin is laid temporarily to rest in a humble room, facing Bahjí, the Qiblih of the Faith. Again those devoted servants, led by their Guardian, return to the gate and again remount the path with another sacred burden, this time the body of the wife of Bahá'u'lláh, the mother of the Master."

The moment this task had been safely accomplished, the American Assembly, on 5 December, received the following cable from Shoghi Effendi: "Blessed remains Purest Branch and Master's mother safely transferred hallowed precincts Shrines Mount Carmel. Long inflicted humiliation wiped away. Machinations Covenant-breakers frustrate plan defeated. Cherished wish Greatest Holy Leaf fulfilled. Sister brother mother wife 'Abdu'l-Bahá reunited one spot designed constitute focal centre Bahá'í Administrative Institutions at Faith's World Centre. Share joyful news entire body American believers. Shoghi Rabbani." The signing of the Guardian's full name was required as we were at war and all correspondence was censored.

The exquisite taste and sense of proportion, so characteristic of everything the Guardian created, is nowhere better reflected than in the marble monuments he erected over the four graves of these close relatives of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Designed in Italy according to Shoghi Effendi's own instructions and executed there in white Carrara marble, they were shipped to Haifa and placed, in the decade between 1932 and 1942, in their predestined positions, around which he constructed the beautiful gardens which we commonly referred to as the "Monument Gardens" and which he evolved into the fulcrum of that arc on Mt Carmel about which are to cluster in future the International Institutions of the Faith.

For three weeks these precious remains were kept in that room until, as Shoghi Effendi cabled on 26 December: "Christmas eve beloved remains Purest Branch and Master's mother laid in state Báb's Holy Tomb. Christmas day entrusted Carmel's sacred soil. Ceremony presence representatives Near Eastern believers profoundly moving. Impelled associate America's momentous Seven Year enterprise imperishable memory these two holy souls who next Twin Founders Faith and Perfect Exemplar tower together with Greatest Holy Leaf above entire concourse faithful. Rejoice privilege pledge thousand pounds my contribution Bahíyyih Khánum Fund designed inauguration final drive insure placing contract next April last remaining stage construction Mashriq'l-Adhkár. Time pressing opportunity priceless potent aid providentially promised unfailing."

The genius of the Guardian for doing things befittingly, ever following so faithfully in the footsteps of his beloved grandfather, is nowhere better demonstrated than in the extreme honour and reverence with which he accomplished the final interment of those two holy souls who had been so much loved by both Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá. So unique is this entire event in religious history that I feel it must receive its full due here. Again I refer to the above-mentioned article: "The last stone is laid in the two vaults, the floors are paved in marble, the name plates fixed to mark their heads, the earth smoothed out, the path that leads to their last resting-place built . . . And now, again on the shoulder of the Guardian, they are borne forth to lie in state in the Holy Tomb of the Báb. Side by side, far greater than the great of this world, they lie by that sacred threshold, facing Bahjí, with candles burning at their heads and flowers before their feet . . . The following sunset we gather once again in that Holy Shrine . . . Slowly, held aloft on the hands of the faithful, led by Shoghi Effendi, who never relinquishes his precious burden . . . Once they circumambulate the Shrines, the coffin of beloved Mihdí, supported by the Guardian, followed by that of the Master's mother, passes us slowly by. Around the Shrine, onward through the lighted garden, down the white path, out onto the moonlit road, that solemn procession passes. High, seeming to move of themselves, above the heads of those following, the coffins wend their way . . . They pass before us, outlined against the night sky . . . They approach, the face of the Guardian close to that priceless burden he bears. They pass on toward the waiting vaults. Now they lay the Purest Branch to rest. Shoghi Effendi himself enters the carpeted vault and gently eases the coffin to its pre-ordained place. He himself strews it with flowers, his hands the last to caress it. The mother of the Master is then placed in the same manner by the Guardian in the neighbouring vault . . . Masons are called to seal the tombs . . . Flowers are heaped upon the vaults and the Guardian sprinkles a vial of attar of rose upon them . . . And now the voice of Shoghi Effendi is raised as he chants those Tablets revealed by Bahá'u'lláh and destined by Him to be read at their graves."

When we remember that all these events, of such an extremely delicate nature, causing so much anxiety and suspense, and so harrowing to the feelings in every way, transpired less than two months after the Guardian had risen from his bed after one of the most serious illnesses he had ever had, we cannot but marvel anew at the pathos of his life and the iron determination, the courage and devotion that animated him in everything he did.

At last Shoghi Effendi, so powerfully guided from on high, had succeeded in establishing his "focal Centre". But it was not until over fourteen years later that he was in a position to inform the Bahá'í world that he was now taking a step which would "usher in the establishment of the World Administrative Centre of the Faith on Mt. Carmel—the Ark referred to by Bahá'u'lláh in the closing passages of His *Tablet of Carmel*". This step was none other than the erection of an international Bahá'í Archives.

Shortly after the addition of three rooms to the Báb's Shrine, in the early thirties, Shoghi Effendi had established an Archives at the World Centre, housed temporarily in these quarters and based on the precious relics of both Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá which were already in the possession of the Master's family and many of the old Bahá'ís living in Palestine. Visiting them became a deeply moving experience. "If one could have walked into a museum of the authentic relics of the days and life of Christ," I wrote in 1937, after my first seeing them, "what would it have meant to the Christian believers? If they had seen His sandals, dusty from the road between Bethlehem and Jerusalem, or the mantle that hung from His shoulders—or the cloth that protected His head from the sun; what atmosphere of assurance, of wonder, even of adoration would have stirred the inheritors of His Faith. If their eyes could have rested on even one fragmentary line penned by His hand . . . To most of the people of the world the meaning of such things is beyond their imagining; but to Bahá'ís, believers in the newest Revelation of God's Will as yet revealed to unfolding mankind upon this planet, this inestimable privilege has been vouchsafed."

As the Bahá'ís learned more about these Archives and the pilgrims visited them in increasing numbers and saw how safely historic and sacred material was preserved, how beautifully exhibited, how reverently displayed, they began to send from Persia truly priceless articles associated with the three Central Figures of the Faith as well as its martyrs and heroes. Amongst these most welcome additions were objects belonging to the Báb, contributed by the Afnans, which greatly enriched the collection. It grew to such dimensions that at a later date the little house where the remains of the Purest Branch and his mother had been placed before their reburial was transformed by the Guardian into an additional Archives and the two places were referred to, for convenience's sake, as the "Major" and "Minor" Archives, or just as the "old" and the "new" Archives.

It was in 1954, during the first year of the World Crusade, that Shoghi Effendi decided to start on what he said was "the first of the major edifices destined to constitute the seat of the World Bahá'í Administrative Centre to be established on Mt. Carmel". His choice fell on a building he considered both urgently needed and feasible, namely, one to house the sacred and historic relics collected in the Holy Land which were dispersed at that time throughout six rooms in two separate buildings. By Naw-Rúz 1954, the excavation for its foundations had begun. Shoghi Effendi was, in choosing his initial design for buildings of the importance he had in mind, guided by three things: it must be beautiful, it must be dignified and it must have a lasting value and not reflect the transient (and to him for the most part very ugly) style of modern buildings being erected in an age of experimentation and groping after new forms. He was a great admirer of Greek architecture and considered the Parthenon in Athens one of the most beautiful buildings ever created; he chose the proportions of the Parthenon as his model, but changed the order of the capitals from Doric to Ionic. After his many suggestions had been incorporated in the final design, Shoghi Effendi approved it and what he described as "this imposing and strikingly beautiful edifice" was completed in 1957. It had cost approximately a quarter of a million dollars and was, like the Shrine of the Báb, ordered in Italy, entirely carved and completed there, and shipped to Haifa for erection; not only was each separate stone numbered, but charts showing where each one went facilitated its being placed in its proper position. Except for the foundations and reinforced cement work of the floor, walls and ceiling, it would not be incorrect to say it was a building fabricated almost entirely abroad and erected locally.

No enterprise undertaken by Shoghi Effendi better demonstrates his originality, his independence of the views and advice of others and his determination to get things done expeditiously than the way he personally handled this entire project. First he spent much time in studying, through strings laid out on the ground marking the dimensions of the building, the exact position he wanted it to occupy, which he changed a number of times until he was satisfied with its location; he then proceeded to landscape all the area in front of it, laying out paths and planting trees and lawns. He then informed Leroy Ioas, who was to supervise the work locally (as Ugo Giachery was supervising the other part of it in Italy), that the building would have to be built from the rear, fitting the front into the gardens that already surrounded it, for practically its full length on all three sides, leaving only about five metres' leeway to work in! The result of this was that as the edifice rose, it rose in a setting of gardens which appeared well-grown and mature, and when it was completed, far from having that usual desolate stretch of tramped down land around it, it looked as if it had been standing there for years. How providential it was that the Guardian did this, that under his guidance, with his impeccable taste, his perfect sense of proportion, it was all completed before he passed away. Indeed, so complete were all his preparations that when the time came to place in the Archives the furniture and *objets d'art* he had himself purchased and chosen to furnish it, practically everything needed was there at hand and the relics and many things of historic interest he had so assiduously assembled in the Major and Minor Archives could be placed in the setting he had designed for them, more or less as he would have done it himself.

In his last Ridván Message to the Bahá'í world Shoghi Effendi's satisfaction with the Archives Building he had chosen and erected is clearly reflected; after announcing its completion, he wrote that it is "contributing, to an unprecedented degree, through its colourfulness, its classic style and graceful proportions, and in conjunction with the stately, golden-crowned Mausoleum rising beyond it, to the unfolding glory of the central institutions of a World Faith nestling in the heart of God's holy Mountain."

In a message addressed to the Bahá'í world on 27 November 1954—linked by the Guardian once again to the anniversary of his beloved Master's passing—Shoghi Effendi dwelt on the significance of this building, stating that possession of a long-desired piece of land had at last been assured and that the ownership of this plot would now make it possible to proceed with the erection of the International Bahá'í Archives. "The raising of this Edifice will in turn", he goes on to say, "herald the construction, in the course of successive epochs of the Formative Age of the Faith, of several other structures, which will serve as the administrative seats of such divinely appointed institutions as the Guardianship, the Hands of the Cause, and the Universal House of Justice. These Edifices will, in the shape of a far-flung arc, and following a harmonizing style of architecture, surround the resting-places of the Greatest Holy Leaf, ranking as foremost among the members of her sex in the Bahá'í Dispensation, of her brother, offered up as a ransom by Bahá'u'lláh for the quickening of the world and its unification, and of their mother, proclaimed by Him to be His chosen '*consort in all the worlds of God*'. The ultimate completion of this stupendous undertaking will mark the culmination of the development of a world-wide, divinely-appointed Administrative Order whose beginnings may be traced as far back as the concluding years of the Heroic Age of the Faith."

So great was the importance Shoghi Effendi attached to this "arc", the lines of which he had studied very carefully on the ground and which sweeps around on the mountain in the form of a gigantic bow, arched above the resting-places of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's closest relatives, and on the right side of which now stands the Archives, that he announced its completion in his last Ridván Message in 1957: "the plan designed to insure the extension and completion of the arc serving as a base for the erection of future edifices constituting the World Bahá'í Administrative Centre, has been successfully carried out."

THE RISE OF THE WORLD CENTRE

Underlying, reinforcing, and indeed often making possible such major undertakings as the erection of the superstructure of the Báb's Shrine, the construction of the Archives, the building of the terraces on Mt Carmel, and many other activities, was the purchase of land, both in Haifa and Bahjí; it was a task to which the Guardian attached great importance and which he pursued throughout all the years of his ministry. Before he passed away he had succeeded in creating great protective rings of land around the holiest of all Shrines, Bahá'u'lláh's Tomb, and around the resting-places of the Báb, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, His mother, sister and brother. In addition to this he had chosen and directed the purchase of the land on Mt Carmel which would serve as the site of the future Bahá'í Temple to be erected in the Holy Land. If we consider that at the time of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's passing the area of Bahá'í properties on Mt Carmel probably did not exceed 10,000 square metres, and that Shoghi Effendi had, by 1957, raised this to 230,000 square metres, and that in Bahjí the comparable figures would be 1,000 square metres for 1921 and 257,000 square metres for 1957, we get an idea of his accomplishments in this one field alone. Through the generosity of individual Bahá'ís, through their bequests, through their response to his appeals in times of crisis, through the use of funds he held at the World Centre, Shoghi Effendi succeeded in purchasing land on the scale reflected by these figures and thus metamorphosed the situation of the Faith at its World Centre.

In May 1931 the Guardian cabled the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada: "American Assembly incorporated as recognized religious body in Palestine entitled hold property as trustees American believers. Mailing title deed property already transferred their name. Prestige Faith greatly enhanced its foundations consolidated love". This was the first step in constituting Palestine Branches—which were later changed to Israel Branches—of various National Assemblies and registering in their names properties owned in the Holy Land. Although the power of disposing of these properties was entirely vested locally at the World Centre, the prestige of the Faith was greatly enhanced by this move, its Holy Places were buttressed and safeguarded, its world character emphasized in the eyes of the authorities, and national Bahá'í communities were encouraged and strengthened. The messages of Shoghi Effendi referring to this subject reflect very clearly his policy and motives: "Palestine Branch Indian National Assembly established. Congratulate believers India Burma incorporation their National Assembly first legally constituted institution eastern section Bahá'í world . . .", ". . . recognition pre-eminent services continually enriching recorded achievements associated pre-eminent community Bahá'í world arranging transfer extensive valuable property acquired precincts Shrines Mount Carmel name Palestine Branch American Assembly . . .", "Every effort will be exerted in the Holy Land, as a tribute to the superb spirit animating the Australian and New Zealand believers and to their incessant and meritorious labours . . . to hasten the transfer of a part of the Bahá'í international endowments to the name of the newly constituted Israel Branch of your Assembly—an act that will at once bestow a great spiritual and material benefit on your Assembly and reinforce the ties binding it to the World Centre . . ."

At the time of Shoghi Effendi's passing he had already established nine of these Branches, namely, the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the British Isles, Iran, Pakistan, Alaska and that of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of India and Burma.

When Shoghi Effendi had built the three additional rooms of the Shrine of the Báb and completed the restoration of the Mansion of Bahá'u'lláh, thus producing local, tangible evidences of the strength of the Bahá'í Community, and had demonstrated to the British authorities, through the victories won over the Covenant-breakers, that he had the solid backing of Bahá'ís all over the world, he set about procuring for the Bahá'í Holy Places exemption from both municipal and government taxes. It was not as difficult to get a building, obviously a place of sacred association and visited by pilgrims, exempted from taxes as it was to secure similar exemption for the steadily increasing area of land owned by the Faith, most of which was registered in the names of individuals. Governments and municipalities are always reluctant to lose sources of income, always very afraid that a precedent will be established which other communities will pounce upon for their own gain. Because of this, the ultimate exemption from all forms of taxation, including customs duty, which Shoghi Effendi obtained for the Bahá'í buildings and holdings throughout the country, was truly a great achievement. The major victories in this field were all won in the days of the British Mandate, the Israeli Government accepting the status achieved by the Bahá'ís before the new State was formed in 1948.

In his early efforts, at the beginning of the 1930's, to obtain this form of recognition Shoghi Effendi was greatly assisted by Sir Arthur Wachope, the High Commissioner for Palestine during that period, who seems to have been, judging by his letters to Shoghi Effendi, a gentle, courteous and noble-minded man. On 26 June 1933 we find him writing to the Guardian: "I have received your letter of 21st June and I hasten to write to thank you for it and to assure you that when the case which you mention is referred to me for a decision under the Palestine (Holy Places) Order in Council, it will receive my most careful consideration." Almost a year later, on 10 May 1934, Shoghi Effendi cabled America: "Prolonged negotiations Palestine authorities resulted exemption from taxation entire area surrounding dedicated Shrines Mount Carmel" and indicated that he considered this step tantamount to "securing indirect recognition sacredness Faith International Centre . . ." In connection with this there are two letters, one dated 16 May 1934 from Sir Arthur to Shoghi Effendi in which he says: "I hope this exemption will help you in carrying on your fine work", and one from Shoghi Effendi to him, dated six days earlier, in which he states: "The gratifying news has just come to me from the District Commissioner at Haifa that the petition for exemption from taxation of the Bahá'í property holdings on Mt. Carmel has been granted by the Government." He goes on to add his own and the Bahá'ís' deep appreciation for His Excellency's effective interest in this matter and says this decision opens the way for "our plan to gradually beautify this property for the use and enjoyment of the people of Haifa . . ."

By thus reading the pleasant tail end of events one does not get any idea of what Shoghi Effendi went through in connection with purchasing, exempting from taxes and safeguarding the properties at the World Centre. In a cable to the American National Assembly, of 28 March 1935, one of innumerable examples of what took place is given: "Contract for purchase and transfer to Palestine Branch American Assembly Dumits property situated centre area dedicated to Shrines on Mount Carmel signed. Four year litigation involving Bahá'í World's petitions Palestine High Commissioner abandoned. Owners require four thousand pounds. Half sum available. Will American believers unitedly contribute one thousand pounds before end of May and remaining one thousand within nine months. Am compelled appeal entire body American community subordinate national interests of Faith to its urgent paramount requirements at its World Centre", to which the American Assembly replied, two days later, that the American Bahá'í Community "will with one heart fulfil glorious privilege conferred upon it by beloved Guardian".

So many times Shoghi Effendi referred to the Holy Land as the "heart and nerve centre" of the Faith. To protect it, develop it and noise abroad its glory was part of his function as its Guardian. In addition to his official contacts with government and municipal authorities, he maintained courteous and friendly relations with many

non-Bahá'ís, of prominence and otherwise. The catholicity of spirit which so strongly characterized the Guardian, his complete lack of any breath of prejudice or fanaticism, the sympathy and courtesy that distinguished him so strongly, are all reflected in his letters and messages to such people. He carried on a lengthy correspondence, during the earliest years of his ministry, with Grand Duke Alexander of Russia, whom it was obvious, from the tone of his letters, he liked. He addresses him as: "My true brother in the service of God!", "My dear brother in the love of God!" The Grand Duke was very interested in a movement called the "Unity of Souls" and Shoghi Effendi encouraged him: "I am more and more impressed", he writes, "by the striking similarity of our aims and principles and I beseech the Almighty to bless His servants in their service to the cause of suffering humanity." The Grand Duke, in a letter to the Guardian writes: ". . . I must confess to you, my dear brother and fellow worker, that in my modest work occasionally I feel discouraged . . . the power of evil forces under the influence of which the majority of humanity is living, is appalling." Shoghi Effendi answers this most beautifully: ". . . I assure my dear fellow-worker in the service of God, that I too feel oftentimes overwhelmed by the rising wave of selfish, gross materialism that threatens to engulf the world, and I feel that however arduous be our common task we must persevere to the very end and pray continually and ardently that the ever-living spirit of God may so fill the souls of men as to cause them to arise with new vision for the service and salvation of humanity. Prayer and individual persistent effort, I feel, must be given greater and wider prominence in these days of stress and gloom . . ."

Shoghi Effendi was in touch not only with Queen Marie of Rumania and a number of her relatives, but with other people of royal lineage, such as Princess Marina of Greece who later became Duchess of Kent, and Princess Kadria of Egypt. To many of these, as well as to men of such prominence as Lord Lamington, a number of former High Commissioners for Palestine, Orientalists, university professors, educators and others, Shoghi Effendi was wont to send copies of the latest *Bahá'í World* volumes or one of his own recently published translations, with his visiting card enclosed—practically the only occasion on which he ever used one, as their main function seemed to be for him to keep notes on! He was always very meticulous—as long as the relationship was one of mutual courtesy and esteem—to send messages of condolence to acquaintances who had suffered a bereavement, expressing his "heartfelt sympathy" at that person's "great loss". Such messages, often sent as cables or wires, deeply touched those who received them and gave him a reputation among them which belied the picture of him the Covenant-breakers did their best to create. He also often congratulated people on the occasion of a marriage or a promotion.

In addition to these personal relationships, Shoghi Effendi had far more contact with certain non-Bahá'í organizations than is commonly supposed. This was particularly true of the Esperantists, whose whole object was to bring about the fulfilment of the Bahá'í principle that a universal auxiliary language must be adopted in the interests of World Peace. We have copies of his personal messages to the Universal Congress of Esperantists held in 1927, 1928, 1929, 1930 and 1931, and he no doubt sent many messages of a similar nature at other times. Shoghi Effendi not only responded warmly when there was any overture made to him, but often took the initiative himself in sending Bahá'í representatives, chosen by him, to various conferences whose interests coincided with those of the Bahá'ís. We thus find him writing to the Universal Esperantist Association, in 1927, that Martha Root and Julia Goldman will attend their Danzig Congress as official Bahá'í representatives, and that he trusts this "will serve to strengthen the ties of fellowship that bind the Esperantists and the followers of Bahá'u'lláh, one of whose cardinal principles . . . is the adoption of an international auxiliary language for all humanity." In his letter addressed to the delegates and friends attending this nineteenth Universal Congress of Esperantists he writes:

My dear fellow workers in the service of humanity,

I take great pleasure in addressing you and wishing you . . . from all my heart the fullest success in the work you are doing for the promotion of the good of humanity.

It will interest you, I am sure, to learn that as the result of the repeated and emphatic admonitions of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá His many followers, even in the most distant villages and hamlets of Persia, where the light of Western civilization has hardly penetrated as yet, as well as in other lands throughout the East, are strenuously and enthusiastically engaged in the study and teaching of Esperanto, for whose future they cherish the highest hopes . . .

The Guardian himself was held in high esteem by many people working for ideals similar to those the Bahá’ís cherish. Sir Francis Younghusband, in 1926, wrote to him in connection with the “World Congress of Faiths”: “Now I wish to ask a great favour of you. Once more I want to try and persuade you to come to England to attend the Congress. Your presence here would carry great influence and would be highly appreciated. And we would most willingly defray the expenses you might be put to.” The Guardian declined this invitation, but arranged for a Bahá’í paper to be presented. His own plans and work precluded him, he felt, from opening such a door.

In 1925 the Zionist Executive in Jerusalem invited him to attend an event in connection with the establishment of a university there. Shoghi Effendi wired them, on 1 April: “Appreciate kind invitation regret inability to be present. Bahá’ís hope and pray the establishment of this seat of learning may contribute to the revival of a land of hallowed memories for us all and for which ‘Abdu’l-Bahá cherished the highest hopes.” To this message they replied in cordial terms: “Zionist Executive much appreciate your friendly message and good wishes. We trust that newly established university may contribute not only advancement of science and learning but also to better understanding between men which ideal is so well served by Bahá’ís”. Twenty-five years later the tie established is still there: “The Hebrew University was very gratified indeed to receive your check for £100.— as the contribution from His Eminence Shoghi Effendi Rabbani towards the work of this institution . . . We were happy to know that His Eminence is aware of the important work that the University is doing and to receive this generous token of appreciation from him . . .”

A cable of Shoghi Effendi, sent to India in December 1930, is of particular interest because it shows how, up to the very end of her life, he would tenderly include the Greatest Holy Leaf in messages that seemed particularly suitable: “Convey to Indian Asian Women’s Conference behalf Greatest Holy Leaf ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s sister and myself our genuine profound interest their deliberations. May Almighty guide bless their high endeavours”.

Aside from this wide correspondence with prominent individuals as well as various Societies, Shoghi Effendi was wont to receive in his home the visits of many distinguished people, such as Lord and Lady Samuel; Sir Ronald Storrs, another friend of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá; Moshe Sharett, later to become one of Israel’s most loved and prominent officials; Professor Norman Bentwich and many writers, journalists and notables.

However important were such contacts and exchanges as these, undoubtedly the most important of all such relations was that which the Guardian had with officials at the World Centre, whether under British rule during the Mandate in Palestine or later after the War of Independence and the establishment of the State of Israel. Cordial though these relations were with the representatives of both governments there is no doubt whatsoever that they would have been much more cordial, and led to much greater things, had it not been for the insidious, persistent influence exerted by all kinds of enemies of the Faith, whether disaffected Bahá’ís or jealous members of other religious groups. To the effect produced by such as these must be added the results of the fact that for the

most part Shoghi Effendi's helpers lacked calibre. Once he remarked to me that it was a great pity so many good people lacked good judgement and so many intelligent people lacked good character, pointing out that the ideal thing was a good person who was intelligent at the same time. He had his full share as Guardian of both extremes and very seldom found in those who served him the combination he desired. I remember on another occasion his telling me of a Persian proverb that says it is better to have a wise enemy than a foolish friend! An example of what the Guardian had to contend with is a remark a member of his family made to me: he said an Englishman—by no means a mere nobody—had told him he would like to call on Shoghi Effendi, to which this person replied that he was welcome to do so, but he must not expect the Guardian to return his call, as he never did this. One can easily see how remarks as tactless and thoughtless as this built a wall of misunderstanding around Shoghi Effendi which, combined with the whispers of real ill-wishers, served to misrepresent him to the public and put him in a most unkind light; if the man had met Shoghi Effendi he would have been so impressed he would not have even thought of whether the Guardian was going to return his call or not. But of course, after this remark he never came near the Guardian. The Guardian's own judgement was so perfect, however, that by strictly guiding his would-be co-workers and subordinates he accomplished, in the face of what often seemed hopelessly complicated situations, miracles. Without having a tortuous mind himself he could see into the workings of the minds of those who did, and thus did not press issues unwisely at the wrong time, or find himself caught by refusals that would manoeuvre the Cause into an impasse out of which he might not be able to extricate it for a very long time.

When one thinks of who Shoghi Effendi was, how exalted both his station and his capacities were, one cannot but feel intense regret that he was denied the company of the great men of this world who, to at least a small extent, might have provided him with interesting and stimulating companionship. That he felt the lack of such relationships in his life he often indicated in remarks he made to me. Shoghi Effendi saw through people very clearly, with a shrewdness that would better be described as divine rather than human.

In all his relationships with both government and municipal officials Shoghi Effendi sought from the very beginning to impress upon them that the Faith was an independent religion, universal in character, and that its permanent World Spiritual and Administrative Centre was situated in the Holy Land. He spent thirty-six years winning from the authorities the recognition and rights that such a status entitled the Bahá'í Faith to enjoy, one aspect of which was that he himself should receive the treatment on official occasions which was his due as the hereditary Head of such a Faith. For a number of reasons, such as the numerical insignificance of the Bahá'í Community in Palestine, the challenge to his authority made by the Covenant-breakers immediately after the Master's passing, the reluctance of all civil authorities to become involved in religious issues, both the British and the Israeli Governments were loath to accord Shoghi Effendi the degree of respect and precedence his unique office warranted, and because of this, with very few exceptions, he avoided ever attending official functions. When we recall the fact that from 1868, when He arrived in Akka, until His death in 1921, 'Abdu'l-Bahá never set foot in Jerusalem, because, Shoghi Effendi said, He would not have been treated as befitted His exalted station and the historical significance a visit by Him to Jerusalem deserved, and that because of this He avoided ever going there, we get some idea of the issues involved in this struggle.

Early in his ministry Shoghi Effendi had had an experience that drove home to him the pitfalls involved if he accepted the invitations the local authorities sent him to be present on such occasions as the visit of a high official to Haifa. He told me of how he attended one of these receptions, given by the District Commissioner in honour of the High Commissioner. On entering the room the Guardian found the High Commissioner seated at the centre and top of the room; the only chair near him which was vacant was the one on his right. Unhesitatingly Shoghi Effendi advanced and seated himself in it; as this was the one reserved for the District Commissioner, and

he did not wish to request the Guardian publicly to vacate it, another one was brought for this official. Shoghi Effendi well knew that on any similar occasion this would not be permitted to happen and he never again attended such a function.

There seems to be an allusion to this, or at least an allusion to the dilemma Shoghi Effendi found himself in, in a letter to Colonel Stewart B. Symes, former Governor of Haifa who had recently been transferred to Jerusalem and appointed Chief Secretary of the Palestine Administration. On 17 May 1925 Shoghi Effendi wrote and congratulated him on this appointment. It then seems that Colonel Symes came on an official visit to Haifa, for we find the Guardian writing to him again, on the 25th, that "In view of various considerations arising out of the still undefined status of the Bahá'í Community I find it, to my regret and sorrow, impossible to participate in person in the various public functions arranged in your honour. I thus find myself denied the great pleasure and privilege of raising my voice not only in the name of the local community but also on behalf of the Bahá'ís throughout the world in appreciation and gratitude for the good will and high sense of justice which have characterized your attitude towards the various problems arising out of the sudden passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. I am sure you will realize that my enforced absence from these public gatherings implies in no way a want of cordiality and friendship towards the representative of an administration which the Bahá'ís have every reason to regard with high esteem and deep confidence." He goes on to invite Colonel and Mrs Symes and her mother to tea in the gardens, or, if this cannot be arranged conveniently, he will call personally at their home. It is interesting to note how, almost a quarter of a century later, a similar situation arose, this time in connection with Prime Minister Ben Gurion's first visit to Haifa, and the same motives persuaded Shoghi Effendi to pursue an identical course.

The Guardian was on very friendly terms with Colonel Symes, who was none other than that Governor of Phoenicia who spoke at the Master's funeral and attended the fortieth-day meeting in His home. It had been to Colonel Symes that Shoghi Effendi had written, on 5 April 1922, at the time of his withdrawal: "As I am compelled to leave Haifa for reasons of health, I have named as my representative during my absence, the sister of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Bahíyyih Khánum", and gone on to say: "To assist her to conduct the affairs of the Bahá'í Movement in this country and elsewhere, I have also appointed a committee of the following Bahá'ís [eight men of the local community, three of them the sons-in-law of 'Abdu'l-Bahá] . . . The Chairman of this Committee, to be soon elected by its members, with the signature of Bahíyyih Khánum has my authority to transact any affairs that may need to be considered and decided during my absence. I regret exceedingly to be unable to see you before my departure, that I may express more adequately the satisfaction that I feel to know that your sense of justice will safeguard the interests of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh whenever called upon to act."

The cordial relations between Symes and Shoghi Effendi and the esteem he evidently had for the character of the Governor are reflected in the letter he wrote to him upon his return: "It is my pleasant duty to inform you of my return to the Holy Land after a prolonged period of rest and meditation and of my assumption of my official functions", and he went on to say: "I had felt after the passing of my beloved Grandfather too exhausted, overwhelmed and sorrowful to be able to conduct efficiently the affairs of the Bahá'í Movement. Now that I feel again restored and refreshed and in a position to resume my arduous duties, I wish to express to you on this occasion my heartfelt gratitude and appreciation for the sympathetic consideration you have shown towards the Movement during my absence." The letter contains, in the next paragraph, an unusual warmth of feeling: "It is a great pleasure and privilege for me to be enabled to renew my acquaintance with you and Mrs. Symes which I am confident will in the course of time grow into warm and abiding friendship." Shoghi Effendi ended it with his "kind regards and best wishes" and simply signed it "Shoghi". The exchange of correspondence with Colonel

Symes—who later was knighted, and became Governor-General of the Sudan before and during the second World War—went on for many years, even after his retirement.

In 1927 Shoghi Effendi wrote to him: “I take the liberty of enclosing for your information a copy of my latest communication addressed to Bahá’ís in Western lands regarding the Egyptian situation . . . We are greatly heartened by the thought that at a time when we are faced with delicate and perplexing issues, Palestine is under an Administration which is actuated by the highest motives of fairness and justice, and for which we Bahá’ís have every reason to be appreciative and thankful. I am glad the Bahá’í Year Book has interested you . . .” and again ended by sending kindest regards to him and Mrs Symes. On 27 December 1935 we find Symes (now Sir Stewart) writing to Shoghi Effendi from “The Palace, Khartoum”: “Very many thanks for your kind Christmas greetings and for the Book . . .” and, also from the Sudan, a year later on 9 April 1936: “Thank you for so kindly sending me Volume V of the ‘Bahá’í World’. I wish some of the Bahá’í Spirit might be transformed into national and international affairs! I trust all is well with you and your work . . .”

The last letter from him, in Shoghi Effendi’s files, was written in July 1945, and testifies to the permanence of Shoghi Effendi’s relationships with people who treated him, and responded to his overtures, with the same warmth and courtesy he was ever ready to shower on them. He had learned that the Symes’s son had been killed in the war. “My wife and I”, Symes wrote, “were much moved by your cable. It was indeed kind of you to remember us in our sorrows . . .” and ended his long letter to the Guardian: “If you should visit England I hope you will advise us. For it would be a great pleasure to us to meet you again. With kindest remembrances and regards . . .”

Another official, whose position, though not so high, involved directly the affairs of the Bahá’í Community at its World Centre, was the District Commissioner. During those years when Shoghi Effendi was beginning to seek recognition for the Faith in tangible privileges, Edward Keith-Roach, O.B.E., held this office. Although a man of an entirely different calibre from Colonel Symes, he was nevertheless friendly and helpful and seemed to be fond of Shoghi Effendi, whose correspondence with him runs from 1925 to 1939. Keith-Roach, undoubtedly because he knew the higher authorities would approve, was at times very co-operative not only in facilitating and expediting Shoghi Effendi’s work, but in making suggestions which the Guardian sometimes carried out. The first copy we find of a letter from Shoghi Effendi to him is so simple and yet so typical of the warmth with which the Guardian invariably responded to other people’s overtures when they were made in the right spirit, that I cannot refrain from quoting it. It was dated simply “Haifa, 25-12-25” and said: “My dear Mr. Keith-Roach: I am touched by your welcome message of good-will and greeting and I hasten to assure you that I fully reciprocate the sentiments expressed in your letter. With best wishes for a happy Christmas, I am yours very sincerely, Shoghi Rabbani”.

In many of the letters exchanged between Shoghi Effendi and Keith-Roach it is evident that they often met. When Keith-Roach was in hospital in Jerusalem, in 1935, Shoghi Effendi wrote to him: “Many thanks for your letter . . . I am so glad to hear your health is improving, and I trust you will on your return be able to have tea with me in the newly-extended gardens surrounding the Resting-Place.” Throughout Shoghi Effendi’s correspondence with both Keith-Roach and Symes there are invitations for them to have tea with him in the gardens on Mt Carmel; in Colonel Symes’s case the invitation sometimes included Mrs Symes. It was not only Shoghi Effendi’s way of extending some hospitality to these officials, but served to show them, by bringing them into the midst of the Bahá’í property, the latest developments and the most recent extension of the gardens and, I have no doubt, he made use of their presence to point out to them his future plans and seek their sympathetic support. Indeed, many of these appointments were made for that specific purpose.



THE GUARDIAN AFTER HIS RETURN TO HAIFA

Shoghi Effendi with Ismail Aqa, the old gardener of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, taken in the garden of the Master's home, 1921



The Bahai teaching brings peace and understanding.
 It is like a wide embrace gathering together all those who have long searched for words of hope. It accepts all great prophets gone before, it destroys no other creeds and leaves all doors open.
 Saddened by the continual strife amongst believers of many confessions and wearied of their intolerance towards each other, I discovered in the Bahai teaching the real spirit of Christ so often denied and misunderstood:
 Unity instead of strife, Hope instead of condemnation, Love instead of hate, and a great reassurance for all men.

Marie.

FACSIMILES OF QUEEN MARIE'S HANDWRITING

Above: Envelope addressed to Shoghi Effendi by the Queen of Rumania, which contained her first letter to him written on 27 August 1926, from Bran, her favourite residence.

Below: One of Her Majesty's written testimonials to the significance of the Bahá'í teachings



FACSIMILE OF SHOGHI EFFENDI'S HANDWRITING

On the left is an excerpt from a letter to the Bahá'ís of the East dated November 1927, concerning the services of Miss Martha Root; on the right, a few of the "Hidden Words"



SAFARI

The car in which Shoghi Effendi travelled as a passenger with an English hunter across part of East Africa, 1929



A PHOTOGRAPH BY THE GUARDIAN

A typical beautiful African mud village, taken by Shoghi Effendi when he
crossed Africa from Cape Town to Cairo in 1929



A FERRY ON THE NILE

Getting the ferry boat through a papyrus swamp on the Nile River, 1929.

Photograph by Shoghi Effendi



VICTORIA FALLS, ZIMBABWE (RHODESIA), 1929

Shoghi Effendi's masterly photograph of one of the world's greatest waterfalls, Zimbabwe, Africa



AFRICAN VIEWS

Above: Shoghi Effendi's photograph of the giant baobab tree which grew near Victoria Falls.

Below: the Guardian standing at the grave of Cecil Rhodes, 1929

From the beginning of his Guardianship up into the 1940's, it had been Shoghi Effendi's practice to see officials, engineers, lawyers and other non-Bahá'ís himself in connection with his important business; he did not go to their offices, but met them at their residences or, more often, they either came to his home or he met them on the Shrine properties. An example of what this friendly co-operation led to is shown in the important events that transpired in 1932. On 19 November the monument for the grave of the Greatest Holy Leaf was delivered in the port of Haifa. On the 20th Shoghi Effendi wrote to Keith-Roach: "May I ask your help in connexion with the marble monument which is to be erected above the grave of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's sister and which was landed safely at Haifa yesterday afternoon. A subordinate official of the Custom's Department is willing to exempt it from duty if the necessary authorization is granted by higher authorities. I therefore appeal to you and feel confident that you will do all you can to facilitate the entrance into Palestine of a work of art which, in some of its features, may well be regarded as unique in this country. With deepest appreciation and gratitude, Yours very sincerely". On 22 November Shoghi Effendi again wrote to him: "May I offer you my deepest thanks for your kind and prompt response to my request. The monument has been safely delivered, and I have given the necessary instructions for its immediate erection. Thanking you again and with kind regards and best wishes . . ." The entrance of this monument duty free created a precedent of far-reaching implications, which was to ensure the Faith at its World Centre, in the course of coming decades, a steadily increasing area of exemption, ending in concessions obtained from the State of Israel of a nature which had not been obtainable during the Mandate.

Four days later Shoghi Effendi reminds the District Commissioner of a demand of far greater significance which he had made of him; the whole letter, following as it did immediately upon the two quoted above, represents a truly masterly diplomacy—one is tempted to say on the part of both God and Shoghi Effendi—for the Former provided the sequence of events and the latter leapt upon the opportunity they afforded.

Haifa,
Nov. 26, 1932

Dear Mr. Keith-Roach:

I am sure you will be interested to learn that I am taking the necessary preliminary steps for the extension of the terraces, forming an integral part of the Shrine, and leading to the German Colony.

I have approached the Municipal Engineer and found him very sympathetic and favourable. I intend, therefore, to submit to the Town Planning Commission an official statement of the conditions under which we are prepared to open and extend the terraces, at our own expense and following the general design already adopted.

It is my earnest hope that before the end of the year 1933 the wish that you have expressed, and for the realization of which I will heartily endeavour, will be completely realized.

I am sure that the application which I have recently submitted to you regarding the sacredness of the Mansion at Bahjí, which forms an integral part of the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh, will receive your sympathetic consideration, and that the necessary certificate will be granted for the exemption from custom duty of the articles consigned for that building.

Shoghi Effendi obviously not only kept his District Commissioner fully informed, but kept after him, in a courteous, friendly and masterly way, to secure for the Faith those privileges he believed were its right. And Keith-Roach, having no doubt ascertained that the Administration in Jerusalem was sympathetic towards the work Shoghi Effendi was carrying out, helped him actively, with suggestions and co-operation. Thus we find Shoghi Effendi writing to him, on 2 February 1934, a letter that was one of the major links in the long struggle to exempt Bahá'í properties from taxation:

Dear Mr. Keith-Roach,

In accordance with your suggestion I am enclosing the formal declaration which I have signed as Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith and which I trust will facilitate the exemption from taxation of the area surrounding the international Bahá'í Shrine on Mt. Carmel.

I should be grateful if you would issue the authorization required to exempt from custom duty the gilded ornamental gate which forms a part of the entrance to the tomb of the Greatest Holy Leaf.

I am enclosing the key to the upper gate of the Shrine, which I hope you will use when passing through the Gardens.

Assuring you of my abiding gratitude and heartfelt appreciation of your assistance and sympathetic consideration of the interests of the Bahá'í Community,

I am yours very sincerely,

Three months later, on 10 May, we find the Guardian writing to him again: "I wish to express to you my deepest appreciation of the action you have taken to exempt from taxation the entire area surrounding and dedicated to the international Bahá'í Shrines on Mt. Carmel." One of the great victories in the course of the development of the World Centre had been won.

In another letter, dated 21 June 1935, Shoghi Effendi, in calling Keith-Roach's attention to matters connected with a court case, says: "Any assistance you can find it possible to extend in this respect would, I am sure, be deeply appreciated by me no less than by the various Bahá'í Assemblies whose interests I represent." Throughout his ministry Shoghi Effendi always let it be known very clearly to officials that, although he was the Head of the Faith, behind him stood a great concourse of Bahá'ís in many countries, ready to back up, with all the power they possessed, his claims and demands; and in expressing his thanks, he very often included their sentiments of gratitude and appreciation along with his own.

Although the Guardian did not attend any government receptions or functions, for reasons already stated, he was often willing to call on officials privately. We find him writing to Keith-Roach: "... I should be delighted to have you come to tea tomorrow afternoon at my home, where we could discuss the matter ... I can call at the Hospice, if it is more convenient to you, and at any time it will suit you." On 27 December 1936 we find Keith-Roach in a warm letter in his own hand, marked "Personal", thanking Shoghi Effendi for "your much appreciated Christmas greetings which were both fragrant and beautiful." He not only thanked Shoghi Effendi for a gift of flowers, but on many occasions had cause to thank him for various Bahá'í books, which he appreciated receiving. After the Guardian was married, in March 1937, Keith-Roach wrote to him: "May I congratulate your bride and you with real sincerity on your marriage and wish you both a life rich in service of the great task set

you by God to carry out. When may I come and call upon you. With deep regard . . .” This letter, of such a warm personal nature, Shoghi Effendi replied to on the same day he received it, 23 April: “I am deeply touched by the sentiments you have expressed to me on the occasion of my marriage. I greatly value your message of good wishes, and will always remember with feelings of gratitude the assistance you have extended to me in my arduous task. I will be most pleased to welcome you at our home on any day that may be convenient to you. Thanking you most warmly for your message . . .” Shortly after this Keith-Roach was made District Commissioner of Jerusalem, but the friendly tie remained and a few years later we were congratulating him on his marriage, which he had written us he was contemplating. As we have almost no record whatsoever of Shoghi Effendi’s attitude towards non-Bahá’ís with whom he was on a friendly basis, I have referred to his correspondence with Keith-Roach in some detail as it reveals to us another side of the Guardian’s many-sided nature.

Immediately upon his return to the Holy Land after the Master’s passing, Shoghi Effendi pursued the policy of keeping the authorities informed, locally and particularly at the seat of Government in Jerusalem, not only of his plans, but of his problems and various crises that arose, such as the seizure of the keys of Bahá’u’lláh’s Shrine in Bahjí and His House in Baghdad, as well as the persecutions and injustices the Faith was suffering. Commencing with his first letter to the High Commissioner, Sir Herbert Samuel, the friend of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, written on 16 January 1922, Shoghi Effendi maintained this contact with the government until the end of his life, first with the British and later with the Jewish representatives. When Shoghi Effendi left Palestine, so crushed and ill, in the spring of 1922, he had informed Sir Herbert of the measures he had taken to protect the Cause during his absence; after his return to Haifa on 15 December of that same year, he had wired Sir Herbert on the 19th: “Pray accept my best wishes and kind regards on my return to Holy Land and resumption of my official duties”.

In May 1923 we find Shoghi Effendi keeping both the Governor of Haifa and the High Commissioner informed of events, for in a letter to the former he writes that the “Haifa Bahá’í Spiritual Assembly” has been “officially reconstituted and will, in conjunction with me, direct all local affairs in this region. I have lately informed H.E. the High Commissioner of this matter . . .” The letter he referred to, dated 21 April, had stated that he enclosed a copy of his recent circular letter to the Bahá’í communities in the West, similar to one written in Persian to the Bahá’í communities in the East, “As you had expressed in your last letter to me the desire to learn of the measures that have been taken to provide for the stable organization of the Bahá’í Movement . . . I shall be only too glad to throw further light on any point which Your Excellency might desire to raise in connection with the enclosed letter, or regarding any other matter bearing upon the interests of the Movement in general.”

It is impossible to go into the details of the thirty-six years of Shoghi Effendi’s relations with the authorities, first of Palestine and later of Israel. That he succeeded in winning and maintaining their good will, their co-operation in his various undertakings at the World Centre, and their recognition of that Centre as the historic heart of the Bahá’í Faith entitled to enjoy the same rights as other Faiths in the Holy Land—indeed, in some respects to enjoy greater rights—all this in the face of the continuous mischief stirred up by various enemies who, whether overtly or covertly, consistently opposed every step he took is a tribute to the extraordinary wisdom and patience that characterized Shoghi Effendi’s leadership of the Cause of God.

When Sir Herbert Samuel’s term of office was drawing to a close the Guardian sent to him, on 15 June 1925, one of those messages that so effectively forged links of good will with the government, expressing his own and the Bahá’ís’ abiding sense of gratitude and deep appreciation of the “kind and noble attitude which Your Excellency has taken towards the various problems that have beset them since the passing of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá . . . The Bahá’ís . . . remembering the acts of sympathy and good will which the Palestine Administration under your guidance has

shown them in the past, will confidently endeavour to contribute their full share to the material prosperity as well as the spiritual advancement of a land so sacred and precious to them all.” Sir Herbert replied to this letter in the following terms: “. . . I have been happy during my five years of office to maintain very friendly relations with the Bahá’í Community in Palestine and much appreciate the good will which they have always shown towards the Administration and to myself.”

When, in 1929, there was an outbreak of trouble in Palestine, we find the Guardian writing to the then High Commissioner, Sir John Chancellor, on 10 September, a highly significant letter:

Your Excellency:

I have learned with profound regret of the lamentable occurrences in Palestine, and hasten, while away from home, to offer Your Excellency my heartfelt sympathy in the difficult task with which you are faced.

The Bahá’í Community of Palestine, who, by reason of their Faith, are deeply attached to its soil truly deplore these violent outbursts of religious fanaticism, and venture to hope that, as the influence of Bahá’í ideals extends and deepens, they may be enabled in the days to come to lend increasing assistance to your Administration for the promotion of the spirit of good will and toleration among the religious communities in the Holy Land.

I feel moved to offer Your Excellency in their behalf the enclosed sum as their contribution for the relief of the suffering and needy, irrespective of race or creed . . .

It was during that same year of 1929 that Shoghi Effendi, through the instrumentality of a formal petition to the government made by the Bahá’í Community of Haifa on 4 May, succeeded in obtaining for it permission to administer according to Bahá’í law the affairs of the Community in such matters of personal status as marriage, thus placing it, in this regard, on an equal footing with the Jewish, Muslim and Christian Communities in Palestine. Shoghi Effendi hailed this as “an act of tremendous significance and wholly unprecedented in the history of the Faith in any country”. The Guardian’s own exclusively Bahá’í marriage was registered and became legal as a result of this recognition he had won for the Faith.

One of the men who occupied the important office of High Commissioner during these years when the Cause was beginning to win in such tangible ways recognition for its independent status, was Sir Arthur Wauchope, a man who, like Colonel Symes, had a personal liking for Shoghi Effendi and who, one suspects, understood how heavy the burden was that rested on the shoulders of the young man who was the Head of the Bahá’í Faith. It was during the period of his administration—which partly coincided with the time Keith-Roach was District Commissioner in Haifa—that some of the greatest victories in winning concessions from the authorities took place, the most important of these, next to the right of the Community to obey some of its own laws governing personal status, being the exemption from taxation of the entire area surrounding the Shrine of the Báb on Mt Carmel. Unlike most High Commissioners, Sir Arthur seems to have met Shoghi Effendi personally as he refers to this in some of his letters.

In one of them, dated 26 June 1933, Sir Arthur states: “I have received your letter of 21st June and I hasten to write to thank you for it and to assure you that when the case which you mention is referred to me for a decision under the Palestine (Holy Places) Order in Council, it will receive my most careful consideration. I have also

received the 'Bahá'í World' for 1930-32. I am most grateful to you for this extremely interesting book . . . I hope to have the pleasure of another visit to the beautiful Gardens on the hillside outside Haifa."

On 13 March 1934 Shoghi Effendi wrote to him: ". . . As the case recently referred to Your Excellency concerning the Bahá'í Shrines on Mt. Carmel has vital international importance, I have asked Mr. _____ to come to Palestine to confer with me about it. I would greatly appreciate Your Excellency's kindly according him an interview in order to clarify one or two points which I do not quite understand and upon which my future action in this matter depends." On 1 May of that same year Shoghi Effendi again wrote to him: "I deeply appreciated the kind message of sympathy and support for the projected plan of the Bahá'í Community to beautify the slopes of Mt. Carmel which you sent to me through Mr. _____. It greatly encouraged me. Unfortunately there are strong and influential interests that are seeking to obstruct the plan. These are in part merely real estate speculators who, in their short-sightedness, are doing their utmost to develop the northern slope of Mt. Carmel for their immediate benefit. More difficult and dangerous for our plan however are those who definitely seek to frustrate the efforts of the followers of Bahá'u'lláh in anything that they may undertake. We believe that these people were back of the case brought against us by the Domets [Dumits], for example, and it was for that reason that we felt justified in our endeavour to have it withdrawn from the jurisdiction of the courts and submitted to Your Excellency's personal consideration . . . With kind regards and renewed expression of my warm appreciation of Your Excellency's sympathy and support . . ." The case in question, which involved four years of litigation, was finally abandoned and in 1935 a contract for the purchase of the Dumit land was signed and Shoghi Effendi cabled the National Assembly in America that he was planning to register it in the name of their Palestine Branch. It is interesting to note that to the Bahá'ís he transliterated the name, but not to the High Commissioner.

Shoghi Effendi had been endeavouring for some time to obtain exemption from taxation on Bahá'í properties surrounding the Báb's Shrine and had finally received news this had been granted. Behind the formal lines of this letter to Sir Arthur, written on 11 May 1934, his inner jubilation over this victory can be sensed:

Your Excellency,

The gratifying news has just come to me from the District Commissioner at Haifa that the petition for exemption from taxation of the Bahá'í property holdings on Mt. Carmel has been granted by the Government.

I hasten to express to Your Excellency for the World Bahá'í Community and myself our deep appreciation of the sympathetic and effective interest which Your Excellency has taken in the matter and which I know must have contributed in large measure to this outcome. And I venture to hope for the continuation of Your Excellency's sympathetic support in our plan to gradually beautify this property for the use and enjoyment of the people of Haifa, for which this action of the Government now opens the way.

To this letter Sir Arthur replied in person, five days later:

Dear Shoghi Effendi,

Thank you for your letter of May 11th and the kind words it contains. I have always had great sympathy with your projects for beautifying the slopes of Mt. Carmel and I hope this exemption will help you in carrying on your fine work.

Yours very sincerely,

Arthur Wauchope

In another letter the High Commissioner wrote: "I am most grateful to you for your kind present of the 'Dawn Breakers'. I shall read the book with much interest, for you know how the wonderful story stirred me when I first heard it in Persia. The book is charmingly produced and the illustrations and reproductions add to its attraction. Again with very many thanks for your kind thoughts and welcome gift . . ." There are similar letters thanking the Guardian for *Gleanings* and *The Bahá'í World*. The last letter, written in February 1938, by this man, who through his high office assisted Shoghi Effendi in winning a major victory at the World Centre of the Faith, was typical of his courteous kindness: ". . . I had every intention of visiting you in Haifa, where I hoped to see the progress you had made with your garden and say good-bye in person. Unfortunately the many calls on my time . . . made this impossible, so I take this opportunity of bidding you farewell and expressing my best wishes to the Bahá'í community." At the bottom of the letter he added by hand: "I hear your garden is growing more beautiful every year."

At the time when the Mandate drew to its close and the troubled people of Palestine were preparing to fight it out, the United Nations appointed a Special Committee on Palestine, headed by Justice Emil Sandstrom. On 9 July he wrote to Shoghi Effendi from Jerusalem, stating that under the terms of reference of this Committee it was charged with giving most careful consideration to the religious interests in Palestine of Islam, Judaism and Christianity, and goes on to say: "I should appreciate it if you would advise me whether you wish to submit evidence—in a written statement on the religious interests of your Community in Palestine." Because of the historic importance to Bahá'ís of Shoghi Effendi's reply to this letter, I quote it in full:

14th July 1947

Mr. Justice Sandstrom,
Chairman,
United Nations Special Committee on Palestine
Sir:

Your kind letter of July 9th reached me and I wish to thank you for affording me the opportunity of presenting to you and your esteemed colleagues a statement of the relationship which the Bahá'í Faith has to Palestine and our attitude towards any future changes in the status of this sacred and much disputed land.

I am enclosing with this letter, for your information, a brief sketch of the history, aims and significance of the Bahá'í Faith, as well as a small pamphlet setting forth its views towards the present state of the world and the lines on which we hope and believe it must and will develop.

The position of the Bahá'ís in this country is in a certain measure unique: whereas Jerusalem is the spiritual center of Christendom it is not the administrative center of either the Church of Rome or any other Christian denomination. Likewise although it is regarded by Moslems as the spot where one of its most sacred shrines is situated, the Holy Sites of the Muhammadan Faith, and the center of its pilgrimages, are to be found in Arabia, not in Palestine. The Jews alone offer somewhat of a parallel to the attachment which the Bahá'ís have for this country inasmuch as Jerusalem holds the remains of their Holy Temple and was the seat of both the religious and political institutions associated with their past history. But even their case differs in one respect from that of the Bahá'ís, for it is in the soil of Palestine that the three central Figures of our

religion are buried, and it is not only the center of Bahá'í pilgrimages from all over the world but also the permanent seat of our Administrative Order, of which I have the honor to be the Head.

The Bahá'í Faith is entirely non-political and we neither take sides in the present tragic dispute going on over the future of the Holy Land and its peoples nor have we any statement to make or advice to give as to what the nature of the political future of this country should be. Our aim is the establishment of universal peace in this world and our desire to see justice prevail in every domain of human society, including the domain of politics. As many of the adherents of our Faith are of Jewish and Moslem extraction we have no prejudice towards either of these groups and are most anxious to reconcile them for their mutual benefit and for the good of the country.

What does concern us, however, in any decisions made affecting the future of Palestine, is that the fact be recognized by whoever exercises sovereignty over Haifa and Acre, that within this area exists the spiritual and administrative center of a world Faith, and that the independence of that Faith, its right to manage its international affairs from this source, the right of Bahá'ís from any and every country of the globe to visit it as pilgrims (enjoying the same privilege in this respect as Jews, Moslems and Christians do in regard to visiting Jerusalem), be acknowledged and permanently safeguarded.

The Sepulchre of the Báb on Mt. Carmel, the Tomb of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in that same spot, the Pilgrim Hostel for oriental Bahá'ís in its vicinity, the large gardens and terraces which surround these places (all of which are open to visits by the public of all denominations), the Pilgrim Hostel for western Bahá'ís at the foot of Mt. Carmel, the residence of the Head of the Community, various houses and gardens in Acre and its vicinity associated with Bahá'u'lláh's incarceration in that city, His Holy Tomb at Bahjí, near Acre, with His Mansion which is now preserved as a historic site and a museum (both likewise accessible to the public of all denominations), as well as holdings in the plain of Acre—all these comprise the bulk of Bahá'í properties in the Holy Land. It should also be noted that practically all of these properties have been exempted from both Government and Municipal taxes owing to their religious nature. Some of these extensive holdings are the property of the Palestine Branch of the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, incorporated as a religious society according to the laws of the country. In future various other Bahá'í National Assemblies will hold, through their Palestine Branches, part of the International Endowments of the Faith in the Holy Land.

In view of the above information I would request you and the members of your Committee to take into consideration the safeguarding of Bahá'í rights in any recommendation which you may make to the United Nations concerning the future of Palestine.

May I take this opportunity of assuring you of my deep appreciation of the spirit in which you and your colleagues have conducted your investigations into the troubled conditions of this Sacred Land. I trust and pray that the outcome of your deliberations will produce an equitable and speedy solution of the very thorny problems which have arisen in Palestine.

Yours faithfully,

Shoghi Rabbani

It must be remembered that the only oriental notable of any standing whatsoever who had not fled from Palestine before the War of Independence was Shoghi Effendi. This fact was not lost upon the authorities of the new State. By acts such as this, the Guardian had succeeded in impressing upon non-Bahá'ís, who had no reason whatever to take him on faith alone, the sterling personal integrity and strict adherence to what he believed was the right course that characterized his leadership of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. Largely because of this and a knowledge of what the Bahá'í Teachings represented, of which the *avant garde* of the Jewish Movement for independence were well aware, the new authorities were extremely co-operative in every way. One of their first acts, when the fighting was still going on, had been to place a notice on the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh—much more isolated than the Shrines in Haifa—stating that it was a *Lieu Sainte* or “Holy Place”, thus ensuring that it would be treated with respect by all Jews.

However, the same old problem of how to maintain his position on formal occasions faced the Guardian under the new State as had faced him under the old administration. In January 1949 Mr Ben Gurion, the Prime Minister of the Provisional Government, came to Haifa on his first official visit and the Mayor naturally invited Shoghi Effendi to attend the reception being given in his honour by the Municipality. The dilemma was acute, for if the Guardian did not go, it would, with every reason, be taken as an affront to the new Government, and if he did go, he would inevitably be submerged in a sea of people where any pretence at protocol would be swept away (this was indeed the case, as my father, Shoghi Effendi's representative, reported after he returned from this reception). The Guardian therefore decided that as he would not be attending, but was more than willing to show courtesy to the Prime Minister of the new State, he would call upon him in person. With great difficulty this was arranged through the good offices of the Mayor of Haifa, Shabatay Levy, as Mr Ben Gurion's time in Haifa was very short and it was only two days before the first general election in the new State.

The interview took place on Friday evening, 21 January, in the private home the Prime Minister was staying in on Mt Carmel and lasted about fifteen minutes. Ben Gurion inquired about the Faith and Shoghi Effendi's relation to it and asked if there was a book he could read; Shoghi Effendi answered his questions and assured him he would send him a copy of his own book *God Passes By*—which he later did, and which was acknowledged with thanks.

Typical of the whole history of the Cause and the constant problems that beset it was a long article which appeared in the leading English-language newspaper on 20 December 1948, in which, in the most favourable terms, its teachings were set forth and the station of Shoghi Effendi as its World Head mentioned. On 28 January 1949 there appeared in the letter column of this paper a short and extraordinary statement, signed “Bahai U.N. Observer”, which flatly refuted the article and asserted: “Mr. Rabbani is not the Guardian of the Bahai faith, nor its World Leader” and gave the New History Society in New York as a source of further information. As there was no such thing as a “Bahai U.N. Observer” this move was plainly inspired by the once-more hopeful band of old Covenant-breakers, who sought, at the outset of a new regime, to blacken Shoghi Effendi's reputation and divert attention from his station by referring to Ahmad Sohrab's rootless group in America. At a later date, when in 1952 the Covenant-breakers in Bahjí brought their case in the local courts against Shoghi Effendi for the demolition of an old building near the Mansion of Bahá'u'lláh, Sohrab sought, unsuccessfully, to bring pressure on the Minister of Religious Affairs to discredit the Bahá'í claims. It was with attacks such as this, both open and covert, that the Guardian, on the threshold of a new phase in the development of the affairs of the Faith at its World Centre, once more had to contend.

The cordiality of the authorities towards Shoghi Effendi and the Bahá'í Faith is reflected in many communications. But it was not only a question of words; tangible evidences of the State's recognition of the

status of the Faith at its international headquarters was also forthcoming.

It had long been the desire of Shoghi Effendi to obtain control of the Mansion at Mazra'ih, where Bahá'u'lláh had first lived when He quitted once for all the walls of the prison-city of Akka. This property was a Muslim religious endowment and had now fallen vacant. It was planned by the government to turn it into a rest home for officials. All efforts, through the departments concerned, to procure this property were unavailing until Shoghi Effendi appealed directly to Ben Gurion, explaining its significance to the Bahá'ís and his desire to have it visited by pilgrims as a place so closely associated with Bahá'u'lláh. The Prime Minister himself then intervened in the matter and it was leased to the Bahá'ís as an historic site. Shoghi Effendi proudly informed the Bahá'í world, on 16 December 1950, that its keys had been delivered to us, by the Israeli authorities, after the lapse of more than fifty years.

The affairs of the Bahá'í Community, in matters concerning its day-to-day dealings with the government in connection with the work at the World Centre, had been placed under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and was at first handled by the head of the Department that dealt with Muslim affairs. This Shoghi Effendi violently objected to as it implied the Faith was in some way identified with Islam. After much negotiation, a letter was received from the Minister of Religious Affairs, dated 13 December 1953, addressed to "His Eminence, Shoghi Effendi Rabbani, World Head of the Bahá'í Faith" in which he said:

. . . I am pleased to inform you of my decision to establish in our Ministry a separate Department for the Bahá'í Faith. I hope that this department will be of assistance to you in matters concerning the Bahá'í Centre in our State.

In the name of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the State of Israel, I wish to assure Your Eminence that full protection will be given to the Holy Places as well as to the World Centre of the Bahá'í Faith.

This victory was all the more welcome, following as it did the previously mentioned court case against Shoghi Effendi brought on a technicality by the Covenant-breakers in connection with the demolition of a house adjoining the Shrine and Mansion of Bahá'u'lláh in Bahjí. Never tired of seeking to publicly humiliate and discredit the Head of the Faith, be it 'Abdu'l-Bahá or the Guardian, they had had the temerity to summon Shoghi Effendi to appear in court as a witness. Once more, greatly concerned for the honour of the Cause at its World Centre, Shoghi Effendi appealed direct to the Prime Minister, sending as his representatives the President, Secretary-General and Member-at-Large of the International Bahá'í Council (whom he had summoned from Italy for this purpose) to Jerusalem on more than one visit to press the strategy he himself had devised. These representations were successful and on the grounds of its being a purely religious issue, it was removed by the Government from the jurisdiction of the civil courts. As soon as the plaintiffs found their plan to humiliate Shoghi Effendi had been forestalled, they were willing to settle the case by negotiation. That the authorities and the Bahá'í Community were equally pleased by this conclusion of the matter is shown in these letters written to the Guardian by members of the Prime Minister's staff—two men to whom the Faith owed much for their sympathetic efforts on its behalf at that time:

PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE

Jerusalem, 19th May, 1952.

His Eminence Shoghi Rabbani,
World Head of the Bahá'í Faith,

Haifa.

Your Eminence,

I am instructed to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 16th May addressed to the Prime Minister.

As you are no doubt aware, the dispute between yourself as the World Head of the Bahá'í Faith and members of the family of the founder of the Faith has found its solution and there is no need, therefore, to take any administrative action in order to solve the problem.

May I express to you our gratitude for your wise and benevolent attitude taken in the dispute which enabled us to impose a just and, we hope, a lasting solution on the dissident group?

The Prime Minister assures you of his personal esteem and sends you his best wishes.

Your sincerely,

S. Eynath

Legal Adviser

The second letter was from Walter Eytan, Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and was written to Shoghi Effendi the following day. In it he says:

. . . Having done my best throughout to be of assistance to Your Eminence in the solution of these vexing problems, I heard with great satisfaction this morning that complete agreement had been reached. I sincerely trust that this puts an end to a period of anxiety for Your Eminence and the members of the Bahá'í Faith, and that you will now be able to proceed with your plans without further interference from any quarter.

In letters such as these, from the President down, it is significant to note that they address Shoghi Effendi as "His Eminence", a title which, though still far below what his position merited, was the one that had been introduced in the earliest days of his ministry, but never really used by any officials until the formation of the Jewish State.

The cordial nature of the relations established between the Guardian and the officials of the State of Israel encouraged Shoghi Effendi to ascertain if the President would care to visit the Bahá'í Shrine in Haifa; when word was received that he would accept such an invitation, Shoghi Effendi formally invited him to do so and arrangements were made for the morning of 26 April 1954, at which time, the Director of the President's Office wrote to Shoghi Effendi, the President would "be pleased to pay you an official visit". Accordingly the president and his wife arrived at the home of the Master, attended by two officials, partook of light refreshment and were presented by the Guardian with a Persian album, painted with miniatures and bound in silver, containing some photographs of the Shrines, as a memento of their visit. The Presidential party, with Shoghi Effendi and those who accompanied him, then proceeded to the gardens on Mt Carmel. It was the first time in the history of the Cause that the Head of an independent nation had ever made an official visit of this kind and constituted another milestone in the development of the World Centre of the Faith. The President and his companions showed the greatest respect to the Shrine of the Báb, removing their shoes as we did, before entering it, the men keeping their hats on out of reverence as Jews for a holy place; it was a very moving moment to see President Ben Zvi standing beside Shoghi Effendi, the former with his European hat, the latter with his simple black fez, before the

threshold. After a few words of explanation from Shoghi Effendi, we all withdrew and walked about the gardens for a few minutes before saying good-bye in front of the Oriental Pilgrim House where the President's car was awaiting him.

On 29 April the President wrote personally to the Guardian: "I should like to express my thanks for your kind hospitality and for the interesting time I spent with you visiting the beautiful Gardens and remarkable Shrine . . . I do appreciate the friendship which the Bahá'í Community has for Israel and it is my sincere hope that we may all live to see the strengthening of amity between all peoples on earth." On 5 May the Guardian replied to this letter in equally warm terms: ". . . It was a pleasure to meet Your Excellency and Mrs. Ben Zvi, and be able to show you one of our places of Bahá'í pilgrimage in Israel . . . If it suits your convenience, Mrs. Rabbani and I, accompanied by Mr. Ioas, would like to call upon Your Excellency and Mrs. Ben Zvi in Jerusalem . . ." The time for this return call was set for the afternoon of 26 May and we had tea and a pleasant conversation with the President and his wife, in her own way as much a personality as her husband and equally nice. In the interim between these two visits Shoghi Effendi had sent to the President some Bahá'í books which he had promised him and these had been acknowledged with the thanks of the President and the assurance that he would read them with great interest. Ever meticulous in all matters, Shoghi Effendi wrote on 3 June to the President: "I wish to thank you and Mrs. Ben Zvi for your kind hospitality. Mrs. Rabbani and I enjoyed our visit with you very much, and I feel sure that this opportunity we have had of visiting with you our Bahá'í Holy Places and calling upon you in the capital of Israel has served to reinforce the bonds of affection and esteem which unite the Bahá'ís to the people and Government of Israel. With kind regards to you and Mrs. Ben Zvi . . ." Thus ended another memorable chapter in the process of winning recognition for the Faith at its World Centre.

Although the major affairs of the World Centre had usually to be handled in Jerusalem with the highest officials, much of its work needed to be transacted with the help of the municipal officials in both Akka and Haifa—particularly the latter. It is an interesting fact that of the many dealings with Haifa municipal engineers which the Bahá'í Community had over the years the first was in the days of 'Abdu'l-Bahá Himself when a Dr Ciffrin had submitted to Him his design for a monumental staircase and cypress avenue leading from the old Templar Colony at the foot of Mt Carmel up to the Báb's Shrine. The Master had not only approved of this scheme but had granted land for its realization and headed the list of subscribers to the "Báb's Monumental Stairway", as the project was called, by contributing £100.

Aside from the struggle on Shoghi Effendi's part, carried on shrewdly and persistently, to win concessions from municipal officials as well as recognition of the unique status of the Bahá'í Faith in both Haifa and Akka—the twin cities harbouring its World Centre—he maintained a friendly and co-operative relationship with the Mayor of Haifa in respect to many municipal undertakings, not the least of which was the support he gave the authorities—either the Municipality, or in the early days, the District Commissioner—when there was some special need for financial help in charitable work.

Nothing could better describe Shoghi Effendi's attitude and policy in such matters than the letter he wrote, on 7 February 1923, so early in his ministry, to Colonel Symes: "I have just heard of the Charity Ball which Mrs. Symes is organizing to aid the poor of Haifa. Realizing how their cause was consistently upheld by my beloved Grandfather, and it being my earnest endeavour to follow in his footsteps, I beg to enclose the sum of £20 – as a contribution to the fund . . . I trust you have had a very enjoyable time in Egypt, and hoping to meet you and Mrs. Symes in the near future . . ." The same sentiment is expressed with equal feeling two years later in another letter to Colonel Symes: "The perusal of your circular letter of February 16th, 1925 with reference to the establishment of the Haifa Charitable Fund has served to remind me of the keen interest 'Abdu'l-Bahá took in

charitable institutions. Animated by the same sentiment and desirous to walk in the footsteps of my beloved Grandfather, I hasten to enclose herewith the sum of £20 – towards the relief of the sufferings of the poor in Haifa.”

Whenever calamity overtook the people, Shoghi Effendi responded warmly to the need. In April 1926 he wrote to the Commissioner of the Northern District: “Fully aware of the intense suffering caused by recent disturbances, and mindful of the loving care bestowed by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá on the suffering and needy, I take great pleasure in enclosing the sum of £30 – as my contribution towards the relief of the poor and shelterless . . . I shall be grateful if you will let me know from time to time if any such need arises, in whatever place and on behalf of whatever denomination.” In 1927 we find him again responding to disaster by sending the Secretariat of the Government in Jerusalem £100 as his contribution to the Earthquake Relief Fund. Over the years, in large or in small amounts, he followed the ways of the Master, Who had been called “the Father of the Poor”.

That these contributions to various causes were warmly received is self-evident: the District Commissioner for the Northern District thanks Shoghi Effendi, in 1934, for his “most generous contribution towards the relief of distress in Tiberias” and also for his “message of sympathy which I will convey to the District Commissioner of Tiberias”. In 1950 we find the Chairman of the Haifa Municipal Commission, the Mayor, thanking Shoghi Effendi for the £500 “being your Eminence’s general contribution for the relief of the poor in Haifa, on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the Martyrdom of the Báb.” Almost invariably, when forwarding such contributions, the Guardian would add that they were to “be distributed equally among the needy members of all communities, irrespective of their race or religion.”

The general policy of the Faith in matters of charity was made abundantly clear by a letter he wrote to the Mayor of Haifa, on 7 May 1929, in which he acknowledges receiving his circular related to the prevention of mendicancy in the city of Haifa and states: “Fortunately, this is a problem which does not affect the Bahá’í Community, as under our laws begging is strictly prohibited. I appreciate, however, the importance and timeliness of the measure you are considering and take pleasure in enclosing a cheque to your order for £50 – in behalf of the Bahá’í Community in anticipation of any plan that the Municipality may devise for the alleviation of poverty and the help of the needy in Haifa. You may be assured that the Community will rigidly observe any regulations that may be put into effect.”

In the years when the people of Palestine and, later, of Israel were undergoing great hardships, between 1940 and 1952 alone, the Guardian gave the Municipality of Haifa over ten thousand dollars for the poor of all denominations. In addition to such help given through government and municipal agencies, he also responded to the appeals of many charities, gave individually to those he deemed worthy, and even sometimes contributed money for some special purpose connected with the mosque in Haifa. Many times he gave contributions spontaneously, such as the £100 he donated to the Government Lunatic Asylum in Akka—the former Turkish barracks—when the room occupied by Bahá’u’lláh was turned over to the custody of the Bahá’ís, and the sum he presented towards the construction of the Institute of Physics which the Weizmann National Memorial was undertaking.

But this was not the only way in which he demonstrated to the local authorities his good will. Whatever demands were made of him he usually found he was in a position to respond to them most cordially. An example of this is an exchange of correspondence with Aba Khoushy, the Mayor of Haifa, which took place in 1952. A country-wide Symposium on Problems of Illumination was to take place at the Hebrew Technical College in Haifa and would coincide with the Jewish Feast of Hanukka, the Feast of Lights. His Worship, in a letter to Shoghi Effendi,

informed him of this and wrote that: "I should be grateful if you too could share in our efforts to make this conference a success and would kindly issue instructions to have the beautiful Shrine of your Faith, on the Carmel slopes, illuminated festively during the week of Dec. 12–Dec. 19, 1952, inclusively." As usual, whenever he was approached courteously, Shoghi Effendi responded warmly. On 7 December he wrote to the Mayor:

Your Worship:

Your letter of November 30th has been received by me on my return from Bahjí, and I wish to assure you that the Bahá'í Community will be happy to co-operate in making the city of Haifa luminous and beautiful, in connection with the Symposium to be held at the Hebrew Technical College on Problems of Illumination, especially so as this Symposium will be held during Hanukka.

I will give instructions that the period of illumination of our Shrine should be extended during these days [the Shrine was always flood-lit every night at sunset for a short time], and wish also to extend through Your Worship an invitation to the delegates and visitors attending the Symposium to enter the Shrine and gardens on one of the evenings when they will be touring our city, to enjoy the illumination. The necessary arrangements can be made to open the gates and Shrine for them, if we are informed in advance.

Yours sincerely,

Shoghi Rabbani

World Head of the Bahá'í Faith

Another significant example of the spirit in which Shoghi Effendi responded to worthy causes pressed upon his attention is the co-operation he gave the Akka District Commissioner when in 1943 he wrote to him that he could find no place to house a children's school and would he consider leasing eight rooms in the house of 'Abbúd (a large building and a place of Bahá'í pilgrimage) for this purpose? Shoghi Effendi permitted the school to use some of the rooms, but said he would not take any payment for them.

XIII

THE RISE OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER

During the years when the Guardian was building up not only the material, tangible assets of the Faith at its World Centre but winning for it the recognition of both the government of the country in which that Centre was situated and the municipal authorities in whose city its chief institutions were to have their permanent headquarters, he was performing at the same time a similar function abroad. Years later he defined what this had been: a triple, worldwide effort to demonstrate the independent character of the Faith, to enlarge its limits and to swell the number of its supporters. In order, however, to accomplish this he had to have instruments and those instruments, so clearly provided for in the teachings, were the local and National Assemblies, the building blocks of its Administrative Order. It is interesting to note that Shoghi Effendi, in a letter a to non-Bahá'í, in 1941, clearly defines his relationship to this all-important work: “. . . The Administrative Order which I, as the responsible interpreter appointed by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, have laboured to expound and establish . . . in accordance with the explicit instructions written by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in His Will . . .”; evidently not satisfied that he had stated it sufficiently unambiguously, he goes on in this letter to rephrase it, saying he had been “empowered and called upon” to establish it.

Although Shoghi Effendi very seldom mentioned himself—indeed very seldom in his general messages ever used the pronoun “I”—the powers conferred upon him in the *Will and Testament* were such that without them the Bahá'í Administrative Order could never have been built, the Bahá'í World Community as we know it today never brought into being, the foundations of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh never laid. As the institutions of the Cause locally and nationally multiplied and its fabric grew stronger, the Guardian's true position became more evident not only to those older Bahá'ís who had always recognized it, but to the many new and often inexperienced believers who had not yet grasped its true significance and implications. There is one letter in which he was forced, in order to protect the Cause, to set forth his own administrative powers; it was written in reply to a singularly imperceptive letter from the Secretary of a National Assembly, to which, most exceptionally, he did not append any postscript in his own hand but merely added: “Read and approved, Shoghi”. This letter stated:

Just as the N.S.A. has full jurisdiction over all its Local Assemblies, the Guardian has full jurisdiction over all National Assemblies; he is not required to consult them, if he believes a certain decision is advisable in the interest of the Cause. He is the judge of the wisdom and advisability of the decision made by these bodies, and not they of the wisdom and advisability of his decisions. A perusal of the *Will and Testament* makes this principle quite clear. He is the Guardian of the Cause in the very fullness of that term, and the appointed interpreter of the Teachings, and is guided in his decisions to do that which protects it and fosters its good and highest interest.

He always has the right to step in and countermand the decisions of an N.S.A.; if he did not possess this right he would be absolutely impotent to protect the Faith, just as the N.S.A., if it were divested of the right to countermand the decisions of a Local Assembly, would be incapable of watching over and guiding the national welfare of the Bahá'í community.

It very seldom happens—but it nevertheless does happen—that he feels impelled to change a major (as you put it) decision of an N.S.A.; but he always unhesitatingly does so when necessary, and the N.S.A. in question should gladly and unhesitatingly accept this as a measure designed for the good of the Faith which its elected representatives are so devotedly seeking to serve.

It is not surprising to find that Shoghi Effendi characterized the period of the Faith that was ushered in after ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s ascension as the “Iron Age”, “the Age of Transition”, “the Formative Period”. It was the Age in which the institutions of the Cause, whether local, national, or international were being created, institutions which, the Guardian said, constitute the embryonic pattern that needs must evolve, during the Golden Age of the Bahá’í Dispensation, into a World Commonwealth. The “world-vitalizing spirit” of the Faith, he wrote, had reached the point where it was ready to “incarnate itself in institutions designed to canalize its outspreading energies and stimulate its growth.” The principles governing the Administrative Order established in the *Will and Testament* were defined by him during the first years of his ministry in a flood of letters to the believers all over the world in which he made clear the functions of Assemblies, their fields of jurisdiction and—what was still more essential—the spirit that must animate them if they were to fulfil their purpose in the immediate future.

The administrative institutions may be likened to the veins and arteries of the body that carry in their network the vital flow of Bahá’u’lláh’s teachings to all parts of the world; through their instrumentality a recreated society, “that Christ-promised Kingdom, that World Order whose generative impulse is none other than Bahá’u’lláh Himself, whose dominion is the entire planet, whose watchword is unity, whose animating power is the force of Justice, whose directive purpose is the reign of righteousness and truth, and whose supreme glory is the complete, the undisturbed and everlasting felicity of the whole of human kind”, can be brought into being.

After defining the purely mechanical technique of how Assemblies should be elected and conduct their business, the Guardian’s early admonitions to them often dealt with the subject of unity; if the “watchword” of the future society was going to be “unity”, it was obviously essential it should be assiduously cultivated amongst the Bahá’ís themselves. In 1923 he wrote to one of the local Assemblies: “Full harmony and understanding among the friends, outside and within the Spiritual Assembly; implicit confidence on the part of the non-members in every decision passed by their elected representatives; and the determination of these to disregard their likes and dislikes and seek naught but the general interests of the Movement—these constitute the only and sure foundation upon which any constructive work can be built in future and prove serviceable to the interests of the Cause.” His letters to National Assemblies were no less emphatic, as witness these excerpts from two written during 1925: “The prime requisite, however, of every undertaking in which the friends may engage is the maintenance of a spirit of unsullied fellowship and whole-hearted and loyal co-operation . . . the spirit of true Bahá’í fellowship—the only remover of our many perplexities in life, the one solvent of those inevitable problems that we shall encounter in the course of our labours for our beloved Cause.” “An active, united, and harmonious National Spiritual Assembly, properly and conscientiously elected, vigorously functioning, alert and conscious of its many and pressing responsibilities, in close and continuous contact with the international centre in the Holy Land, and keenly watchful of every development throughout the length and breadth of its ever-expanding field of work—is surely in this day of urgent necessity and paramount importance, for it is the cornerstone on which the edifice of Divine Administration must ultimately rest.”

Slowly, patiently, with infinite love and understanding, Shoghi Effendi educated the Assemblies, East and West, in how to conduct the affairs of the Cause of God on a proper basis, in accordance with the teachings. The members of these truly nascent institutions, like children, were prone to sometimes having rows amongst themselves; but these were not allowed by the Guardian to place the interests of the Faith itself in danger. On one

such occasion, when a prominent national body, tired of one of its members, had voted him off it, Shoghi Effendi cabled them a strong warning that this could have “world-wide repercussions inflict irreparable injury Cause Bahá’u’lláh” and said the membership of the person in question should be retained and all criticism and discussion dropped and forgotten as it would “impair undivided authority institution National Assembly”.

The handling of this case was not unusual; the Guardian well knew that the world, the believers and the Assemblies were still very immature; the administration of “justice”—in itself a highly involved subject—presupposes some degree of maturity, of experience, of deep knowledge of the teachings on the part of those concerned with it. It also takes a great deal of time. Over and over, during his entire ministry, the Guardian refused to arbitrate cases referred to him and urged those concerned to rise above the situation, to forget the past and forgive, to concentrate on the urgent, the paramount needs of the Faith, which were to fulfil the goals of its current Plans and spread its healing message to all mankind. Of course in cases of divorce or disputes on financial matters and other tangible issues, the believers were advised to refer to their Assemblies and he urged those bodies to investigate and come to a decision; indeed, as the administrative bodies gradually matured over the years, he encouraged the Bahá’ís to refer to them their problems for solution, so that both the Bahá’ís and the Assemblies could gain in experience and learn to implement the marvellous Order of Bahá’u’lláh in their personal and community life; but nevertheless, in instances where plain inharmony, backbiting and mutual distrust had created the situation, he always called upon the friends to rise above it for the good of the Cause. His admonitions and appeals on such occasions were like a cool hand placed on a fevered brow, calming and comforting the angry and distressed contestants, soothing them until they were ready to let their essential love for their Faith flood back into their hearts and heal their wounds.

No sooner had Shoghi Effendi got national bodies properly elected and functioning—in those countries where such a step was possible—than he set about putting these bodies on an unequivocal, clear legal basis. Through his encouragement one of the great milestones in Bahá’í history was set up, in 1927, five years after he had begun to function as Guardian of the Faith. That milestone was no less than “the drafting and adoption of a Bahá’í National constitution, first framed and promulgated by the elected representatives of the American Bahá’í Community”. He has described this as the initial step in “the unification of the Bahá’í World Community and the consolidation of its Administrative Order” and said it was “a worthy and faithful exposition of the constitutional basis of Bahá’í Communities in every land, foreshadowing the final emergence of the World Bahá’í Commonwealth of the future.”

This document became the “charter” for all National Assemblies, was translated into such major languages in use throughout the Bahá’í world as Persian, Arabic, French, German and Spanish, and its provisions—based on those guiding lines Shoghi Effendi himself had been providing in his interpretive writings on the teachings of the Faith and the, as he described it, “complete system of world administration implicit in the teachings of Bahá’u’lláh”—were summarized by him in the following words: “The text of this National constitution comprises a Declaration of Trust, whose articles set forth the character and objects of the national Bahá’í community, establish the functions, designate the central office, and describe the official seal, of the body of its elected representatives, as well as a set of by-laws which define the status, the mode of election, the powers and duties of both local and national Assemblies, describe the relation of the National Assembly to the International House of Justice as well as to local Assemblies and individual believers, outline the rights and obligations of the National Convention and its relation to the National Assembly, disclose the character of Bahá’í elections, and lay down the requirements of voting membership in all Bahá’í communities.”

The drafting of the By-Laws of the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the City of New York, in 1931, was likewise another great step forward in the evolution of the Administrative Order and was followed, a year later, by the legal incorporation of that Assembly in the State of New York. Of these by-laws Shoghi Effendi wrote that they would “serve as a pattern for every Bahá'í local Assembly in America and a model for every local community throughout the Bahá'í world.”

The formulation of this prototype for all National Bahá'í constitutions, as well as the framing of by-laws suitable for any local Spiritual Assembly, laid a firm basis on which both national and local Bahá'í Assemblies could obtain incorporation or registration, according to the law of the country in which they functioned, and thus hold legal title to such endowments of the Faith as land, national and local headquarters, historic sites and, in some cases, Bahá'í Houses of Worship—steps to which Shoghi Effendi attached the utmost importance. During 1928 the Guardian began to urge the oriental National Assemblies to form their national constitutions, patterned on the American one, and in addition to seek recognition as religious courts empowered to administer the Bahá'í laws on matters of personal status, such as marriage, divorce, inheritance and so on, which in many Islamic countries do not come within the jurisdiction of the usual civil courts.

All this primarily involved the battle of an independent Faith to obtain full recognition of its position in history and to be treated on an equal footing with other world religions. In the constant process of orienting the destinies of individual Bahá'í communities towards their common goal of becoming a completely unified international body, directed from a World Centre and labouring to achieve no less than the universal brotherhood of man, world peace and eventually a world commonwealth of nations, Shoghi Effendi seized upon the formation of the United Nations as a further means of hastening the attainment of this supreme objective.

As soon as it became apparent that the framework of this international body permitted non-governmental organizations to send their accredited representatives to various conferences convened under its auspices, Shoghi Effendi urged what was then the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada to apply for this status, which was obtained by that body in 1947. At the time it made its application, it submitted a Bahá'í Declaration of Human Obligations and Rights as well as a Bahá'í Statement on the Rights of Women. A Bahá'í United Nations Committee was appointed and a Bahá'í observer attended United Nations sessions. As this status was very limited in scope, ways and means were found by which it could be enlarged. This was achieved during the winter of 1947-8 through seven National Spiritual Assemblies' authorizing the American national body to act on their behalf as their representative under the title “Bahá'í International Community”, duly recognized as an international organization accredited to the United Nations, a status that both enhanced the prestige of the Faith and increased the privileges of the official Bahá'í representatives who regularly attended and took part in various United Nations conferences of a type open to those enjoying such status. As new National Spiritual Assemblies were formed, these too joined in and reinforced the organization representing the Bahá'í world.

The importance Shoghi Effendi attached to this tie linking the Cause with the greatest international instrument ever forged in human history is reflected in his own words: “It marks an important step forward in the struggle of our beloved Faith to receive in the eyes of the world its just due, and be recognized as an independent World Religion. Indeed, this step should have a favourable reaction on the progress of the Cause everywhere, especially in those parts of the world where it is still persecuted, belittled, or scorned, particularly in the East.” At the time of the intense wave of persecution that swept over the Bahá'í Community of Persia in 1955, the carefully established and fostered relationship with the United Nations bore fruit; in consequence of the detailed documentation of the injuries and atrocities the followers of Bahá'u'lláh in His native land had been made to

suffer, which was submitted to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, a commission was appointed by him, headed by the High Commissioner for Refugees, and instructed to contact the Persian Government and obtain formal assurance from it that the rights of the Bahá'í minority would be safeguarded. So much importance did the Guardian attach to this relationship that one of the twenty-seven listed objectives of the Ten Year International Teaching and Consolidation Plan—the World Crusade—was the “Reinforcement of the ties binding the Bahá'í World Community to the United Nations.”

The history of the Cause, Shoghi Effendi wrote, “if read aright, may be said to resolve itself into a series of pulsations, of alternating crises and triumphs, leading it ever nearer to its divinely appointed destiny.” Although the passing of the Central Figure of the Faith—whether it was the Báb, Bahá'u'lláh or ‘Abdu'l-Bahá—had inevitably precipitated a crisis, the majority of such shocks which impelled it forward were the result of the persecutions it suffered, usually, though not exclusively, at the hands of its inveterate enemies, the Muslim ecclesiastics. During the thirty-six years of Shoghi Effendi's ministry there were repeated and violent outbreaks, locally and on a national scale, of a most brutal and bloodthirsty nature, against the followers of the Faith in Persia; its adherents in Turkey were suppressed, persecuted and falsely accused; its followers in Egypt were subjected to attacks upon their persons, their properties, their cemeteries and their legal rights; its adherents in Russia had their Assemblies dissolved, their Temple confiscated and were themselves, for the most part, either deported or exiled; the Bahá'í Community in Germany was officially dissolved and its activities forbidden in June 1937, its national archives were confiscated, some of its members interrogated and even placed under arrest.

Such events caused the Guardian keen distress, took up a great deal of his time and added to the burdens of an already overburdened heart and mind. The major problem, however, was always Persia, where a “long-abused, down-trodden, sorely-tried community” perpetually struggled for its very existence in the face of continual persecution. This “dearly-beloved” Community—as he so lovingly and repeatedly referred to it—preoccupied him from the earliest to the latest days of his ministry. A steady flow of communications from him poured out to its members and its elected national body, and in his communications to the Bahá'ís of the West it was the frequent subject of his solicitude, his appeals for assistance in defending it and his explanations of why this Community—which he said had led the Heroic Age of the Faith—was so bitterly set upon by the people of its native land.

The fact that the Supreme Manifestation of God appeared in Persia and that it is therefore the much-loved “Cradle of our Faith and the object of our tenderest affections”, as Shoghi Effendi said; the fact that, as he also wrote, the time will come “which is to witness the spiritual and material ascendancy of Persia among all the nations of the world”, does not mean that at the present time the national character is so changed as to promise the speedy fulfilment of this prophecy. “Only a close and unbiased observer”, he wrote, in one of his general letters, “of the manners and habits of the Persian people . . . can truly estimate the immensity of the task that faces every conscientious believer in that land” due to “the prevailing tendencies of different sections of the population”, such as their apathy, indolence, absence of a sense of public duty and loyalty to principle, lack of concerted effort and constancy in action, and their habit of secrecy and blind surrender to an ignorant and fanatical clergy. As Bahá'u'lláh's Message must change the entire world it must likewise change His native land, which, when it comes under His shadow, has such a great destiny before it.

There was a time, as indicated in his letters, when Shoghi Effendi hoped the founder of the new Pahlavi dynasty—who was introducing many much-needed reforms—would speedily usher in a new phase in the development of Bahá'u'lláh's Faith in that country. In 1929 Shoghi Effendi had written that the believers there were “tasting the first-fruits of their long-dreamed emancipation”. It was in view of this process of reform now taking place

that he had advised the National Assembly to press for permission to print books and establish a Bahá'í Publishing Trust. This having been refused, we find him cabling America in January 1932: "Urge transmit promptly through Teheran Assembly two written communications Persian Government and Shah expressing behalf American believers lively appreciation recent beneficial internal reforms, emphasizing spiritual ties binding two countries and earnestly pleading removal ban entry Bahá'í literature stressing their high moral value with particular reference to Nabils and Bahá'í World." Shoghi Effendi's hopes, however, were short-lived; the reforms were not big enough to include a bitterly hated community and this request too was refused. Determined not to give in without a real struggle, the Guardian cabled America five months later: "Urge address promptly written petition on behalf American believers to Shah introducing Ransom-Kehler as chosen representative empowered appeal for entry Bahá'í literature Persia. Stress widespread appreciation internal reforms and spiritual ties binding both countries emphasize high tribute paid in Bahá'í writings to Islam and their moral value to Persia. Mail petition Persian National Assembly."

This case provides us with an excellent example of how the Guardian seized upon any tool that came to his hand and used it for the service of the interests of the Faith. Mrs Keith Ransom-Kehler, an American believer and a woman of outstanding ability and character, had arrived in Haifa as a pilgrim and Shoghi Effendi determined to send her to Persia. She had been, before becoming a Bahá'í, a minister of a Christian Church and was a fiery and able speaker. He kept her many weeks in Haifa, briefing her on Persia and what he hoped she could do there to assist in winning greater freedom for the Faith and at least a measure of recognition. Although the mission entrusted to her failed of its purpose, as the Shah refused to receive Mrs Ransom-Kehler, nevertheless the visit of this emissary of the Guardian had an historic effect on the Persian Bahá'í Community for she had been steeped in his instructions regarding the development of the Administrative Order there and was able to stir a frequently intimidated, always down-trodden and sometimes apathetic community into a new awareness of the mission awaiting it in the future, and the urgency of the immediate duties that lay before it. But, as in the case of Dr Esslemont, this newly taken-up instrument was wrenched from the Guardian's hand. On 28 October 1933 he cabled America: "Keith's precious life offered up sacrifice beloved Cause in Bahá'u'lláh's native land. On Persian soil for Persia's sake she encountered challenged and fought forces of darkness with high distinction indomitable will unswerving exemplary loyalty. Mass of her helpless Persian brethren mourn sudden loss their valiant emancipator American believers grateful and proud memory their first and distinguished martyr. Sorrow stricken I lament earthly separation invaluable collaborator unfailing counsellor esteemed and faithful friend. Urge local Assemblies befittingly organize memorial gatherings in memory one whose international services entitle her eminent rank among Hands of Cause of Bahá'u'lláh". Persia's great loss in this death had become America's great gain.

The worthiness of Shoghi Effendi's emissary for the posthumous honours he so generously heaped upon her is amply reflected in her own words, written in Persia at a time when she felt keenly the failure of her primary mission: "I have fallen, though I never faltered. Months of effort with nothing accomplished is the record that confronts me. If anyone in future should be interested in this thwarted adventure of mine, he alone can say whether near or far from the seemingly impregnable heights of complaisance and indifference, my tired old body fell. The smoke and din of battle are to-day too dense for me to ascertain whether I moved forward or was slain in my tracks. Nothing in the world is meaningless, suffering least of all. Sacrifice with its attendant agony is a germ, an organism. Man cannot blight its fruition as he can the seeds of earth. Once sown it blooms, I think forever, in the sweet fields of eternity. Mine will be a very modest flower, perhaps like the single tiny forget-me-not, watered by the blood of Quddus, that I plucked in the Sabz-i-Maydan of Barfurush; should it ever catch the eye, may one who seems to be struggling in vain garner it in the name of Shoghi Effendi and cherish it for his dear remembrance."

In December 1934 Shoghi Effendi wired the Persian National Assembly: “Has Tarbiyat School been permanently closed enquire and wire”. The background of this question is reflected in the answer of that Assembly to the Guardian: “Pursuant to your request on day Báb’s Martyrdom both Tarbiyat Schools Teheran were closed therefore Ministry Education obliged close both schools and asked why we did not dissimulate . . .” This case might be cited as a classic example of the struggle of the Persian Bahá’ís—constantly spurred on and guided by Shoghi Effendi—to obtain at least a reasonable measure of liberty in following their own religion, which numerically was, after Islam, the largest in the country. The Tarbiyat boys’ and girls’ School, owned and managed entirely by the Bahá’ís, had been in existence for thirty-six years. Founded in 1898, in the days of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, it had been a project dear to His heart; it had always had an excellent reputation, and although its pupils were mainly Bahá’í, children of all denominations attended it. The School had always closed on the nine Bahá’í Holy Days but now, on the flimsy pretext that the Bahá’ís belonged to a denomination not officially recognized in Persia, the Ministry of Education had suddenly required the School to remain open on these days. This meant a retreat instead of an advance in the battle for emancipation the Cause was struggling so desperately to win and Shoghi Effendi flatly refused, ordering the Assembly to close the School on the anniversary of the Báb’s Martyrdom. As he was neither willing to advise the believers to dissimulate their Faith, nor to keep the School open on Bahá’í Holy Days, and the Government refused to change its orders, the Tarbiyat School, one of the best in Persia, was closed and remains closed to the present day.

In announcing this bad news, the day after he received his answer from Tehran, to the Bahá’ís in that land where they enjoyed the greatest degree of freedom throughout the entire world, the anger of the Guardian is reflected in every word as he pours out the list of indignities and sufferings to which the Bahá’ís of Persia are being subjected: “Information just received indicates deliberate efforts undermine all Bahá’í institutions in Persia. Schools in Kashan, Qazvin, Sultanabad closed. In several leading centres including Qazvin Kirmanshah orders issued suspend teaching activities, prohibit gatherings, close Bahá’í Hall, deny right burial in Bahá’í cemeteries. Bahá’ís of Teheran compelled under penalty imprisonment register themselves Moslems in identity papers. Elated clergy inciting population. National Teheran Assembly’s petitions to Shah undelivered rejected. Impress Persian Minister gravity intolerable situation”.

In face of these wholly unwarranted blows received at a time when it could logically be expected that the more liberal policy affecting the entire country would be stretched to include the members of a Faith that since the days of Darius and his successors constituted that nation’s only serious claim to fame—at such a time the Persian Bahá’ís were able to hold a Convention whose delegates were sufficiently representative of the Bahá’í Community within that country to elect a National Assembly that Shoghi Effendi officially lists in his statistical pamphlets as having been formed in 1934; already in 1927, what he had termed “their first historic representative conference of various delegates” had been held and plans made for the holding of future annual gatherings of this nature, and in 1928 he had begun to call the assemblies elected at these gatherings the National Spiritual Assembly of Persia. One of the main reasons for this long-delayed proper election, “modelled”, as he wrote, “after the method pursued by their brethren in the United States and Canada”, was that the Assembly had been unable to carry out his instructions that a carefully compiled list of all believers in the country was a prerequisite to the proper administrative procedure involved in the formation of a national body.

During 1931 Shoghi Effendi had instructed Persia to buy a piece of land for her future Mashriqu’l-Adhkár and to start building a Hazíratu’l-Quds in Tehran. It was no doubt partly due to these assertions of its right to exist as a recognized community that an irate government had, far from recognizing it, stiffened in its determination to deny its existence in spite of the great lengths to which the Guardian and the Community went in a reasonable effort not to provoke the authorities or the people unnecessarily. An example of this moderation is his instruction

to the Bahá'í women not to take the lead in the new emancipation of women the Shah had set in motion—an emancipation which involved abandoning the veil and was entirely in keeping with the teachings of both the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh—lest it precipitate new troubles.

The situation of the Bahá'ís in the East and particularly Persia is never really quiet, is always precariously balanced, ever ready to flare up into a violent and all-too-frequently bloody outbreak of persecution. Repeatedly there were isolated cases of Bahá'ís being killed—some of whom the Guardian mentioned as martyrs; constantly there was a temperature of persecution, sometimes hotter here and sometimes hotter there, but always present. To all the vicissitudes afflicting the Persian friends the Guardian responded with loving messages, with sums of money for relief, and instructions, usually to the American National Assembly, to intervene on their behalf and solicit justice in their cause. Such communications as the following were not infrequent and reflect the spirit of these messages: “advise . . . hold special devotional gatherings Temple auditorium supplicate assistance invisible hosts Abhá Kingdom emancipation long suffering brethren Bahá'u'lláh's native land. May America's incessant strivings redoubled exertions compensate enforced inactivity so large a section organized body of His followers”.

The worst crisis, however, which the Persian Bahá'í Community experienced in the thirty-six years of the Guardian's ministry, arose in 1955, when, as he cabled, a sudden deterioration took place in the affairs of this largest community in the Bahá'í world. In a long cable, dated 23 August, he reported to the Hands and National Assemblies what had been taking place: following the seizure by the authorities of the National Headquarters of the Persian believers in Tehran and the destruction of its large ornamental dome (a destruction during which one of the country's leading divines and a general of its army themselves took up pickaxes and went to work), local Bahá'í administrative headquarters all over Persia were seized and occupied, the Parliament of the country outlawed the Faith, a virulent press and radio campaign was started, distorting its history, calumniating its Founders, misrepresenting its teachings, and obscuring its aims and purposes—following all this a series of atrocities was perpetrated against the members of this sorely-tried community throughout the entire country. In his summary of the terrible damage done and the “barbarous acts” committed, he cited such events as: the desecration of the House of the Báb in Shiraz, the foremost Shrine of the Faith in Persia, which had been severely damaged; the occupation of the ancestral home of Bahá'u'lláh; the pillaging of shops and farms owned by the believers and the looting of their homes, destruction of their livestock, burning of their crops and digging up and desecration of the Bahá'í dead in their cemeteries; adults were beaten; young women abducted and forced into marriage with Muslims; children were mocked, reviled and expelled from schools as well as being beaten; tradesmen boycotted Bahá'ís and refused to sell them food; a girl of fifteen was raped; an eleven-month-old baby was trampled underfoot; pressure was brought on believers to recant their Faith. More recently, he went on to say, a mob two thousand strong had hacked to pieces with spades and axes a family of seven—the oldest eighty and the youngest nineteen—to the sound of music and drums.

The Bahá'ís, at the instruction of their Guardian, had already, through the intermediary of telegrams and letters to the authorities in Persia from over one thousand groups and Assemblies throughout the world, protested against such unjust and lawless acts committed against their law-abiding brethren. In addition all National Assemblies had addressed letters to the Shah, the Government and the Parliament protesting against this unwarranted persecution of a harmless community on purely religious grounds. As all this brought forth no acknowledgement whatsoever from official quarters, the Guardian instructed the International Bahá'í Community, accredited as a Non-Governmental Organization to the United Nations, to take the question to that body in Geneva, he himself nominating those whom he wished to act as representatives of the Community on this important occasion. Copies of the Bahá'í appeal were delivered to representatives of the member nations of the Social and Economic Council and the Director of the Human Rights Division, as well as to certain specialized agencies of the Non-

Governmental Organizations enjoying consultative status. The President of the United States was likewise appealed to by the American National Assembly and by all groups and local Assemblies in that country to intervene on behalf of their oppressed sister community in Persia.

This was the first time in its history that an attacked Faith was able to fight back with weapons that possessed some strength to defend it. The significance of this was clearly brought out by Shoghi Effendi. Whatever the outcome of these “heart-rending” events might be, one fact had clearly emerged: God’s infant Faith, which had during the twenty-five years following the Ascension of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá provided itself with the machinery of its divinely appointed Administrative Order, and subsequently utilized its newly born administrative agencies to systematically propagate that Faith through a series of national plans that had culminated in the World Crusade, was now, in the wake of this ordeal convulsing the overwhelming majority of its followers, emerging from obscurity. The world-wide reverberations of these events would be hailed by posterity as the “mighty blast of God’s trumpet” which, through the instrumentality of the “oldest, most redoubtable, most vicious, most fanatical adversaries” of the Cause must awaken governments and heads of government, in both the East and West, to the existence and the implications of this Faith. So stormy were the circumstances surrounding these events in Persia and so impressive their repercussions abroad that the Guardian stated they were bound to pave the way for the emancipation of the Faith from the fetters of orthodoxy in Islamic countries as well as for the ultimate recognition in His own homeland of the independent character of the Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh.

In view of the great sufferings and pitiful condition of the Persian believers, Shoghi Effendi inaugurated an “Aid the Persecuted” Fund and opened it by himself contributing the equivalent of eighteen thousand dollars for “this noble purpose”. Not content with this evidence of Bahá’í solidarity, he called for the construction in Kampala, in the heart of Africa, of the “Mother Temple” of that continent as a “supreme consolation” to the “oppressed masses” of our “valiant brethren” in the Cradle of the Faith. He struck back at the forces of darkness swarming over the oldest bastion of that Faith in the world, with the greatest weapons at his disposal—the forces of creative progress, enlightenment and faith.

It is hard to realize that one man, all alone in his solitude in Switzerland, with no advisers surrounding him to assist or comfort him at such a time, bore the shock of this violent wave of attacks that broke so suddenly on Persia in 1955; that all alone he devised his strategy, cabled his adjutants—the various National Assemblies—what action they should take, appointed those who were to represent the interests of the Faith to the highest international body ever devised by man—the United Nations—comforted the down-trodden, raised money for their succour, hurled his spears left and right in their defence.

Turning to the question of the liquidation of the Faith in Russia we must remember that one of the earliest Bahá’í communities in the world had existed there, in the Caucasus and Turkistan, from the end of the last century, where many Persians had found a welcome refuge from the persecutions to which they were so constantly subjected in their native land. They had established themselves in a number of towns, particularly in Ishqabad, where they had erected the first Temple of the entire Bahá’í world and opened schools for the Bahá’í children which remained in existence for over thirty years. Their affairs were well organized. They had, in 1928, a number of Spiritual Assemblies (including one in Moscow) and two central Assemblies had, pending the holding of proper, representative national elections, administered their affairs, appearing on lists published in the United States as the National Assemblies of the Caucasus and of Turkistan. In a letter addressed in September 1927 to the Local Spiritual Assembly of Ishqabad, Shoghi Effendi instructed them to gradually prepare for delegates from all Assemblies in Turkistan to meet in Ishqabad and hold the election of their National Assembly. On 22 June 1928 Shoghi Effendi received a cable from the Ishqabad Assembly as follows: “In accordance general

agreement 1917 Soviet Government has nationalized all Temples but under special conditions has provided free rental to respective religious communities. Regarding Mashriqu'l-Adhkár government has provided same conditions agreement to Assembly. Supplicate guidance by telegram". The Guardian took immediate action, cabling the Moscow Assembly to "Intercede energetically authorities prevent expropriation Mashriqu'l-Adhkár. Enquire particulars Ishqabad . . ." and to Ishqabad to "refer Moscow Assembly address petition authorities behalf all Bahá'ís Russia. Act firmly assure you prayers".

In recalling the events which transpired in Russia, a sharp distinction must be made—one which the Guardian himself recognized—between the hardships to which the Russian believers were subjected and the persecutions the Bahá'ís underwent in Persia. In Persia the believers were, and still are, singled out as victims of every form of injustice because they are followers of Bahá'u'lláh; in Russia the situation was entirely different. The Bahá'ís were not discriminated against because they were Bahá'ís but suffered from a policy which the government pursued against all religious communities.

In September 1928, in a letter to Martha Root, Shoghi Effendi indicates not only what had been going on in Russia but how it had affected him personally: "It has been a very depressing summer this year for me as the condition of the Cause in Russia is going from bad to worse. The Mashriqu'l-Adhkár has been appropriated by the State, closed and sealed. A very large sum is required from the friends if rented to them, otherwise they threaten to sell it to others in parts. The situation is very critical and many families have migrated to Persia. Meetings are suspended, Assemblies dissolved, heavy restrictions and penalties imposed . . . this and other happenings have made me feel very down-hearted and sad." The return to Persia of Bahá'ís from Russia was a move he did not approve of at all. He informed the Ishqabad Assembly that "departure friends Iran exceedingly harmful" and said they should change their Persian citizenship to Russian citizenship if necessary. He had already urged the Bahá'í immigrants in Russia to learn the language and translate Bahá'í literature into it. In 1929 he wrote to the Persian National Assembly that the Ishqabad believers should remain there and not disperse but wait for the evil clouds of injustice to pass and the sun of justice to come out.

In all persecutions, how much is exacerbated by the unwisdom of the persecuted themselves, interacting on the unwisdom of subordinates carrying out the instructions of superiors—who may or may not be ill disposed—is a mystery we are not likely ever to solve in this world. It does not seem unreasonable to suppose, however, that at least some of our misfortunes we amplify by our own acts.

What had transpired in Russia, Shoghi Effendi wrote in a long letter to the Bahá'ís of the West, on 1 January 1929, was that the Russian Bahá'ís had at last been brought under the "rigid application of the principles already enunciated by the state authorities and universally enforced with regard to all other religious communities"; the Bahá'ís "as befits their position as loyal and law-abiding citizens" had obeyed the "measures which the State, in the free exercise of its legitimate rights, has chosen to enforce". The measures which the authorities had taken "Faithful to their policy of expropriating in the interests of the State all edifices and monuments of a religious character" had led them to expropriate and assume the ownership and control over "that most cherished and universally prized Bahá'í possession, the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár of Ishqabad." In addition to this, "state orders, orally and in writing," had "been officially communicated to the Bahá'í Assemblies and individual believers, suspending all meetings . . . suppressing the committees of all Bahá'í local and national Spiritual Assemblies, prohibiting the raising of funds . . . requiring the right of full and frequent inspection of the deliberations . . . of the Bahá'í Assemblies . . . imposing a strict censorship on all correspondence to and from Bahá'í Assemblies . . . suspending all Bahá'í periodicals . . . and requiring the deportation of leading personalities in the Cause whether as public teachers and speakers or officers of Bahá'í Assemblies. To all

these”, Shoghi Effendi stated, “the followers of the Faith of Bahá’u’lláh have with feelings of burning agony and heroic fortitude unanimously and unreservedly submitted, ever mindful of the guiding principles of Bahá’í conduct that in connection with their administrative activities, no matter how grievously interference with them might affect the course of the extension of the Movement, and the suspension of which does not constitute in itself a departure from the principle of loyalty to their Faith, the considered judgment and authoritative decrees issued by their responsible rulers must, if they be faithful to Bahá’u’lláh’s and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s express injunctions, be thoroughly respected and loyally obeyed.” He went on to say that after the Bahá’ís in Turkistan and the Caucasus had unsuccessfully exhausted every legitimate means for the alleviation of these restrictions imposed upon them, they had resolved to “conscientiously carry out the considered judgment of their recognized government” and “with a hope that no earthly power can dim . . . committed the interests of their Cause to the keeping of that vigilant, that all-powerful Divine Deliverer . . .”

Shoghi Effendi assured the Bahá’ís in this message that if he deemed it expedient to call upon the Bahá’í world to intervene at a later stage he would do so. In April 1930 he felt the time had come for this; the precious Temple, which the Bahá’ís had succeeded in renting from the authorities after its confiscation, was now placed in danger of passing once for all from their hands through a series of further and harsher measures imposed upon the friends. He therefore cabled the American National Assembly: “. . . prompt action required. Stress international character Temple . . .” In his previous long letter he had already outlined the approach that should be made, when and if the time came for the believers abroad to raise their voices in protest and explanation: national as well as local Assemblies, East and West, in a gesture of Bahá’í solidarity, would call the attention of the Russian officials not only to their refutation of any implication of a political design or ulterior motive which might have been falsely imputed to their brethren in that land, but to the “humanitarian and spiritual nature of the work in which Bahá’ís in every land and of every race are unitedly engaged” and to the international character of that Edifice which had the distinction of being Bahá’u’lláh’s first Universal House of Worship, whose design ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had Himself conceived and which had been constructed under His direction and supported by the collective contributions of believers throughout the world.

But when the die was finally cast, Shoghi Effendi cabled the Ishqabad Assembly to “abide by decision State Authorities”. A case such as this, involving the first of the two Bahá’í Temples erected under the aegis of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, cannot but constitute a guiding pattern for Bahá’í Assemblies to follow throughout all time and furnish a well of information to the individual believer on his duty towards his government, whatever the nature of that government may be.

Two other countries, Turkey and Egypt, formed with Russia, Persia and Germany the scene of serious repressive and restrictive measures imposed on the Faith during the lifetime of the Guardian. In Turkey, which ever since the downfall of the Caliphate had been the subject, as Shoghi Effendi wrote, of “an uncompromising policy aiming at the secularization of the State and the disestablishment of Islam”, great civil reforms had taken place, reforms with which incidentally the Bahá’ís were wholly in sympathy. The troubles which arose there were therefore not based on religious prejudice but were rather brought about by the fact that the new regime had in the past discovered that so-called religious groups in Turkey had provided cover for political agitation and when its agents found the Bahá’í Community was organized and was pursuing its activities openly, teaching and spreading the Faith, they became suspicious and alarmed, searched many of the believers’ homes, seized any literature they found, severely cross-examined some of them and put a good number in prison. The case brought a great deal of publicity to the Faith, to some extent abroad, but mostly in the Turkish press, which reacted in favour of the Bahá’ís and ensured for them, when it came before the Criminal Tribunal on 13 December 1928, a full and impartial hearing. It marked a new departure in the unfoldment of the Cause: “never before in Bahá’í

history”, Shoghi Effendi wrote, “have the followers of Bahá’u’lláh been called upon by the officials of a state . . . to unfold the history and principles of their Faith . . .”

It is interesting to note that in the papers seized by the authorities from the Assembly of Constantinople (the city now known as Istanbul), one of Queen Marie’s tributes to the Faith was found and its implications were not lost upon the examining judges. The President of the Constantinople Bahá’í Spiritual Assembly, in giving his testimony before the court, exposed in a most brilliant manner the tenets of the Faith and included this pointed quotation from Bahá’u’lláh’s own words: “*Before Justice, tell the Truth and fear nothing.*” The conclusion of this entire episode was that the Bahá’ís had to pay a fine for having infringed the law that all associations should be registered with the government and due authorization to hold public meetings be obtained, but its results were of great significance to the Faith, not only locally but abroad. The verdict of the Court was summarized by Shoghi Effendi in a general letter to the Bahá’ís of the West, written on 12 February 1929: “As to the verdict . . . it is stated clearly that although the followers of Bahá’u’lláh, in their innocent conception of the spiritual character of their Faith, found it unnecessary to apply for leave for the conduct of their administrative activities and have thus been made liable to the payment of a fine, yet they have, to the satisfaction of the legal representatives of the State, not only established the inculpability of the Cause of Bahá’u’lláh, but have also worthily acquitted themselves of the task of vindicating its independence, its Divine origin, and its suitability to the circumstances and requirements of the present age.”

Although this was the first major episode involving the Bahá’ís with the new State that had evolved in Turkey after the downfall of the Caliphate, it was not to be the last. The secular powers were constantly on their guard against reactionary forces in the State and, as the official memory was short, in 1933 there was a recrudescence of the same suspicions and accusations that had brought about the case in 1928. On 27 January we find Shoghi Effendi cabling the American National Assembly: “Bahá’ís Constantinople and Adana numbering about forty imprisoned charged subversive motives. Urge induce Turkish Minister Washington make immediate representations his government release law-abiding followers non-political Faith. Advise also National Assembly cable authorities Angora and approach State Department”. At the same time he wired the Persian National Assembly: “Urge immediate representations Turkish Ambassador behalf imprisoned Bahá’ís Stamboul and Adana charged political motives”. The next day he wired a prominent Turk:

His Excellency Ismat Pasha
Ankara

As Head of Bahá’í Faith learned with amazement and grief imprisonment followers of Bahá’u’lláh in Stamboul and Adana. Respectfully appeal Your Excellency’s intervention on behalf followers of a Faith pledged loyalty to your government for whose epochal reforms its adherents world over cherish abiding admiration.

The Bahá’ís, familiar with the whole situation through the detailed letters the Guardian had written at the time of the previous case, immediately took action and their representations to the Turkish authorities, as well, no doubt, as moves made in Turkey to cite the verdict the Criminal Court had given in the former case, secured, after many months of effort, the release and acquittal of the believers. On 5 March the Guardian informed the American Assembly: “Istanbul friends acquitted 53 still imprisoned Adana urge renew energetically representations immediate release”, and on 2 April he cabled them: “Adana friends released. Advise convey appreciation Turkish Ambassador”.

When we recall that this latest case in Turkey was taking place at the same time that Shoghi Effendi was struggling to obtain some rights for the Faith in Persia—during Mrs Keith Ransom-Kehler’s sojourn in that country—we get a faint idea of the number and nature of the problems he was so constantly called upon to deal with. In spite of a regular recrudescence of suspicion on the part of the Turkish authorities, the Guardian was able to lay, during his own lifetime, sufficiently strong foundations in the Bahá’í community of that country for it to elect after his passing, in fulfilment of one of his goals of the Ten Year Plan, its own independent National Spiritual Assembly.

In Egypt, one of the earliest countries to receive, during His own days, the Light of Bahá’u’lláh’s Revelation, events transpired, three years before the first court case of the believers in Turkey took place, to which the Guardian attached supreme significance. Beginning by a fierce attack on a small band of Bahá’ís in an obscure village of Upper Egypt, it ended in being the “first step”, Shoghi Effendi said, in “the eventual universal acceptance of the Bahá’í Faith, as one of the independent recognized religious systems of the world”. The laws of personal status in almost all Islamic countries are administered by religious courts; when the Bahá’ís of that village formed their Spiritual Assembly, the headman, inflamed by religious fanaticism, began to stir up feeling against three married men who had become Bahá’ís; through legal channels a demand was made that their Muhammadan wives divorce them on the grounds that they were now married to heretics. The case went to the Appellate religious court of Beba, which delivered its Judgement on 10 May 1925, in which it strongly condemned the heretics for violating the laws and ordinances of Islam and annulled the marriages. This in itself was a significant move but what the Guardian attached the most importance to was that “It even went so far as to make the positive, the startling and indeed the historic assertion that the Faith embraced by these heretics is to be regarded as a distinct religion, wholly independent of the religious systems that have preceded it”. In his résumé of that verdict Shoghi Effendi quoted the actual words of the Judgement, of such immense historic importance to the Bahá’ís:

The Bahá’í Faith is a new religion, entirely independent, with beliefs, principles and laws of its own, which differ from, and are utterly in conflict with, the beliefs, principles and laws of Islam. No Bahá’í, therefore, can be regarded a Muslim or vice-versa, even as no Buddhist, Brahmin, or Christian can be regarded a Muslim or vice-versa.

Even if this verdict had remained an isolated phenomenon in an obscure local court of Egypt it would have been an invaluable weapon in the hands of the believers all over the world who were seeking to assert just that independence so clearly enunciated in this Judgement. But it did not rest there; it was subsequently sanctioned and upheld by the highest ecclesiastical authorities in Cairo, and printed and circulated by the Muslims themselves.

The Guardian, who was ever ready to seize upon the most insignificant and flimsy tools—from human beings to pieces of paper—and wield them as weapons in his battle to secure the recognition and emancipation of the Faith, grasped this sharp new sword placed in his hands by the enemies of the Faith themselves and went on striking with it until the end of his life. It was, he stated, the first Charter of the emancipation of the Cause from the fetters of Islam. In the East the Bahá’ís used it, under his astute guidance, as a lever to win for them a reluctant admission that the Faith was not a heresy inside Islam, and in the West to assert its disavowal of that same accusation. It was even cited, at the time Shoghi Effendi made strong representations to the Israeli Minister for Religious Affairs, as a reason for his insistence that the affairs of the Bahá’í Community should not be handled by the same department head who was responsible for the Muslim Community in Israel, pointing out that this created the impression we were a branch of Islam, and stating he preferred to have Bahá’í matters placed

under the jurisdiction of the head of the Christian Department as in this way there could be no ambiguity as regards the independent status of the Bahá'í Faith. It was as a result of such arguments as these that the Ministry for Religious Affairs set up a Bahá'í Department with a head of its own.

With the powerful lever of the Beba Court's Judgement the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Egypt fought, over a period of years, to obtain for its Community at least a modicum of recognition of its independent religious status. To facilitate this, the Assembly published a compilation of the Bahá'í laws related to matters of personal status and with the force of this document behind it, and using repeated incidents provoked by fanatical Muslims against the Bahá'ís, succeeded in obtaining from the Egyptian Government plots of land, officially granted to it in those cities where there was a relatively large group of believers, to be used as exclusively Bahá'í burial grounds.

This compilation of the laws regarding personal status was translated into Persian as well as English and used as a guide in the conduct of Bahá'í affairs in those countries which did not have civil laws covering such matters. Although certain concessions were won from the authorities in Muslim countries such as Egypt, Persia, Palestine and India as a result of this, the fact remained that the legal situation of the Bahá'ís, particularly in Egypt and Persia, was highly ambiguous and they often found themselves with no rights at all in certain respects, living in a kind of legal no-man's-land. This was particularly true of their marriages and divorces which were registered with their Assemblies, took place according to Bahá'í law, but were viewed as non-existent in the eyes of the government of their country. The fact that large communities of believers accepted this hardship proudly, refusing to be humiliated in the eyes of their derisive fellow-countrymen, and continue to this day the struggle for recognition in such fundamental matters, is the highest possible tribute to the spirit of faith the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh have engendered in their hearts, and to the loyalty with which they carried out the instructions of their beloved Guardian not to mind "any wave of unpopularity, of distrust or criticism, which a strict adherence to their standards might provoke."

In his recapitulation of those events which must ultimately lead to the recognition and emancipation of the Faith, Shoghi Effendi, in *God Passes By*, wrote these memorable words: "To all administrative regulations which the civil authorities have issued from time to time . . . the Bahá'í community, faithful to its sacred obligations towards its government, and conscious of its civic duties, has yielded, and will continue to yield implicit obedience . . . To such orders, however, as are tantamount to a recantation of their faith by its members, or constitute an act of disloyalty to its spiritual, its basic and God-given principles and precepts, it will stubbornly refuse to bow, preferring imprisonment, deportation and all manner of persecution, including death—as already suffered by the twenty thousand martyrs that have laid down their lives in the path of its Founders—rather than follow the dictates of a temporal authority requiring it to renounce its allegiance to its cause."

In Shoghi Effendi's administration of the affairs of the Faith there was a quality of rigidity in essentials and fluidity in non-essentials that must always characterize a truly great leader. Whereas in matters that are fundamental there can be no compromise, there can and should be, in administering the affairs of a world-wide community, recognition of the fact that people are in different stages of evolution. An example of the wisdom and skill of Shoghi Effendi is the way he treated different communities differently, never permitting any community—be it in one of the world's great and most sophisticated metropolises or in a village of illiterate peasants—to disregard the fundamental teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, but recognizing at the same time the fact that one does not require of a five-year-old child what one does of an adolescent or demand the same wisdom, obedience and experience in a young man of twenty-one that one expects from a person who has passed through three score years and ten in the school of life. It was because of this understanding of the different stages of

inexperience or maturity, as the case might be, of the various Bahá'í communities that Shoghi Effendi treated the Persian Bahá'í Community—the oldest and most tried in the tests of any community in the world—with the greatest degree of severity, expecting its privileged believers to be an example under all circumstances of fidelity and obedience to the laws of Bahá'u'lláh. Because of this policy he not only assiduously prepared the North American Bahá'ís, constituting the oldest western community in the world, to follow the laws—few in number but essential—which he ultimately gave them but forbore with them through the many long years it took to educate them to the point where they would and could accept and apply those laws. It was in accordance with this understanding that he instructed those National Assemblies engaged in teaching the Faith in so many countries opened during the World Crusade—countries whose inhabitants had mostly come from pagan backgrounds—to require of the new adherents of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh a minimum knowledge of its teachings and laws before accepting them into the Community of the Most Great Name.

No better example of this differentiation in the stages of development that characterize different Bahá'í communities at the present time could be found than in the last letter Shoghi Effendi addressed to one of the great African Regional Assemblies. Dated 8 August 1957 (less than three months before he died), and written at the instruction of the Guardian himself, his secretary pointed out the very essence of his thoughts on such a supremely important subject at this stage in Bahá'í history:

“During Mrs. _____’s visit, the Guardian discussed with her the teaching work in _____ where there is such a response to the Message, and where the people in outlying districts seem to be eager to enroll. He feels that those responsible for accepting new believers should consider that the most important and fundamental qualification for acceptance is the recognition of the station of Bahá'u'lláh in this day on the part of the applicant. We cannot expect people who are illiterate (which is no reflection on their mental abilities or capacities) to have studied the Teachings, especially when so little literature is available in their own language in the first place, and grasp all their ramifications, the way an African, say in London, is expected to. The spirit of the person is the important thing, the recognition of Bahá'u'lláh and His position in the world in this day. The friends therefore must not be too strict, or they will find that the great wave of loving enthusiasm with which the African people have turned to the Faith, many of them already accepting it, cools off; and being very sensitive, they will feel in some subtle way that they are rebuffed, and the work will suffer.

“The purpose of the new National Assemblies in Africa, and the purpose of any administrative body, is to carry the Message to the people and enlist the sincere under the banner of this Faith.

“Your Assembly must never lose sight of this for a moment, and must go on courageously expanding the membership of the communities under your jurisdiction, and gradually educating the friends in both the Teachings and the Administration. Nothing could be more tragic than if the establishment of these great administrative bodies should stifle or bog down the teaching work. The early believers in both the East and the West, we must always remember, knew practically nothing compared to what the average Bahá'í knows about his Faith nowadays; yet they were the ones who shed their blood, the ones who arose and said: ‘I believe’, requiring no proof, and often never having read a single word of the Teachings. Therefore, those responsible for accepting new enrollments must just be sure of one thing—that the heart of the applicant has been touched with the spirit of the Faith. Everything else can be built on this foundation gradually.

“He hopes that during the coming year it will be increasingly possible for the African Bahá'í teachers to circulate amongst the newly-enrolled Bahá'ís and deepen their knowledge and understanding of the Teachings.”

The balanced judgement that was such a paramount quality of Shoghi Effendi's mind is nowhere better exemplified than in these instructions conveyed in that same letter:

"As regards the questions of tribal practice, the Guardian wishes you to be extremely forbearing and patient in weaning the Bahá'ís away from their old customs. This can only be done by taking each case individually as it comes up, using the greatest wisdom and kindness, and not trying rigorously to impose all Bahá'í laws in every detail at this time.

"Of course it is obvious that if a Bahá'í man already has one wife he cannot take another, no matter what the tribal law may be. Your Assembly should distinguish between this fundamental point and other phases of the tribal community life in which the new Bahá'í may still be deeply involved, and from which he cannot extract himself until the Bahá'í element in his community is strong enough to be a power in its own right.

"He agrees with the feeling of your Assembly that to start imposing the heavy sanction of depriving the friends of their voting rights is most unwise at the present time. The best policy is one of loving education."

What Shoghi Effendi made us understand is that the great tree of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh when first planted is a tiny seed—belief in Him. Gradually it will grow, like any living thing, bigger and bigger and become more and more mature. Shoghi Effendi conceived it his major task, pursuant to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's instructions in His Will, to promulgate the Faith throughout the entire planet and enlist under its banner all the peoples of the world; he realized the raw material must first be assembled from which could be shaped the future society of that world; although so many things were required to shape that future society and were admittedly essential prerequisites to its creation, the supreme fact remained that the masses must be first brought under the shadow of Bahá'u'lláh before His World Order would emerge in all its glory.

In North America, the Cradle of the Administrative Order of the Faith, the Guardian spent sixteen years in laying a firm foundation and creating a pattern for all Bahá'í administrative institutions. In our modern terminology he built a launching pad from which he could send off his rockets—the great teaching Plans that occupied so much of his time during the last two decades of his life. That "the administration of the Cause is to be conceived as an instrument and not a substitute for the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, that it should be regarded as a channel through which His promised blessings may flow, that it should guard against such rigidity as would clog and fetter the liberating forces released by His Revelation . . ." Shoghi Effendi made absolutely clear. "It is surely", he went on to say, "for those to whose hands so priceless a heritage has been committed to prayerfully watch lest the tool should supersede the Faith itself, lest undue concern for the minute details arising from the administration of the Cause obscure the vision of its promoters, lest partiality, ambition, and worldliness tend in the course of time to becloud the radiance, stain the purity, and impair the effectiveness of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh." Four years after he began his first correspondence with the Bahá'ís of the East and the West in January 1922, Shoghi Effendi had begun to stress this point, which he evidently viewed as a danger from the beginning to the end of his ministry. In January 1926 he wrote to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada that "As the administrative work of the Cause steadily expands, as its various branches grow in importance and number, it is absolutely necessary that we bear in mind this fundamental fact that all these administrative activities, however harmoniously and efficiently conducted, are but means to an end, and should be regarded as direct instruments for the propagation of the Bahá'í Faith. Let us take heed lest in our great concern for the perfection of the administrative machinery of the Cause, we lose sight of the Divine Purpose for which it has been created."

When the first Regional Assemblies were elected in Europe in 1957 as the intermediary bodies which would administer the affairs of some of the Ten Goal Countries of the second Seven Year Plan, pending the formation at a later date of independent National Assemblies, the Guardian wrote to each of these newly elected bodies a letter, stressing once again—as he had repeatedly done for years to all National Assemblies—this question of the administration being a means and not an end in itself. “The whole purpose of the Bahá’í administrative bodies at this time is to teach, to increase the membership, to increase the Assemblies and Groups” his secretary wrote on his behalf to one of these National Assemblies, and to another: “The fundamental purpose of the Bahá’í Administration at the present time is to teach the Faith. Administering it is only to coordinate its activities and to safeguard it. The friends must bear this clearly in mind; and he feels that he should point out to your Assembly, just embarking on its historic tasks, what he has many times pointed out to the old and tried national bodies, and that is that you should strenuously avoid introducing rules and regulations which will complicate the smooth working of the Faith in your region, handicap the Bahá’ís unnecessarily and confuse them. Short of the essentials, as already laid down in the teachings, and clearly available, the national bodies must try to do everything in their power to encourage the friends to teach individually, to serve actively, to open new centres, convert groups to Assemblies . . .”

After the first Seven Year Plan had been formulated and launched, the Guardian, always clear in his own mind as to what he was doing and how it must be done, in 1939 informed the North American Bahá’ís, who were the prosecutors of that Plan, that they were “promoting the growth and consolidation of that pioneer movement for which the entire machinery of their Administrative Order has been primarily designed and erected”.

Just as in the universe there are many galaxies in different stages of evolution, so in the global universe of God’s Cause different parts of the Bahá’í world were in different states of development. The communities of the Middle East were much farther advanced in applying the Bahá’í laws and ordinances in the lives of the believers that composed them, but they were neither emancipated, recognized nor free. The communities in the West, in the Americas, Europe and Australasia were free, but, because of their cultural past, and the fact that in their countries laws of personal status were administered by civil and not religious courts, were far behind the East in applying many of the laws of their Faith as well as in observing its ordinances. The new Bahá’ís in many of the world’s more backward countries were free in the sense of not being, like their brethren in the East, the victims of fanatical governments whose state religion was Islam, but were not always able to apply the Bahá’í laws because of the tribal societies in which many of them lived, and were also handicapped, at least temporarily, by the fact that the historical backgrounds from which they had sprung were so different in many respects from those of the peoples of Jewish, Christian and Muhammadan antecedents, whose common background was that from which the Bahá’í Faith itself had come. Because of these factors Shoghi Effendi, like the conductor of a great orchestra, made sure that each community within the Bahá’í world was playing its own notes in the symphony of the whole. Though the parts were different, each one had to follow the notes he had been given. Unless we grasp this picture of what our Bahá’í world is like at this present stage of its development, we will never be able to properly understand just what Shoghi Effendi did create, did accomplish, during his ministry and how thrilling his achievements are.

These different examples indicate that although mankind is one and the Faith is one, although its Administrative Order is one and its World Order will be one, the enforcement of the laws, ordinances and administrative procedures of the Cause must perforce progress at different rates of speed in different places. It took a long time for the Bahá’ís to reach the point, in the East and in the West, when they were sufficiently mature and had gained sufficient understanding of their Administrative Order for Shoghi Effendi to introduce, for example, the application of sanctions. He spent many years erecting, on the foundation already created by the Master, an

organized system in which a Bahá'í was clearly differentiated from a non-Bahá'í—through his beliefs, his privileges and his responsibilities—before he could take the step of devising a way to ensure that inside the Bahá'í communities the believers made reasonable effort to follow the Bahá'í teachings and that if they too flagrantly disregarded them, there was a means of punishment—a sanction—at hand to ensure they did not place in jeopardy the good name and independent character of the Faith and as a means of protecting the reputation of the community. This sanction was the removal of the administrative rights of a believer; it meant that he or she could no longer vote in Bahá'í elections, be elected to or appointed on Bahá'í Assemblies and committees, receive a Bahá'í marriage or divorce and attend those meetings where the Bahá'ís as a community were gathered. It is exceedingly interesting to note that when Shoghi Effendi inaugurated this sanction—which is the heaviest administrative punishment the Bahá'ís possess and should never be confused for a moment with Covenant-breaking and its attendant excommunication, which is isolation because of a spiritual disease—he made it abundantly clear to the National Assemblies that it must be used only as an extreme measure, be applied (in the West) only with the approval of the National Assembly itself, and only be invoked in extreme cases. In the East, where many laws of personal status were administered by Assemblies, it involved a number of the provisions of the Aqdas; in the West, where a different situation existed, it involved obedience to those laws the Guardian considered the Bahá'ís must now follow, such as obtaining the consent of both parents to marriage, having a Bahá'í marriage ceremony, and following the Bahá'í divorce laws. This sanction was also invoked in cases where Bahá'ís, completely disregarding the teachings of their Faith, entered into political matters, or in cases of what he carefully termed “flagrant immorality” which brought the whole community into disrepute, or for other serious breaches of what he called those “directing and regulating principles of Bahá'í belief” which “the upholders of the Cause . . . feel bound, as their Administrative Order expands and consolidates itself, to assert and vigilantly apply.” Shoghi Effendi made it clear that the removal of voting rights must never be used lightly and its use at all should be avoided as much as possible, both to protect individuals from a hasty retaliation on the part of irate bodies and to make the friends realize that in being Bahá'ís they were privileged and had responsibilities and that in losing their rights in the community they forfeited something very great and very precious.

A procedure as fundamental as this was one which Shoghi Effendi universally applied to Bahá'ís everywhere in the world, no matter what type of society they were living in, and was part of his gradual implementation of the laws and principles ordained by Bahá'u'lláh “which constituted”, he stated, “the warp and woof of the institutions upon which the structure of His World Order must ultimately rest”.

This direction of a Faith from its World Centre, which necessitated rigidity and universality in fundamental matters and permitted and even encouraged fluidity in secondary matters, forms a fascinating subject for observation. Shoghi Effendi's ministry was a constant breaking of the various shackles binding the Bahá'ís to the past, to the societies in which they lived, and a building up of their knowledge of the Faith and of its administrative institutions. Like a skilled physician he gave general health rules to all and specific remedies in specific cases. There are innumerable examples of this, only a few of which can be cited here.

In 1923 Shoghi Effendi wrote to the National Spiritual Assembly of India and Burma that Bahá'í women should be included in all administrative activities on an equal footing with Bahá'í men—women in those parts of the world were already enjoying a greater freedom than was generally realized in the West. But in such countries of the Middle East as Persia, Egypt and Iraq, where women were entirely suppressed in civil life, the Guardian, not wishing to unnecessarily provoke the Muslim population by a highly provocative measure, did not permit Bahá'í women to take part in the administration of the Faith until a quarter of a century later. In spite of the many glowing tributes he paid to Bahá'í women, and the testimony of 'Abdu'l-Bahá that “women have evinced a

greater boldness than men when enlisted in the ranks of this Faith”, in spite of the fundamental principle enunciated in the Bahá’í Teachings that men and women are equal, its application to the machinery of the Administrative Order was deemed by Shoghi Effendi purely secondary and relatively unimportant compared to the paramount need to advance the general interests of the Faith in Islamic countries and protect its very existence.

Another excellent example of the manner in which the Guardian’s explicit instructions, which he gave to various National Assemblies conducting Plans under his generalship, were modified by him according to changing situations was the establishment during the World Crusade of local Bahá’í endowments and local headquarters: as the goals of the Ten Year Plan involved the acquisition of both national Hazíratu’l-Quds and national endowments, he had instructed the Assemblies that there should be no further drain on the very limited resources of the Faith, already shouldering such a heavy programme, through expenditures on a local level. Had he not specified this, the major goals would never have been reached; but by the summer of 1957 his secretary wrote in his letter to one of the Regional Assemblies of Africa: “Now that the work all over the Bahá’í world is progressing so remarkably and to all intents and purposes the Hazíratu’l-Quds and national endowments have been purchased, he feels the friends should be left free to add additional Hazíratu’l-Quds and endowments wherever they wish to.”

It was by policies such as these that the Guardian had succeeded, long before he passed away, in building up the Administration of the Faith all over the world and making of it such a smoothly running international organization. He could never have achieved this during his lifetime if he had not had such a remarkable sense of proportion. He always knew where he could give way to the pressure of events without harming the Faith and when he should insist that, at any cost, some particular principle must be meticulously followed because not to do so would jeopardize a fundamental issue. Let us take the two extremes we find covered by his instructions on various occasions, both dealing with the same subject—National Conventions. At a time when there was a suggestion made to him by the American Assembly, in 1932, that because of the imperative need for economy the Convention should be given up that year and the election take place by mail, he cabled: “Spiritual advantages derived from deliberations of delegates in Convention assembled outweigh financial considerations. Urge eliminate unnecessary expenses.” On another occasion, when he inaugurated the North American believers’ first Seven Year Plan through a cable addressed to the 1937 Convention while it was in session, he called upon the delegates to prolong the Convention in order to have time to consider the details of this Plan they were to formulate and launch. But at the time he instructed Australia and New Zealand to form their joint national body, in 1934, he must have been perfectly aware of the fact that because the two countries were separated by a great distance, expensive to traverse, the National Assembly might have difficulty in holding its meetings. He evidently considered the advantages outweighed the disadvantages; the Australian and New Zealand Bahá’ís held a Convention in 1934, one in 1937 and one in 1944—three in ten years; they conducted their work mostly through correspondence, a quorum operating in Australia in emergencies. This example, so completely different from the advice given to the American believers, reveals how Shoghi Effendi, through his wisdom and judgement, was able to advance the development of the Faith at such a rapid pace, never permitting minor considerations to hamper him or frustrate his purpose. Of primary importance—as soon as a reasonable basis for its election had been laid—was the formation of new National Assemblies; it was desirable that Conventions be held annually, desirable that as many as possible of the delegates take part in them, desirable that the Assembly meet as often as possible to consult, but it was not fundamental; the goal could be achieved by other means if necessary.

Another and typical example of this wonderful balance Shoghi Effendi expressed in all his views is that reflected in his attitude towards the subject of the funds of the Faith. Provisions for the support of the Cause of God had been made by Bahá'u'lláh Himself and mentioned by 'Abdu'l-Bahá on many occasions; but it was not until 1923 that Shoghi Effendi began to lay the foundations of systematic financial support of the work. On 12 March of that year he wrote a general letter addressed "To the beloved of the Lord and the handmaids of the Merciful throughout America, Great Britain, Germany, France, Switzerland, Italy, Japan and Australasia" in which he said: "As the progress and extension of spiritual activities is dependent and conditioned upon material means, it is of absolute necessity that immediately after the establishment of local as well as National Spiritual Assemblies, a Bahá'í Fund be established . . . It is the sacred obligation of every conscientious and faithful servant of Bahá'u'lláh who desires to see His Cause advance, to contribute freely and generously for the increase of that Fund." On 6 May he wrote to the American Assembly amplifying this subject and stating that in order to reinforce the vitally needed teaching campaign it was undertaking and to conduct properly and efficiently the manifold affairs that were the responsibility of the National Assembly, it was "urgently necessary to establish that Central Fund, which if generously supported and upheld by individual friends and local Assemblies, will soon enable you to execute your plans with promptness and vigour." In a letter in October of that same year his deep concern for the work the believers were required to so urgently undertake after the Master's passing is reflected in these words: "the Cause which stands today in sore need of material help and assistance".

On one hand it was apparent that under no circumstances could the world-redeeming Order of Bahá'u'lláh be established without great financial expenditures and on the other there were two principles that Shoghi Effendi felt compelled to call to the attention of the Bahá'ís which, if not correctly understood and exposed in their proper light, could militate against the much-needed flow of contributions into the various Funds of the Faith. The first was that as the Bahá'ís had received the bounty of knowing of and accepting Bahá'u'lláh in this great new day, and had therefore become His people and were privileged to build up His Divine Kingdom on earth, they were the ones to freely give back to their fellow men the benefits this had brought them; you could not very well first ask people to pay for a thing—in this case all the multiple institutions of the Bahá'í Faith—and then give it to them as a gift! Shoghi Effendi made this very clear as early as 1929: "We should, I feel, regard it as an axiom and guiding principle of Bahá'í administration that in the conduct of every specific Bahá'í activity . . . only those who have already identified themselves with the Faith and are regarded as its avowed and unreserved supporters should be invited to join and collaborate. For apart from the consideration of embarrassing complications which the association of non-believers in the financing of institutions of a strictly Bahá'í character may conceivably engender . . . it should be remembered that these specific Bahá'í institutions, which should be viewed in the light of Bahá'u'lláh's gifts bestowed upon the world, can best function and most powerfully exert their influence in the world only if reared and maintained solely by the support of those who are fully conscious of, and unreservedly submissive to, the claims inherent in the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh." This was the great spiritual principle involved. The practical, material one, which might lead to "embarrassing complications" was that if you accept money from non-Bahá'ís for Bahá'í schools, Bahá'í Temples and other Bahá'í institutions, including the many activities undertaken by Assemblies, you risk that these well-wishers, be they governments or individuals, societies or philanthropists, will feel they have a right to follow where their money led and have a say in the conduct of purely Bahá'í affairs. As this was obviously impossible, the Guardian stated the Bahá'ís could only accept money from non-Bahá'ís for purely humanitarian purposes, such as charity to be expended for peoples of all racial and religious backgrounds and not just for Bahá'ís.

The second, and what he termed "the cardinal principle", in a message to the American National Assembly in 1926, was "that all contributions to the Fund are to be purely and strictly voluntary in character. It should be made clear and evident to everyone that any form of compulsion, however slight and indirect, strikes at the very

root of the principle underlying the formation of the Fund ever since its inception.” This instruction was the logical concomitant of the attitude of the Bahá’í religion that the Message of the Manifestation of God in this day is His free gift to the peoples of the world; that all men have been called by Him to enter the Divine Fold and that in doing so, not money but faith is required of them. Unlike so many churches, there were no entrance fees, no obligatory dues to be paid, no seats in the Temples to be purchased, no forced contributions. The poor could find a refuge and the rich be welcomed on equal terms.

Apart from these two principles, what was the duty of the Bahá’ís towards the Fund? For a strong and unmistakable duty to support it existed, as Shoghi Effendi made abundantly clear: “The supply of funds”, he wrote to the American Assembly in 1935, “in support of the National Treasury, constitutes, at the present time, the lifeblood of those nascent institutions which you are labouring to erect. Its importance cannot, surely, be overestimated.” He said, in that same message, that the National Fund was the very “bedrock on which all other institutions must necessarily rest and be established”. He said that it “should be increasingly supported by the entire body of the believers, both in their individual capacities, and through their collective efforts, whether organized as groups or as local Assemblies.” By precept and example, over a period of more than a third of a century, the Guardian educated the Bahá’ís in a proper understanding of what it meant to have a Bahá’í Fund, to support it, and to spend it. It is a most fascinating subject; just as the heart pulses blood out through the arteries and capillaries of the body to give life to every individual cell, so the International, the National and the Local Funds pour back into the body of believers the benefits their contributions have made possible. International institutions proclaim the fame and create the heart of a World Community; national institutions, Bahá’í Temples, summer schools, endowments, teaching institutes, literature, news letters perform the same function on a national scale; and local Funds enable the believers to have meeting places, carry on their teaching activities and generally forward the interests of the Faith in cities, villages and hamlets.

Shoghi Effendi made it clear that one of the duties and privileges of being a follower of Bahá’u’lláh was to support His work in this world. He also made it clear that the principle involved in giving is more important than the sum involved; the penny of a poor man, which may for him and his family represent a real sacrifice, is as precious, as much needed and just as respectable a contribution as the hundreds or thousands of dollars a more well-to-do Bahá’í may give. Over and over again he stressed these two things: universality in giving, the participation of all as a symbol of our common love for and solidarity in our Faith, and sacrifice in giving. At the time when the great Mother Temple of the West was in urgent need of contributions to raise its structure, the Guardian wrote: “It cannot be denied that the emanations of spiritual power and inspiration destined to radiate from the central Edifice of the *Mashriqu’l-Adhikár* will to a very large extent depend upon the range and variety of the contributing believers, as well as upon the nature and degree of self-abnegation which their unsolicited offerings will entail.” It is hard for a wealthy person to sacrifice because he has so much; but for a poor person to sacrifice is easier because he has so little. Money given to the Cause at a sacrifice on the part of any giver carries a particular blessing with it.

I am reminded of an example of this giving of the poor and meek in the Kingdom of God which the Guardian himself referred to in *God Passes By*: “. . . the touching scene when ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, receiving from the hands of a Persian friend, recently arrived in London from ‘Ishqábád, a cotton handkerchief containing a piece of dry black bread and a shrivelled apple—the offering of a poor Bahá’í workman in that city—opened it before His assembled guests, and, leaving His luncheon untouched, broke pieces off that bread, and partaking Himself of it shared it with those who were present.” The first Bahá’í Temple erected in Russia, the Mother Temple of the West in America, and the three other great Bahá’í Houses of Worship in Europe, Africa and Australia have all

been built by contributions from believers all over the world, many of them representing real sacrifice on the part of Bahá'í men, women and even children.

At the very outset of his instructions regarding the necessity to build up a national Fund and create local Funds Shoghi Effendi, in a cable in 1923, made another fundamental principle involved in giving quite clear: "Individuals at liberty specify purpose of their donations. But general principle contributions, free and frequent, by individuals and local Assemblies toward central Fund for discretionary apportionment by National Assembly highly recommended." Briefly, and simply, as usual, he put everything in its proper place; the Assembly Funds—national or local—needed to be freely and frequently supported, but the principle of the freedom of individuals, so inherent in the Faith, was likewise pointed out.

Shoghi Effendi himself repeatedly supported various undertakings in different countries. Shortly after the Master's passing he began to contribute to the American Temple; in 1957 he announced he himself would defray one-third of the cost of erecting the three new Bahá'í Temples to be constructed during the World Crusade; he supported much of the translation and printing of Bahá'í books, contributed to Bahá'í cemeteries and the purchase of various Bahá'í headquarters, and innumerable other activities. In doing this he set an example to all believers and all Bahá'í institutions of giving, of participating with others in the joy of bringing to fruition plans of the Cause of God. His complete frankness in such matters, his avowal on some occasions that he did not have the money needed to do a certain thing he wanted to do for the Cause, the touching words with which he sent a small sum for the American Temple: "I beg to enclose my humble contribution of 19 pounds, as my share of the numerous donations that have reached the Temple Treasury in the past year", all provide not only an example but a very real encouragement to believers, rich or poor, to follow in his footsteps, happy they have such footsteps to tread in.

In his constant encouragement of the Bahá'ís to arise and spread their Faith among the spiritually hungry multitudes of their fellow men, the Guardian frequently recalled to them the injunction of Bahá'u'lláh Himself: "*Centre your energies in the propagation of the Faith of God. Whoso is worthy of so high a calling, let him arise and promote it. Whoso is unable, it is his duty to appoint him who will, in his stead, proclaim this Revelation . . .*" and said that those who were not able to go forth and establish themselves in those places where Bahá'ís were so urgently needed, should, mindful of these words of Bahá'u'lláh, "determine . . . to appoint a deputy who, on that believer's behalf, will arise and carry out so noble an enterprise." On more than one occasion he himself, through a National Assembly, deputed a number of Bahá'ís to fulfil specific goals.

The Guardian gave to the Bahá'ís of the world what in my own mind I like to call guiding lines of thought, different themes in different fields. They were, to use a homely but graphic metaphor, like the tracks of a railway on which certain trains run; it is the track that keeps the train on its path and enables it to reach its destination. Some of these major themes must be recalled if we are to gain any true appreciation of the life-work of Shoghi Effendi and to study how he succeeded in rearing the nascent institutions of a future world society.

XIV

GUIDING LINES

A proper understanding of the evolution of the Cause of God cannot be achieved unless certain fundamental truths enshrined in it are made clear. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá stated one of these when He wrote: “*From the beginning of time until the present day, the light of Divine Revelation hath risen in the East and shed its radiance upon the West. The illumination thus shed hath, however, acquired in the West an extraordinary brilliancy.*” This was the statement of a general principle common to the phenomenon of religion on this planet, but in this Bahá’í Dispensation the clear and specific working of this principle has been laid bare to our eyes over a period of more than one hundred and twenty-five years. In His first and mightiest book, the *Qayyúmu’l-Asmá’*, the Báb had called upon the people of the West to leave their cities and ensure the triumph of His Cause. Bahá’u’lláh in His Most Holy Book, the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, had addressed the rulers of the American continent and called upon them to arise and respond to His Call. To the impetus released by these initial divine pronouncements uttered by the twin Manifestations of God for this day was added the concentrated personal attention of the Centre of the Covenant. From the time, immediately following the ascension of Bahá’u’lláh, when mention of Him was first made at the World’s Columbian Exhibition held in Chicago in 1893, North America has been lapped in the waves of divine outpourings emanating from the pen and person of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, and later the ceaseless directives and encouragement of Shoghi Effendi. The Guardian informed us that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Divine Plan had derived its inspiration from Bahá’u’lláh’s own words in the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* and was in no small part a result of the direct contact of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá with the American and Canadian believers in the course of His journey through North America.

The combination of the love of the Father for the first-born, for the first nation in the West to respond to His Message, and the vitality of the New World itself, seems, in a mysterious and beautiful way, to have invested the Bahá’ís of North America with a station and powers unparalleled in history. The Master Himself conferred on them the title of “Apostles of Bahá’u’lláh” and they became “the object”, Shoghi Effendi wrote, “of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s tender solicitude . . . the centre of His hopes, the recipient of His promises and the beneficiary of His blessings”. Throughout Shoghi Effendi’s ministry they received from him an affection and encouragement equal to that the Master had showered upon them—indeed it was the continuation of that same love and that same policy. The Guardian referred to them as the “indefatigable, irresistibly advancing, majestically unfolding American Bahá’í Community”, the “cradle and stronghold” of the Administrative Order, “singled out by the Almighty for such a unique measure of favour”. In his innumerable letters he addressed them often as his “most prized and best-beloved brethren”, so “dearly-loved, richly-endowed, unflinchingly resolute”. They had been invested, he said, with “spiritual primacy” by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, and were “the appointed, the chief trustees” of that “divinely conceived, world-encompassing” Divine Plan which conferred on them a world mission which was the “sacred birthright of the American followers of Bahá’u’lláh”. More, they were not only the executors of the Mandate enshrined in that Plan but the “Executors of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Will” and because of these factors they were the “champion-builders of Bahá’u’lláh’s embryonic Order” and the “torch bearers of a world civilization” and the “privileged framers and custodians of the constitution of the Faith of Bahá’u’lláh” itself. In his observation of the fulfilment of the truths enshrined in the Teachings, Shoghi Effendi pointed out that there had been forces at work “which, through a remarkable swing of the pendulum, have caused the administrative centre of the Faith to gravitate away from its cradle, to the shores of the American Continent.” “To their Persian

brethren, who in the Heroic Age of the Faith had won the crown of Martyrdom, the American believers, forerunners of its Golden Age, were now worthily succeeding”; they had become the “spiritual descendants of the heroes of God’s Cause”. It was their destiny, the destiny of this “much loved”, “high-minded and valiant”, “God-chosen” community, this “invincible arm, this mighty organ” of the Faith, as it carried on its “unique mission”, to “be acclaimed as the creator and champion-builder of the World Order of Bahá’u’lláh”.

The rise of the American Bahá’í Community was, Shoghi Effendi considered, one of the noblest episodes in the first century of the Faith; its development was directly due to the operation of the Will of the Master. What the Guardian, in his usual intense self-effacement, neglected to add was that it was his own implementation of the Will, fidelity to it and the application of the directives it enshrined, that brought this about.

In one of his earliest letters as Guardian, addressed to the New York Spiritual Assembly in 1923, Shoghi Effendi states in a few words his attitude towards America, an attitude that never altered until the end of his life: “Conscious of the clear and emphatic predictions of our beloved Master as to the predominant part the West is destined to play during the early stages in the universal triumph of the Movement, I have, ever since His departure, turned my eyes in hopeful expectation to the distant shores of that continent . . .” “How often”, he wrote to the American National Assembly that same year, “I have wished and yearned to be nearer to the field of your activities and thus be able to keep in more constant and closer touch with every detail of the manifold and all-important services you render.”

A mutually trusting and tender relationship grew up between the young Guardian and those he called “the children of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá” from the very first moment they heard he had been named the Master’s successor. When the provisions of His Will were promulgated, after its official reading on 7 January 1922, the national body, still known as the “Bahá’í Temple Unity” or “Executive Board”, cabled him on 20 January: “America rejoices appointment offers you its devoted services co-operation.” They were both young, the Guardian and the American Community, and there is something about the way they grew up together, in his ministry, that is deeply moving. After his breakdown and withdrawal for a period of time during 1922, he cabled America on 16 December, after his return to Haifa, “The onward march of the Cause hath not been, nor can it ever be stayed. I pray the Almighty that my efforts, now refreshed and reassured, may with your undiminished support lead it to glorious victory.” The National Assembly replied on the 19th: “Your Message refreshed and revived every heart like unto the refunctioning of the body of oneness may the power of a sustained unity in America be your ever present help our love loyalty devoted co-operation and happiness to you.”

In one of his first letters to them, itself revealing of the state of his mind and the beginnings of things, and captioned as follows “To the members of the Spiritual National Assembly, the elected representatives of all the believers throughout the continent of America”, dated 23 December 1922 and followed by their nine names, Shoghi Effendi says, amongst other things: “. . . The efficient manner in which you have carried out my humble suggestions has been a source of great encouragement to me and has revived confidence in my heart. I have read and re-read reports of your activities, have studied minutely all the steps you have taken to consolidate the foundations of the Movement in America, and have learned with a keen sense of satisfaction the plans you contemplate for the further rise and spread of the Cause in your great country . . .” He is not only, he assures them, awaiting “all the joyous news of the deepening as well as the spreading of the Cause for which our beloved Master has given his time, his life, his all”, but is remembering their “labours of love and service every time I lay my head on the Sacred Thresholds”. He signs himself: “Your brother in His service”.

We must always bear in mind that it was this early partnership with America, inherent in the destiny of the Faith, that led to the establishment and growth of the Administrative Order all over the world. The matrix of that Order was perfected in America, though in an embryonic form it had existed already in the days of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Shoghi Effendi, from the beginning in 1923, when he wrote: “I assure you again of my readiness and wish to be of help and service to those faithful and devoted servants of Bahá’u’lláh in that land”, never changed his attitude. In 1939 he wrote: “I, for my part, am determined to reinforce the impulse that impels its members forward to meet their destiny.”

When ‘Abdu’l-Bahá ascended, the North American Bahá’ís were in the midst of a crisis of Covenant-breaking. The blow of His departure, the wave of agony and despair that swept over them, was succeeded by a wave of hope and love when they fixed their eyes on their young Guardian. Help is dependent on two factors, someone who needs help and is willing to receive it, and someone who wants to help and can do so. Shoghi Effendi began to actively guide America, finding her eager and responsive, from the very outset of his ministry. To the 1923 Convention he cabled: “that this year’s Convention may . . . inaugurate an unexampled campaign of teaching is indeed my ardent prayer. Let this be Ridván’s Message: unite, deepen, arise.” The captain had placed his hand on the helm. Through every storm, in calm waters, in years of trial and vicissitude, through war and peace, in youth, in middle age, at the end of his life, Shoghi Effendi never ceased to guide, turn to, love, admonish and hearten this “pre-eminent community of the Bahá’í World”, a Community which had been, as he once wrote, “singled out by the Almighty for such a unique measure of favour, . . . distinguished from its sister communities through the revelation of a Plan emanating directly from the mind and pen of its Founder”, “recognized as the impregnable Citadel of the Faith of God, and the cradle of the rising institutions of its World Order”, “whose elevation to the throne of everlasting dominion the Centre of the Covenant confidently anticipated.”

“Whenever”, Shoghi Effendi wrote to one of America’s local Assemblies, on 6 January 1923—a year after the reading of the Will of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá—“I recall the messages of love, of confidence and of hope our Beloved has expressed in such glowing terms in His innumerable Tablets to the loved ones in America, I feel that sooner or later the secret of this unbounded love must appear and that great continent so near and dear to His heart, must soon unfold itself entirely to the Glory of His Revelation.”

It is utterly impossible to divorce the rise of the Administrative Order throughout the world from the evolution of the North American Bahá’í Community, and particularly the United States believers, because the two processes are practically one and the same thing. With few exceptions, for thirty-six years, the pattern in administrative matters, the great directives concerning teaching, the world-shaping concepts and plans conveyed in the general letters of the Guardian were addressed to, published by or relayed through this Community. This does not mean the Guardian ignored Persia and other Bahá’í communities; far from it. He had an independent, intensely personal and loving relationship to each and every one of them, formed, with the older communities, at the same time as that with America, which neither flagged nor suffered neglect throughout the years, but rather grew in scope and intensity with the passage of time. He was always everyone’s Guardian. But the North American body of the faithful was, according to the mysterious workings of Providence, burdened with unique responsibilities and the recipient of unique honours. In *America and the Most Great Peace*, written in 1933, Shoghi Effendi states America’s position in unmistakable terms: out of the anguish following the Master’s passing, he wrote, “the Administration of Bahá’u’lláh’s invincible Faith was born”. The ascension of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá released “potent energies” which “crystallized into this supreme, this infallible Organ for the accomplishment of a Divine Purpose.” The *Will and Testament* of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had set forth its character and provisions, America had espoused the cause of the Administration: “It was given to her, and to her alone, . . . to become the fearless champion of that Administration, the pivot of its new-born institutions and the leading promoter of its influence.”

A born administrator, with a brain and temperament that were invariably orderly and tidy, Shoghi Effendi set about organizing the affairs of the Faith in a highly systematic manner. During the first two or three years he kept lists of his letters, before his correspondence, his problems, his fatigue and lack of proper helpers made it impossible for him to handle his mail in this manner. From these lists we gather he wrote to the following places: America, Britain, France, Germany, Japan, Mesopotamia, Caucasus, Persia, Turkistan, Turkey, Australia, Switzerland, India, Syria, Italy, Burma, Canada, Pacific Islands, Egypt, Palestine, Sweden and Europe. He also wrote to many individual centres, in America, Europe, North Africa, the Middle and Far East. He lists sixty-seven of these in the 1922-3 period, eighty-eight during the period 1923-4, and ninety-six in the 1924-5 period. We see him stretch out his hands, probably literally often trembling with shock and illness, and seize the reins of affairs in the far-flung kingdom of Bahá'u'lláh he became heir to in 1921.

The vast majority of Bahá'ís still resided in Persia and neighbouring territories; there was a small but equally loyal and devoted community in North America, even smaller ones in Europe, Africa, the Indian sub-continent and the Pacific region. Most of these believers—including some of the members of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's own family—were anything but clear in their minds as to just what the Faith represented, had no idea of what form it was about to take, pursuant to the Master's instructions in His Will, and still less any real understanding of its Administrative Order. Although there were bodies called Spiritual Assemblies, they were often called by other names too, and their functioning and membership were frequently vague and bore small resemblance to what we now understand a Spiritual Assembly to be. America's national body, which had existed in some form since 1908, was known as "The Bahá'í Temple Unity"; in 1909 it was incorporated and had an "Executive Board"; in addition to delegates to the National Convention there were "alternate delegates"; the Chicago Assembly was known as "The House of Spirituality of the Bahá'ís of Chicago", at one time it had nine members and two "consulting members"; in New York there were nine people known as "The Board of Consultation, New York Metropolitan district"; the Bahá'ís in one Californian city wrote to Shoghi Effendi they had elected a committee of twelve people as their local Assembly; although for over a decade before 'Abdu'l-Bahá's passing elections had been taking place, the so-called administrative bodies were haphazard in their formation and functioning, embryonic in the truest sense of the word; the situation in Persia was not only equally confused but, in addition, the great amorphous mass of believers was so persecuted and suppressed that it took years for the Guardian to create any kind of order out of their chaos; other countries were equally ignorant of the principles of the Administrative Order of the Cause. The British Bahá'ís had spontaneously formed in 1922 a "Bahá'í Council" to foster national affairs; India had a National Assembly in some form, for Shoghi Effendi states, during 1923, that although Burma has its own "Central Council" it is nevertheless under the jurisdiction of the "All Indian National Assembly"; in 1921 Germany had held a National Convention, but a national body was not elected until 1922. During the early years of the unfoldment of the Administration the affairs of the Bahá'ís in Persia, in the Caucasus and in Turkistan were administered in each area by one prominent local Assembly fulfilling the functions of a National Assembly or National Council, pending the time when a representative and free National Convention could take place. Thus far 'Abdu'l-Bahá before His passing, and Shoghi Effendi and the Bahá'ís immediately after His passing, had been able to bring the new-born babe of Bahá'í Administration. In 1922 there cannot have been, throughout the Bahá'í world, more than one body—the American one—which remotely resembled a nationally elected National Assembly as we now know it.



TWO VIEWS OF MT. CARMEL

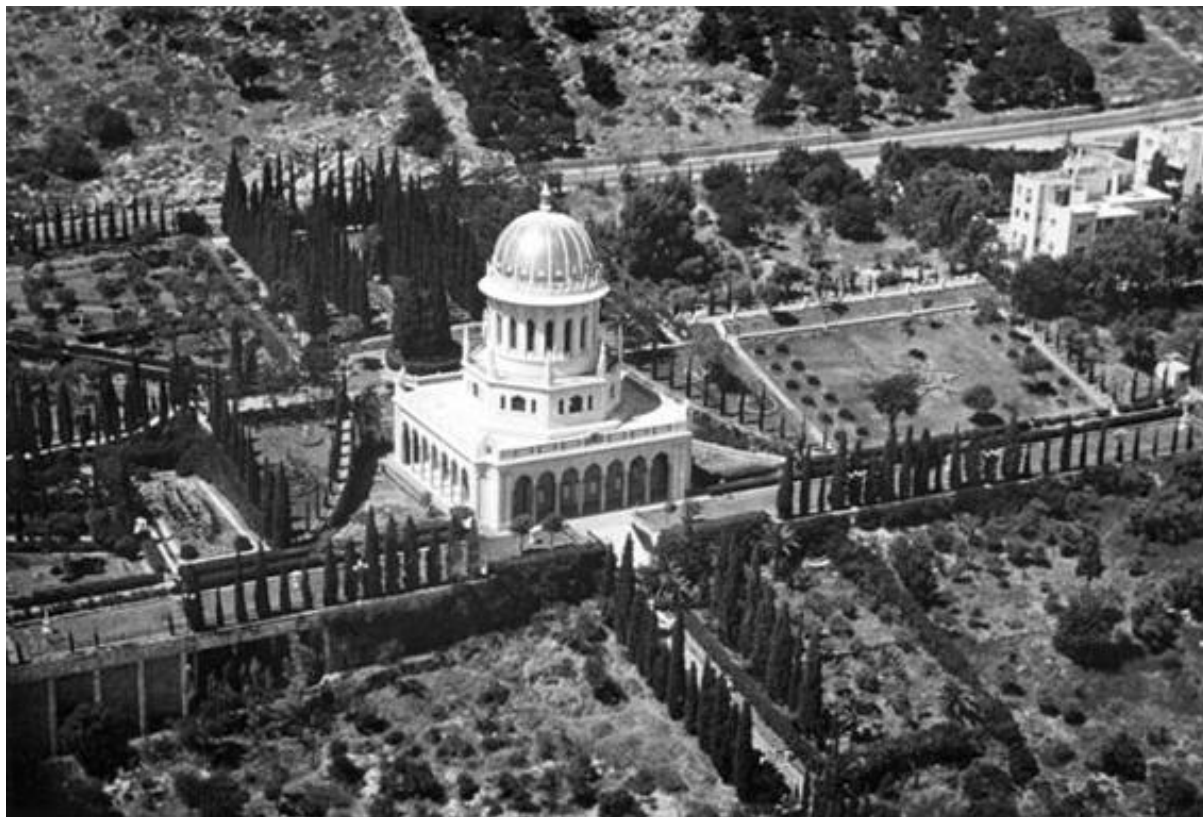
Above: the Shrine of the Báb as it appeared after the passing of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

Below: the superstructure completed by Shoghi Effendi in 1953 according to the general instructions of the Master Himself



THE DEVELOPMENT OF MT. CARMEL BY SHOGHI EFFENDI

The Shrine of the Báb set in its terraces and gardens, top left; the elongated Archives Building, with the arc in front of it, and the remarkable arabesque pattern of the gardens above it



THE SHRINE OF THE BÁB ON MT. CARMEL

Part of the gardens and terraces surrounding the superstructure of the Báb's Tomb erected by Shoghi Effendi



BUILDINGS ERECTED BY SHOGHI EFFENDI

Left: International Archives Building.

Right: Shrine of the Báb. The curved path is part of the arc around which other international buildings are being constructed



THE GUARDIAN STUDIES HIS GARDENS

Top: Shoghi Effendi views the Báb's Shrine from the top of Mt. Carmel.

Bottom: He surveys the newly developed area in Bahjí



AERIAL VIEW OF BAHJÍ

Looking northward: The large building is the Mansion of Bahá'u'lláh, the pointed roof on the left His Shrine. The extensive gardens created by Shoghi Effendi are shown to the southwest and north. Note at end of the winding path, top centre, the small white building from the roof of which he surveyed the work



BAHÁ'U'LLÁH'S TOMB IN BAHJÍ

Above: Appearance of the entrance to the Shrine about 1921.

Below: The majestic beautification of the entrance to His Tomb, 1957



THE MOST HOLY TOMB

Above: The Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh at Bahjí.

Below: Some of the 96 lamp posts illuminating the Shrine gardens at night

This dispersed, heterogeneous, unorganized but loyal mass of believers throughout the world had other handicaps to overcome. The Persian friends, though fully aware of the completely independent character of their Faith—an independence they had unstintingly sacrificed their lives to assert—nevertheless had not yet succeeded in cutting themselves off completely from certain national customs and evils at complete variance with the teachings of its Founder. There was still a twilight-land of overlapping with the customs of Islam and the many abuses to which its gradual decline had given rise over the centuries. The principle of monogamy was neither strictly practised nor properly understood; the drinking of alcohol was still widespread; the categorical ban of Bahá'u'lláh on the use of narcotics had not been fully grasped in a land riddled through and through with the pernicious use of opium and other drugs. In the West, particularly in America where the largest group of its occidental followers was to be found, the Bahá'ís, however attached they might be to this new Faith they had accepted, were still entangled with church affiliations and membership in various societies, which only served to dissipate their extremely limited resources, squander their capacity for concerted and concentrated activity for the Cause of God and weaken any claims they might make as to its independent character. Neither in the East nor in the West were the Bahá'ís clear in their minds as to the degree they should shun all political affiliations and activities. Shoghi Effendi attacked this somewhat nebulous condition of the Bahá'í world in two ways. The first was to create a universal, consistent and coherent method of carrying on Bahá'í community life and organizing its affairs, based on the Teachings and the Master's elaboration of them; and the second was to educate the believers in an understanding of the objectives and implications of their religion and the truths enshrined in it.

Shoghi Effendi's genius for organization—one of his strongest characteristics, no doubt divinely created in him to fulfil the needs of the Formative Age of the Faith—became increasingly manifest and the uniform system of national and local Assemblies was quickly and carefully built up by him throughout the world. The first step was to get the national body in America properly named and duly elected as such. Immediately after the announcement of the provisions of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will, a number of prominent American Bahá'ís proceeded to Haifa to visit the Shrines and their Guardian. One of these, Corinne True, reports to Shoghi Effendi in a letter written on 4 May 1922 that: "The spirit of the Convention was very wonderful and a new era in the Bahá'í Cause has been inaugurated through your letter. Sixty-five centres throughout Canada and the United States had delegates present . . . I tried to present to these friends the plan you had instructed me upon while I was in Haifa . . . The result of this Convention was the election of the 'National Spiritual Assembly' or Executive Board . . . These nine men and women are your servants at all times, begging confirmation from the Centre of the Covenant, that they may render you faithful service in all affairs for the advancement of the Cause . . ." Mrs True, as well as a number of the other old Bahá'ís who had received instructions from Shoghi Effendi in Haifa during the first months of his Guardianship, was elected to this Assembly.

On 4 April 1923 Shoghi Effendi cabled this new national body: "Strongly urge re-election all local Assemblies first Ridván April 21". The repercussions of this emphasis Shoghi Effendi placed on the need for system and uniformity in Bahá'í elections and what the proper title of these Bahá'í bodies should be, seem to have gone out all over the Bahá'í world. There was a movement everywhere, constantly encouraged and fostered by him, to elect local Assemblies and get them to function according to the principles 'Abdu'l-Bahá had already laid down, but which had not received sufficient attention. In spite of these early efforts to ensure Assemblies were actually formed, this was a task Shoghi Effendi had to pursue actively for many years, as very often the friends completely neglected to elect or re-elect their local body. The Bahá'ís, eager, but confused, welcomed this guidance from their Guardian. As he clarified matters for them things evidently grew clearer to him too. In carbon copies of two of his letters written in December 1922 to National representatives one finds the terms "the

Spiritual National Assembly” and the “Spiritual Local Assemblies”. He later adopted permanently the more descriptive terms “National Spiritual Assembly” and “Local Spiritual Assembly”. In that same month he had written to the believers in Paris, France: “It would give me genuine satisfaction and pleasure to learn of the establishment of a local Spiritual Assembly, properly constituted, efficiently functioning, and officially recognized by the members of the great Bahá’í family. I would strongly urge you, if such an assembly has not yet been founded, to establish such a definite and fixed centre for the Cause which, though at first may appear a mere matter of form, will not only fill a gap in the uniform administration of the Movement throughout the world but would, I am certain, prove a nucleus around which would gather many a soul in future . . .” It is not surprising that when Shoghi Effendi approached the Bahá’ís with as much love, tact and straightforwardness as this extract from one of what must have been many similar letters shows, he should meet with universal co-operation, and whenever the response came he was quick to congratulate and praise. In this case he waited over a year until he could cable Paris: “heartly congratulations on inauguration of Assemblée Spirituelle”.

Some communities already had, in response to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s encouragement, established committees. Correspondence in 1922 and 1923 between ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and the American National Assembly shows that there were in existence such National committees as Teaching, Publishing and Reviewing, Children’s Education, Library, Star of the West, Race Amity and National Archives. In going over the Guardian’s early acts and communications it is both astonishing and fascinating to see how everything that was there at the end of his ministry was there at the beginning too. As the years went by he amplified his thoughts and elaborated his themes, himself matured, and the Cause matured with him, but it was all quite complete in embryo when he first started directing the affairs of the Faith. The instructions he had given the earliest national bodies and communities were only different in quality, but not in kind, at the end of his life. Take for instance his cable to the American National Convention in 1923 “. . . You stand at this challenging hour in the history of the Cause at the threshold of a new era; the functions you are called upon to discharge are fraught with immense possibilities; the responsibilities you shoulder are grave and momentous; and the eyes of many peoples are turned . . . towards you, expectant to behold the dawning of a Day that shall witness the fulfilment of His Divine Promise.” Almost thirty-five years of future events are caught up in those short phrases.

The education of the Bahá’ís in the principles underlying Bahá’u’lláh’s social system became, for many years, the paramount concern of the Guardian. They were used to believing in the Teachings, to trying to spread them amongst their fellow men, to at least a modicum of community life through feasts, meetings and commemoration of their Holy Days. They were not used to working in an organized manner as members of an organization in the truest sense of that word. They were also not used to keeping the system of communication within the Faith open. Shoghi Effendi realized from the outset that the work that lay before him required that he, in particular, should have a thorough knowledge of what was going on in the Bahá’í communities throughout the world and of the state of their activities and their response to the up-building of the administrative system of the Cause. This required a close correspondence with not only all the national bodies, but with all the local Assemblies; the national bodies were weak or practically non-existent, the local Assemblies usually even weaker. He felt it essential to be in contact with them all, East and West. In December 1922 he informed the American National Assembly: “I would be pleased and gratified if you could inform all the various local spiritual assemblies of my wish and desire to receive as soon as possible from every local assembly a detailed and official report on their spiritual activities, the character and organization of their respective assemblies, accounts of their public and private gatherings, of the actual position of the Cause in their provinces and of their plans and arrangements for the future. Pray convey to all of them my best wishes and the assurance of my hearty assistance in their noble work of service to mankind.” He wrote to the German National Assembly, in the same vein, a year later: “I am so desirous to receive from the National Spiritual Assembly frequent, comprehensive and up-to-date reports on the

present position of the Cause throughout Germany, with an account of the activities of the various Bahá'í Centres recently established throughout that land."

His plan was not only to collect information at the World Centre but to stimulate and encourage the oppressed oriental communities through relaying to them glad-tidings from their sister communities in the West. He made this clear in a letter to the New York Local Assembly written in February 1924: "As I have already intimated in my first letter to the National Spiritual Assembly, I shall be most pleased to receive from every Bahá'í Centre throughout America regular comprehensive reports on the position of the Cause and the activity of the friends. These I shall gladly transmit to the friends throughout the East who in their present hour of restlessness and turmoil will, I am sure, be cheered to hear of the steady and peaceful growth of the Faith in your land . . . awaiting your joyful news . . ."

This system was to work two ways, as he had already written to the "National Council" of the British Bahá'ís in December 1922: "I am now starting correspondence with every Bahá'í local Centre throughout the East and will not fail to instruct and urge the believers everywhere to send directly through their Spiritual Local Assemblies the joyful tidings of the progress of the Cause, in the form of regular detailed reports, to the various assemblies of their spiritual brethren and sisters in the West." He wrote to the Leipzig Bahá'ís: "I await lovingly and eagerly your letters". He wrote to the Japanese believers: "It is my hope that the friends in Japan will from now on write me frequent and detailed letters, setting forth the account of their various spiritual activities, and giving me the plans for their future services to the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh." To the Bahá'ís in the Pacific Islands he wrote the same. Such sentiments were expressed over and over in his earliest letters to local centres in various countries. But it was not easy to stimulate the concrete response he sought. Much of his time, throughout his entire ministry, was spent in recalling the Bahá'ís to their duties and tasks. "Expecting frequent comprehensive reports from National Assembly" he cabled America in 1923. "No letter from National Assembly last two months" he cabled them in 1924. "Awaiting eagerly National Assembly's detailed frequent reports" he cabled India in 1925. Such reminders were by no means infrequent and went out to more than one country.

In their hearts the Bahá'ís, a sincere and loving group of people gathered about Bahá'u'lláh in belief and confidence, were deeply aware of their international bond of unity in faith. But this was not sufficient. The time had come for a dynamic, working, every-day consciousness of this to take place. In addition to creating a uniform system of Bahá'í elections and flow of reports and correspondence to him and from him, Shoghi Effendi took steps to greatly reinforce and reinvigorate certain Bahá'í publications already in existence when he became Guardian and which had been encouraged and supported by 'Abdu'l-Bahá Himself. The *Star of the West*, published in America, was the oldest and most famous of these. In addition there were the *Sun of Truth* published in Germany, *The Dawn* published in Burma, the *Bahá'í News of India* published there, and the *Khorshid-i-Khavar* published in Ishqabad. To all these Shoghi Effendi gave his enthusiastic support. He wrote to the Bahá'ís in Syria, in February 1923, that they should subscribe and contribute to the Bahá'í magazines the *Star of the West*, the *Bahá'í News of India* and the *Khorshid-i-Khavar* of the Russian believers. The standard he set for such publications was eloquently expressed in a letter to the editors of *The Dawn* in Burma, written two months later: "Universal in its outlook, progressive and practical in the measures it advocates, faithful to its sacred traditions and principles of the Cause, thorough in its methods, impartial in its views, and elevated and impressive in style, may it advance resolute and unhindered, towards the fulfillment of its destiny." During these first months of 1923 he wrote to the Editor of the Indian Bahá'í News: "I have recently requested the friends throughout Persia, Turkistan, Caucasus, Iraq, Egypt, Turkey, America, Great Britain, Germany, Syria and Palestine to contribute regularly to the Bahá'í News of India reports of their activities and carefully written articles on spiritual matters, hoping thereby to widen its sphere and enhance its value as one of the leading organs of the Bahá'í community

throughout the world . . . I shall follow every stage of its progress with hopeful interest and shall not fail to contribute my share of assistance in the noble task it has purposed to achieve.” Similar letters were sent to both Germany and America, urging the same policy in respect to their own Bahá’í magazines. He repeatedly urged the different national communities of the Bahá’í world to send news and appropriate articles to these various publications in order to support them, propagate the Faith and inspire the believers.

In addition to this Shoghi Effendi inaugurated a “circular letter which the Haifa Bahá’í Spiritual Assembly forwards every nineteen days to all Bahá’í Centres throughout the East.” This was in Persian. It had an English counterpart. “The Spiritual Assembly which has been established in Haifa”, he wrote to the Swiss Bahá’ís in February 1923, “will from now on send you regularly the news of the Holy Land . . .” This Haifa News Letter, closely supervised by the Guardian himself, with material provided by him, continued to be sent out until the Haifa Spiritual Assembly was disbanded by Shoghi Effendi at the time he sent the local community away in 1938 and 1939. Measures such as these had the effect of a giant spoon by which he vigorously stirred the entire community of the faithful all over the world, blending, stimulating, challenging its component parts to greater action, co-operation and understanding.

But what, we should pause and ask, was this Administration the Guardian was so tirelessly working to establish? As it evolved it would, he said: “at once incarnate, safeguard and foster” the spirit of this invincible Faith. It was unique in history, divinely conceived and different from any system which had existed in the religions of the past. Fundamentally it was the vehicle of a future World Order and World Civilization which would constitute no less than a World Commonwealth of all nations on this planet. Though its entire structure of elected bodies was based on principles of universal suffrage and election by secret ballot, its ultimate workings were conceived of in a different light, for, unlike the paramount principle of democracy by which the elected are constantly responsible to the electors, Bahá’í bodies are responsible at all times to the Founder of their Faith and His teachings. Whereas in democracy the ruling factor at the top can go no higher than their own councils and their decisions are subject to the scrutiny and approval of those they represent, this ruling factor in the Cause of God is at once the servant of all the servants of God—in other words the body of the faithful—but responsible to a higher factor, divinely guided and inspired, the Guardian or sole interpreter, and the Universal House of Justice, the supreme elected body, or sole legislator. It will be seen that in this system the people, divorced from the corrupt influences of nomination, political canvassing and the violence of those whims and dissatisfactions so easily engendered in the masses by the working of the democratic principle alone, are free to choose those they deem best qualified to direct their affairs and safeguard their rights on the one hand, and to protect and serve the interests of the Cause of God on the other.

The elected Bahá’í bodies might be likened to a great network of irrigation pipes, selected and put together by the people for their own benefit. But life-giving waters from on high flow through this system, independent of the people, independent of any will of the pipes, and this water is the divinely guided and inspired counsels of the Guardian and the Supreme Body of the Cause, which they receive, in this Bahá’í Dispensation, from no less a source than the twin Manifestations of God. The system of Bahá’u’lláh, Shoghi Effendi wrote, “cannot ever degenerate into any form of despotism, of oligarchy, or of demagoguery which must sooner or later corrupt the machinery of all man-made and essentially defective political institutions.” Already, in 1934, Shoghi Effendi was able to write of the workings of this system, which was rapidly growing and spreading its roots steadily throughout the Bahá’í world, that it had evinced a power which a “disillusioned and sadly shaken society” could ill afford to ignore. The vitality of its institutions, the obstacles overcome by its administrators, the enthusiasm of its itinerant teachers, the heights of self-sacrifice attained by its champion-builders, the vision, hope, joy, inward peace, integrity, discipline and unity that were manifested by its stalwart defenders, the manner in which

diversified peoples were cleansed of their prejudices and fused into the structure of this system—all testified, Shoghi Effendi wrote, to the power of this ever-expanding Order of Bahá'u'lláh.

Shoghi Effendi had the qualities of true statesmanship. Unlike many of the Bahá'ís, who, alas, are prone like Icarus to take off on wings of wax, full of hope and faith alone, Shoghi Effendi forged his flying machine of airworthy materials, building it carefully, piece by piece. Within the first few years of his ministry he had created uniformity in essential matters of Bahá'í Administration. He had established his bedrock of local Assemblies and a national body, wherever the national communities were strong enough to support such an institution. By 1930 he had nine of these, which were listed in the “Bahá'í Directory” of the American National Assembly as follows: Caucasus, Egypt, Great Britain, Germany, India and Burma, Iraq, Persia, Turkistan and that of the United States and Canada. Those of the Caucasus, Turkistan and Persia were for many years of a different nature from the others in the sense that no National Convention could be held for delegates to meet freely and elect their national institution. Nevertheless, a governing body existed (referred to in English as a National Assembly by the Guardian, but in Persian by a different term from that later used when Persia's national election took place), and carried on the communities' national affairs; the situation in Russia, however, led to the dissolution of the National Assemblies of the Caucasus and Turkistan when all Bahá'í activity there was later completely suspended.

In his labours to establish the Administrative Order of the Faith Shoghi Effendi found himself ably seconded by capable and devoted co-workers in both the West and the East who seemed to have been raised up by God for the purpose of catching the vision of the Guardian, responding to his instructions and behests, interacting on his mind with constructive suggestions, and swift to implement his wishes and adapt them to the local need.

Concurrent with this almost sudden coalescence of the Administrative Order went the other process of education in the true meaning and implications of the Faith—an education no one but him who had been given the sole right to interpret its teachings could have carried out. As one cannot separate the vehicle from the spirit, let us try and catch a glimpse of some of the salient truths Shoghi Effendi called to our attention throughout the years.

One of the most wonderful things about Shoghi Effendi was that he pushed the horizons of our minds ever further away. His vision of the Cause was seen from the Everest of his all-embracing understanding of its implications. In thirty-six years nothing every grew smaller, everything grew bigger and bigger. There was infinite room not only to breathe but to dream. Bahá'u'lláh was the Inaugurator of a five-hundred-thousand-year cycle. He was the culmination of a six-thousand-year cycle of prophecy beginning with Adam. Withal, His Revelation was but part of an infinite chain of Divine Guidance. The Guardian summed up this concept in his masterly statement submitted to the United Nations Special Palestine Committee: “The fundamental principle enunciated by Bahá'u'lláh . . . is that religious truth is not absolute but relative, the Divine Revelation is a continuous and progressive process, that all the great religions of the world are divine in origin, that their basic principles are in complete harmony, that their aims and purposes are one and the same, that their teachings are but facets of one truth, that their functions are complementary, that they differ only in the non-essential aspects of their doctrines, and that their missions represent successive stages in the spiritual evolution of human society. The aim of Bahá'u'lláh . . . is not to destroy but to fulfil the Revelations of the past . . . His purpose . . . is to restate the basic truths which these teachings enshrine in a manner that would conform to the needs . . . of the age in which we live . . . Nor does Bahá'u'lláh claim finality for His own Revelation, but rather stipulates that a fuller measure of truth . . . must needs be disclosed at future stages in the constant and limitless evolution of mankind.”

In that same statement he places the Administrative Order, in words of crystal clearness, in its proper relationship to this Revelation: “The Administrative Order of the Faith of Bahá’u’lláh, which is destined to evolve into the Bahá’í World Commonwealth . . . unlike the systems evolved after the death of the Founders of the various religions, is divine in origin . . . The Faith which this Order serves, safeguards and promotes, is, it should be noted in this connection, essentially supernatural, supranational, entirely non-political, non-partisan, and diametrically opposed to any policy or school of thought that seeks to exalt any particular race, class or nation. It is free from any form of ecclesiasticism, has neither priesthood nor rituals, and is supported exclusively by voluntary contributions made by its avowed adherents.”

What this concept would lead to was expressed on another occasion in one of the Guardian’s communications to the Bahá’ís of the West: “A world federal system, ruling the whole earth . . . blending and embodying the ideals of both the East and the West, liberated from the curse of war . . . a system in which Force is made the servant of Justice, whose life is sustained by its universal recognition of one God and by its allegiance to one common Revelation—such is the goal towards which humanity, impelled by the unifying forces of life, is moving.”

All this being so, something was very much the matter with the world. What it was Shoghi Effendi also made clear to us in *The Promised Day Is Come*: “For a whole century God has respited mankind, that it might acknowledge the Founder of such a Revelation, espouse His Cause, proclaim His greatness, and establish His Order. In a hundred volumes . . . the Bearer of such a Message has proclaimed, as no Prophet before Him has done, the Mission with which God had entrusted Him . . . How—we may well ask ourselves—has the world, the object of such Divine solicitude, repaid Him Who sacrificed His all for its sake?” Bahá’u’lláh’s Message met, Shoghi Effendi wrote, with unmitigated indifference from the élite, unrelenting hatred from the ecclesiastics, scorn from the people of Persia, utter contempt from most of the rulers addressed by Him, the envy and malice of those in foreign lands, all of which were evidences of the treatment such a Message received from “a generation sunk in self-content, careless of its God, and oblivious of the omens, warnings and admonitions revealed by His Messengers.” Man was therefore to taste what his own hands had wrought. He had refused to take the direct road leading him to his great destiny, through acceptance of the Promised One for this Day, and had chosen the long road, bitter, blood-stained, dark, literally leading him through hell, before he once again could near the goal originally placed at his fingertips for him to seize.

The words of Bahá’u’lláh Himself make abundantly clear to us what mankind, through refusing to accept His Revelation in the beginning, must expect: “*We have fixed a time for you, O people! If ye fail, at the appointed hour, to turn towards God, He, verily, will lay violent hold on you, and will cause grievous afflictions to assail you from every direction. How severe indeed is the chastisement with which your Lord will then chastise you.*” “*The time for the destruction of the world and its people hath arrived.*” “*The promised day is come, the day when tormenting trials will have surged above your heads, and beneath your feet . . .*” “*Soon shall the blasts of His chastisement beat upon you, and the dust of hell enshroud you.*”

From the very beginning of his ministry, steeped as he was in the Teachings, Shoghi Effendi foresaw the course events seemed inevitably to be taking. As early as January 1923 he painted the picture of the future in a letter to an American local Assembly: “Individuals and nations”, he wrote, “are being swept by a whirlwind of insincerity and selfishness, which if not resisted may imperil, nay destroy civilization itself. It is our task and privilege to capture gradually and persistently the attention of the world by the sincerity of our motives, by the breadth of our outlook and the devotion and tenacity with which we pursue our work of service to mankind.” He was not only clear as to the situation and the remedy, but sufficiently shrewd to doubt the possibility, after eighty years of neglect on the part of humanity, of averting universal catastrophe. “The world”, he wrote in February 1923, was

“apparently drifting further and further from the spirit of the Divine Teachings . . .” Many times, in both his writings and his words to visiting pilgrims, Shoghi Effendi reminded the Bahá’ís of the formidable warning of Bahá’u’lláh: *“The civilization, so often vaunted by the learned exponents of arts and sciences, will, if allowed to overleap the bounds of moderation, bring great evil upon men. Thus warneth you He Who is the All-Knowing. If carried to excess, civilization will prove as prolific a source of evil as it had been of goodness when kept within the restraints of moderation . . . The day is approaching when its flame will devour the cities.”*

From the outset Shoghi Effendi realized that there was a great cancer eating away at the vitals of men, a materialism reaching a state of development in the West unrivalled by the decadence it had invariably produced in past civilizations when their decline set in. As very many people do not know what materialism means it can do no harm to quote Webster who defines certain of its aspects as “the tendency to give undue importance to material interests; devotion to the material nature and its wants” and says another definition is the theory that human phenomena should be viewed and interpreted in terms of physical and material causes rather than spiritual and ethical causes. Shoghi Effendi’s attitude towards this subject, the evils that produce it and the evils it in turn gives rise to, is reflected in innumerable passages of his writings, beginning in 1923 and going on to 1957. In 1923 he refers to “the confusion and the gross materialism in which mankind is now sunk”. A few years later he writes of “the apathy, the gross materialism and superficiality of society today”. In 1927 he wrote to the American National Assembly: “in the heart of society itself, where the ominous signs of increasing extravagance and profligacy are but lending fresh impetus to the forces of revolt and reaction that are growing more distinct every day”. In 1933, in a general letter to the American Bahá’ís, he speaks of the “follies and furies, the shifts, shams and compromises that characterize the present age”. In 1934, in a general letter to the Bahá’ís throughout the West, he speaks of “the signs of an impending catastrophe, strangely reminiscent of the Fall of the Roman Empire in the West, which threatens to engulf the whole structure of present-day civilization”. In that same communication he says: “How disquieting the lawlessness, the corruption, the unbelief that are eating into the vitals of a tottering civilization!” In his general letter to the Bahá’ís of the West, in 1936, he says: “in whichever direction we turn our gaze . . . we cannot fail to be struck by the evidences of moral decadence which, in their individual lives no less than in their collective capacity, men and women around us exhibit”. In 1938 he warned of “the challenge of these times, so fraught with peril, so full of corruption” and speaks of the root-evil of all: “as the chill of irreligion creeps relentlessly over the limbs of mankind” and of “A world, dimmed by the steadily dying-out light of religion”, a world in which nationalism was blind and triumphant, in which racial and religious persecution was pitiless, a world in which false theories and doctrines threatened to supplant the worship of God, a world, in sum, “enervated by a rampant and brutal materialism; disintegrating through the corrosive influence of moral and spiritual decadence”.

In 1941 Shoghi Effendi castigated the prevalent trends of society in no uncertain terms: “The spread of lawlessness, of drunkenness, of gambling, and of crime; the inordinate love of pleasure, of riches, and other earthly vanities; the laxity in morals, revealing itself in the irresponsible attitude towards marriage, in the weakening of parental control, in the rising tide of divorce, in the deterioration in the standard of literature and of the press, and in the advocacy of theories that are the very negation of purity, of morality and chastity—these evidences of moral decadence, invading both the East and the West, permeating every stratum of society, and instilling their poison in its members of both sexes, young and old alike, blacken still further the scroll upon which are inscribed the manifold transgressions of an unrepentant humanity.” In 1948 he again stigmatizes modern society as being: “politically convulsed, economically disrupted, socially subverted, morally decadent and spiritually moribund”. By such oft-repeated words as these the Guardian sought to protect the Bahá’í communities and alert them to the dangers by which they were surrounded.

However, it was towards the end of his life that Shoghi Effendi dwelt more openly and frequently on this subject, pointing out that although Europe was the cradle of a “godless”, a “highly-vaunted yet lamentably defective civilization”, the foremost protagonist of that civilization was now the United States and that in that country, at the present time, its manifestations had led to a degree of unbridled materialism which now presented a danger to the entire world. In 1954, in a letter to the Bahá’ís of the United States, couched in terms he had never used before, he recapitulated the extraordinary privileges this Community had enjoyed, the extraordinary victories it had won, but said it stood at a most critical juncture in its history, not only its own history but its nation’s history, a nation he had described as “the shell that enshrines so precious a member of the world community of the followers” of Bahá’u’lláh. In this letter he pointed out that the country of which the American Bahá’ís formed a part is passing through a crisis which, in its spiritual, moral, social and political aspects, is of extreme seriousness—a seriousness which to a superficial observer is liable to be dangerously underestimated.

“The steady and alarming deterioration in the standard of morality as exemplified by the appalling increase of crime, by political corruption in ever-widening and ever-higher circles, by the loosening of the sacred ties of marriage, by the inordinate craving for pleasure and diversion, and by the marked and progressive slackening of parental control, is no doubt the most arresting and distressing aspect of the decline that has set in, and can be clearly perceived, in the fortunes of the entire nation.

“Parallel with this, and pervading all departments of life—an evil which the nation, and indeed all those within the capitalist system, though to a lesser degree, share with that state and its satellites regarded as the sworn enemies of that system—is the crass materialism, which lays excessive and ever-increasing emphasis on material well-being, forgetful of those things of the spirit on which alone a sure and stable foundation can be laid for human society. It is this same cancerous materialism, born originally in Europe, carried to excess in the North American continent, contaminating the Asiatic peoples and nations, spreading its ominous tentacles to the borders of Africa, and now invading its very heart, which Bahá’u’lláh in unequivocal and emphatic language denounced in His Writings, comparing it to a devouring flame and regarding it as the chief factor in precipitating the dire ordeals and world-shaking crises that must necessarily involve the burning of cities and the spread of terror and consternation in the hearts of men.”

Shoghi Effendi reminded us that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, during His visit to both Europe and America, had, from platform and pulpit, raised His voice “with pathetic persistence” against this “all-pervasive, pernicious materialism” and pointed out that as “this ominous laxity in morals, this progressive stress laid on man’s material pursuits and well-being” continued, the political horizon was also darkening “as witnessed by the widening of the gulf separating the protagonists of two antagonistic schools of thought which, however divergent in their ideologies, are to be commonly condemned by the upholders of the standard of the Faith of Bahá’u’lláh for their materialistic philosophies and their neglect of those spiritual values and eternal verities on which alone a stable and flourishing civilization can be ultimately established.”

The Guardian constantly called to our attention that the objectives, standards and practices of the present-day world were, for the most part, in opposition to or a corrupt form of what the Bahá’ís believe and seek to establish. The guidance he gave us in such matters was not confined to issues as blatant and burning as those cited in the above quotations. He educated us as well—if we accept to be educated by him—in matters of good taste, sound judgement and good breeding. So often he would say: this is a religion of the golden mean, the middle of the way, neither this extreme nor that. What he meant by this was not compromise but the very essence of the thought conveyed in these words of Bahá’u’lláh Himself: “*overstep not the bounds of moderation*”; “*whoso cleaveth to justice can, under no circumstances, transgress the limits of moderation.*” We live in perhaps

the most immoderate society the world has ever seen, shaking itself to pieces because it has turned its back on God and refused His Messenger.

Shoghi Effendi did not see this society with the eyes that we see it. Had he done so he would not have been our guide and our shield. Whereas the Manifestation of God appears from celestial realms and brings a new age with Him, the Guardian's station and function were entirely different. He was very much a man of the twentieth century. Far from being alien to the world in which he lived, one might say he represented the best of it in his clear and logical mind, his unembarrassed, uninhibited appraisal of it. His understanding of the weaknesses of others, however, produced in him no compromise, no acceptance of wrong trends as evils to be condoned because they were universal. Too much stress cannot be laid on this point. We are prone to think that because a thing is general it is the right thing; because our leaders and scholars hold a view, it is the right view; because experts assure us that this, that or the other thing is proper and enduring they speak with the voice of authority. No such complacency afflicted Shoghi Effendi. He saw everything in the world today—in the realm of politics, morality, art, music, literature, medicine, social science—against the framework of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings. Did it fit into the guiding lines laid down by Bahá'u'lláh? It was a sound trend. Did it not? It was on a wrong and dangerous track.

Shoghi Effendi gave us, over the years, what I like to call “guiding lines”, clarification of great principles, doctrines and thoughts in our religion. Only a few can be arbitrarily selected for a work of this scope, but they are ones which to me have a special significance in shaping our Bahá'í outlook in the world we live in today. One of the most fallacious modern doctrines, diametrically opposed to the teachings of all religions, is that man is not responsible for his acts but is excused his wrongdoing because it is brought about by conditioning factors. This is a contention with which Shoghi Effendi had no patience, for it was not in accordance with the words of Bahá'u'lláh: *“That which traineth the world is justice, for it is upheld by two pillars, reward and punishment. These two pillars are the source of life to the world.”* Individuals, nations, Bahá'í communities, the human race, are all held accountable for their acts. Though there are many factors involved in all our decisions, the essence of Bahá'í belief is that God gives us the chance, the help, and the strength, to make the right one and that for it we will be rewarded and failing it we will be punished. This concept is almost the opposite of the teachings of modern psychology. This principle was brought home very vividly to me in my personal life. When the beloved Guardian did me the great and unexpected honour of choosing me to be his wife, I had the idea that for me, at least, all my troubles of wondering what my spiritual end would be were over. I was going to be near him. It was like dying and going to heaven where nothing more could get at me. One day, in the course of conversation, Shoghi Effendi said to me words to this effect: “Your destiny lies in the palm of your own hand!” I was horrified! It had come back to me, the life-long struggle to do the right thing for the sake of my own soul.

The Guardian's relationship with the entire Bahá'í world, as well as individuals, officials and non-Bahá'ís, was based on this principle. He was immensely patient, but in the end punishment was swift and just; his rewards were swift too, and to me seemed always greater than deserved by those who received them.

The highest standards of literature and language are reflected, whether in Persian, Arabic or English, in the writings of the Báb, Bahá'u'lláh, ‘Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi. No debased coin of words was used by any of them. I remember once when a pilgrim sincerely and modestly remonstrated with the Guardian about the difficulty ordinary people in America had in understanding his writings and suggested he make them a little bit easier. The Guardian pointed out, firmly, that this was not the answer; the answer was for people to raise their standard of English, adding, in his beautiful voice with its beautiful pronunciation—and a slight twinkle in his eye—that he himself wrote in English. The implication that a great deal of the writing on the other side of the

Atlantic did not always fall in this category was quite clear! He urged Bahá'í magazines to use an “elevated and impressive style” and certainly set the example himself at all times.

When I was first married I was a little apprehensive of what the Guardian's attitude might be towards modern art. Loving the great periods of art in our own and other cultures I wondered what I would do if I found he admired modern trends in painting, sculpture and architecture. I need have had no fears. Occasionally we were able to visit famous European museums and art galleries together. I soon discovered, to my great relief, that his love of symmetry and beauty, of a mature style and a noble expression of real values, was deep and true. The blind search for a new style, however sincere and logical it may be, which has followed upon the general crumbling of the old order of things in the world, Shoghi Effendi never mistook for the evidence of a new, evolved expression of art, least of all a Bahá'í expression of anything. He knew history too well to mistake the lowest point of decay, the reflection of a decadent and moribund society, for the birth of a new style inspired by Bahá'u'lláh's World Order! He knew the fruit is the end product of the growth of the tree and not the first; he knew that a world system, drawing strength from world peace and unification, must come first and then be followed by the flowering, in the Golden Age, of a new, mature expression of art. Lest there be any doubt of this, look at the superstructure of the Shrine of the Báb and the International Archives Building which he built; look at the four designs of the Temples for Mt Carmel, Tehran, Sydney and Kampala he himself chose. They were admittedly conservative, based on past experience; but they were also based on styles that had withstood the test of time and would continue to do so until a new and organically evolved style could be produced as the world evolved under the influence of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings. I wrote down one remark of his made when viewing a design that had been submitted for the Kampala Temple: “Poor Africans! They became Bahá'ís to gather under such monstrosities?” He came to the defence of his much-loved brothers and sisters in that continent through ordering for them a design created at the World Centre and which he himself liked and approved. One has only to turn to his own letters for confirmation. In letters he wrote in 1956 to two different National Assemblies about two different Temples, his secretary stated his views as follows: “He feels that, as this is the Mother Temple . . . it has a very great importance; and must under all circumstances be dignified, and not represent an extremist point of view in architecture. No one knows how the styles of the present day may be judged two or three generations from now; but the Bahá'ís cannot afford to build a second Temple if the one they build at the present time should seem too extreme and unsuitable at a future date.” “He was sorry to have to disappoint Mr. F _____ . . . However, there was no possible question of accepting something as extreme as this. The Guardian feels very strongly that, regardless of what the opinion of the latest school of architecture may be on the subject, the styles represented at present all over the world in architecture are not only very ugly, but completely lack the dignity and grace which must be at least partially present in a Bahá'í House of Worship. One must always bear in mind that the vast majority of human beings are not either very modern or very extreme in their tastes, and that what the advanced school may think is marvellous is often very distasteful indeed to just plain, simple people.”

The same thoughts that moved the Guardian as regards literature and art applied to his feelings about music, of which he had a great love.

What one gleans from the above is that the Guardian desired to safeguard the Cause, to maintain for it and its precious institutions a standard of dignity and beauty that would protect its Holy Name, the sacred nature of its institutions, its international character, its newness and promise, from the whims and caprices of an age in transition and from the undue influence of a corrupt, wholly western civilization. For it should be borne in mind that until the present time the majority of the followers of the Faith have been of Aryan extraction, whereas the majority of the human race is not. I remember watching the face of the first Japanese Bahá'í pilgrim when Shoghi Effendi, with those wonderfully expressive eyes of his fixed upon him, said that as the majority of the

human race was not white there was no reason why the majority of Bahá'ís should be white. The emphasis and openness with which Shoghi Effendi stated this was clearly a revelation to this man from the Far East who was returning from a protracted stay in the United States.

How many Bahá'ís appreciate the fact that just as chastity, honesty and truthfulness are required of them, courtesy, dignity and reverence are qualities upheld in the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh? One of Shoghi Effendi's early cables to America stresses this point: "Dignity of Cause requires restraint use Master's voice record." The sense of the holiness of things is one of the greatest benedictions for man. Many times the Guardian brought this to our attention in instructions such as these: "Ensure no one photographs Báb's portrait during display." To gaze upon the reproduction of the face of the Manifestation of God, were it the Báb or Bahá'u'lláh, was a unique privilege, to be approached as such, not just as one more reproduction to be passed about from hand to hand.

Shoghi Effendi's exposition of the teachings on the role certain nations have been called upon to play in history at the inception of the Bahá'í Cycle was illuminating, thought-provoking and often at sharp variance with our own limited understanding. The reason Persia was the Cradle of the Faith and America the Cradle of its Administrative Order was based on the teaching that the greatest power in the world is the power of the Holy Spirit, a divine alchemy which can transmute the base material of copper into the precious metal of gold. In *The Advent of Divine Justice* the Guardian educated us in this fundamental truth: "To contend", he wrote, "that the innate worthiness, the high moral standard, the political aptitude and social attainments of any race or nation is the reason for the appearance in its midst of any of these Divine Luminaries, would be an absolute perversion of historical facts, and would amount to a complete repudiation of the undoubted interpretation placed upon them, so clearly and emphatically, by both Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá." He goes on to say that such races and nations as are chosen specially by God must unreservedly recognize and courageously testify to the fact that they have been so chosen because of their crying needs, their lamentable degeneracy, their irremediable perversity, and not because of any racial superiority, political capacity or spiritual virtue. For such reasons as these the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh had chosen Persia to be the Cradle of the Faith and America the Cradle of its World Order. Through the fulfilment of this great law the glory of God is manifest and man is made to realize that the source of his own powers and glory is God alone. That members of "one of the most backward, the most cowardly, and perverse of peoples" should, when they accepted the Divine Message, have been transformed into a race of heroes "fit to effect in turn a similar revolution in the life of mankind", was proof of the regenerating spirit of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation. The same principle applied, Shoghi Effendi stated, to America: "It is precisely by reason of the patent evils which, notwithstanding its other admittedly great characteristics and achievements, an excessive and binding materialism has unfortunately engendered within it" that it has been singled out to become the standard-bearer of the New World Order. "It is by means such as this", he went on to say, "that Bahá'u'lláh can best demonstrate to a heedless generation His Almighty power to raise up from the very midst of a people immersed in a sea of materialism, a prey to one of the most virulent and long-standing forms of racial prejudice, and notorious for its political corruption, lawlessness and laxity in moral standards, men and women who, as time goes by, will increasingly exemplify those essential virtues of self-renunciation, of moral rectitude, of chastity, of indiscriminating fellowship, of holy discipline and spiritual insight" which will fit them to play a preponderating role in the establishment of Bahá'u'lláh's World System.

When Shoghi Effendi was beginning to write *The Advent of Divine Justice*, he was one day expatiating on this theme and suddenly stated that the United States was the most corrupt country politically in the world. I was simply stupefied by this remark as I had always taken it for granted that it was because of our system of democracy and our political prominence that God had chosen us to build His Administrative Order! I ventured to remonstrate and said surely Persia was more corrupt politically. He said no, America was the most corrupt

politically. He must have seen in my face how hard and unbelievable this new idea was for me to accept for he suddenly pointed his finger at me and said: "Swallow it, it is good for you." I swallowed it and kept silent, and as he elaborated this theme, and when he wrote his memorable passages on it, and, indeed, in the course of years, I came to see clearly how he was enunciating, clarifying from the teachings, great spiritual laws and truths in which lie healing and strength for us if we but grasp them. We derive no advantage, as Bahá'ís, from having the wrong concepts, from colouring the teachings of the Divine Educator with our limited, prejudiced, environment-produced ideas. Nothing is improved or rendered more serviceable by distortion. That is why I think of these great themes, these statements of truth given us by the Guardian, as guiding lines of thought which enable us to see things as they are and obtain a correct understanding of our Faith.

This factual, realistic approach of the Guardian meant that he not only estimated the true force of the Cause but was also aware of its limitations at the present time. He never confused the two. In a letter to a non-Bahá'í youth leader in the United States, in 1926, he said: "We believe that the spirit of the Cause is gradually directing peoples and nations, and that all Bahá'ís are called upon to do is to persevere in their advocacy of the sublime principles revealed by Bahá'u'lláh. They will never hold aloof from the great humanitarian endeavours of the true leaders of public thought and always welcome every opportunity of raising their voice, in conjunction with other movements, on behalf of peace, truth and justice." In spite of this, he had no illusions as to how much power we could wield. In July 1939 he wrote to the American National Assembly (representing the freest and most powerful community of the Bahá'í world) that they could not impose their will upon those in whose hands the destiny of the Persian Bahá'ís lay; that they were not yet capable of launching a campaign of sufficient magnitude to capture the imagination and arouse the conscience of mankind and thereby ensure the redress of the wrongs their persecuted brethren were suffering; that they could wield no power at the present time in the councils of nations commensurate with the claims and greatness of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh; nor could they assume a position and exercise responsibilities that would enable them to "reverse the process which is urging so tragically the decline of human society and its institutions."

It was, Shoghi Effendi wrote in 1948, "not ours to speculate, or dwell upon the immediate workings of an inscrutable Providence presiding alike over the falling fortunes of a dying Order and the rising glory of a Plan holding within it the seeds of the world's spiritual revival and ultimate redemption." Many times he spoke to the pilgrims about two plans: our own internal one—the workings of the Divine Plan, which lies in our hands to implement—and Almighty God's over-all Plan for the entire planet, which He was implementing in His own way, through forces outside the Cause, to achieve and hasten His own ends. To the degree the Bahá'ís work within the framework of their own Plan and labour for its speedy fulfilment—the establishment of the Kingdom of the Lord of Hosts throughout the world—will Bahá'u'lláh's blessings be rained upon them; to the degree to which the world ignores His Message and pursues its own perverse ends will the visitation of God descend on peoples and nations alike, pounding, crumbling, grinding them into one world because they have refused to create that world peaceably through the instructions given them by God's Messenger in this day.

The sharp distinction between the coalescence of Bahá'u'lláh's followers in a unified, spiritually motivated world system and the disintegration, side-taking and hatred decimating the races, religions and political parties of the world, was constantly pointed out by the Guardian, and the dangers involved if the Bahá'ís did not hold themselves strictly aloof from these dissensions repeatedly emphasized. In September 1938, as humanity drifted towards the precipice of a second world war, Shoghi Effendi cabled a stern warning and unambiguous instruction to the believers on this policy of strict neutrality: "Loyalty World Order Bahá'u'lláh security its basic institutions both imperatively demand all its avowed supporters particularly its champion-builders American continent in these days when sinister uncontrollable forces are deepening cleavage sundering peoples nations creeds classes

resolve despite pressure fast crystallizing public opinion abstain individually collectively in word action informally as well in all official utterances publications from assigning blame taking sides however indirectly in recurring political crises now agitating ultimately engulfing human society. Grave apprehension lest cumulative effect such compromises disintegrate fabric clog channel grace that sustains system God's essentially supranational supernatural order so laboriously evolved so recently established."

The patriotism of Bahá'ís is not manifest in an allegiance to national prejudices and political systems but rather in two ways: to serve one's country by fostering its highest spiritual interests and by implicit obedience to government, whatever that government may be. The Guardian pointed out, in 1932, that the extension of Bahá'í activities throughout the world and "the variety of the communities which labour under divers forms of government, so essentially different in their standards, policies and methods, make it absolutely essential for all . . . members of any one of these communities to avoid any action that might, by arousing the suspicion or exciting the antagonism of any one government, involve their brethren in fresh persecutions . . ." and went on to say: "How else, might I ask, could such a far-flung Faith, which transcends political and social boundaries, which will have to rely increasingly, as it forges ahead, on the good-will and support of the diversified and contending governments of the earth—how else could such a Faith succeed in preserving its unity, in safeguarding its interests, and in ensuring the steady and peaceful development of its institutions?" On another occasion Shoghi Effendi wrote: "Let them proclaim that in whatever country they reside, and however advanced their institutions, or profound their desire to enforce the laws, and apply the principles enunciated by Bahá'u'lláh, they will, unhesitatingly, subordinate the operation of such laws and the application of such principles to the requirements of their respective governments. Theirs is not the purpose, while endeavouring to conduct and perfect the administrative affairs of their Faith, to violate, under any circumstances, the provisions of their country's constitution, much less to allow the machinery of their Administration to supersede the government of their respective countries." A telegram of the Guardian, sent in 1930 to one of the Near Eastern Assemblies, points very clearly to the correct Bahá'í attitude: "Unless government objects formation Assembly essential". The Bahá'ís, as Shoghi Effendi said so aptly, belong to no political party but to "God's party". They are the agents of His Divine Polity.

The freedom of a sovereign state to pursue its own policies—however detrimental they might be to Bahá'í interests—was upheld by Shoghi Effendi in 1929 when the Soviet Government expropriated the first Bahá'í Temple of the world. In spite of the sorrow this action caused the Guardian, he wrote that because of the articles of its own constitution the authorities had acted "within their recognized and legitimate rights". When every appeal had failed of its purpose, he instructed the Bahá'ís in that country to obey the decrees of their Government, trusting that in time, as he wrote, God would "lift the veil that now obscures the vision of their rulers, and reveal the nobility of aim, the innocence of purpose, the rectitude of conduct, and the humanitarian ideals that characterize the as yet small yet potentially powerful Bahá'í communities in every land and under any government."

It must not be thought that as this Faith grew in strength and passed from victory to victory there was a change in this fundamental policy enunciated by Shoghi Effendi only eight years after he became Guardian. Far from it. In 1955 he cabled a message to all National Assemblies, at a time when the number of countries enrolled under the banner of the Faith had almost doubled during two years, appealing to the believers who were engaged in the mightiest Crusade ever launched since the inception of the Faith "whether residing homelands overseas however repressive regimes under which they labour ponder anew full implications essential requirements their stewardship Cause Bahá'u'lláh . . . rise higher levels consecration vigilantly combat all forms misrepresentations eradicate suspicions dispel misgivings silence criticisms through still more compelling demonstration loyalty

their respective governments win maintain strengthen confidence civil authorities their integrity sincerity reaffirm universality aims purposes Faith proclaim spiritual character its fundamental principles assert non-political character its Administrative institutions . . .”

There are three factors involved in this question of loyalty to government yet complete aloofness from politics: one is obedience, another is wisdom and the third is the use of approved legal channels. Too often the factor of wisdom is overlooked, and yet the Guardian made it abundantly clear that it should always be considered, not only in these words, “the variety of the communities which labour under divers forms of government . . . make it absolutely essential for all . . . members of any one of these communities to avoid any action that might, by arousing the suspicion or exciting the antagonism of any one government, involve their brethren in fresh persecutions . . .” but in his repeated instructions to different communities and individuals that they must exercise the greatest wisdom in serving the Faith. In a world where press and radio are hourly pouring out accusations, indictments and abuse upon the systems and policies of other nations, the Bahá’ís cannot be too wise. When one remembers the pride and joy of Shoghi Effendi when in the very heart of Islam the first Spiritual Assembly was formed, the lavish praise he bestowed upon the pioneer responsible—who was of Jewish background in addition to being a Bahá’í and thus endangered his life twice over—and recalls that for two years this man did not open his mouth to betray he was a Bahá’í, until the day when, in fear and trembling and with a prayer in his heart, he invited his first prospective believer into the back of his shop and began to broach the subject of the Faith, one gets an idea of what Shoghi Effendi meant by wisdom.

In various countries he forbade the Bahá’ís to seek publicity and told them to shun all contact with certain sects and nationalities who, if they heard of the Faith or accepted it, could place the entire work of the pioneers in jeopardy. This was the essence of wisdom, and every time it was ignored it led to disaster.

On the other hand, in different countries at different times, the Guardian strongly urged the Assemblies and the pioneers, wherever the way was open to do so, to protect the interests of the Faith through legal channels and through securing for it legal recognition, as well as through ensuring the support of public opinion through the media of the press and radio.

In such matters of policy as these, however, which affect the international interests and well-being of the Faith, guidance and protection must come from the World Centre, which, by its very nature, is the sole authority in a position to use its judgement on such vital and delicate questions.

Another great guiding line of thought was the Guardian’s exposition of what unity means in the Bahá’í teachings. Shoghi Effendi wrote that “the principle of unification which” the Cause “advocates and with which it stands identified”, the enemies of the Faith “have misconceived as a shallow attempt at uniformity”; “Let there be no misgivings as to the animating purpose of the world-wide Law of Bahá’u’lláh . . . it repudiates excessive centralization on the one hand, and disclaims all attempts at uniformity on the other. Its watchword is unity in diversity . . .” The principle of the Oneness of Mankind, Shoghi Effendi stated, though it aimed at creating “a world organically unified in all the essential aspects of its life” was nevertheless to be a world “infinite in the diversity of the national characteristics of its federated units.” He wrote of “the highly diversified Bahá’í society of the future” and, urging the Bahá’ís to pay special attention to winning the adherence to the Faith of different races, said: “A blending of these highly differentiated elements of the human race, harmoniously interwoven into the fabric of an all-embracing Bahá’í fraternity and assimilated through the processes of a divinely-appointed Administrative Order, and contributing each its share to the enrichment and glory of Bahá’í community life, is surely an achievement the contemplation of which must warm and thrill every Bahá’í heart.” This Faith, Shoghi

Effendi wrote, “does not ignore, nor does it attempt to suppress, the diversity of ethnical origins, of climate, of history, of language and tradition, of thought and habit, that differentiate the peoples and nations of the world.”

In an age of proselytizing, when nations and blocks of nations, various societies and organizations are hammering away at people’s minds day and night, seeking to make them over in their own image, seeking to force their political systems, their clothes, their way of living, their housing, their medical systems, their philosophy and moral and social codes on each other, it is surely of the greatest importance for Bahá’ís to ponder their own teachings and the illuminating interpretation of them given by their Guardian. The Western World today has a passion for uniformity. As fast as it can it is trying to make everyone alike. The result is that while much good is undoubtedly being spread, and material benefits are reaching an ever larger number of people, many things diametrically opposed to the methods and objectives of Bahá’u’lláh are also taking place.

One of the things our western materialism is rapidly spreading—in addition to irreligion, immorality and the worship of money and possessions—is a wave of despair, unrest and a feeling of deep inferiority among the so-called backward peoples of the world. We might well pause to contrast the impact—so deadly—that this self-importance, self-satisfaction and wealth is having upon other peoples with where the Guardian placed the emphasis in his relation to such peoples. Why did Shoghi Effendi keep and publish such exhaustive lists of the “races” and the “tribes” enlisted under the banner of the Faith? Did he perhaps collect them, each as a separate pearl, to weave into precious adornments for the body of Bahá’u’lláh’s Cause? Why did he hang on the walls of the Mansion in Bahji a picture of the first Pygmy Bahá’í, and the first descendant of the Inca Indians to accept the Faith? Surely it was not as curiosities or trophies but rather because the beloved Josephs of the world were come home to the tent of their Father. So well I remember when Shoghi Effendi discovered that one of his pilgrims was a descendant of the old royal family of Hawaiian kings. He seemed to radiate with a joy and delight that was almost tangible, and this glow enveloped a man whose portion in life had been mostly compounded of scorn for his native blood! It must not be thought that such things were personal peculiarities of Shoghi Effendi or matters of policy. Far, far from it. It was the reflection of the very essence of the teachings that each division of the human race is endowed with gifts of its own needed to make the new Order of Bahá’u’lláh diversified, rich and perfect.

Not only did Shoghi Effendi preach this, he actively pursued it, through announcements, appeals and instructions to Bahá’í Assemblies: “First all red Indian Assembly consolidated Macy Nebraska” he cabled triumphantly in 1949. Constantly remembering ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s words in the *Tablets of the Divine Plan* to “give great importance to teaching the Indians, i.e., the aborigines of America”, Shoghi Effendi pursued this objective until the last months of his life, when he wrote, in July 1957, to the Canadian National Assembly, that the “long overdue conversion” of the American Indians, the Eskimos and other minorities should receive such an impetus “as to astonish and stimulate the members of all Bahá’í communities throughout the length and breadth of the Western Hemisphere”.

A year before, in one of Shoghi Effendi’s letters to the United States National Assembly, his secretary had written: “The beloved Guardian feels that sufficient attention is not being paid to the matter of contacting minorities in the United States . . . He feels your Assembly should appoint a special committee to survey the possibilities of this kind of work, and then instruct local Assemblies accordingly, and in the meantime encourage the Bahá’ís to be active in this field, which is one open to everybody, as the minorities are invariably lonely, and often respond to kindness much more quickly than the well-established majority of the population.”

The natural outcome of this policy is the unique attitude the Bahá'í Faith has towards minorities, which was set forth so clearly by Shoghi Effendi in *The Advent of Divine Justice*: “To discriminate against any race, on the ground of its being socially backward, politically immature, and numerically in a minority, is a flagrant violation of the spirit that animates the Faith”. Once a person accepts this Faith “every differentiation of class, creed or colour must automatically be obliterated, and never be allowed, under any pretext, and however great the pressure of events or public opinion, to reassert itself.” Shoghi Effendi then goes on to state a principle so at variance with the political thinking of the entire world that it deserves far more consideration than we usually give it: “If any discrimination is at all to be tolerated, it should be a discrimination not against, but rather in favour of the minority, be it racial or otherwise. Unlike the nations and peoples of the earth, be they of the East or of the West, democratic or authoritarian, communist or capitalist, whether belonging to the Old World or the New, who either ignore, trample upon, or extirpate, the racial, religious or political minorities within the sphere of their jurisdiction, every organized community enlisted under the banner of Bahá'u'lláh should feel it to be its first and inescapable obligation to nurture, encourage, and safeguard every minority belonging to any faith, race, class, or nation within it. So great and vital is this principle that in such circumstances, as when an equal number of ballots has been cast in an election, or where the qualifications for any office are balanced as between the various races, faiths or nationalities within the community, priority should unhesitatingly be accorded the party representing the minority, and this for no other reason except to stimulate and encourage it, and afford it an opportunity to further the interests of the community. Shoghi Effendi once expressed the workings of this principle so succinctly and brilliantly that I wrote it down in his own words: “the minority of a majority is more important than the majority of a minority.” In other words, it is not the numerical strength or weakness in the nation that is the index of a minority, but its numerical strength or weakness inside the Bahá'í community holding the election—so great is the protection of any minority. The Guardian used to say that when the day came that a Bahá'í state existed, the rights of non-Bahá'í religious minorities would be rigorously protected by the Bahá'ís.

The Bahá'í Faith not only safeguards society as a whole and protects the rights of minorities, it upholds the rights of the individual—internationally the individual nation, and within the community, the individual human being. “The unity of the human race, as envisaged by Bahá'u'lláh,” Shoghi Effendi wrote, “implies the establishment of a world commonwealth . . . in which the autonomy of its state members and the personal freedom and initiative of the individuals that compose them are definitely and completely safeguarded.”

Staunchly as the Guardian upheld the authority of the Assemblies, he was also a stout defender of the individual believer and had a deep bond of love with the “rank and file” of the followers of Bahá'u'lláh. Scarcely an appeal was made to the Bahá'í world or to national communities that did not address the individual Bahá'í and not only encourage his initiative, but point out that without it all plans must fail. In a letter to the American National Assembly in 1927 he wrote: “In my hours of prayer at the Holy Shrines, I will supplicate that the light of Divine Guidance may illumine your path, and enable you to utilize in the most effective manner that spirit of individual enterprise which, once kindled in the breasts of each and every believer and directed by the discipline of the majestic Law of Bahá'u'lláh, imposed upon us, will carry our beloved Cause forward to achieve its glorious destiny.” He pointed out, in *The Advent of Divine Justice*, that it was the duty of every believer “as the faithful trustee of ‘Abdu'l-Bahá’s Divine Plan . . . to initiate, promote, and consolidate” any activity he or she considered would assist in the fulfilment of that Plan, always providing this was done within the limits fixed by the administrative principles of the Faith. He told the American National Assembly that while retaining the guidance of Bahá'í affairs and the right of final decision in its own hands, it should “foster the sense of interdependence and co-partnership, of understanding and mutual confidence” between itself and the Assemblies and individual believers.

The humble have ever been singled out for unique blessings. In 1925 Shoghi Effendi wrote: "Not infrequently, nay oftentimes, the most lowly, untutored and inexperienced among the friends will, by sheer inspiring force of selfless and ardent devotion, contribute a distinct and memorable share to a highly involved discussion in any given Assembly." The Guardian was a passionate admirer of the meek and pure in heart and disliked aggressive and, particularly, ambitious individuals. His appeals for pioneers made his attitude quite plain. During the Seven Year Plan he wrote: "no believer, however humble," was to feel himself debarred from participation in the great pioneer movement taking place, and obstacles should not be put in the way of those who wished to go forth and serve, "whether young or old, rich or poor". He went very much further, in *The Advent of Divine Justice*, when he wrote: "all must participate, however humble their origin, however limited their experience, however restricted their means, however deficient their education, however pressing their cares and preoccupations, however unfavourable the environment in which they live . . . How often . . . have the lowliest adherents of the Faith, unschooled and utterly inexperienced, and with no standing whatever, and in some cases devoid of intelligence, been capable of winning victories for their Cause, before which the most brilliant achievements of the learned, the wise, and the experienced have paled." Shoghi Effendi then points out that if Christ, the Son, was able to infuse into Peter, who was so ignorant he divided his food into seven portions and rested when he came to the seventh, knowing it was the Sabbath, such spirit as to enable him to become His successor, then what must the power of Bahá'u'lláh, the Father, be to empower the puniest and most insignificant of His followers to achieve wonders that will dwarf the achievements of the first apostle of Jesus. Not satisfied with emphasizing the duties of the humble, the Guardian, in no uncertain terms, also admonished those of a different category: "It is therefore imperative for the individual American believer, and particularly for the affluent, the independent, the comfort-loving and those obsessed by material pursuits, to step forward, and dedicate their resources, their time, their very lives to a Cause of such transcendence that no human eye can even dimly perceive its glory." He said, most touchingly, that "the heart of the Guardian cannot but leap with joy, and his mind derive fresh inspiration, at every evidence testifying to the response of the individual to his allotted task."

The question of who is a believer and how he becomes one and is knit into the supple but well organized, world-wide Administrative Order of the Faith, was quite clear to Shoghi Effendi—though not always so clear to the Bahá'ís themselves. It must be understood that at all times the Guardian saw the Cause as a growing and living thing, expanding at different rates in different places. There must be uniformity in essentials; there could be and needed to be diversity in other matters. A Ford car, for instance, being a machine, is the same car everywhere. But the members of a large family, not remotely being machines, are all different, each at a different age, at a different stage of growth. No one expects of the five-month-old grandson the same conduct and understanding as the university-professor-of-physics grandfather of the family. From the very beginning more was expected of the old, oriental communities, particularly in Persia, than of the younger, western Bahá'í communities such as those in America and Europe, and a great deal more was expected of these than, for instance, the still younger communities in Africa and the Pacific. We must always bear in mind that Islam, next to our own Faith, is the world's youngest revealed religion. The Bahá'ís coming from this background are closer, so to speak, to the laws given us by Bahá'u'lláh because His law grew out of and at the same time abrogated, in many instances, the laws of Islam. It is therefore not surprising that the believers who came from this background should have been expected to conform to the Bahá'í pattern in matters of personal status and to follow from the outset those laws and ordinances of Bahá'u'lláh which could be applied in the society in which they lived, and that those who accepted the Faith and came from the background of either paganism or much older revealed religions should require more, gradual and patient education until they too could do so.

Before trying to understand what entitles a person to be a Bahá'í, let us first try to see how the Guardian conceived of and managed the Cause of God. If we study the course of past religions we see that one of the main

ills which has affected them was the strong tendency of their followers to want to get the mobile, expansive, inspiring power of the Faith into moulds, to crystallize it into forms. A religion is a growing thing. Shoghi Effendi himself gave the most beautiful and poetic description of this natural process of growth in his message to the Intercontinental Conference held in Chicago in 1953, in which he likened the history of religion to a tree, which grew for thousands of years, from the days of Adam until the days of the Báb, putting forth branches, leaves, buds, blossoms and finally producing a Holy seed which was the Manifestation and Revelation of the Báb. That Seed, ground in the mill of martyrdom after only six years of existence, had yielded an oil whose light had flickered upon Bahá'u'lláh in the Síyáh-Chál, whose fire had gathered brilliance in Baghdad and shone resplendently in Adrianople, whose rays had later been cast upon the fringes of the American, European and Australian continents, whose radiance was now overspreading the entire globe during this Formative Age and whose full splendour, he said, was destined in the course of future millenniums to suffuse the entire planet. How nascent then must be our present stage of development!

Little minds instinctively seek to circumscribe the things around them, to pull in the walls to the size of their own small existence, to get everything squared off to their own scale so they can feel safe and snug. This process invariable means that a lot of the material used in their walls is from the last house they lived in, is very much what they were accustomed to before they moved, so to speak. Big minds, on the contrary, push the horizons farther away, create new frontiers, leave room for growth. It is not difficult, when one reads over the letters to and from the Guardian, to see how he kept a perfect balance between what was wise and essential for the present stage of the Faith, and what would unduly circumscribe its unfoldment and crystallize its living teachings into a premature form, too small, too national or provincial, too sectarian or racial, to expand into a World Order, with its attendant world government and world society. I have often wondered in the course of my Bahá'í life why so many people who are eminently practical and sensible in their lives as business men, doctors, lawyers, ditch-diggers or whatever it may be, do not carry these faculties into their Bahá'í activity. It is almost as if to them Utopia was a film and all you had to do was project it on a screen and it would become reality.

Not so the Guardian. He went about his own tasks—building up the Administrative Order, implementing the Divine Plan of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, organizing his work and the work of the Bahá'í world—very much as the great Renaissance painters created their vast frescoes and canvases. First came the cartoon, the whole idea, scale, colour, proportion; then it was quartered, divided into a grid of squares; this was transferred to the permanent surface and the great guiding lines filled in, the outlines, the figures in shadow; then came the detail and colours, applied with infinite patience until perfection was achieved. Such was the method of Shoghi Effendi, and he allowed no one to start painting in figures or details before the canvas was ready to take them. What does this mean in actual facts?

So many examples come to one's mind. After the Master's passing, we wanted the House of Justice the next day. It had to wait forty-two years, until a foundation to support it, tier on tier of local Assemblies and National Assemblies was built, on which it could firmly stand. We wanted the Aqdas in English. Slowly, much of it was translated and given us by Shoghi Effendi himself as he repeatedly quoted from it; the few laws and ordinances and details not already given were to come later; they required very careful work, part of which he undertook himself at the end of his life. Many times an enthusiastic individual or group wanted to start, now, at once, in some quiet country spot, a Bahá'í settlement where all the economic teachings could be put in practice—the Utopia projection on the flat not in the round—but the answer from Shoghi Effendi would come: now is not the time, concentrate on increasing the number of believers, groups, Assemblies. We wanted to build a school in the capital; no, not in the capital, where any failure would humiliate the Cause, with its limited funds and workers, but in the bush, a simple, humble beginning. We wanted a Bahá'í university—it never seemed to occur to the

writer, who in his own life probably never got into debt or tried to pretend he was a millionaire, that such an undertaking would paralyse every other national activity and even require funds, already so limited, that were being used to open the whole world to the Faith! Every instinct prevented Shoghi Effendi from embarking on what is known in commerce as over-expansion. Risks he would take, but always reasonable ones and never foolish ones. His judgement was equal to his faith. Miracles he firmly believed in, but he never treated the Almighty as if He were a conjuror. If we study the life of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, we see there too this wonderful balance between the practical, reasonable mind and the sublime assurance of faith.

A small, but no less indicative example comes to mind. What about Spiritualism? “The Guardian does not feel that this is the time for him to make any special statement on this subject”, his secretary wrote, “. . . there are more important things for the friends to concentrate their attention upon, namely, the establishment of new assemblies and groups.” So often the answer was the same, not the right time, not yet. Plant the Banner of Bahá’u’lláh in the farthest corners of the earth, bring into His fold humanity, lay the foundations of the Kingdom, don’t start putting knick-knacks about in a house not even built.

From the earliest days of his ministry Shoghi Effendi set about creating order in what was then a very small Bahá’í world, barely existing in some of the thirty-five countries which had received at least a ray of illumination from the Light of Bahá’u’lláh. The great, guiding lines were clear in his mind and as he grew older, and the community of believers grew and increased in experience, these lines became clearer and details were added. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá Himself, in His *Will and Testament*, had foreshadowed this unfoldment when He said of the Guardian, “*that day by day he may wax greater in happiness, in joy and spirituality, and may grow to become even as a fruitful tree.*” Time and space do not permit of a chronological recapitulation of this evolution. We must try to catch the great vision he gave us and see how the details were gradually filled in. So often, as I listened to and observed Shoghi Effendi, I felt he was the only real Bahá’í in the world. Everyone else, claiming to be a Bahá’í, had a portion of the Faith, an angle on it, a concept, however large, tintured by his own limitations, but the Guardian saw it as a whole, in all its greatness and perfect balance. He had not only the capacity to see but to analyse and express with brilliant clarity what he saw.

For instance, take this epitome of what he felt the Bahá’í Faith is in the scheme of things: “. . . it should be stated that the Revelation identified with Bahá’u’lláh abrogates unconditionally all the Dispensations gone before it, upholds uncompromisingly the eternal verities they enshrine, recognizes firmly and absolutely the Divine origin of their Authors, preserves inviolate the sanctity of their authentic Scriptures, disclaims any intention of lowering the status of their Founders or of abating the spiritual ideals they inculcate, clarifies and correlates their functions, reaffirms their common, their unchangeable and fundamental purpose, reconciles their seemingly divergent claims and doctrines, readily and gratefully recognizes their respective contributions to the gradual unfoldment of one Divine Revelation, unhesitatingly acknowledges itself to be but one link in the chain of continually progressive Revelations, supplements their teachings with such laws and ordinances as conform to the imperative needs, and are dictated by the growing receptivity, of a fast evolving and constantly changing society, and proclaims its readiness and ability to fuse and incorporate the contending sects and factions into which they have fallen into a universal Fellowship, functioning within the framework, and in accordance with the precepts, of a divinely conceived, a world-unifying, a world-redeeming Order.” Immediately one sees where this “greatest religious Dispensation in the spiritual history of mankind” fits into the panorama of history.

This Faith, “at once the essence, the promise, the reconciler, and the unifier of all religions”, had, as its “primary mission”, the establishment of a Divine Civilization. I remember in the course of a conversation Shoghi Effendi had with a former teacher of his at the American University in Beirut, how beautifully he answered this man’s

question as to what was the purpose of life to a Bahá'í. The Guardian answered that the object of life to a Bahá'í was to promote the oneness of mankind. He then went on to point out that Bahá'u'lláh had appeared at a time when His Message could and should be directed to the whole world and not merely to individuals; that salvation today was through world salvation, world change, world reform of society and that the world civilization resulting from this would in turn reflect upon the individuals composing it and lead to their redemption and reformation. Over and over Shoghi Effendi made it clear in his writings and talks that the two processes must go on together—reform of society, reform of personal character. There was never any doubt that individual regeneration, as he wrote to a non-Bahá'í in 1926, was the “sure and enduring foundation on which a reconstructed society” could develop and prosper. But how could one create a pattern for future society, even a tiny embryo of the future World Commonwealth of Bahá'u'lláh, if all around its fringes it was still interwoven with the fabric of that society which was dying out, must die out, to make way for the new?

Shoghi Effendi took up his scalpel—the interpretation of the writings of the Faith—and began to cut. Although the reading aright of our doctrines showed that there was only one religion, that of God Almighty, all down the ages, and the Prophets were its exponents at various times in history, the fact remained, Shoghi Effendi made us understand, that the duty of man in each new Dispensation was to adhere to it in all its forms and cut one's self away from the outer forms and secondary laws of the previous religion. How could any honest Christian remain in the church and pray for the coming of the Father and His Kingdom while in his heart he very well knew Bahá'u'lláh was the Father and the Kingdom was beginning to emerge through the establishment of His laws and system as reflected and embodied in the Administrative Order? The Bahá'ís—East and West—had vaguely understood this to a greater or lesser degree in different places, but now through the communications of the Guardian, they began to see a sharp line where shadow and light met, with no comfortable twilight zone of compromise with family feelings, community opinion, personal convenience left. You were expected to either get in or get out. This had a purifying and stiffening effect on the entire body of believers the world over and made them, as never before, conscious of the fact that they were a world body of people, the people of the new Day, of the new Dispensation. To use a homely simile: if Bahá'u'lláh had built the boat, it was the Master who had got up steam and Shoghi Effendi who cast off the hawsers and calmly set sail. As the years went by, not only the non-Bahá'ís began to look at us with new eyes, but we began to look at ourselves with new eyes. We gradually came to realize we were not a new aspect of the society in which we lived, we were the new society, we were the future.

It is in the light of this process that we must see how the emphasis shifted, over the years, in relation to the acceptance of new Bahá'ís. During the first decade-and-a-half of Shoghi Effendi's ministry Bahá'í bodies, in the West in particular, were encouraged to be sure that those who became Bahá'ís were well aware of the greatness of the step they took. A clear break with the past was required of them. “Otherwise”, Shoghi Effendi wrote in 1927, “those whose faith is still unripe may thereby remain indefinitely along the circumference and continue in their attitude of half-hearted allegiance to the teachings of the Cause in their entirety.” During those years the Faith rose in fame and stature, won in many western lands recognition as an independent religion with laws and a system of its own—greatly helped in this process by the ruling of a Muslim court in Egypt which stated we were not part of Islam but as distinct from it as Christianity or Judaism—and became increasingly acknowledged as a Faith in its own right. Shoghi Effendi, however, constantly vigilant and unnaturally sensitive to whatever affected the life of the Cause, detected a trend amongst the administrative institutions to carry his original instruction in such matters (given in 1933) that the Assemblies should be “slow to accept” new believers, too far. A new rigidity was in danger of frustrating the main animating purpose of all Bahá'í institutions—to convert mankind to the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. The Bahá'ís, in their eagerness to obey Shoghi Effendi's instructions, had gone to extremes and were so interested in screening applicants that it was getting difficult to become a Bahá'í at

all. In 1938 Shoghi Effendi, therefore, found it necessary to instruct the American Assemblies “to desist from insisting too rigidly on the minor observations and beliefs, which might prove a stumbling block in the way of any sincere applicant”, and pointed out that the duty of Bahá’í communities was to nurse the new believers, subsequent to their acceptance of the Faith, into Bahá’í maturity.

As the Faith grew in inner cohesion and strength, as National Assembly after National Assembly was formed in East and West and began to function strongly and systematically, as the people of the world became increasingly aware of the existence of this new religion as an independent Revelation with a system of its own, the instructions of Shoghi Effendi changed. Particularly during the great Ten Year Plan of Teaching and Consolidation the whole emphasis in relation to the enrolment of new Bahá’ís was modified; now we were strong, now our foundations had been unassailably laid, now we could deal, at last, at last, with the masses of mankind in all the countries of the world. Fling open the doors and bring them into the ark of Bahá’u’lláh’s salvation! The time had come to obey ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s injunction: “*Summon the people in these countries, capitals, islands, assemblies and churches to enter the Abhá Kingdom.*” In other words, having achieved his end Shoghi Effendi changed his tactic. He informed the American National Assembly that the fundamental and primary requisites a candidate should have were acceptance of the stations of the Báb, the Forerunner; Bahá’u’lláh, the Author; and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, the Exemplar of the Faith; submission to whatever They had revealed; loyal and steadfast adherence to the provisions of the Will of the Master; and close association with the spirit and form of the world-wide Bahá’í Administration. These were the “principal factors” and any attempt to analyse and elucidate further, he said, would only lead to barren discussion and controversy and be detrimental to the growth of the Cause. He ended up his exposition on this delicate subject by urging the friends, unless some particular circumstance made it absolutely necessary, to “refrain from drawing rigidly the line of demarcation”.

The Báb, Bahá’u’lláh, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Shoghi Effendi were the Great Teachers. Their ministries—each so different in character—were primarily devoted to the sublime aim of bringing all mankind under the tent of this healing, peace-giving, soul-regenerating Faith. Over and over again, insistently, for thirty-six years Shoghi Effendi rallied us to “the pre-eminent task of teaching the Faith to the multitudes . . . a task”, he assured us in his last Ridván Message to the Bahá’í world, “. . . at once so sacred, so fundamental, and so urgent; primarily involving and challenging every single individual; the bedrock on which the solidity and the stability of the multiplying institutions of a rising Order must rest—such a task must, in the course of this year, be accorded priority over every other Bahá’í activity”, a task to which Bahá’u’lláh Himself had accorded priority, as Shoghi Effendi repeatedly reminded us, supporting this with quotations such as these: “*Teach ye the Cause of God, O people of Bahá, for God hath prescribed unto every one the duty of proclaiming His Message, and regardeth it as the most meritorious of all deeds.*” “*Centre your energies in the propagation of the Faith of God.*” “*This is the day in which to speak. It is incumbent upon the people of Bahá to strive, with the utmost patience and forbearance, to guide the peoples of the world to the Most Great Horizon [Himself].*” “*Unloose your tongues, and proclaim unceasingly His Cause. This shall be better for you than all the treasures of the past and the future . . .*” Bahá’u’lláh attached such importance to the teaching of His Cause that He firmly admonishes His followers that whoso is unable to go forth himself, “*it is his duty to appoint him who will, in his stead, proclaim this Revelation*”. Shoghi Effendi wrote in 1938 that this “Mandate of Teaching, so vitally binding upon all,” should become “the all-pervading concern” of every individual Bahá’í and that the Assemblies should, at each of their sessions, set aside time for the “earnest and prayerful consideration of such ways and means as may foster the campaign of teaching.”

The Guardian made it quite clear that the one who was teaching should “refrain, at the outset, from insisting on such laws and observances as might impose too severe a strain on the seeker’s newly-awakened faith . . . Let him

not be content until he has infused into his spiritual child so deep a longing as to impel him to arise independently, in his turn, and devote his energies to the quickening of other souls, and the upholding of the laws and principles laid down by his newly-adopted Faith.”

If one compiled what the Guardian has written on the subject of teaching, it would be a good-sized book. But one sees throughout that the objective was clear, the duty fixed, the methods adaptable and fluid. Shoghi Effendi used so many words in connection with new Bahá'ís and their acceptance of Bahá'u'lláh: he called them “converts”, “candidates”, “avowed adherents”, “new believers”, “unreserved” supporters of the Faith and many other descriptive and satisfying names; he said they were “enrolled”, “converted”, “declared their faith”, “embraced the Faith”, “enlisted” under Bahá'u'lláh's banner, “espoused His Cause”, “joined the ranks” of the faithful and so on. In an age of banal, stereotyped clichés we might do well to remember this. I might add that I never heard him debase acceptance of the Supreme Manifestation of God into that horrible and meaningless phrase when applied to spiritual rebirth, “he signed his card”. Shoghi Effendi never gave up the correct use of the English language because certain words had developed an unpopular connotation. The Bahá'í Faith has neither priest nor missionary—but the Bahá'ís undertook “missionary journeys” for the avowed purpose of “conversion”.

THE PROSECUTION OF
'ABDU'L-BAHÁ'S DIVINE PLAN

In making any attempt to give a coherent picture of what Shoghi Effendi called the first epoch in the evolution of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Divine Plan—an epoch which he stated began in 1937 and would end in 1963, and comprised “three successive” crusades—one must go back and study his writings chronologically, for in them the clear reflection of his mind and the emergence of the scheduled pattern of his plans can be discerned. Ever since the passing of his beloved Master, the whole object of the Guardian's existence was to fulfil His wishes and complete His works. The Divine Plan, conceived by Him, in one of the darkest periods in human history was, Shoghi Effendi stated, “‘Abdu'l-Bahá's unique and grand design” embodied in His Tablets to the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada, with which the destinies of the followers of Bahá'u'lláh in the North American Continent would “for generations to come remain inextricably interwoven”; for twenty years it had been held in abeyance while the agencies of a slowly emerging Administrative Order were being created and perfected for “its efficient, systematic prosecution”. How much importance the Guardian attached to this fundamental concept, often stressed by him, we are prone to forget, so let us turn to his actual words. During the opening years of the first Seven Year Plan, in 1939, he wrote to the American community: “Through all the resources at their disposal, they are promoting the growth and consolidation of that pioneer movement for which the entire machinery of their Administrative Order has been primarily designed and erected.” Eighteen years later Shoghi Effendi's view on this subject was the same, for he wrote to one of the European National Assemblies, in August 1957, shortly before his passing: “Less substantial, however, has been the progress achieved in the all-important teaching field, and far inferior the acceleration in the vital process of individual conversion for which the entire machinery of the Administrative Order has been primarily and so laboriously erected.”

It was the Guardian who had “so laboriously erected” this “machinery”, with the help of willing and eager tools he found amongst the North American believers, who grasped his thought, obeyed his command and hastened to put into action his instructions. It was the Guardian alone who possessed the divine and indefeasible right to direct the battle of Bahá'u'lláh's forces of light against the forces of darkness. “*Soon*”, He had written, “*will the present day Order be rolled up and a new one spread out in its stead*”. It was an Order which had upset the very equilibrium of the world as men knew it. Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá had produced a scion not only capable of grasping Their vision, but of organizing both Their teachings and Their followers.

If we view aright what happened in 1937 at the beginning of the first Seven Year Plan, we see that Shoghi Effendi, now in his fortieth year, stepped out as the general leading an army—the North American Bahá'ís—and marched off to the spiritual conquest of the Western Hemisphere. While other generals famous in the eyes of the world, were leading vast armies to destruction all over the planet, fighting battles of unprecedented horror in Europe, Asia and Africa, this unknown general, unrecognized and unsung, was devising and prosecuting a campaign more vital and far-reaching than anything they could ever do. Their battles were inspired by national hates and ambitions, his by love and self-sacrifice. They fought for the preservation of dying concepts and values, for the past order of things. He fought for the future, with its radiant age of peace and unity, a world society and the Kingdom of God on earth. Their names and battles are slowly being forgotten, but Shoghi

Effendi's name and fame is rising steadily, and his victories rise in greatness with him, never to be forgotten. The sun of his genius and achievements will shine for a thousand years as part of the light of the Bahá'í Dispensation.

In reviewing the overwhelming volume of material on the subject of the Guardian's Plans, we must never forget that although the first organized implementation of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Spiritual Mandate to the American believers (and let us note that this term does not refer to the Bahá'ís of the United States alone but to the believers of North America) took place with the initiation of the first Seven Year Plan, a body of devoted American followers of the Faith, the majority of whom Shoghi Effendi pointed out were "women pioneers", had already arisen, in immediate response to the *Tablets of the Divine Plan* presented to the Eleventh Annual Bahá'í Convention in New York in 1919, and had proceeded to Australia, the northernmost capitals of Europe, most of its Central States, the Balkan Peninsula, the fringes of Africa and Latin America, some countries in Asia and the island of Tahiti in the Pacific Ocean. During thirty-six years Shoghi Effendi never forgot the services of these souls or ceased to name them. He made it clear, however, that such overseas teaching enterprises of the American Bahá'ís had been "tentative" and "intermittent". With the inauguration of the first Seven Year Plan a new epoch had begun.

When the Divine Plan will come to an end we do not know. The legend goes that where the rainbow touches earth there is a pot of gold, so the end of our glorious rainbow may well rest in the Golden Age of our Faith. The significance of the Divine Plan has been elaborated by the Guardian in innumerable passages. It was, he wrote, "the weightiest spiritual enterprise launched in recorded history", "the most potent agency for the development of the World Administrative System", "a primary factor in the birth and efflorescence of the World Order itself in both the East and the West." The American believers, "the privileged recipients of these epoch-making Tablets", "the vanguard of the dawn-breakers of Bahá'u'lláh's Order", were the ones in whose hands Providence had placed a key, the promulgation of the Divine Plan, with which they would unlock the door leading them to the fulfilment of their unimaginably glorious destiny. This Plan of the Master, as they faithfully prosecuted it through its unfolding phases, would, Shoghi Effendi assured them, lead, in the Golden Age of our Faith, to the fulfilment of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's own promise to them: their elevation to the "*throne of an everlasting dominion*", when "*the whole earth*" would "*resound with the praises*" of their "*majesty and greatness*."

With Shoghi Effendi everything was clear: there was The Plan, and then there were plans and plans! There were, after the inauguration of the first Seven Year Plan, in the course of many years, and in various parts of the world, a Nineteen Month, Two Year, Three Year, Forty-five Month, Four-and-a-Half Year, Five Year, Six Year and other plans; but whether given by him, or spontaneously initiated by the Bahá'ís themselves, he knew where to place them in the scheme of things. There was a God-given Mission, enshrined in a God-given Mandate, entrusted to the American believers; this Mission was their birthright, but they could only fulfil it by obeying the instructions given them in the Master's *Tablets of the Divine Plan* and winning every crusade they undertook; the other plans, Shoghi Effendi wrote in 1949, "are but supplements to the vast enterprise whose features have been delineated in those same Tablets and are to be regarded, by their very nature, as regional in scope, in contrast with the world-embracing character of the Mission entrusted to the community of the champion-builders of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, and the torch-bearers of the civilization which that Order must eventually establish."

If Shoghi Effendi was the general, undoubtedly his chief of staff was the American Assembly; it got its orders direct from him and the rapport was intimate and complete. But he never forgot that the glory of an army is its soldiers, the "rank and file", as he forthrightly called them. He never ceased to appeal to them, to inspire them, to love them and to inform them that every North American believer shared a direct responsibility for the success of the Plan. Knowing how prone human nature is to be diverted from any purpose, he constantly reiterated the tasks

undertaken, the responsibility assumed, the immediate need. When the different crusades approached their end and the success of various aspects of the work seemed to hang in the balance, his appeals rose in a veritable crescendo and swept the Bahá'ís to victory. In reading over thirty-six years of his communications to the American believers it almost seems as if he had lived amongst them. Certainly they lived with him, did they but know it, in his life, his thoughts, his prayers, his plans—and his worries. But let them be comforted, they brought him much joy, gave him much hope and never caused him to despair. May their record be unblemished.

Shoghi Effendi, very much like a volcano before it erupts, had a way of giving premonitory rumbles. In 1933 he cabled the American Convention that all eyes were on it, it had a great opportunity to release forces which would usher in an era whose splendour “must outshine Heroic Age our beloved Cause . . . Supreme Concourse waiting for them to seize it.” He became more specific in his message to the Bahá'ís gathered at the Temple in 1935 to celebrate the completion of its dome: “New hour struck . . . calling for nation-wide, systematic, sustained efforts teaching field . . .” Ten weeks later he is even more categoric, and indeed prophetic, for one seems to feel the first cold shadow of the coming war: “This new stage in the gradual unfoldment of the Formative Period of our Faith into which we have just entered—the phase of concentrated teaching activity—synchronizes with a period of deepening gloom, of universal impotence, of ever-increasing destitution and widespread disillusionment in the fortunes of a declining age.” To the 1936 Convention he cabled that the opportunities of the present hour were unimaginably precious and urged them to ponder the “historic appeal voiced by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá Tablets Divine Plan”, and consult on how to ensure its “complete fulfillment”, at a moment when humanity was “entering outer fringes most perilous stage its existence.” At the end he gives up the pearl that has been growing in his own heart: “Would to God every state within American Republic every Republic American continent might ere termination this glorious Century embrace light Faith Bahá’u’lláh establish structural basis His World Order.” We were off! It was the opening salute of the Divine Plan!

The first Seven Year Plan had a “triple task”: one, to complete the exterior ornamentation of the first Mashriqu’l-Adhkár in the Western World; two, to establish one local Spiritual Assembly in every state of the United States and every province in Canada; three, to create one centre in each Latin American Republic, “for whose entry into the fellowship of Bahá’u’lláh”, Shoghi Effendi wrote, “the Plan was primarily formulated.” Every nation in the Western Hemisphere was to be “woven into the fabric of Bahá’u’lláh’s triumphant Order”, and he pointed out to us that there were twenty independent Latin American Republics “constituting approximately one-third of the entire number of the world’s sovereign states” and that the Plan was no less than an “arduous twofold campaign undertaken simultaneously in the homeland and in Latin America.”

A little over two years after the initiation of this historic teaching drive, Europe went to war; another two years passed and the United States—and practically the whole planet—was at war. Its seven-year activity took place in the face of the greatest suffering and darkest threat the New World had ever experienced. The degree to which Shoghi Effendi watched over, encouraged and guided this first great Plan of the Divine Plan is unbelievable. Messages streamed from him to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada. In 1937 he informed them that to carry out the dual enterprises of this Plan would shed a “lustre no less brilliant” on the closing years of the first Bahá'í Century, “than the immortal deeds which have signalized its birth, in the Heroic Age of our Faith.” In 1938 he told them the “deepening gloom” of the Old World invested their labours with a “significance and urgency” that could not be overestimated. The Latin American campaign was “one of the most glorious chapters in the international history of the Faith”, and upon its success depended future Plans. It marked, he cabled them, the “inauguration long-deferred world mission constituting ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s distinctive legacy Bahá'í Community North America.” It was the “opening scene of the First Act of that superb Drama whose theme is no less than the spiritual conquest of both the Eastern and Western Hemispheres.” With all this, it

was still to be viewed as “a mere beginning, as a trial of strength, a stepping-stone to a crusade of still greater magnitude . . .”

After two years of the Plan had run their course, when the exterior ornamentation of the Temple was satisfactorily progressing and a series of ardent appeals from him (as well as a contribution of nine hundred pounds which he had felt “irresistibly urged” and “proud” to contribute toward the permanent pioneer settlement of the nine still unsettled states and provinces in North America) had ensured that all the preliminary steps had been taken on the home front—Shoghi Effendi waved his arm and directed the march of his forces down the coasts and over the islands of Central America, following, as he cabled, in a “methodical advance along line traced pen ‘Abdu’l-Bahá”. In spite of his own ever-growing burdens and anxieties, he informed the friends he wished to keep personally in contact with pioneers in North, Central and South America. What those letters of his meant to the pioneers “holding”, as he said, “their lonely posts in widely scattered areas throughout the Americas”, only those who received them can truly judge, but I myself wonder if this, or later crusades would ever have been won without this communion he had with the believers. His love, encouragement and understanding kept them anchored to their posts. Not a few are still where they are because of letters signed: “Your true brother, Shoghi”.

A year after the outbreak of the “world-encircling conflagration”, whose fires, Shoghi Effendi wrote, had first been lit in the Far East, ravaged Europe, enveloped Africa and now threatened not only the World Centre but America—the “chief remaining Citadel” of the Faith as he termed it—there were only two Latin American Republics still to receive pioneers. The inhabitants of the “remaining Citadel” had certainly discharged their duty of “carrying the sacred Fire to all the Republics of the Western Hemisphere” in a most notable manner. The believers in Persia were being persecuted; the Faith was dissolved in Russia and its confiscated Temple was in danger; in Western, Southeastern and Central Europe the Bahá’ís were repressed, and in Germany banned; in North Africa they were the object of fanatical religious attacks; the progress of the war had placed the World Centre itself in great danger. No wonder Shoghi Effendi wrote to the American believers that “The hopes and aspirations of a multitude of believers, in both the East and the West, young and old, whether free or suppressed,” hung on the “triumphant consummation” of their labours! No wonder he appealed to them to “dare greatly, toil unremittingly, sacrifice worthily, endure radiantly, unflinchingly till very end.” No wonder he assured them that “The grandeur of their task is indeed commensurate with the mortal perils by which their generation is hemmed in. As the dusk creeps over a steadily sinking society the radiant outlines of their redemptive mission become sharper every day. The present world unrest, symptom of a world-wide malady, their world religion has already affirmed must needs culminate in that world catastrophe out of which the consciousness of world citizenship will be born, a consciousness that can alone provide an adequate basis for the organization of world unity, on which a lasting world peace must necessarily depend, the peace itself inaugurating in turn that world civilization which will mark the coming of age of the entire human race.” They had been, he said: “galvanized into action at the sight of a slowly disrupting civilization”. Had he not pointed out to them, in words that fired their imagination, the nature of their responsibilities in relation to the state of the world, they would never have been galvanized at all.

In looking back on those glorious and terrible years of the last war, the success of the first Seven Year Plan seems truly miraculous. While humanity was being decimated in Europe and Asia, while the World Centre of the Faith was being threatened with unprecedented danger on four sides, while the United States and Canada were engaged in a world conflict, with its attendant anxieties, restrictions and furore, a handful of people, lacking in resources but rich in faith, lacking in prestige but rich in determination, succeeded in not only doubling the number of Bahá’í Assemblies in North America and ensuring the existence of at least one in every state of the

Union and every province of Canada, but in completing the extremely costly exterior ornamentation of their Mother Temple sixteen months ahead of the scheduled time, and establishing not only a strong Bahá'í group in each of the twenty Latin Republics, but, in addition, fifteen Spiritual Assemblies throughout the entire area. In the last months of the Plan Shoghi Effendi fairly stormed the remaining unfinished tasks, with his valiant little army, too excited to feel the exhaustion of seven years' constant struggle, hard at his heels. When the sun of the second Bahá'í Century rose, it rose on triumph. To his cohorts, Shoghi Effendi said that he and the entire Bahá'í world owed them a debt of gratitude no one could "measure or describe". Small wonder, he wrote, that such a community had "abundantly demonstrated its worthiness to shoulder the superhuman tasks with which it had been entrusted."

For twenty years, under the guidance of Shoghi Effendi, to a design he provided, the Bahá'ís wove the tapestry of the three great Crusades of his ministry. Amidst the busy, multi-coloured scenes, depicting so much work in so many places, could be discerned three sumptuous golden wheels—the three great Centenaries, historic landmarks into which he drew the threads of his plans and out of which they emerged to form still more beautiful and powerful patterns. The first of these Centenaries took place on 23 May 1944. Providentially, the vast majority of Bahá'í communities throughout the world had not been cut off from communication with the Guardian at the World Centre, nor, in spite of the dangers of an encroaching theatre of war, been swallowed up in its battles. Persia, Iraq, Egypt, India, Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand and the Western Hemisphere had been miraculously spared. These communities, each to the degree possible under the circumstances prevailing in its own land, proceeded to celebrate the glorious occasion of the one hundredth anniversary of the Declaration of the Báb, which was at once the inception of the Bahá'í cycle as well as the birthday of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

In spite of the fact that the Persian believers were not free to hold befitting nation-wide celebrations on the occasion of the first Centenary of the Faith which had dawned in their native land, this does not mean that worthy homage was not paid to the memory of the blessed Báb. The Guardian himself, full of tenderness for a community so perpetually afflicted, instructed its national body in detail regarding the manner in which this glorious event was to be commemorated; his special representative, Jenabi Valíyu'lláh Varqá, Trustee of the Huqúq, was to place in the room where the Báb had declared His Mission in His home in Shiraz, a precious silk carpet, the offering of Shoghi Effendi himself; at two hours and eleven minutes after sunset, one hundred years since the Báb had revealed His Station to Mullá Husayn in that very room, the members of the National Assembly and the delegates to the Annual Convention were to assemble; the National Assembly members were requested to prostrate themselves, at the threshold of that sacred spot, on Shoghi Effendi's behalf; the first surih of the *Qayyúmu'l-Asmá'* was then to be chanted. Following this, passages of the Guardian's Centennial Message to the Bahá'ís of the East were read, in which he eulogized the Báb and the significance of the events which had taken place in that holy spot a century before.

For the North American Bahá'í Community a second anniversary occurred at the same time, as it was fifty years since the establishment of the Faith in the Western World. Shoghi Effendi, with his usual foresight and method, made quite clear to the American Bahá'ís in a series of messages during 1943 how he expected them to appropriately commemorate such an occasion and why he wanted them to do it on such a scale: in "its scope and magnificence" it was to "fully compensate for the disabilities which hinder so many communities in Europe and elsewhere, and even in Bahá'u'lláh's native land, from paying a befitting tribute to their beloved Faith at so glorious an hour in its history." The celebrations the Americans would hold, he said, would not only crown their own labours but those of the entire body of their fellow-workers in both the East and the West.

A nation-wide publicity campaign, aimed at the proclamation of the Message of Bahá'u'lláh, was to precede the Centenary, through which the public, by means of the press, radio and publications, was to be acquainted with the aims and purposes of the Faith as well as the achievements of its heroes, martyrs, teachers, pioneers and administrators, and the nature of its institutions was to be explained. Locally, as well as on a national scale, the believers were to celebrate and proclaim the joyous nature of this Festival, through lectures, conferences, banquets and contact with eminent leaders.

The climax of so much rejoicing would take place through the holding of an All-American Centennial Convention at which not only the delegates from the United States and Canada would gather, having for the first time in their history been elected at State and Provincial Conventions by votes cast by all believers rather than by communities which had local Assemblies, but also at least one representative from each of the Latin American countries. At the exact hour of the Báb's declaration, a solemn thanksgiving dedication ceremony would be held in the Temple auditorium at which the only copy of the miniature portrait of the Báb ever to have left Shoghi Effendi's hands, and his special gift to this victorious and dearly-loved Community, would be viewed by that greatly blest gathering, and was to be followed by a public meeting consecrated to the memory of both the Báb and 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Nothing, as he had foretold, had clouded the "triumphant termination of the first, most shining century of the Bahá'í Era". Similar, though less ostentatious, gatherings were being held in other countries. The close of these international festivities, Shoghi Effendi said, would mark the end of the first epoch of the Formative Age of the Faith which had lasted from 1921 to 1944.

The close of one century and the opening of another is a propitious moment to take stock of the Bahá'í world. Such a torrent of material presents itself to anyone trying to evaluate the labours of the Guardian that it is difficult indeed to know how to deal with his various achievements. He was not only a great creator of facts but an able and interested statistician and there was very little that he could not dramatize. But is not that the very essence of living—to derive interest from what superficially seems perfunctory, obligatory and therefore boring?

In 1944 Shoghi Effendi published, in Haifa, a small pamphlet, twenty-six pages long, which bore the title *The Bahá'í Faith, 1844-1944*, and under this, modestly, "Information Statistical and Comparative"; in 1950, with much more exhaustive material provided by him, the Bahá'í Publishing Committee in the United State published a similar, larger pamphlet, thirty-five pages long, with a map; on it they put: "Compiled by Shoghi Effendi Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith". In 1952, again with material provided by him and at his instigation, both the British and American National Assemblies published the same pamphlet, with the same heading, only this time twice as long and covering the period 1844-1952. Shoghi Effendi had now added a new sub-title: "Ten Year International Teaching and Consolidation Plan".

It is impossible to go into details on a subject as vast as this one. On the other hand, to ignore it completely would be unjust to a field of work that absorbed, for over thirteen years, a great deal of Shoghi Effendi's attention and time. The fallibility and inefficiency of most people being what they are, the tale of these statistics alone represents an almost superhuman effort on Shoghi Effendi's part to obtain them. What must then have been the effort he exerted to produce the facts many of them represent? He constantly kept his statistics up to date; at the time of his passing he had the usual small notebook in his bedroom in which he kept the latest additions. I remember once his smilingly holding such a notebook up and telling me: "Do you realize the whole Bahá'í world is in this?"

To understand the statistics better, one must understand what was in Shoghi Effendi's mind behind the statistics. One cannot argue with facts; one can disagree with ideas, pooh-pooh claims, belittle historic happenings, but

when one is shown in cold print that such and such a thing is worth five-and-a-half-million dollars, or that seven National Bahá'í Assemblies have been incorporated, or that the Bahá'í Marriage Ceremony is entirely legal in fifteen states, or one reads the names of the African tribes who are represented in the Faith, the languages in which its teachings have been translated, one is forced to accept that this Faith exists in a very concrete way. Facts were part of Shoghi Effendi's ammunition with which he could defend the Faith against its enemies and through which he could not only encourage the Bahá'ís but stimulate them to greater effort.

One of his most cherished lists, the first and foremost, was that which reflected the spread of this glorious Cause entrusted to his care by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in 1921. Under "Countries opened to the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh" he had placed for the period of the Báb's Ministry: 2, Bahá'u'lláh's Ministry: 13, 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Ministry: 20. It is interesting to note how methodical his mind was, because in the 1944 pamphlet Bahá'u'lláh's Ministry had only 10. Then why, in the 1952 pamphlet, did Shoghi Effendi put 13? Pakistan had become a nation and two of the original Russian territories had been split into 4 republics of the Soviet Union—an addition of 3, so they went up to Bahá'u'lláh's period. Where else could they go? These statistics reflect in a most fascinating way the expansion of our Faith. I will continue the statistics, in so far as the material is available, up to the time of the Guardian's passing. From 1844-1921, 35 countries (for Bahá'í purposes this includes Sovereign States, Mandated Territories, Dependencies and Colonies) had been opened to the Faith. From 1921-32, 5 were added in 11 years; 1932-44, 38 were added in 12 years; 1944-50, 22 were added in 6 years; 1950-1, 6 were added in one year; 1951-2, 22 were added in one year; 1952-3, no increase in numbers; 1953-4, 100 were added in one year, an accomplishment, Shoghi Effendi wrote, which signified that "the most vital and spectacular objective of the Ten Year Plan" had "been virtually attained ere the termination of the first year of this decade-long stupendous enterprise." At this point, for Bahá'í purposes, the world began to run out of countries! Nevertheless, from 1954-7, 26 more were added. When Shoghi Effendi became Guardian there were 35 countries, but when he passed away he had raised this number to 254—219 added by his vision, drive and determination working through and with a dedicated, spiritually inflamed world-wide group of believers.

Although no exact statistics are available for the number of centres where Bahá'ís resided throughout the world, "foci of the warming and healing light of an all-conquering Revelation", as Shoghi Effendi called them, it seems unlikely that during the first Century of the Faith they numbered a thousand. A rough calculation indicates that by 1952 there were about 2,400. Shoghi Effendi himself announced the following numbers: 1953, 2,500; 1954, almost 2,900; 1955, well over 3,200; 1956, well nigh 3,700; 1957, 4,500, in less than a five-year period an addition of over 2,000.

The over-all picture this conveys is both clear and impressive. But which parts of the Bahá'í tree were growing the fastest? That is also reflected in the published statistics of the Guardian. When 'Abdu'l-Bahá made his historic visit to the United States and Canada there were probably about 40 places in the Western Hemisphere where Bahá'ís were to be found. By 1937 there were 300, an increase of 260 in 25 years. By 1944 this had swelled to 1,300 centres in North America, an increase of over 1,000 during the first Seven Year Plan. The last figure received from Shoghi Effendi in October 1957 was 1,570. In the thirty-six years of his ministry Shoghi Effendi, through his unceasing messages of inspiration and encouragement and through the operation of his successive plans, had added at least 1,500 centres in the United States and Canada alone. The list of local Spiritual Assemblies in North America was no less impressive: in 1931 there were 47; in 1944 there were 131, an increase of 84 in 13 years—most of them added during the great drive associated with the first Seven Year Plan. By 1952 there were 184 and in April 1957 the total had reached 204.

In 1944 Shoghi Effendi published the first statistics for Latin America, listing 57 centres and 15 Assemblies; by 1950 there were 70 centres and 35 Assemblies. At the time of his passing, the centres had increased to 137 and the Assemblies to about 52. In the 1921-44 pamphlet he gave the figures for India (which included what was later Pakistan) and Burma as 66 centres and 31 Assemblies; by 1957 the figure was 140 centres and about 50 Assemblies. It had always been difficult to obtain proper statistics from Persia because of the constant recrudescence of persecution, but in 1952 Shoghi Effendi published the figures of 621 centres and 260 Assemblies. The Antipodes, particularly watched over by Shoghi Effendi, made remarkable progress throughout his ministry, in spite of its isolation from the rest of the Bahá'í world: in 1934 there were about 8 centres in Australia and New Zealand and 3 Assemblies; by 1950 there were 59 centres—an increase of about 50 in 16 years—and 10 Assemblies; by 1957 there were over 100 centres and 12 or 13 Assemblies. The British Isles had likewise shown a remarkable increase: in 1944 there were a few centres and 5 Assemblies; in 1957 over 110 centres and 20 Assemblies. The figures for Germany and Austria, listed by Shoghi Effendi for the first time in 1950, show 34 centres and 14 Assemblies (whereas before the war they were likely to have been in the neighbourhood of 15 and 5 respectively); in 1957 there were over 130 centres and 25 Assemblies.

With the second Seven Year Plan there appears a new list in the 1950 pamphlet, the Ten European Goal Countries with 34 centres and 14 Assemblies; by 1957 these had swelled to over 110 centres and 27 or 28 Assemblies. Cautiously the Guardian inserted a figure (unchanged from 1950-7) for Arabia: 10 centres—perhaps the most difficult to maintain in the entire Bahá'í world. Egypt and Sudan, long struggling against Muslim prejudice, were listed in 1952 as having 38 centres and 10 Assemblies. In 1956 Shoghi Effendi announced there were over 900 local Bahá'í Assemblies throughout the world. By 1957 he was able to inform the Bahá'ís this number had risen to over 1,000. It is very unlikely that at the time of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's passing in 1921 there were more than a handful throughout the East and the West. It was Shoghi Effendi who created them, on the pattern laid down by the Master Himself.

The Guardian devoted particular attention, in addition to creating the structural basis of the Administrative Order and assuring the rapid spread of the Faith, to ensuring that Bahá'í literature be made available, in different languages, to the people of the world. Many of the translations and publications were paid for by him; most frequently, in the years preceding her death in 1939, Martha Root was his agent in this all-important work. In 1944 there were Bahá'í publications available in 41 languages; by 1950, 19 had been added; by 1952 there were 71, 11 added in 2 years; in 1955 there were 167, no less than 96 added in 3 years; by 1957 there were 237, an increase of over 70 in 2 years. It is interesting to note that right after the list of published languages there invariably followed a second list of "Languages in which Bahá'í literature is being translated".

He was not only eager to welcome as many different ethnic groups into the Faith as possible but constantly urged the Bahá'ís to reach people of different races so that within the communities that cardinal principle of unity in diversity might be exemplified. This was reflected in two of his statistics, the second one significantly emphasizing the great importance he attached to this aspect of our teachings; the headings of these statistics speak for themselves: "Races Represented in the Bahá'í World Community", which were listed by name. In 1944 there were 31 races; in 1955 there were about 40 races. "Minority Groups and Races with which contact has been established by Bahá'ís", likewise listed by name: in 1944 these were 9, but in 1952 they had risen to 15—12 of which were American Eskimo and Indian tribes. In 1952 a new caption was added, in spite of the insignificance of the figures involved: "African Tribes Represented in the Bahá'í Faith"; the names of 12 tribes were given—proudly. Periodically he continued to announce the increase in these figures: 1955, 90; 1956, 140; 1957, 197—an addition of 185 in 5 years. In 1954 he informed the Bahá'í world there were over 500 African believers in Uganda alone (out of perhaps 800 Negro adherents of the Faith throughout the entire continent) and in 1957 said

the number of African believers was now over 3,000. His keen interest in the racial questions of our day, his strong sense of the value of the different qualities with which God has endowed different peoples, made him eager to share what he considered to be substantial triumphs. In 1956 he announced there were 170 Bahá'í centres in the Pacific area and in 1957 informed us these had increased to 210 and that there were more than 2,000 believers of the brown race throughout that region.

The growth of the institutions and endowments of the Faith, a strong wall to protect its maturing Administrative Order, was another of the things to which Shoghi Effendi devoted particular attention. It is not a dream Bahá'u'lláh has come to the world to help us dream, but a reality He has given us the design to build. Incorporated bodies can hold property legally. It was and is essential that a growing Faith should own its own Temples, national and local headquarters, institutions, lands, schools and so on. The figures in this regard speak eloquently of the progress made throughout the Guardian's ministry: in 1944 there were 5 incorporated National Assemblies and 63 locally incorporated ones in various countries; in 1952 the figures were 9 and 105, respectively; by 1957 there were over 200 incorporations of local Bahá'í Assemblies—137 being added in 13 years. Whereas in 1944, at the beginning of the second Bahá'í Century, the legal right to perform a Bahá'í marriage existed in a very few places, by 1957 this right was enjoyed by Bahá'ís in over 30 places and Bahá'í Holy Days were acknowledged as grounds for the suspension of work or school attendance in 45 places, the definition of a place being either a country, a state or a district. In 1952 the Bahá'ís owned only 8 national headquarters, but by 1957 they owned 48; national endowments had likewise multiplied to an unprecedented degree and that same year there were 50 of them in various capital cities of the world.

The financial assets of a growing Faith were likewise rapidly increasing. Its now multitudinous properties in different countries were reflected in a swelling roll of figures which Shoghi Effendi kept announcing as the years went by: the United States, in 1944, had holdings estimated at \$1,768,339; in 1950 \$1,783,958; in 1952 \$3,070,958, and by October 1957 the sum was nearing \$5,000,000. Persia, in 1952, had endowments estimated at \$500,000 whilst in 1957 the sum had increased to \$5,000,000. In 1947 Shoghi Effendi gave the figures for the Holy Land, at the World Centre of the Faith, as £35,000 Sterling (\$140,000); in 1952 \$500,000; in 1957 \$5,500,000. The estimated figure for other countries he gave as, in 1952 \$500,000 and in 1957 \$850,000. The totals of these various figures, at best conservative, were: 1952 \$4,500,000 and in 1957 over \$16,350,000.

The three statistical pamphlets published by Shoghi Effendi are not only very informative, but provide an insight into his mind because they reflect to what he attached importance. There are lists of dates of historical significance which, aside from the cardinal dates of Bahá'í history, give dates associated with such events as the construction of the first Mashriqu'l-Adhkár of the West and the Shrine of the Báb, the verdict of the Muhammadan court in Egypt pronouncing the Faith to be an independent religion, Martha Root's first interview with Queen Marie of Rumania, the Resolution of the Council of the League of Nations upholding the claim of the Bahá'í Community to the House of Bahá'u'lláh in Baghdad, the inception of various Plans, and so on. There are no dates to indicate the Bahá'í Faith had a Guardian. The man who informed us we were never to commemorate any anniversary associated with himself does not appear on his own list. The best-known Writings of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh are enumerated; the Bahá'í Calendar is reproduced; the names of the cities visited by 'Abdu'l-Bahá during His three-year travels are given; a list of centres in Greenland to which Bahá'í literature had been sent is printed; the names of personages who have paid tribute to the Bahá'í Faith are listed, as well as other information; and a very strange little list indeed reappeared regularly in every new pamphlet: "Comparative Measurements of Famous Domed Structures"—St Peter's in Rome, St Paul's in London, St Sophia in Constantinople, the Pantheon in Rome—all by themselves. A very thought-provoking list. Did he envisage the day when the Bahá'ís would build temples far surpassing these dimensions, to the glory of the Father?

With each release of statistical data the tally of National Spiritual Assemblies grew. To bring these “Pillars” of the future Universal House of Justice into existence was a task Shoghi Effendi conceived as one of his primary duties. Few of the Bahá’ís may remember the nine names enumerated in 1930: the National Spiritual Assemblies of the Bahá’ís of the Caucasus, of Egypt, of Great Britain, of Germany, of India and Burma, of Iraq, of Persia, of Turkistan and of the United States and Canada. Although the two in Russia and the one in Persia were of a transitional nature—a central Assembly assuming the functions of a future national body as we now know it, pending the time when a properly grounded election by national delegates could take place—they were nevertheless fulfilling the functions of National Assemblies. Owing to the suppression of all Bahá’í activity in Russia, the National Assemblies of the Caucasus and Turkistan completely disappeared. Therefore at the end of the first Bahá’í Century there were only eight national bodies, that of Australia and New Zealand having been added in 1934.

The oldest National Assembly in the Bahá’í world, that of the United States and Canada, had existed at the time of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s passing under the name “Bahá’í Temple Unity”; in 1909 it was incorporated and in that same year its “Executive Board” was formed. When the Guardian took the helm in 1921 he immediately set out to create uniformity in fundamental principles and from then on these future “Secondary Houses of Justice” were styled “National Spiritual Assemblies”. By 1923 the National Assemblies for the British, the German, the Indian and Burmese believers were already functioning and those of the Bahá’ís of Egypt and the Sudan, Persia, Iraq and Australia and New Zealand soon followed. Much as the Guardian longed to see new “Pillars” erected, he had to be sure a sufficiently strong community—and especially a sufficiently strong base of local Assemblies—existed before he could permit a national body to be elected. In 1948 he launched Canada on her independent administrative destiny, followed in 1951 by two other National Assemblies, one for Central and one for South America. There was in Shoghi Effendi’s mind a very clear reason for this grouping of two or more countries under a single National Assembly, which he explained to an Indian Bahá’í pilgrim in 1929, who wrote down his words at the time: “He is against separation of Burma and India for he says we have very few workers and separation will dissipate our forces and energy while what we most need at the present time is consolidation of all our resources and forces . . .”

With the formation of these two giant Central and South American bodies, whose title was National Assembly but whose composition and function were regional in nature, a new phase in the administrative development of the Faith began. Shoghi Effendi was never intimidated by the magnitude or difficulty of a task, nor was he any respecter of current views or methods. For nine years he was to constitute nothing but these vast National “Regional” Assemblies—except in the case of the National Assembly of the Bahá’ís of Italy and Switzerland, elected in 1953—which were truly immense in scope. The two Latin American ones comprised 20 countries and the four African ones, formed in 1956, represented 57 territories. This meant that nine people, often residing in countries over a thousand miles apart, had to consult and administer the affairs of scattered, mostly young and inexperienced Assemblies and communities, spread over hundreds of thousands of square miles. No doubt had Shoghi Effendi called in as advisers his fellow Bahá’ís, the wisdom of such undertakings might have been questioned and they would have recommended either purely National or at least much smaller Regional Assemblies. Fortunately, the Guardian consulted no one and with his clear and incisive mind sized up the relative advantages and disadvantages of the two policies and chose what appeared, superficially, to be the more unwieldy method. There were many factors involved in this choice: the main one was that in all these countries the need for a more centralized direction of the work was now urgent; it could no longer be efficiently administered from bases across oceans under the aegis of other National Assemblies prosecuting a later stage of the Divine Plan through their committees, however able and devoted these were. Also, the primary object of teaching the Faith in new fields was to fit its newly won converts to assume responsibility for the work in their

own areas. There was now a choice corps of experienced Bahá'í pioneers, administrators and teachers in Latin America and in Africa, but they were not sufficient in number for the work of 20 independent administrative bodies in Central and South America and far, far from sufficient to provide experienced Bahá'ís for 57 territories in Africa. The answer was these interim National Assemblies which were to be broken down into ever smaller units pending the day when each nation had a sufficiently strong network of local Assemblies, of more mature believers, deepened in the teachings they had so recently embraced, who could assume responsibility for the administration and advancement of the Cause in their own territories. The remarkable feats achieved by these Regional Assemblies, constantly urged on and encouraged by Shoghi Effendi in the discharge of their historic tasks, fully justified his method.

In his selection of the countries he associated under one national body, the Guardian amply demonstrated the fact that the Bahá'ís are far more than international, they are supra-national—above nation—in their beliefs and policy. No consideration of national prejudices, political animosities or religious differences influenced his choice of those who were to work together under one Assembly. For him such worldly considerations were not allowed to weigh, albeit he was a keen student of current affairs and never blind to facts. It was those Divine forces within the Faith that he utilized—a Faith which, as he so beautifully expressed it, “feeds itself upon . . . hidden springs of celestial strength” and “propagates itself by ways mysterious and utterly at variance with the standards accepted by the generality of mankind.”

It was not until 1957 that he resumed the formation of purely National Assemblies; in April of that year Alaska, Pakistan and New Zealand elected their own permanent Bahá'í bodies. It was an historic occasion in the evolution of the Administrative Order for no less than 11 new National Assemblies came into existence that year at one time, the others being Regional Assemblies for North East Asia, South East Asia, the Benelux Countries, Arabia, the Iberian Peninsula, Scandinavia and Finland, the Antilles, and the northern countries of South America which formed a new body. What had hitherto been one National Assembly for South America and one for Central America now became two smaller Regional ones in South America, while Central America was partially pared away and its island republics joined in electing an Assembly of their own. Ere Shoghi Effendi's last great Crusade drew to a close, every republic of Latin America had its own independent national body, as he himself had planned when, in his statistical pamphlet published on the eve of the Centenary of 1953, he had included within the “Ten Year International Bahá'í Teaching and Consolidation Plan” as one of its most thrilling and challenging provisions the task of more than quadrupling the existing National Assemblies through raising their number to over 50.

It is not possible in an appraisal of the work achieved by Shoghi Effendi as brief as the present one, to describe in detail the progress made in individual countries during his ministry. That will require a full-length history and much research into sources gradually being assembled at the World Centre. As he himself always saw his work in its broadest outlines, so we must here strive to follow the comet's path across the skies. The spiritual conquest of this Planet—the avowed purpose of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings—is primarily bound up with the prosecution of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Divine Plan. As the American believers pursued, in the course of successive crusades, the destiny with which this Plan had endowed them, a tremendous force was released, ever-increasingly, throughout the Bahá'í world. If the North American Community is viewed as the Himalayas—the great watershed of the forces of expansion in the Cause of God—other communities must be seen as streams and rills that flow into the mighty rivers they produce and swell their power to irrigate all the lands of the earth.

The example set through the achievements of the first Seven Year Plan inspired other communities to dare greatly. The increasing awareness of the glorious possibilities of service opening before the Bahá'í world in the

second Century of its own era was constantly fanned into flame by the Guardian's messages to various National Assemblies. He frequently quoted Bahá'u'lláh's admonition: "*Vie ye with each other in the service of God and of His Cause*" and openly encouraged a competitive spirit in its noblest form. His use of statistics was one example of the way he did this, his own words another: "Spiritual competition", he cabled America in 1941, "galvanizing organized followers Bahá'u'lláh East West waxes keener as first Bahá'í Century speeds to its close." Still more illuminating was what followed, for he acclaimed this as a sign of Bahá'í solidarity in the five continents of the globe—like the horses of a Roman chariot, each trying to get its neck forward but all pulling together. It would be lacking in respect to say he called for bids—but he never hesitated to tell his warriors there was a golden fleece to be won; who would get to it first? No doubt it was all divinely inspired, but it was also warm and human, vibrant and stimulating!

The news of the victories being won during the first Seven Year Plan, passed on by the Guardian in a steady flow of inspiring messages to the believers of Persia, was, Shoghi Effendi cabled in 1943, "thrilling Eastern communities Bahá'í world with delight admiration and wonder Ninety-five Persian families emulating example American trail-blazers Faith" had left their homes and were on their way to hoist its banner in Afghanistan, Baluchistan, Sulaimaniya, Hejaz and Bahrein. India and Egypt were stirring and the Iraqi Bahá'ís were hastening their own plans to crown the end of the first Century with local victories. The Bahá'ís of both the East and the West were writing the last glorious pages in their own chapters of the first Century of their Faith.

Three months after the May 1944 celebrations were ended, the Guardian informed the North American Community: "A memorable chapter in the history of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh in the West has been closed. A new chapter is now opening, a chapter which, ere its termination, must eclipse the most shining victories won so heroically by those who have so fearlessly launched the first stage of the Great Plan conceived by 'Abdu'l-Bahá for the American believers." They stood at the threshold of "yet another phase in a series of crusades which must carry . . . the privileged recipients of those epoch-making Tablets beyond the Western Hemisphere to the uttermost ends of the earth, to implant the banner, and lay an unassailable basis for the administrative structure of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh." There are not so many ways of doing things on this planet. Right methods are right when applied to different fields. Shoghi Effendi was a spiritual general leading a spiritual army to win spiritual prizes—but the campaign method was immemorial: organize your forces, conceive your strategy, attack your goal, occupy the position, keep your communications open to your base, bring up reinforcements, establish garrisons in the conquered territory, muster your forces and start the next campaign. As the armies of brilliant leaders get more and more experience, the lull between campaigns diminishes. This was equally true of Shoghi Effendi's Plans.

Having won his first great campaign, he immediately turned to consolidating his victories: he informed the American National Assembly that the laboriously won local Assemblies must be preserved, groups raised to Assembly status, centres multiplied, the Faith proclaimed to the masses and the new believers deepened in their understanding of it. In addition, more translations of Bahá'í literature should be made and published for the benefit of the Latin American work; above all, in every republic where an Assembly had not yet been established, one must now be formed.

Between the opening phase of the American believers' World Mission, which ended with the first Seven Year Plan, and the second stage of that Mission, there occurred what Shoghi Effendi called, on the occasion of the launching of the second Seven Year Plan, a "two year respite". It is unlikely that the American Community had realized that their arduous labours between 1944 and 1946—which stretched from Anchorage in the north to Magallanes in the south of the Western Hemisphere—had been a "respite" until the Guardian called it that. When

a “war-ravaged, disillusioned and bankrupt society” paused in its bloody battles after six years and began, with the cessation of European hostilities in the summer of 1945, to lick its wounds, Shoghi Effendi told the American Bahá’ís that the prosecutors of the Divine Plan must “gird up their loins, muster their resources” and prepare themselves for the next step in their destiny. The appeals he made, during the months that preceded the launching of the second Seven Year Plan, to the minds and the feelings of the American believers were profound. He told these “ambassadors of the Faith of Bahá’u’lláh” that the “sorrow-stricken, war-lacerated, sorely bewildered nations and peoples” of Europe were waiting in their turn for the healing influence of the Faith to be extended to them as it had been extended to the peoples throughout the Americas. News he received of the plight of the believers in Germany and Burma—two old and tried communities—greatly touched him and was so distressing that he hastened to appeal to “their fellow workers in lands which have providentially been spared the horrors of invasion and all the evils and miseries attendant upon it” to take immediate and collective action to mitigate their plight. He appealed particularly to the American Community, which “of all its sister communities in East and West, enjoyed the greatest immunity” during the war and had in addition been privileged to successfully prosecute so great a Plan, to do all in its power to help financially and by any other means at its disposal.

The official inception of the second Seven Year Plan, the “second collective enterprise undertaken in American Bahá’í history”, took place at the 1946 Convention. It would seem as if all the work so successfully undertaken since 1921, the building up of strong administrative institutions of the Faith, the expansion of the North American Community during seven years to include every state within the United States and every province in Canada—an expansion which raised the number of centres from 300 to 1,000—the triumphant spiritual campaign in Latin America, had been designed to create in the Western Hemisphere a vast home front from which the New World could now launch a well-organized attack on the Old World—on Europe, its parent continent. Once again Shoghi Effendi mustered a small army; “Bahá’u’lláh’s spiritual battalions are moving into position”, he informed the friends. America, the child of the Old World, now a fully-grown young giant, was ready to return, vital and fresh, destined, as Shoghi Effendi wrote “through successive decades, to achieve the spiritual conquest of the continent unconquered by Islam, rightly regarded as the mother of Christendom, the fountain head of American culture, the mainspring of Western civilization . . .”

Again we see the design in Shoghi Effendi’s great tapestry drawn into another blazing wheel of glory—this time the second great Centenary of the Faith in 1953 which would, he informed us, commemorate the Year Nine marking the mystic birth of Bahá’u’lláh’s prophetic mission as He lay in the Síyáh-Chál of Tehran.

The objectives of this new Plan, of which Europe was the “pre-eminent” goal, and which came to be known as the European Campaign, were as follows: consolidation of work throughout the Americas; completion of the interior ornamentation of the Mother Temple of the West in time for the celebration of its fiftieth anniversary in 1953; erection of three pillars of the future Universal House of Justice through the election of the Canadian, the Central and the South American National Assemblies; a systematic teaching campaign in Europe aimed at the establishment of Spiritual Assemblies in the Iberian Peninsula (Spain and Portugal), the Low Countries (Holland and Belgium), and Scandinavian states (Norway, Sweden and Denmark) and Italy. He ended his message by saying that he himself was pledging ten thousand dollars as his initial contribution for the “manifold purposes glorious Crusade surpassing every enterprise undertaken by followers Faith Bahá’u’lláh course first Bahá’í Century.”

Six weeks later a cable from Shoghi Effendi informed the American National Assembly that “nine competent pioneers” should be promptly dispatched to Europe to as many countries as feasible, that the Duchy of Luxembourg should be added to the Low Countries and Switzerland also included. With these two and the

previous eight, the “Ten Goal Countries” came into existence in our Bahá’í vocabulary. Some time later, in view of the marked progress being made in the north of Europe, Finland was also added to the scope of the Plan. Although, in addition to Britain and Germany, there were still Bahá’ís living in France, Switzerland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and perhaps other places, they were for the most part too isolated or too suppressed to undertake large-scale teaching activities. The opening of this systematic, well-organized Plan in “war-torn, spiritually famished” Europe meant that the American Community now found itself “launched in both hemispheres on a second, incomparably more glorious stage, of the systematic Crusade designed to culminate, in the fullness of time, in the spiritual conquest of the entire planet.” It meant that the American Community was to be engaged in strenuous work in thirty countries, in addition to ensuring that proper foundations were laid for the election, in 1948, of the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada, whose essential local Assemblies in various provinces were in most cases new and weak.

As this home front of believers, at best numbering a few thousand Bahá’ís, heroically struggled with the various leviathans they now had by their tails, the Guardian’s love and admiration for them steadily increased. Although he occasionally used the rhetorical form “we”, in one of his most touching messages at the very beginning of this new Plan, his use of “we” seems a clear indication of how profoundly he had become identified with the band of his followers in America who had followed him so faithfully from the first instant they heard he was their Guardian: “We stand too close to the noble edifice our hands are rearing . . . for us to be in a position to evaluate the contribution which we, as the executors of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Mandate, as the champion-builders of Bahá’u’lláh’s Order, as the torch-bearers of a civilization of which that Order is the mainspring and precursor, are now being led . . . to make to the world triumph of our Faith . . .” Truly they were become his sisters and brothers!

It was no use, Shoghi Effendi said, trying to envisage, at so early a stage, where this new Plan would lead; the duty of the hour was sufficient; the future depended on present efforts. No opportunity must be missed, no obligation evaded, no task half-heartedly performed, no decision procrastinated. All resources, spiritual and material, must be concentrated on the tasks that lay ahead; all must participate, however modest, restricted or inconspicuous their share might be, until every ounce of energy had been spent and, “tired but blissful”, the promised harvest was brought in. The continent of Europe was “turbulent, politically convulsed, economically disrupted and spiritually depleted.” But it was the arena where the American Community must now carry out the “first stage of its transatlantic missionary enterprise”, “amidst a people so disillusioned, so varied in race, language, and outlook, so impoverished spiritually, so paralyzed with fear, so confused in thought, so abased in their moral standards, so rent by internal schisms . . .”

When these “trail-blazers” of the second Seven Year Plan began their mission there were only two European Bahá’í communities worthy of the name, those of the British Isles and Germany, both long-standing and both of which had had active National Assemblies before the war; the first had never ceased to function; the second, dissolved by the Nazi authorities in 1937 when all Bahá’í activity was officially suspended, was now reconstituted and heroically gathering its war-torn flock about it. With these the European Teaching Committee of the American National Assembly and the ever-swelling group of pioneers in the Ten Goal Countries closely co-operated. The progress was so rapid that by the second year of the new Plan there were already eight new local Assemblies functioning in these countries and, as the work continued to rapidly spread, the Guardian extended its objectives to include Finland.

With the same degree of burning interest with which he had guided the exploits of the first Seven Year Plan he now followed the course of the second one. In 1948 he informed the friends that the “primacy” of the American

Bahá'í Community was “re-asserted, fully vindicated, completely safeguarded”; that “intent on maintaining its lead among its sister communities” it had excited “feelings of admiration and envy in several communities, East and West”. The victories won in Europe were all the more meritorious, Shoghi Effendi pointed out, because the environment and circumstances were more adverse and challenging than had been the case in Latin America. Though the aftermath of the war, from the standpoint of physical misery, gradually wore off, the fundamental difficulty of teaching the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh to the European people did not change. A few months before his passing, in a letter to one of the National Assemblies, Shoghi Effendi was as emphatic and clear regarding this problem as he had been in 1946: “In their constant concern to illuminate the hearts of their countrymen with the radiance of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, and in their daily contact with peoples intensely conservative by nature, steeped in tradition, bound, for the most part, by the ties of religious orthodoxy, sunk in materialism, and fully content with the standard they have achieved,” the Bahá'ís must “of necessity find the work painfully slow, extremely arduous, and often highly discouraging . . . the seeds, however, they are now sowing . . . will,” he assured them, “under the watchful care of Providence, and in consequence of the tribulations which a heedless generation is bound sooner or later to experience, germinate, at the appointed time, and yield a harvest of such importance as will fill them with astonishment.”

In the middle of this great European undertaking, which had truly fired the imagination of the Bahá'ís all over the world, including the new communities of Latin America—who were even able to send some of their own pioneers to assist in this new Crusade—the hard-pressed American Bahá'ís found themselves faced by a serious crisis. Owing to a sudden increase in costs, the expense of completing their beloved Temple, through clothing its interior with designs little less elaborate than its exterior and of the same material, had risen heavily. Shoghi Effendi's army was in difficulties. He investigated the situation carefully and then immediately decided on the action necessary to save it. It is illuminating to see what he considered could be safely jettisoned and what was essential: the budgets allocated to the all-important European work, to the spread and maintenance of the precious Assemblies and centres created in Latin and North America, must not be curtailed; the holding of the American National Convention and the publication of *Bahá'í News* he considered imperative; but all other activities, such as proclamation, publications and summer schools, should either be “drastically curtailed or suspended during two years” (1949 and 1950). Like any great general conducting a campaign, he safeguarded three things: his front lines of battle, his “essential base” (as he called it) of operations and his lines of communication. Other considerations, however, were to persuade the Guardian, in 1951, to not only prolong this period of intense economy in America but to enlarge it to embrace the whole Bahá'í world. The construction of the Shrine of the Báb—for the entire stonework of which he had recently signed a contract—as well as the formation of the International Bahá'í Council and the general expansion of the work in the Holy Land, led him to appeal to all National Spiritual Assemblies, local Assemblies and individual believers to curtail their budgets and, through a great effort and sacrifice, rally to the support of the World Centre. “Austerity period”, he cabled, “previously affecting fortunes American Bahá'í Community unavoidable prolonged now extended entire Bahá'í world in recognition pressing needs paramount importance glorious international task.” The American Bahá'ís had already, by 1950, raised half-a-million dollars for the interior ornamentation of their Temple, thus breaking the back of a particularly heavy commitment.

During these difficult years the numerically much smaller Canadian Community—co-partner with the American Community in the execution of the Divine Plan—was so preoccupied with the Five Year Plan the Guardian had instructed it to initiate when the independent stage of its development was reached in 1948, that it was in no position to offer much assistance to the main body of believers in the United States, and the formation in 1951 of two more National Assemblies, one in Central and one in South America, made further demands on their tenacity, resources and courage. Yet with all their burdens, their triumphs during the last years of the second

Seven Year Plan continued to multiply. So pleased was Shoghi Effendi with the spirit of this truly heroic Community, every year justifying more clearly the great hopes for and trust in it 'Abdu'l-Bahá had had, that in the summer of 1950 the Guardian suggested that, at a time when the Centenary of the Martyrdom of the Báb “with all its poignant memories is upon us”, it would be suitable for such a community to resolve that on the occasion of the Centenary of the birth of Bahá'u'lláh's Mission—coinciding with the end of its second Seven Year Plan—it would place a “worthy, befitting, five-fold offering . . . on the altar of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh” through reinforcing the foundations of the institutions established in North America; rearing the two Pillars of the future Universal House of Justice in Latin America; maintaining the strength achieved in the Ten Goal Countries of Europe; completing the interior ornamentation of the Temple; and assisting in the erection of the superstructure of a still holier edifice at the World Centre of the Faith. Although it was only a “hard-pressed, adolescent community”, Shoghi Effendi reminded it that the “untapped sources of celestial strength from which it can draw are measureless in their potencies, and will unhesitatingly pour forth their energizing influences if the necessary daily effort be made and the required sacrifices be willingly accepted.”

The winning of so many victories by the Bahá'ís of the United States as well as Canada—to which had been added, in the closing years of this Crusade, services in the African Continent never contemplated in the original Plan—far exceeding in substance the misty prizes which had loomed, beckoning but vague, in the fog surrounding the world at the end of the war, now encouraged the Guardian to add a sixth offering on the altar of Bahá'u'lláh, one he termed the “fairest fruit” of the mighty European project. In 1952 he cabled that “ere termination American Community's second Seven Year Plan” the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Italy and Switzerland should be formed, and added: “Advise European Teaching Committee upon consummation glorious enterprise issue formal invitation their spiritual offspring newly emerged National Assembly participate together with sister National Assemblies United States, British Isles, Germany Intercontinental Conference August same year capital city Sweden”. He explained he was planning to entrust this youngest Assembly of the Bahá'í world with a specific plan of its own as part of the Global Crusade to be embarked upon between the second and third Century celebrations. It had become an established procedure of the Guardian for these new National Bahá'í babies to be born with a plan in their mouths!

It may well be imagined how excited, how heartened, all the followers of Bahá'u'lláh were by news so thrilling as this. They saw what seemed to them little short of miracles taking place, and their loving “true brother”, in his humility, his praises and kindness, led them to believe such miracles were all theirs. That Italy should have, from a vacuum, succeeded in one decade in building up a foundation of local Assemblies strong enough, with its Swiss companion, to bear the weight of an independent National Assembly was a feat far beyond anyone's fairest dreams.

In order to grasp, in however dim a way, why the third Seven Year Plan—which the Guardian had repeatedly referred to since the end of the first Bahá'í Century—became a Ten Year Plan instead, we must understand a fundamental teaching of our Faith. A just and loving God does not require of any soul what He will not give it the strength to accomplish. Privileges involve responsibilities, for peoples, nations, individuals. To the degree to which they arise to meet their responsibilities, they are blessed and sustained; to the degree they fail, they are automatically deprived and punished. Shoghi Effendi had written at the beginning of the first Seven Year Plan that “failure to exploit these golden opportunities would . . . signify the loss of the rarest privilege conferred by Providence upon the American Bahá'í Community.” *“The Kingdom of God”*, 'Abdu'l-Bahá had said, “*is possessed of limitless potency. Audacious must be the army of life if the confirming aid of that Kingdom is to be repeatedly vouchsafed to it . . .*” It was in pursuance of the operation of this great law that the followers of Bahá'u'lláh who had been entrusted with the Divine Plan, rising to meet their challenge, pulling down from on

high through their services an ever-greater measure of celestial aid, discharging their sacred responsibility in so noble a fashion, found destiny hastening to meet them, a step in advance. A victorious army, having swept all barriers before it, is often so exhilarated by its exploits it needs no respite. It is ready to march on, fired by its victories. This was the mood of the Bahá'í world as 1953 approached and it was about to enter the Holy Year. Their Commander-in-Chief was a general who needed very little encouragement to induce him to go on, and who never rested. So it was inevitable that given the hour, the mood and the man the Bahá'ís should find themselves with no “three year respite” but rather twelve completely evolved plans—one for each National Assembly—ready to be put into operation the moment the trumpet sounded the reveille in Ridván 1953.

Wonderful as had been the celebration of the hundredth anniversary of the inception of the Bahá'í Faith, in 1944, by Bahá'í communities living in the shadow of the worst war the world had ever known, it was dwarfed by the events associated with the hundredth anniversary of the revelation Bahá'u'lláh received in the Síyáh-Chál of Tehran. Poignantly, in the months preceding the commemoration of that event, the Guardian recalled to the Bahá'í world the tidal wave of persecution and martyrdom which had swept so many disciples of the Báb, so many heroes, so many innocent women and even children, from the scene a century before and had culminated in casting the Supreme Manifestation of God into a loathsome subterranean dungeon immediately following the abortive attempt on the life of Násiri'd-Dín Sháh on 15 August 1852. The Guardian chose as the commencement of the Holy Year—the celebration of the Anniversary of the “Year Nine”—the middle of October 1952. A veritable fever of anticipation swept over the believers East and West, now free in every part of the globe to give their hearts to unreserved rejoicing. Perhaps for the first time in their history the Bahá'ís had a throbbing sense of their true oneness as a world community. What had always been a matter of doctrine, taught and firmly believed in, was now sensed by every individual as a great and glorious reality. The plans for the future, set in motion by a series of dynamic messages from Shoghi Effendi, served to inflame this new awareness.

At the end of November 1951, in a cable addressing all National Assemblies of the Bahá'í world, Shoghi Effendi informed us that the long anticipated intercontinental stage in the administrative evolution of our Faith was now at hand. We had, he pointed out, passed through the phases of local, regional, national and international activity and were emerging, at such an auspicious moment, into a new kind of Bahá'í world, one in which we began to think in terms of the entire planet with its continents in relation to our teaching strategy. Shoghi Effendi took the Centenary—this great golden wheel in his tapestry—and fashioned it in such a way that two entirely different things were made to react on each other and at the same time blend into each other in one great creative centre of force. One was the past, the commemoration of such soul-shaking events as the martyrdoms, the imprisonment of Bahá'u'lláh, His mystic experience of His own station in the Síyáh-Chál, His exile, and all that these events signified for the progress of man in his journey towards his Creator; the other was the marshalling, this time of all the organized Bahá'í communities of the planet, in a vast Plan, the next step in the unfoldment of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Divine Plan.

Moved by the spirits of those two Exalted Beings Who, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had promised in His *Will and Testament*, would infallibly guide him, his whole heart and attention focused on the propagation of that Faith of which he had been made Guardian—and Guardian is a very weak English equivalent for what the original Arabic “Valíyy-i-Amru’lláh” means, Defender of the Faith, Leader, Commander-in-Chief—Shoghi Effendi set about devising the next stage of the Master’s Plan. It was beginning to take shape in his mind long before its detailed provisions were released through the publication in 1952 of his pamphlet *The Bahá'í Faith 1844–1952*, with its supplement “Ten Year International Teaching and Consolidation Plan”, which was made public at the inception of the Holy Year. Previously he had requested different National Assemblies to provide him with the names of territories and major islands of the five continents where Bahá'í activity was in progress, thus supplementing his

own exhaustive list, which included the countries mentioned by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá Himself in the *Tablets of the Divine Plan*, and which he had carefully compiled with the aid of atlases and works of reference. I remember so vividly how he worked on his own map of the goals of the Ten Year Plan. He was tired out and run down after his long winter’s work in Haifa, with the Shrine, the gardens, the pilgrims, the interminable and ever-increasing correspondence. With difficulty I had extracted a quasi-promise that when he took a cure, at a well-known watering place, he would really rest and devote himself for that period at least to his health. The pleasant summer sun was shining outside, the long leafy alleys of trees, through which one went to drink from the various waters at specific times, were shady in the heat, it all beckoned to drowsy relaxation—but Shoghi Effendi spent the hours of daylight leaning over his map, filling in its details with infinite care. All my remonstrances and those of his doctor, my indignant reminder of his promise, had no effect. He was wholly absorbed in his task, forgetful of tired muscles, strained eyes, overworked brain.

The highlights of the Holy Year were four great Intercontinental Teaching Conferences which were announced in that same November 1951 cable and were to be held in four continents: the first in Africa, in Kampala, Uganda, in the spring of 1953; the second in Chicago, in the United States, during Ridván; the third in Stockholm, Sweden, during the summer and the fourth in New Delhi, India, in the autumn. The pattern of these great Conferences—which were announced a year before the new Plan itself was disclosed—became clear as the hour approached for them to take place. All Hands of the Cause were invited to attend as many of them as possible; to each one the Guardian would send as his own special representative one of the Hands “honoured direct association newly-initiated enterprises World Centre”. In chronological order, these were Leroy Ioas, Amatu’l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum, Ugo Giachery and Mason Remey; these emissaries would fulfil a four-fold mission: they would bear a reproduction of a miniature portrait of the Báb to show the friends gathered on such an historic occasion; they would deliver the Guardian’s own message to the assembled attendants; they would elucidate the character and purposes of the Spiritual World Crusade; they would rally the participants to an energetic, sustained, enthusiastic prosecution of the colossal tasks that lay ahead.

Before going into more detail it would be well to recall that, although in his November 1951 message announcing these Conferences to be held during the Holy Year Shoghi Effendi had given a faint hint of things to come, when he stated they would initiate a new stage of intercontinental activity and would reflect a degree of Bahá’í solidarity of unprecedented scope and intensity, still as far as the Bahá’í world knew, they were designed as great jubilee gatherings to commemorate the Year Nine, to celebrate the end of the victorious second Seven Year Plan, and many regional ones as well. Indeed, only a week before the cable announcing those Conferences reached the Bahá’í world, the Guardian had, in another message, still been referring to a “third Seven Year Plan”, so that there was in 1951 no association in the minds of the Bahá’ís of the commencement of a new crusade with these festival gatherings. The extraordinary success the Bahá’ís were meeting with all over the world, the enthusiasm of National Assemblies such as America and Britain, who had been winning remarkable victories in Europe and in Africa, respectively, swung the compass on a new course, a course that in reality started three years before the inauguration of the Ten Year Plan. So vast is the range covered by the provisions of this Plan, so numerous the communications from Shoghi Effendi on this subject—his lists, his announcements and his statistics, beginning in 1952 and carried on until his death in November 1957—that to give more than a brief outline of them here is impossible. On the other hand, this Crusade crowned his ministry and his life’s work, was a source of deep happiness to him, and its unfolding victories a comfort to his often sad and overburdened heart. Therefore it must be dealt with, however inadequately.

No words can better sum up the very essence of this supreme Plan conceived of and organized by him than his own definition of it: “Let there be no mistake. The avowed, the primary aim of this Spiritual Crusade is none

other than the conquest of the citadels of men's hearts. The theatre of its operations is the entire planet. Its duration a whole decade. Its commencement synchronizes with the Centenary of the birth of Bahá'u'lláh's Mission. Its culmination will coincide with the Centenary of the Declaration of that same mission."

Although all believers were welcome to be present at the four great Conferences of the Holy Year, a special category was singled out and invited to attend by Shoghi Effendi, namely, representatives of those National Assemblies and communities who were intimately concerned with the work which was to go forward in each of the four continents. If we begin with the first Conference held in February, in Africa, and analyse what the most crucial phase of the entire Crusade involved there—the opening of new territories and the consolidation of the work in those already opened—we will get an idea of the shattering impact these historic gatherings had on Bahá'í history: 57 territories were to be the subject of concentrated teaching activities for which six national bodies would be responsible, namely, the National Spiritual Assemblies of the British, the American, the Persian, the Egyptian and Sudanese, the Iraqi and the Indian, Pakistani and Burmese believers, who were to open 33 new territories and consolidate the work already begun in 24. The tasks allotted the whole Western Hemisphere community, through its four National Assemblies, those of the United States, Canada, Central America and South America, were equally staggering: 56 territories, 27 to be opened and 29 to be consolidated, involving such widely separated and difficult goals as the Yukon and Keewatin in the north and the Falkland Islands in the south. The Asian goals were even more formidable: 84 territories in all, 41 to be opened and 43 to be consolidated, ranging from countries in the Himalayas to dots in the Pacific Ocean; these were divided among the nine National Assemblies of Persia; India, Pakistan and Burma; Iraq; Australia and New Zealand; the United States; Canada; Central America; South America and the British Isles. At the European Conference five National Assemblies received 52 territories as their share of the Plan, 30 to be opened and 22 to be consolidated. Seated amongst its elders, the National Assemblies of the United States, Canada, the British Isles, Germany and Austria, was the baby national body of the Bahá'í world—that of Italy and Switzerland, scarcely three months old—which was given by the Guardian territories all its own, 7 in number.

At these historic gatherings, held at such vast distances not only from each other but in most cases from widely dispersed local Bahá'í communities, more than 3,400 believers were present, representing, Shoghi Effendi announced, not only all the principal races of mankind, but more than 80 countries. Each of the Conferences had some special distinction of its own. The first, the African one, attended by no less than ten Hands of the Cause, friends from 19 countries and representatives of over 30 tribes and races, being particularly blessed by having over 100 of the new African believers present as the personal guests of the Guardian himself, a mark of consideration on his part that clearly showed his deep attachment to the new African Bahá'ís. Indeed, in his highly significant message to that first Conference of the Holy Year he was at pains to quote the words of Bahá'u'lláh, Who had compared the coloured people to the "*black pupil of the eye*" through which "*the light of the spirit shineth forth*". Shoghi Effendi not only praised the African race, he praised the African Continent, a continent that had "remained uncontaminated by the evils of a gross, a rampant and cancerous materialism undermining the fabric of human society alike in the East and the West, eating into the vitals of the conflicting peoples and races inhabiting the American, the European, and the Asiatic continents, and, alas, threatening to engulf in one common catastrophic convulsion the generality of mankind." Should such a warning, given at such an historic juncture in the fortunes of Africa, not be remembered more insistently by the band of Bahá'u'lláh's followers labouring there to establish a spiritually based World Order?

The second, "without doubt," Shoghi Effendi wrote, "the most distinguished of the four Intercontinental Teaching Conferences commemorating the Centenary of the inception of the Mission of Bahá'u'lláh" and marking the launching of that "epochal, global, spiritual decade-long Crusade", took place in the middle of the

Holy Year and constituted the central feature of that year's celebrations and the highest point of its festivities. This great all-America Conference was held in the heart of North America, in Chicago, the very city where sixty years before Bahá'u'lláh's name had first been publicly mentioned in the Western World during a session of the World Parliament of Religions held in connection with the World's Columbian Exposition which opened on 1 May 1893. Its sessions were preceded by the consummation of a fifty-year-old enterprise—the dedication to public worship, on 2 May, of the Mother Temple of the West, which was, Shoghi Effendi assured us, not only “the holiest House of Worship ever to be reared to the glory of the Most Great Name” but that no House of Worship would “ever possess the immeasurable potentialities with which it has been endowed” and that the “role it is destined to play in hastening the emergence of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh” could not as yet be fathomed.

The unveiling of the model of the future Bahá'í Temple to be erected on Mt Carmel at the World Centre of the Faith was another event which Shoghi Effendi himself had planned to take place in conjunction with that Conference—a Conference which he said will “go down in history as the most momentous gathering held since the close of the Heroic Age of the Faith, and will be regarded as the most potent agency in paving the way for the launching of one of the most brilliant phases of the grandest crusade ever undertaken by the followers of Bahá'u'lláh since the inception of His Faith . . .”

The lion's share of this new crusade in prosecution of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Divine Plan had been given by Shoghi Effendi to those he so lovingly said were not only “ever ready to bear the brunt of responsibility” but were, indeed, that Plan's “appointed” and “chief trustees”. They had performed in the past “unflagging and herculean labours”; now, through their two national bodies, that of the United States and of Canada, in competition with ten other National Assemblies, each of which had received a goodly portion of goals, this Community would indeed have to struggle hard to maintain its lead and win the new victories expected of it. There were 131 virgin territories throughout the world to be opened to the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh in ten years and 118 territories already opened but still requiring a great deal of consolidation. Of these 249 places, most of them large, independent nations, the United States and Canada received 69, or 28 per cent of the total; 48 new National Assemblies were to be formed before 1963, 36 of them by the United States alone. The first dependency ever to be erected in the vicinity of a Bahá'í Temple was likewise to be undertaken by this Community; in addition, it was to purchase two sites for future Houses of Worship, one in Toronto, Canada, and one in Panama City, Panama; translate and publish Bahá'í literature in 10 Western Hemisphere Indian languages, and achieve many other goals besides.

In the presence of the twelve Hands of the Cause attending this Conference—to which Bahá'ís from 33 countries had come—well over 100 believers arose and offered themselves as pioneers to set in motion the accomplishment of the great tasks the Guardian had just made so dazzlingly clear in his message, in which he called upon the United States believers, the “chief executors”, the Canadian believers, their “allies”, and the Latin American believers, their “associates”, to “brace themselves and initiate . . . in other continents of the globe, an intercontinental campaign designed to carry a stage further the glorious work already inaugurated throughout the Western Hemisphere.” Pioneering demanded, Shoghi Effendi had written long ago, “first and foremost those qualities of renunciation, tenacity, dauntless and passionate fervour.” One saw in the faces of these new volunteers, old and young, single and families, black and white, those qualities reflected like a heavenly glow, and it was this first vanguard of shock troops, followed by an ever-swelling, determined little army, from all over the world, who stormed the citadels of those “unopened” territories and won in one year one hundred of them. These pioneers received from Shoghi Effendi the title “Knight of Bahá'u'lláh”, reserved for any believer, of an age to take part in such a decision, who first pioneered to a virgin territory or either arrived there or was on his way there before the close of the first year of the Crusade. In future years those who first

reached as yet unopened territories would receive this same title. It is interesting to note a term used by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, which seems to foreshadow this beautiful title, where He speaks of the “Knights of the Lord”. All the fires the Guardian lit were from the sparks gathered so painstakingly from the writings of his forefathers.

The opening of the doors of the Mother Temple to public worship, the public meetings addressed by prominent Bahá’ís and non-Bahá’ís alike during the jubilee celebrations attracted thousands of people and received enthusiastic nation-wide publicity in the press, on television and over the radio. During the Holy Year the light of the Faith truly shone most brightly in the Great Republic of the West, the chosen Cradle of its Administrative Order. One of the most moving, never-to-be-forgotten moments of these glorious celebrations was when the Bahá’ís, over 2,500 in number, filed past the Guardian’s representative, Amatu’l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum, to be anointed with attar of rose Shoghi Effendi had entrusted to her for this purpose, on the occasion of the purely Bahá’í dedication ceremony in the Temple, followed by selections from sacred Scriptures read in English and chanted in Persian and Arabic—a programme arranged by the Guardian himself—and crowned by a solemn act of visitation when they filed past the portraits of both the Báb and Bahá’u’lláh and were permitted to gaze for a fleeting and sacred moment at the faces of the twin Manifestations of God for this New Day in which mankind is living. Silently, deeply satisfied, deeply overwhelmed, they then left the House of Worship.

The third Intercontinental Bahá’í Teaching Conference, which convened in Stockholm during July, was honoured by having the largest attendance of Hands of the Cause of any of the others, fourteen being present, the five Persian Hands and one African Hand having just come from extensive travels in the Western Hemisphere, undertaken at the instruction of the Guardian, immediately following the launching of the Crusade in Chicago. It would not be inaccurate to characterize this third gathering as the “executive conference”. Though numerically much smaller than the American one, circumstances permitted a hard core of the most dedicated and active National Assembly members, teachers, administrators and pioneers to be present from all over Europe, including 110 believers from the Ten Goal Countries. The attendants, from thirty countries, devoted themselves during six days not only to the solemn yet joyous recapitulation of those events which had transpired a century before and which the Holy Year commemorated, but to a studious analysis of the work their beloved Guardian had entrusted to the three European National Assemblies and that of the United States, the only other national body involved in the European work being that of Canada, which had been given Iceland as a consolidation goal.

In his message on this historic occasion Shoghi Effendi recalled not only the history of the Bahá’í Faith in relation to Europe—“a continent which, in the course of the last two thousand years, has exercised on the destiny of the human race a pervasive influence unequalled by that of any other continent of the globe”—but the effect both Christianity and Islam had had upon the unfoldment of its fortunes. In recapitulating the advances made and victories won since the end of the last World War, the Guardian pointed out that these had been largely due to “the dynamic impact of a series of national Plans preparatory to the launching of a World Spiritual Crusade”. Those Plans had been the second Seven Year Plan, conducted by the North American believers, a Six Year Plan and a Two Year Plan launched by the British Bahá’ís, and a Five Year Plan prosecuted by the German and Austrian Bahá’í Communities. The result of these well-organized labours had been the establishment of local Assemblies in Eire, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales and in each of the capitals of the Ten Goal Countries, a large increase in the number of Assemblies, centres and believers throughout Europe, the election of yet another independent national body, and the acquisition of a national Bahá’í headquarters in Frankfurt. The hour was now ripe, Shoghi Effendi wrote, for them “to initiate befittingly and prosecute energetically the European campaign of a Global Crusade” which would not only broaden the foundations of the Faith in Europe but would “diffuse its light over the neighbouring islands” and would “God willing, carry its radiance to the Eastern territories of that continent, and beyond them as far as the heart of Asia”. Europe, he stated, was entering upon

“what may well be regarded as the opening phase of a great spiritual revival that bids fair to eclipse any period in its spiritual history.” He went on to express the hope that “the elected representatives of the National Bahá’í Communities entrusted with the conduct of this momentous undertaking launched on the soil of this Continent” might “lend a tremendous impetus to the conversion, the reconciliation and the ultimate unification of the diverse and conflicting peoples, races and classes dwelling within the borders of a travailing, a sorely-agitated, and spiritually famished continent.”

Words such as these fired the attendants to take immediate action, and there were not only 63 offers from among those present to pioneer to European goals, but, what was much more unusual, various national bodies and committees, whose members were present in numbers, immediately took up these offers and before the Conference ended pioneers had been allocated to every goal given the European believers, with the exception of those territories within the Soviet orbit. The thrilling objective of the erection of one of the two Bahá’í Temples called for in the original outline of the “Ten Year Teaching and Consolidation Plan”—the Mother Temple of Europe to be built in Germany—received substantial financial pledges, as did three other European projects involving large sums of money, namely, the purchase of the National Hazíratu’l-Quds of the British Bahá’ís and the sites for two future Bahá’í Temples, one in Stockholm and one in Rome. Many of the new pioneers were deputized by zealous but less free individuals attending the Conference, and touching sacrifices of personal belongings were made by those unable to contribute money. The convocation of such a Conference met with wide and favourable publicity and the public meeting held in conjunction with it attracted one of the largest audiences gathered under Bahá’í auspices that had yet been seen on the Continent.

Twelve months after the beginning of the Holy Year, ushered in during mid-October 1952, the great Asian Intercontinental Teaching Conference took place in New Delhi, India. Though the logical place for such a gathering would have been Persia, or failing this, Iraq, the temperature of the fanatical populations of these countries and the constant and unchanging animosity of the Muslim clergy made the choice of either place impossible. It was therefore highly befitting that the great sister country to the east—opened in the earliest days of Bahá’u’lláh’s Ministry—should receive this honour. To it flocked hundreds of His followers from all over the world, from places as far apart as Europe, Africa, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, many countries in the Western Hemisphere, and particularly Persia, as well as all five Asiatic Hands, who had already attended, at the request of the Guardian, the African, American and European Conferences. There were also present six other Hands of the Cause from the Holy Land, Europe, America, Africa and Australia. In his message to this last of the great Teaching Conferences Shoghi Effendi, after greeting its attendants “with high hopes and a joyful heart”, pointed out the unique circumstances and significance of the work in Asia: in this “world-girdling crusade” the “triple Campaign, embracing the Asiatic mainland, the Australian Continent and the islands of the Pacific Ocean” might “well be regarded as the most extensive, the most arduous and the most momentous of all the Campaigns”. Its scope was “unparalleled in the history of the Faith in the Eastern Hemisphere”; it was to take place in a continent on whose soil “more than a century ago, so much sacred blood was shed”, a continent enjoying an unrivalled position in the Bahá’í world, a continent where the overwhelming majority of Bahá’u’lláh’s followers resided, a continent that was “the cradle of the principal religions of mankind; the home of so many of the oldest and mightiest civilizations which have flourished on this planet; the crossways of so many kindreds and races; the battleground of so many peoples and nations”, above whose horizon in modern times the suns of two independent Revelations had successively risen, and within whose boundaries such holy places as the Qiblih of our Faith (Bahjí), the “Mother of the World” (Tehran) and the “Cynosure of an adoring world” (Baghdad) are embosomed. The Guardian ended his message with an expression of assurance, as well as a sad foreboding of what might lie ahead: “May this Crusade, launched simultaneously on the Asiatic mainland, its neighbouring islands and the Antipodes . . . provide, as it unfolds, an effective antidote to the baneful forces of atheism,

nationalism, secularism and materialism that are tearing at the vitals of this turbulent continent, and may it re-enact those scenes of spiritual heroism which, more than any of the secular revolutions which have agitated its face, have left their everlasting imprint on the fortunes of the peoples and nations dwelling within its borders.”

No less enthusiasm for the tasks ahead—the most staggering of which was work in 84 territories, half of them virgin areas—filled the hearts of the Bahá’ís gathered in New Delhi than had characterized the reaction of their brothers and sisters attending the three previous Conferences. This enthusiasm was further heightened when a cable was received from the Guardian giving the glad-tidings that his own personal hope—expressed before the festivities of the Holy Year began—had been attained through the completion of the superstructure of the Báb’s Holy Sepulchre. The Bahá’ís rallied strongly to meet their given goals: offers to pioneer were received from over 70 people, 25 of whom proceeded to their posts shortly after the Conference ended; funds were lavishly contributed towards the purchase of the three sites for future Bahá’í Temples—Baghdad, Sydney and Delhi, 9 acres of land for the latter being acquired before the Conference rose; substantial donations were received for that most precious and longed-for Temple to be erected in Bahá’u’lláh’s native city, the capital of Persia, which was one of the two Temples originally scheduled to be built during the World Crusade; public meetings and a reception for over a thousand guests were held at which many important figures were present; India’s President, Dr Rajendra Prasad, as well as her famous Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, received delegations from the Conference and the publicity was wide and friendly. At the end of the Conference Shoghi Effendi instructed the Hands attending it to disperse on trips lasting some months, himself providing both assistance and directions as to their itineraries.

In addition to what might be called his routine work, already consuming daily an alarming amount of his time, for over two years Shoghi Effendi not only worked on and fully elaborated the details of this global crusade but made the exhaustive plans necessary for these great jubilee celebrations and constantly directed the Hands of the Cause and the National Assemblies who were to implement their programmes. One might have thought that a lull in his creative output would ensue, but such was not the case. Cables and letters streamed from him at the end of each of the Conferences like missiles towards targets. For four years he never let the white hot heat he had engendered wane. A typical example of this is the tone in which, immediately after the American Conference ended, when the bemused Bahá’í world had scarcely begun to recover from the first glorious revelation of the new Plan, he cabled the Persian National Assembly: “Announce friends no less 128 believers offered pioneer services during celebrations Wilmette including offer pioneer leper colony. Appeal friends not allow themselves surpassed western brethren. Hundreds must arise. Enumerated goals at home abroad must promptly be fulfilled. Upon response progress protection victory entire community depends. Eagerly awaiting evidence action.” Such oft-repeated appeals had such an effect on a community which had lived its entire existence in a wretched cage of prejudice and persecution that the Persian believers, seeing, unbelievably, a door open before them, began to pour forth to the four corners of the world in ever-swelling numbers; without their assistance, their strong financial support and their constant readiness to sacrifice, the Crusade could never have been won on the scale that marked its triumphal conclusion in 1963.

Well aware of the fact that the believers in the West were few in number, Shoghi Effendi himself frequently assisted them in their projects. Immediately after the official inauguration of the Crusade at the Chicago Conference, he sent a contribution of £500 to the Central American National Assembly to help purchase its Temple site in Panama and £1,000 to the Italo-Swiss National Assembly for its Temple site in Rome; at the same time he put pressure on the United States, the British and the Indian National Assemblies to speed up their publication of Bahá’í literature in the languages allotted to them in the Ten Year Plan, sending a £1,000 donation himself to England, as he knew the financial burden their share of this extremely important work imposed was

more than they could shoulder alone. Included in the provisions of the World Crusade were 91 new languages into which Bahá'í literature was to be translated, 40 in Asia, 31 in Africa, 10 in Europe and 10 in America, for which the Indian, Australian, British and American Communities were responsible. Throughout the years of the Crusade he frequently supported this work himself, indeed, throughout his entire ministry the question of languages had been one of his chief concerns. He chose them, urged their publication, kept inquiring when the finished product would be ready, paid, very often, for them to be printed, and sometimes for their translation as well, and not infrequently purchased a supply for himself in Haifa.

The combination of Shoghi Effendi's vision, his constant insistence on getting the work of the Cause done, and his not infrequent financial assistance, made possible by the Huqúq (Right of God) which was payable to him as Head of the Faith in accordance with the *Will and Testament* of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, provided the motive power behind many undertakings. He gave his contributions wisely and graciously, sometimes as an example to others, sometimes as a personal form of participation in some enterprise particularly close to his heart, sometimes because there was no other source to be drawn upon. A significant example of this was £50 he gave the Tasmanian Bahá'ís to carry out their first State Teaching Campaign. On innumerable occasions he paid for the travels of Bahá'í teachers, particularly following the passing of the Master when the believers in the West were faced with many tests and required the deepening in faith which he felt a visit from one of the old and tried Persian Bahá'ís could provide; later he provided the expenses of those Hands of the Cause who were not in a position to finance themselves on the trips he instructed them to take. When he removed the remains of the mother and brother of 'Abdu'l-Bahá from their lowly cemeteries in Akka and entombed them in state on Mt Carmel, he contributed £1,000 to the Mother Temple of the West in their memory. On a number of occasions, throughout all the great Plans, he gave a sum of money and called for a specific number of believers to arise and with this sum fulfil a certain objective. To such pledges he would sometimes link touching and revealing statements, saying he was "deprived of personal participation", or that this was his "initial donation". He never failed to contribute lavishly to the victims of many disasters. In Persia, when Bahá'í villagers were persecuted and martyred, when the settlers in Russia were expelled and returned penniless to their land of origin, when earthquake or flood had left the friends homeless and destitute, Shoghi Effendi went to their assistance. He allocated a yearly contribution to the Persian National Assembly to assist in purchasing the historic sites associated with the Faith in that country, which constituted one of its specific tasks. He assisted in the purchase of various national Bahá'í headquarters and Temple sites, and frequently himself paid for the erection of the tombstones of prominent and much-loved believers as a mark of his personal esteem and affection.

The greatest single contribution of the Guardian's ministry, however, was his pledge of one-third of a million dollars towards the erection of the three Temples which became part of the World Crusade goals. How he reached this figure was typical of the way he did everything. I remember it all very clearly: he first provided the designs for the Temples, then got estimates from the National Assemblies entrusted with the task of building them—and tied them down, incidentally, to a ceiling price; he then, having ascertained the Temples would cost in the neighbourhood of a million dollars, and that almost \$150,000 was already available for them, estimated how much the Bahá'ís might be able to raise by the time, towards the end of the Crusade, their completion could be anticipated, and, having figured out about one-third was assured by this calculation, he proceeded to figure out what he felt he himself could give, knowing from past experience what the World Centre income might be and to what other plans he was committed; having allowed for contingencies, he arrived at his figure of a third-of-a-million dollars. The third third he left to God, so to speak, knowing full well that if His followers exerted their utmost, by mysterious means forces would be released which would enable the believers to attain their goal.

But let us return to the newly inaugurated “fate-laden, soul-stirring, decade-long, world-embracing Spiritual Crusade” with its four objectives: development of the institutions at the World Centre of the Faith; consolidation of the home fronts of the twelve territories serving as the administrative bases of the twelve Plans which were component parts of The Plan; consolidation of all the territories already opened to the Faith; opening of the remaining chief virgin territories of the planet. Although the administration of the Crusade had been entrusted to the twelve National Assemblies, nevertheless, every single believer, irrespective of his race, nation, class, colour, age or sex, was to lend his particular assistance to the accomplishment of this “gigantic enterprise”. In a colourful passage of scintillating prose Shoghi Effendi lifted the curtain on the arena of the new Plan: Where? Why, everywhere—in the Arctic Circle, in the deserts, the jungles, the isles of the cold North Sea and the torrid climes of the Indian and Pacific Oceans. To whom? Why, to all peoples—to the tribes of Africa, the Eskimos of Canada and Greenland, the Lapps of the far north, the Polynesians, the Australian Aborigines, the red Indians of the Americas. Under what circumstances? Not only in the wilderness, but in the cities, “immersed in crass materialism”, where people breathed the fetid air of “aggressive racialism”, bound by the chains of “haughty intellectualism”, surrounded by “blind and militant nationalism”, immersed in “narrow and intolerant ecclesiasticism”. What strongholds must Bahá’u’lláh’s soldiers storm? The strongholds of Hinduism, the monasteries of Buddhism, the jungles of the Amazon, the mountains of Tibet, the steppes of Russia, the wastes of Siberia, the interior of China, Mongolia, Japan, with their teeming multitudes—nor should they forget to sit with the leper and consort with the outcast in their penal colonies. “I direct my impassioned appeal,” he wrote, “to obey, as befits His warriors, the summons of the Lord of Hosts and prepare for that Day of Days, when His victorious battalions will, to the accompaniment of hosannas from the invisible angels in the Abhá Kingdom, celebrate the hour of final victory.”

It is clear that the Guardian envisaged this Ten Year undertaking as no more and no less than a battle of the “world-wide, loyal, unbreachable army” of “Bahá’u’lláh’s warriors”, His “army of light”, against the entrenched battalions of darkness holding the globe. Its “Supreme Commander” was ‘Abdu’l-Bahá; behind Him stood His Father, the “King of Kings”, His aid pledged “to every crusader battling for His Cause”. “Invisible battalions” were mustered “rank upon rank, ready to pour forth reinforcements from on high”. And so the little band of God’s heroes assembled, ready to go forth and “emblazon on their shields the emblems of new victories”, ready to implant the “earthly symbols of Bahá’u’lláh’s unearthly sovereignty” in every country of the world, ready to lay the unassailable administrative foundation of His Christ-promised Kingdom of God upon earth.

In retrospect we see that Shoghi Effendi divided his great World Crusade into four phases. The first was from Ridván 1953 to Ridván 1954, the second from 1954–6 and the third from 1956–8. The end of the fourth phase he linked with the completion of the Temples scheduled to be constructed during the Ten Year Plan, all three of which were practically entirely completed by 1963. The Guardian did not have the period of these phases fixed in his mind at the inception of the Plan; they were a result of the natural growth of the forces released by the Crusade and the nature of the victories won, though there can be no doubt that it was his mind that directed these forces, first towards one set of goals, then towards another, throughout all the campaigns waged by his one army with its twelve battalions.

Three weeks after the opening of the Crusade Shoghi Effendi cabled the Bahá’í world that the “paramount issue challenging” the prosecutors of the Plan was the need for “immediate, determined, sustained, universal” dispersal throughout the unopened territories. Shoghi Effendi, never lacking a fitting sense of protocol, including what one might call divine protocol, said the Chief Executors of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Divine Plan, by virtue of the primacy conferred on them in His Tablets, enjoyed the prerogative of sending their pioneers to goals allotted to their sister communities in the East or the West. He then appealed for 130 “Bahá’í warriors” to arise and fill the gaps of the

unconquered territories of the globe during the first year of the Crusade. Four months later, before the Asian Intercontinental Teaching Conference had even been held, he was able to inform the Bahá'í world that over 300 believers had volunteered to pioneer, 150 from North America, over 50 from Europe, over 40 from Africa and over 40 from Asia. In less than five months 28 territories and islands had been opened. Always emboldened by success, Shoghi Effendi told the friends that as the total countries in the world opened to the Faith had now surpassed 150, they should endeavour to make it 200 by the end of the Holy Year. The Bahá'ís almost succeeded in meeting this date, the 200 mark being reached three weeks after the close of the Holy Year. It was in September 1953 that Shoghi Effendi announced the first names of those whom he inscribed on the "Roll of Honour", which he planned, when completed, to place under the floor at the entrance of Bahá'u'lláh's Holy Tomb in Bahjí, a befitting place for His heroic "Knights"; both the names and the territories opened were listed on it, and until the end of his life the Guardian continued to make these periodic announcements of pioneers. By 1963 the Roll included representatives of all races, from all continents, of both sexes and many countries. Nine months after the opening of the Crusade the Guardian could announce that almost ninety territories had been opened, three-quarters of the total number, exclusive of those within the Soviet Orbit, and in his Ridván Message of 1954 he was able to give the glad-tidings that the "Knights of the Lord of Hosts in pursuance of their sublime mission for the spiritual conquest of the planet" had opened 100 virgin territories. In so doing, the opening phase of the Crusade had been "triumphantly concluded . . . exceeding our fondest expectations."

It was during this same Ridván period that the Hands of the Cause in different continents, pursuant to detailed instructions which the Guardian had given in previous communications, appointed for each continent an Auxiliary Board of nine members who would act as their "deputies, assistants and advisers", and that five Continental Funds were also initiated at his instigation to facilitate the work of this unfolding institution.

Having seized 100 new prizes, the army of Bahá'u'lláh was now engaged in depth. Shoghi Effendi, his mind more or less at rest about the progress on the front lines, immediately set about digging in. The second phase of the Plan, now opening, was primarily concerned with consolidation. In his 1954 Ridván Message the Guardian listed 13 points which were to be concentrated upon during the coming two years: prosecution of the all-important teaching work; preservation of all prizes won; maintenance of all local Assemblies; multiplication of groups and centres—all to hasten the emergence of the 48 National Assemblies scheduled to be formed during the Crusade; purchase of Temple sites; initiation of special funds for purchase of the specified National Hazíratu'l-Quds; speedy fulfilment of various language tasks; acquisition of historic Bahá'í sites in Persia; measures for the erection of the Tehran and Frankfurt Temples; establishment of the Wilmette Temple dependency; inauguration of national endowments; incorporation of local Assemblies; establishment of the new Publishing Trusts. He directed his "fervent plea" to accomplish such monumental labours as these to the 108 people constituting the 12 National Assemblies of the Bahá'í world, out of the teeming millions of human beings on the planet!

The miracle was that such an appeal, to what in the eyes of the sophisticated could not but appear to be pitifully weak instruments, should have had such an effect. All over the Bahá'í world the leaders and rank and file redoubled their efforts, and sweeping victories were won. In 1955 Shoghi Effendi informed the believers in his annual Ridván Message, which was his main instrument for conveying news of the progress of the Faith, that the Plan was "forging ahead, gaining momentum with every passing day, tearing down barriers in all climes and amidst divers peoples and races, widening irresistibly the scope of its beneficent operations, and revealing ever more compelling signs of its inherent strength as it marches towards the spiritual conquest of the entire planet."

In spite of his constant encouragement, however, there were times when Shoghi Effendi felt compelled to address the commanders of his battalions—the twelve National Assemblies—in sombre terms. One very significant example of this is the message he cabled them in May 1955, in which he says he is “impelled” at “this grave hour” to ask them to ponder anew the “full implications” and “essential requirements” of their “stewardship” of the Cause and says he entreats them not to “allow any vicissitudes present or future dampen their ardour” or “weaken their resolution”. He appealed to them all, but particularly those who were “untrammelled by disabilities shackles imposed their less privileged brethren” to accelerate the tempo of their work and multiply their exploits, thus offsetting the “transient setbacks” a steadily advancing but not yet “fully emancipated” Faith might suffer.

During August of that same year the Bahá’í world was subjected to one of its periodic crises—a crisis which took a heavy toll of the strength and forces of the Guardian and was one more factor hastening his premature death at a relatively young age. In a cabled message which he said should be transmitted to all Hands and National Assemblies, Shoghi Effendi stated that what was still the largest community of believers was experiencing a “violent recrudescence of persecutions afflicting intermittently for over century members residing Bahá’u’lláh’s native land”: the National Headquarters in Tehran had been seized and its dome publicly demolished by one of Persia’s leading divines—in the presence and with the cheerful assistance of a general of the Iranian Army—followed by the occupation of similar local institutions throughout the provinces; the Parliament of the country made a declaration outlawing the Faith; the press and radio viciously attacked and calumniated its aims and purposes, and the Bahá’ís were subjected to a series of atrocities throughout the whole land; the Holy House of the Báb was twice desecrated and severely damaged; other Holy Places were occupied or destroyed; the shops and homes of Bahá’ís were looted and razed; bodies were dug up in Bahá’í cemeteries and mutilated; Bahá’í adults and children were beaten and women abducted and forced to marry Muslims; a family of seven, the oldest 80, the youngest 19, were hacked to pieces with spades by a mob, to the accompaniment of music from drums and trumpets. Such horrors aroused the violent indignation of the entire Bahá’í world and, at the instigation of the Guardian, over a thousand messages poured into Persia to the authorities from places members of its Parliament had never even heard of. The United Nations was appealed to, as well as Presidents and prominent figures throughout the civilized part of the world. The Director of the Division of Human Rights assured the American National Assembly (the official representative of other Bahá’í bodies now accredited to the United Nations as a non-governmental body under the name “International Bahá’í Community”) that a summary of the situation was being furnished to both the Commission of Human Rights and the Persian Government, whilst the Secretary-General of the United Nations appointed a commission of United Nations officers, headed by the High Commissioner for Refugees, which had instructions to make representations to the Persian Government and seek assurances from it that the rights of the Bahá’í minority in Persia would be protected. What was not yet a fully emancipated Faith had nevertheless, after over a century of struggle, developed some powerful teeth and it bit back most effectively on this occasion, aided by a \$40,000 publicity campaign in the United States. Shoghi Effendi, in addition to directing such vigorous counteraction to such barbarous attacks on a peaceable and defenceless community, initiated an “Aid the Persecuted” Fund, to which he himself immediately contributed about \$18,000 and which was widely and warmly supported by indignant Bahá’í communities already struggling in the middle of a period of heavy financial commitments.

It was during this second phase of the World Crusade that the Bahá’ís accomplished such feats as purchasing 10 of the 11 Temple sites enumerated as goals of their Ten Year Plan, at a cost of over \$100,000, of acquiring 30 out of the 51 national endowments at an estimated \$100,000, and of buying 43 of the 49 national Bahá’í headquarters, for over half-a-million dollars, in various continents of the globe —the latter being a feat which Shoghi Effendi cryptically and significantly stated was “amply compensating for the seizure and occupation of

the National Administrative Headquarters of the Faith and the demolition of its dome by the military authorities in the Persian capital.”

There were many brilliant victories during these early years of the Crusade: the Sýáh-Chál, scene of the first intimation of Bahá’u’lláh’s Prophetic Mission, was purchased; His banner was planted in Islam’s very heart through the establishment of a Spiritual Assembly in Mecca; the particularly welcome news reached the Guardian that there were Bahá’ís—remnants of the former communities in the Caucasus and Turkistan—in some of the Soviet states listed at the inception of the Crusade as unopened, but which might now be regarded as open, however faint and feeble the solitary candles burning there; 98 islands throughout the world now had Bahá’ís; work on the erection of the International Archives building at the World Centre was begun.

It was in a period of victories such as these that Shoghi Effendi took the momentous decision to erect not two but three Houses of Worship during the Ten Year Plan. The significance given in the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to these Mashriqu’l-Adhkárs (dawning-places of the mention of God) is very great: they are erected, Shoghi Effendi said, for “the worship of the one true God, and to the glory of His Manifestation for this Day.” They are strongly linked to both the spiritual life of the individual and the communal life of the believers. The Guardian called the American Temple the “symbolic Edifice” of the Administration, “its mighty bulwark, the symbol of its strength and the sign of its future glory”, the “harbinger of an as yet unborn civilization”, the “symbol and harbinger of the World Order”. Such “Mother” Temples, he said, were the great silent teachers of the Faith and occupied such a key position in its progress that he stated the American House of Worship incarnated the soul of the American Bahá’í Community in the Western Hemisphere. Although the first Temple was built according to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s own instructions in Ishqabad during his lifetime, the Guardian assured us that the first Temple erected in the New World was the holiest for all time because the Master Himself had laid its foundation stone during His visit to North America and it had been one of the undertakings dearest to His heart. By 1921, when Shoghi Effendi became Guardian, its foundations had been laid but the building ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had so longed to see erected before His passing was only a hideous black waterproofed cylinder, resembling a gas tank sticking up above the ground.

The Guardian conceived it as one of his major duties to complete this sacred edifice as soon as possible. It took him thirty-two years to accomplish this task, which he called the greatest enterprise ever launched by the western followers of the Faith and the most signal victory won during the Formative Period of the Bahá’í Dispensation. One of his first acts was to send £19 to its Temple Fund in 1922, and in 1926 he says he is “joyously pledging 95 dollars per month as my humble share”; throughout the years he frequently contributed towards its erection. Shoghi Effendi encouraged the Bahá’ís to transform the great circular space, which in future would be surrounded by the steps of the Temple, into a usable hall for Conventions and other gatherings, pending the construction, at a later period, of an auditorium for such purposes outside an edifice solely to be used for devotional services; by 1923 the Convention was held in what became known from then on as Foundation Hall; to embellish its walls, he sent as his gift beautiful Persian rugs from the Shrine of Bahá’u’lláh; until 1928, however, no progress was made in the erection of the Temple. To the Convention held that year he sent a strongly worded message pleading with the American believers to resume the construction of their great Temple, and this influenced them to initiate what became known as the “Plan of Unified Action”, designed to raise money for the extremely costly work of the superstructure. In spite of this, by 1929 the required sum had not been obtained and Shoghi Effendi, not himself at that time in a position to send a large amount, decided to sell the most precious thing the Faith possessed in the Holy Land. He cabled the Convention: “Am sacrificing the most valuable ornament Bahá’u’lláh’s Shrine in order consecrate and reinforce collective endeavours American believers speedily to consummate plan unified action appeal for unprecedented self-sacrifice.” It was typical of

him that he first cabled the Persian donor of this priceless object: "Temple work America progressing three quarters sum required first storey actually subscribed. Strongly feel desirability sale silk carpet you donated. Wire views promptly regarding market and price. Appreciate your consent." Only when he received a warm answer and advice to sell in New York did he inform America of his decision. So deeply touched were the Bahá'ís by this offering of their Guardian that they raised almost \$300,000 before the Convention rose. Fearing that heavy debts might be incurred if the sum for the entire future work was not pledged in advance, Shoghi Effendi would not permit contracts to be signed. However, by the 1930 Convention the sum was pledged, the Guardian consented, and the Bahá'ís wanted to buy the precious carpet themselves, which in the meantime had reached the United States. His cabled replies were typical in every way: "Approve proceed construction entire Temple without external decorations provided believers are determined to consummate their sacrifice by adding decorations eventually. Feel we all should uphold design in its entirety as approved 'Abdu'l-Bahá." "Consecrated carpet need neither be sold nor returned. Dedicated as permanent ornament first Mashriqu'l-Adhkár of West." The Convention, overwhelmed, cabled its "deep gratitude for matchless gift". The enthusiasm Shoghi Effendi engendered by such messages and acts as these was not produced by policy on his part, but rather by the deep unselfconscious instinct of a born leader with a singularly pure motive and heart.

By the time of the 1931 Convention Shoghi Effendi was able to cable: "Greatest Holy Leaf joins me . . . expression our heartfelt congratulations boundless joy profound gratitude practical completion superstructure glorious edifice . . ." In 1933 he, again associating the sister of 'Abdu'l-Bahá with this work, cabled: "Beseech entire body American believers by love they bear departed Greatest Holy Leaf not allow slightest interruption progress Temple work so near her heart dim splendours their past achievements. Beg them ponder extreme urgency my entreaty." This message, sent in January, was followed in October by another cable: "Appeal hard pressed American believers heed this my last passionate entreaty not suffer slightest interruption Temple contributions dim magnificence their epoch-making enterprise . . . promise one year's respite upon successful conclusion first stage ornamentation our glorious Temple." No wonder he put "our". He had struggled with the American Bahá'ís to erect this building "during" what he himself described as "one of the severest depressions experienced by the people of the United States in this century"; he had insisted, in the midst of this struggle, that only "unreserved" supporters of the Faith could contribute towards its construction, only those who were "fully conscious" of and "unreservedly submissive" to the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh; he had rallied his fellow-Bahá'ís, few in number, for the most part poor, living from day to day in the shadow of economic disaster, by assuring them that such a significant enterprise should be supported "not be the munificence of a few but by the joint contributions of the entire mass of the convinced followers of the Faith", pointing out that the spiritual power destined to radiate from the Temple would depend to a large extent on the "range and variety of the contributing believers, as well as upon the nature and degree of self-abnegation which their unsolicited offerings" would entail. He encouraged, comforted and drove them to victory. Proudly he reminded them that no one else had what they had—the dual blessing of an efficiently functioning Administrative Order and a Temple!

Year after year the messages went out and the fabulous Temple went up, until, at the second and last great Centenary to be celebrated during Shoghi Effendi's lifetime, I was able to read those words: "On behalf of the Guardian of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, I have the great honour of dedicating this first Mashriqu'l-Adhkár of the Western World to public worship . . . I greet and welcome you on behalf of the Guardian of our Faith within these walls . . ."

Such a brief history of a work so dear to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's and Shoghi Effendi's hearts conveys an idea of the importance of these Temples in the life of Bahá'í communities. It is small wonder then that at the inception of the Crusade the Guardian turned his attention to the problem of erecting the first Bahá'í Temple in Bahá'u'lláh's

native land. In 1942 Shoghi Effendi announced that the Persian Bahá'ís had purchased a three-and-a-half-million square metre area near Tehran as the site of their future Mashriqu'l-Adhkár. They had been stimulated to do this by the consistent efforts of the American Bahá'ís in erecting their own Temple—much as the American Bahá'ís had been stimulated in 1903 to undertake a Temple of their own because the oriental Bahá'ís were building one in Asia, in Ishqabad. The Guardian attached great importance to this historic and sacred Temple. It is significant for us to remember that he rejected all of the many designs submitted to him, in response to his own invitation, because he found them far too extreme, too much the reflection of the current glass of fashion, undignified and unsuitable for the purposes of a Faith which will give birth to a World Order and civilization during a thousand-year Dispensation. He decided on a conservative concept, worked out with his personal approval in Haifa, which he stated, “incorporates a dome reminiscent of that of the Báb's Holy Sepulchre”. Already the enthusiastic Persian believers had started a five year plan to raise twelve million tumans for its construction and the Guardian himself had had its design unveiled at the meeting in Bahjí on the first day of Ridván, 1953. It was a project to which Shoghi Effendi attached the greatest importance and the outlawing of all Bahá'í activity in Persia in 1955 came as a severe blow to him, for he realized that the situation there, far from having improved in the quarter of a century of his ministry, had again deteriorated to such a point that there was little hope of such a building being erected before the end of the Ten Year Plan. In spite of the fact that the first Mashriqu'l-Adhkár of Europe—the second Temple of the Plan—could still be built, he immediately struck back at the enemies of the Faith through a cable sent in November 1955: “Historic decision arrived at raise Mother Temple Africa in City Kampala situated its heart and constituting supreme consolation masses oppressed valiant brethren cradle Faith. Every continent globe except Australasia will thereby pride itself on derive direct spiritual benefit its own Mashriqu'l-Adhkár. Befitting recognition will moreover have been accorded marvelous expansion Faith amazing multiplication its administrative institutions throughout continent . . .” Thus the African believers received what he characterized as “the stupendous, the momentous and unique project of the construction of Africa's Mother Temple.”

Whereas Tehran was to have the third great Temple of the Bahá'í world and Germany the fourth, in reality the European one became third in priority and Africa the fourth. The design for the Africa Temple was made under Shoghi Effendi's supervision in Haifa and met with his full approval. The situation as regards the German one was different: he himself had chosen a design and sent it to the National Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Germany and Austria, but there was already so much strong church-aroused opposition to the erection of a Bahá'í House of Worship that the National Assembly had informed him they felt the conservative nature of the design he had chosen would, in a land favouring at the moment extremely modern-style buildings, complicate its erection, as a building permit might be refused on this pretext. Shoghi Effendi therefore permitted them to hold a competition and of the designs sent him he favoured the one which was later built.

There is no doubt in my mind that if Shoghi Effendi had asked the opinion of the Bahá'ís, they would certainly have advised avoiding Germany; when he announced in 1953 that the European Temple would be built there it was only eight years since the terrible war had ended and, with the exception of a few countries, where there were practically no believers at all, the Bahá'ís all over the world lived in lands which had suffered through or fought against Germany during the war. Unafraid, unhampered by worldly considerations, the Guardian pursued the spiritual destiny of the world-wide community of the Greatest Name entrusted to his care. The standards of the world were never his index, only the standards enshrined in the teachings. Ever mindful of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit to that country and the love He had for that community, Shoghi Effendi had fostered its unfoldment from the very first years of his own ministry; it was one of the communities he included in the first, heart-broken, hesitant letters he sent out to the miniature Bahá'í world of those days in 1922. Writing of it in 1926 he had referred to, “The growing number of German Bahá'í Centres and adherents, the glorious words spoken by our Beloved regarding their destiny and dominant part in the future awakening of Europe . . .” and in 1927, in letters to

Martha Root, he told her: “Germany should become the pivotal centre of your activities as I attach great importance to the varied and rich opportunities offered by that awakening country . . .”, “I feel you should devote more attention to Germany for I fully share with you the hopes you entertain for its future contribution to the spiritual regeneration of Europe.” In 1947 he had referred to the “astounding resurgence” of the “war-devastated Community of Central Europe” and stated that within Germany’s frontiers was to be found “the largest community of the adherents of the Faith on that continent—a community destined, as prophesied by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, to play a major role in the spiritual awakening and ultimate conversion of the European peoples and races to His Father’s Faith.” Frankfurt was in the heart of Germany, Germany was in the heart of Europe. It was the logical place for the European Temple.

Still thoroughly aroused by the persecution of the main body of the faithful who resided in Bahá’u’lláh’s native land, Shoghi Effendi quietly set a new plan in motion. He had chosen a third Temple design and instructed the National Assembly of the Bahá’ís of Australia and New Zealand to make inquiries, confidentially, as to how much such a building would cost if erected in Sydney. When he received an estimate which he felt would not add too heavily to the financial burden the Crusade was already carrying, he made his thrilling announcement, in his Ridván Message of 1957, of the launching of an “ambitious three-fold enterprise, designed to compensate for the disabilities suffered by the sorely-tried Community of the followers of His Faith in the land of His birth, aiming at the erection, in localities as far apart as Frankfurt, Sydney and Kampala, of the Mother Temples of the European, the Australian and African continents, at a cost of approximately one million dollars, complementing the Temples already constructed in the Asiatic and American continents.” This announcement meant that the loss to the Persian believers of their first Mashriqu’l-Adhkár would be compensated for by the erection in the Pacific of what the Guardian called “The Mother Temple of the Antipodes, and indeed the whole Pacific area” and the construction in the heart of the African Continent of another House of Worship which he said was “destined to enormously influence the onward march of the Cause of God the world over, to consolidate to a marked degree the rising institutions of a divinely appointed Order and noise abroad its fame in every continent of the globe.” The Guardian also announced in this Ridván Message that the designs for all three of these “monumental edifices, each designed to serve as a house for the indwelling Spirit of God and a tabernacle for the glorification of His appointed Messenger in this day” would be shown to “the assembled delegates at the thirteen historic Bahá’í National Conventions being held for the first time during this year’s Ridván Festival.”

It was during this second phase of the World Crusade that the American National Assembly purchased the land for its first Temple dependency. The Guardian had advised that Assembly that he did not consider a library—the first proposal—sufficiently demonstrative of the purpose and significance of the institution of the Mashriqu’l-Adhkár in Bahá’í society and it was therefore decided to build a Home for the Aged. One of his last letters was to urge that Assembly to commence work on the Home, as it would impress on the public that one of the chief functions of our Faith is to serve humanity, regardless of creed, race or denomination, and be sure to attract attention and publicity.

XVI

A UNIQUE MINISTRY

Well is it with him that seeketh the shelter of his shade that shadoweth all mankind.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá

The Guardian had fused in the alembic of his creative mind all the elements of the Faith of Bahá’u’lláh into one great indivisible whole; he had created an organized community of His followers which was the receptacle of His teachings, His laws and His Administrative Order; the teachings of the twin Manifestations of God and the Perfect Exemplar had been woven into a shining cloak that would clothe and protect man for a thousand years, a cloak on which the fingers of Shoghi Effendi had picked out the patterns, knitted the seams, fashioned the brilliant protective clasps of his interpretations of the Sacred Texts, never to be sundered, never to be torn away until that day when a new Law-giver comes to the world and once again wraps His creature man in yet another divine garment.

The Master’s grandson had been sublimed by the forces released in His Testament into the Guardian of the Faith; belonging to the sovereign caste of his divine Forefathers, he was himself a sovereign. To the primacy conferred by ties of consanguinity had been added the powers of infallible guidance with which the operation of God’s Covenant had invested him. Shoghi Effendi’s divine and indefeasible right to assume the helm of the Cause of God had been fully vindicated through thirty-six years of unremitting, heart-breaking toil. It would be hard indeed to find a comparable figure in history who, in a little over a third of a century, set so many different operations in motion, who found the time to devote his attention to minute details on one hand and on the other to cover the range of an entire planet with his plans, his instructions, his guidance and his leadership. He had laid the foundations of that future society Bahá’u’lláh had fathered upon the mind of the Master, and which He in turn had gestated to a point of perfection, passing it upon His death into the safe hands of His successor.

Patiently, as a master jeweller works at his designs, picking out from his stock of gems some kingly stone, setting it amidst smaller but equally precious ones, so would Shoghi Effendi choose a theme from the Teachings, pluck it out, study it, polish its facets and set it amidst his brilliant commentaries, where it would flash and catch our eye as never before when it had lain buried beneath a heap of other jewels. It would be no exaggeration to say that we Bahá’ís now live in a room entirely surrounded by these glorious, blazing motifs Shoghi Effendi created. It is as if he had caught the sunlight of this Revelation in a prism and enabled us to appreciate the number of colours and rays that make up the blinding light of Bahá’u’lláh’s words.

Things we knew all our lives suddenly, startlingly, took on a new and added significance. We were challenged, rebuked, stimulated. We found ourselves arising to serve, to pioneer, to sacrifice. We grew under his aegis and the Faith grew with us into something vastly different from what had existed before. Let us take a few of these master jewels, these themes Shoghi Effendi set before us in such a brilliant manner. One day Bahá’u’lláh rested on Mt Carmel. He pointed out a spot to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and said buy this land and bring the body of the Báb and inter Him here. The Master brought the Precious Trust and placed it in the heart of the mountain and covered it

with the building He erected with so many tears. The Guardian completed the sacred Edifice, and now the glorious Shrine of the Forerunner of the Faith rests in queenly splendour on Mt Carmel, the cynosure of all eyes.

The Master sent a handful of precious Tablets, written during dark and dangerous days, to America after the war and a pleasant ceremony was held, called the “unveiling of the Divine Plan”, at which pairs of children and young people (myself included) pulled strings and one of the Tablets duly appeared on the draped background of the platform. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had sent a king’s ransom to the North American believers, who rejoiced but did not understand. Shoghi Effendi, never losing sight of this gleaming hoard that had been deposited on the other side of the world, set about working his way to it. It took him almost two decades, but at last, having painfully and feverishly erected the machinery of the Administrative Order, he was in a position to take up those jewels and set them. The North was conquered, the South was conquered, the East and the West alike began to glow and blaze in all their parts with the light of new Bahá’í centres and Assemblies, more than 4,200 throughout the world. Into the various territories of the globe—251 in number—which Shoghi Effendi had ensured should either be awakened or reanimated by the breezes of the Divine Plan, he had spilled the river of the translations of the literature of the Faith in 230 languages. For twenty years, since he first set in motion the power ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had concealed in those Tablets, Shoghi Effendi never ceased to wave forward an army of pioneers, battalion after battalion marching forth to conquer at his bidding the whole planet and implant, wherever it conquered, the Banner of Bahá’u’lláh.

Grasping the hidden import of Bahá’u’lláh’s Tablet of Carmel, the Guardian entombed the Greatest Holy Leaf near the Shrine of the Báb, brought her mother and brother to rest beside her, designated this spot as the heart of a world-wide administration, drew an arc above it on the mountainside which he associated with Bahá’u’lláh’s words “*the seat of God’s Throne*”, built the first of the great edifices that will rise about that arc, and in innumerable passages pointed out the nature of the progress that must pour out from this great spiritual hub to all the peoples and nations of the world, a progress based on the teachings of a Faith that is “essentially supernatural, supranational, entirely non-political, non-partisan, and diametrically opposed to any policy or school of thought that seeks to exalt any particular race, class or nation”; a Faith whose “followers view mankind as one entity, and profoundly attached to its vital interests, will not hesitate to subordinate every particular interest, be it personal, regional or national, to the overriding interests of the generality of mankind, knowing full well that in a world of interdependent peoples and nations the advantage of the part is best to be reached by the advantage of the whole”; a Faith the embryo of which, Shoghi Effendi explained, had developed during the Heroic Age, whose child, the social Order contained in the teachings of Bahá’u’lláh, would grow during the Formative Age, whose adolescence would witness the establishment of the World Order, and whose maturity in the distant reaches of the Golden Age would flower in a world civilization, a global civilization without precedent, which would mark “the furthestmost limits in the organization of human society”, which would never decline, in which mankind would continue to progress indefinitely and ascend to ever greater heights of spiritual power.



THE GUARDIAN

The last photograph of Shoghi Effendi taken a few months before he passed away. Enlarged from a very small snapshot, it conveys something of the gentle, noble, humble nature of the Guardian. The majesty and power that so strongly radiated from him are lacking in this picture



THE GUARDIAN IN 1957

A snapshot showing Shoghi Effendi standing in the garden gate of the Master's house. He was directing the placing of the coffin of an old servant in the funeral cortège that was about to leave for the Bahá'í Cemetery



THE LAST MESSAGE OF THE GUARDIAN

On the terrace of this mountain guest house Shoghi Effendi penned in its final form
his momentous midway point of the World Crusade message



THE FUNERAL OF SHOGHI EFFENDI IN LONDON

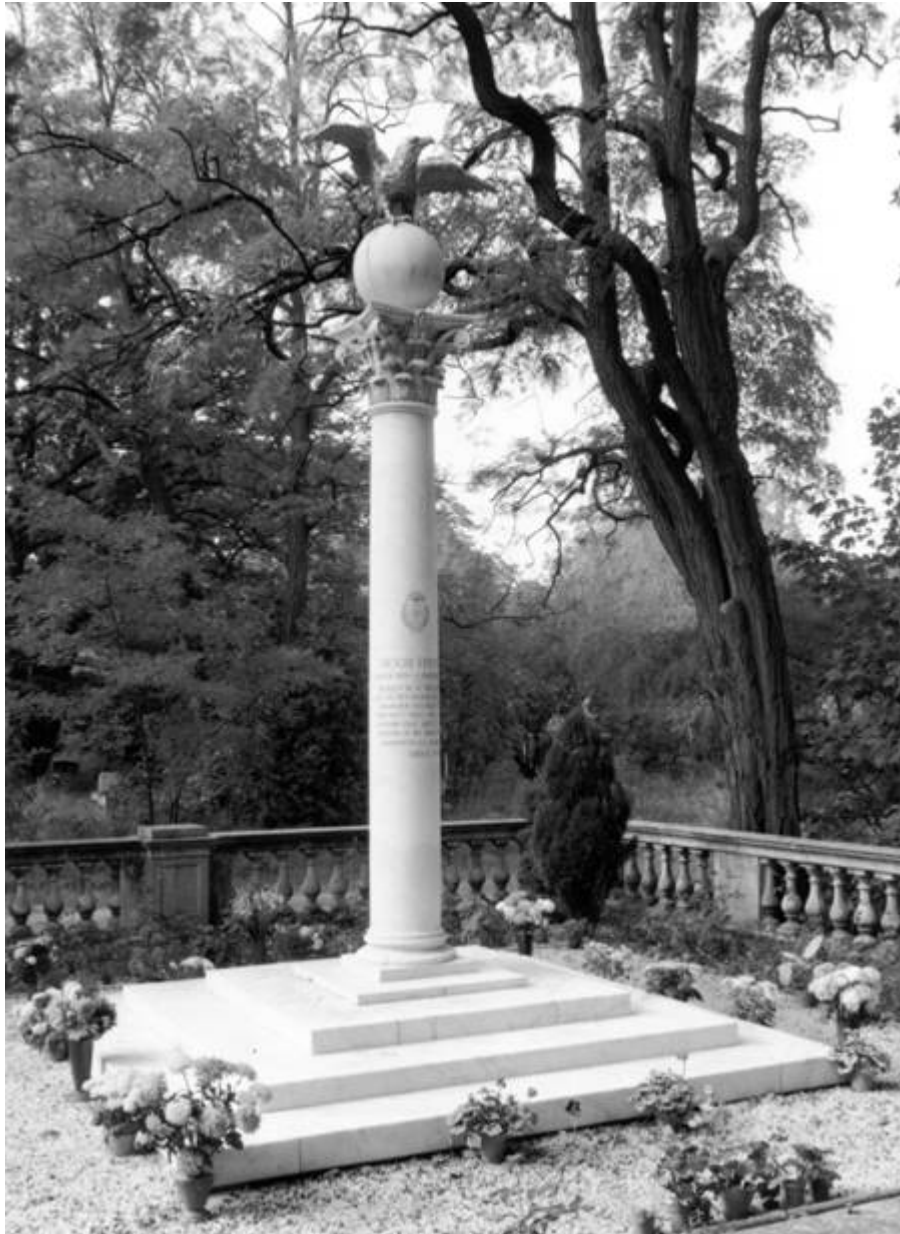
Grief-stricken farewells take place as the Bahá'ís file past the coffin of their Guardian at the foot of his open grave, November 9, 1957



THE COFFIN OF THE GUARDIAN LAID TO REST IN A FLOWER-LINED GRAVE



AN OCEAN OF FLOWERS LAPPED THE NEW-MADE GRAVE OF THE GUARDIAN AFTER THE FUNERAL SERVICE WAS OVER



SHOGHI EFFENDI'S GRAVE IN LONDON

White Carrara marble, a Corinthian column, a globe showing the map of Africa, and his own Japanese eagle on top, symbol of victory



THE GILDED EAGLE SURMOUNTING THE GRAVE OF SHOGHI EFFENDI

He divided the events that had taken place, and were taking place in the Cause of God, into sections, relating each to the whole evolution of the Faith, creating a map in relief that enabled us to see at a glance where our present labours fitted in, how much the achievement of an immediate objective would pave the way for the next inevitable step we must take in our service to Bahá'u'lláh's Cause. The definitions and divisions he employed were not arbitrary, but implicit in the teachings and in the course of events transpiring within the Faith. The Prophetic Cycle—which began with Adam and culminated with Muhammad—in the school of whose Prophets man had been educated and prepared for the age of his maturity, had given way to the Cycle of Fulfilment, inaugurated by Bahá'u'lláh. The unity of the planet, which science had made possible, would enable, nay, oblige man to create a new society in which a world at peace could devote itself exclusively to the material and spiritual unfoldment of man. Because of the very greatness of this transformation, Bahá'u'lláh's shadow would be cast over the planet for five thousand centuries, the first ten of which would be governed by the laws, ordinances, teachings and principles He had laid down.

This thousand-year-long Dispensation Shoghi Effendi divided into great Ages. The first, commencing with the declaration of the Báb and ending with the Ascension of the Master, lasted seventy-seven years and was styled by the Guardian the Apostolic or Heroic Age of the Faith because of the nature of the events that transpired within it and the blood-bath that had characterized its inception and swept away 20,000 souls, including the Báb Himself. This Age was divided into three epochs by the Guardian, associated with the Ministry of the Báb, Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, respectively. The second Age, which Shoghi Effendi called the Formative Age, the Age of Transition, the Iron Age of the Faith, was the period during which its Administrative Order—the very hallmark of this Age—must evolve, reach perfection and effloresce into the establishment of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh. The first epoch of the Age spanned the period from the inception of the Faith in 1944 and the events immediately following upon it, and the second epoch was consummated by the termination of the World Crusade in 1963, coinciding with the hundredth anniversary of the Declaration of Bahá'u'lláh. Although the Guardian never stated exactly how many epochs would characterize this Formative Age, he implied that others, equally vital, equally thrilling, would take place as the Faith steadily advanced towards what he called its Golden Age, which, on more than one occasion, he intimated would probably arise in the later centuries of the Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh.

Shoghi Effendi said the Cause of God would pass from obscurity and persecution into the light of recognition as a world religion; it would achieve full emancipation from the shackles of the past, become a state religion, and eventually the Bahá'í state itself would emerge, a new and unique creation in the world's religious history. When the Formative Age passed and man entered the Golden Age, he would have entered that Age foretold in the Bible in Habakkuk, 2:14: "For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

The historic implementation of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Divine Plan by Shoghi Effendi was likewise divided into epochs by him and these in turn subdivided into specific phases, a device that enabled the Bahá'ís to follow closely the course of their own activities and to concentrate on specific goals. The first epoch of the Divine Plan passed through three phases, the first Seven Year Plan, the second Seven Year Plan and the Ten Year Teaching and Consolidation Plan which we came to term the World Crusade. This Crusade itself Shoghi Effendi divided into a series of phases: the first of these lasted one year, 1953–4; during it, Shoghi Effendi said, the vital objective of the Plan had been virtually attained through the addition of no less than 100 new countries enlisted under the Banner of Bahá'u'lláh; the second phase, from 1954 to 1956, was marked by a unique measure of consolidation

as well as expansion, which not only paved the way for the election of the forty-eight new national bodies which was scheduled to take place before the Plan was consummated, but was characterized by unprecedented expenditures through the purchase of National Hazíratu'l-Quds and Temple sites, as well as the formation of Bahá'í Publishing Trusts; "the third and what promises to be the most brilliant phase of a world spiritual Crusade", he wrote, would take place between 1956 and 1958, and was to be distinguished by an unparalleled multiplication of Bahá'í centres throughout the entire world, as well as the formation of sixteen new National Assemblies. Before he passed away, the Guardian indicated that the fourth phase of his mighty Plan, which would stretch from 1958 to 1963, must be distinguished not only by an unprecedented increase in the number of believers and centres all over the world but by progress in the erection of the three Temples which now formed part of the goals of the Ten Year Plan.

But for us, the end of this great leadership, that had given us such concepts as these, that had fulfilled in so brilliant a manner the work begun by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, that had so worthily implemented not only His own instructions but the supreme guidance of the Manifestation of God Himself, was at hand. No one could know, no one could bear to know, that when the Bahá'í world received the message dated October 1957, it would be the last message of Shoghi Effendi. It was a happy and victorious message, full of hope, full of new plans, a last priceless gift from the man who, as he wrote it, was in reality laying down his pen and turning away his face from the world and its sorrows for all time. Soon, Shoghi Effendi informed us, the Global Spiritual Crusade would reach its midway point. That point was to be marked by the convocation of a series of five Intercontinental Conferences to be held in January, March, May, July and September of 1958, in Africa, the Antipodes, America, Europe and Asia, respectively. Following a pattern similar to the one he employed at the time of the convocation of the first four Intercontinental Conferences held during the Holy Year at the inception of the Crusade, Shoghi Effendi specified the five bodies under whose auspices these great gatherings would be held and whose chairmen were to act as their convenors. The Central and East African Regional Assembly was made responsible for the first Conference (surely it is not by chance that Africa, twice in a period of five years, led the way in the series by holding the first Conference?); the National Assembly of Australia for the second; the National Assembly of the United States for the third; the National Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Germany and Austria for the fourth; and the Regional Assembly of South East Asia the final one. "They are to be convened", Shoghi Effendi wrote, ". . . for the five-fold purpose of offering humble thanksgiving to the Divine Author of our Faith, Who has graciously enabled His followers, during a period of deepening anxiety and amidst the confusion and uncertainties of a critical phase in the fortunes of mankind to prosecute uninterruptedly the Ten Year Plan formulated for the execution of the Grand Design conceived by 'Abdu'l-Bahá; of reviewing and celebrating the series of signal victories won so rapidly in the course of each of the campaigns of this world-encircling Crusade; of deliberating on ways and means that will ensure its triumphant consummation; and of lending simultaneously a powerful impetus, the world over, to the vital process of individual conversion—the preeminent purpose underlying the Plan in all its ramifications—and to the construction and completion of the three Mother Temples to be built in the European, the African, and Australian continents."

Shoghi Effendi informed us that, "The phenomenal advances made since the inception of this globe-girdling Crusade, in the brief space of less than five years, eclipse . . . in both the number and quality of the feats achieved by its prosecutors, any previous collective enterprise undertaken . . . since the close of . . . the Heroic Age . . ." With evident joy, he recapitulated these feats and enumerated the victories won, characterizing them as "so marvellous a progress, embracing so vast a field, achieved in so short a time, by so small a band of heroic souls".

In was in this message that the Guardian appointed his last contingent of Hands of the Cause of God—eight more individuals to join this "august institution"—thus raising the total number of "high-ranking officers of a fast

evolving World Administrative Order” to twenty-seven, an act which, in view of their recent assumption “of their sacred responsibility as protectors of the Faith”, called for the formation of another Auxiliary Board, equal to the previous one in number, which would be “charged with the specific duty of watching over the security of the Faith”. The five Hands who had been chosen by Shoghi Effendi to work at the World Centre were to attend these five Intercontinental Conferences as his special representatives. Two of them would place in the foundations of the Mother Temples being built in Kampala and Sydney “a portion of the blessed earth from the inmost Shrine of Bahá’u’lláh”; another portion of that sacred soil would be delivered in Frankfurt to the National Spiritual Assembly of Germany and Austria, pending the time when it could be placed in the foundations of the first European Mashriqu’l-Adhkár. A reproduction of the portrait of Bahá’u’lláh and a lock of His precious hair would not only be shown to the attendants at the European, Australian and African Conferences, but deposited with the national bodies in whose areas these great Houses of Worship were being erected, as a permanent and loving gift of their Guardian. The Guardian would send with the Hand who was to attend the Conference in Asia another reproduction of the portrait of Bahá’u’lláh for the assembled believers to view, but this was to be brought back for safekeeping to the Holy Land. At the Conference to be convened in Chicago, Shoghi Effendi’s representative would exhibit to the believers the portraits of Bahá’u’lláh and the Báb which he had previously entrusted to the care of the American National Assembly. These were the final gestures of love Shoghi Effendi was able to shower on the believers, that host of the faithful over whom he had watched, who had followed him so unflinchingly, for so many history-making years.

When thousands of Bahá’ís from innumerable lands gathered during 1958, in fulfilment of Shoghi Effendi’s plan and wish, at these five great Intercontinental Conferences, it was not only with awe that they gazed on the sacred portrait of the Founder of their Faith, but with grief-filled hearts and tear-filled eyes. Why had He, before Whose glory they bowed themselves, Whose teachings they had espoused, into the depths of Whose deep and all-knowing eyes they were now gazing, seen fit to remove His scion from their midst? They not only cried out for their Guardian, they asked where was the Guardianship itself? It was the supreme test of faith; God had given, and God had taken back, and “*He doth what He pleaseth. He chooseth; and none may question His choice.*” When the Báb was martyred Bahá’u’lláh had remained; when Bahá’u’lláh ascended ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had remained; when ‘Abdu’l-Bahá passed away Shoghi Effendi had remained. But now it was as if a procession of Kings—albeit each different, vastly different, in station from the other—had gone into a room of their own and closed the door. We Bahá’ís looked at the door and kept asking, like children whose parents have been killed in an earthquake and disappeared, why had it been closed?

Perhaps at no point in its history will the deepness of the root of belief that binds the Bahá’ís to their religion be again laid as bare as it was in the year after the passing of Shoghi Effendi. They bowed their heads in the agony of the grief that swept them, but they held. Had not the Guardian provided these five great rallying points at which the believers could come together in such large numbers, console each other and receive guidance from the Hands of the Cause who had risen to complete the Guardian’s Plan and ensure the election of the divinely guided Universal House of Justice, it is hard to image how greatly affected the body of the Faith might have been by the sudden and totally unexpected death of its beloved Head. The fact that the friends were actively engaged in a Plan, the fact that the attention of the Bahá’í world was now focused on its midway point, the fact that at these Conferences five specific themes were to be given special attention, and the fact that they repeatedly received messages of love, faith and encouragement from the Hands of the Cause—all exerted a binding and unifying influence upon the Bahá’ís of the world. The very calamity itself brought to their hearts, cleansed by the rushing freshets of their grief, a new fortitude and called forth a deeper love. They were not going to fail Shoghi Effendi. He had told them to consider ways and means of ensuring the triumphal conclusion of the Plan—very

well, they would do so, they would see it crowned befittingly in 1963 with a success that would have thrilled his heart and brought from his pen one of those rushes of praise and gratitude so dearly prized by them.

No testimony to the truth and the strength of the Cause could have been greater than the triumphal conclusion of the Guardian's World Crusade which the believers achieved. It had been a hard, an overwhelming task to begin with. That the Bahá'ís achieved it, that for over five years they worked and sacrificed to a greater degree than ever before in their history without his leadership, without those appeals, those reports, those marvellous word-pictures he painted for them in his messages, without the knowledge that he was there at the helm, their so dearly-loved captain steering them to victory and safety, is little short of a miracle and testifies not only to how well he builded, but to those words of the Master: "*there is a mysterious power in this Cause, far, far above the ken of men and angels.*"

Life and death are so closely allied that they are the two halves of one heartbeat, and yet death never seems very real to us in the normal course of events—who, therefore, awaited Shoghi Effendi's death! He had been in very good health that last summer, better than for a long time, a fact that he not only mentioned himself but which his doctor commented upon at the time he examined him some weeks prior to his passing. No one dreamed that the time clock inside that heart was reaching the end of its allotted span. Many times people have asked me if I did not notice indications that the end was near. My answer is a hesitant "no". If a terrible storm comes suddenly into the midst of a perfect day, one can later imagine one saw straws floating by on the wind and pretend they had been portents. I do remember a very few things that might have been significant, but certainly they meant nothing to me at the time. I could never have survived the slightest foreknowledge of the Guardian's death, and only survived it in the end because I could not abandon him and his precious work, which had killed him long before any one believed his life would end.

One of the goals of the Ten Year Plan associated with the World Centre, a goal the Guardian had allotted to himself, was what he termed the "codification of the laws and ordinances of the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, the Mother Book of the Bahá'í Revelation." Any work involving a book of this magnitude, which Shoghi Effendi had stated was, together with the *Will and Testament* of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, "the chief depository wherein are enshrined those priceless elements of that Divine Civilization, the establishment of which is the primary mission of the Bahá'í Faith", would certainly be unsuitable for any one but the Head of the Faith to undertake. Shoghi Effendi worked on this for about three weeks or so in the spring of 1957 prior to his departure from Haifa. As I often sat in the room with him while he worked, reading out loud and making notes, I realized from what he told me that he was not planning at that time a legal codification of the provisions in the Aqdas but rather a compilation, placing subject with subject, which would enable the Bahá'ís to comprehend the nature of the laws and ordinances given by Bahá'u'lláh to His followers. It was at this time that Shoghi Effendi remarked more than once that he did not feel he could ever finish this task he had undertaken. I attached no particular importance to this, as he sometimes fretted under the terrible load of his ever-increasing work, and attributed it to his great fatigue at the end of the long, exhausting, unbroken stretch of labour he had passed through during his months at home. After his death, I remembered and wondered.

That last summer he went back to visit many of his favourite scenes in the mountains, and I wondered about this, too, when the blow fell, but at the time I was only happy to see him happy, forgetting, for a few fleeting moments, the burdens and sorrows of his life.

Before the time came to return to Haifa in November, Shoghi Effendi went to London to purchase a few more things for the furnishing of the now completed Archives Building and in anticipation of transferring after his

arrival all the precious historical materials he had exhibited and stored in the six rooms in which they had previously been housed. While we were there, the great epidemic of Asiatic influenza was sweeping Europe and we both fell ill with it. We had an excellent physician, whom the Guardian liked and trusted, and the attack was not a particularly severe one, though he did have quite high fever for a few days. The doctor insisted that Shoghi Effendi should not arrange to leave London until he had been without any abnormal temperature for a week, and to this he consented. In spite of his fever, he read a great deal in bed and attended to his mail and cables. His illness at no time incapacitated him in any way, though it left him weak and with almost no appetite. When one week had passed from the time he first felt the effects of his influenza, he was busy working on his last beautiful map, the one he called "the half-way point of the Ten Year Crusade". He had requested me to have a large table put in his room on which he could spread his map, and for hours he worked at it, checking with me various figures and data against the many notes he kept showing the status of the Crusade all over the world. When I remonstrated with him about standing for so many hours to do this work when he was still so exhausted and begged him to wait a few days until he was feeling stronger, he said, "No, I must finish it, it is worrying me. There is nothing left to do but check it. I have one or two names to add that I have found in this mail, and I will finish it today." While he was working, he repeated once again the words I had so often heard him say during the last years of his life: "This work is killing me! How can I go on with this? I shall have to stop it. It is too much. Look at the number of places I have to write down. Look how exact I have to be!" He was tired when it was finally done and went back to his bed, where he sat and read reports. So vast was the amount of material reaching him all the time from various parts of the Bahá'í world that if he did not keep abreast of it through reading many hours every day he risked never being able to catch up with it again.

But the strains and pressures of his life had been too many, and early in the morning of 4 November he suffered a coronary thrombosis. Death must have come to him so gently and so suddenly that he died without even knowing he was ascending to another realm. When I went to his room in the morning to ask him how he was, I did not recognize that he was dead. His eyes were half-open with no look of pain, alarm or surprise in them. He lay as if he had wakened up and was quietly thinking about something, in a relaxed and comfortable position. How terribly he had suffered when he suddenly learned of the death of his grandfather! Now he had been called softly and quickly away to join Him. The suffering and shock were this time to be the portion of someone else.

It seemed to me, in the depths of my agony that black and terrible day, that I could not do to any Bahá'í what had been done to me. How could I cable the believers their Guardian had ascended? What of the old and the ill and the weak to whom this news would come as an insupportable blow, having the same effect on them which the news of the beloved Master's death had produced on Shoghi Effendi and on my own mother? It was because of this that I immediately cabled the members of the International Bahá'í Council in Haifa: "Beloved Guardian desperately ill Asiatic flu tell Leroy inform all National Assemblies inform believers supplicate prayers divine protection Faith." I knew that a few hours later I would have to follow this by a second cable telling them the full truth but I felt impelled to send this one first, in the hope of cushioning the terrible blow. Later in the day I again cabled Haifa giving the details of his death to be relayed from there to all National Assemblies throughout the world. Such news, I felt, should first come from the World Centre of the Faith:

Shoghi Effendi beloved of all hearts sacred trust given believers by Master passed away sudden heart attack in sleep following Asiatic flu. Urge believers remain steadfast cling institution Hands lovingly reared recently reinforced emphasized beloved Guardian. Only oneness heart oneness purpose can befittingly testify loyalty all National Assemblies believers departed Guardian who sacrificed self utterly for service Faith.

Rúhíyyih

The following day, on 5 November, another cable was sent to all National Assemblies, this time direct from London:

Beloved all hearts precious Guardian Cause God passed peacefully away yesterday after Asiatic flu. Appeal Hands National Assemblies Auxiliary Boards shelter believers assist meet heartrending supreme test. Funeral our beloved Guardian Saturday London. Hands Assembly Board members invited attend. Any press release should state meeting Hands shortly Haifa will make announcement to Bahá'í world regarding future plans. Urge hold memorial meetings Saturday.

Rúhíyyih

The sea of grief this news released upon the believers in all parts of the world was similar to that which had flooded the hearts of the Bahá'ís thirty-six years earlier when they lost their Master in circumstances equally sudden and devastating. The problems attending this event were equally serious. In accordance with the laws of the Aqdas—of which Shoghi Effendi had himself been the appointed defender—burial must take place not more than one hour's journey from the place of death. I knew there could be no question of breaking this law and taking his remains back to the Holy Land. With infinite pains arrangements were made to inter the beloved of our hearts in a cemetery near London, a peaceful and beautiful spot, surrounded by trees and filled with the songs of many birds. The funeral was set for 10.30 A.M. on Saturday, 9 November. London became the lodestone of the entire Bahá'í world. Messages, telephone calls and believers began to pour into the National Hazíratu'l-Quds, each bringing a fresh wave of grief and love to add to the surging sea of feeling that focused itself on that peaceful figure, still, and at last removed from all responsibility.

The first to rally round me in response to the shattering news I had conveyed to them were my compeers, the Hands of the Faith. I had turned to Hasan Balyuzi, who lived in London, immediately after the first terrible events following my entry into Shoghi Effendi's room were over. He joined me shortly and John Ferraby, who also lived there, came a little later. That night Ugo Giachery arrived from Rome and the next day Milly Collins flew from Haifa to be at my side, as she had so often been, in my hours of deepest need. Adelbert Mühlischlegel, a Hand who was fortunately also a physician, following a telephone conversation in which I had asked him if he would come and wash the sacred remains of the Guardian, had arrived from Germany with Hermann Grossmann. These fellow-Hands then shared the load with me and assured that everything that could possibly be done to show the respect, the gratitude and the love that so overwhelmed every sincere believer at that moment would be befittingly accomplished. As the days passed, more and more Hands arrived from all the continents, an infinite comfort to me, to each other and to the believers. On the eve of the funeral of Shoghi Effendi, we Hands met to choose selections for the service, the first of many meetings that were to follow as the years of Shoghi Effendi's Crusade rolled by in triumph after triumph, to be finally crowned with the victory that he had hoped for and planned.

At last the day of final farewell arrived and hundreds of believers followed the coffin of the Guardian in a funeral cortège of over sixty automobiles that wended its way towards the Great Northern London Cemetery. On their arrival they found a great crowd of believers already waiting there, practically the entire British Community having gathered in London to pay homage to the sacred Guardian whose remains, for some mysterious reason, God had chosen to entrust to the soil of their native land. As first the floral hearse, piled high with glowing flowers, and then the hearse containing the coffin of Shoghi Effendi drew up; the multitude stood in a stricken silence, heads bowed and many faces streaming with tears. The funeral service took place in the simple and

dignified non-denominational Chapel of the cemetery, which was too small to hold all the believers within its walls. The description I wrote, which was published in *The Passing of Shoghi Effendi* some months later, best describes what then took place: “The Great Guardian was carried in and laid on the soft green covering of the catafalque. The Chapel was crowded to the doors, and many had to remain outside. All stood while the wonderful prayer, ordained by Bahá’u’lláh for the dead, was chanted in Arabic. Six other prayers and excerpts from the Teachings were then read by friends with beautiful voices, some in English, some in Persian, and representative of Bahá’ís from Europe, Africa, America, Asia—Negro, Jew and Aryan.

“In solemn file the friends followed the casket as it was borne out, placed in the hearse again, and slowly driven the few hundred yards to the graveside.

“As all stood waiting for the coffin to be lowered into the grave, Rúhíyyih Khánum felt the agony of the hearts around her penetrate into her own great grief. He was their Guardian. He was going forever from their eyes, suddenly snatched from them by the immutable decree of God, Whose Will no man dare question. They had not seen him, had not been able to draw near him. She decided to ask for it to be announced that before the coffin was placed in the grave, the friends who wished might pass by it and pay their respects. For over two hours the believers, eastern and western, filed by. For the most part they knelt and kissed the edge or the handle of the casket. Rarely indeed in history can such a demonstration of love and grief have been seen. Children bowed their little heads beside their mothers, old men wept, the iron reserve of the Anglo-Saxon—the tradition never to show feeling in public—melted before the white-hot sorrow in the heart. The morning had been sunny and fair; now a gentle shower started and sprinkled a few drops on the coffin, as if nature herself were suddenly moved to tears. Some placed little flasks of Persian attar-of-rose at the head; one hesitatingly laid a red rose on the casket, symbol no doubt of the owner’s heart; one could not bear the few drops of rain above that blessed, hidden face, and timidly wiped them off as he knelt; others with convulsed fingers carried away a little of the earth near the casket. Tears, tears and kisses, and solemn inner vows were poured out at the head of the one who had always called himself their ‘true brother’. When the last believers in this grief-stricken procession had filed by, Rúhíyyih Khánum approached the casket, kissed it and knelt in prayer for a moment. She then had the green pall spread over it, laid the blue-and-gold brocade from the innermost Shrine of Bahá’u’lláh on top of it and arranged the still-fragrant jasmine flowers over all its length. Then the mortal remains of him whom ‘Abdu’l-Bahá designated *‘the most wondrous, unique and priceless pearl that doth gleam from out the Twin Surging Seas’* were slowly lowered into the vault, amid walls covered with evergreen boughs and studded with flowers, to rest upon the rug from the Holy Tomb at Bahjí.”

With such homage, in such a spirit, did the Bahá’ís lay to rest the remains of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s blessed grandson.

All during the funeral upon his casket rested a great sheaf of red and white flowers which I had especially ordered and on which I placed a card that seemed to me to express the feelings of those who alone had a right to share in this fragrant shield reposing over his body: “From Rúhíyyih and all your loved ones and lovers all over the world whose hearts are broken.” When the vault had been sealed this sheaf rested upon it and like the waves of a multicoloured sea the thousands upon thousands of flowers the Bahá’ís had brought or ordered from all parts of the world lapped about it, completely covering the whole area around the grave with a thick mass of fragrant blossoms.

When the funeral was over the Bahá’í world was informed and the believers were requested to hold suitable memorial meetings:

Beloved Guardian laid rest London according laws Aqdas in beautiful spot after impressive ceremony held presence multitude believers representing over twentyfive countries east and west. Doctors assure sudden passing involved no suffering blessed countenance bore expression infinite beauty peace majesty. Eighteen Hands assembled funeral urge National Bodies request all believers hold memorial meetings eighteenth November commemorating dayspring divine guidance who has left us after thirtysix years utter selfsacrifice ceaseless labours constant vigilance.

Rúhíyyih

In 1958 his grave was built of the same dazzling white Carrara marble he had himself chosen for the monuments of his illustrious relatives in Haifa, a simple grave as he would have wished it to be. A single marble column, crowned by a Corinthian capital is surmounted by a globe, the map of Africa facing forward—for had not the victories won in Africa brought him the greatest joy during that last year of his life?—and on this globe is a large gilded bronze eagle, a reproduction of a beautiful Japanese sculpture of an eagle which he greatly admired and which he had placed in his own room. No better emblem than this symbol of victory could have been found for the resting-place of him who had won so many victories as he led the hosts of Bahá'u'lláh's followers on their ceaseless conquests throughout the five continents of the world.

Having, with adamant fortitude in the face of every trial, accomplished “the toilsome task of fixing the pattern, of laying the foundations, of erecting the machinery, and of setting in operation the Administrative Order”, to use the Guardian's own words; having effected the world-wide spread and establishment of the Cause of God through the implementation of ‘Abdu'l-Bahá's Divine Plan; having, through that rare spirit of his so admirably compounded of audacity and sobriety, guided the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh to heights it had never before reached; having carried the work his Lord had entrusted to him as far forward as his failing strength would permit; bearing the scars of innumerable personal attacks made upon him during the course of his ministry, Shoghi Effendi departed from the scene of his labours. The man had been “called by sorrow and a strange desolation of hopes into quietness”. The Guardian, he who was named in the Master's Will the “*primal branch of the Divine and Sacred Lote-Tree*”, and who, through the provisions of that Will, had been so firmly planted in the soil of the believers' hearts after ‘Abdu'l-Bahá's passing, remained forever; and well indeed will it be with “*him that seeketh the shelter of his shade that shadoweth all mankind.*”

[1] Male descendants of Bahá'u'lláh.

[2] Relatives of the Báb.

[3] It has been subsequently ascertained that this cable was in response to Shoghi Effendi's cable of 22 July 1927 expressing condolences to Queen Marie on the passing of her husband, King Ferdinand, who died on 20 July.

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