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Bahá’í Administration

by Shoghi Effendi

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PART ONE: Excerpts from the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

“All-praise to Him Who, by the Shield of His Covenant, hath...”

All-praise to Him Who, by the Shield of His Covenant, hath guarded the Temple of His Cause from the darts of doubtfulness, Who by the Hosts of His Testament hath preserved the Sanctuary of His Most Beneficent Law and protected His Straight and Luminous Path, staying thereby the onslaught of the company of Covenant-breakers, that have threatened to subvert His Divine Edifice; Who hath watched over His Mighty Stronghold and All-glorious Faith, through the aid of men whom the slander of the slanderer affects not, whom no earthly calling, glory and power can turn aside from the Covenant of God and His Testament, established firmly by His clear and manifest words, writ and revealed by His All-glorious Pen and recorded in the Preserved Tablet.

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; upon the offshoots of the Tree of Holiness, the twigs of the Celestial Tree, they that in the Day of the Great Dividing have stood fast and firm in the Covenant; upon the Hands (pillars) of the Cause of God that have diffused widely the Divine Fragrances, declared His Proofs, proclaimed His Faith, published abroad His Law, detached themselves from all things but Him, stood for righteousness in this world, and kindled the Fire of the Love of God in the very hearts and souls of His servants; upon them that have believed, rested assured, stood steadfast in His Covenant and followed the Light that after my passing shineth from the Dayspring of Divine Guidance—for behold! he is the blest and sacred bough that hath branched out from the Twin Holy Trees. Well is it with him that seeketh the

shelter of his shade that shadoweth all mankind.

“O ye beloved of the Lord! The greatest of all things is the...”

O ye beloved of the Lord! The greatest of all things is the protection of the True Faith of God, the preservation of His Law, the safeguarding of His Cause and service unto His Word. Ten thousand souls have shed streams of their sacred blood in this path, their precious lives they offered in sacrifice unto Him, hastened wrapt in holy ecstasy unto the glorious field of martyrdom, upraised the Standard of God’s Faith and writ with their life-blood upon the Tablet of the world the verses of His Divine Unity. The sacred breast of His Holiness, the Exalted One, (may my life be a sacrifice unto Him) was made a target to many a dart of woe, and in Mazandarán, the Blessed feet of the Abhá Beauty (may my life be offered up for His loved ones) were so grievously scourged as to bleed and be sore wounded. His neck also was put into captive chains and His feet made fast in the stocks. In every hour, for a period of fifty years, a new trial and calamity befell Him and fresh afflictions and cares beset Him. One of them: after having suffered intense vicissitudes, He was made homeless and a wanderer and fell a victim to still new vexations and troubles. In ‘Iráq, the Day-Star of the world was so exposed to the wiles of the people of malice as to be eclipsed in splendor. Later on He was sent an exile to the Great City (Constantinople) and thence to the Land of Mystery (Adrianople), whence, grievously wronged, He was eventually transferred to the Most Great Prison (Akká). He Whom the world hath wronged (may my life be offered for His loved ones) was four times banished from city to city, till at last condemned to perpetual confinement, He was incarcerated in this Prison, the prison of highway robbers, of brigands and of manslayers. All this is but one of the trials that have afflicted the Blessed Beauty, the rest being even as grievous as this.

“According to the direct and sacred command of God we are...”

According to the direct and sacred command of God we are forbidden to utter slander, are commanded to show forth peace and amity, are exhorted to rectitude of conduct, straightforwardness and harmony with all the kindreds and peoples of the world. We must obey and be the well-wishers of the governments of the land, regard disloyalty unto a just king as disloyalty to God Himself and wishing evil to the government a transgression of the Cause of God.

“O God, my God! Thou seest this wronged servant of Thine,...”

O God, my God! Thou seest this wronged servant of Thine, held fast in the talons of ferocious lions, of ravening wolves, of bloodthirsty beasts. Graciously assist me, through my love for Thee, that I may drink deep of the chalice that brimmeth over with faithfulness to Thee and is filled with Thy bountiful Grace; so that, fallen upon the dust, I may sink prostrate and senseless whilst my vesture is dyed crimson with my blood. This is my wish, my heart’s desire, my hope, my pride, my glory. Grant, O Lord my God, and my Refuge, that in my last hour, my end, may even as musk shed its fragrance of glory! Is there a bounty greater than this? Nay, by Thy Glory! I call Thee to witness that no day passeth but that I quaff my fill from this cup, so grievous are the misdeeds wrought by them that have broken the Covenant, kindled discord, showed their malice, stirred sedition in the land and dishonored Thee amidst Thy servants. Lord! Shield Thou from these Covenant-breakers the mighty Stronghold of Thy Faith and protect Thy secret Sanctuary from the onslaught of the ungodly. Thou art in truth the Mighty, the Powerful, the Gracious, the Strong.

“O God, my God! Shield Thy trusted servants from the evils of...”

O God, my God! Shield Thy trusted servants from the evils of self and passion, protect them with the watchful eye of Thy loving kindness from all rancour, hate and envy, shelter them in the impregnable stronghold of Thy Cause and, safe from the darts of doubtfulness, make them the manifestations of Thy glorious Signs, illumine their faces with the effulgent rays shed from the Dayspring of Thy Divine Unity, gladden their hearts with the verses revealed from Thy Holy Kingdom, strengthen their loins by Thy all-swaying power that cometh from Thy Realm of Glory. Thou art the All-bountiful, the Protector, the Almighty, the Gracious!

O ye that stand fast in the Covenant! When the hour cometh that this wronged and broken winged bird will have taken its flight unto the celestial concourse, when it will have hastened to the Realm of the Unseen and its mortal frame will have been either lost or hidden neath the dust, it is incumbent upon the Afnán, that are steadfast in the Covenant of God, and have branched from the Tree of Holiness; the Hands, (pillars) of the Cause of God, (the glory of the Lord rest upon them), and all the friends and loved ones, one and all to bestir themselves and arise with heart and soul and in one accord, to diffuse the sweet savors of God, to teach His Cause and to promote His Faith. It behooveth them not to rest for a moment, neither to seek repose. They must disperse themselves in every land, pass by every clime and travel throughout all regions. Bestirred, without rest and steadfast to the end they must raise in every land the triumphal cry “O Thou the Glory of Glories!” (Yá-Bahá’u’l-Abhá), must achieve renown in the world wherever they go, must burn brightly even as a candle in every meeting and must kindle the flame of Divine love in every assembly; that the light of truth may rise resplendent in

the midmost heart of the world, that throughout the East and throughout the West a vast concourse may gather under the shadow of the Word of God, that the sweet savors of holiness may be diffused, that faces may shine radiantly, hearts be filled with the Divine spirit and souls be made heavenly.

In these days, the most important of all things is the guidance of the nations and peoples of the world. Teaching the Cause is of utmost importance for it is the head corner-stone of the foundation itself. This wronged servant has spent his days and night in promoting the Cause and urging the peoples to service. He rested not a moment, till the fame of the Cause of God was noised abroad in the world and the celestial strains from the Abhá Kingdom roused the East and the West. The beloved of God must also follow the same example. This is the secret of faithfulness, this is the requirement of servitude to the Threshold of Bahá!

The disciples of Christ forgot themselves and all earthly things, forsook all their cares and belongings, purged themselves of self and passion and with absolute detachment scattered far and wide and engaged in calling the peoples of the world to the Divine Guidance, till at last they made the world another world, illumined the surface of the earth and even to their last hour proved self-sacrificing in the pathway of that Beloved One of God. Finally in various lands they suffered glorious martyrdom. Let them that are men of action follow in their footsteps!

O my loving friends! After the passing away of this wronged one, it is incumbent upon the Aghsán (Branches), the Afnán (Twigs) of the Sacred Lote-Tree, the Hands (pillars) of the Cause of God and the loved ones of the Abhá Beauty to turn unto Shoghi Effendi—the youthful branch branched from the two hallowed and sacred Lote-Trees and the fruit grown from the union of the two offshoots of the Tree of Holiness,—as he is the sign of God, the chosen branch, the guardian of the Cause of God, he unto whom all the Aghsán, the Afnán, the Hands of the Cause of God

and His loved ones must turn. He is the expounder of the words of God and after him will succeed the first-born of his lineal descendants.

The sacred and youthful branch, the guardian of the Cause of God, as well as the Universal House of Justice, to be universally elected and established, are both under the care and protection of the Abhá Beauty, under the shelter and unerring guidance of His Holiness, the Exalted One (may my life be offered up for them both). Whatsoever they decide is of God. Whoso obeyeth him not, neither obeyeth them, hath not obeyed God; whoso rebelleth against him and against them hath rebelled against God; whoso opposeth him hath opposed God; whoso contendeth with them hath contended with God; whoso disputeth with him hath disputed with God; whoso denieth him hath denied God; whoso disbelieveth in him hath disbelieved in God; whoso deviateth, separateth himself and turneth aside from him hath in truth deviated, separated himself and turned aside from God. May the wrath, the fierce indignation, the vengeance of God rest upon him! The mighty stronghold shall remain impregnable and safe through obedience to him who is the guardian of the Cause of God. It is incumbent upon the members of the House of Justice, upon all the Aghsán, the Afnán, the Hands of the Cause of God to show their obedience, submissiveness and subordination unto the guardian of the Cause of God, to turn unto him and be lowly before him. He that opposeth him hath opposed the True One, will make a breach in the Cause of God, will subvert His word and will become a manifestation of the Center of Sedition. Beware, beware, lest the days after the ascension (of Bahá'u'lláh) be repeated when the Center of Sedition waxed haughty and rebellious and with Divine Unity for his excuse deprived himself and perturbed and poisoned others. No doubt every vainglorious one that purposeth dissension and discord will not openly declare his evil purposes, nay rather, even as impure gold, would he seize upon divers measures and various pretexts that he may separate

the gathering of the people of Bahá. My object is to show that the Hands of the Cause of God must be ever watchful and so soon as they find anyone beginning to oppose and protest against the guardian of the Cause of God cast him out from the congregation of the people of Bahá and in no wise accept any excuse from him. How often hath grievous error been disguised in the garb of truth, that it might sow the seeds of doubt in the hearts of men!

O ye beloved of the Lord! It is incumbent upon the guardian of the Cause of God to appoint in his own life-time him that shall become his successor, that differences may not arise after his passing. He that is appointed must manifest in himself detachment from all worldly things, must be the essence of purity, must show in himself the fear of God, knowledge, wisdom and learning. Thus, should the first-born of the guardian of the Cause of God not manifest in himself the truth of the words:—"The child is the secret essence of its sire," that is, should he not inherit of the spiritual within him (the guardian of the Cause of God) and his glorious lineage not be matched with a goodly character, then must he (the guardian of the Cause of God), choose another branch to succeed him.

The Hands of the Cause of God must elect from their own number nine persons that shall at all times be occupied in the important services in the work of the guardian of the Cause of God. The election of these nine must be carried either unanimously or by majority from the company of the Hands of the Cause of God and these, whether unanimously or by a majority vote, must give their assent to the choice of the one whom the guardian of the Cause of God hath chosen as his successor. This assent must be given in such wise as the assenting and dissenting voices may not be distinguished. (secret ballot)

O friends! The Hands of the Cause of God must be nominated and appointed by the guardian of the Cause of God. All must be under his shadow and obey his command. Should any, within or without the company of the Hands of the Cause of God disobey

and seek division, the wrath of God and His vengeance will be upon him, for he will have caused a breach in the true Faith of God.

The obligations of the Hands of the Cause of God are to diffuse the Divine Fragrances, to edify the souls of men, to promote learning, to improve the character of all men and to be, at all times and under all conditions, sanctified and detached from earthly things. They must manifest the fear of God by their conduct, their manners, their deeds and their words.

This body of the Hands of the Cause of God is under the direction of the guardian of the Cause of God. He must continually urge them to strive and endeavor to the utmost of their ability to diffuse the sweet savors of God, and to guide all the peoples of the world, for it is the light of Divine Guidance that causeth all the universe to be illumined. To disregard, though it be for a moment, this absolute command which is binding upon everyone, is in no wise permitted, that the existent world may become even as the Abhá Paradise, that the surface of the earth may become heavenly, that contention and conflict amidst peoples, kindreds, nations and governments may disappear, that all the dwellers on earth may become one people and one race, that the world may become even as one home. Should differences arise they shall be amicably and conclusively settled by the Supreme Tribunal, that shall include members from all the governments and peoples of the world.

O ye beloved of the Lord! In this sacred Dispensation, conflict and contention are in no wise permitted. Every aggressor deprives himself of God's grace. It is incumbent upon everyone to show the utmost love, rectitude of conduct, straightforwardness and sincere kindliness unto all the peoples and kindreds of the world, be they friends or strangers. So intense must be the spirit of love and loving-kindness, that the stranger may find himself a friend, the enemy a true brother, no difference whatsoever existing between them. For universality is of God and all limitations earthly.

Thus man must strive that his reality may manifest virtues and perfections, the light whereof may shine upon everyone. The light of the sun shineth upon all the world and the merciful showers of Divine Providence fall upon all peoples. The vivifying breeze reviveth every living creature and all beings endued with life obtain their share and portion at His heavenly board. In like manner, the affections and loving-kindness of the servants of the One True God must be bountifully and universally extended to all mankind. Regarding this, restrictions and limitations are in no wise permitted.

Wherefore, O my loving friends! Consort with all the peoples, kindreds and religions of the world with the utmost truthfulness, uprightness, faithfulness, kindliness, good-will and friendliness; that all the world of being may be filled with the holy ecstasy of the grace of Bahá, that ignorance, enmity, hate and rancor may vanish from the world and the darkness of estrangement amidst the peoples and kindreds of the world may give way to the Light of Unity. Should other peoples and nations be unfaithful to you show your fidelity unto them, should they be unjust toward you show justice towards them, should they keep aloof from you attract them to yourself, should they show their enmity be friendly towards them, should they poison your lives sweeten their souls, should they inflict a wound upon you be a salve to their sores. Such are the attributes of the sincere! Such are the attributes of the truthful.

And now, concerning the House of Justice which God hath ordained as the source of all good and freed from all error, it must be elected by universal suffrage, that is, by the believers. Its members must be manifestations of the fear of God and daysprings of knowledge and understanding, must be steadfast in God's faith and the well-wishers of all mankind. By this House is meant the Universal House of Justice, that is, in all countries, a secondary House of Justice must be instituted, and these secondary Houses of Justice must elect the members of the

Universal one. Unto this body all things must be referred. It enacteth all ordinances and regulations that are not to be found in the explicit Holy Text. By this body all the difficult problems are to be resolved and the guardian of the Cause of God is its sacred head and the distinguished member for life of that body. Should he not attend in person its deliberations, he must appoint one to represent him. Should any of the members commit a sin, injurious to the common weal, the guardian of the Cause of God hath at his own discretion the right to expel him, whereupon the people must elect another one in his stead.

“O ye beloved of the Lord! It is incumbent upon you to be submissive...”

O ye beloved of the Lord! It is incumbent upon you to be submissive to all monarchs that are just and show your fidelity to every righteous king. Serve ye the sovereigns of the world with utmost truthfulness and loyalty. Show obedience unto them and be their well-wishers. Without their leave and permission do not meddle with political affairs, for disloyalty to the just sovereign is disloyalty to God himself.

This is my counsel and the commandment of God unto you. Well is it with them that act accordingly.

“By the Ancient Beauty! This wronged one hath in no wise...”

By the Ancient Beauty! This wronged one hath in no wise borne nor doth he bear a grudge against any one; towards none doth he entertain any ill-feeling and uttereth no word save for the good of the world. My supreme obligation, however, of necessity, prompteth me to guard and preserve the Cause of God. Thus, with the greatest regret, I counsel you saying:—“Guard ye the Cause of God, protect His law and have the utmost fear of discord. This is the foundation of the belief of the people of Bahá (may my life be offered up for them). “His Holiness, the Exalted One, (the Báb) is the Manifestation of the Unity and Oneness of God and the Forerunner of the Ancient Beauty. His Holiness the Abhá Beauty, (may my life be a sacrifice for His steadfast friends) is the Supreme Manifestation of God and the Dayspring of His Most Divine Essence. All others are servants unto Him and do His bidding.” Unto the Most Holy Book every one must turn and all that is not expressly recorded therein must be referred to the Universal House of Justice. That which this body, whether unanimously or by a majority doth carry, that is verily the Truth and the Purpose of God himself. Whoso doth deviate therefrom is verily of them that love discord, hath shown forth malice and turned away from the Lord of the Covenant. By this House is meant that Universal House of Justice which is to be elected from all countries, that is, from those parts in the East and West where the loved ones are to be found, after the manner of the customary elections in Western countries such as those of England.

“O ye beloved of the Lord! Strive with all your heart to shield...”

O ye beloved of the Lord! Strive with all your heart to shield the Cause of God from the onslaught of the insincere, for souls such as these cause the straight to become crooked and all benevolent efforts to produce contrary results.

O God, my God! I call Thee, Thy Prophets and Thy Messengers, Thy Saints and Thy Holy Ones, to witness that I have declared conclusively Thy Proofs unto Thy loved ones and set forth clearly all things unto them, that they may watch over Thy Faith, guard Thy Straight Path and protect Thy Resplendent Law. Thou art, verily, the All-knowing, the All-wise!

“Whosoever and whatsoever meeting becometh a hindrance to...”

Whosoever and whatsoever meeting becometh a hindrance to the diffusion of the Light of Faith, let the loved ones give them counsel and say: “Of all the gifts of God the greatest is the gift of Teaching. It draweth unto us the Grace of God and is our first obligation. Of such a gift how can we deprive ourselves? Nay, our lives, our goods, our comforts, our rest, we offer them all as a sacrifice for the Abhá Beauty and teach the Cause of God.” Caution and prudence, however, must be observed even as recorded in the Book. The veil must in no wise be suddenly rent asunder. The Glory of Glories rest upon you.

O ye the faithful loved ones of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá! It is incumbent upon you to take the greatest care of Shoghi Effendi, the twig that hath branched from the fruit given forth by the two hallowed and Divine Lote-Trees, that no dust of despondency and sorrow 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.

For he is, after ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, the guardian of the Cause of God, the Afnán, the Hands (pillars) of the Cause and the beloved of the Lord must obey him and turn unto him. He that obeyeth him not, hath not obeyed God; he that turneth away from him, hath turned away from God and he that denieth him, hath denied the True One. Beware lest anyone falsely interpret these words, and like unto them that have broken the Covenant after the Day of Ascension (of Bahá’u’lláh) advance a pretext, raise the standard of revolt, wax stubborn and open wide the door of false interpretation. To none is given the right to put forth his own opinion or express his particular convictions. All must seek guidance and turn unto the Center of the Cause and the House

of Justice. And he that turneth unto whatsoever else is indeed in grievous error.

The Glory of Glories rest upon you!

PART TWO: Letters from Shoghi Effendi

Guardian of the Bahá'í Cause

January 21, 1922-July 17, 1932

Letter of January 21st, 1922.

Dearly beloved brethren and sisters in ‘Abdu’l-Bahá:

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, who now share with us all the agonies of His separation.

It is idle for me to emphasize how much the sorrowful ladies of the Holy Household look forward to the work that lies before the friends in the American continent, who in the past have rendered so glorious a service to His Cause and will now, faithful to His special love for them, carry on their mission still more gloriously than ever before. True, the shock has been too terrible and sudden for us all to recover from in so short a time, but whenever we recall His Sayings and read His Writings, hope springs in our hearts and gives us the peace that no other material comfort can give.

How well I remember when, more than two years ago, the Beloved Master turning to a distinguished visitor of His, who was seated by Him in His garden, suddenly broke the silence and said:—“My work is now done upon this plane; it is time for me to pass on to the other world.” Did He not in more than one occasion state clearly and emphatically:—“Were ye to know what will come to pass after me, surely would ye pray that my end be hastened?” In a Tablet sent to Persia when the storm raised years ago by that Committee of Investigation was fiercely raging around Him, when the days of His incarceration were at their blackest, He reveals the following:—“Now in this world of being, the Hand of Divine Power hath firmly laid the foundations of this all-highest Bounty and this wondrous Gift. Gradually whatsoever is latent in the innermost of this Holy Cycle shall appear and be made manifest, for now is but the beginning of its

growth and the dayspring of the revelation of its Signs. Ere the close of this Century and of this Age, it shall be made clear and manifest how wondrous was that Springtide and how heavenly was that Gift!"

With such assuring Utterances and the unmistakable evidences of His sure and clear knowledge that His end was nigh, is there any reason why the followers of His Faith, the world over, should be perturbed? Are not the prayers He revealed for us sufficient source of inspiration to every worker in His Cause? Have not His instructions paved before us the broad and straight Path of Teaching? Will not His now doubly effective power of Grace sustain us, strengthen us and confirm us in our work for Him? Ours is the duty to strive by day and night to fulfill our own obligations and then trust in His Guidance and never failing Grace. Unity amongst the friends, selflessness in our labors in His Path, detachment from all worldly things, the greatest prudence and caution in every step we take, earnest endeavor to carry out only what is His Holy Will and Pleasure, the constant awareness of His Presence and of the example of His Life, the absolute shunning of whomsoever we feel to be an enemy of the Cause ... these, and foremost among them is the need for unity, appear to me as our most vital duties, should we dedicate our lives for His service. Should we in this spirit arise to serve Him, what surer and greater promise have we than the one His Glorious Father, Bahá'u'lláh, gives us in His Most Holy Book:—"Verily, We behold you from Our Realm of Effulgent Glory, and shall graciously aid whosoever ariseth for the triumph of Our Cause with the hosts of the Celestial Concourse and a company of Our chosen angels."

How dearly all the Holy Leaves[1] cherish that memory of the departed Master, as He commented upon the fresh tidings that poured in from that continent, admiring the untiring activity of

[1] Descendants (feminine) of Bahá'u'lláh.

the friends, the complete subordination of their material interests to those of the Cause, the remarkable spread of the Movement in their midst and their staunch firmness in the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh. It is these encouraging reflections of the Master about His loved ones in America and the tests intellectual rather than physical which He said He would send to them to purify them and make ever brighter than before—it is these comments and promises of His that make of the Movement in that land such a potential force in the world today. The Beloved Master's cable to the friends in that region is a clear indication of the presence of those counteracting forces that may usher in those storms of tests that the Master Himself has said will ultimately be for the good of the Cause in that land.

And finally, the ladies of the Sacred Household and we, the rest of His kindred and family, will pray at His Hallowed Shrine for every one of you and He will surely watch over and enhance in the course of time that noble part of His heritage that He has bequeathed to His friends in the Far West; friends from whom in return He expects so much and whom He has loved and still doth love so dearly.

Your sincere co-worker in His Cause,
SHOGHI.

Haifa, Palestine.
January 21st, 1922.

Letter of March 5, 1922.

Dear fellow-workers in the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh:—

It is with words of regret and disappointment that I desire to open this letter because of my inability, in view of my manifold and pressing duties, to respond individually and in writing to the many messages of love and sympathy and of hope that you have so affectionately sent me since our Beloved's passing from this World. I am sure I am voicing the sentiments of the bereaved ladies of the Household when I say that however desirous we may be to correspond separately with every one of you, the grave responsibilities and manifold duties now devolved upon us make it regrettably impossible to express in written messages to every friend what we constantly feel in our hearts, and pray for when visiting His sacred Shrine.

At this grave and momentous period through which the Cause of God in conformity with the Divine Wisdom is passing, it is the sacred duty of every one of us to endeavor to realize the full significance of this Hour of Transition, and then to make a supreme resolve to arise steadfastly for the fulfilment of our sacred obligations.

The Mission of the Cause

Great as is the love and paternal care which our beloved Master is extending to us from on High, and unique as is the Spirit that animates today His servants in the world, yet a great deal will depend upon the character and efforts of His loved ones on whom now rests the responsibility of carrying on His work gloriously after Him. How great is the need at this moment when the promised outpourings of His grace are ready to be extended to every soul, for us all to form a broad vision of the mission of the Cause to mankind, and to do all in our power to spread it throughout the world! The eyes of the world, now that the sublime Personality of the Master has been removed from this visible plane, are turned with eager anticipation to us who are named after His name, and on whom rests primarily the responsibility to keep burning the torch that He has lit in this world. How keenly I feel at this challenging hour in the history of the Cause the need for a firm and definite determination to subordinate all our personal likings, our local interests, to the interests and requirements of the Cause of God! Now is the time to set aside, nay, to forget altogether, minor considerations regarding our internal relationships, and to present a solid united front to the world animated by no other desire but to serve and propagate His Cause.

It is my firm conviction which I now express with all sincerity and candor, that the dignity and unity of the Cause urgently demands—particularly throughout the American continent—that the friends should in their words and conduct emphasize and give absolute prominence to the constructive dynamic principles of Bahá'u'lláh, rather than attach undue importance to His negative Teachings. With hearts cleansed from the least trace of suspicion and filled with hope and faith in what the spirit of love can achieve, we must one and all endeavor at this moment to forget past impressions, and with absolute good-will and genuine

cooperation unite in deepening and diffusing the spirit of love and service that the Cause has thus far so remarkably shown to the world. To this attitude of good-will, of forbearance and genuine kindness to all, must be added, however, constant but unprovocative vigilance, lest unrestricted association with the peoples of the world should enable the very few who have been definitely pronounced by the Master as injurious to the body of the Cause, to make a breach in the Movement. Not until, however, an unmistakable evidence should appear, manifestly revealing the evil motives of a certain individual or group of individuals, is it advisable to make the matter public; for an untimely declaration that shall give rise to open differences among the friends is far more detrimental than forbearing still further with those who are suspected of evil intentions. As the Master so fully and consistently did throughout His lifetime, we must all make a supreme effort to pour out a genuine spirit of kindness and hopeful love to peoples of various creeds and classes, and must abstain from all provocative language that may impede the effect of what true and continued kindness can produce.

Does not ‘Abdu’l-Bahá wish us, as He looks down upon us with loving expectation from His glorious Station, to obliterate as much as possible all traces of censure, of conflicting discussions, of cooling remarks, of petty unnecessary observations that impede the onward march of the Cause, that damp the zeal of the firm believer and detract from the sublimity of the Bahá’í Cause in the eyes of the inquirer? In order, however, to insure fair and quick and vigorous action whenever such an evil activity is revealed and has been carefully ascertained, the best and only means would appear to be, for the careful observer, once he is assured of such an evil action, and has grown hopeless of the attitude of kindness and forbearance, to report it quietly to the Spiritual Assembly representative of the friends in that locality and submit the case to their earnest and full consideration. Should the majority of the members of that Assembly be conscientiously

convinced of the case—and this being a national issue affecting the body of the friends in America—it should, only through the intermediary of that Assembly, be cautiously communicated to that greater body representing all the Assemblies in America, which will in its turn obtain all the available data from the local Assembly in question, study carefully the situation and reserve for itself the ultimate decision. It may, if it decides so, refer to the Holy Land for further consideration and consultation.

Local and National Spiritual Assemblies

This clearly places heavy responsibilities on the local as well as national Assemblies, which in the course of time will evolve, with the Master's power and guidance, into the local and national Houses of Justice. Hence the vital necessity of having a local Spiritual Assembly in every locality where the number of adult declared believers exceeds nine, and of making provision for the indirect election of a Body that shall adequately represent the interests of all the friends and Assemblies throughout the American Continent.

A perusal of some of the words of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá on the duties and functions of the Spiritual Assemblies in every land (later to be designated as the local Houses of Justice), emphatically reveals the sacredness of their nature, the wide scope of their activity, and the grave responsibility which rests upon them.

Addressing the members of the Spiritual Assembly in Chicago, the Master reveals the following:—"Whenever ye enter the council-chamber, recite this prayer with a heart throbbing with the love of God and a tongue purified from all but His remembrance, that the All-powerful may graciously aid you to achieve supreme victory:—'O God, my God! We are servants of Thine that have turned with devotion to Thy Holy Face, that have detached ourselves from all beside Thee in this glorious Day. We have gathered in this spiritual assembly, united in our views and thoughts, with our purposes harmonized to exalt Thy Word amidst mankind. O Lord, our God! Make us the signs of Thy Divine Guidance, the Standards of Thy exalted Faith amongst men, servants to Thy mighty Covenant. O Thou our Lord Most High! Manifestations of Thy Divine Unity in Thine Abhá Kingdom, and resplendent stars shining upon all regions. Lord! Aid us to become seas surging with the billows of Thy wondrous Grace, streams flowing from Thy all-glorious Heights,

goodly fruits upon the Tree of Thy heavenly Cause, trees waving through the breezes of Thy Bounty in Thy celestial Vineyard. O God! Make our souls dependent upon the Verses of Thy Divine Unity, our hearts cheered with the outpourings of Thy Grace, that we may unite even as the waves of one sea and become merged together as the rays of Thine Effulgent Light; that our thoughts, our views, our feelings may become as one reality, manifesting the spirit of union throughout the world. Thou art the Gracious, the Bountiful, the Bestower, the Almighty, the Merciful, the Compassionate.'"

In the Most Holy Book is revealed:—"The Lord hath ordained that in every city a House of Justice be established wherein shall gather counsellors to the number of Bahá, and should it exceed this number it does not matter. It behooveth them to be the trusted ones of the Merciful among men and to regard themselves as the guardians appointed of God for all that dwell on earth. It is incumbent upon them to take counsel together and to have regard for the interests of the servants of God, for His sake, even as they regard their own interests, and to choose that which is meet and seemly. Thus hath the Lord your God commanded you. Beware lest ye put away that which is clearly revealed in His Tablet. Fear God, O ye that perceive."

Furthermore, 'Abdu'l-Bahá reveals the following:—"It is incumbent upon every one not to take any step without consulting the Spiritual Assembly, and they must assuredly obey with heart and soul its bidding and be submissive unto it, that things may be properly ordered and well arranged. Otherwise every person will act independently and after his own judgment, will follow his own desire, and do harm to the Cause."

"The prime requisites for them that take counsel together are purity of motive, radiance of spirit, detachment from all else save God, attraction to His Divine Fragrances, humility and lowliness amongst His loved ones, patience and long-suffering in difficulties and servitude to His exalted Threshold. Should they be

graciously aided to acquire these attributes, victory from the unseen Kingdom of Bahá shall be vouchsafed to them. In this day, assemblies of consultation are of the greatest importance and a vital necessity. Obedience unto them is essential and obligatory. The members thereof must take counsel together in such wise that no occasion for ill-feeling or discord may arise. This can be attained when every member expresseth with absolute freedom his own opinion and setteth forth his argument. Should any one oppose, he must on no account feel hurt for not until matters are fully discussed can the right way be revealed. The shining spark of truth cometh forth only after the clash of differing opinions. If after discussion, a decision be carried unanimously, well and good; but if, the Lord forbid, differences of opinion should arise, a majority of voices must prevail."

Enumerating the obligations incumbent upon the members of consulting councils, the Beloved reveals the following:—"The first condition is absolute love and harmony amongst the members of the assembly. They must be wholly free from estrangement and must manifest in themselves the Unity of God, for they are the waves of one sea, the drops of one river, the stars of one heaven, the rays of one sun, the trees of one orchard, the flowers of one garden. Should harmony of thought and absolute unity be non-existent, that gathering shall be dispersed and that assembly be brought to naught. The second condition:—They must when coming together turn their faces to the Kingdom on High and ask aid from the Realm of Glory. They must then proceed with the utmost devotion, courtesy, dignity, care and moderation to express their views. They must in every matter search out the truth and not insist upon their own opinion, for stubbornness and persistence in one's views will lead ultimately to discord and wrangling and the truth will remain hidden. The honored members must with all freedom express their own thoughts, and it is in no wise permissible for one to belittle the thought of another, nay, he must with moderation set forth the truth, and

should differences of opinion arise a majority of voices must prevail, and all must obey and submit to the majority. It is again not permitted that any one of the honored members object to or censure, whether in or out of the meeting, any decision arrived at previously, though that decision be not right, for such criticism would prevent any decision from being enforced. In short, whatsoever thing is arranged in harmony and with love and purity of motive, its result is light, and should the least trace of estrangement prevail the result shall be darkness upon darkness.... If this be so regarded, that assembly shall be of God, but otherwise it shall lead to coolness and alienation that proceed from the Evil One. Discussions must all be confined to spiritual matters that pertain to the training of souls, the instruction of children, the relief of the poor, the help of the feeble throughout all classes in the world, kindness to all peoples, the diffusion of the fragrances of God and the exaltation of His Holy Word. Should they endeavor to fulfill these conditions the Grace of the Holy Spirit shall be vouchsafed unto them, and that assembly shall become the center of the Divine blessings, the hosts of Divine confirmation shall come to their aid, and they shall day by day receive a new effusion of Spirit."

So great is the importance and so supreme is the authority of these assemblies that once 'Abdu'l-Bahá after having himself and in his own handwriting corrected the translation made into Arabic of the Ishráqát (the Effulgences) by Sheikh Faraj, a Kurdish friend from Cairo, directed him in a Tablet to submit the above-named translation to the Spiritual Assembly of Cairo, that he may seek from them before publication their approval and consent. These are His very words in that Tablet:—"His honor, Sheikh Faraju'llah, has here rendered into Arabic with greatest care the Ishráqát and yet I have told him that he must submit his version to the Spiritual Assembly of Egypt, and I have conditioned its publication upon the approval of the above-named Assembly. This is so that things may be arranged in an

orderly manner, for should it not be so any one may translate a certain Tablet and print and circulate it on his own account. Even a non-believer might undertake such work, and thus cause confusion and disorder. If it be conditioned, however, upon the approval of the Spiritual Assembly, a translation prepared, printed and circulated by a non-believer will have no recognition whatever."

This is indeed a clear indication of the Master's express desire that nothing whatever should be given to the public by any individual among the friends, unless fully considered and approved by the Spiritual Assembly in his locality; and if this (as is undoubtedly the case) is a matter that pertains to the general interest of the Cause in that land, then it is incumbent upon the Spiritual Assembly to submit it to the consideration and approval of the national body representing all the various local assemblies. Not only with regard to publication, but all matters without any exception whatsoever, regarding the interests of the Cause in that locality, individually or collectively, should be referred exclusively to the Spiritual Assembly in that locality, which shall decide upon it, unless it be a matter of national interest, in which case it shall be referred to the national body. With this national body also will rest the decision whether a given question is of local or national interest. (By national affairs is not meant matters that are political in their character, for the friends of God the world over are strictly forbidden to meddle with political affairs in any way whatever, but rather things that affect the spiritual activities of the body of the friends in that land.)

Full harmony, however, as well as cooperation among the various local assemblies and the members themselves, and particularly between each assembly and the national body, is of the utmost importance, for upon it depends the unity of the Cause of God, the solidarity of the friends, the full, speedy and efficient working of the spiritual activities of His loved ones.

Committees of the National Assembly

Large issues in such spiritual activities that affect the Cause in general in that land, such as the management of the "Star of the West" and any periodical which the National Body may decide to be a Bahá'í organ, the matter of publication, or reprinting Bahá'í literature and its distribution among the various assemblies, the means whereby the teaching campaign may be stimulated and maintained, the work of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, the racial question in relation to the Cause, the matter of receiving Orientals and association with them, the care and maintenance of the precious film exhibiting a phase of the Master's sojourn in the United States of America as well as the original matrix and the records of His voice, and various other national spiritual activities, far from being under the exclusive jurisdiction of any local assembly or group of friends, must each be minutely and fully directed by a special board, elected by the National Body, constituted as a committee thereof, responsible to it and upon which the National Body shall exercise constant and general supervision.

The time is indeed ripe for the manifold activities, wherein the servants and handmaids of Bahá'u'lláh are so devoutly and earnestly engaged, to be harmonized and conducted with unity, cooperation and efficiency, that the effect of such a combined and systematized effort, through which an All-powerful Spirit is steadily pouring, may transcend every other achievement of the past, however glorious it has been, and may stand, now that, to the eyes of the outside world the glorious Person of the Master is no more, a convincing testimony of the potency of His everliving Spirit.

Your brother and co-worker in His Cause,
SHOGHI.

Haifa, Palestine.
March 5, 1922.

Letter of Circa May, 1922 (undated).

IN THE NAME OF 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 that my presence here, at such a time and in such an atmosphere, is not in accordance with the fulfilment 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[2] 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.

Haifa, Palestine.
Circa May, 1922 (undated).

[2] Bahíyyih, sister of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

Our Common Servitude

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.

Haifa, Palestine.
Circa May, 1922 (undated).

Letter of December 16, 1922

To the loved ones of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá throughout the continent of America.

Dear fellow-workers in the Holy Vineyard of Bahá!

Now that my long hours of rest and meditation are happily at an end, I turn my face with renewed hope and vigor to that vast continent the soil of which is pregnant with those seeds that our beloved Master has so tenderly and so profusely scattered in the past. Prolonged though this period has been, yet I have strongly felt ever since the 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.

I am now confident that the energies of my beloved brethren and sisters across the seas, far from being damped by my sudden disappearance from the field of service, will henceforth be fully maintained, nay redoubled in their intensity, that we may all together carry triumphantly to the uttermost corners of the world the glorious Standard of Bahá.

Bereft of all news whatsoever during my hours of restful seclusion, I now feel the more the thrill of the various tidings, few but indeed promising, that have been awaiting my return to the Holy Land. The work of the noble Edifice that the mighty hands of the All-wise Master has reared in this world can suffer no delay, nor can its foundations be made to totter, whatever the apparent obstacles its enemies in their impotent wrath and despair may throw in its way. We need not wait too long, for already from various quarters there comes the news that the awful promises of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá regarding the Covenant-breakers have been strikingly fulfilled!

But it behooves us not to dwell for a moment on these doomed and darkened efforts, for the shining light of the Master’s un-

failing guidance is beckoning us to more constructive service, to nobler and worthier achievements.

We have, not a long time ago, with tearful eyes commemorated the world over the passing hour of our beloved Master. Would to God it has marked in our lives, which we all have consecrated to His service, a fresh, solemn and unswerving resolution of devotion and fidelity to His Cause

Your brother and co-worker,
SHOGHI.

Haifa, Palestine,
December 16, 1922.

Letter of December 23rd, 1922

To the members of the National Spiritual Assembly, the elected representatives of all believers throughout the continent of America.

Esteemed co-workers in the Vineyard of God:

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! I am however assured and sustained by the conviction, never dimmed in my mind, that whatsoever 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. Indeed, our experiences of the distant past, as well as of recent events, are too numerous and varied to permit of any misgiving or doubt as to the truth of this basic principle—a principle which throughout the vicissitudes of our sacred mission in this world we must never disregard or forget.

I cannot refrain from expressing in this, my first letter to you my deep gratitude and great pleasure in learning how promptly, thoroughly and admirably you have conducted the affairs of the Cause in that land. Of the sincerity of your efforts, of the determination with which you have faced your delicate and difficult task, I have never doubted for a moment, as I knew too well of the ardent spirit of service and fellowship which the sudden passing of our Beloved had infused in all his followers everywhere. But great was my surprise to know how the ever-present Hand of the Master has removed so speedily all the difficulties in our way and how the light of His Divine Guidance caused the darkness of doubts, of fears and mistrust to vanish.

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

the 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. I very highly approve of the arrangements you have made for centralizing the work in your hands and of distributing it to the various committees, who each in its own sphere, have so efficiently and thoroughly undertaken the management of their own affairs.

What has given me still greater pleasure is to learn that the members of this Central Body which has assumed so grave a responsibility and is facing such delicate and difficult tasks, command individually and collectively not only the sympathy of their spiritual brethren and sisters but who also can confidently rely on their active and whole-hearted support in the campaign of service to the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh. It is indeed as it should be, for if genuine and sustained cooperation and mutual confidence cease to exist between individual friends and their local and national assemblies, the all-beneficent work of the Cause must cease and nothing else can enable it to function harmoniously and effectively in future.

True, the Cause as every other movement has its own obstacles, complications and unforeseen difficulties, but unlike any other human organization it inspires a spirit of Faith and Devotion which can never fail to induce us to make sincere and renewed efforts to face these difficulties and smooth any differences that may and must arise.

I look forward with fervent hope to hear of these renewed efforts on your part and of the strong determination which you will never suffer to slacken, to maintain at any cost the unity, the effectiveness and the dignity of the Cause.

May I through you express my heartfelt gratitude to the members of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár Building Committee, Mr. Alfred E. Lunt, Mrs. Corinne True, Dr. Zia Bagdadi, Mr. Charles

Mason Remey, Mr. Louis Bourgeois, Mr. Leo Perron for their incessant labors in speeding the work of this noble Edifice which when raised and completed will prove to be the most powerful factor in the promulgation of the Cause in America.

Will you also extend to the members of the Publishing and Reviewing Committees, Mr. William H. Randall, Mr. Mountfort Mills, Mr. Roy C. Wilhelm, Mr. Albert R. Vail, Miss Edna True, Mrs. Marjory Morten and Mr. Alfred E. Lunt, my high appreciation for the very efficient management of their departments and their devotion to a work which if consistently maintained cannot fail to impress and attract a vast number of the enlightened public. Regarding the Star of the West, I wish to congratulate in particular the members of the Publishing Committee on the quality of their work. I have perused with particular interest the last numbers of the Magazine and am glad to note an encouraging improvement in its management, its style, its general presentation and the nature and number of its articles.

To the members of the Teaching Committee, Mr. William Randall, Mrs. Agnes S. Parsons, Mr. Albert Vail, Mr. Louis G. Gregory and Mrs. Mariam Haney I offer my very best wishes and assure them of my constant prayers on their behalf, that their services to such a vital department in the affairs of the Cause, so primary and immediate in its importance, may be crowned with brilliant success.

For the members of the Children's Educational Work Committee, Mrs. Grace Ober, Mrs. Louise Boyle, Mrs. Victoria Bedikian, Mrs. Hebe Struven, Mrs. Grace Foster, Mr. Stanwood Cobb and Mr. Allen McDaniel, I supplicate Divine Assistance, that He may graciously aid them in a work which was so near and dear to the Master's heart and enable them to assist in the rise of future devoted and efficient servants to the Cause of God.

On behalf of all the members of these Committees, I shall pray at the Three Hallowed Shrines, that they may become purified channels of His Grace and instruments of His Divine Plan for

this world. For my part, I shall not fail to offer my humble share of help and assistance to every one of them in their respective work and would welcome from each a special report on their present activities and of their plans for the future.

Awaiting from you 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, and remembering your labors of love and service every time I lay my head upon the Sacred Thresholds,

I am, as ever, your brother in His Service,
SHOGHI.

Haifa, Palestine,
December 23rd, 1922.

P.S. 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 province, 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.

SHOGHI.

Letter of January 12, 1923

To the members of the National Spiritual Assembly.

Beloved co-workers in the Cause of God!

In the midst of your unceasing labors for the progress of the Movement in that country, I am sure you would welcome every now and then such news as shall breathe a fresh spirit into your activities and stimulate you to further effort for the promotion of His Cause.

Only the other day, in the course of my study of various Bahá'í documents, I came, as if by mere chance, across a very important message from our beloved 'Abdu'l-Bahá, bearing no date, and revealing no sign as to exactly where, how and to whom it was given, written in the Master's own handwriting upon a leaflet that seemed ordinary and ill-preserved in appearance but which on close study proved of the profoundest interest to all believers in the East as well as in the West. As to the authenticity of these remarkable words, so clearly and forcibly written, there is no doubt whatsoever, and the measure of assurance it shall inspire in the loved ones of Persia and the spirit of hopeful encouragement it shall breathe in the friends of the West, have urged me to communicate it to you, that subject to your consideration and consent, it may be published[3] amongst the friends and redouble their confidence in the very remarkable share the West is destined to contribute to the immediate spread of the Movement throughout the world.

Recently, I have rendered it myself into English and enclosed is a copy of the full translation.

[3] Published in the booklet "Prayer of Bahá'u'lláh: Prayers and Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá."

Star of the West

May I also mention in passing the fact that since my return to the Holy Land I have directed and emphatically urged in my letters, the friends in Persia, Turkestan, Caucasus, Great Britain, India, Egypt and Syria to subscribe, through their respective Assemblies, to the Star of the West, report regularly to that paper and through their Assemblies the news of their activity and contribute every now and then carefully written articles approved and sanctioned by the same Assemblies.

I trust that this measure will react favorably on the Star of the West and will serve to stimulate the members of the Publishing Committee to further activity in their sphere of service to the Cause.

Awaiting eagerly your letters and wishing you the fullest success in your very arduous duties,

I am your devoted brother,
SHOGHI.

Haifa, Palestine,
January 12, 1923.

Letter of January 16, 1923.

The beloved of the Lord and the handmaids of the Merciful throughout the United States and Canada.

Beloved brothers and sisters in ‘Abdu’l-Bahá:

Our dear friend, Jináb-i-Fádil-i-Mázindarání, accompanied by his family, has gladly and gratefully responded to the kind invitation of the American friends to visit them once more and extend his helping hand to the many friends who are so faithfully laboring throughout that continent for the Cause of Bahá’u’lláh.

Deeply appreciative of the sentiments of warm and abiding affection which his co-workers of that land have abundantly shown him in the past, fired with the zeal of service which the passing of our Beloved has kindled in every heart and hopeful of the immediate future of the Cause in those regions, he is proceeding to America with the sole purpose of promoting far and wide and with greater efficiency and vigor the all-important work of teaching.

As to the extent of his sojourn, the details of his travel, his plan for visiting the various spiritual centers and all other matters related to his visit, I have left them all to his own discretion, that he may, after consultation with the various Spiritual Assemblies, do as he deems best and most serviceable to the interests of the Cause in that land.

That all the friends may realize more fully the urgent and supreme necessity of teaching the Cause in these days; that they may arise to inaugurate a more strenuous, systematized and extensive campaign of service—these are the high aims he has set before himself and which he intends, with the unfailing help and wholehearted support of every believer in America, to achieve in the immediate future.

May his second visit to your shores mark, in its character and results, a new and memorable era in the history of the Cause in that great country!

Your brother and co-worker,
SHOGHI.
Haifa, Palestine.
January 16, 1923.

Letter of January 17th, 1923

To the members of the National Spiritual Assembly.

Dear friends:

It is a great pleasure for me to share with you the translation[4] of some of the prayers and Tablets of our beloved Master, the reading of which I trust will inspire you and strengthen you in your work of service to His Cause.

I trust that in the course of time I will be enabled to send you regularly correct and reliable translations of the various prayers and Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, which will unfold to your eyes a new vision of His Glorious Mission on earth and give you an insight into the character and meanings of His Divine Teachings.

I shall await very eagerly any suggestions you would like to give me on this point and on all other matters that pertain to the interests of the Cause in America, and 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.

Your brother and co-worker,
SHOGHI.

Haifa, Palestine,
January 17th, 1923.

[4] These translations, with others received later, were published as a pamphlet by the N.S.A.

Letter of February 13, 1923

To the members of the National Spiritual Assembly.

Dearest friends:

I have just completed the translation of a number of selections[5] from the Master's soul-stirring Words to His loved ones in Persia, revealed some twenty-five years ago, and during the darkest days of His incarceration in the prison city of Akká.

You will realize, as you read them, the unshakable confidence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in the inevitable growth of the Cause, even in the most perilous days of His life. Their perusal will enable you all to grasp more fully the significance of this Movement and its dynamic power, the urgent need for sustained unity and harmony amongst the friends, and the glory of the station that awaits in the world to come every faithful servant of Bahá'u'lláh.

May they contribute their share to the unfolding of the Spirit of the Cause in that land, and may they infuse in all the friends that ardent spirit of service and fellowship that will enable them to fulfill their glorious destiny in this world!

Your brother and co-worker,
SHOGHI.

Haifa, Palestine,
February 13, 1923.

[5] Published in the booklet "Prayer of Bahá'u'lláh: Prayers and Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá."

Letter of March 12, 1923

To the beloved of the Lord and the handmaids of the Merciful throughout America, Great Britain, Germany, France, Switzerland, Italy, Japan and Australasia.

Fellow-workers in the Vineyard of God!

Over a year has elapsed since that calamitous Hour, when the glorious Person of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was veiled from mortal eyes and His Spirit ascended to the Kingdom of Glory; and I feel that the time is now ripe to take those fresh and momentous decisions which will enable us to fulfill, speedily and faithfully, the last wishes of our departed Master.

The year has been to the outside world a year of fear and suffering, of disillusion and turmoil. To us, however, the bereaved followers of a gracious and loving Master, it has been, despite the passing cares which His sudden departure must necessarily entail, a period of hope, of wholesome activity, marked throughout with a spirit of undiminished confidence in His power and of fidelity to His Cause.

From the East and from the West, from the North and from the South, the unnumbered servants of Bahá’u’lláh, disdainful of the evil machinations of the enemies of His Cause, the breakers of His behests, have rallied to His Standard, and risen with one accord to carry on the great Work He has entrusted to their charge. All-hail to that undying spirit of fidelity which burns and shall burn unceasingly, in the breasts of His loved ones! Great shall be their reward, and blissful the hour, when after a toilsome life of service, they are gathered to the glory of Bahá, and partake in their Beloved’s Presence, of the joy of eternal Reunion.

Condition of the World

But great achievements still await us in this world, and we feel confident that, by His grace and never-failing guidance, we shall now and ever prove ourselves worthy to fulfill His great Purpose for mankind. And who can fail to realize the sore need of bleeding humanity, in its present state of uncertainty and peril, for the regenerating Spirit of God, manifested this Day so powerfully in this Divine Dispensation? Four years of unprecedented warfare and world cataclysms, followed by another four years of bitter disappointment and suffering, have stirred deeply the conscience of mankind, and opened the eyes of an unbelieving world to the Power of the Spirit that alone can cure its sicknesses, heal its wounds, and establish the long-promised reign of undisturbed prosperity and peace.

Responsibility of Bahá'ís

Now surely, if ever, is the time for us, the chosen ones of Bahá'u'lláh and the bearers of His Message to the world, to endeavor by day and by night, to deepen, first and foremost, the Spirit of His Cause in our own individual lives, and then labor, and labor incessantly to exemplify in all our dealings with our fellow-men that noble Spirit of which His beloved Son 'Abdu'l-Bahá has been all the days of His life a true and unique exponent. The sayings of our beloved Master have been noised abroad, His name has filled all regions, and the eyes of mankind are now turned expectant towards His disciples who bear His name and profess His teachings. Shall we not by our daily life vindicate the high claims of His teachings, and prove by our services the influence of His undying Spirit? This surely is our highest privilege, and our most sacred duty.

Let us, with a pure heart, with humility and earnestness, turn afresh to His counsels and exhortations, and seek from that Source of Celestial Potency all the guidance, the spirit, the power which we shall need for the fulfillment of our mission in this life.

Behold, the station to which 'Abdu'l-Bahá is now calling His loved ones from the Realm of Glory:—

"It behooveth the loved ones of God to be enamored of one another and to sacrifice themselves for their fellow-workers in the Cause. They should yearn towards one another even as the sore athirst yearneth for the Water of Life, and the lover burneth to meet his heart's desire."

Such is the sublime, the glorious position He wishes us, and all the peoples and kindreds on earth, to attain in this world; how much more to achieve unity and common understanding among ourselves, and then arise to herald with one voice the coming of the Kingdom and the salvation of mankind.

With unity of purpose firmly established in our minds, with every trace of personal animosity banished from our hearts, and

with the spirit of whole-hearted and sustained fellowship kindled in our souls, can we hope to deliver effectively the Message of Bahá'u'lláh, and execute faithfully the various provisions of our Beloved's Will and Testament.

Steadfast in our faith, firm in our union, abounding in our hope, fervent in our spirit, and selfless in our labors, let us arise and with prayerful hearts make another and supreme effort to fulfill these last words of our Beloved, His most cherished desire:

"O ye that stand fast in the Covenant! When the hour cometh that this wronged and broken winged bird will have taken its flight unto the Celestial Concourse, when it will have hastened to the Realm of the Unseen, and its mortal frame will have either been lost or hidden neath the dust, it is incumbent upon the Afnán that are steadfast in the Covenant of God and have branched from the Tree of Holiness, the Hands of the Cause of God (the glory of the Lord rest upon them), and all the friends and loved ones, one and all, to bestir themselves and arise with heart and soul and in one accord to diffuse the sweet savors of God, to teach His Cause and to promote His Faith. It behooveth them not to rest for a moment, neither to seek repose. They must disperse themselves in every land, pass by every clime, and travel throughout all regions. Bestirred, without rest, and steadfast to the end, they must raise in every land the triumphal cry of Yá-Bahá'u'l-Abhá, must achieve renown in the world wherever they go, must burn brightly even as a candle in every meeting, and must kindle the flame of Divine Love in every assembly; that the Light of Truth may rise resplendent in the midmost heart of the world, that throughout the East and throughout the West a vast concourse may gather under the shadow of the Word of God, that the sweet savors of Holiness may be diffused, that faces may shine radiantly, hearts be filled with the Divine Spirit and souls be made heavenly. In these days the most important of all things is the guidance of the nations and the peoples of the world. Teaching the Cause is of utmost importance, for it is the head

corner-stone of the foundation itself. This wronged servant has spent his days and nights in promoting the Cause, and urging the peoples to service. He rested not a moment, till the fame of the Cause of God was noised abroad in the world, and the Celestial Strains from the Abhá Kingdom roused the East and the West. The beloved of God must also follow the same example. This is the secret of faithfulness, this is the requirement of servitude to the Threshold of Bahá."

We need but glance at the Words of Bahá'u'lláh and the Epistles of 'Abdu'l-Bahá to realize the great privilege of teaching the Cause, its vital necessity, its supreme urgency, and its wide-reaching effects. These are the very words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá:—

"In these days, the Holy Ones of the Realm of Glory, dwelling in the all-highest Paradise, yearn to return unto this world, and be of some service to the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh and prove their servitude to the Threshold of Abhá beauty."

What a wondrous vision these words unfold to our eyes! How great our privilege to labor in this Day in the Divine Vineyard! Is it not incumbent upon us to arise and teach His Cause with such an ardor which no worldly adversity can quell, nor any measure of success can satiate?

Election of Local Assemblies

And, now that this all-important Work may suffer no neglect, but rather function vigorously and continuously in every part of the Bahá'í world; that the unity of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh may remain secure and inviolate, it is of the utmost importance that in accordance with the explicit text of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, the Most Holy Book, in every locality, be it city or hamlet, where the number of adult (21 years and above) declared believers exceeds nine, a local "Spiritual Assembly" be forthwith established. To it all local matters pertaining to the Cause must be directly and immediately referred for full consultation and decision. The importance, nay the absolute necessity of these local Assemblies is manifest when we realize that in the days to come they will evolve into the local Houses of Justice, and at present provide the firm foundation on which the structure of the Master's Will is to be reared in future.

Duties of Spiritual Assemblies

The matter of Teaching, its direction, its ways and means, its extension, its consolidation, essential as they are to the interests of the Cause, constitute by no means the only issue which should receive the full attention of these Assemblies. A careful study of Bahá'u'lláh's and 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Tablets will reveal that other duties, no less vital to the interests of the Cause, devolve upon the elected representatives of the friends in every locality.

It is incumbent upon them to be vigilant and cautious, discreet and watchful, and protect at all times the Temple of the Cause from the dart of the mischief-maker and the onslaught of the enemy.

They must endeavor to promote amity and concord amongst the friends, efface every lingering trace of distrust, coolness and estrangement from every heart, and secure in its stead an active and whole-hearted cooperation for the service of the Cause.

They must do their utmost to extend at all times the helping hand to the poor, the sick, the disabled, the orphan, the widow, irrespective of color, caste and creed.

They must promote by every means in their power the material as well as the spiritual enlightenment of youth, the means for the education of children, institute, whenever possible, Bahá'í educational institutions, organize and supervise their work and provide the best means for their progress and development.

They must make an effort to maintain official, regular, and frequent correspondence with the various Bahá'í centers throughout the world, report to them their activities, and share the glad-tidings they receive with all their fellow-workers in the Cause.

They must encourage and stimulate by every means at their command, through subscription, reports and articles, the development of the various Bahá'í magazines, such as the "Star of the West" and the "Magazine of the Children of the Kingdom" in the United States of America, the "Bahá'í News" of India, the "Sun

of the East" (Khurshid-i Khavar) in Turkestan, the "Star of the East" in Japan, the "Sun of Truth" in Germany.

They must undertake the arrangement of the regular meetings of the friends, the feasts and the anniversaries, as well as the special gatherings designed to serve and promote the social, intellectual and spiritual interests of their fellow-men.

They must supervise in these days when the Cause is still in its infancy all Bahá'í publications and translations, and provide in general for a dignified and accurate presentation of all Bahá'í literature and its distribution to the general public.

These rank among the most outstanding obligations of the members of every Spiritual Assembly. In whatsoever locality the Cause has sufficiently expanded, and in order to insure efficiency and avoid confusion, each of these manifold functions will have to be referred to a special Committee, responsible to that Assembly, elected by it from among the friends in that locality, and upon whose work the Assembly will have to exercise constant and general supervision.

These local Spiritual Assemblies will have to be elected directly by the friends, and every declared believer of 21 years and above, far from standing aloof and assuming an indifferent or independent attitude, should regard it his sacred duty to take part conscientiously and diligently, in the election, the consolidation and the efficient working of his own local Assembly.

National Assemblies

Regarding the establishment of "National Assemblies," it is of vital importance that in every country, where the conditions are favorable and the number of the friends has grown and reached a considerable size, such as America, Great Britain and Germany, that a "National Spiritual Assembly" be immediately established, representative of the friends throughout that country.

Its immediate purpose is to stimulate, unify and coordinate by frequent personal consultations, the manifold activities of the friends as well as the local Assemblies; and by keeping in close and constant touch with the Holy Land, initiate measures, and direct in general the affairs of the Cause in that country.

It serves also another purpose, no less essential than the first, as in the course of time it shall evolve into the National House of Justice (referred to in 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will as the "secondary House of Justice"), which according to the explicit text of the Testament will have, in conjunction with the other National Assemblies throughout the Bahá'í world, to elect directly the members of the International House of Justice, that Supreme Council that will guide, organize and unify the affairs of the Movement throughout the world.

It is expressly recorded in 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Writings that these National Assemblies must be indirectly elected by the friends; that is, the friends in every country must elect a certain number of delegates, who in their turn will elect from among all the friends in that country the members of the National Spiritual Assembly. In such countries, therefore, as America, Great Britain and Germany, a fixed number of secondary electors must first be decided upon (95 for America, including the Pacific Islands; 95 for Germany; and 19 for Great Britain). The friends then in every locality where the number of adult declared believers exceeds nine must directly elect its quota of secondary electors assigned to it in direct proportion to its numerical strength. These

secondary electors will then, either through correspondence, or preferably by gathering together, and first deliberating upon the affairs of the Cause throughout their country (as the delegates to the Convention), elect from among all the friends in that country nine who will be the members of the National Spiritual Assembly.

This National Spiritual Assembly, which, pending the establishment of the Universal House of Justice, will have to be re-elected once a year, obviously assumes grave responsibilities, for it has to exercise full authority over all the local Assemblies in its province, and will have to direct the activities of the friends, guard vigilantly the Cause of God, and control and supervise the affairs of the Movement in general.

Vital issues, affecting the interests of the Cause in that country such as the matter of translation and publication, the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, the Teaching Work, and other similar matters that stand distinct from strictly local affairs, must be under the full jurisdiction of the National Assembly.

It will have to refer each of these questions, even as the local Assemblies, to a special Committee, to be elected by the members of the National Spiritual Assembly, from among all the friends in that country, which will bear to it the same relation as the local committees bear to their respective local Assemblies.

With it, too, rests the decision whether a certain point at issue is strictly local in its nature, and should be reserved for the consideration and decision of the local Assembly, or whether it should fall under its own province and be regarded as a matter which ought to receive its special attention. The National Spiritual Assembly will also decide upon such matters which in its opinion should be referred to the Holy Land for consultation and decision.

With these Assemblies, local as well as national, harmoniously, vigorously, and efficiently functioning throughout the Bahá'í world, the only means for the establishment of the Supreme

House of Justice will have been secured. And when this Supreme Body will have been properly established, it will have to consider afresh the whole situation, and lay down the principle which shall direct, so long as it deems advisable, the affairs of the Cause.

Annual Election of Assemblies

Pending its establishment, and to insure uniformity throughout the East and throughout the West, all local Assemblies will have to be re-elected once a year, during the first day of Ridván, and the result of polling, if possible, be declared on that day.

In order to avoid division and disruption, that the Cause may not fall a prey to conflicting interpretations, and lose thereby its purity and pristine vigor, that its affairs may be conducted with efficiency and promptness, it is necessary that every one should conscientiously take an active part in the election of these Assemblies, abide by their decisions, enforce their decree, and cooperate with them wholeheartedly in their task of stimulating the growth of the Movement throughout all regions. The members of these Assemblies, on their part, must disregard utterly their own likes and dislikes, their personal interests and inclinations, and concentrate their minds upon those measures that will conduce to the welfare and happiness of the Bahá'í Community and promote the common weal.

The Bahá'í Fund

And as the progress and execution 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, to be placed under the exclusive control of the Spiritual Assembly. All donations and contributions should be offered to the Treasurer of the Assembly, for the express purpose of promoting the interests of the Cause, throughout that locality or country. 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. The members of the Spiritual Assembly will at their own discretion expend it to promote the Teaching Campaign, to help the needy, to establish educational Bahá'í institutions, to extend in every way possible their sphere of service. I cherish the hope that all the friends, realizing the necessity of this measure, will bestir themselves and contribute, however modestly at first, towards the speedy establishment and the increase of that Fund.

The need for the centralization of authority in the National Spiritual Assembly, and the concentration of power in the various local Assemblies, is made manifest when we reflect that the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh is still in its age of tender growth and in a stage of transition; when we remember that the full implications and the exact significance of the Master's world-wide instructions, as laid down in His Will, are as yet not fully grasped, and the whole Movement has not sufficiently crystallized in the eyes of the world.

It is our primary task to keep the most vigilant eye on the manner and character of its growth, to combat effectively the forces of separation and of sectarian tendencies, lest the Spirit of the Cause be obscured, its unity be threatened, its Teachings

suffer corruption; lest extreme orthodoxy on one hand, and irresponsible freedom on the other, cause it to deviate from that Straight Path which alone can lead it to success.

The Most Essential Obligation

But let us be on our guard—so the Master continually reminds us from His Station on high—lest too much concern in that which is secondary in importance, and too long a preoccupation with the details of our affairs and activities, make us neglectful of the most essential, the most urgent of all our obligations, namely, to bury our cares and teach the Cause, delivering far and wide this Message of Salvation to a sorely-stricken world.

To His valiant combatants on earth, who at times may feel disheartened, our ever-victorious Commander, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, gives us the following assurance:

“O ye servants of the Sacred Threshold! The triumphant Hosts of the Celestial Concourse, arrayed and marshalled in the Realms above, stand ready and expectant to assist and assure victory to that valiant horseman who with confidence spurs on his charger into the arena of service. Well is it with that fearless warrior, who armed with the power of true Knowledge, hastens unto the field, disperses the armies of ignorance, and scatters the hosts of error, who holds aloft the Standard of Divine Guidance, and sounds the Clarion of Victory. By the righteousness of the Lord! He hath achieved a glorious triumph and obtained the true victory....”

With such inspiring words as these, are we to remain any longer unmoved and inactive? His trumpet-call resounds on every side, and summons us to service; are we to tarry and hesitate? His voice is calling aloud from every land; let us march on, unfettered and unafraid, and fulfill our glorious Destiny.

SHOGHI.

Haifa, Palestine,
March 12, 1923.

Transliteration of Bahá'í Terms

P.S. On another page[6] is given the list of the best known and most current Bahá'í terms, and other Oriental names and expressions, all properly and accurately transliterated, the faithful spelling of which by all the Western friends will avoid confusion in future, and insure in this matter a uniformity which is greatly needed at present in all Bahá'í literature. The full code will be duly communicated to the various National Assemblies, and the transliteration of the Oriental terms mentioned in the English letters sent out by the Haifa Spiritual Assembly will provide a correct and reliable supplement to the above-mentioned list. I feel confident that all the friends will from now on follow this system and adhere scrupulously and at all times to this code in all their writings.

[6] The complete list of terms is to be found in Bahá'í World, volume VII.

Letter of April 8th, 1923.

To the beloved of the Lord and the handmaids of the Merciful, the accredited delegates to the Annual Convention of America, Chicago, Illinois.

Dearly beloved brothers and sisters in ‘Abdu’l-Bahá:

On this auspicious occasion, when the elected representatives of the Bahá’í Community throughout the continent of America, gathered for the first time within the Foundation Hall of the stately edifice of the Mashriqu’l-Adhkár, are assembled to take counsel together regarding those vital issues that confront the Cause of Bahá’u’lláh in that land, may I, as one of your humble fellow-workers in the field of service, offer you from the very depths of my heart my brotherly love and sincere greetings, and assure you of my fervent prayers for the success of your deliberations and the attainments of your hearts’ desire.

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, at this hour, towards you, expectant to behold the dawning of a Day that shall witness the fulfilment of His divine Promise.

Forgetful of the past and its vicissitudes, conscious of the need for renewed and combined effort, freed from all earthly limitations and motives, with every lingering trace of ill-feeling forever banished from our hearts, freshly united and determined, let us join in deep and silent communion with the ever-watchful Spirit of our beloved ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, and with humility and earnestness supplicate for the guidance that will enable us to fulfil the task which is now committed to our charge. May this year’s Convention, by the range of its activities, by the character of its proceedings, by its faithful adherence to the divine Instructions of our loving Master, and above all by its radiant spirit of

enthusiasm and true fellowship, prove itself one of the greatest landmarks in the history of the Cause in America.

May the all-pervading Spirit of Bahá'u'lláh so permeate the souls of its members as to cause it to mirror forth the glories and the splendors of the Celestial Concourse.

Your devoted brother,
SHOGHI.

Haifa, Palestine.
April 8, 1923.

Letter of April 9th, 1923.

To the members of the American National Spiritual Assembly.

Dearest friends:

I have lately received your long-awaited reports on the present situation of the Movement in that land, and have read them all, together with their enclosures, with the utmost care and deepest interest.

I am much impressed and feel deeply gratified to learn of your devoted and unremitting labors, individually and collectively in the field of service to the Cause; of your constant vigilance and watchful care in upholding its fundamental principles and guarding its essential interests; of the efficiency, faithfulness and vigor with which you are conducting the administration of its affairs throughout that land.

Many and grave may be the obstacles, whether from within or from without, which we shall have to encounter in the days to come, but we feel sure that if we but maintain consistently before our eyes a broad and noble vision of its significance and vital necessity in these days, and above all of its universality and all-conquering power, we shall be enabled to surmount them, one and all, and by the Power of Faith, carry the Ark of the Covenant to its Haven of Safety and Triumph.

It is, I firmly believe, of the utmost urgent importance that, with unity of purpose and action firmly established in our midst, and with every trace of the animosity and mistrust of the past banished from our hearts, we should form one united front and combat, wisely and tactfully, every force that might darken the spirit of the Movement, cause division in its ranks, and narrow it by dogmatic and sectarian belief.

National Spiritual Assemblies

It is primarily upon the elected members of the National Spiritual Assemblies throughout the Bahá'í world that this highly important duty devolves, as in their hands the direction and management of all spiritual Bahá'í activities have been placed and centralized, and as they constitute in the eyes of the people of their country the supreme body in that land that officially represents, promotes and safeguards the various interests of the Cause, it is my fervent prayer and my most cherished desire, that the unfailing guidance of Bahá'u'lláh and the blessings of our beloved Master will enable them to set a high and true example to all other Bahá'í institutions and local Assemblies, and will show them what absolute harmony, mature deliberation and whole-hearted cooperation can achieve.

Should such a representative and responsible body fail to realize this fundamental requisite for all successful achievement, the whole structure is sure to crumble, and the Great Plan of the Future, as unfolded by the Master's Will and Testament, will be rudely disturbed and grievously delayed.

Regarding the management of the Star of the West, as I have already intimated, this Bahá'í organ as well as other similar publications, far from being regarded as the special organ of a certain group or particular locality, should fall under the exclusive control of the National Spiritual Assembly, which, aided by a special committee, shall minutely guide and judiciously scrutinize all the information it gives, the character of the articles and translations it publishes, and the tone and language it assumes in all its issues....

Reports of Activities

I shall always await from the members of the National Spiritual Assembly, collective, official and comprehensive reports on their manifold activities, sent to me at frequent intervals, and bearing upon the inner and outward currents of the Movement, the relations of Assemblies to one another, and the general standing and the various aspects of the progress of the Cause throughout the land. I would welcome more specific reports sent to me by the various committees of the National Spiritual Assembly, enclosed in the National Assembly's letter, and approved by all its members.

Mashriqu'l-Adhkár

I have read with keen interest all the enclosures regarding the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, have shared the up-to-date news they contained with the friends throughout the East, and note with particular pleasure the completion of the Basement Section, with its spacious Foundation Hall ready for the holding of meetings and the gatherings of friends. Though the prospect of the immediate resumption of building activity does not seem bright at present, yet I hope and pray that these difficulties will soon disappear, and the work of this unique Edifice, stimulated and advanced in time by the zeal and self-sacrifice of the friends the world over, will soon attain its glorious consummation. 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.

Pray convey to the members of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár Committee the highest sense of my appreciation for their devoted and strenuous labors, and my constant prayers for the success of the task which they have set themselves to accomplish.

With regard to the situation in Persia, and the condition of the friends in that land, I have requested the Ṭihrán Spiritual Assembly to send me immediately an authoritative and full report of the exact situation, whereupon I shall duly inform you of the exact steps to be taken to insure the well-being and safety of the tried believers in Persia....

The holding of State Congresses, Amity Conventions, and other universal associations of the friends in America, will naturally fall within the province of the National Spiritual Assembly, which will direct and supervise the work of them all by the aid of special committees, each constituted for a specific purpose. The matter of receiving Orientals is left entirely in the hands of the National Spiritual Assembly, whose special committee for this purpose will have to investigate all the questions arising in

this connection in future. Please convey to the members of the newly constituted Library Committee my deep appreciation of their labors in this important field of service, and assure them of my prayers for their success.

Touching the point raised in the Secretary's letter regarding the nature and scope of the Universal Court of Arbitration, this and other similar matters will have to be explained and elucidated by the Universal House of Justice, to which, according to the Master's explicit instructions, all important and fundamental questions must be referred. At present the exact implication and full significance of the provisions of the Master's Will are as yet imperfectly understood, and time will serve to reveal the wisdom and the far-reaching effects of His words.

I am enclosing on a separate sheet the full authoritative code, widely adopted by contemporary Orientalists throughout the world, which will serve as a basis for the transliteration of Bahá'í terms and Oriental names.[7]

Remembering you all in my hours of visit and prayer at the Three Holy Shrines, and wishing you success from all my heart,

I am your brother and fellow-worker,
SHOGHI.

Haifa, Palestine.
April 9th, 1923.

[7] See previous footnote on transliterations.

Letter of April 27th, 1923.

To the members of the National Spiritual Assembly.

Beloved fellow-workers in the Cause:

I am not sure whether I have sent you before a copy of this glorious Tablet revealed by Bahá'u'lláh for His beloved 'Abdu'l-Bahá, written in His own blessed handwriting, and which we found among his papers and documents soon after the Master's Ascension. It reveals in terms of touching tenderness the unique station of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and constitutes an unchallengeable evidence of His supreme authority.

I am also enclosing my rendering of various passages of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas[8] which you may feel at liberty to circulate amongst the friends.

Wishing you all success in your work,

I am your devoted brother,

SHOGHI.

Haifa, Palestine,

April 27th, 1923.

[8] Published in "The Star of the West" during the year 1923.

Letter of May 6th, 1923

To the members of the National Spiritual Assembly.

My friends and fellow-workers in the Cause of God!

Your most welcome message, imparting the glad news of a successful Convention, has rejoiced my heart and fortified my hope in this year of active service, that has just unfolded itself before you.

I am certain that, as the newly elected representatives of the Bahá'í Community throughout America, you are, one and all, well aware of your mighty responsibilities, and fully realize the tremendous need for a full understanding amongst the friends, and their active and sustained cooperation in spreading far and wide the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh throughout that vast continent.

I fervently hope that in collaboration with our wise, able and devoted brother, Jináb-i-Fádil, you will inaugurate a brilliant and vigorous campaign of Teaching, that shall by its very splendor banish the darkness of differences and contention that so impede the majestic and onward march of the Cause in every land.

Central Fund

That you may reinforce this Teaching Campaign—so vitally needed in these days—and conduct, properly and efficiently, the rest of your manifold activities, spiritual as well as humanitarian, it is 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 vigor.

It is my earnest prayer, in the day-time and in the night season, that the ever-guiding Hand of our loved and departed Master may graciously aid you to surmount every obstacle, and will lead, through you,—His chosen ones in that land,—the Ark of His Cause, to its promised haven of glory and triumph.

With heartfelt congratulations and best wishes,

I am your brother and fellow-worker,

SHOGHI.

Haifa, Palestine.

May 6th, 1923.

P.S. I enclose a copy of my translation[9] of Bahá'u'lláh's Words of Wisdom, which you will feel at liberty to circulate amongst the friends.

[9] Published in the Bahá'í Magazine, Star of the West.

Letter of November 14, 1923.

To the beloved of the Lord and the handmaids of the Merciful throughout America, care of the members of the American National Spiritual Assembly.

Fellow-laborers in the Divine Vineyard:

Upon my return, after a forced and prolonged absence, to the Holy Land, it is my first and most ardent wish to renew and strengthen those ties of brotherly love and fellowship that bind our hearts together in our common servitude to His sacred Threshold.

The two years that have elapsed since the passing of our beloved Master have been for the Cause, as well as for mankind, years of deep anxiety and pain. The momentous changes that are taking place in the history of both have proved so swift and far-reaching as to arouse in certain hearts a strange misgiving as to their stability and future.

On one hand 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, whilst the ever-increasing confusion of the world, threatened as never before with disruptive forces, fierce rivalries, fresh commotions and grave disorder, has well-nigh overwhelmed the heart and damped the zeal of even the most enthusiastic believer in the destiny of mankind.

And yet, how often we seem to forget the clear and repeated warnings of our beloved Master, who, in particular during the concluding years of His mission on earth, laid stress on the "severe mental tests" that would inevitably sweep over His loved ones of the West—tests that would purge, purify and prepare them for their noble mission in life.

The Cause of Human Suffering

And as to the world's evil plight, we need but recall the writings and sayings of Bahá'u'lláh, who, more than fifty years ago, declared in terms prophetic the prime cause of the ills and sufferings of mankind, and set forth their true and divine remedy. "Should the Lamp of Religion be hidden," He declares, "Chaos and confusion will ensue." How admirably fitting and applicable are these words to the present state of mankind!

Ours is then the duty and privilege to labor, by day and by night, amidst the storm and stress of these troublous days, that we may quicken the zeal of our fellow-men, rekindle their hopes, stimulate their interest, open their eyes to the true Faith of God and enlist their active support in the carrying out of our common task for the peace and regeneration of the world.

Let us take heart and be thankful to our beloved 'Abdu'l-Bahá, as we remember His manifold blessings and unfailing care and protection, ever since the hour of His departure from our midst. The flames of sedition, so maliciously kindled in the past by those who have dared to flout His will, are gone out for ever, and the fondest hopes of these evil plotters are now abandoned, doomed never to revive. He has indeed redeemed His promise!

It seemed not a long time ago that their agitation, so violently renewed immediately after the passing of our Beloved, would for a time confuse the Divine Message of Bahá'u'lláh, obscure His Covenant, retard the progress of His Cause, and shatter its unity; and yet how well we see them all today, not through our efforts, but by their own folly, and above all, by the intervention of the hidden hand of God, reduced to the vilest and most humiliating position.

And now, with the Cause purified and inwardly victorious, its principles vindicated, its enemies silenced and sunk in unspeakable misery, may we not, henceforth, direct all our efforts to collective action and constructive achievement, and, in utter

disregard of the flickerings of their fast-fading light, arise to carry out those urgent measures that will secure the outward and complete triumph of the Cause.

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.

I cherish the hope that, from now on, the Beloved may bestow upon me all the strength and vigor that will enable me to pursue over a long and unbroken period of strenuous labor the supreme task of achieving, in collaboration with the friends in every land, the speedy triumph of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh. This is the prayer I earnestly request all my fellow-brethren and sisters in the Faith to offer on my behalf.

Let us pray to God that in these days of world-encircling gloom, when the dark forces of nature, of hate, rebellion, anarchy and reaction are threatening the very stability of human society, when the most precious fruits of civilization are undergoing severe and unparalleled tests, we may all realize, more profoundly than ever, that though but a mere handful amidst the seething masses of the world, we are in this day the chosen instruments of God's grace, that our mission is most urgent and vital to the fate of humanity, and, fortified by these sentiments, arise to achieve God's holy purpose for mankind.

Your brother in His Service,
SHOGHI.

Haifa, Palestine.
November 14, 1923.

Letter of November 26, 1923.

To the members of the American National Spiritual Assembly.

Friends and fellow-workers in the Vineyard of God!

After a long and unbroken silence, it gives me the greatest joy to be enabled to correspond again with my dearly-beloved co-workers of the National Spiritual Assembly.

Your three letters, dated June 8th, July 10th and October 12th, have been safely received, and to each I have given my earnest and fullest attention. Their perusal which reflects only a certain amount of your activities together with the study of the enclosed communications and circulars and of the detailed and admirable report of the proceedings of the Annual Convention have all served to heighten my admiration for the thoroughness, the ability, and the devotion with which you are conducting the affairs of the Cause of God in that land.

How often I have wished and yearned to be nearer to the field of your activities and thus be able to keep in a more constant and closer touch with every detail of the manifold and all-important services you render. I cherish the hope that erelong the facilities in the means of communication and transport will serve to draw us still nearer to one another, and fulfill, though partially, this long-desired wish.

The Annual Convention

I have been made happy and grateful to learn from your first letter that "throughout the sessions (of the last Convention) the atmosphere was one of great detachment and spirituality combined with practical vision and purpose." I am deeply convinced that if the Annual Convention of the friends in America, as well as the National Spiritual Assembly, desire to become potent instruments for the speedy realization of the Beloved's fondest hopes for the future of that country, they should endeavor, first and foremost, to exemplify, in an increasing degree, to all Bahá'ís and to the world at large the high ideals of fellowship and service which Bahá'u'lláh and the beloved Master repeatedly set before them. They can claim the admiration, the support and eventually the allegiance of their fellow-countrymen only by their strict regard for the dignity, the welfare, and the unity of the Cause of God, by their zeal, their disinterestedness, and constancy in the service of mankind, and by demonstrating, through their words and deeds, the need and practicability of the lofty principles which the Movement has proclaimed to the world.

The efforts you have displayed, and the considerable success you have achieved in consolidating the forces of the Movement in the United States and Canada have been a source of inspiration to every one of us, and, I am certain, will spur the friends throughout the East to combined and sympathetic activity for the promotion of the Cause.

My fervent prayer at the three Holy Shrines is that the bountiful Lord may bless His American friends who constitute the vanguard of His host in the Western world, and prosper them in their material affairs and pursuits, that the Cause which stands today in sore need of material help and assistance may advance, rapidly and unhindered, towards the fulfillment of its destiny.

The Bahá'í Fund

With regard to the Bahá'í Fund, recently established amongst the friends, I trust that the matter now stands clear to every one throughout the country. As I have previously intimated, although individual friends and local Assemblies are absolutely free to specify the object and purpose of their donations to the National Spiritual Assembly, yet, in my opinion, I regard it of the utmost vital importance that individuals, as well as local Assemblies, throughout the land should, in view of the paramount importance of National Teaching and as an evidence of their absolute confidence in their national representatives, endeavor, however small at first, to contribute freely towards the upkeep and the increase of the National Bahá'í Fund, so that the members of the National Assembly may at their full discretion expend it for whatever they deem urgent and necessary.

The Mashriqu'l-Adhkár

Concerning the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, I shall always recall with pride and gratitude the self-sacrifice of the American friends and, in particular the devoted services of our dear Bahá'í sister, Mrs. True, and our beloved brethren, Dr. Bagdadi, Mr. Remey and Mr. Bourgeois, whose persistent efforts and devoted services are in the eyes of all friends highly praiseworthy. I would feel indeed disheartened were the friends to think for a moment, that its work should fall into abeyance, nay, rather they should do all in their power (and I trust their fellow-brethren and sisters throughout the East may share in their stupendous efforts) to provide for the steady and uninterrupted progress of the work, until the day may come when this sublime Edifice, raised in its majestic splendor in the very heart of the continent, may be yet another evidence of the triumph and vitality of the Cause.

Your reference to the friends in Akron, Ohio, and their harmonious participation in the proceedings of the Convention have rejoiced my heart, for it has removed another obstacle in the way of the rapid and vigorous development of the Cause in those regions.

The beneficent services and unremitting labors of that selfless and able teacher of the Cause of God, Jináb-i-Fádil-i-Mazandarání, the details of whose travels and activities I have followed with deep interest, have been to me a constant source of hope and real encouragement, and my hope is that the seeds he has so wisely sown may with your support yield in the not distant future an abundant harvest.

Green Acre

I was delighted to hear of the progressive activities of that dearly-beloved spot, Green Acre, upon which the Master has bestowed His tender care and loving-kindness, and of which we are all hopeful that it may become, while the work of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár is in progress, the focal center of the devotional, humanitarian, social and spiritual activities of the Cause. The sacrifice of the time, energy and money made by our dearly beloved friends, Mr. and Mrs. Randall, Mr. and Mrs. Schopflocher, and those who have helped them in their task, I shall never forget, and will fervently pray on their behalf that our Beloved may fulfill their heart's desire. I feel that no interference with its present organization should be attempted, as it enjoys in its present condition unique opportunities for the diffusion of the Bahá'í spirit and the promotion of the Word of God.

I am glad to report that the situation of the houses in Baghdád is free from immediate danger, though the issue has not yet been definitely determined. I wish in this respect to express my high admiration and deep gratitude for the promptness, caution, and care with which you, and particularly Mrs. Parsons and Mr. Mills, have approached and handled this delicate question. I shall inform you of any future developments in this matter.

With regard to the Star of the West, I have been impressed by the beauty and force of the various articles contributed to the Journal by Mr. Horace Holley and Mr. Stanwood Cobb, and would indeed welcome with genuine satisfaction an even more active participation on their part in the editorial section of the Bahá'í Magazine.

I have addressed a few days ago a cable to the secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly, requesting the friends to exercise restraint and caution in the use and distribution of the record of the Master's voice. In my view, it should be used only on special occasions and be listened to with the utmost reverence.

The dignity of the Cause, I am sure, would suffer from too wide and indiscriminate use of one of the most precious relics of our departed Master.

Regarding the short film of the Master, for which, as well as for the record of His voice, I am deeply indebted to the selfless efforts and services of my dear brother, Mr. Roy C. Wilhelm, it would be undoubtedly better to combine it with other films representing various scenes in the history of the Cause, taken in countries visited by the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá. As this would take considerable time and preparation and would entail much expense I wonder whether it would be an expense and burden to you to forward only to the Holy Land one copy of the actual film, as it would impart untold happiness and consolation to the bereaved ladies of the Holy Household.

I am gratified to peruse the able and masterly work of my dear fellow-worker, Mr. Horace Holley, a work[10] which I have no doubt will by virtue of its subject matter, its comprehensiveness and uniqueness arouse widespread and genuine interest in the Movement. I am looking forward eagerly to similar productions by the pen of such able and gifted servants of Bahá'u'lláh.

I am enclosing for all the friends recent translations of those highly significant utterances of Bahá'u'lláh, revealed some fifty years ago, and pregnant with His divine wisdom. His ringing call to humanity in its hour of peril sounds prophetic in these days of utter gloom.

I am forwarding also a copy of the transliterated Oriental terms with few corrections of minor type errors. I am confident that the friends will not feel their energy and patience taxed by a scrupulous adherence to what is an authoritative and universal, though arbitrary code for the spelling of Oriental terms.

[10] Bahá'í Scriptures, New York, 1923; replaced by Bahá'í World Faith, 1943.

Committees of the National Assembly

The diligent efforts exerted by the various committees of the National Spiritual Assembly, those for National Teaching, for the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, the Star of the West, the National Library, for the reviewing and publication of Bahá'í literature, for education, for the National Archives and the Race Amity Conventions, have cheered and heartened me in the discharge of my manifold duties, and constitute in themselves a convincing evidence and inspiring example to the Bahá'í world of the efficient spiritual administration of the affairs of the Bahá'í world.

As to the spiritual activities of the "Children of the Kingdom" in America, my hope and prayer is that they may grow to become efficient servants of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh. Their devotion and self-sacrifice, their readiness to help the cause of the Bahá'í Temple, their activity in connection with the Bahá'í Magazine are all unmistakable signs of the glorious future of the Cause in that land. May the care and loving-kindness of the Heavenly Father guide them, protect them and aid them in their future mission in life.

The Greatest Holy Leaf, the Holy Mother, and the other ladies of the Holy Household wish to join me, one and all, in expressing to every one of you their deep thankfulness and their highest appreciation for the efficient and admirable manner with which you are coordinating the dynamic forces of the Cause, and conducting its affairs throughout America.

The sum of 100 English pounds which you have offered to the Cause through me, I must acknowledge with deep appreciation and gratitude, and wish to inform you that a part of it has been directly expended for the furthering of the interests of the Cause throughout the world, and the rest for the embellishment of the Well-Beloved's Shrine on Mount Carmel.

With deep gratitude, and hoping to hear from you, singly and collectively, I am your true brother,

SHOGHI.
Haifa, Palestine.
November 26, 1923.

Letter of January 4th, 1924.

To the members of the American National Spiritual Assembly.

My dearest friends:

On November 28th I received the following communication from the President of the National Spiritual Assembly of Great Britain:

"I have now to bring to your notice, though possibly you are already aware of it, a matter which is of the first importance in the opinion of the National Spiritual Assembly as you will see from one of the paragraphs of the enclosed minutes of its first meeting, which was held on October 13th. So far the programme of the conference on the 'Living Religions within the British Empire' is in a somewhat nebulous condition, but I have ascertained from Miss Sharples, the honorary secretary of the committee of organization, that the conference has been approved by the authorities of the British Empire Exhibition 1924 and will last for ten days, covering the last week of the month of September and the first three days of October. It is proposed that all religions taught and practiced throughout the British Empire shall be represented at the conference, including the Christians, Muhammadans, Buddhists, Brahma Somaj, Theosophists and others, and that each one in turn shall have at its disposal a day or part of a day for a meeting to expound its principles and deal with its organization and objects."

In their last letter, the members of the National Spiritual Assembly of Great Britain further informed me that the idea of the above-mentioned conference has originated with the Theosophical Society, but these having later dropped its management, the organization of the conference passed into the hands of the School of Oriental Studies and the Sociological Society. You will also note from the enclosed copy of a letter addressed by the same Miss Sharples to the President of the British National

Spiritual Assembly that the time offered to the Bahá'í representatives will be very limited, and that most probably the allotted time will be just sufficient to read their papers or deliver their address and engage in the discussion that might arise after their formal presentation of the Cause.

As the British Empire Exhibition, of which this conference forms a part, is itself a semi-official undertaking, and receives actually the generous support and active participation of the government authorities throughout the British Empire, I feel that the opportunities now offered to the Bahá'í world should not be missed, as this chance, if properly utilized, might arouse and stimulate interest among the enlightened public.

As so much will depend upon the nature and general presentation of the theme, rather than upon the personality of the reader or speaker, I feel that, first and foremost, our attention should be concentrated on the choice and thorough preparation of the subject matter as well as on the proper drafting and the form of the paper itself, which might possibly have to be submitted afterwards to the authorities of the conference.

I feel the necessity of entrusting this highly important and delicate task to a special committee, to be appointed most carefully by the National Spiritual Assembly of America, and consisting of those who by their knowledge of the Cause, their experience in matters of publicity, and particularly by their power of expression and beauty of style will be qualified to produce a befitting statement on the unique history of the Movement as well as its lofty principles.

I am enclosing an article on the Bahá'í Movement which I trust might serve as a basis and example of the paper in question. An account of the most salient features of the history of the Cause, a brief but impressive reference to its many heroes and martyrs, a convincing and comprehensive presentation of its basic principles, and a characteristic survey of the Master's life, as well as a short but graphic description of the present

position and influence of the Movement both in the East and the West, should, in my opinion, be included and combined into one conclusive argument. Its length should not surpass that of the enclosed article, and its general tone, expression and language should be at once dignified, sober and forceful.

The greatest care and caution must be exercised in choosing those who can best provide and fulfill the above mentioned requisites and conditions.

I shall be most pleased to offer my views and suggestions once the paper has assumed its final shape, and wish you to obtain the assistance and advice of those whom you think able to judge amongst the friends in England and elsewhere.

Mr. Simpson, the President of the British National Spiritual Assembly, writes that Miss Grand from Canada has suggested the names of Dr. Watson and Mr. J. O. McCarthy of Toronto to represent the Canadian Bahá'ís. I would be pleased to receive your views as to who should represent Canada at the Conference. India is the only other country within the British Empire that can send a native Bahá'í representative to the conference, and it is rather unfortunate that the United States of America should have to be excluded, as the speakers at the conference must necessarily be subjects of the British Empire.

I am enclosing recent translations[11] of the prophetic and most remarkable words of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá which I trust you will all find of great value and interest in the great work you are doing for the Cause.

May this great project yield an abundant harvest for the Cause, and your efforts be richly blessed by the guiding Spirit of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

Your fellow-worker,
SHOGHI.

[11] Published in "The Star of the West."

Haifa, Palestine,
January 4th, 1924.

Letter of February 23, 1924.

To the beloved of the Lord and the handmaids of the Merciful throughout America.

My dear fellow-workers:

I gather from various sources that the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh, in the course of its sure yet toilsome march towards the salvation of the world, has encountered of late further obstacles, which in the eyes of some appear to retard its progress and hinder its growth. I have learned with feelings of sadness and surprise that some vague sense of apprehension, a strange misconception of its immediate purpose and methods, is slowly gaining ground, steadily affecting its wholesome growth and vigorous development throughout the continent.

Though such signs should appear from time to time, and however unrepresentative they be of the vast and growing mass of its convinced and zealous supporters, the world over, what, I wonder, could have caused this uneasiness of mind? Are such misgivings possible, though on the part of but a few, in the face of the remarkable manifestations of so remarkable a movement? To what extent do they form a part of those mental tests and trials destined at various times by the Almighty to stir and reinvigorate the body of His Cause, and how far are they traceable to our imperfect state of understanding, to our weaknesses and failings?

Divine Destiny and Human Frailty

That the Cause of God should, in the days to come, witness many a challenging hour and pass through critical stages in preparation for the glories of its promised ascendancy in the new world has been, time and again, undeniably affirmed by our departed Master, and is abundantly proved to us all by its heroic past and turbulent history. And yet, if it is the lot of the chosen ones of God, the people of Bahá, to face adversity and suffer tribulation before achieving ultimate victory, are we to believe that whatever befalls us is divinely ordained, and in no wise the result of our faint-heartedness and negligence?

Surely now, if ever, is the time to turn our eyes inwardly, to bestir ourselves, to invoke the Most Great Name, and standing together, summon to our aid and support all the faith, the strength, and the courage that we shall need to meet our pressing obligations and discharge our trust.

The Plight of Mankind

The plight of mankind, the condition and circumstances under which we live and labor are truly disheartening, and the darkness of prejudice and ill-will enough to chill the stoutest heart. Disillusion and dismay are invading the hearts of peoples and nations, and the hope and vision of a united and regenerated humanity is growing dimmer and dimmer every day. Time-honored institutions, cherished ideals, and sacred traditions are suffering in these days of bewildering change, from the effects of the gravest onslaught, and the precious fruit of centuries of patient and earnest labor is faced with peril. Passions, supposed to have been curbed and subdued, are now burning fiercer than ever before, and the voice of peace and good-will seems drowned amid unceasing convulsions and turmoil. What, let us ask ourselves, should be our attitude as we stand under the all-seeing eye of our vigilant Master, gazing at a sad spectacle so utterly remote from the spirit which He breathed into the world? Are we to follow in the wake of the wayward and the despairing? Are we to allow our vision of so unique, so enduring, so precious a Cause to be clouded by the stain and dust of worldly happenings, which, no matter how glittering and far-reaching in their immediate effects, are but the fleeting shadows of an imperfect world? 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? Shall we not equip ourselves with a clear and full understanding of their purpose and implications for the age we live in, and with an unconquerable resolve arise to utilize them, intelligently and with scrupulous fidelity, for the enlightenment and the promotion of the good of all mankind?

Humanity, torn with dissension and burning with hate, is crying at this hour for a fuller measure of that love which is born of God, that love which in the last resort will prove the one solvent of its incalculable difficulties and problems. Is it not

incumbent upon us, whose hearts are aglow with love for Him, to make still greater effort, to manifest that love in all its purity and power in our dealings with our fellow-men? May our love of our beloved Master, so ardent, so disinterested in all its aspects, find its true expression in love for our fellow-brethren and sisters in the faith as well as for all mankind. I assure you, dear friends, that progress in such matters as these is limitless and infinite, and that upon the extent of our achievements along this line will ultimately depend the success of our mission in life.

The New World Order

And as we make an effort to demonstrate that love to the world may we also clear our minds of any lingering trace of unhappy misunderstandings that might obscure our clear conception of the exact purpose and methods of this new world order, so challenging and complex, yet so consummate and wise. We are called upon by our beloved Master in His Will and Testament not only to adopt it unreservedly, but to unveil its merit to all the world. To attempt to estimate its full value, and grasp its exact significance after so short a time since its inception would be premature and presumptuous on our part. We must trust to time, and the guidance of God's Universal House of Justice, to obtain a clearer and fuller understanding of its provisions and implications. But one word of warning must be uttered in this connection. Let us be on our guard lest we measure too strictly the Divine Plan with the standard of men. I am not prepared to state that it agrees in principle or in method with the prevailing notions now uppermost in men's minds, nor that it should conform with those imperfect, precarious, and expedient measures feverishly resorted to by agitated humanity. Are we to doubt that the ways of God are not necessarily the ways of man? Is not faith but another word for implicit obedience, whole-hearted allegiance, uncompromising adherence to that which we believe is the revealed and express will of God, however perplexing it might first appear, however at variance with the shadowy views, the impotent doctrines, the crude theories, the idle imaginings, the fashionable conceptions of a transient and troublous age? If we are to falter or hesitate, if our love for Him should fail to direct us and keep us within His path, if we desert Divine and emphatic principles, what hope can we any more cherish for healing the ills and sicknesses of this world?

Pending the establishment of the Universal House of Justice, whose function it is to lay more definitely the broad lines that

must guide the future activities and administration of the Movement, it is clearly our duty to strive to obtain as clear a view as possible of the manner in which to conduct the affairs of the Cause, and then arise with single-mindedness and determination to adopt and maintain it in all our activities and labors.

The Foundation of the House of Justice

The various Assemblies, local and national, constitute today the bedrock upon the strength of which the Universal House is in future to be firmly established and raised. Not until these function vigorously and harmoniously can the hope for the termination of this period of transition be realized. It devolves upon us whose dearest wish is to see the Cause enter upon that promised era of universal recognition and world achievements, to do all in our power to consolidate the foundations of these Assemblies, promoting at the same time a fuller understanding of their purpose and more harmonious cooperation for their maintenance and success.

Let us also remember that at the very root of the Cause lies the principle of the undoubted right of the individual to self-expression, his freedom to declare his conscience and set forth his views. If certain instructions of the Master are today particularly emphasized and scrupulously adhered to, let us be sure that they are but provisional measures designed to guard and protect the Cause in its present state of infancy and growth until the day when this tender and precious plant shall have sufficiently grown to be able to withstand the unwisdom of its friends and the attacks of its enemies.

Let us also bear in mind that the keynote of the Cause of God is not dictatorial authority but humble fellowship, not arbitrary power, but the spirit of frank and loving consultation. Nothing short of the spirit of a true Bahá'í can hope to reconcile the principles of mercy and justice, of freedom and submission, of the sanctity of the right of the individual and of self-surrender, of vigilance, discretion and prudence on the one hand, and fellowship, candor, and courage on the other.

Duties of Elected Representatives

The duties of those whom the friends have freely and conscientiously elected as their representatives are no less vital and binding than the obligations of those who have chosen them. Their function is not to dictate, but to consult, and consult not only among themselves, but as much as possible with the friends whom they represent. They must regard themselves in no other light but that of chosen instruments for a more efficient and dignified presentation of the Cause of God. They should never be led to suppose that they are the central ornaments of the body of the Cause, intrinsically superior to others in capacity or merit, and sole promoters of its teachings and principles. They should approach their task with extreme humility, and endeavor, by their open-mindedness, their high sense of justice and duty, their candor, their modesty, their entire devotion to the welfare and interests of the friends, the Cause, and humanity, to win, not only the confidence and the genuine support and respect of those whom they serve, but also their esteem and real affection. They must, at all times, avoid the spirit of exclusiveness, the atmosphere of secrecy, free themselves from a domineering attitude, and banish all forms of prejudice and passion from their deliberations. They should, within the limits of wise discretion, take the friends into their confidence, acquaint them with their plans, share with them their problems and anxieties, and seek their advice and counsel. And, when they are called upon to arrive at a certain decision, they should, after dispassionate, anxious and cordial consultation, turn to God in prayer, and with earnestness and conviction and courage record their vote and abide by the voice of the majority, which we are told by our Master to be the voice of truth, never to be challenged, and always to be whole-heartedly enforced. To this voice the friends must heartily respond, and regard it as the only means that can insure the protection and advancement of the Cause.

Election of Delegates

Again I earnestly appeal to every one of you, and renew my only request with all the ardor of my conviction, to make, before and during the coming Convention, yet another effort, this time more spontaneous and selfless than before, and endeavor to approach your task—the election of your delegates, as well as your national and local representatives—with that purity of spirit that can alone obtain our Beloved's most cherished desire. Let us recall His explicit and often-repeated assurances that every Assembly elected in that rarefied atmosphere of selflessness and detachment is, in truth, appointed of God, that its verdict is truly inspired, that one and all should submit to its decision unreservedly and with cheerfulness.

Let us first strive to fulfill these conditions, difficult yet essential, in our lives, so that, contented and assured, we may make of this new year of activity a year of abundant blessings, of unprecedented achievements.

May this dearest wish be fulfilled!

SHOGHI.

Haifa, Palestine,
February 23, 1924.

Letter of September 24, 1924.

The beloved of the Lord and the handmaids of the Merciful throughout the Continent of America:

Dear friends:

I return to the Holy Land with an overpowering sense of the gravity of the spiritual state of the Cause in the world. Much as I deplore the disturbing effect of my forced and repeated withdrawals from the field of service, I can unhesitatingly assure you that my last and momentous step was taken with extreme reluctance and only after mature and anxious reflection as to the best way to safeguard the interests of a precious Cause.

My prolonged absence, my utter inaction should not, however, be solely attributed to certain external manifestations of unharmony, of discontent and disloyalty—however paralysing their effect has been upon the continuance of my work—but also to my own unworthiness and to my imperfections and frailties.

I venture to request you to join me in yet another prayer, this time more ardent and universal than before, supplicating with one voice the gracious Master to overlook our weaknesses and failings, to make us worthier and braver children of His own.

Our Inner Life

Humanity, through suffering and turmoil, is swiftly moving on towards its destiny; if we be loiterers, if we fail to play our part surely others will be called upon to take up our task as ministers to the crying needs of this afflicted world.

Not by the force of numbers, not by the mere exposition of a set of new and noble principles, not by an organized campaign of teaching—no matter how worldwide and elaborate in its character—not even by the staunchness of our faith or the exaltation of our enthusiasm, can we ultimately hope to vindicate in the eyes of a critical and sceptical age the supreme claim of the Abhá Revelation. One thing and only one thing will unfailingly and alone secure the undoubted triumph of this sacred Cause, namely, the extent to which our own inner life and private character mirror forth in their manifold aspects the splendor of those eternal principles proclaimed by Bahá'u'lláh.

Looking back upon those sullen days of my retirement, bitter with feelings of anxiety and gloom, I can recall with appreciation and gratitude those unmistakable evidences of your affection and steadfast zeal which I have received from time to time, and which have served to relieve in no small measure the burden that weighed so heavily upon my heart.

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. But I assure you such remarkable solicitude as you have shown for the protection of His Cause, such tenacity of faith and unceasing activity as you have displayed for its promotion, cannot but in the end be abundantly rewarded by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, who from His station above is the sure witness of all that you have endured and suffered for Him.

Dawn of a Brighter Day

And now as I look into the future, I hope to see the friends at all times, in every land, and of every shade of thought and character, voluntarily and joyously rallying round their local and in particular their national centers of activity, upholding and promoting their interests with complete unanimity and contentment, with perfect understanding, genuine enthusiasm, and sustained vigor. This indeed is the one joy and yearning of my life, for it is the fountainhead from which all future blessings will flow, the broad foundation upon which the security of the Divine Edifice must ultimately rest. May we not hope that now at last the dawn of a brighter day is breaking upon our beloved Cause?

SHOGHI.

Haifa, Palestine.

September 24, 1924.

Letter of November 24th, 1924.

To my dearly-beloved brothers and sisters in ‘Abdu’l-Bahá: care of the American National Spiritual Assembly.

Dearest friends:

The day is drawing near when, for the third time, we shall commemorate the world over the passing of our well-beloved ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. May we not pause for a moment, and gather our thoughts? How has it fared with us, His little band of followers, since that day? Whither are we now marching? What has been our achievement?

Menace of Social Chaos

We have but to turn our eyes to the world without to realize the fierceness and the magnitude of the forces of darkness that are struggling with the dawning light of the Abhá Revelation. Nations, though exhausted and disillusioned, have seemingly begun to cherish anew the spirit of revenge, of domination, and strife. Peoples, convulsed by economic upheavals, are slowly drifting into two great opposing camps with all their menace of social chaos, class hatreds, and worldwide ruin. Races, alienated more than ever before, are filled with mistrust, humiliation and fear, and seem to prepare themselves for a fresh and fateful encounter. Creeds and religions, caught in this whirlpool of conflict and passion, appear to gaze with impotence and despair at this spectacle of unceasing turmoil.

Such is the plight of mankind three years after the passing of Him from whose lips fell unceasingly the sure message of a fast-approaching Divine salvation. Are we by our thoughts, our words, our deeds, whether individually or collectively, preparing the way? Are we hastening the advent of the Day He so often foretold?

None can deny that the flame of faith and love which His mighty hand kindled in many hearts has, despite our bereavement, continued to burn as brightly and steadily as ever before. Who can question that His loved ones, both in the East and the West, notwithstanding the insidious strivings of the enemies of the Cause, have displayed a spirit of unshakable loyalty worthy of the highest praise? What greater perseverance and fortitude than that which His tried and trusted friends have shown in the face of untold calamities, intolerable oppression, and incredible restrictions? But such staunchness of faith, such an unsullied love, such magnificent loyalty, such heroic constancy, such noble courage, however unprecedented and laudable in themselves, cannot alone lead us to the final and complete triumph of such a

great Cause. Not until the dynamic love we cherish for Him is sufficiently reflected in its power and purity in all our dealings with our fellow-men, however remotely connected and humble in origin, can we hope to exalt in the eyes of a self-seeking world the genuineness of the all-conquering love of God. Not until we live ourselves the life of a true Bahá'í can we hope to demonstrate the creative and transforming potency of the Faith we profess. Nothing but the abundance of our actions, nothing but the purity of our lives and the integrity of our characters, can in the last resort establish our claim that the Bahá'í spirit is in this day the sole agency that can translate a long-cherished ideal into an enduring achievement.

Paramount Duty of Every Bahá'í

With this vision clearly set before us, and fortified by the knowledge of the gracious aid of Bahá'u'lláh and the repeated assurances of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, let us first strive to live the life and then arise with one heart, one mind, one voice, to reinforce our numbers and achieve our end. Let us recall, and seek on this sad occasion the comfort of, the last wishes of our departed yet ever-watchful Master:—

"It behooveth them not to rest for a moment, neither to seek repose. They must disperse themselves in every land, pass by every clime, and travel throughout all regions. Bestirred, without rest, and steadfast to the end, they must raise in every land the triumphal cry 'Ya Bahá'u'l-Abhá!' (O Thou the Glory of Glories).... The disciples of Christ forgot themselves and all earthly things, forsook all their cares and belongings, purged themselves of self and passion, and with absolute detachment scattered far and wide and engaged in calling the peoples of the world to the divine guidance; till at last they made the world another world, illumined the surface of the earth, and even to their last hour proved self-sacrificing in the pathway of that beloved One of God. Finally in various lands they suffered glorious martyrdom. Let them that are men of action follow in their footsteps!"

Having grasped the significance of these words, having obtained a clear understanding of the true character of our mission, the methods to adopt, the course to pursue, and having attained sufficiently the individual regeneration—the essential requisite of teaching—let us arise to teach His Cause with righteousness, conviction, understanding and vigor. Let this be the paramount and most urgent duty of every Bahá'í. 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; arouse, stimulate and maintain universal interest in the Movement, and at the same time endeavor by all the means in our power, by concentrated and persistent attention, to enlist the unreserved allegiance and the active support of the more hopeful and receptive among our hearers. Let us too bear in mind the example which our beloved Master has clearly set before us. Wise and tactful in His approach, wakeful and attentive in His early intercourse, broad and liberal in all His public utterances, cautious and gradual in the unfolding of the essential verities of the Cause, passionate in His appeal yet sober in argument, confident in tone, unswerving in conviction, dignified in His manners—such were the distinguishing features of our Beloved's noble presentation of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh.

If we all choose to tread faithfully His path, surely the day is not far distant when our beloved Cause will have emerged from the inevitable obscurity of a young and struggling Faith into the broad daylight of universal recognition. This is our duty, our first obligation. Therein lies the secret of the success of the Cause we love so well. Therein lies the hope, the salvation of mankind. Are we fully conscious of our responsibilities? Do we realize the urgency, the sacredness, the immensity, the glory of our task?

I entreat you, dear friends, to continue, nay, to redouble your efforts, to keep your vision clear, your hopes undimmed, your determination unshaken, so that the power of God within us may fill the world with all its glory.

In this fervent plea joins me the Greatest Holy Leaf. Though chagrined in the evening of her life at the sorrowful tales of repression in Persia, she still turns with the deepest longings of her heart to your land where freedom reigns, eager and expectant to behold, ere she is called away, the signs of the universal triumph of the Cause she loves so dearly.

SHOGHI.

Haifa, Palestine,
November 24th, 1924.

Letter of November 27, 1924.

To my dear friends and fellow-workers, the members of the American National Spiritual Assembly.

My friends and fellow-workers:—

The letters which our able and devoted friend, Mr. Horace Holley, has addressed in your behalf to the Greatest Holy Leaf and myself have all been received, and, together with their enclosures, read with the closest attention. It is indeed highly gratifying to observe that notwithstanding the strain and stress of the critical period through which our beloved Cause is passing, the elected representatives of the friends in America have, with unflinching faith, undaunted courage, and conspicuous ability, persevered in their task and fulfilled their arduous duties.

The splendid contribution you have made to the efforts of your fellow-workers in England in connection with the Conference on the Living Religions within the British Empire, we all heartily appreciate and regard as a fresh evidence of the growing power and solidarity of the Cause of God. Both in the admirable paper which you arranged to be drafted and prepared, and in the person of your devout, trusted and talented President, who performed his duty with absolute fidelity and high distinction, you have rendered the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh a fresh and distinguished service. May the results achieved lend a fresh impetus to the onward march of the Cause in the West.

The recent measures you have adopted in view of the necessity of promoting fuller confidence and a greater measure of understanding and cooperation between the body of the believers and the local and National Assemblies, will, I am confident, be of the greatest value, and indicate clearly that you are fully aware of the true position, the privileges and responsibilities of every Bahá'í Assembly.

Mashriqu’l-Adhkár

We all long to hasten by wise and effective measures the completion of the Mashriqu’l-Adhkár, and we fervently supplicate the All-Bountiful to bless richly our teaching work that our numbers may be reinforced in time by men who with sufficient means at their disposal may voluntarily and abundantly support this vast and noble endeavor. I trust that you will encounter no further obstacles in receiving the necessary support to meet the immediate needs of this Universal House of Worship as decided at your recent general gathering in Chicago.

Bahá'í Magazine

The Star of the West, the latest issues of which I have read with genuine satisfaction, has admittedly made a notable advance towards the ideal which the Master has set before it. Articles on broad humanitarian lines, well-conceived, adequately treated, and powerfully presented, should have their proper place in every issue together with such accounts of the history and the teachings of the Cause as will portray to the Bahá'í and non-Bahá'í alike the unique beauty as well as the compelling power of the Bahá'í spirit. Matters political and partisan in character should be carefully avoided as they would eventually lead to entanglements that would be not only futile but positively harmful. As regards the Persian Section: I feel that in view of the severe restrictions imposed on the friends in Persia its temporary suspension would be well-advised, particularly as it makes such a disproportionate demand on the meagre resources of the friends in America.

The increasing efforts displayed by my beloved brothers and sisters in America, both individually and collectively, and the action taken by you in constituting regional Teaching Committees are of vital importance to the spread of the Cause in the present stage of our work. I feel that we should all collaborate in widening its scope, intensifying its influence, assuring its continuity, and endeavoring to subordinate every other activity to this most urgent and vital task. It is our bounden duty to do all in our power to give the Cause from day to day a fuller publicity, to maintain and stimulate the interest aroused, and to concentrate at the same time our attention on a chosen few, endeavoring tactfully and persistently to make of them earnest and unreserved supporters of the Bahá'í Faith.

I am deeply conscious of the manifold and unavoidable difficulties that confront you in your labors for the administration of the affairs of the Cause. Vast distances; personal professional preoccupations; insufficient number of capable and experienced

teachers, unhampered by the necessity of earning their means of livelihood; the inadequacy of the means at your disposal, financial and otherwise; the prevailing tendencies in the general thought, sentiment, and manners of the people in whose midst you work—all these, though insuperable obstacles at present, will, if we stand steadfast and faithful, be one by one removed, and pave the way for the ultimate ascendency of the Cause and the fruition and triumph of our labors.

As to the projected prayer-book, I feel the need for a specially prepared compilation of the prayers of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá designed for the general public which would both prove of value for devotional purposes and act as a fresh incentive to eager and inspiring minds. I am enclosing copies of prayers which you may have not yet received and trust to send you more in future. I should be glad to receive any particulars you might wish me to consider in this connection.

Our untiring and devoted sister, Dr. Moody (the handmaid of the Most High), has had to her profound regret to discontinue for a time the invaluable and unique services she has been rendering to the Cause in Persia. She is proceeding to America, and will familiarize you with the deplorable state of affairs in that unhappy country. You will get first-hand information from her regarding the present condition and activities of our long-suffering friends in Persia, and she will take counsel with you as to the best way to meet the needs and serve the Cause of Education in Ṭihrán. I hope and pray that as soon as circumstances permit, the friends in America may enable Dr. Moody to take back with her to Persia suitable, capable and ardent collaborators who will contribute their distinct share towards the uplift and the advancement of their brethren and sisters in that land.

Concerning the magazine ... I feel we must make it unmistakably plain to those in charge of it that the Bahá'ís would gladly and gratefully respond to the invitation to cooperate with those that are responsible for it immediately they are fully satisfied that

nothing is or will be published by them, whether in the magazine or elsewhere, that would, however indirectly, prejudice or reflect upon their conception of what the Bahá'í Movement is or stands for. Should this be refused, and unfriendly and harmful matters be published against them, the attitude of all of us should be a definite refusal to help and absolute non-interference, as well as the absence of any form of retaliation which will instead of achieving our end defeat our purpose. We should leave him in the hands of God.

As to the suggestion of the Annual Convention being held next summer at Green Acre, I believe it to be both wise and helpful, and trust that it will forge another link between the Bahá'ís as a body and its founders and trustees, and will serve to draw them closer and closer to the outward form as well as to the spirit of the activities of the friends in America.

The financial help extended recently by the friends in America to their fellow-workers of the Faith in Qadiyán, Punjab, has given us all intense satisfaction and made us deeply grateful. Their contribution has immediately been forwarded to them through the National Spiritual Assembly of India and Burma, and will, I am certain, enhance the prestige and the influence of the Cause.

I feel that the conditions are now favorable for the circulation of the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá only in manuscript form and among recognized believers in America. Every such believer should be trusted with a single copy with the express understanding that no duplicate copies or extracts of it be made or published anywhere.

Bahá'í Year Book

The suggestion made by my dear and able friend, Mr. Horace Holley, as to the compilation of an annual "Bahá'í Year Book" is extremely valuable and timely. I am much impressed by it, and feel that an immediate start should be made. I believe it can best be now undertaken under the direction and supervision of your Assembly until the time should come for the friends in the East and particularly Persia to participate effectually in its development. I trust you will send me a copy of the skeleton of the material you propose to include, and I shall here attempt to fill up any gap and render any assistance I can to make it as comprehensive, as attractive, and as authoritative as possible.

I am sending through my dear brother, Mr. M. Mills, various relics and Tablets of our beloved 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the only and priceless treasures of the devoted gardener of Bahá'u'lláh's Shrine, Ustad Abu'l-Qasim Khurasani, who has offered them to be preserved in his behalf in the Archives of the friends in America. I am hoping to be able to send you in future precious additions to what the Archives Committee has already collected, and may I in this connection express to those who have conceived so admirable a plan my profound admiration and heartfelt gratitude.

I wish to assure you in conclusion of my readiness and genuine desire to help you and serve you to the utmost of my ability. I fully realize the enormous burden that weighs on your shoulders, and am constantly mindful of the distinct and eminent share you are contributing to the advancement of the Cause. I wish you from the depths of my heart entire satisfaction in your glorious work. Our beloved Master is surely watching from the Realm Beyond over His children whom He nurtured and loved so well, and will certainly guide you in every step you take, and crown your patient efforts with signal success.

Your brother and fellow-worker,
SHOGHI.
Haifa, Palestine,
November 27, 1924.

Letter of January 16, 1925.

To my dearly-beloved friends, the members of the American National Spiritual Assembly.

My dear and precious fellow-workers:

The three communications dated November 19, November 22 and December 22, which I have recently received from that indefatigable servant of Bahá'u'lláh, my esteemed spiritual brother, Mr. Holley, have given me great satisfaction and have cheered and sustained me in my work. I have read most carefully the minutes of your December meeting and am particularly pleased to note in many respects the notable advance you have made in establishing the Cause upon a wider and surer foundation.

History of the Cause

With reference to the need, so often expressed, for an authentic and comprehensive history of the Cause, I am glad to inform you of the action contemplated by the National Spiritual Assembly of Persia in instructing and urging the local Assemblies throughout the country to take immediate steps for the formation in every locality of a special committee which will seek the assistance and the testimony of the remnants of the earliest believers and pioneers of the Cause in Persia in collecting most carefully all available evidence and data for the compilation of a comprehensive, reliable and representative history of the Movement from its earliest dawn to the present day. I have communicated with the National Assembly of Persia, regarding this urgent and vital necessity, and I feel the time is not far distant when a free rendering into English of this stirring narrative as well as an abridged form of it will be made available for both the Bahá'ís and the general public in the West.

The efforts recently displayed by the Publishing Committee so clearly reflected in the minutes of their meeting of November 2, 1924, a copy of which I have read with the closest attention, indicate the efficiency, the zeal and the determination with which they are conducting this vital branch of Bahá'í activity. The scope of their effective work is expanding rapidly, and I wish to assure them one and all of my prayers for the fruition of their labors and the further development and consolidation of their work.

There have been of late no fresh developments in the situation of the House of Baghdád. The case, which is now before the court of First Instance, has been postponed for some time and we still await anxiously the decision of the court. Any hope of an immediate and final solution of this intricate problem seems for the present remote. In the event of our success the case may still be referred by our powerful opponents to the Court

of Appeal—the highest in the land—and should its decision be in our favor the government may at any time—as it does not seem unlikely—decide, by retaining the keys in its custody, to postpone indefinitely the execution of such a verdict in order to allay the fierce hostility of the clerical element as well as the Shi'ite population of 'Iráq.

Should a crisis occur, I will immediately inform you and endeavor to define more clearly any measure that I feel should be taken by the American Assemblies to insure the security of the House of Bahá'u'lláh.

Bahá'í Periodicals

Regarding the publication of Bahá'í periodicals in America, there is no doubt whatsoever that every individual Bahá'í is free to inaugurate and conduct any magazine of his own provided that nothing is published therein which in the estimation of the National Assembly tends in the least to become detrimental or injurious to the highest interests of the Cause. Within these limits, and these limits only, private initiative should in no wise be discouraged and is indeed highly praiseworthy. It is for the National Assembly, however, to exercise its judgment as to what extent the resources at their disposal enable them to aid financially the individual undertakings of the friends. Should the response of the friends and Assemblies to the appeals made on behalf of the National Fund be prompt, sustained and generous, the National Assembly will, I am certain, justify its sympathy, good-will and genuine cooperation with every individual Bahá'í enterprise. I would, however, at this early state of our work, strongly urge, nay entreat, the friends not to dissipate their efforts, but to seek, after frank, mature and continuous deliberation, to arrive at a common conclusion as to the most urgent requirements and needs of the hour, and having unified their views to strive to uphold and enforce them with promptitude, wholeheartedness and understanding.

News Letter

The first printed issue of the National Assembly's News Letter prepared and signed on behalf of the Assembly by its able secretary, stands as a bright and eloquent testimony of his thoroughness, his industry, his conspicuous ability, his undoubted self-sacrifice. The Cause is entering upon a new era of renewed and concerted activity. Its method of presentation has unmistakably improved, and this general advancement in standard is in no small measure attributable to the distinctive capacity of your Assembly. My constant prayer is that He who watches over and inspires your manifold activities may bless more richly than ever before your noble endeavors.

Temple Meetings

With reference to the matter of meeting in the Foundation Hall of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, I feel that the Foundation Hall should serve the purpose both of devotional gatherings where the revealed Word of God is read and chanted, and meetings at which subjects strictly Bahá'í in character are presented, propounded and discussed. I have no doubt that every conscientious and thoughtful Bahá'í will scrupulously and at all times observe the commandment of Bahá'u'lláh and the instructions of 'Abdu'l-Bahá relative to the maintenance of the sacredness, the dignity, and the universality of an edifice that will in time become God's universal House of Worship.

May the blessings of our Almighty Master rest upon your deliberations.

Your true brother,
SHOGHI.

Haifa, Palestine,
January 16, 1925.

Letter of January 29th, 1925.

To the esteemed members of the American National Spiritual Assembly.

My well-beloved and precious fellow-workers:

I have perused your recent communication, dated December 29th, and signed on your behalf by your vigilant and capable secretary, with an interest and attention worthy of the paramount importance of the issues it raises.

The matter of the revision of the English version of the Hidden Words, in view of the rapidity of the sale of the copies recently printed, is of urgent importance. I shall as soon as my multitudinous preoccupations permit avail myself of the opportunity of Dr. Esslemont's happy sojourn in the Holy Land to collaborate with him in any necessary alterations of the text. I strongly hope, except in the event of unforeseen circumstances, to undertake this task in the course of this coming month.

In connection with the fundamental questions of general policy referred to in your letter, I feel that the basic principles, laid down but briefly stated in my past letters, which must guide the administration of the affairs of the Bahá'í Movement, pending the definite formation of the first authoritative Universal House of Justice, must be further affirmed, elucidated, and explained in greater detail, for the complete knowledge of all the individual members of the vast and growing community of the believers in America.

The National Convention

Hitherto the National Convention has been primarily called together for the consideration of the various circumstances attending the election of the National Spiritual Assembly. I feel, however, that in view of the expansion and the growing importance of the administrative sphere of the Cause, the general sentiments and tendencies prevailing among the friends, and the signs of increasing interdependence among the National Spiritual Assemblies throughout the world, the assembled accredited representatives of the American believers should exercise not only the vital and responsible right of electing the National Assembly, but should also fulfill the functions of an enlightened, consultative and cooperative body that will enrich the experience, enhance the prestige, support the authority, and assist the deliberations of the National Spiritual Assembly. It is my firm conviction that it is the bounden duty, in the interest of the Cause we all love and serve, of the members of the incoming National Assembly, once elected by the delegates at Convention time, to seek and have the utmost regard, individually as well as collectively, for the advice, the considered opinion and the true sentiments of the assembled delegates. Banishing every vestige of secrecy, of undue reticence, of dictatorial aloofness, from their midst, they should radiantly and abundantly unfold to the eyes of the delegates, by whom they are elected, their plans, their hopes, and their cares. They should familiarize the delegates with the various matters that will have to be considered in the current year, and calmly and conscientiously study and weigh the opinions and judgments of the delegates. The newly elected National Assembly, during the few days when the Convention is in session and after the dispersal of the delegates, should seek ways and means to cultivate understanding, facilitate and maintain the exchange of views, deepen confidence, and vindicate by every tangible evidence their one desire to serve and

advance the common weal. Not infrequently, nay oftentimes, the most lowly, untutored and inexperienced among the friends will, by the sheer inspiring force of selfless and ardent devotion, contribute a distinct and memorable share to a highly involved discussion in any given Assembly. Great must be the regard paid by those whom the delegates call upon to serve in high position to this all-important though inconspicuous manifestation of the revealing power of sincere and earnest devotion.

National Spiritual Assembly

The National Spiritual Assembly, however, in view of the unavoidable limitations imposed upon the convening of frequent and long-standing sessions of the Convention, will have to retain in its hands the final decision on all matters that affect the interests of the Cause in America, such as the right to decide whether any local Assembly is functioning in accordance with the principles laid down for the conduct and the advancement of the Cause. It is my earnest prayer that they will utilize their highly responsible position, not only for the wise and efficient conduct of the affairs of the Cause, but also for the extension and deepening of the spirit of cordiality and wholehearted and mutual support in their cooperation with the body of their co-workers throughout the land. The seating of delegates to the Convention, i.e., the right to decide upon the validity of the credentials of the delegates at a given Convention, is vested in the outgoing National Assembly, and the right to decide who has the voting privilege is also ultimately placed in the hands of the National Spiritual Assembly, either when a local Spiritual Assembly is for the first time being formed in a given locality, or when differences arise between a new applicant and an already established local Assembly. While the Convention is in session and the accredited delegates have already elected from among the believers throughout the country the members of the National Spiritual Assembly for the current year, it is of infinite value and a supreme necessity that as far as possible all matters requiring immediate decision should be fully and publicly considered, and an endeavor be made to obtain after mature deliberation, unanimity in vital decisions. Indeed, it has ever been the cherished desire of our Master, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, that the friends in their councils, local as well as national, should by their candor, their honesty of purpose, their singleness of mind, and the thoroughness of their discussions, achieve unanimity in all things. Should this in certain cases prove impracticable the

verdict of the majority should prevail, to which decision the minority must under all circumstances, gladly, spontaneously and continually, submit.

Nothing short of the all-encompassing, all-pervading power of His Guidance and Love can enable this newly-enfolded order to gather strength and flourish amid the storm and stress of a turbulent age, and in the fulness of time vindicate its high claim to be universally recognized as the one Haven of abiding felicity and peace.

Regarding the pamphlet entitled "The Passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá," I believe some additional material, consisting mainly of a few selections from leading American newspapers, would increase its value and extend its scope. I shall be glad to receive a copy of the reprinted edition, and I wish you success in this endeavor.

My dearly-beloved friend and fellow-worker, Mr. Mountfort Mills, is now with me in Haifa, and will ere long join you in the discharge of your manifold and arduous duties. I greatly value his assistance in the difficult task and the complex and often urgent problems that are before me, and I trust that his return to America will lend a fresh impetus to the glorious work of service you are rendering to the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh.

I wish you success from all my heart.

Your brother and fellow-worker,
SHOGHI.

Haifa, Palestine,
January 29th, 1925.

Letter of April 10th, 1925.

To the members of the American National Spiritual Assembly.

My dearly-beloved fellow-workers:

The communications lately received from your distinguished secretary, dated January 8th, February 6th and 13th, and March 17th, together with the enclosed minutes, reports and letters, have been read with profound interest and genuine satisfaction. The methods you pursue, the new measures for publicity which you have adopted, the increasing confidence you have achieved, and the degree of support, both moral and financial, which you have deservedly earned from the body of the believers are all encouraging signs that testify to the growing solidarity of a Cause destined to confer inestimable benefits upon mankind.

Great as is the promise of the Movement for the future, it has already revealed in a remarkable manner to every unprejudiced observer its indomitable spirit of loving sacrifice and true fellowship burning with undiminished ardor in the breasts of its followers both in the land of its birth and in the great Republic of the West. The heroism and fortitude lately displayed by its sorely-tried adherents in Persia, and the prompt and generous contributions of the American believers who have spontaneously responded to the call of their needy brethren of the East have served to kindle the flame of enthusiasm in many a heart, and forged fresh bonds of fellowship which will prove of the highest value for the advancement of the Bahá'í Faith. I would specially request you to convey to all the friends in the name of the oppressed Bahá'ís of Persia, and particularly the homeless sufferers of Nayríz, the expression of their deepest gratitude and highest appreciation. May America's noble donations draw even as a magnet the blessings of the Almighty Giver upon the task it has set itself to achieve!

I am delighted to learn of the evidences of growing interest, of the sympathetic understanding, and brotherly cooperation on the

part of two capable and steadfast servants of the One True God, Dr. H. Randall and Dr. Guthrie, whose participation in our work I hope and pray will widen the scope of our activities, enrich our opportunities, and lend a fresh impetus to our endeavors. I wish them happiness and success from all my heart.

News Letter

The News Letter which you have lately initiated fulfills a very vital function and has been started admirably well. I would urge you to enlarge its scope, as much as your resources permit, that in time it may devote a special section to every phase of your activities, administrative, devotional, humanitarian, financial, educational and otherwise. That it may attain its object it must combine the essential qualities of accuracy, reliability, thoroughness, dignity and wisdom. It should become a great factor in promoting understanding, providing information on Bahá'í activity, both local and foreign, in stimulating interest, in combating evil influences, and in upholding and safeguarding the institutions of the Cause. It should be made as representative as possible, should be replete with news, up-to-date in its information, and should arouse the keenest interest among believers and admirers alike in every corner of the globe. I cherish great hopes for its immediate future, and I trust you will devote your special attention to its development, and by devising well-conceived and worldwide measures transform this News Letter into what I hope will become the foremost Bahá'í Journal of the world.

Title of Assemblies

As to the title to be adopted for letterheads, I would suggest, pending the formation of the Universal House of Justice, the phrase “The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of the United States and Canada,” retaining the word “spiritual” and restricting the meaning of the term “assembly” to be applied only to the body of nine elected by the friends whether for local or national purposes.

Representation at Convention

I have already replied to your cable in connection with the representation of groups of less than nine adult believers at the annual Convention and the matter of proxy, the latter being left to the discretion of the National Spiritual Assembly. Should the conditions be altered, and the number of Bahá'í localities multiply, the situation will have to be considered afresh and a new basis for representation adopted.

The Mashriqu'l-Adhkár

Regarding the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, I would again most emphatically urge the believers in America, and ask you to do the utmost you can to devise every possible means for the removal of every outstanding financial liability incurred in this connection. I would remind you of the supreme and urgent necessity of raising the full sum decided upon by the National Spiritual Assembly at its meeting in Chicago in order to meet the immediate needs of this great future House of Worship. I would welcome a full, authorized and up-to-date statement on its present situation, its assets and liabilities and an estimate of the cost for its completion.

In conclusion I wish to renew the assurance of my ardent prayers for you and for those whom you represent in safeguarding and promoting the sacred interests of so precious a Cause. I am fully alive to the vastness and delicacy of your task, I heartily appreciate your indefatigable efforts and unflinching determination, I am continually reminded of our Master's assurances of a dazzling future before you. May His love enfold you, His Spirit guide you, and His power enable you to achieve signal victory.

Your brother in the Master's service,
SHOGHI.

Haifa, Palestine,
April 10th, 1925.

Letter of May 12, 1925.

To the members of the American National Assembly.

Dearly-beloved fellow-workers:

I have read with deep interest your two recent communications dated April 4th and 18th, and am gratified to learn of the steady expansion of your manifold activities.

Election of National Assembly

Regarding the method to be adopted for the election of the National Spiritual Assemblies, it is clear that the text of the Beloved's Testament gives us no indication as to the manner in which these Assemblies are to be elected. In one of His earliest Tablets, however, addressed to a friend in Persia, the following is expressly recorded:—

"At whatever time all the beloved of God in each country appoint their delegates, and these in turn elect their representatives, and these representatives elect a body, that body shall be regarded as the Supreme Baytu'l-'Adl (Universal House of Justice)."

These words clearly indicate that a three-stage election has been provided by 'Abdu'l-Bahá for the formation of the International House of Justice, and as it is explicitly provided in His Will and Testament that the "Secondary House of Justice (i.e., National Assemblies) must elect the members of the Universal One," it is obvious that the members of the National Spiritual Assemblies will have to be indirectly elected by the body of the believers in their respective provinces. In view of these complementary instructions the principle, set forth in my letter of March 12th, 1923, has been established requiring the believers (the beloved of God) in every country to elect a certain number of delegates who, in turn, will elect their national representatives (Secondary House of Justice or National Spiritual Assembly) whose sacred obligation and privilege will be to elect in time God's Universal House of Justice.

Should the appointing of the delegates be made a part of the functions of local Spiritual Assemblies, who are already elected bodies, the principle of a four-stage election would be introduced which would be at variance with the provisions explicitly laid down in the Master's Tablet. On the other hand, were the local Spiritual Assemblies, the number of whose members is

strictly confined to nine, to elect directly the members of the National Spiritual Assembly—thus maintaining the principle of a three-stage election—all Bahá'í localities, which must necessarily differ in numerical strength, would then have to share equally in the election of the National Spiritual Assembly—a practice which would be contrary to fairness and justice. Moreover, the central principle guiding for the present the administration of the Cause has been to make the Bahá'í National Spiritual Assemblies as independent as possible in the conduct of such affairs as fall within their province, and to lessen the hampering influence of any institution within their jurisdiction that might, whether directly or indirectly, impair their authority and prestige.

Membership Roll

I would also strongly urge the members of every incoming National Spiritual Assembly to take all necessary steps to insure that every local Assembly throughout America, without any exception whatsoever, should immediately after its election send the complete list of its members together with the full address of its secretary to the National Secretary, who in turn will forward them to me directly, enclosing his own address as well as the list of the members of the National Spiritual Assembly. It would also be extremely helpful, should actual circumstances permit, to devise with the wholehearted assistance of every local Assembly ways and means for the compilation of an authoritative, up-to-date, and exhaustive list of recognized believers in America, supplemented by the full address of each believer's permanent residence—this list to be continually revised according to every change affecting the residence and number of such believers. This would be particularly advisable in view of the permanent residence of isolated believers in various parts of the country, as well as of those who form parts of groups as yet numerically too small for the formation of a local Spiritual Assembly.

However desirable these steps may be, it is evident that they are secondary in their importance and urgency to the pressing and ever-increasing issues that vitally affect the spread and the consolidation of the work which you are called upon to perform, and which it is my privilege to assist in and serve. I am enclosing a preliminary list of Bahá'í centers throughout the world, exclusive of Persia, which, though inadequate, may still, I trust, be of some help to you. I would welcome any additions or corrections you might be able to make and hope it will evolve into a valuable section of the contemplated Bahá'í Year Book.

I wish to assure you, in conclusion, of my heartfelt appreciation of your devoted labors in the Divine Vineyard.

Your brother and fellow-worker,
SHOGHI.
Haifa, Palestine,
May 12, 1925.

Letter of June 3rd, 1925.

To the beloved of God and the handmaids of the Merciful, the delegates and visitors to the Bahá'í Convention, Green Acre, Maine, U.S.A.

Fellow-laborers in the Vineyard of God:

Once again the hand of divine power has gathered together the chosen representatives of the American believers, assembled this time amid the pleasant surroundings of a blest and beloved spot, to deliberate upon the most effective measures that will insure the advancement of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh. I feel it a pleasure and privilege to offer you these few thoughts as my humble contribution to the proceedings of your annual Convention.

May I at the outset reaffirm my feelings of gratitude and keen appreciation for the eminent share which the friends in America, individually as well as by their collective efforts, have contributed to ease the burden of responsibility and care that has so often oppressed my heart. Your steadfastness, your unsparing devotion; your self-sacrifice in upholding and fostering the institutions of the Cause; the notable advance you have achieved in the coordination of your activities; the remarkable solicitude you have shown, and the magnificent response you have made on behalf of the oppressed and needy among your brethren; the measures you have initiated, the hindrances you have removed and the means and methods you have perfected—these and others beside have established you in the confidence, the esteem and the admiration of all the Bahá'í world. I personally appreciate and am thankful for your unfailing supplications and special prayers on my behalf. I am deeply touched by your expressions of unwavering faith, of loyalty and affection, and fully reciprocate your brotherly sentiments and your keen desire and readiness to collaborate with me more closely and effectively than ever before.

Purpose of Convention

And now regarding this forthcoming Convention, I feel that the dominating purpose inspiring the assembled friends, delegates and visitors alike, should be a two-fold one. The first is a challenge to the individual, the second a collective responsibility. The one seeks to reinforce the motive power of our spiritual activities, the second aims at raising the standard of administrative efficiency so vitally needed at this advanced stage of our work. We should first and foremost endeavor by every conceivable means to revitalize our precious Cause, rudely shaken by the constant vicissitudes attending the outward departure of a vigilant and gracious Master. Our next object should be to seek to approach, through more intimate association, fuller and more frequent consultations, and a closer familiarity with the character, the mission and the teachings of the Cause, that standard of excellence which should characterize the cooperative efforts of Bahá'í Communities in every land.

High aims and pure motives, however laudable in themselves, will surely not suffice if unsupported by measures that are practicable and methods that are sound. Wealth of sentiment, abundance of good-will and effort, will prove of little avail if we should fail to exercise discrimination and restraint and neglect to direct their flow along the most profitable channels. The unfettered freedom of the individual should be tempered with mutual consultation and sacrifice, and the spirit of initiative and enterprise should be reinforced by a deeper realization of the supreme necessity for concerted action and a fuller devotion to the common weal.

National Spiritual Assembly

It would be impossible at this stage to ignore the indispensability or to overestimate the unique significance of the institution of the National Spiritual Assembly—the pivot round which revolve the activities of the believers throughout the American continent. Supreme is their position, grave their responsibilities, manifold and arduous their duties. How great the privilege, how delicate the task of the assembled delegates whose function it is to elect such national representatives as would by their record of service ennoble and enrich the annals of the Cause! If we but turn our gaze to the high qualifications of the members of Bahá'í Assemblies, as enumerated in 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Tablets, we are filled with feelings of unworthiness and dismay, and would feel truly disheartened but for the comforting thought that if we rise to play nobly our part every deficiency in our lives will be more than compensated by the all-conquering spirit of His grace and power. Hence it is incumbent upon the chosen delegates to consider without the least trace of passion and prejudice, and irrespective of any material consideration, the names of only those who can best combine the necessary qualities of unquestioned loyalty, of selfless devotion, of a well-trained mind, of recognized ability and mature experience. May the incoming National Spiritual Assembly—the privileged and chosen servants of the Cause—immortalize their term of stewardship by deeds of loving service, deeds that will redound to the honor, the glory and the power of the Most Great Name.

The Cornerstone of Service

I would also earnestly entreat all the delegates at this coming Convention, and through them I appeal to the larger body of believers whom they represent, to ever bear in mind the supreme injunction of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, to teach unceasingly until the “head cornerstone of the foundation” of the Cause of God is firmly established in every heart. Let those whose time, resources and means allow, travel throughout the length and breadth of that vast continent, let them scatter to the most distant regions of the earth and, fired with enthusiasm and detachment, hand on the torch of God’s undying flame to the waiting multitudes of a sadly-stricken world.

One word more in conclusion. Let the West, and particularly the Great Republic of the New World, where a quarter of a century ago Bahá’u’lláh’s Banner was firmly implanted, realize that upon it now rests the responsibility of achieving the universal recognition of the Bahá’í Faith, of fulfilling ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s fondest hopes.

Persia, the cradle of an unfolding world civilization, is still bereft of her freedom, sunk in ignorance, a prey to contending policies and factions, beset on one hand by the powers of orthodoxy and sectarian fanaticism and assailed on the other by the forces of materialism and unbelief. In her evil plight she is radiantly confident that the Flame she had kindled in the world will, in the fullness of time, blaze forth in the heart of the mighty West and shed redeeming illumination upon the silent sufferers of a distracted country. Will it be America, will it be one of the nations of Europe, that will seize the torch of Divine Guidance from Persia’s fettered hands and with it set the western world aflame? May your Convention, by its spirit, its resolutions and its accomplishments, give to that country’s urgent call a noble and decisive answer.

Your brother and fellow-worker,
SHOGHI.
Haifa, Palestine,
June 3rd, 1925.

Letter of October 24th, 1925.

To the members of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada.

My well-beloved friends:

The numerous communications which your distinguished Secretary has lately addressed on your behalf to the Greatest Holy Leaf and myself, have been eagerly perused and their contents carefully noted. The news they imparted and the spirit they revealed have caused us both genuine satisfaction, and have served to intensify the feelings of joyous confidence, of pride and gratitude with which we have greeted the inauguration of your term of service.

The notable advance achieved by this year's memorable Convention is, I am certain, attributable in no small measure to the energy, the thoroughness, the insight and the loving-kindness that have characterized in an unprecedented degree the activities of the outgoing National Spiritual Assembly. I am confident that the work of America's newly elected representatives, so splendidly and auspiciously begun, will further consolidate the labors of the past, will resolve to a great extent the problems and perplexities of the present, and open up fresh fields of future achievements and service.

I rejoice to learn that ways and means have been found to enable the National Secretary, who discharges in such an exemplary manner the manifold and exacting duties of a highly responsible position, to devote all his time to the pursuit of so meritorious a task. I am fully conscious of the privations and sacrifice which the choice of this arduous work must involve for him, as well as for his devoted and selfless companion; I cannot but admire and extol their heroic efforts; and wish to assure them both of my continued prayers for the speedy fruition of their earnest endeavors.

Qualifications of a Believer

Regarding the very delicate and complex question of ascertaining the qualifications of a true believer, I cannot in this connection emphasize too strongly the supreme necessity for the exercise of the utmost discretion, caution and tact, whether it be in deciding for ourselves as to who may be regarded a true believer or in disclosing to the outside world such considerations as may serve as a basis for such a decision. I would only venture to state very briefly and as adequately as present circumstances permit the principal factors that must be taken into consideration before deciding whether a person may be regarded a true believer or not. Full recognition of the station of the Forerunner, the Author, and the True Exemplar of the Bahá'í Cause, as set forth in 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Testament; unreserved acceptance of, and submission to, whatsoever has been revealed by their Pen; loyal and steadfast adherence to every clause of our Beloved's sacred Will; and close association with the spirit as well as the form of the present day Bahá'í administration throughout the world—these I conceive to be the fundamental and primary considerations that must be fairly, discreetly and thoughtfully ascertained before reaching such a vital decision. Any attempt at further analysis and elucidation will, I fear, land us in barren discussions and even grave controversies that would prove not only futile but even detrimental to the best interests of a growing Cause. I would therefore strongly urge those who are called upon to make such a decision to approach this highly involved and ever-recurring problem with the spirit of humble prayer, and earnest consultation, and to refrain from drawing rigidly the line of demarcation except on such occasions when the interests of the Cause absolutely demand it.

National Convention

In connection with the annual holding of the Bahá'í Convention and Congress, I feel that although such a representative body need not be convened necessarily every year, yet it is highly desirable, in view of the unique functions it fulfills in promoting harmony and good-will, in removing misunderstandings and in enhancing the prestige of the Cause, that the National Spiritual Assembly should exert itself to gather together annually the elected representatives of the American believers. It would in some ways be obviously convenient and eminently desirable though not absolutely essential, if the National Spiritual Assembly could arrange that the holding of such a Congress should synchronize with the time at which the national elections are renewed, and that both events should take place, if not on the first of Ridván, at least during the twelve joyous days of what may be justly regarded as the foremost Bahá'í Festival. Apart from the local elections, which universally are to be renewed on the 21st day of April, it is entirely left to the discretion of the National Spiritual Assembly to decide, after having given due consideration to the above mentioned observations, on whatever time and place the Bahá'í Convention as well as the annual elections are to be held. Were the National Spiritual Assembly to decide, after mature deliberations, to omit the holding of the Bahá'í Convention and Congress in a given year, then they could, only in such a case, devise ways and means to insure that the annual election of the National Spiritual Assembly should be held by mail, provided it can be conducted with sufficient thoroughness, efficiency and dispatch. It would also appear to me unobjectionable to enable and even to require in the last resort such delegates as cannot possibly undertake the journey to the seat of the Bahá'í Convention to send their votes, for the election of the National Spiritual Assembly only, by mail to the National Secretary, as in my view the advantages of such a procedure outweigh the considerations

referred to in your letter. It should, however, be made clear to every elected delegate—who should be continually reminded—that it is a sacred responsibility and admittedly preferable to attend if possible in person the sessions of the Convention, to take an active part in all its proceedings, and to acquaint his fellow-workers on his return with the accomplishments, the decisions and the aspirations of the assembled representatives of the American believers.

Bahá'í Year Book

I am eagerly looking forward to your sending me in manuscript form the projected Bahá'í Year Book, that I may be enabled to contribute my share in rendering it as comprehensive, as attractive, and as authoritative as possible. I strongly advise you to combine in a judicious manner the two methods outlined in this connection in your letter of September 2, 1925. A short, concise and forceful account of the primary objects, as well as of the principles underlying the worldwide administration of the Cause, together with a brief description of various features of the present day administration of its activities, supplemented with a not-too-detailed survey of the actual accomplishments and plans evolved in the current year, would serve to acquaint the outsider with the purpose and the achievements of the Cause, and provide sufficient material that would be edifying and helpful to the active believers whether in the East or in the West....

The Greatest Holy Leaf desires me to convey in her name to the esteemed members of the Green Acre Fellowship the expression of her cordial thanks and sincere appreciation in having been made a life member of the said Fellowship. She assures them of her prayers for the success of this noble institution as well as for the spiritual advancement of its individual members.

Recent developments in the Holy Land have led various organizations in the Jewish world to contemplate seriously the early possibility of transferring to Palestine's sacred soil the mortal remains of certain prominent founders and leaders of Jewish thought, and Mount Carmel, which next to Akká's Most Holy Shrine is the most cherished object of Bahá'í veneration, has been cited on various occasions as a permanent and most befitting burial ground for their illustrious dead. Surely the Bahá'ís of the world, ever on the alert and with an eye to the future, will, no matter how pressed by financial obligations, arise while there is yet time to contribute each his share in securing for posterity

such land as lies in close proximity to the Holy Shrine—an area the acquisition of which in time will prove indispensable if the sublime vision of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá is to be realized. I appeal to you, and through you to every earnest and conscientious believer, to safeguard in particular the land extending southward from these Shrines which now, alas! is gravely exposed to the assaults of covetous and speculating interests. I am loth to press further claims on friends who have displayed so magnificent a spirit of self-sacrifice on several occasions in the past, but I feel the urge of a sacred and impelling responsibility to call your attention to what I conceive to be one of the worldwide issues of the greatest moment requiring a prompt, generous and collective response. I may add that whatever land is purchased will be registered in the name of the contributor, and I would therefore request every contributing believer to forward together with his donation such power of attorney as will legally empower me to transact in his name and on his behalf the purchase of the plot he desires to acquire. It would be desirable to forward small contributions to the National Spiritual Assembly, who will then decide upon the manner in which the transaction should be conducted.

Persecution of Persian Bahá'ís

The compilation of newspaper clippings with regard to recent persecutions in Persia which has been sent by our dear brother, Mr. H. Holley, to the Greatest Holy Leaf has been forwarded to the National Spiritual Assembly of Persia, that they may witness for themselves and share with the rank and file of the Persian believers the results of the extensive and vigorous campaign so promptly undertaken on their behalf by their sympathetic brethren in the West. It grieves me to inform you that this sad tale of barbarism and unrestrained aggression on the property, the lives and the honor of the heroic sufferers in that land is still continuing to reach our ears, and the campaign of obstruction, of intimidation and plunder is, but for short periods of comparative lull, being systematically pursued with unabated vigor. I am certain that the members of the National Spiritual Assembly, fully alive to the uncertainty, the confusion and the seriousness of the present situation, will seize the first opportunity to redress as much as it lies in their power the interminable grievances that are being inflicted upon harassed yet law-abiding citizens.

Wishing you success from all my heart, and assuring you of my continued prayers for the steady expansion and consolidation of your work,

I am, your brother and fellow-worker,
SHOGHI.

Haifa, Palestine,
October 24th, 1925.

Letter of November 6, 1925.

To the members of the American National Spiritual Assembly.

My dear fellow-workers:

Two recent communications of your able secretary, dated Oct. 14th and 15th, have been received and read with deep gratitude and pleasure.

The Mashriqu’l-Adhkár

I rejoice to learn of the prompt and well-considered measures you have undertaken to evolve, in conjunction with all local Assemblies and groups, a wise and effective plan for the contribution of America’s befitting share in response to the appeal lately addressed to the American believers regarding the work of the Mashriqu’l-Adhkár. Surely the great company of eager and sympathizing believers throughout the East will, as they increasingly witness the evidences of a revival of activity along this line, arise to lend a helping hand to this vast endeavor. They will not fail to extend their support in alleviating the burden that is now borne so joyously and gratefully by their younger brethren in North America. I shall myself do all in my power to hasten the fruition of your self-sacrificing labors.

International Bahá'í Shrine

The sad and sudden crisis that has arisen in connection with the ownership of Bahá'u'lláh's sacred house in Baghdád has sent a thrill of indignation and dismay throughout the whole of the Bahá'í world. Houses that have been occupied by Bahá'u'lláh for well nigh the whole period of His exile in 'Iráq; ordained by Him as the chosen and sanctified object of Bahá'í pilgrimage in future; magnified and extolled in countless Tablets and Epistles as the sacred center "round which shall circle all peoples and kindreds of the earth"—lie now, due to fierce intrigue and ceaseless fanatical opposition, at the mercy of the declared enemies of the Cause.

I have instantly communicated with every Bahá'í center in both East and West, and urgently requested the faithful followers of the Faith in every land to protest vehemently against this glaring perversion of justice, to assert firmly and courteously the spiritual rights of the Bahá'í Community to the ownership of this venerated house, to plead for British fairness and justice, and to pledge their unswerving determination to insure the security of this hallowed spot.

Conscious of the fact that this property has been occupied by Bahá'í authorized representatives for an uninterrupted period of not less than thirty years, and having successfully won their case at the Justice of Peace and the Court of First Instance, the Bahá'ís the world over cannot believe that the high sense of honor and fairness which inspires the British Administration of 'Iráq will ever tolerate such grave miscarriage of justice. They confidently appeal to the public opinion of the world for the defense and protection of their legitimate rights now sorely trampled under the feet of relentless enemies.

Widespread and effective publicity along these lines, in well-conceived and carefully worded terms, is strongly recommended

for it will undoubtedly serve to facilitate the solution of this delicate and perplexing problem.

Having exerted ourselves to the utmost of our ability let us rest assured in the power of the Lord, who keepeth watch over His house, and who will, no matter how dark present prospects appear, assure for generations yet unborn His cherished and holy edifice. I shall acquaint you with every development of the case, and will advise you as to the measures that should be taken whether we decide to institute fresh proceedings or to appeal to higher legal authorities in London.

Green Acre

In connection with the important step that has been taken for the eventual inclusion of Green Acre Fellowship within the orbit of the activities of the American National Spiritual Assembly, I hope and pray that this new privilege and added responsibility will prove highly beneficial in its results, both to Green Acre itself and the general interests of the Cause in America. In a separate communication addressed to the Chairman of the said Fellowship, our dearly-beloved and self-sacrificing brother, Mr. W. Randall, I will express my warm approval of this constructive step, and my ardent hopes for the quicker unfolding and fuller expansion under the fostering care of the National Spiritual Assembly, of Green Acre's unique and sublime mission in life. I shall follow in this connection with the keenest interest the course of your activities in accordance with the policy outlined in your letter of October 14th, and feel that the greatest stress must be laid upon the necessity of exemplifying in a most liberal and practical manner the driving power hidden in this Divine Revelation, rather than upon the idle reiteration of a set of principles, however exalted and unique in their character. May the National Fund so flourish as to enable its Trustees to undertake such measures as will eloquently testify to a sorely stricken humanity the healing power of God's Faith.

Jurisdiction of a Local Assembly

May I remind you regarding the situation in San Francisco that no two independent Bahá'í centers can possibly be recognized in the same city, and that the center which bears my name should act in all matters only with the full consent and approval of the San Francisco Spiritual Assembly.

Voting Rights of National Assembly Members

Concerning the election of alternate members to the National Spiritual Assembly, I feel that only the nine original members of the National Spiritual Assembly are entitled to vote, whereas such alternate members as may be elected should be asked to fill vacancies only in a consultative capacity and not be entitled to vote. They should not be regarded as part of the quorum (i.e., five out of the nine original members) which is necessary for the transaction of the business of the National Assembly. All secondary matters that do not affect the principle outlined are left to the discretion of the National Spiritual Assemblies who will decide according to the exigencies of their respective circumstances.

Assuring you of my deep appreciation of your continued efforts, and of my unceasing prayers on your behalf,

I am your grateful brother,
SHOGHI.

Haifa, Palestine,
November 6, 1925.

Letter of November 30, 1925.

To the beloved of God and the handmaids of the Merciful in the East and in the West.

Dear fellow-workers:

It is with feelings of overwhelming sorrow that I communicate to you the news of yet another loss which the Almighty, in His inscrutable wisdom, has chosen to inflict upon our beloved Cause. On the 22nd of November, 1925, that memorable and sacred day in which the Bahá'ís of the Orient celebrated the twin Festivals of the Declaration of the Báb and the birthday of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Dr. John E. Esslemont passed on to the Abhá Kingdom. His end was as swift as it was unexpected. Suffering from the effects of a chronic and insidious disease, he fell at last a victim to the inevitable complications that ensued, the fatal course of which neither the efforts of vigilant physicians nor the devoted cares of his many friends could possibly deflect.

He bore his sufferings with admirable fortitude, with calm resignation and courage. Though convinced that his ailment would never henceforth forsake him, yet many a time he revealed a burning desire that the friends residing in the Holy Land should, while visiting the Shrines, implore the All-merciful to prolong his days that he may bring to a fuller completion his humble share of service to the Threshold of Bahá'u'lláh. To this noble request all hearts warmly responded. But this was not to be. His close association with my work in Haifa, in which I had placed the fondest hopes, was suddenly cut short. His book,[12] however—an abiding monument to his pure intention—will, alone, inspire generations yet unborn to tread the path of truth and service as steadfastly and as unostentatiously as was trodden by its beloved author. The Cause he loved so well, he served even unto his last

[12] Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era, by J. E. Esslemont, London, 1922; Bahá'í Publishing Committee, New York, 1927.

day with exemplary faith and unstinted devotion. His tenacity of faith, his high integrity, his self-effacement, his industry and painstaking labors were traits of a character the noble qualities of which will live and live forever after him. To me personally he was the warmest of friends, a trusted counsellor, an indefatigable collaborator, a lovable companion.

With tearful eyes I supplicate at the Threshold of Bahá'u'lláh—and request you all to join—in my ardent prayers, for the fuller unfolding in the realms beyond of a soul that has already achieved so high a spiritual standing in this world. For by the beauty of his character, by his knowledge of the Cause, by the conspicuous achievements of his book, he has immortalized his name, and by sheer merit deserved to rank as one of the Hands of the Cause of God.

He has been laid to rest in the heart of that beautifully situated Bahá'í burial ground at the foot of Carmel, close to the mortal remains of that venerable soul, Ḥájí Mírzá Vakilu'd-Dawlih, the illustrious cousin of the Báb and chief builder of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár of Ishqábád. Pilgrims visiting his grave from far and near will, with pride and gratitude, do honor to a name that adorned the annals of an Immortal Cause.

May he eternally rest in peace.

SHOGHI.

Haifa, Palestine,
November 30, 1925.

Letter of January 10, 1926.

To the members of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada.

Dearly-beloved fellow-workers in the Vineyard of God!

Your letter dated Nov. 9, 1925, has been received and read with feelings of deep satisfaction and gratitude. It is most unfortunate that, owing to unavoidable circumstances, I have been prevented from communicating more fully and frequently with the distinguished representatives of those dear fellow-workers of mine, the progress of whose accomplishments I am continually following with the liveliest expectations, loving sympathy and cheerful hope.

The multiplicity of vital and pressing issues, arising out of the steady expansion of the Movement in various parts of the world; the pain and sorrow so keenly felt at the sudden passing of distinguished and dearly-beloved servants of the Cause; grave and unexpected developments in the Holy Land and elsewhere—have all in rapid succession greatly added to the already oppressive burden of responsibility and care which it is my lot and privilege to shoulder in the interests of the Cause. And yet in the midst of my unceasing toil, my afflictions and perplexities, I have found fresh sustenance and comfort in the striking manner in which the pioneers of the Cause in that promising continent are proving themselves worthy of the spiritual heritage bequeathed to them by their departed Master. Refreshed and fortified by their inspiring example, I feel I can pursue the thorny path of my arduous duties with serene confidence, cheerful contentment and undiminished gratitude.

I rejoice to learn of the marvelous effect which your resourcefulness, efficiency and unrelenting efforts are producing upon your admiring brethren of the East. I am fully alive to the eminent share you are contributing to the emancipation of those heroic sufferers in distracted Persia. I am deeply conscious of the part

you play in consolidating the position of the Cause in the eyes of both the exalted and lowly, and in hastening the advent of that promised day of universal recognition and triumph for our beloved Cause.

Shrine of Baghdád

We can but dimly discern the signs of that day of priceless victory—the day when the mission of this sublime and holy Faith will have been unfolded in all its power and glory to the eyes of an unbelieving world. We have only to refer to the utterances of Bahá'u'lláh in order to realize for ourselves God's invincible power to turn every fleeting abasement, every transient sorrow, into abiding joy and glory. For amid the gloom of humiliation that has now beset Bahá'u'lláh's holy habitation in Baghdád, these prophetic words of His regarding His house shine forth resplendent in their assurance of a future victory: "In truth, I declare, it shall be so abased in the days to come as to cause tears to flow from every discerning eye.... And in the fulness of time, shall the Lord by the power of truth exalt it in the eyes of all the world, cause it to become the mighty standard of His domination, the shrine round which shall circle the concourse of the faithful." How startling in His prediction, how reassuring His promise!

The thoroughness of your methods in handling this grave and highly delicate situation, the promptness of your response, the spirit of unabated confidence, of unrelaxing determination and admirable courage which you have abundantly displayed have, I am certain, endeared you to us all, justified our hopes in you, and ennobled the already lofty position you deservedly occupy among the staunch supporters of God's immortal Cause. Whatever the outcome of your memorable endeavors, the immediate consequences of your strenuous efforts cannot but be a growing realization on the part of those placed in authority that the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh, despite the calumny and slander showered upon it in the past, has linked the East with the West as no other human agency can possibly link and is capable of demonstrating the reality of that celestial potency which no man can today safely belittle or ignore.

Furthermore, the spontaneous and generous response of the American believers in connection with the land situation on Mount Carmel has, in conjunction with the donations of the friends in other parts of the world, safeguarded such lands as lie in close proximity to the holy Shrines. This highly meritorious effort, blest and sanctified by the bountiful grace of Bahá'u'lláh, has in like manner served to reveal to every discerning eye the friends' unquenchable enthusiasm and unrivalled devotion—the dominant characteristic of a Faith that is still in its stage of tender growth, and now standing on the threshold of undreamt-of achievements.

Judgment of Egyptian Religious Court

Among the disturbing factors that have intensified the difficulties of the present situation is the extraordinary judgment recently passed by the Supreme Religious Court of Egypt, declaring the Bahá'ís of that land adherents of a Faith heretical in character, and at variance with the accepted doctrines of Islám, and hence utterly outside the sphere of its jurisdiction. What exactly the implication of this verdict will be, the effect its practical application will have on the relations of the Bahá'ís with the followers of the Muslim Faith, what measure of publicity it will receive, what impression it will create in Muslim lands and particularly in hostile Persia, the future only can disclose. So far it has failed to perturb public sentiment or give rise to any official or public demonstration of a nature that would justify or necessitate any action on the part of the American Bahá'ís, who are powerfully demonstrating today their readiness to champion the cause of truth and justice. I will not delay in informing you of the exact measures that I feel will be necessary to take should the occasion arise in future. It is clear and evident that Western influence, the loosening of the bonds of religion, and the consequent waning vitality of the once powerful Muhammadan stronghold of Egypt are in a great measure to account for the indifference and apathy that now seem to characterize the attitude of the masses towards this important and vital issue. This decision, however locally embarrassing, in the present stage of our development, may be regarded as an initial step taken by our very opponents in the path of the eventual universal acceptance of the Bahá'í Faith, as one of the independent recognized religious systems of the world.

National Fund

In connection with the institution of the National Fund and the budgetary system set forth in the minutes of the National Spiritual Assembly, I feel urged to remind you of the necessity of ever bearing in mind the cardinal principle that all contributions to the Fund are to be purely and strictly voluntary in character. It should be made clear and evident to every one 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. While appeals of a general character, carefully worded and moving and dignified in tone are welcome under all circumstances, it should be left entirely to the discretion of every conscientious believer to decide upon the nature, the amount, and purpose of his or her contribution for the propagation of the Cause.

Association with Orientals

Regarding association with Oriental travelers and residents in the United States and Canada, I desire to emphasize afresh the vital necessity for the exercise in these days of the greatest vigilance and reserve, prudence and caution, on the part of the American believers in their dealings with them, either in an official or private capacity, whether in business transactions or for purely religious purposes. As the Movement grows in prestige, fame and influence, as the ambitions, malice and ill-will of strangers and enemies correspondingly wax greater, it becomes increasingly important for every individual and Spiritual Assembly to be on their guard lest they fall innocent victims of the evil designs of the malevolent, the self-seeking and greedy.

Touching the publication of articles and pamphlets bearing on the controversial and political issues of the day, I desire to remind my dearly-beloved fellow-workers that at the present stage when the Cause is still in its infancy, any minute and detailed analysis by the friends of subjects that are in the forefront of general discussion would often be misconstrued in certain quarters and give rise to suspicions and misunderstandings that would react unfavorably on the Cause. They would tend to create a misconception of the real object, the true mission, and the fundamental character of the Bahá'í Faith. We should, while endeavoring to uphold loyally and expound conscientiously our social and moral principles in all their essence and purity, in all their bearings upon the divers phases of human society, insure that no direct reference or particular criticism in our exposition of the fundamentals of the Faith would tend to antagonize any existing institution, or help to identify a purely spiritual movement with the base clamorings and contentions of warring sects, factions and nations. We should strive in all our utterances to combine the discretion and noble reticence of the wise with the frankness and passionate loyalty of the ardent advocate of an inspiring

Faith. While refusing to utter the word that would needlessly alienate or estrange any individual, government or people, we should fearlessly and unhesitatingly uphold and assert in their entirety such truths the knowledge of which we believe is vitally and urgently needed for the good and betterment of mankind.

The copy of the minutes of the 1925 Bahá'í Convention has been received and, despite the pressure of work, read with deep pleasure and keen interest.

Purpose of Bahá'í Administration

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. Let us be on our guard lest the growing demand for specialization in the administrative functions of the Cause detain us from joining the ranks of those who in the forefront of battle are gloriously engaged in summoning the multitude to this New Day of God. This indeed should be our primary concern; this is our sacred obligation, our vital and urgent need. Let this cardinal principle be ever borne in mind, for it is the mainspring of all future activities, the remover of every embarrassing obstacle, the fulfillment of our Master's dearest wish.

May the year that has just dawned upon us witness in such a glorious field many a signal victory.

Your true brother,
SHOGHI.

Haifa, Palestine,
January 10, 1926.

Letter of April 22nd, 1926.

To the beloved of the Lord and the handmaids of the Merciful through the West.

Fellow-laborers in the Divine Vineyard:

In the midst of the many vicissitudes which the creative Word of God is destined to encounter in the course of its onward march towards the redemption of the world, there breaks upon us the news of still another loss, more bewildering in its character, yet more inspiring in its challenge, than any of the gravest happenings of recent times. Once again the woeful tale of unabated persecution, involving this time the martyrdom of twelve of our long-suffering brethren in Jahrum, southern Persia, has reached our ears, and filled us with a gloom which all the joys and ennobling memories of Ridván have failed to dispel.

Bahá'í Martyrdoms in Persia

From the meagre reports which have thus far been received from that distracted country it appears that this shameful and atrocious act, though the outcome of a number of obscure and complex causes, has been chiefly instigated by that ever-present factor of fierce and relentless impulse of religious hostility. Persia—long neglected and sorely tried—continues, despite the revival of recent hopes, to be the down-trodden victim of unscrupulous personal rivalries and factious intrigue, of tribal revolt, political dissensions and religious animosities—all of which have in times past brought in their wake the shedding of the blood of so many of its innocent and choicest sons.

Fully alive to the gravity of the occasion, and realizing the urgency of my sacred duty, I have, upon the receipt of the news, transmitted telegraphically through the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Persia a special message addressed in the name of the Bahá'ís of every land to the supreme authority in the State, expressing our profound horror at this outrageous act as well as our earnest entreaty to inflict immediate punishment on the perpetrators of so abominable a crime. And as this sad event involved chiefly the welfare and security of the Bahá'í residents in Persia, I have specially requested all local Assemblies in that land to address a similar message to the highest authorities concerned appealing for full protection and justice. Should future developments necessitate direct and foreign intervention, I shall acquaint the national Bahá'í representatives in every land to take in cooperation with all local Assemblies such measures as will effectually conduce to a fuller recognition of the dynamic force latent in the Bahá'í Faith and insure the betterment of the lot of the heroic supporters of our Cause.

Pending the opening of official communication with recognized authorities whether in Persia or elsewhere, I strongly feel that the time has assuredly come when it is incumbent upon

every conscientious promoter of the Cause to bestir himself and undertake in consultation with the friends in his locality such measures of publicity as will lead to the gradual awakening of the conscience of the civilized world to what is admittedly an ignominious manifestation of a decadent age.

I would specially request all National Assemblies to give their anxious and immediate consideration to this grave matter, and to devise ways and means that will secure the fullest publicity for our grievances. I would remind them that whatever is published should be couched in terms that are at once correct, forceful and inoffensive.

I would particularly stress the importance of making every effort to secure the sympathy and hospitality of the leading journals and periodicals of the Western world, and of sending to the Holy Land any such references in papers that will arise to champion the cause of righteousness and justice. I greatly deplore the fact that owing to the remoteness and the unstable conditions in Persia, details and particulars regarding this ugly incident are not as yet available, but will be duly communicated to the various centers immediately upon their receipt. I would, however, ask the believers throughout the West to arise without any further delay and supplement the publication of the news conveyed in this message with an account of previous happenings of a similar character, combined with an adequate survey of the aim, the principles and history of the Bahá'í Cause.

It is to you, dearly beloved friends of the West, who are the standard-bearers of the emancipation and triumph of the Bahá'í Faith, that our afflicted brethren of the East have turned their expectant eyes, confident that the day cannot be far-distant when, in accordance with 'Abdu'l-Bahá's explicit utterance, the West will "seize the Cause" from Persia's fettered hands and lead it to glorious victory.

Though grief-stricken and horrified at this cruel blow, let us be on our guard lest we give way to despair, lest we forget that

in the Almighty's inscrutable wisdom this sudden calamity may prove to be but a blessing in disguise. For what else can it do but to stir the inmost depths of our souls, set our faith ablaze, galvanize our efforts, dissolve our differences, and provide one of the chief instruments which the unhampered promoters of the Faith can utilize to attract the attention, enlist the sympathy, and eventually win the allegiance of all mankind?

Ours is this supreme opportunity; may we fulfill our trust.

Your true brother,
SHOGHI.

Haifa, Palestine,
April 22nd, 1926.

Letter of May 11th, 1926.

To the members of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada.

Fellow-laborers in the Vineyard of God:

Various happenings of recent months, highly disquieting in their suddenness, their complexity and consequences, have time and again, to my regret, compelled me to defer correspondence with you, my highly valued co-workers, who are destined to share no small a part of the burden that now weighs so heavily upon me. The prolonged and delicate negotiations arising out of the critical situation of Bahá'u'lláh's house in Baghdád; the shameful recrudescence of unrestrained barbarism in stricken Persia; the unexpected reverse recently sustained in our legal transactions for the deliverance of Bahá'u'lláh's mansion at Bahjí from the hands of the enemy; the unprecedented increase in the volume of work resulting from the rise and expansion of the Movement in various parts of the world—these and other issues, no less pressing in their demand upon my time and energy, have gradually affected my health and impaired the efficiency required in the discharge of my arduous duties. But, though body and mind be sorely strained by cares and perplexities which a Movement such as ours just emerging from obscurity must needs encounter, yet the spirit continues to draw fresh inspiration from the manner in which the chosen deliverers of the Faith in the Western world, and particularly in the American continent, are proving themselves increasingly worthy of such a stupendous yet so noble a task.

Persecutions in Jahrum

Grave and manifold as are the problems confronting the struggling Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, none appear more significant, nor seem more compelling in their urgency, than the incredible sufferings borne so heroically by our down-trodden brethren of the East. Recent reports confirming the news which I have lately communicated to you have all emphasized the barbarous severity practiced on the innocent followers of our Cause. They reveal the possibility of the extension of this agitation, partly instigated for political purposes and selfish motives, to neighboring towns and provinces, and dwell upon the traditional slackness of the local authorities to inflict prompt and severe punishment upon all the perpetrators of such abominable crimes. It has been ascertained that in the town of Jahrum women have suffered martyrdom in a most atrocious manner, that the knife of the criminal has mercilessly cut to pieces the body of a child, that a number have been severely beaten and injured, their bodies mutilated, their homes pillaged, their property confiscated, and the homeless remnants of their family abandoned to the mercy of a shameless and tyrannical people. In other parts of Persia, and particularly in the province of Ádhirbayján in the town of Marághih, the friends have been pitilessly denied the civic rights and privileges extended to every citizen of the land. They have been refused the use of the public bath, and been denied access to such shops as provide the necessities of life. They have been declared deprived of the benefit and protection of the law, and all association and dealing with them denounced as a direct violation of the precepts and principles of Islám. It has even been authoritatively stated that the decencies of public interment have been refused to their dead, and that in a particular case every effort to induce the Muslim undertaker to provide the wood for the construction of the coffin, failed to secure the official support of the authorities concerned. Every appeal made by these Bahá'ís on behalf of

their brethren, whether living or dead, has been met with cold indifference, with vague promises, and, not infrequently, with severe rebuke and undeserved chastisement.

The tale of such outrageous conduct, such widespread suffering and loss, if properly expressed and broadcast, cannot fail in the end to arouse the conscience of civilized mankind, and thereby secure the much-needed relief for a long-suffering people. I would, therefore, renew my plea, and request you most earnestly to redouble your efforts in the wide field of publicity, to devise every possible means that will alleviate the fears and sorrows of the silent sufferers in that distracted country. Surely these vile wrong-doers cannot long remain unpunished for their ferocious atrocities, and the day may not be far distant when we shall witness, as we have observed elsewhere, the promised signs of Divine Retribution avenging the blood of the slaughtered servants of Bahá'u'lláh.

Plan of Unified Action

In connection with the Plan of Unified Action, enclosed in your letter of January 19th, I feel that the friends must be constantly reminded of the vital necessity for a continuous and whole-hearted support of the scheme, the success or failure of which will to a marked extent affect the course of the progress of the Cause not only in Northern America but throughout the Bahá'í world. Let the friends recall and ever bear in mind the repeated exhortations and glowing promises of our beloved Master with reference to the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, the crowning institution in every Bahá'í community. Let them arise with determination and confidence to lend a helping hand to the Plan which you have so admirably devised for its speedy and practical realization. Theirs is a splendid opportunity; let their response to your call be prompt, whole-hearted and decisive.

I have specially requested that indefatigable pioneer of the Cause of God, our well-beloved Bahá'í sister, Mrs. Victoria Bedekian, to concentrate for the present all the resources of her mind and heart upon this vast and vital undertaking. I have urged her to direct her energies to this lofty purpose, and by the aid of her most valuable letters arouse both the East and the West to a fresh consciousness of the significance and urgency of the object you have set yourselves to achieve.

Regarding the series of World Unity meetings which some of the thoughtful, capable and devoted servants of the Cause have carefully organized and successfully conducted, and to which you have referred in your letter of March 8th, I wish to express my keen appreciation of such a splendid conception, my deep gratitude for the efforts they have exerted, and my gratification in view of the success they have achieved.

Guiding Principles of Bahá'í Administration

The administrative machinery of the Cause having now sufficiently evolved, its aim and object fairly well grasped and understood, and its method and working made more familiar to every believer, I feel the time is ripe when it should be fully and consciously utilized to further the purpose for which it has been created. It should, I strongly feel, be made to serve a twofold purpose. On one hand, it should aim at a steady and gradual expansion of the Movement along lines that are at once broad, sound and universal; and on the other it should insure the internal consolidation of the work already achieved. It should both provide the impulse whereby the dynamic forces latent in the Faith can unfold, crystallize, and shape the lives and conduct of men, and serve as a medium for the interchange of thought and the coordination of activities among the divers elements that constitute the Bahá'í community.

Whether it be by an open and bold assertion of the fundamental verities of the Cause, or the adoption of a less direct and more cautious method of teaching; whether by the dissemination of our literature or the example of our conduct, our one aim and sole object should be to help in the eventual recognition by all mankind of the indispensability, the uniqueness and the supreme station of the Bahá'í Revelation. Whatever method he adopts, and however indirect the course he chooses to pursue, every true believer should regard such a recognition as the supreme goal of his endeavor. Whilst consciously laboring towards the attainment of this end, he should, by supporting every branch of the administrative activities of his national and local assembly, seek and obtain the fullest information on the character and extent of the worldwide progress of the Cause, and strive to contribute his share towards the strengthening of the spirit of solidarity among the component parts of the Bahá'í world.

Such in their broad outline are the guiding principles which those who have been placed in charge of the administration of the affairs of the Cause should at present endeavor to promote, explain and securely establish. Nothing short of the spirit of unwavering faith, of continuous vigilance and patient endeavor can hope to secure eventually the realization of this our cherished desire.

May America's national representatives arise with clear vision, with unswerving determination and renewed vigor to carry out in its entirety the sacred task they have purposed to perform.

Assuring you of my continued and earnest prayers for the success of your efforts,

I am your true brother,
SHOGHI.

Haifa, Palestine,
May 11th, 1926.

Letter of October 7th, 1926.

To the beloved of the Lord and the handmaids of the Merciful throughout the West.

Dearly-beloved brothers and sisters in ‘Abdu’l-Bahá:

In the course of the few months that have elapsed since my last communication to you regarding the appalling circumstances that have culminated in the martyrdom of our Persian brethren in Jahrum, events of the highest importance to the future welfare of our beloved Cause have transpired, and with startling suddenness conferred abiding solace upon those who still have to face the pains and terrors of unmitigated and shameless tyranny.

Response of Queen Marie

You have, most of you, I presume, read with thrilling joy in one of the recent issues of the Star of the West that illuminating account given by our beloved sister, Miss Martha Root, wherein she tells with her characteristic directness and modesty the story of her moving interview with Her Majesty Queen Marie of Roumania and of the cordial and ready response which her gentle yet persuasive presentation of the principles of the Bahá'í Faith has evoked in the heart of that honored queen. One of the visible and potent effects which this historic interview proved capable of achieving was the remarkable appeal in the form of an open letter which Her Majesty freely and spontaneously caused to be published to the world at large testifying in a language of exquisite beauty to the power and sublimity of the Message of Bahá'u'lláh.

It was indeed a never-to-be-forgotten occasion when, on the eve of the day commemorating the passing of Bahá'u'lláh, a handful of us, His sorrowing servants, had gathered round His beloved Shrine supplicating relief and deliverance for the downtrodden in Persia, to receive in the midst of the silence of that distressing hour the glad-tidings of this notable triumph which the unbending energy and indomitable spirit of our beloved Martha has achieved for our sacred Cause.

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 fulness of time signalize the triumph of God's holy Faith. For who can doubt but that the deeds of those valiant pioneers of the Faith, unexampled though they have been in the abundance of their number and unexcelled in their sublime heroism, are but a faint glimmer of what, according to the divine promise, its steadfast followers are destined to perform? Those

heroic exploits that have immortalized the names of its primitive adherents will continue to adorn and illuminate the pages of its blood-stained history; yet we cannot forget that the period of its full fruition with all its promise of world felicity and undreamt-of achievements is yet to be realized, its golden age yet to unfold. Indeed, how chastening to our pride, how challenging to our enthusiasm, if we but pause for a moment amidst the world's many distractions and ponder in our hearts the vastness, the compelling urgency, the ineffable glory of what still remains unachieved.

The Regenerating Power

But let us all remember, in this connection, that prior to every conceivable measure destined to raise the efficiency of our administrative activities, more vital than any scheme which the most resourceful amongst us can devise, far above the most elaborate structure which the concerted efforts of organized Assemblies can hope to raise, is the realization down in the innermost heart of every true believer of the regenerating power, the supreme necessity, the unfailing efficacy of the Message he bears. I assure you, dear friends, that nothing short of such an immovable conviction could have in days past enabled our beloved Cause to weather the blackest storms in its history. Naught else can today vitalize the manifold activities in which unnumbered disciples of the Faith are engaged; naught else can provide that driving force and sustaining power that are both so essential to the success of vast and enduring achievements. It is this spirit that above all else we should sedulously guard, and strive with all our might to fortify and exemplify in all our undertakings.

Moved by an irresistible impulse, I have addressed to Her Majesty in the name of the Bahá'ís of both the East and the West a written expression of our joyous admiration and gratitude for the queenly tribute which Her Majesty has paid to the beauty and nobility of the Bahá'í Teachings. I have, moreover, assured Her Majesty of the far-reaching effect which her superb testimony will inevitably produce, and of the welcome consolation it has already brought to the silent sufferers in that distracted country. To my message of appreciation and gratitude there has come lately a written response, penned by Her Majesty, profoundly touching, singularly outspoken, and highly significant in the testimony it bears. From this queenly tribute to a divine ideal I quote these penetrating words:

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

Dear friends, with feelings of profound emotion we recall the glowing promises that have so often fallen from the lips of our departed Master, and with throbbing hearts rejoice in the gradual realization of His most cherished desire.

And as we call to mind the circumstances that have led to such a notable advance, we are filled with admiration for that unique and great-hearted apostle of Bahá’u’lláh, our dearly-beloved Martha Root, who under trying circumstances and almost single-handed in her efforts, has so wonderfully paved the way for the universal recognition of the Cause of God. 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.

Let such remarkable revelations of the reality and continuity of the divine purpose, made manifest from time to time to us His feeble children, serve to fortify our faith in Him, to warm the chill which fleeting misfortunes may leave behind, and fill us with that celestial potency which alone can enable us to withstand the storm and stress that lives dedicated to His service must needs encounter.

Your true brother,
SHOGHI.

Haifa, Palestine,
October 7th, 1926.

Letter of October 29, 1926.

To the beloved of the Lord and the handmaids of the Merciful throughout the West.

Dear fellow-workers in the Divine Vineyard:

It will gladden and rejoice every one of you to learn that from various quarters there has of late reached the Holy Land tidings of fresh developments that are a clear indication of those hidden and transforming influences which, from the source of Bahá'u'lláh's mystic strength, continue to flow with ever-increasing vitality into the heart of this troubled world.

Both in the wider field of its spiritual conquests, where its indomitable spirit is forging ahead, capturing the heights, pervading the multitude; as well as in the gradual consolidation of the administrative structure which its avowed followers the world over are laboring to raise and fortify, the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, we can increasingly discern, bids fair to become that force which, though not as yet universally recognized, none can afford to belittle or ignore.

In the bold and repeated testimonies which Her Majesty, Queen Marie of Roumania, has chosen to give to the world,—a copy of whose latest pronouncement I enclose,[13]—we truly recognize evidences of the irresistible power, the increasing vitality, the strange working of a Faith destined to regenerate the world. Her Majesty's striking tribute paid to the illuminative power of the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá is bound to effect an entire transformation in the attitude of many to a Faith the tenets of which have often been misunderstood and sorely neglected. It will serve as a fresh stimulus to the enlightened

[13] This enclosure consisted of a copy of an article by Queen Marie in her newspaper syndicated series entitled "Queen's Counsel." Since the queen's first public reference to the Cause in this series, two additional references have appeared, one on September 26 and one on September 27, 1926.

and cultured to investigate with an open mind the verities of its message, the source of its life-giving principles.

Shrine at Baghdád

From Baghdád, moreover, where the sacred habitation of Bahá'u'lláh has been violated by a relentless enemy and converted into a rallying center for the corrupt, the perverse, and the fanatical, there comes the news, highly reassuring to us all, of the satisfactory progress of the negotiations which, we are informed on high authority, will soon lead to the expropriation of the property by the State, culminating in the fullness of time in its occupation by the triumphant followers of God's holy Faith. The case of the houses, so ably presented, so persistently pursued, above all reinforced by the vigilant and protecting power of our departed Master, will eventually triumph, and by its repercussions in Persia as in the world at large, will lend a powerful impetus to the liberation of those forces which will carry the Cause to its ultimate destiny. I will, when the occasion presents itself, inform the believers through their respective National Spiritual Assemblies to address messages of appreciation and gratitude to the authorities concerned in view of their unrelaxing efforts for the triumph of right and justice.

For the present, we cannot but rejoice and feel profoundly thankful as we witness in so many directions the welcome signs of the gradual emancipation of the struggling Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, of the increasing recognition on the part of both the high and lowly of its universal principles—all so rich in their promise of ultimate victory.

Your true brother,
SHOGHI.

Haifa, Palestine,
October 29, 1926.

Letter of October 31, 1926.

To the members of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada.

Dearly-beloved fellow-workers:

I have on two recent occasions given expression to the profound sense of inspiring confidence and joyous gratitude which recent happenings in the Cause—evident manifestations of the steady evolution of a living Faith—must needs evoke in the heart of every thoughtful and observing believer. And as I contemplate the far-reaching possibilities involved in a careful handling of those forces which Bahá'u'lláh's almighty arm has now released, I cannot help reflecting upon the dominant share which the American friends, at home as well as in distant lands, have contributed to this rejuvenation of the Cause of God, and the decisive part it is theirs to play in its eventual victory.

Your letters, dated June 17, July 11, July 20, August 3 and 16, and October 2, 1926, all of which have been forwarded during my days of retirement and rest, have proved an added source of thankfulness, of joy and strength to me. They have clearly revealed by their spirit, as well as by the nature and variety of their contents, the sustained devotion, the unabated confidence, and the increasing vigor and efficiency with which you are initiating, coordinating, and consolidating the manifold activities of the Cause in North America.

International Secretariat

The range and character of the problems confronting you, as revealed by the careful perusal of the minutes of your meetings, the steady increase in the number and effectiveness of vigorously functioning Centers in Central and Northern Europe, and 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 labors. I have anxiously considered this important matter in all its bearings during the past few months, and have accordingly requested three well-informed, capable representatives from America, Europe and the East to visit the Holy Land this fall, that we may lay down the foundation of this vitally needed institution. We shall take counsel together and decide, not only upon the measures that have to be promptly undertaken to meet the pressing demands of the present hour, but upon the wider issues that on one hand will strengthen the ties that should bind the International Center of the Cause with the world at large, and on the other provide for the preliminary steps that will eventually lead to the proper establishment of the First International House of Justice.

It is my earnest hope and prayer that this exchange of thought and close cooperation in the work that has henceforth to be internationally and vigorously conducted, will enable me to participate more minutely and effectively in the labors of the various administrative departments of your Assembly, and thus reinforce the splendid efforts you are exerting for the extension of its influence and the widening of its scope.

Plan of Unified Action

From the report of the National Treasurer, setting forth the account of the progress of the contributions of the American believers for the support of the Plan of Unified Action, up to June 30, 1926, I gather that the result has by no means exceeded our expectations, nay has considerably fallen below what I confidently expected it to achieve. I earnestly renew my plea and appeal to you, and through you to every true and faithful lover of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, to realize, while there is yet time, the far-reaching possibilities with which the present situation is fraught. I am firmly convinced that this Plan combines, embodies, and serves the twofold purpose of the present-day Bahá’í administration in the United States and Canada, namely the promotion of the vitally needed teaching work, and the provision for the gradual completion of the Mashriqu’l-Adhkár, both wishes so near and dear to our beloved Master’s heart. It is the only effective, feasible, and practical instrument placed in our hands for the speedy accomplishment of our ends. So much that is vital to the future welfare, the effectiveness, and the fair name of our beloved Cause depends, I assure you, upon the success or failure of this nobly-conceived, this sound and befitting enterprise. The eyes of all Bahá’ís and of many sympathizers throughout the world are turned towards you, eager to reinforce your accomplishments in this field, expectant to witness what measure of success you are capable of achieving.

World Unity Conferences

In connection with the series of World Unity Conferences which you have initiated and so laboriously organized, I feel that in order to reap the fullest advantage and benefit from this laudable effort, it is absolutely essential to follow up with the aid of enlightened, experienced and capable teachers the interest which has been aroused. Such a group of teachers should judiciously select those few among the many interested, and endeavor with patience and sympathy and by constant intimate personal intercourse, to prepare them gradually for the entire and unreserved acceptance of the fundamentals of the Bahá'í Revelation. If the results be meagre, if the attendance be small, let us not despair, nor relax in our efforts. Let us remember that this sound method will eventually triumph, if we only consistently support it, and persevere in undertaking those subsequent steps that can alone produce full and permanent benefit.

Appeal to the Sháh of Persia

I have already expressed my grateful appreciation of the prompt and wise measures you have taken in behalf of our oppressed and down-trodden brethren in Persia. The noble appeal which you were moved to address to His Majesty the Sháh, so illuminating, so courteous, so powerful, and the wide range of publicity you have undertaken, were truly providential in character, and will undoubtedly prove an inspiration and solace to those who still continue to be trampled under the heel of an odious and inveterate enemy. I have had your appeal translated into Persian and sent to all Centers throughout the Orient that the suffering in Persia may learn of your bold and courageous intervention, and witness the signs of their promised redemption which, as foretold by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, must first be made manifest through the efforts of their brethren in that great freedom-loving Republic of the West.

It is sad and distressing to reflect that, notwithstanding the repeated appeals addressed to the authorities concerned, and so powerfully reinforced by the spontaneous action of some of the leading Governments of the West, Persia, still heedless and unaware of the spiritual forces that are at work, continues to treat with indifference and contempt the most loyal, innocent and law-abiding subjects of its realm. The chronic instability of its affairs, the changing fortunes of factions and shadowy personalities that sap its vitality and tarnish its name, the acute and widespread economic depression that is now prevailing, and the grave discontent of the masses of the people, all tend to aggravate a situation already highly threatening to the security of its sorely tried children. What else can we do but pray most fervently that the almighty power of Bahá’u’lláh may soon triumph over this petty strife, this age-long tyranny, and make, as He prophesied, of the land of His birth, “the most honored of all governments, the pride, the admiration and the envy of the peoples of the world.”

Your true brother,
SHOGHI.
Haifa, Palestine,
October 31, 1926.

Letter of November 14, 1926.

The beloved of the Lord and the handmaids of the Merciful throughout the United States and Canada.

Dearly-beloved friends:

The progress of various events, both within and outside the Bahá'í world, as well as the perusal of the able and illuminating report recently submitted by the Committee of the Persian National Spiritual Assembly in charge of the Tarbíyat School in Ṭihrán, have served to reinforce a gradually growing idea as to the desirability of arranging for the settlement in the capital of that country of one or two American believers who, having the means, the freedom and the capacity, can adequately meet the pressing requirements of a responsible position. Judging from their report, the situation in Ṭihrán though much confused and perplexing, is fraught with rich possibilities for the future of the Cause, both as affecting the national fortunes of Persia, as well as its influence upon the international development of the Cause.

American Teachers in Ṭihrán

The situation as I see it calls for the devoted efforts of one or two capable workers who, untrammelled and with independent means, can quietly, tenaciously and tactfully, pursue over a considerable length of time the meritorious work of fostering the cause of Bahá'í education, for both boys and girls, in the swiftly changing capital of a promising country. It should be their primary duty to extend the scope and enhance the prestige of these twin Bahá'í educational institutions, and to initiate by sound and well-considered methods such measures as will consolidate the work already achieved. It would be highly gratifying if they could also endeavor, by keeping in close and constant touch with the Persian and American National Spiritual Assemblies, to fortify those vital bonds that spiritually unite the cradle of the Bahá'í Faith with the great American Republic—the foremost standard-bearer of the Cause in the Western field. Such efforts will extremely facilitate cooperation between these two countries, whose common destiny is to provide, each in its own typical manner, the essential elements in the foundation of the world order ushered in by Bahá'u'lláh.

The gradual expansion of foreign as well as officially subsidized educational schools in Ṭihrán, the prolonged absence of competent teachers and organizers that can revive the declining influence of a hitherto renowned Bahá'í educational institution, and the critical and vigilant attitude which the growing influence of the Cause has induced in its malignant and envious enemies, are today subjects of gravest concern to the elected representatives of our suffering brethren and sisters in Persia. I would therefore request those who feel the urge and have the means to undertake this task to communicate with the National Spiritual Assembly who, after mature deliberation, will select one or two who, in their judgment, can best render this service, and decide upon the exact time and manner which would be most suitable

for its execution. I would strongly urge the friends to consult most earnestly with that devoted, experienced and indefatigable handmaid of Bahá'u'lláh, Dr. Moody, whose past services have ennobled the record of collaboration of East and West for the furtherance of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh. It would be highly satisfactory and immensely helpful if our beloved sister could find it possible and convenient to accompany such a carefully-chosen person on the way to Ṭihrán, and, by her unrivaled experience and loving-kindness, assist personally in the fulfillment of this pressing need.

Whoever steps into this field will find, as he settles down to his work, that the environment is extremely disheartening, that restrictions are oppressive, that the amenities of social life are lacking, that the forces of opposition are determined and organized. But let him realize also that, however tedious and exacting his labors, however precarious and thankless his task, the pioneer services it is his unique privilege to render in this time of stress will forever live in the annals of God's living Faith, and will prove a source of inspiration to the countless workers who, in happier times and with better means at their disposal, will consummate the spiritual regeneration and material rehabilitation of Bahá'u'lláh's native land.

Your true brother,
SHOGHI.

Haifa, Palestine,
November 14, 1926.

Letter of February 12, 1927.

To the beloved of the Lord and the handmaids of the Merciful throughout the West.

Dearly-beloved brothers and sisters in ‘Abdu’l-Bahá:

The trend of various events, affecting directly and indirectly the interests of the Bahá’í Cause, have of late served to bring into further prominence the character as well as the significance of a Faith destined to regenerate the world.

Decision of Egyptian Tribunal

Of all the diverse issues which today are gradually tending to consolidate and extend the bounds of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, the decision of Egypt's religious Tribunal regarding the Bahá'ís under its jurisdiction appears at the present moment to be the most powerful in its challenge, the most startling in its character, and the most perplexing in the consequences it may entail. I have already alluded in my letter of January 10, 1926, addressed to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada, to a particular feature of this momentous verdict, which after mature deliberation has obtained the sanction of Egypt's highest ecclesiastical authorities, has been communicated and printed, and is regarded as final and binding. I have stressed in my last reference to this far-reaching pronouncement the negative aspect of this document which condemns in most unequivocal and emphatic language the followers of Bahá'u'lláh as the believers in heresy, offensive and injurious to Islám, and wholly incompatible with the accepted doctrines and practice of its orthodox adherents.

Bahá'í Cause Recognized as Independent Religion

A closer study of the text of the decision will, however, reveal the fact that coupled with this strong denunciation is the positive assertion of a truth which the recognized opponents of the Bahá'í Faith in other Muhammadan countries have up to the present time either sedulously ignored or maliciously endeavored to disprove. Not content with this harsh and unjustifiable repudiation of the so-called menacing and heretical doctrines of the adherents of the Bahá'í Faith, they proceed in a formal manner to declare in the text of that very decision their belief, that the Bahá'í Faith is a "new religion," "entirely independent" and, by reason of the magnitude of its claim and the character of its "laws, principles and beliefs," worthy to be reckoned as one of the established religious systems of the world. Quoting various passages judiciously gleaned from a number of Bahá'í sacred Books as an evidence to their splendid testimony, they proceed in a notable statement to deduce the fact that henceforth it shall be regarded as impossible for the followers of such a Faith to be designated as Muslim, just as it would be incorrect and erroneous to call a Muhammadan either Christian or Jew.

It cannot be denied that in the course of the inevitable developments of this present situation the resident Bahá'ís of Egypt, originally belonging to the Muslim Faith, will be placed in a most humiliating and embarrassing position. They, however, cannot but rejoice in the knowledge that whereas in various Muhammadan countries and particularly in Persia the overwhelming majority of the leaders of Islám are utterly opposed to any form of declaration that would facilitate the universal recognition of the Cause, the authorized heads of their co-religionists in one of the most advanced communities in the Muhammadan world have, of their own initiative, published to the world a document

that may justly be termed as the first chapter of liberty emancipating the Bahá'í Faith from the fetters of orthodox Islám. And in order to insure the complete rupture of Bahá'í official relations with Muslim Courts they lay down in unmistakable terms the condition that under no circumstances can the marriage of those Bahá'ís who have been required to divorce their Muslim wives be renewed by the Muslim Court unless and until the husbands formally recant their faith by solemnly declaring that the Qur'án is the "last" Book of God revealed to man, that no law can abrogate the Prophet's Law, no faith can succeed His Faith, no revelation can claim to fulfill His Revelation.

While unwavering in their belief in the Divine station of the Author of the Qur'án and profoundly convinced of the necessity and worldwide influence of His Divine mission, Bahá'ís in every land stand undeterred and unabashed in the face of the strong condemnation pronounced against their brethren in Egypt. Indeed, they together with their fellow-workers in all Muslim countries welcome with gladness and pride every opportunity for further emancipation that they may set forth in a truer light the sublime mission of Bahá'u'lláh.

In the face of such an outspoken and challenging declaration, the Bahá'í of the West cannot but feel the deepest sympathy with their Egyptian brethren who, for the sake of our beloved Cause and its deliverance, have to face all the embarrassments and vexations which the severance of old-established ties must necessarily entail. They will, however, most certainly expect every staunch and loyal believer in the Faith who resides in that land to refrain in view of the grave warning uttered expressly by our opponents, from any practice that would in any manner constitute in the eyes of a critical and vigilant enemy a repudiation of the fundamental beliefs of the people of Bahá. They will most assuredly, whenever the moment is opportune, step forth with eager hearts to offer every support in their power to their fellow-workers who, with stout hearts and irreproachable loyalty,

will continue to hold aloft the standard of God's struggling Faith. They will not fail to come to the rescue of those who with joyous confidence will endure to the very end such vicissitudes as this New Day of God, now in its birth-throes, must needs suffer and surmount.

Worldwide Attacks Foretold

We cannot believe that as the Movement grows in strength, in authority and in influence, the perplexities and the sufferings it has had to contend with in the past will correspondingly decrease and vanish. Nay, as it grows from strength to strength, the fanatical defendants of the strongholds of orthodoxy, whatever be their denomination, realizing the penetrating influence of this growing Faith, will arise and strain every nerve to extinguish its light and discredit its name. For has not our beloved ‘Abdu’l-Bahá sent forth His glowing prophecy from behind the prison walls of the citadel of Akká—words so significant in their forecast of the coming world turmoil, yet so rich in their promise of eventual victory:—

“How great, how very great is the Cause; how very fierce the onslaught of all the peoples and kindreds of the earth! Erelong shall the clamor of the multitude throughout Africa, throughout America, the cry of the European and of the Turk, the groaning of India and China be heard from far and near. One and all they shall arise with all their power to resist His Cause. Then shall the Knights of the Lord, assisted by grace from on high, strengthened by faith, aided by the power of understanding and reinforced by the legions of the Covenant, arise and make manifest the truth of the verse: ‘Behold the confusion that hath befallen the tribes of the defeated!’”

Dearly beloved friends, upon us devolves the supreme obligation to stand by His side, to fight His battles and to win His victory. May we prove ourselves worthy of this trust.

Your true brother,
SHOGHI.

Haifa, Palestine,
February 12, 1927.

Letter of February 20, 1927.

To the members of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada.

Dear and precious fellow-workers in the Vineyard of God:—

The communications addressed to me by your indefatigable and distinguished secretary, dated October 28, November 8, 11, 18, December 4, 16 and January 27th, have been received, and together with their enclosures read and carefully noted. I cannot but admire the spirit of unrelaxing resolve and harmonious cooperation with which you are conducting the ever-expanding activities of the Cause in a land upon which our Beloved has lavished His richest blessings, and for the spiritual potentialities of which He cherished the brightest hopes. The vigorous efforts you are exerting to consolidate the forces which the Almighty has placed in your hands; the resourcefulness you display by the measures you have initiated for the furtherance of the Cause; the magnificent response with which you have met the piteous call of your suffering brethren of the East—all proclaim your worthiness of the unexampled efforts which, in your country more than in any other land, 'Abdu'l-Bahá has exerted for the spread of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh.

Twofold Teaching Method

In connection with the World Unity Conferences, which you have organized, I desire to assure you of my heartfelt appreciation of such a splendid conception. I am profoundly impressed by the generous assistance spontaneously offered by those who, faithful to their other obligations, have risen to insure the financial success of such a noble Plan. I am grateful to those local Assemblies and individuals who have given it their whole-hearted support in their respective fields.

As to the policy that should be adopted with regard to these Conferences and other Bahá'í activities in general, it appears increasingly evident that as the Movement grows in strength and power the National Spiritual Assemblies should be encouraged, if circumstances permit and the means at their disposal justify, to resort to the twofold method of directly and indirectly winning the enlightened public to the unqualified acceptance of the Bahá'í Faith. The one method would assume an open, decisive and challenging tone. The other, without implying in any manner the slightest departure from strict loyalty to the Cause of God, would be progressive and cautious. Experience will reveal the fact that each of the methods in its own special way might suit a particular temperament and class of people, and that each in the present state of a constantly fluctuating society, should be judiciously attempted and utilized.

It is, I feel, for the National representatives of the believers in every land to utilize and combine both methods, the outspoken as well as the gradual, in such a manner as to secure the greatest benefits and the fullest advantage for this steadily-growing Cause. Every staunch and high-minded believer is thoroughly convinced of the unfailing efficacy of every humanitarian undertaking which boldly and unreservedly proclaims the source of its motive power to be the consciousness of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh. Yet, if we but call to mind the practice generally

adopted by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, we cannot fail to perceive the wisdom, nay the necessity, of gradually and cautiously disclosing to the eyes of an unbelieving world the implications of a Truth which, by its own challenging nature, it is so difficult for it to comprehend and embrace.

It was He, our beloved ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, our true and shining Exemplar, who with infinite tact and patience, whether in His public utterances or in private converse, adapted the presentation of the fundamentals of the Cause to the varying capacities and the spiritual receptiveness of His hearers. He never hesitated, however, to tear the veil asunder and reveal to the spiritually ripened those challenging verities that set forth in its true light the relationship of this Supreme Revelation with the Dispensations of the past. Unashamed and unafraid when challenged to assert in its entirety the stupendous claim of Bahá’u’lláh, Bahá’ís, whether laboring as individuals or functioning as an organized community, feel certain that in the face of the apathy, the gross materialism, and the superficiality of society today, a progressive disclosure of the magnitude of the claim of Bahá’u’lláh would constitute the most effective means for the attainment of the end so greatly desired by even the staunchest and most zealous advocate of the Faith.

Fully aware of the repeated statements of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá that universality is of God, Bahá’ís in every land are ready, nay anxious, to associate themselves by word and deed with any association of men which, after careful scrutiny, they feel satisfied is free from every tinge of partisanship and politics and is wholly devoted to the interests of all mankind. In their collaboration with such associations they would extend any moral and material assistance they can afford, after having fulfilled their share of support to those institutions that affect directly the interests of the Cause. They should always bear in mind, however, the dominating purpose of such a collaboration which is to secure in time the recognition by those with whom they are associated of

the paramount necessity and the true significance of the Bahá'í Revelation in this day.

As the Movement extends the bounds of its influence and its opportunities for fuller recognition multiply, the twofold character of the obligations imposed on its National elected representatives should, I feel, be increasingly emphasized. Whilst chiefly engaged in the pursuit of their major task, consisting chiefly in the formation and the consolidation of Bahá'í administrative institutions, they should endeavor to participate, within recognized limits, in the work of institutions which though unaware of the claim of the Bahá'í Cause are prompted by a sincere desire to promote the spirit that animates the Faith. In the pursuit of their major task their function is to preserve the identity of the Cause and the purity of the mission of Bahá'u'lláh. In their minor undertaking their purpose should be to imbue with the spirit of power and strength such movements as in their restricted scope are endeavoring to achieve what is near and dear to the heart of every true Bahá'í. It would even appear at times to be advisable and helpful as a supplement to their work for the Bahá'ís to initiate any undertaking, not specifically designated as Bahá'í, provided they have ascertained that such an undertaking would constitute the best way of approach to those whose minds and hearts are as yet unprepared for a full acceptance of the claim of Bahá'u'lláh. These twofold obligations devolving upon organized Bahá'í communities, far from neutralizing the effects of one another or of appearing antagonistic in their aims, should be regarded as complementary and fulfilling, each in its way, a vital and necessary function.

It is for the National representatives of the Bahá'í Cause to observe the conditions under which they labor, to estimate the forces that are at work in their own surroundings, to weigh carefully and prayerfully the merits of either procedure, and to form a correct judgment as to the degree of emphasis that should be placed upon these twofold methods. Then and only then will they

be enabled to protect and stimulate on one hand the independent growth of the Bahá'í Faith, and on the other vindicate the claim of its universal principles to the doubtful and unbelieving.

I have already considered these delicate and complex issues with the Bahá'í representatives whom I have requested to gather in the Holy Land in the hope of arriving at the best possible solution of the pressing and intricate problems that confront the development of the Bahá'í Cause. I have asked our dearly-beloved brother, Mr. Mountfort Mills, whose services to the Cause only future generations can estimate, to acquaint you with these and other considerations, the delicacy and scope of which only a verbal explanation can adequately reveal. He will fully and authoritatively inform you regarding the policy that should govern the conduct of the Star of the West, the character and the range of the Bahá'í Bibliography to be inserted in the next edition of the Bahá'í Year Book, the present position of Bahá'u'lláh's House in Baghdád, the hopes and desires I cherish for the successful conclusion of the Plan of Unified Action, and the consequences and possibilities involved in the decision of Egypt's religious Tribunal regarding the Muslim Bahá'ís in that land.

The splendid record of the action taken by the national and local representatives of the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada, embodied in the compilation of newspaper cuttings which you have recently sent me, will be forwarded to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Persia. I will request them to pass it on from hand to hand, that the rank and file of the sufferers in that distracted country may obtain the strength and solace which the perusal of such a noble record of service is bound to produce.

Regarding the publicity campaign, recently launched, with your consent and under your general supervision, by a group of devoted friends, I desire to express my earnest hope that it may be richly blessed by our Beloved and yield abundant fruit.

I am gratified to learn that those who have conceived such a comprehensive plan and have generously supported it by every means in their power have refrained from any action that would involve the imposing of a fresh burden upon those who have incurred the financial obligations connected with the Budget Plan. I earnestly hope that those who have undertaken to finance this project with such spontaneous generosity have already fulfilled their sacred obligations in connection with the Plan, and will not allow any pledges they have made for publicity to interfere with their regular contributions to the National Fund, the paramount importance of which has already been emphasized.

The Spirit of Enterprise

It is the duty and privilege of the National and Local Assemblies if they find that the pressing requirements of their local and national budgets have been adequately met, to encourage individuals and groups to initiate and conduct, with their knowledge and consent, any undertaking that would serve to enhance the work which they have set themselves to achieve. Not content with appeals addressed to each and every believer to offer any constructive suggestions or plan that would remedy an existing grievance, they should, by every means in their power, stimulate the spirit of enterprise among the believers in order to further the teaching as well as the administrative work of the Cause. They should endeavor by personal contact and written appeals, to imbue the body of the faithful with a deep sense of personal responsibility, and urge every believer, whether high or low, poor or wealthy, to conceive, formulate and execute such measures and projects as would redound, in the eyes of their representatives, to the power and the fair name of this sacred Cause.

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.

Your true brother,
SHOGHI.

Haifa, Palestine,
February 20, 1927.

Letter of April 12, 1927.

To the members of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada:

Dearly-beloved friends:

Your recent communications, dated February 17 and March 2, 17 and 21, have been received, and their perusal has served to heighten my admiration for the unflinching determination which characterizes the concerted efforts which you are exerting for the spread and consolidation of the Bahá'í Faith.

Inter-racial Amity

I have also received and read with the keenest interest and appreciation a copy of that splendid document formulated by the National Committee on inter-racial amity and addressed to all the Spiritual Assemblies throughout the United States and Canada. This moving appeal, so admirable in its conception, so sound and sober in its language, has struck a responsive chord in my heart. Sent forth at a highly opportune moment in the evolution of our sacred Faith, it has served as a potent reminder of these challenging issues which still confront in a peculiar manner the American believers.

As this problem, in the inevitable course of events, grows in acuteness and complexity, and as the number of the faithful from both races multiplies, it will become increasingly evident that the future growth and prestige of the Cause are bound to be influenced to a very considerable degree by the manner in which the adherents of the Bahá'í Faith carry out, first among themselves and in their relations with their fellow-men, those high standards of inter-racial amity so widely proclaimed and so fearlessly exemplified to the American people by our Master 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

I direct my appeal with all the earnestness and urgency that this pressing problem calls for to every conscientious upholder of the universal principles of Bahá'u'lláh to face this extremely delicate situation with the boldness, the decisiveness and wisdom it demands. I cannot believe that those whose hearts have been touched by the regenerating influence of God's creative Faith in His day will find it difficult to cleanse their souls from every lingering trace of racial animosity so subversive of the Faith they profess. How can hearts that throb with the love of God fail to respond to all the implications of this supreme injunction of Bahá'u'lláh, the unreserved acceptance of which, under the cir-

cumstances now prevailing in America, constitutes the hall-mark of a true Bahá'í character?

Let every believer, desirous to witness the swift and healthy progress of the Cause of God, realize the twofold nature of his task. Let him first turn his eyes inwardly and search his own heart and satisfy himself that in his relations with his fellow-believers, irrespective of color and class, he is proving himself increasingly loyal to the spirit of his beloved Faith. Assured and content that he is exerting his utmost in a conscious effort to approach nearer every day the lofty station to which his gracious Master summons him, let him turn to his second task, and, with befitting confidence and vigor, assail the devastating power of those forces which in his own heart he has already succeeded in subduing. Fully alive to the unfailing efficacy of the power of Bahá'u'lláh, and armed with the essential weapons of wise restraint and inflexible resolve, let him wage a constant fight against the inherited tendencies, the corruptive instincts, the fluctuating fashions, the false pretences of the society in which he lives and moves.

In their relations amongst themselves as fellow-believers, let them not be content with the mere exchange of cold and empty formalities often connected with the organizing of banquets, receptions, consultative assemblies, and lecture-halls. Let them rather, as equal co-sharers in the spiritual benefits conferred upon them by Bahá'u'lláh, arise and, with the aid and counsel of their local and national representatives, supplement these official functions with those opportunities which only a close and intimate social intercourse can adequately provide. In their homes, in their hours of relaxation and leisure, in the daily contact of business transactions, in the association of their children, whether in their study-classes, their playgrounds, and club-rooms, in short under all possible circumstances, however insignificant they appear, the community of the followers of Bahá'u'lláh should satisfy themselves that in the eyes of the world at large and in the sight

of their vigilant Master they are the living witnesses of those truths which He fondly cherished and tirelessly championed to the very end of His days. If we relax in our purpose, if we falter in our faith, if we neglect the varied opportunities given us from time to time by an all-wise and gracious Master, we are not merely failing in what is our most vital and conspicuous obligation, but are thereby insensibly retarding the flow of those quickening energies which can alone insure the vigorous and speedy development of God's struggling Faith.

I would particularly address my appeal to you, as the Trustees of God's sacred Faith, to reaffirm by word and deed the spirit and character of the insistent admonitions of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, so solemnly and so explicitly uttered in the course of His journeys through your land—a trust which it is your privilege and function to preserve and fortify.

May the varied opportunities presented by the forthcoming assembly of the friends at Green Acre this summer—a place so admirably suited to the realization of such a noble ideal—be fully utilized to further this noble end. May it, on one hand, serve to banish once and for all every misgiving and mistrust as to the attitude that should characterize the conduct of the members of the Bahá'í family, and, on the other, serve to familiarize the invited public with that aspect of our Faith which, owing to the pressure of circumstances, a few have inclined to belittle or ignore.

Green Acre—a Testing Ground

It is my earnest hope and prayer that the forthcoming gathering at Green Acre, the program for which has been so carefully and judiciously prepared, may serve as a testing ground for the application of those ideals and standards that are the distinguishing features of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh. May the assembled believers—now but a tiny nucleus of the Bahá'í Commonwealth of the future—so exemplify that spirit of universal love and fellowship as to evoke in the minds of their associates the vision of that future City of God which the almighty arm of Bahá'u'lláh can alone establish.

Not by merely imitating the excesses and laxity of the extravagant age they live in; not by the idle neglect of the sacred responsibilities it is their privilege to shoulder; not by the silent compromise of the principles dearly cherished by 'Abdu'l-Bahá; not by their fear or unpopularity or their dread of censure can they hope to rouse society from its spiritual lethargy, and serve as a model to a civilization the foundations of which the corrosion of prejudice has well-nigh undermined. By the sublimity of their principles, the warmth of their love, the spotless purity of their character, and the depth of their devoutness and piety, let them demonstrate to their fellow-countrymen the ennobling reality of a power that shall weld a disrupted world.

We can prove ourselves worthy of our Cause only if in our individual conduct and corporate life we sedulously imitate the example of our beloved Master, Whom the terrors of tyranny, the storms of incessant abuse, the oppressiveness of humiliation, never caused to deviate a hair's breadth from the revealed Law of Bahá'u'lláh.

Such is the path of servitude, such is the way of holiness He chose to tread to the very end of His life. Nothing short of the strictest adherence to His glorious example can safely steer our

course amid the pitfalls of this perilous age, and lead us on to fulfill our high destiny.

Your true brother,
SHOGHI.

Haifa, Palestine,
April 12, 1927.

Letter of April 27, 1927.

To the beloved of the Lord and the handmaids of the Merciful throughout the United States and Canada.

Dearly-beloved friends:

With feelings of horror and indignation I communicate to you the tale of yet another tragedy involving the shedding of the blood of a martyr of the Faith on Persia's sacred soil. I have before me, as I pen these lines, the report of the local Spiritual Assembly of Ardibil, a town on the north-east confines of the province of Ádhirbayján, not far distant from those hallowed spots where the Báb suffered His last confinement and martyrdom. Addressed to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Persia, this report recounts in simple but moving language the circumstances that have led to the cowardly crime committed in the darkness of the night at the instigation of the fanatical clergy—the deadliest opponents of the Faith in that town.

Assassination of Persian Believer

Our martyred brother, Aminu'l-'Ulama' by name, had for some time past become notorious in the eyes of the Muslim inhabitants of Ardibil for his tenacity of faith by openly refusing at every instance to vilify and renounce his most cherished convictions. In the latter part of Ramadán—the month associated with prayer, pious deeds and fasting—his use of the public bath (that long-established institution the amenities and privileges of which are as a rule accorded only to the adherents of the Muslim Faith) had served to inflame the mob, and to provide a scheming instigator with a pretext to terminate his life. In the market place he was ridiculed and condemned as an apostate of the Faith of Islám, who, by boldly rejecting the repeated entreaties showered upon him to execrate the Bahá'í name, had lawfully incurred the penalty of immediate death at the hands of every pious upholder of the Muslim tradition.

In spite of the close surveillance exercised by a body of guards stationed around his house, in response to the intercession of his friends with the local authorities, the treacherous criminal found his way into his home, and on the night of the 22nd of Ramadán, corresponding with the 26th of March, 1927, assailed him in a most atrocious and dastardly manner. Concealing within the folds of his garment his unsheathed dagger, he approached his victim and claiming the need of whispering a confidential message in his ears, plunged the weapon hilt-deep into his vitals, cutting across his ribs and mutilating his body. Every attempt to secure immediate medical assistance seems to have been foiled by malicious devices on the part of the associates of this merciless criminal, and the helpless victim after a few hours of agonizing pain surrendered his soul to his Beloved. His friends and fellow-believers, alarmed at the prospect of a fresh outbreak that would inevitably result were his mortal remains to be accorded the ordinary privileges of a decent burial, decided to inter his

body in one of the two rooms that served as his own dwelling, seeking thereby to appease the fury of an unrelenting foe.

He leaves behind in desperate poverty a family of minors with no support but their mother, expectant to bring forth her child, and with no hope of relief from their non-Bahá'í relatives in whose eyes they deserve to be treated only with the meanest contempt.

It appears from the above-mentioned report that the merciless assailant has been arrested, waiting, however, as has been the case with similar incidents in southern Persia, to be sooner or later released under the pressure of bribery and intimidation sedulously exercised by an impenitent enemy.

Dearest friends! Any measure of publicity the concerted efforts of the Bahá'í Spiritual Assemblies of the West, on whom almighty Providence has conferred the inestimable benefits of religious toleration and freedom, can accord to this latest manifestation of unbridled barbarism in Persia will be most opportune and valuable. It will, I am certain, confer abiding solace to those disconsolate sufferers who with sublime heroism continue to uphold the traditions of their beloved Faith. Our one weapon lies in our prayerful efforts, intelligently and persistently pursued, to arouse by every means at our disposal the conscience of unheeding humanity, and to direct the attention of men of vision and authority to these incredibly odious acts which in their ferocity and frequency cannot but constitute in the eyes of every fair-minded observer the gravest challenge to all that is sacred and precious in our present-day civilization.

Your true brother,
SHOGHI.

Haifa, Palestine,
April 27, 1927.

Letter of May 27, 1927.

To the members of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada:

Dearly-beloved co-workers:

Your communications dated April 15th and May 6th and 9th have been received, with their enclosures, and carefully perused.

Declaration of Trust and By-Laws

The Declaration of Trust, the provisions of which you have so splendidly conceived, and formulated with such assiduous care, marks yet another milestone on the road of progress along which you are patiently and determinedly advancing. Clear and concise in its wording, sound in principle, and complete in its affirmations of the fundamentals of Bahá'í administration, it stands in its final form as 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, when correlated and combined with the set of by-laws which I trust are soon forthcoming, will serve as a pattern to every National Bahá'í Assembly, be it in the East or in the West, which aspires to conform, pending the formation of the First Universal House of Justice, with the spirit and letter of the world-order ushered in by Bahá'u'lláh.

I eagerly await the receipt of the complete set of the contemplated by-laws, the purpose of which should be to supplement the provisions, clarify the purpose, and explain more fully the working of the principle underlying the above-mentioned Declaration. I shall, after having given it my close and personal consideration, transmit it to you, in order that you may submit it to the local Spiritual Assemblies, who in turn will endeavor to secure its final ratification by the body of the recognized believers throughout the United States and Canada. I would urge you to insert the Text of the Declaration, the complete set of the by-laws, and the accompanying Indenture of Trust, all combined, in the next issue of the Bahá'í Year Book, that sympathizers and believers alike in every land may obtain a clear and correct vision of the preliminary framework of that complete system of world administration implicit in the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh.

Spirit and Method of Bahá'í Elections

In connection with the best and most practical methods of procedure to be adopted for the election of Bahá'í Spiritual Assemblies, I feel that in view of the fact that definite and detailed regulations defining the manner and character of Bahá'í elections have neither been expressly revealed by Bahá'u'lláh nor laid down in the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, it devolves upon the members of the Universal House of Justice to formulate and apply such system of laws as would be in conformity with the essentials and requisites expressly provided by the Author and Interpreter of the Faith for the conduct of Bahá'í administration. I have consequently refrained from establishing a settled and uniform procedure for the election of the Assemblies of the East and the West, leaving them free to pursue their own methods of procedure which in most cases had been instituted and practiced during the last two decades of the life of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

The general practice prevailing throughout the East is the one based upon the principle of plurality rather than absolute majority, whereby those candidates that have obtained the highest number of votes, irrespective of the fact whether they command an absolute majority of the votes cast or not, are automatically and definitely elected. It has been felt, with no little justification, that this method, admittedly disadvantageous in its disregard of the principle that requires that each elected member must secure a majority of the votes cast, does away on the other hand with the more serious disadvantage of restricting the freedom of the elector who, unhampered and unconstrained by electoral necessities, is called upon to vote for none but those whom prayer and reflection have inspired him to uphold. Moreover, the practice of nomination, so detrimental to the atmosphere of a silent and prayerful election, is viewed with mistrust inasmuch as it gives the right to the majority of a body that, in itself under the present circumstances, often constitutes a minority of

all the elected delegates, to deny that God-given right of every elector to vote only in favor of those who he is conscientiously convinced are the most worthy candidates. Should this simple system be provisionally adopted, it would safeguard the spiritual principle of the unfettered freedom of the voter, who will thus preserve intact the sanctity of the choice he first made. It would avoid the inconvenience of securing advance nominations from absent delegates, and the impracticality of associating them with the assembled electors in the subsequent ballots that are often required to meet the exigencies of majority vote.

I would recommend these observations to your earnest consideration, and whatever decision you arrive at, all local Assemblies and individual believers, I am certain, will uphold, for their spiritual obligation and privilege is not only to consult freely and frequently with the National Spiritual Assembly, but to uphold as well with confidence and cheerfulness whatever is the considered verdict of their national representatives.

Wishing you success from all my heart,

I am, your true brother,

SHOGHI.

Haifa, Palestine,

May 27, 1927.

Letter of October 17, 1927.

To the Honored Members of the Bahá'í National Spiritual Assemblies throughout the West.

My dear fellow-workers:

With feelings of burning indignation I find myself impelled to acquaint you with various events that have recently transpired in Persia. Though in their immediate effect these happenings may prove gravely disquieting to the followers of the Faith in Persia and elsewhere, yet they cannot but eventually contribute to the strengthening and purification of the Cause we steadfastly love and serve.

I refer to the treacherous conduct of a professed adherent of the teaching of Bahá'u'lláh, by the name of 'Abdu'l-Ḥusayn Avarih, hitherto regarded as a respected teacher of the Cause, and not unknown by a few of its followers in Europe. Of a nature and character whom those who have learned to know him well have never ceased to despise, even in the brightest days of his public career in the Cause, he has of late been driven by the force of circumstances which his shortsightedness has gravely miscalculated to throw off the mask which for so many years hid his hideous self.

The sudden removal of the commanding personality of our beloved 'Abdu'l-Bahá; the confused consternation that seized His followers in the years immediately succeeding His passing; the reputation which to superficial eyes he had acquired by his travels in Europe; the success attending his voluminous compilation of the history of the Cause—these and other circumstances emboldened him to launch a campaign of insinuation and fraud aiming at the eventual overthrow of the institutions expressly provided by Bahá'u'lláh. He saw clearly his chance in the complete disruption of the Cause to capture the allegiance if not of the whole world-wide Bahá'í community of at least a considerable section of its followers in the East.

No sooner had his evil whisperings reached the ears of the loyal and vigilant followers of Bahá'u'lláh, than they arose with overwhelming force and unhesitating determination to denounce him as a dangerous enemy seeking to undermine the faith and sap the loyalty of the adherents of the Cause of God. Shunned by the entire body of the believers, abandoned by his life-long and most intimate friends, deserted by his wife, separated from his only child, refused admittance into even his own home, denied of the profit he hoped to derive from the sale and circulation of his book, he found to his utter amazement and remorse his best hopes irretrievably shattered.

Forsaken and bankrupt, and in desperate rage, he now with startling audacity sought to expose to friend and foe, the futility and hollowness which he attributed to the Cause, thereby revealing the depths of his own degradation and folly. He has with bitter hatred conspired with the fanatical clergy and the orthodox members of foreign Missions in Ṭihrán, allied himself with every hostile element in the Capital, directed with fiendish subtlety his appeal to the highest dignitaries of the State and sought by every method to secure financial assistance for the furtherance of his aim.

Not content with an infamous denunciation of the originality and efficacy of the teachings and principles of the Cause, not satisfied with a rejection of the authenticity of the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, he has dared to attack the exalted person of the Author and Founder of the Faith, and to impute to its Forerunner and true Exemplar the vilest motives and most incredible intentions.

He has most malignantly striven to revive the not unfamiliar accusation of representing the true lovers of Persia as the sworn enemies of every form of established authority in that land, the unrelenting disturbers of its peace, the chief obstacles to its unity and the determined wreckers of the venerated faith of Islám. By every artifice which a sordid and treacherous mind can devise he

has sought in the pages of his book to strike terror in the heart of the confident believer, to sow the seeds of doubt in the mind of the well-disposed and friendly, to poison the thoughts of the indifferent and to reinforce the power of the assaulting weapon of the adversary.

But, alas! he has labored in vain, oblivious of the fact that all the pomp and powers of royalty, all the concerted efforts of the mightiest potentates of Islám, all the ingenious devices to which the cruelest torture-mongers of a cruel race have for well-nigh a century resorted, have proved one and all impotent to stem the tide of the beloved Faith or to extinguish its flame. Surely, if we read the history of this Cause aright, we cannot fail to observe that the East has already witnessed not a few of its sons, of wider experience, of a higher standing, of a greater influence, apostatize their faith, find themselves to their utter consternation lose whatsoever talent they possessed, recede swiftly into the shadows of oblivion and be heard of no more.

Should ever his book secure widespread circulation in the West, should it ever confuse the mind of the misinformed and stranger, I have no doubt that the various Bahá'í National Spiritual Assemblies, throughout the Western world, will with the wholehearted and sustained support of local Assemblies and individual believers arise with heart and soul for the defence of the impregnable stronghold of the Cause of God, for the vindication of the sacredness and sublimity of the Bahá'í Teachings, and for the condemnation, in the eyes of those who are in authority, of one who has so basely dared to assail, not only the tenets, but the holy person of the recognized Founder of an established and world-wide Faith.

Your true brother,
SHOGHI.

Haifa, Palestine; October 17, 1927.

Letter of October 18, 1927.

To the Members of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada.

Dearly-beloved co-workers:

I have already expressed indirectly my views with regard to various secondary issues raised in your latest communications to me dated May 23, June 10, 21, July 11, 14, 15 and 25, August 7 and September 28; and I wish in this letter to deal more particularly with such matters of primary importance as affect the conduct and the growth of Bahá'í administration. The perusal of these communications replete with the news of steadily multiplying activities and newly conceived plans, all of which I as heretofore appreciate and welcome, has made me feel however that the time seems now opportune to utter a word of caution and warning to those who with unceasing zest labor to give befitting embodiment to those latent energies released by the Message of Bahá'u'lláh.

Concentration of Resources

Much as I rejoice in witnessing the abundant signs of unfaltering energy that characterize in various fields and distant lands the mission of the valiant warriors of the Cause, I cannot help observing that, driven by their impetuous eagerness to establish the undisputed reign of Bahá'u'lláh on this earth, they may by an undue multiplication of their activities, and the consequent dissipation of their forces, defeat the very purpose which animates them in the pursuit of their glorious task. Particularly do I feel that this necessity for a careful estimation of the present resources at our disposal and of cautious restraint in handling them applies in a peculiar manner to the swiftly expanding activities of the American believers, whose mission increasingly appears to be to give the lead and set the example to their brethren across the seas in laying a secure foundation for the permanent institutions of the Bahá'í Faith. That I feel is chiefly the reason why such stress has been laid in the past upon the necessity for consultation on the part of individual believers with their elected national representatives in the matter of initiating plans of action above and beyond the plans which the deliberations of the National Spiritual Assembly have already evolved. In the matter of affiliation with bodies and organizations that advocate ideals and principles that are in sympathy with the Bahá'í Revelation; in establishing magazines beyond those that already are designed to advance openly and indirectly the interests of the Bahá'í Teachings; in the financial support we may sooner or later be called upon to extend to philanthropic institutions and the like; in advancing the cause of any particular activity to which we may feel sentimentally inclined;—these, as well as all similar undertakings, we should only approach after having definitely ascertained, through careful deliberation with those who are in a responsible position, that the institutions representing the paramount interests of the Cause are already assured of adequate and continuous assistance.

Nothing short of the spirit of earnest and sustained consultation with those whom we have prayerfully and of our own accord placed in the forefront of those who are the custodians of the priceless heritage bequeathed by Bahá'u'lláh; nothing less than persistent and strenuous warfare against our own instincts and natural inclinations, and heroic self-sacrifice in subordinating our own likings to the imperative requirements of the Cause of God, can insure our undivided loyalty to so sacred a principle—a principle that will for all time safeguard our beloved Cause from the allurements and the trivialities of the world without, and of the pitfalls of the self within. I entreat you, well-beloved brethren, to resolve as you never have resolved before to pledge undying loyalty and sleepless vigilance in upholding so essential a principle in the course of your manifold activities, that yours may be the abiding satisfaction of having done nothing that may tend in the least to impede the flow or obscure the radiance of the rejuvenating spirit of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh.

Relations of Committees to Assembly

Touching the recent decision of the National Spiritual Assembly to place as much as possible of the current details of the work in the hands of its national committees, I feel I should point out that this raises a fundamental issue of paramount importance, as it involves a unique principle in the administration of the Cause, governing the relations that should be maintained between the central administrative body and its assisting organs of executive and legislative action. As it has been observed already, the role of these committees set up by the National Spiritual Assembly, the renewal, the membership and functions of which should be reconsidered separately each year by the incoming National Assembly, is chiefly to make thorough and expert study of the issue entrusted to their charge, advise by their reports, and assist in the execution of the decisions which in vital matters are to be exclusively and directly rendered by the National Assembly. The utmost vigilance, the most strenuous exertion is required by them if they wish to fulfill as befits their high and responsible calling, the functions which it is theirs to discharge. They should, within the limits imposed upon them by present-day circumstances, endeavor to maintain the balance in such a manner that the evils of over-centralization which clog, confuse and in the long run depreciate the value of the Bahá'í services rendered shall on one hand be entirely avoided, and on the other the perils of utter decentralization with the consequent lapse of governing authority from the hands of the national representatives of the believers definitely averted. The absorption of the petty details of Bahá'í administration by the personnel of the National Spiritual Assembly is manifestly injurious to efficiency and an expert discharge of Bahá'í duties, whilst the granting of undue discretion to bodies that should be regarded in no other light than that of expert advisers and executive assistants would jeopardize the very vital and pervading powers that are the sacred prerogatives of bodies that

in time will evolve into Bahá'í National Houses of Justice. I am fully aware of the strain and sacrifice which a loyal adherence to such an essential principle of Bahá'í administration—a principle that will at once ennoble and distinguish the Bahá'í method of administration from the prevailing systems of the world—demands from the national representatives of the believers at this early stage of our evolution. Yet I feel I cannot refrain from stressing the broad lines along which the affairs of the Cause should be increasingly conducted, the knowledge of which is so essential at this formative period of Bahá'í administrative institutions.

By-Laws of National Assembly

As already intimated, I have read and re-read most carefully the final draft of the By-Laws drawn up by that highly-talented, much-loved servant of Bahá'u'lláh, Mountfort Mills, and feel I have nothing substantial to add to this first and very creditable attempt at codifying the principles of general Bahá'í administration. I heartily and unhesitatingly commend it to the earnest perusal of, and its loyal adoption by, every National Bahá'í Spiritual Assembly, whether constituted in the East or in the West. I would ask you particularly to send copies of the text of this document of fundamental importance accompanied by copies of the Declaration of Trust and the text of the Indenture of Trust, to every existing National Spiritual Assembly, with my insistent request to study the provisions, comprehend its implications, and endeavor to incorporate it, to the extent that their own circumstances permit, within the framework of their own national activities. You can but faintly imagine how comforting a stimulant and how helpful a guide its publication and circulation will be to those patient and toiling workers in Eastern lands, and particularly Persia, who in the midst of uncertainties and almost insuperable obstacles are straining every nerve in order to establish the world order ushered in by Bahá'u'lláh. You can hardly realize how substantially it will contribute to pave the way for the elaboration of the beginnings of the constitution of the worldwide Bahá'í Community that will form the permanent basis upon which the blest and sanctified edifice of the first International House of Justice will securely rest and flourish.

I would specifically remind you that in the text of the said By-Laws which to the outside world represents the expression of the aspirations, the motives and objects that animate the collective responsibilities of Bahá'í Fellowship, due emphasis should not be placed only on the concentrated authority, the rights, the privileges and prerogatives enjoyed by the elected

national representatives of the believers, but that special stress be laid also on their responsibilities as willing ministers, faithful stewards and loyal trustees to those who have chosen them. Let it be made clear to every inquiring reader that among the most outstanding and sacred duties incumbent upon those who have been called upon to initiate, direct and coordinate the affairs of the Cause, are those that require them to win by every means in their power the confidence and affection of those whom it is their privilege to serve. Theirs is the duty to investigate and acquaint themselves with the considered views, the prevailing sentiments, the personal convictions of those whose welfare it is their solemn obligation to promote. Theirs is the duty to purge once for all their deliberations and the general conduct of their affairs from that air of self-contained aloofness, from the suspicion of secrecy, the stifling atmosphere of dictatorial assertiveness, in short, from every word and deed that might savor of partiality, self-centeredness and prejudice. Theirs is the duty, while retaining the sacred and exclusive right of final decision in their hands, to invite discussion, provide information, ventilate grievances, welcome advice from even the most humble and insignificant members of the Bahá'í family, expose their motives, set forth their plans, justify their actions, revise if necessary their verdict, foster the spirit of individual initiative and enterprise, and fortify the sense of interdependence and co-partnership, of understanding and mutual confidence between them on one hand and all local Assemblies and individual believers on the other.

First National Convention of Persian Bahá'ís

As to the state of affairs in Persia, where the circumstances related in a previous circular letter have had their share in intensifying the chronic state of instability and insecurity that prevail, grave concern has been felt lest the support, both moral and financial, anticipated from the bigoted elements of foreign Missions in the Capital should lead to an extension of its circulation in the West, and thus inflict, however slight, a damage on the prestige and fair name of our beloved Cause. These internal agitations, however, coinciding as they have done with outbursts of sectarian fanaticism from without, accompanied by isolated cases of fresh persecution in Kirmán and elsewhere, have failed to exasperate and exhaust the heroic patience of the steadfast lovers of the Cause. They have even failed to becloud the serenity of their faith in the inevitable approach of the breaking of a brighter dawn for their afflicted country. Undeterred and undismayed, they have replied to the defiance of the traitor within, and the assaults of the enemy without by a striking re-affirmation of their unbroken solidarity and inflexible resolve to build with infinite patience and toil on the sure foundations laid for them by Bahá'u'lláh. With their traditional fidelity and characteristic vigor, notwithstanding the unimaginable hindrances they have to face, they have convened their first historic representative conference of various delegates from the nine leading provinces of Persia, have evolved plans for holding every year as fully representative a convention of Bahá'í delegates in Persia as circumstances permit, and modelled after the method pursued by their brethren in the United States and Canada. They have reconstituted and defined the limits of the hitherto confused Bahá'í administrative divisions throughout the length and breadth of their land. They have adopted various resolutions of vital importance, the chief ones

among them aiming at the reorganization of the institution of the National Fund, the consolidation and extension of their national campaign of Teaching, the strengthening of the bonds that unite them with the local and national Assemblies at home and abroad, the establishment of Bahá'í primary educational institutions in towns and villages, the raising of the social and educational standards of women, irrespective of sect and caste, and the reinforcement of those forces that tend to raise the moral, cultural and material standard of their fellow-countrymen. Surely, to an unbiased observer of the present state of affairs in Persia, these resolutions, backed by the creative energy inherent in the power of the Word of God, mark not only a milestone on the road of the progress of the Persian believers, but constitute as well a notable landmark in the checkered history of their own country.

The warm hospitality accorded by the National Spiritual Assembly and the American believers to my dear cousin and collaborator, Ruhi Effendi, has deeply touched me, particularly as I realize from the appreciative reports I have recently received that by his radiant and earnest spirit of service he has deserved well of his dear fellow-workers in that continent, and contributed substantially to their better appreciation of the Teachings of the Cause. Much as I desire him to work by my side here in the Holy Land, I very gladly concur with your wish to further extend his sojourn with you, trusting that he will prove of great assistance to you all in the discharge of your noble task.

The Trend of World Events

And now in conclusion, may I be permitted to direct your attention to the lesson which the trend of world events brings home to us, the little band of His chosen workers who, according to the intelligent efforts we exert, can prove ourselves the determining factor in the immediate fortunes of the society we live in? As we witness on all sides the growing restlessness of a restless age, we are filled with mixed feelings of fear and hope—fear, at the prospect of yet another deadly encounter, the inevitability of which is alas! becoming increasingly manifest; hope, in the serene assurance that whatever cataclysm may yet visit humanity, it cannot but hasten the approaching era of universal and lasting peace so emphatically proclaimed by the Pen of Bahá'u'lláh. In the political domain, where we have lately witnessed, in the council of the leading nations of the world, the surrender of humanity's noblest conception to what may be regarded only as a transient phase in the life of peoples and nations; in the industrial world, where the representatives of the wage-earning classes, either through violence or persuasion, are capturing the seats of authority and wielding the scepter of power: in the field of religion, where we have lately witnessed widespread and organized attempts to broaden and simplify the basis of man's faith, to achieve unity in Christendom and restore the regenerating vigor of Islám; 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 these as in many others we have much cause for alarm, but much to be hopeful and thankful for also. To take but one instance more fully: Observe the fierce and as yet unsilenced dispute which the proposal for the introduction of a binding and universal pact of non-aggression among the nations of Europe has aroused among the avowed supporters of the League of Nations—a League so auspiciously welcomed for the

ideal that prompted its birth, yet now so utterly inadequate in the actual principles that underlie its present-day structure and working. And yet, in the great outcry raised by post-war nationalism in blindly defending and upholding the unfettered supremacy of its own sovereignty, and in repudiating unreservedly the conception of a world super-state, can we not discern the re-enactment only on a larger scale of the dramatic struggles that heralded the birth of the reconstructed and unified nations of the West? Has not authentic history clearly revealed in the case of these nations the painful yet inevitable merging of rival, particularistic and independent cities and principalities into one unified national entity, the evolving of a crude and narrow creed into a nobler and wider conception? Is not a parallel struggle being now manifested on the world stage of ever-advancing humanity? Can it lead to any other result than that which shall reaffirm the truth of humanity's onward march towards an ever-widening conception, and the ever-brightening glory of its destiny? Reverses and setbacks, such as we have already witnessed, no doubt will retard the ripening of the choicest fruit on the tree of human development. Yet the fierceness of controversy, the weight of argument advanced in its disfavor, cannot but contribute to the broadening of the basis and the consolidation of the foundations upon which the stately edifice of unified mankind must ultimately rest. Let us take heart therefore, and labor with renewed vigor and deepened understanding to contribute our share to those forces which, whether or not cognizant of the regenerating Faith of Bahá'u'lláh in this age, are operating, each in its respective sphere and under His all-encompassing guidance, for the uplift and the salvation of humanity.

Your true brother,
SHOGHI.

Haifa, Palestine,
October 18, 1927.

Letter of December 6, 1928.

To the beloved of the Lord and the handmaids of the Merciful throughout the West.

Dearly-beloved brothers and sisters in ‘Abdu’l-Bahá:

Events, of a startling character and of the utmost significance to the Faith of Bahá’u’lláh, have recently transpired throughout the Near and Middle East in such rapid succession, that I feel moved to write about them to those who, in distant lands and with eager hearts, are waiting to witness the fulfillment of the prophecies of Bahá’u’lláh. You will, I am certain, rejoice with me to learn that the quickening forces of internal reform are swiftly awakening from their age-long slumber of negligence those lands which, trodden by the feet of Bahá’u’lláh and wherein are enshrined the memorable scenes of His birth, His ministry, His exiles, His banishments, His suffering and His ascension, are destined in the fulness of time to play a pre-eminent role in the regeneration of the East—nay of all mankind.

The Promises of Our Departed Master

From Persia, the cradle of our Faith and the object of our tenderest affections, there breaks upon us the news of the first stirrings of that social and political Reformation which, as we firmly believe, is but the direct and unavoidable consequence of that great spiritual Revival ushered in by the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh. These social and political forces now released by the Source of such a tremendous Revival are bound in their turn to demolish one by one the barriers that have so long impeded its flow, sapped its vitality and obscured its radiance.

From a communication addressed to me recently by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Persia, as well as from reliable reports submitted by the local representatives of the Persian believers, and confirmed by the vivid narrative of visiting pilgrims, it is becoming increasingly manifest that the glowing promises so many times uttered by our departed Master are, with extraordinary exactitude and remarkable swiftness, being successively fulfilled. Reforms of a revolutionary character are, without bloodshed and with negligible resistance, gradually transforming the very basis and structure of Persia's primitive society. The essentials of public security and order are being energetically provided throughout the length and breadth of the Sháh's domain, and are hailed with particular gratification by that much harassed section of the population—our long-suffering brethren of that land. The rapidity, the incredible ease, with which the enlightened proposals of its government, in matters of education, trade and finance, means of transportation and travel, and the development of the country's internal resources, are receiving the unqualified sanction of a hitherto reactionary Legislature, and are overcoming the resistance and apathy of the masses, have undoubtedly tended to hasten the emancipation of our Persian brethren from the remaining fetters of a once despotic and blood-stained regime. The severely repressive and

humiliating measures undertaken on the initiative of progressive provincial Governors, and with the connivance of State officials in the Capital, aiming at the scattering and ultimate extinction of a rapidly waning clergy, such as degradation, detainment, deportation and in some cases pitiless execution, are paving the way for the entire removal of the shackles imposed by an ignorant and fanatical priesthood upon the administration of State affairs. In matters of dress; in the obligatory enforcement of a uniform style of national head-gear; in the strict limitation of the number, the rights and the prerogatives of high ecclesiastical officials; in the growing unpopularity of the veil among almost every section of society; in the marked distinction which unofficially and in various phases of public life is being made by an enlightened and pressing minority between the tottering forms of a discredited Ecclesiasticism and the civil rights and duties of civilized society; in the general laxity in religious observances and ceremonies; in the slow and hidden process of secularization invading many a government department under the courageous guidance of the Governors of outlying provinces—in all of these a discerning eye can easily discover the symptoms that augur well for a future that is sure to witness the formal and complete separation of Church and State.

Regeneration of Persia

To this uplifting movement, various external factors are being added that are tending to hasten and stimulate this process of internal regeneration so significant in the life of renascent Persia. The multiplicity and increasing facilities in the means of transportation and travel; the State visit of energetic and enlightened reformers to Persia's capital; the forthcoming and widely-advertised journey of the Sháh himself to the progressive capitals of Western Europe; the repercussion of Turkey's astounding reforms among an essentially sensitive and receptive people; the loud and persistent clamor of a revolting order in Russia against the evil domination and dark plottings of all forms of religious sectarianism; the relentless vigor with which Afghanistan's ambitious Ruler, reinforced by the example of his gracious Consort, is pursuing his campaign of repression against a similar order of a corrupted clergy at home—all tend to lend their force in fostering and fashioning that public opinion which can alone provide an enduring basis for the reform Movement destined to usher in that golden Era craved for by the followers of the Faith in Bahá'u'lláh's native land.

As a direct consequence of the birth of this new consciousness in the life of the nation, as evidenced by these early stirrings in the minds of the people, both high and low, meetings of an elaborate character, unprecedented in the number of their attendants, in the tone of the public addresses, in the undisturbed atmosphere of their proceedings, and the general impressiveness of their organization, have been publicly held in Ṭihrán, under the auspices of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Persia. Particularly significant and impressive were those that were held in the Hazíratu'l-Quds, the administrative and spiritual center of the Faith in the Capital, on the occasion of the twin Festivals commemorating the declaration of the Báb and the birth of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, at the chief of which no less than

two thousand representative Bahá'ís and non-Bahá'ís, leaders of public opinion, State officials and foreign representatives were officially invited. The addresses stressing the universality of the Teachings of the Cause, the formal and ordered character of the proceedings so unusual a feature to a gathering of such proportions, the mingling of the Bahá'ís with the recognized representatives of progressive thought in the Capital who, by virtue of their high office and stately appearance, lent color and weight to the concourse of attending believers, have all contributed to enhance the brilliance and spiritual significance of that gathering on that memorable occasion.

Moreover, reports of a highly encouraging nature, are being continually received from local Assemblies and individual believers, giving the names and stating the number of influential Persians who, hitherto reluctant to declare openly their faith in Bahá'u'lláh, are as a result of this reassuring and promising state of affairs emerging from the obscurity of their concealment and enlisting under the erected banner of Bahá'u'lláh. This has served to embolden the followers of the Faith to take the necessary steps, under the direction of their local Assemblies, for the institution of Bahá'í schools, for the holding of public gatherings, for the establishment of Bahá'í hostels, libraries and public baths, for the construction of official headquarters for their administrative work, and for the gradual execution among themselves, within the limits imposed upon them by the State, of the laws and ordinances revealed in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. Words fail me to describe the feelings of those patiently suffering brethren of ours in that land who, with eyes dim with tears and hearts overflowing with thanksgiving and praise, are witnessing on every side and with increasing force the unfoldment of a Faith which they have served so well and love so dearly. Accounts pathetic and inspiring in their tone are being received from that steadfast and cheerful band of exultant believers, and are being shared with the resident friends in the Holy Land who, having had the

privilege of close and continued association with the person of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, cannot but marvel at the range, the potency and accuracy of the prophecies of their departed Master.

Bahá'í Faith Vindicated in Turkey

From Turkey, on whose soil, for well nigh three score years and ten, were enacted some of the sublimest and most tragic scenes in the annals of the Cause; Turkey, under whose rule Bahá'u'lláh twice proclaimed Himself, was thrice exiled and banished, and finally ascended to the Abhá Kingdom, and where 'Abdu'l-Bahá spent more than fifty years of His Life, in incarceration and suffering; has of late been rudely awakened to a Call which it has so long obstinately despised and ignored. Following on the overthrow of that effete theocracy, resting on the twin institutions of the Caliphate and Sultanate—those two sinister forces that have combined to inflict the deadliest blows to our beloved Faith in the earliest stages of its infancy and growth—an uncompromising policy aiming at the secularization of the State and the disestablishment of Islám was initiated and carried out with exemplary vigor. Religious institutions and monastic orders which under the guise of religious propaganda were converted into hot-beds of political intrigue and sedition were peremptorily closed, their adherents scattered and banished, their funds confiscated, their privileges and prerogatives abolished. None, save the little band of Bahá'u'lláh's devoted followers, escaped the trenchant ax of the pitiless reformer; all, without fear or favor, had to submit to his searching investigations, his dictatorial edicts, his severe and irrevocable judgment. Lately, however, the Turkish Government, faithful to its policy of ceaseless vigilance, and fearful of the growing activities of the Bahá'ís under its rule, decided to order the Police in the town of Smyrna to conduct a close investigation into the purpose, the character and the effects of Bahá'í activity in that town. No sooner were the representative Bahá'ís in that locality arrested and conducted to the Law Courts for purposes of investigation, than the President of the Bahá'í Spiritual Assembly of Constantinople who, having read in the morning papers the report of the Smyrna incident,

had resolved unsummoned to offer the necessary explanations to the authorities concerned, was in his turn arrested and taken to the Police Headquarters where he soon afterwards was joined by the other members of the Assembly. The official searching of their homes, the seizure of whatever Bahá'í literature they had in their possession, their twenty-four hours detention at the Police station, the searching severity of the cross-examination to which they were subjected—all proved powerless to alarm and shake the faith of those intrepid champions of the Cause, or to evince anything detrimental to the best interests of the State. On the contrary, they served to deeply impress upon the minds and hearts of the officials concerned the sublimity, the innocence, and the dynamic force of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. So much so that their books were returned, a genuine desire to deepen their knowledge of the Cause was expressed by their examiners, and widespread publicity, as reflected in the articles of about a dozen leading newspapers of Turkey, was accorded by the Government, proclaiming the innocence of the Cause and lifting up the ban that now so oppressively weighs upon religious institutions in Turkey.

From Constantinople in European Turkey to the eastern confines of Anatolia, on the banks of the river Euphrates, where a small and flourishing Bahá'í Community has been recently established, a wave of public interest, criticism and inquiry has been sweeping over the surface of the land, as witnessed by the character and number of the leading articles, the illustrations and caricatures that have appeared in the most prominent newspapers of the capital and the provincial towns of Asiatic Turkey. Not only Turkey, but its neighboring countries of the East and the West, have lifted up their voice in the vindication of the Bahá'í truth. From information thus far gathered we learn that in Hungary, in 'Iráq, Egypt and Syria, and as far west as France and England, newspapers have, of their own accord, with varying degree of accuracy, and in more or less detail, reported this incident in their

columns, and have given, unasked and unaware, such publicity to our beloved Faith which no campaign of teaching, however elaborately organized by the believers themselves, could ever hope to achieve at the present time. Surely the invincible arm of Bahá'u'lláh, working through strange and mysterious ways, will continue to guard and uphold, to steer the course, to consolidate, and eventually to achieve the world-wide recognition and triumph of His holy Faith.

Our Most Vital Opportunity

And while the East, through suffering and turmoil, is moving on in its slow and toilsome march towards the acceptance of God's holy Faith, let us turn for a moment our gaze to the Western Hemisphere, and particularly to the American continent, and attempt to visualize the possibilities of the future spread of the Cause, and to estimate afresh those golden yet swiftly passing opportunities which Bahá'u'lláh in those far-away lands has accorded to His chosen people. I feel thoroughly convinced, and am moved to share this firm conviction within me with that great company of western believers, that in the speedy resumption of the sorely-neglected construction of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár at Wilmette lies our undoubted privilege, our primary obligation, our most vital opportunity to lend an unprecedented impetus to the advancement of the Cause, not only throughout the West but in every country of the world. I would not stress at this moment the prestige and good name of the Cause, much as they are involved in this most pressing issue, I would not dwell upon the eager expectancy with which the unnumbered followers of the Faith as well as the vast number of the non-believers in almost every section of society throughout the East are awaiting to behold that noble structure rear its head in the heart of that far-western continent; nor would I expatiate on the ineffable beauty of this holy Edifice, its towering glory, its artistic design, its unique character, or its functions in the organic life of the Bahá'í community of the future. But I would with all the strength of my conviction emphasize the immeasurable spiritual significance of an Edifice, so beauteous, so holy, erected solely by the concerted efforts, strained to the utmost degree of self-sacrifice, of the entire body of the believers who are fully conscious of the significance of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh. In this vast endeavor, unparalleled in modern times, its world-wide range, its spontaneity, its heroic and holy character, the American be-

lievers, on the soil of whose country Bahá'u'lláh's first universal House of Worship is to be built, must, if they be faithful to their trust, claim and fulfill a pre-eminent share in the collective contributions offered by the Bahá'ís of the world.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Cherished Desire

For this reason do I feel impelled to direct by incessant plea in particular to the followers of the Faith in the United States and Canada to arise and play their part, while there is yet time, and not to allow their earnest strivings to be swamped and superseded by the self-sacrificing heroism of the multitude of their brethren in Persia. Again I feel the urge to remind you one and all of the necessity of keeping ever in mind this fundamental verity that the efficacy of the spiritual forces centering in, and radiating from, the first Mashriqu’l-Adhkár in the West will in a great measure depend upon the extent to which we, the pioneer workers in that land will, with clear vision, unquenchable faith, and inflexible determination, resolve to voluntarily abnegate temporal advantages in our support of so meritorious an endeavor. The higher the degree of our renunciation and self-sacrifice, the wider the range of the contributing believers, the more apparent will become the vitalizing forces that are to emanate from this unique and sacred Edifice; and the greater, in consequence, the stimulating effect it will exert upon the propagation of the Faith in the days to come. Not by the abundance of our donations, not even by the spontaneity of our efforts, but rather by the degree of self-abnegation which our contributions will entail, can we effectively promote the speedy realization of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s cherished desire. How great our responsibility, how immense our task, how priceless the advantages that we can reap!

Plan of Unified Action

I cannot refrain, however, from giving expression to my gratification and appreciation of the substantial and continued support already accorded, and in particular during the past year by the believers in the United States and Canada, under the wise and judicious direction of their elected national representatives, to the Plan of Unified Action, whose declared purpose is to insure, ere the present Bahá'í year comes to a close, the raising of the funds required for the building of the first Unit of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár. The vigilance and fidelity with which the National Assembly of the United States and Canada has observed its pledge in connection with the limitation of the current administrative expenses of the Cause, and the zeal and ready response manifested by local Assemblies and individual believers to curtail their local and personal expenditures in order to concentrate on the Temple Fund, are worthy of the highest praise, and will deservedly attract the manifold blessings of a loving and bountiful Master. Much indeed has been accomplished during this past year of concentrated and consecrated self-sacrifice for so glorious a purpose. Much more still remains unachieved if we are to vindicate, in the eyes of an expectant world, the honorable name, the inexhaustible and miraculous vitality of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh.

In the mid-watches of the night, commemorating the passing of Him Who with His own hands laid the head-cornerstone of His Father's House of Worship in that land, seated within the hallowed precincts of His shrine, and keeping vigil in the company of His closest companions, I have more than once in the midst of my devotions prayerfully remembered those chosen ones of God on whose shoulders has fallen so weighty a responsibility, whose destiny is to bring to full fruition so excellent a heritage. I have recalled on that peaceful and moonlit night, with much emotion and gratitude, the inestimable bounties He lavished while on

earth upon you. I have revived in my memory the glowing promises that His unfailing guidance and gracious assistance would continue from His station on high to be showered upon you. I have pictured in my mind that beauteous vision of a Cause unfolded in all its glory which in His immortal writings He has revealed unto you. And with my head upon His threshold, I have prayed and prayed again that we may all prove ourselves worthy disciples of so gracious a Master, that we may, when called unto Him, transmit, undiminished and unimpaired, our share of the immeasurably precious heritage bequeathed by Him to us all.

And in closing, dearly-beloved friends, what more appropriate thought with which to conclude my fervent plea than these pregnant words fallen from the lips of Bahá'u'lláh: "O My friends! I bear witness that the Divine Bounty has been vouchsafed unto you, His Argument has been made manifest, His Proof has been revealed, and His Guidance has shone forth upon you. Let it now be seen what your endeavors in the path of renunciation can reveal."

Your true brother,
SHOGHI.

Haifa, Palestine,
December 6, 1928.

Letter of December 6, 1928.

To the beloved of the Lord and the handmaids of the Merciful throughout the East and West.

Dear fellow-workers:

I desire to convey to you in a few words my impressions of the recently published "Bahá'í World," copies of which, I understand, have already, thanks to the assiduous care and indefatigable efforts displayed by the Publishing Committee of the American National Spiritual Assembly, been widely distributed among the Bahá'í countries of East and West.

The Bahá'í World

This unique record of world-wide Bahá'í activity attempts to present to the general public, as well as to the student and scholar, those historical facts and fundamental principles that constitute the distinguishing features of the Message of Bahá'u'lláh to this age. 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, whose desire is to place in the hands of the critical and intelligent inquirer, of whatever class, creed or color, a work that can truly witness to the high purpose, the moving history, the enduring achievements, the resistless march and infinite prospects of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh. Eminently readable and attractive in its features, reliable and authoritative in the material it contains, up-to-date, comprehensive and accurate in the mass of information it gives, concise and persuasive in its treatment of the fundamental aspects of the Cause, thoroughly representative in the illustrations and photographs it reveals:—it stands unexcelled and unapproached by any publication of its kind in the varied literature of our beloved Cause. It will, without the slightest doubt, if generously and vigorously supported, arouse unprecedented interest among all classes of civilized society.

I earnestly request you, dearly-beloved friends, to exert the utmost effort for the prompt and widespread circulation of a book that so faithfully and vividly portrays, in all its essential features, its far-reaching ramifications and most arresting aspects, the all-encompassing Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. Whatever assistance, financial or moral, extended by Bahá'í Spiritual Assemblies and individual believers, to those who have been responsible for such a highly valuable and representative production will, it should

be remembered, be directly utilized to advance the interests and reinforce the funds that are being raised in behalf of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, and will indirectly serve to exert a most powerful stimulus in removing the malicious misrepresentations and unfortunate misunderstandings that have so long and so grievously clouded the luminous Faith of Bahá'u'lláh.

Your true brother,
SHOGHI.

Haifa, Palestine,
December 6, 1928.

Letter of December 21, 1928.

To the beloved of the Lord and the handmaids of the Merciful throughout the West.

Dearly-beloved brothers and sisters in ‘Abdu’l-Bahá!

With feelings of profound sorrow I am moved to address you these few lines mourning the loss which the Cause has undoubtedly sustained by the passing of one who, for many years and in circumstances of exceptional significance, rendered the sacred Threshold distinctive and inestimable services. The hand of Divine Decree has removed, by the death of our talented and dearly-beloved friend, Mr. Hippolyte Dreyfus-Barney, yet another outstanding figure in the Cause of Bahá’u’lláh, who, by his brilliant gifts of mind and heart as well as by the divers achievements of his life, has truly enriched the annals of God’s immortal Faith.

Mr. Hippolyte Dreyfus-Barney

A pioneer of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh ever since its celestial light first warmed and illuminated the West, he has, by his close association with the person of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, by his contact with all sections of society, by his scholarly presentation of the history and fundamentals of the Faith, and lastly by his unforgettable share in the settlement of the complex and pressing issues that called for expert assistance in the days following 'Abdu'l-Bahá's passing, achieved a standing which few have as yet attained.

The days of his spiritual communion with 'Abdu'l-Bahá and His household within the walls of the prison-city of Akká, wherein he imbibed the principles which he later so ably expounded to the peoples of the West; his pre-eminent role on his return to Paris in kindling the torch which is destined to shed eternal illumination upon his native land and its people; the links of abiding fellowship which he forged with our Persian brethren in the course of the historic mission entrusted to his charge by our Beloved; the seeds which he scattered far and wide during his subsequent travels to the heart of Asia, throughout India, beyond the remotest villages of Burma and as far as the eastern confines of Indo-China; the able support he lent in its initial and intermediary stages to the case of Bahá'u'lláh's house in Baghdád; his unhesitating intervention with State officials in paving the way for the ultimate emancipation of our Egyptian brethren from the yoke of orthodox Islám; the stimulating encouragement his visit caused to the Bahá'í community of Tunis on the northern shores of Africa; and last but not least the ability and diligence with which he applied himself to the solution of the delicate and vexing problems of the Holy Land in the critical years following 'Abdu'l-Bahá's ascension—all stand out as memorable landmarks in a life that was as varied in its international aspects as it was rich in its spiritual experience.

His gifts of unfailing sympathy and penetrating insight, his wide knowledge and mature experience, all of which he utilized for the glory and propagation of the Message of Bahá'u'lláh, will be gratefully remembered by future generations who, as the days go by, will better estimate the abiding value of the responsibilities he shouldered for the introduction and consolidation of the Bahá'í Faith in the Western world.

Suffering as he did in his last days from the effects of a slow and painful illness, he bore heroically his share of the afflictions of the world, and is now in the realms of blissful deliverance partaking his full share of the goodly reward which he certainly deserved. To me, and particularly amid the storm and stress that have agitated my life after 'Abdu'l-Bahá's passing, he was a sustaining and comforting companion, a most valued counsellor, an intimate and trusted friend.

With much emotion and the deepest sense of gratitude I supplicate at the holy Threshold—and request you to join with me in my prayers—for the spiritual advancement in the realms above of a soul who by the sheer merit of the signal services he rendered already deserves to rank highly among the departed faithful.

May he forever rest in peace.

SHOGHI.

Haifa, Palestine,
December 21, 1928.

Letter of January 1, 1929.

The beloved of the Lord and the handmaids of the Merciful throughout the West.

Dearly-beloved co-workers:

Whilst the Bahá'ís of Persia, constituting the overwhelming majority of the adherents of the Bahá'í Faith in eastern lands, are tasting the first-fruits of their long-dreamed emancipation, a not inconsiderable section of Bahá'u'lláh's following in the East, inhabiting the provinces of Caucasus and Turkistan, are being subjected to trials and tribulations not very dissimilar, though inferior in intensity, to the afflictions borne so long and so heroically by their Persian brethren.

In my last communication to you I have attempted to depict the nature and swiftness of those liberating forces which today are being released in Persia by an enlightened regime determined to shake off with unconcealed contempt the odious fetters of a long standing tyranny. And I feel that a description of the very perplexing situation with which our brethren in Russia find themselves confronted at present will serve to complete the picture which responsible believers in the West must bear in mind of the critical and swiftly moving changes that are transforming the face of the East.

Persecutions in Russia

Ever since the counter-revolution that proclaimed throughout the length and breadth of Czarist Russia the dictatorship of the Proletariat, and the subsequent incorporation of the semi-independent territories of Caucasus and Turkistan within the orbit of Soviet rule, the varied and numerous Bahá'í institutions established in the past by heroic pioneers of the Faith have been brought into direct and sudden contact with the internal convulsions necessitated by the establishment and maintenance of an order so fundamentally at variance with Russia's previous regime. The avowed purpose and action of the responsible heads of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics who, within their recognized and legitimate rights, have emphatically proclaimed and vigorously pursued their policy of uncompromising opposition to all forms of organized religious propaganda, have by their very nature created for those whose primary obligation is to labor unremittingly for the spread of the Bahá'í Faith a state of affairs that is highly unfortunate and perplexing. For ten years, however, ever since the promulgation of that policy, by some miraculous interposition of Providence, the Bahá'ís of Soviet Russia have been spared the strict application to their institutions of the central principle that directs and animates the policy of the Soviet state. Although subjected, as all Russian citizens have been, even since the outbreak of the Revolution, to the unfortunate consequences of civil strife and external war, and particularly to the internal commotions that must necessarily accompany far-reaching changes in the structure of society, such as partial expropriation of private property, excessive taxation and the curtailment of the right of personal initiative and enterprise; yet in matters of worship and in the conduct of their administrative and purely non-political activities they have, thanks to the benevolent attitude of their rulers, enjoyed an almost unrestricted freedom in the exercise of their public duties.

Lately, however, due to circumstances wholly beyond their control and without being in the least implicated in political or subversive activity, our Bahá'í brethren in those provinces have had to endure the rigid application of the principles already enunciated by the state authorities and universally enforced with regard to all other religious communities under their sway. Faithful to their policy of expropriating in the interests of the State all edifices and monuments of a religious character, they have a few months ago approached the Bahá'í representatives in Turkistan, and after protracted negotiations with them, decided to claim and enforce their right of ownership and control of that most cherished and universally prized Bahá'í possession, the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár of Ishqábád. The insistent and repeated representations made by the Bahá'ís, dutifully submitted and stressed by their local and national representatives, and duly reinforced by the action of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Persia, emphasizing the international character and spiritual significance of the Edifice and its close material as well as spiritual connection with the divers Bahá'í communities throughout the East and West, have alas! proved of no avail. The beloved Temple which had been seized and expropriated and for three months closed under the seal of the Municipal authorities was reopened and meetings were allowed to be conducted within its walls only after the acceptance and signature by the Bahá'í Spiritual Assembly of Ishqábád of an elaborate contract drawn by the Soviet authorities and recognizing the right of undisputed ownership by the State of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár and its dependencies. According to this contract, the Temple is rented by the State for a period of five years to the local Bahá'í community of that town, and in it are stipulated a number of obligations, financial and otherwise, expressly providing for fines and penalties in the event of the evasion or infringement of its provisions.

To these measures which the State, in the free exercise of its legitimate rights, has chosen to enforce, and with which the

Bahá'ís, as befits their position as loyal and law-abiding citizens, have complied, others have followed which though of a different character are none the less grievously affecting our beloved Cause. In Baku, the seat of the Soviet Republic of Caucasus, as well as in Ganjih and other neighboring towns, state orders, orally and in writing, have been officially communicated to the Bahá'í Assemblies and individual believers, suspending all meetings, commemoration gatherings and festivals, suppressing the committees of all Bahá'í local and national Spiritual Assemblies, prohibiting the raising of funds and the transmission of financial contributions to any center within or without Soviet jurisdiction, requiring the right of full and frequent inspection of the deliberations, decisions, plans and action of the Bahá'í Assemblies, dissolving young men's clubs and children's organizations, imposing a strict censorship on all correspondence to and from Bahá'í Assemblies, directing a minute investigation of Assemblies' papers and documents, suspending all Bahá'í periodicals, bulletins and magazines, and requiring the deportation of leading personalities in the Cause whether as public teachers and speakers or officers of Bahá'í Assemblies.

Guiding Principle of Conduct

To all these 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. In matters, however, that vitally affect the integrity and honor of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, and are tantamount to a recantation of their faith and repudiation of their innermost belief, they are convinced, and are unhesitatingly prepared to vindicate by their life-blood the sincerity of their conviction, that no power on earth, neither the arts of the most insidious adversary nor the bloody weapons of the most tyrannical oppressor, can ever succeed in extorting from them a word or deed that might tend to stifle the voice of their conscience or tarnish the purity of their faith. Clinging with immovable resolution to the inviolable verities of their cherished Faith, our sorely-tried brethren in Caucasus and Turkistan have none the less, as befits law-abiding Bahá'í citizens resolved, after having exhausted every legitimate means for the alleviation of the restrictions imposed upon them, to definitely uphold and conscientiously carry out the considered judgment of their recognized government. They have with a hope that no earthly power can dim, and a resignation that is truly sublime, committed the interests of their Cause to the keeping of that vigilant, that all-powerful Divine Deliverer, who, they feel confident, will in time 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.

Should the present restrictions increase in number and stringency, should a situation arise that would so endanger the position of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in Ishqábád as to necessitate the intervention of the Bahá'í world, I will call upon the National and Local Bahá'í Spiritual Assemblies in the East and the West to arise with one accord and lend their moral support to those of their brethren whose particular mission and privilege is to keep watch over that consecrated ground on which already has been erected the central Structure of Bahá'u'lláh's First Universal House of Worship. I will urge them to take whatever action is deemed advisable in order to demonstrate the solidarity of the followers of Bahá'u'lláh, to dispel whatever doubts and apprehensions may yet linger in the minds of the State officials in that land, and to restore their suspected brethren to the esteem and confidence of their governors. I will specially request them to proclaim in their written representations to the authorities concerned their absolute repudiation of whatever ulterior motive or political design may be imputed to them by their malignant adversaries, and to reaffirm in unmistakable terms the purely humanitarian and spiritual nature of the work in which Bahá'ís in every land and of every race are unitedly engaged. I will moreover ask them to assert the international character of the Bahá'í Edifice in Ishqábád and to stress the close bonds of material interest and spiritual fellowship that bind Bahá'í communities the world over to an Edifice that can rightly claim the distinction of being Bahá'u'lláh's First Universal House of Worship, of being conceived in its design by 'Abdu'l-Bahá Himself, constructed and completed in His days and under His direction, and supported by the collective contributions of the believers throughout the world. The hour for such a world-wide and concentrated appeal is not yet come, but it behooves us, while expectantly watching

from a distance the moving spectacle of the struggling Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, to seek abiding solace and strength from the reflection that whatever befalls this Cause, however grievous and humiliating the visitations that from time to time may seem to afflict the organic life or interfere with the functions of the administrative machinery of the Bahá'í Faith, such calamities cannot but each eventually prove to be a blessing in disguise designed, by a Wisdom inscrutable to us all, to establish and consolidate the sovereignty of Bahá'u'lláh on this earth.

Bahá'u'lláh's House at Baghdád

What we have already witnessed in connection with the latest developments regarding the case of Bahá'u'lláh's House in Baghdád affords abundant evidence of the truth of the observation that has just been made. In its initial stages appearing to the superficial observer as a petty dispute submitted to an obscure and antiquated Shiite court, the case has gradually evolved into a paramount issue engaging the attention of the highest tribunal of 'Iráq. In its latest stages, it has gathered such strength, secured such publicity, and received such support from the chancelleries of Europe, as to become a subject fit for the consideration not only of the specific international Commission ultimately responsible for the administration of Mandated Territories but of the leading Signatories of the Covenant of the League of Nations that are represented in the Council of the League itself.

Few if any among those closely associated with the case did at first imagine or expect that dwellings which to outward seeming appeared only as a cluster of humble and decrepit buildings lost amid the obscure and tortuous lanes of old Baghdád could ever obtain such prominence as to become the object of the deliberations of the highest international Tribunal that the hand of man has thus far reared for the amicable settlement of his affairs. Whatever the decision of the world's highest Tribunal regarding the petition submitted to it by the Bahá'ís of 'Iráq—and none can deny that should its verdict be in our favor, a triumph unparalleled in its magnitude will have been achieved for our beloved Faith—the work already accomplished is in itself an abundant proof of the sustaining confirmations that are being showered upon the upholders of the case from the realm on high.

I cannot refrain from giving expression in this connection to my feelings of profound appreciation of the ceaseless vigilance and marked distinction with which our precious brother and fellow-worker, Mr. Mountfort Mills, has undertaken and is still

shouldering this sacred and historic mission committed to his charge. His unremitting labors, despite ill-health and domestic anxieties and cares, are worthy of the highest praise and will be gratefully recorded in the annals of an immortal Cause.

Surely, if we read the history of this case aright, we cannot but discern the direction which the forces, released by these prophetic utterances of Bahá'u'lláh sixty years ago, are destined to take in the eventual solution of this mighty issue:—

"In truth I declare, it shall be so abased in the days to come as to cause tears to flow from every discerning eye.... And in the fullness of time shall the Lord, by the power of truth, exalt it in the eyes of all the world, cause it to become the mighty standard of His Dominion, the Shrine round which shall circle the concourse of the faithful."

Your true brother,
SHOGHI.

Haifa, Palestine,
January 1, 1929.

Letter of February 12, 1929.

To the beloved of the Lord and the handmaids of the Merciful throughout the West.

Fellow-laborers in the Divine Vineyard:

I feel impelled by the force of various circumstances to share with you the news of recent happenings in those countries of the Near and Middle East which, by the ruling of Providence, are in these days undergoing a transformation which is as startling in its features as it is significant in its bearings upon the interests of our beloved Faith.

I have already in my previous communication briefly referred to the nature and effects of that momentous Revolution which has, with surprising swiftness, substituted a westernized and rejuvenated Turkey for the primitive and decrepit Ottoman Empire. I have also attempted to describe the first stages of that recent and moving episode which has served in a manner that is truly providential to thrust the Bahá'í community in Turkey out of the obscurity of oppressive neglect into the broad daylight of official and public attention.

Recently, however, from the reports that have been received from the elected representatives of the believers in different parts of Turkey, it appears that the investigations conducted by the Police authorities in the capital and provinces of that land have proved but a preliminary to a more official and detailed inquiry into the Bahá'í position with respect to the laws recently promulgated by the Republican government. For no sooner were the followers of Bahá'u'lláh released from detention at the Police headquarters and given the assurance that their Faith was in no way associated with any political design or motive, than an official communication was delivered to their representatives summoning them to appear before the State's criminal Tribunal on the charge of infraction of the law of the Republic requiring the registration and authorization of all public gatherings and

associations within the jurisdiction of the State. To this summons our brethren yielded immediate and implicit obedience. They indeed welcomed this further opportunity to assert not only the innocence of their Faith but to vindicate as well the sublimity of the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh. Realizing that with this fresh development their case has assumed a solemn and juridical character, the undaunted champions of the Cause resolved to seek the assistance of an expert and sympathetic advocate, who would reinforce from a purely legal standpoint the spiritual argument which they reserved for themselves to propound. For a period ranging from a week to eighteen days the attention of the officers of the Court, of the elected representatives of the believers, of their officially appointed advocates, and of the visiting public was focused upon the deliberations of a Court that closely scrutinized not only the conduct and motives of the Bahá'í followers but the laws and principles, the past history and the present position of the Faith itself.

Trial of Turkish Believers

Fortified by the reflection that never before in Bahá'í history have the followers of Bahá'u'lláh been called upon by the officials of a State, responsible for the administration of Justice, to unfold the history and principles of their Faith, our brethren in Turkey decided to assert in their entirety those distinguishing laws and ordinances of the Bahá'í Revelation which the terrors of a suspicious autocracy had so long compelled them to dissimulate and ignore.

I cannot do better than quote in this connection a few passages from the text of the official defense which in a moving language was pronounced by the President of the Constantinople Bahá'í Spiritual Assembly at a plenary session of the Court on that historic occasion: "La Behá'isme est une religion universelle, moderne et absolument independante. Si l'on désiré une désignation plus moderne encore: c'est une institution de Clémence, de bonne entente et d'amour, en d'autres termes, de progrès moral et spirituel. Il n'est ni une secte, ni une branche des autres religions et doctrines diverses. Il est cependant leur aboutissement naturel, logique et pour ainsi dire scientifique. C'est la raison pour laquelle l'on trouve parmi ses adhèrents des personnes, venant de toutes les religions et doctrines existantes dans le monde, et qui se comptent aujourd'hui par millions. ...Ces explications ne sauraient toutefois à dévoiler le suffire (?) mystère qui est au fond des sacrifices, consentis dans ce siècle en Orient, par plus de vingt mille martyrs du Behá'isme, parmi lesquels se trouve Qurratu'l-'Ayn Táhirih (la joie des yeux, la pure), cette jeune femme turque, dépeinté ainsi par notre illustre écrivain Suleyman Nasif, et dont le martyre sans precèdent est cité aujourd'hui par le monde entier comme l'epopée sans pareille de la cause humaine. Je ne sais si ces explications peuvent elucider les raisons pour lesquelles il se trouve à cette doctrine petrié également par le sang turc des amis parmi des hommes de race turque, cette race

qui dans tout procès du genre humain et de ses nobles aspirations, n'a pas hesité jusqu'ici à verser son sang.... Toutefois, les Behá'ís n'ont point dissimulé leur présence en Turquie, surtout depuis le régime de la République. C'est ainsi qu'ils se sont fait inscrire comme Behá'ís sur les feuilles du dernier recensement à Constantinople. D'autre part est-il admissible que le Gouvernement ignore leur présence dans cette ville? Cela étant, il ne saurait etre imaginé que les Behá'ís soient sous le régime de la République, poursuivis comme tels, surtout après avoir acquis leur liberté sous le régime de la Constitution qui a suivi celui de la tyrannie durant lequel ils étaient persecutés.... Mais avant de terminer, je ne puis m'empecher de dire avec une entière assurance, que les adeptes en Turquie de cette doctrine, sont surs de la Justice d'un pays régi par la première véritable République pleine de lumière dont s'honore adjourd'hui tout l'Orient.... Ces déclarations d'une part, et la conduite suivie par les Behá'ís, a l'occasion de cet incident qui a commencé par l'interrogatoire auquel ils ont été soumis par la Police, de l'autre, sont la preuve convainquante de la sincerité et de la bonne foie avec lesquelles nous nous comportons tant vis à vis de la Justice que de celui du Gouvernement. Ainsi, nous aurions pu soustraire certaines pièces qui constituent les seuls documents pouvant servi à nous assimiler à des societés. Ne nous voyant pas en contravention avec la loi, nous n'avons rien voulu dissimuler, comme personellement je ne cherche qu'a tout dire ici. Ce n'est lá d'ailleurs qu'une necessité dicté par le Behá'isme et la conformation à une recommendation de Bahá'u'lláh. Lui nous dit: "Devant la Justice, dites la Verité et ne craignez rien."

To these hotly contested debates two circumstances of unexpected character lent color and force, and must have contributed in no small measure to the successful conclusion of the issue. The participation of a noted Turkish publicist and author whose expressed sympathy for the Cause had identified him with the group of the suspected believers, and the association of the name of the Dowager Queen of Rumania with the Bahá'í Faith as

a result of the discovery among the seized documents of the Constantinople Bahá'í Assembly of her public pronouncements on the Cause and her personal message to the friends in that city, both served to reinforce the position of the Bahá'ís and greatly encouraged them in their task. I am assured by a letter addressed to me by the President of the Constantinople Assembly that the sessions of the Court were dignified in their proceedings, sublime in the presentation of the ideals of the Cause, and representative in the character of their attendants. He writes: "Ce fut une déclaration de la Cause dans toute sa grandeur, et jamais l'Orient n'a vu retentir le nom de Bahá dans une pareille formule.... J'ai prefère laisser l'avocat qui n'est pas Behá'í en parler. En effet cela a eu plus d'effet d'entendre l'avocat, emporté par je ne sais quelle mystèrieuse poussée, crier, après avoir cité les principes ainsi: 'Monsieur le Juge! n'est-ce pas lá en somme l'idéal vers lequel marche actuellement notre pays avec en tète notre Grand Gazi?'"

The extravagant language of the newspapers in reporting the details of this official inquiry served in turn to accentuate the publicity already achieved, and induced the officials of the Court to exercise scrupulous impartiality in the consideration and judgment of the case. As to the verdict that has been pronounced on December 13, 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 in the task of vindicating its independence, its Divine origin, and its suitability to the circumstances and requirements of the present age. It will be admitted that this recognition on the part of the authorities would have never been so speedily secured had the representatives of the

believers proceeded through the ordinary and official channels to obtain such a recognition from their government.

Decline of Islám

Surely every unprejudiced observer, reviewing on one hand the turbulent history of the Cause in Turkey and recalling on the other the series of internal convulsions that have seized that country, cannot but marvel at the contrast between the swift decline of an all-powerful theocracy and the gradual consolidation of a persecuted Faith. He will appreciate the significance of the circumstances that have caused on one hand the dismemberment of what was the most powerful institution of Islám, and contributed on the other to the emergence upon its ruins of the very Faith it has vainly labored to suppress. Should he look further into the past and consult the annals of Christendom during the first century of the Christian era, he cannot fail to observe the striking parallel between the cataclysmic visitation of Providence that has afflicted the most sacred institutions of the Jews in the Holy Land and the utter collapse in this, the first century of the Bahá'í era, of the Sultanate and the Caliphate, the highest institutions of orthodox Islám. He will recall the severities which the hand of Titus inflicted upon the Jews, the harassing siege of Jerusalem, the destruction of the Holy City, the profanation of the Temple, the desecration of the Holy of Holies, the transfer of its priceless treasures to the imperial city of Rome, the erection on the site of Zion of the pagan colony of Oelia Capitolina, the massacre of the Jews, and the exile and dispersion of most of the survivors. In like manner, he will observe that almost in the corresponding decade of the first century of the era of Bahá'u'lláh, not at the hand of the infidel, but by a recognized ruler professing the faith of Islám, a blow, unprecedented in its magnitude, has been dealt to the highest seats of authority in the Islámic world. He will call to mind the recent disestablishment of the state religion of Turkey, the overthrow of the dynasty of the House of Uthmán, the loss of the unity of the vast majority of the adherents of the Muhammadan Faith, the humiliation inflicted upon the whole

hierarchy of its ecclesiastical exponents in that land, the abolition of religious courts, the annulment of the provisions of the Qur'án, the promulgation of a universal western code of civil law, the suppression of its Orders and the closing of most of its seminaries and establishments.

Such a close correspondence between these historic retributions which the Almighty's avenging arm has chosen to inflict upon the persecutors of Christ and Bahá'u'lláh cannot but fortify the confidence of every Bahá'í believer in the future glories of this Divine Dispensation. Particularly will he feel strengthened when he recalls the triumphs that have signalized the advance of Christianity after the humiliation of its enemies. And as he ponders upon the circumstances that have given such startling publicity to the Cause, not only throughout Turkey but in the adjoining countries as well, he cannot fail to recognize, in this strange episode, following so closely upon the fall of the mighty stronghold of Bahá'í opposition, a prelude to a higher recognition and fuller unfoldment of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh.

Progress in Persia

In Persia, where, unlike its ill-fated sister nation Afghánistán, the pace of reform has been wisely regulated, the salutary effects of the progressive regime established by its enlightened ruler are not only reacting upon the social and economic structure of its society, but are being increasingly felt by the mass of the followers of Bahá'u'lláh in that land. The welter of controversy into which the drastic reforms of a determined government, aiming at the gradual secularization of the State, has plunged a revolting clergy, has afforded our Persian brethren their long-desired opportunity to pursue untrammelled the course of their spiritual and humanitarian activities. The deportation of a considerable number of Muslim ecclesiastical officials, amongst them the heir of that notorious and bloodthirsty Mujtahid of Iṣfáhán, "the Son of the Wolf," has served to clear the ground for the extension and consolidation of Bahá'í institutions. Already, as reported from an outlying center in the province of Yazd, a leading but fair-minded Mulláh has, upon the discovery of the specific prophecy of 'Abdu'l-Bahá regarding the forced abandonment of the traditional headdress of Muslim clericals, acknowledged the Divine origin of the Bahá'í Faith, embraced its truth, and openly enlisted as an active supporter of its institutions.

Moreover, it is stated that in various quarters, and among responsible sections of the community the matter of the codification and introduction of a western civil code, and its universal application to all the different communities is being freely discussed, and its desirability increasingly emphasized. As a preliminary measure, however, to the introduction of such a far-reaching reform, certain changes of policy have been lately initiated, not in the form of hastily conceived dictatorial edicts, but as a result of the mature deliberations and with the sanction of the national representatives of the people. The systematization of the laws of marriage and contract; the establishment of a Land Registry

wholly independent of ecclesiastical control; the distribution of birth certificates of a purely undenominational character; the increasing prominence accorded to the social rights of womanhood; the close attention paid by State authorities to the education of Persian youth in the Universities of Europe; the banning of all Muslim Passion Plays throughout the territory of the Sháh: the bold and various schemes that have been launched for the embellishment of the Persian Capital—all are welcome signs of the approaching era which is to witness the spiritual and material ascendency of Persia among the people and nations of the world.

In this ever-improving environment and witnessing on every side the downfall of those institutions that have crippled their struggling Faith, the believers in Persia are joyously seizing every opportunity to demonstrate the redeeming power of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh. An illuminating report, submitted by one of the most capable and trusted itinerant teachers of the Cause in Persia, has lately reached the Holy Land. In it the writer sets forth in graphic and accurate language the many evidences of the increasing vitality displayed by the Faith in different parts of Persia. Summoned by the Persian National Spiritual Assembly to interrupt his travels in the vicinity of the town of Mashhad in order to devote immediate attention to a situation that had unexpectedly arisen in Iṣfáhán, our indefatigable teacher and brother was surprised upon his arrival in that province to note in the various towns and villages he visited a ten-fold increase in the number of the adherents of the Faith since his last visit to those regions. He was moreover startled at the hospitality which he received at the hands of those persons who six years ago had been instrumental in expelling him from their localities, and who now had freely enlisted under the banner of Bahá'u'lláh. He was furthermore highly elated to learn that the prestige, the integrity and ability of the local Bahá'í Assemblies in that province had of late stood so high that non-Bahá'ís, exasperated by the corruption and incompetence of their own judges, had more than once

freely submitted cases of dispute to the judgment of the elected representatives of the Bahá'í community in their locality.

Only a close and unbiased observer of the manner and habits of the Persian people, already familiar with the prevailing tendencies of different sections of the population, such as their apathy and indolence, the absence of a sense of public duty and of loyalty to principle, the lack of concerted effort and constancy in action, the habit of secrecy and blind surrender to the capricious will of an ignorant and fanatical clergy, can truly estimate the immensity of the task that faces every conscientious believer in that land. He will moreover readily testify to the high standard already attained by the Bahá'ís of Persia in their efforts to inculcate in the minds of their fellow-countrymen the principles of the Divine Civilization ushered in by Bahá'u'lláh.

We have only to glance at the soul-stirring written assurances of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in order to realize the magnitude and exalted character of the mission entrusted by Him to the adherents of the Faith in Bahá'u'lláh's native land. By the faithful application of the spiritual principles which their present administration is endeavoring to propagate; by the character of those indissoluble bonds of Bahá'í fellowship that cement the union of the mass of the believers with their elected councillors; by the distinctiveness of their future contributions in the domain of art, of science and of trade, of education and of industry—by these and by still other convincing manifestations of the quickening vitality of their Faith, our Persian brethren are destined to demonstrate to the ruling powers on earth the majesty, the enduring stability and the unfailing efficacy of the Government of Bahá'u'lláh.

The following passage from the Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, revealed more than thirty years ago, while incarcerated within the walls of the prison-city of Akká, and addressed to the Bahá'ís of Khurásán, will undoubtedly stimulate those energetic friends of the West who long to contribute by every means in their power to the rehabilitation of their Master's native land:—

"Erelong will your brethren from Europe and America journey to Persia. There they will promote to an unprecedented degree the interests of art and industry. There they will rear the institutions of true civilization, promote the development of husbandry and trade, and assist in the spread of education.... Assuredly they will come; assuredly they will contribute in making of the land of Írán the envy and the admiration of the peoples and nations of the world."

And as we ponder these words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in our hearts, let us also remember the prophetic utterances of Bahá'u'lláh, which reveal not only the merciless cruelty of the ecclesiastical leaders of Islám but also the measure of Divine retribution which now afflicts the oppressors of God's holy Faith:—

"O people of the Qur'án! Verily the prophet of God, Muḥammad, sheddeth tears at the sight of your cruelty. Ye have assuredly followed your evil and corrupt desires and turned away your face from the light of guidance. Erelong will ye witness the result of your deeds; for the Lord My God lieth in wait and is watchful of your behavior.... Erelong He will raise in every city the standard of His sovereignty, and will wipe away the traces of them that have denied Him on the day of His return.... O concourse of Muslim divines! By your deeds the exalted station of the nation hath been abased, the standard of Islám hath been reversed and its mighty throne hath fallen. Whenever the Divine Reformer has sought to ennoble the rank of the people, ye have tumultuously risen against Him and prevented Him from executing His purpose, wherefore the realm hath remained in grievous loss."

And in conclusion, I wish, in a few words, to pay a tribute, however inadequate, to the magnificent services rendered by that 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 Esperantist circles; and her latest victories in the university circles of Germany—all constitute a compelling evidence of what the power of Bahá'u'lláh can achieve. These historic labors, 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 vigor that none has excelled.

I appeal to individual believers and Bahá'í Assemblies alike to reinforce by every possible means the earnest strivings of such a precious soul, to respond speedily and entirely to every request that from time to time she feels moved to address to her fellow-workers in every land, to strive to attain the high standard of stewardship that she has set, and to pray from the very depths of their hearts for the uninterrupted continuance of her noble endeavors.

Your true brother,
SHOGHI.

Haifa, Palestine,
February 12, 1929.

Letter of March 20, 1929.

To the beloved of the Lord and the handmaids of the Merciful throughout the West.

Dearly-beloved brothers and sisters in ‘Abdu’l-Bahá:

With a heart overflowing with thankfulness and joy I take my pen to share with you tidings that eloquently testify to the triumphant majesty and unconquerable spirit of the Faith of Bahá’u’lláh. From Geneva, the seat of the League of Nations, there comes the news that the fervent plea addressed by the Bahá’ís of ‘Iráq to the world’s supreme Tribunal regarding an issue that for a time has stirred the Bahá’í world to its foundation has at last met with a noble and most gratifying response.

You will recall the references made in my previous communications, dated November 6, 1925, October 29, 1926, and January 1, 1929, to the forcible seizure of Bahá’u’lláh’s sacred house by the Shí’ah of Baghdád, to the appeals which from almost every quarter of the globe have showered upon the authorities of ‘Iráq for its restitution, to the long and unsuccessful legal proceedings to which the representatives of the Faith in that land have resorted, and lastly to the petition which they have addressed to the League’s Permanent Mandates Commission setting forth the history of the case and appealing for the intervention of the Council in their behalf. I am now informed that after mature deliberation the conclusion arrived at by the Mandates Commission, urging that prompt action be taken to redress the wrong suffered by the Bahá’ís, has been duly communicated to, and adopted by, the Council of the League, which in turn will formally communicate the recommendations of its Commission to the Mandatory Power.

Decision of League of Nations

From the official text of the minutes of the meeting of the Mandates Commission, as well as from its authorized report to the Council, both of which have been made public, it is clear and evident that the terms of the conclusion arrived at are neither vague nor evasive, but set forth in unmistakable language the legitimate aspirations of an oppressed and struggling Faith. The decision neither implies compensation to the Bahá'í Community for the loss of the sacred buildings, nor does it expressly provide for the expropriation of the property by the State. To quote from the text of the official document, the Commission has resolved "to recommend the Council to ask the British Government to call upon the Government of 'Iráq to redress without delay the denial of justice from which the petitioners have suffered."

A glance at the minutes of the Commission's meeting will suffice to reveal that in the course of the lengthy discussions conducted by the members of the Commission the following important facts have been stressed and recognized. The British accredited representative, present at the sessions of the Commission, has declared that "it was a fact that the Mandatory Power had recognized that the Bahá'ís had suffered an injustice and, ever since the award made by the High Court, the High Commissioner had been considering what means could be found to remove, either by an executive act or otherwise, the unjust effects of that decision." Moreover, it has been acknowledged by the accredited representative that the Bahá'ís had been in bonafide occupancy of the property, that they had expended on it sums that exceeded the value of the site itself, and were thus, in accordance with the provision in the still operative Turkish Law, entitled to purchase the site. Allusion has also been made in the course of the deliberations of the members of the Commission to the fact that the action of the Shí'ah community with respect

to Bahá'u'lláh's sacred house constituted a breach of the Constitution and the Organic Law of 'Iráq which, according to the testimony of the British accredited representative, expressly provided for the unfettered freedom of conscience. A question from one of the members had even elicited from the representative of the British Government the reply assuring the Commission that the Mandatory Power actually possessed means of exercising pressure on the authorities in order, if necessary, to insure that so fundamental an article in the Constitution would be respected. Furthermore, the opinion has been strongly expressed that the matter had assumed an "importance which exceeded that of the individual case of the Bahá'ís," inasmuch as "the judgment of the High Court was suspected of having been inspired by political prejudice," with the consequent impression on the Commission that "from a moral point of view, conditions in 'Iráq were not improving; that religious passions still ran high and that peace had not yet been brought about between the various religious communities." It has even been proposed to supplement the report submitted to the Council with the observation that, in the opinion of the Commission, "a country in which the Sovereign and the highest law courts are capable of so flagrant a denial of justice would probably not be considered to be eligible to become a Member of the League of Nations." The minutes of the Commission's meeting further indicate that the contents of the letter addressed by the Prime Minister of 'Iráq to the British representative in Baghdád and which accompanied the text of the petition of the Bahá'ís do not in the opinion of the Commission "meet any of the allegations of the petitioners" and are confined to a mere assertion that the judgment of the Court of Appeal was pronounced in accordance with the laws of the land. As to the memorandum submitted by the Mandatory Power in connection with the Bahá'í petition, and to which the minutes briefly refer, it is expressly stated that His Britannic Majesty's Government considers the ejectment of the Bahá'ís while the case was still

undecided to have been an illegal action, that the reasons adduced to justify such action were hardly admissible, and that the final verdict of the Court of Appeal is unsustainable, contrary to the law, and tainted by political considerations. The minutes further declare that although any petition presented to the Commission appealing from a decision given by a Court of Law is to be considered as not being in order, yet as the petition submitted by the Bahá'ís reveals such a state of partiality, servility and sectarianism it has been found desirable to depart from the general rule and to regard the petition in question as receivable by the Commission. And among the concluding observations in the minutes of the Commission's meeting regarding the Bahá'í petition is this significant passage: "The revelations made in connection with this petition show the present position in 'Iráq in an unfavorable light. In a country where the conduct of the highest authorities has led the Mandatory Power to pass such severe criticisms, where the Supreme Court of Justice is under legitimate suspicion, and where religious fanaticism pursues minorities and controls power, a state of affairs prevails which is not calculated to insure the development and well-being of the inhabitants. The petitioners have suffered a serious denial of justice the direct responsibility for which rests on the authorities of 'Iráq. The fact that this denial of justice could not be prevented or immediately made good was due to the weakening of the Mandatory Power's control in 'Iráq. The Mandatory attempted, but in vain, to redress the injury done to the petitioners by using the means of influence at its disposal under the régime set up by the 1922 Treaty vis-á-vis King Feisal and the 'Iráq Government. These efforts would not appear to correspond fully to the engagements resulting from the British Government's declaration, which was approved by the Council on September 27, 1924, and renewed by the British Government in 1926, whereby the Treaty of Alliance between the British Government and 'Iráq 'was to insure the complete observance and execution in 'Iráq of the principles which the acceptance of

the mandate was intended to secure.'"

This grave censure pronounced by the Mandates Commission of the League of Nations on the administration of justice and the general conduct of affairs in 'Iráq, as well as the association of the humiliation afflicting Bahá'u'lláh's sacred dwelling-place with the obligations implied in the Treaty of Alliance binding the Governments of Great Britain and 'Iráq, not only proclaim to the world the enhanced prestige of that hallowed and consecrated spot, but testify as well to the high sense of integrity that animates the members of the League's honored Commission in the discharge of their public duties. In their formal reply to the Bahá'í petitioners, the members of the Permanent Mandates Commission have, with the sanction of the Council of the League of Nations, issued this most satisfactory declamation: "The Permanent Mandates Commission, recognizing the justice of the complaint made by the Bahá'í Spiritual Assembly of Baghdád, has recommended to the Council of the League such action as it thinks proper to redress the wrong suffered by the petitioners." A similar passage inserted in the report of the Finnish Representative to the Council of the League runs as follows: "The Commission has also considered a petition from the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of 'Iráq, a community which has been dispossessed of its property by another community and has been unable to recover it by legal means. The Commission is convinced that this situation, which is described as an injustice, must be attributed solely to religious passion, and it asks that the petitioner's wrongs should be redressed. I venture to suggest that the Council should accept the Mandate Commission's conclusions on this case, which is an example of the difficulties to be met with in the development of a young country." This report, together with the joint observations and conclusions of the Commission, have been duly considered and approved by the Council of the League, which has in turn instructed the Secretary-General to bring to the notice of the Mandatory Power, as

well as the petitioners concerned, the conclusions arrived at by the Mandates Commission.

Dearly-beloved co-workers! Much has been achieved thus far in the course of the progress of this complicated, delicate and highly significant issue. The Bahá'í world is eagerly expectant, and fervently prays, that the Almighty may graciously assist the Government chiefly responsible for the well-being of 'Iráq to take "without delay" such steps as will insure the execution of the considered judgment of the representatives of the Sovereign States, members of the Council, and signatories of the Covenant, of the League of Nations.

I will, if deemed proper and advisable, inform you of the manner in which the admiration and the gratitude of the National Spiritual Assemblies, representative of the divers communities in the Bahá'í world, should be expressed and tendered to the authorities of the League of Nations who have been chiefly responsible for this noble, this epoch-making decision. For none can doubt that the published verdict pronounced by the Mandate Commission sets the seal of international sanction on the triumph of God's persecuted Faith over the ecclesiastical and civil powers of hostile Islám. Within the ranks of the orthodox Sunnís and of the bitter and fanatical Shí'ah, the chief sects of the Muslim Faith and constituting respectively the bulk of the ruling class and the population of 'Iráq, a feeling of consternation must necessarily prevail. For however obscured their vision they still can recognize in this historic judgment the herald of that complete victory which is destined to establish the ascendancy of what, in the words of the members of the Commission, is but "a small minority, drawn from a lower social grade, and possessing neither political nor social influence," over the combined forces of the Islámic population of 'Iráq.

I must not fail in conclusion to refer once again to the decisive role played by that distinguished and international champion of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, our dearly-beloved Mountfort Mills, in

the negotiations that have paved the way for the signal success already achieved. The text of the Bahá'í petition, which he conceived and drafted, has been recognized by the members of the Mandates Commission as "a document well-drafted, clear in its argument and moderate in tone." He has truly acquitted himself in this most sacred task with exemplary distinction and proved himself worthy of so noble a mission. I request you to join with me in my prayers for him, that the Spirit of Bahá'u'lláh may continue to guide and sustain him in the final settlement of this most mighty issue.

Your true brother,
SHOGHI.

Haifa, Palestine,
March 20, 1929.

Letter of October 25, 1929.

The beloved of the Lord and the handmaids of the Merciful throughout the United States and Canada.

My well-beloved friends:

Ever since that remarkable manifestation of Bahá'í solidarity and self-sacrifice which has signalized the proceedings of last year's memorable Convention, I have been expectantly awaiting the news of a steady and continuous support of the Plan which can alone insure, ere the present year draws to its close, the resumption of building operations on our beloved Temple.

Gift from Tomb of Bahá'u'lláh

Moved by an impulse that I could not resist, I have felt impelled to forego what may be regarded as the most valuable and sacred possession in the Holy Land for the furthering of that noble enterprise which you have set your hearts to achieve. With the hearty concurrence of our dear Bahá'í brother, Zíáoulláh Asgarzadeh, who years ago donated it to the Most Holy Shrine, this precious ornament of the Tomb of Bahá'u'lláh has been already shipped to your shores, with our fondest hope that the proceeds from its sale may at once ennoble and reinforce the unnumbered offerings of the American believers already accumulated on the altar of Bahá'í sacrifice. I have longed ever since to witness such evidences of spontaneous and generous response on your part as would tend to fortify within me a confidence that has never wavered in the inexhaustible vitality of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh in that land.

I need not stress at this moment the high hopes which so startling a display of unsparing devotion to our sacred Temple has already aroused in the breasts of the multitude of our brethren throughout the East. Nor is it I feel necessary to impress upon those who are primarily concerned with its erection the gradual change of outlook which the early prospect of the construction of the far-famed Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in America has unmistakably occasioned in high places among the hitherto sceptical and indifferent towards the merits and the practicability of the Faith proclaimed by Bahá'u'lláh. Neither do I need to expatiate upon the hopes and fears of the Greatest Holy Leaf, now in the evening of her life, with deepening shadows caused by failing eye-sight and declining strength swiftly gathering about her, yearning to hear as the one remaining solace in her swiftly ebbing life the news of the resumption of work on an Edifice, the glories of which she has, from the lips of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Himself, learned to admire. I cannot surely overrate at the present juncture in the

progress of our task the challenging character of these remaining months of the year as a swiftly passing opportunity which it is in our power to seize and utilize, ere it is too late, for the edification of our expectant brethren throughout the East, for the vindication in the eyes of the world at large of the realities of our Faith, and last but not least for the realization of what is the Greatest Holy Leaf's fondest desire.

As I have already intimated in the course of my conversations with visiting pilgrims, so vast and significant an enterprise as the construction of the first Mashriqu'l-Adhkár of the West should be supported, not by the munificence of a few but by the joint contributions of the entire mass of the convinced followers of the Faith. It cannot be denied that the emanations of spiritual power and inspiration destined to radiate from the central Edifice of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár 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. Moreover, 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, as different from undertakings of a humanitarian, philanthropic or charitable character, which may in future be conducted under Bahá'í auspices, 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 in the administration of the Bahá'í community of the future, 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 are unreservedly submissive to, the

claims inherent in the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh. In cases, however, when a friend or sympathizer of the Faith eagerly insists on a monetary contribution for the promotion of the Faith, such gifts should be accepted and duly acknowledged by the elected representatives of the believers with the express understanding that they would be utilized by them only to reinforce that section of the Bahá'í Fund exclusively devoted to philanthropic or charitable purposes. For, as the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh extends in scope and in influence, and the resources of Bahá'í communities correspondingly multiply, it will become increasingly desirable to differentiate between such departments of the Bahá'í treasury as minister to the needs of the world at large, and those that are specifically designed to promote the direct interests of the Faith itself. From this apparent divorce between Bahá'í and humanitarian activities it must not, however, be inferred that the animating purpose of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh stands at variance with the aims and objects of the humanitarian and philanthropic institutions of the day. Nay, it should be realized by every judicious promoter of the Faith that at such an early stage in the evolution and crystallization of the Cause such discriminating and precautionary measures are inevitable and even necessary if the nascent institutions of the Faith are to emerge triumphant and unimpaired from the present welter of confused and often conflicting interests with which they are surrounded. This note of warning may not be thought inappropriate at a time when, inflamed by a consuming passion to witness the early completion of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, we may not only be apt to acquiesce in the desire of those who, as yet uninitiated into the Cause, are willing to lend financial assistance to its institutions, but may even feel inclined to solicit from them such aid as it is in their power to render. Ours surely is the paramount duty so to acquit ourselves in the discharge of our most sacred task that in the days to come neither the tongue of the slanderer nor the pen of the malevolent may dare to insinuate that so beauteous, so

significant an Edifice has been reared by anything short of the unanimous, the exclusive, and the self-sacrificing strivings of the small yet determined body of the convinced supporters of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. How delicate our task, how pressing the responsibility that weighs upon us, who are called upon on one hand to preserve inviolate the integrity and the identity of the regenerating Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, and to vindicate on the other its broad, its humanitarian, its all-embracing principles!

True, we cannot fail to realize at the present stage of our work the extremely limited number of contributors qualified to lend financial support to such a vast, such an elaborate and costly enterprise. We are fully aware of the many issues and varied Bahá'í activities that are unavoidably held in abeyance pending the successful conclusion of the Plan of Unified Action. We are only too conscious of the pressing need of some sort of befitting and concrete embodiment of the spirit animating the Cause that would stand in the heart of the American Continent both as a witness and as a rallying center to the manifold activities of a fast growing Faith. But spurred by those reflections may we not bestir ourselves and resolve as we have never resolved before to hasten by every means in our power the consummation of this all-absorbing yet so meritorious a task? I beseech you, dear friends, not to allow considerations of numbers, or the consciousness of the limitations of our resources, or even the experience of inevitable setbacks which every mighty undertaking is bound to encounter, to blur your vision, to dim your hopes, or to paralyze your efforts in the prosecution of your divinely appointed task. Neither, do I entreat you, to suffer the least deviation into the paths of expediency and compromise to obstruct those channels of vivifying grace that can alone provide the inspiration and strength vital not only to the successful conduct of its material construction, but to the fulfilment of its high destiny.

And while we bend our efforts and strain our nerves in a feverish pursuit to provide the necessary means for the speedy

construction of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, may we not pause for a moment to examine those statements which set forth the purpose as well as the functions of this symbolical yet so spiritually potent Edifice? It will be readily admitted that at a time when the tenets of a Faith, not yet fully emerged from the fires of repression, are as yet improperly defined and imperfectly understood, the utmost caution should be exercised in revealing the true nature of those institutions which are indissolubly associated with its name.

Purpose of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár

Without attempting an exhaustive survey of the distinguishing features and purpose of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, I should feel content at the present time to draw your attention to what I regard certain misleading statements that have found currency in various quarters, and which may lead gradually to a grave misapprehension of the true purpose and essential character of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár.

It should be borne in mind that the central Edifice of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, round which in the fulness of time shall cluster such institutions of social service as shall afford relief to the suffering, sustenance to the poor, shelter to the wayfarer, solace to the bereaved, and education to the ignorant, should be regarded apart from these Dependencies, as a House solely designed and entirely dedicated to the worship of God in accordance with the few yet definitely prescribed principles established by Bahá'u'lláh in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. It should not be inferred, however, from this general statement that the interior of the central Edifice itself will be converted into a conglomeration of religious services conducted along lines associated with the traditional procedure obtaining in churches, mosques, synagogues, and other temples of worship. Its various avenues of approach, all converging towards the central Hall beneath its dome, will not serve as admittance to those sectarian adherents of rigid formulae and man-made creeds, each bent, according to his way, to observe his rites, recite his prayers, perform his ablutions, and display the particular symbols of his faith, within separately defined sections of Bahá'u'lláh's Universal House of Worship. Far from the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár offering such a spectacle of incoherent and confused sectarian observances and rites, a condition wholly incompatible with the provisions of the Aqdas and irreconcilable with the spirit it inculcates, the central House of Bahá'í worship, enshrined within the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, will gather within its

chastened walls, in a serenely spiritual atmosphere, only those who, discarding forever the trappings of elaborate and ostentatious ceremony, are willing worshipers of the one true God, as manifested in this age in the Person of Bahá'u'lláh. To them will the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár symbolize the fundamental verity underlying the Bahá'í Faith, that religious truth is not absolute but relative, that Divine Revelation is not final but progressive. Theirs will be the conviction that an all-loving and ever-watchful Father Who, in the past, and at various stages in the evolution of mankind, has sent forth His Prophets as the Bearers of His Message and the Manifestations of His Light to mankind, cannot at this critical period of their civilization withhold from His children the Guidance which they sorely need amid the darkness which has beset them, and which neither the light of science nor that of human intellect and wisdom can succeed in dissipating. And thus having recognized in Bahá'u'lláh the source whence this celestial light proceeds, they will irresistibly feel attracted to seek the shelter of His House, and congregate therein, unhampered by ceremonials and unfettered by creed, to render homage to the one true God, the Essence and Orb of eternal Truth, and to exalt and magnify the name of His Messengers and Prophets Who, from time immemorial even unto our day, have, under divers circumstances and in varying measure, mirrored forth to a dark and wayward world the light of heavenly Guidance.

But however inspiring the conception of Bahá'í worship, as witnessed in the central Edifice of this exalted Temple, it cannot be regarded as the sole, nor even the essential, factor in the part which the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, as designed by Bahá'u'lláh, is destined to play in the organic life of the Bahá'í community. Divorced from the social, humanitarian, educational and scientific pursuits centering around the Dependencies of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, Bahá'í worship, however exalted in its conception, however passionate in fervor, can never hope to achieve beyond the meagre and often transitory results produced by the

contemplations of the ascetic or the communion of the passive worshiper. It cannot afford lasting satisfaction and benefit to the worshiper himself, much less to humanity in general, unless and until translated and transfused into that dynamic and disinterested service to the cause of humanity which it is the supreme privilege of the Dependencies of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár to facilitate and promote. Nor will the exertions, no matter how disinterested and strenuous, of those who within the precincts of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár will be engaged in administering the affairs of the future Bahá'í Commonwealth, fructify and prosper unless they are brought into close and daily communion with those spiritual agencies centering in and radiating from the central Shrine of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár. Nothing short of direct and constant interaction between the spiritual forces emanating from this House of Worship centering in the heart of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, and the energies consciously displayed by those who administer its affairs in their service to humanity can possibly provide the necessary agency capable of removing the ills that have so long and so grievously afflicted humanity. For it is assuredly upon the consciousness of the efficacy of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, reinforced on one hand by spiritual communion with His Spirit, and on the other by the intelligent application and the faithful execution of the principles and laws He revealed, that the salvation of a world in travail must ultimately depend. And of all the institutions that stand associated with His Holy Name, surely none save the institution of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár can most adequately provide the essentials of Bahá'í worship and service, both so vital to the regeneration of the world. Therein lies the secret of the loftiness, of the potency, of the unique position of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár as one of the outstanding institutions conceived by Bahá'u'lláh.

Dearly-beloved friends! May we not as the trustees of so priceless a heritage, arise to fulfill our high destiny?

Your true brother,

SHOGHI.

Haifa, Palestine,
October 25, 1929.

Letter of July 17, 1932.

The beloved of God and the handmaids of the Merciful throughout the United States and Canada.

Brethren and fellow-mourners in the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh:

A sorrow, reminiscent in its poignancy, of the devastating grief caused by 'Abdu'l-Bahá'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 very 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 consciousness of its final consummation at this terrible hour leaves us, we whose souls have been impregnated by the energizing influence of her 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 me since my earliest childhood—how can such a pen repay the great debt of gratitude and love that I owe her whom I regarded as my chief sustainer, my most affectionate comforter, the joy and inspiration of my life? My grief is too immense, my remorse too profound, to be able to give full vent at this moment to the feelings that surge within me.

Only future generations and pens abler than mine can, and will, pay a worthy tribute to the towering grandeur of her spiritual life, to the unique part she played throughout the tumultuous stages of Bahá'í history, to the expressions of unqualified praise that have streamed from the pen of both Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the Center of His covenant, though unrecorded, and in the main

unsuspected by the mass of her passionate admirers in East and West, the share she has had in influencing the course of some of the chief events in the annals of the Faith, the sufferings she bore, the sacrifices she made, the rare gifts of unfailing sympathy she so strikingly displayed—these, and many others stand so inextricably interwoven with the fabric of the Cause itself that no future historian of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh can afford to ignore or minimize.

As far back as the concluding stages of the heroic age of the Cause, which witnessed the imprisonment of Bahá'u'lláh in the Síyáh-Chál of Ṭihrán, the Greatest Holy Leaf, then still in her infancy, was privileged to taste of the cup of woe which the first believers of that apostolic age had quaffed.

How well I remember her recall, at a time when her faculties were still unimpaired, the gnawing suspense that ate into the hearts of those who watched by her side, at the threshold of her pillaged house, expectant to hear at any moment the news of Bahá'u'lláh's imminent execution! In those sinister hours, she often recounted, her parents had so suddenly lost their earthly possessions that within the space of a single day from being the privileged member of one of the wealthiest families of Ṭihrán she had sunk to the state of a sufferer from unconcealed poverty. Deprived of the means of subsistence, her illustrious mother, the famed Navváb, was constrained to place in the palm of her daughter's hand a handful of flour and to induce her to accept it as a substitute for her daily bread.

And when at a later time this revered and precious member of the Holy Family, then in her teens, came to be entrusted by the guiding hand of her Father with missions that no girl of her age could, or would be willing to, perform, with what spontaneous joy she seized her opportunity and acquitted herself of the task with which she had been entrusted! The delicacy and extreme gravity of such functions as she, from time to time, was called upon to fulfill, when the city of Baghdád was swept by the

hurricane which the heedlessness and perversity of Mírzá Yaḥyá had unchained, as well as the tender solicitude which, at so early an age, she evinced during the period of Bahá'u'lláh's enforced retirement to the mountains of Sulaymáníyyih, marked her as one who was both capable of sharing the burden, and willing to make the sacrifice, which her high birth demanded.

How staunch was her faith, how calm her demeanor, how forgiving her attitude, how severe her trials, at a time when the forces of schism had rent asunder the ties that united the little band of exiles which had settled in Adrianople and whose fortunes seemed then to have sunk to their lowest ebb! It was in this period of extreme anxiety, when the rigors of a winter of exceptional severity, coupled with the privations entailed by unhealthy housing accommodations and dire financial distress, undermined once for all her health and sapped the vitality which she had hitherto so thoroughly enjoyed. The stress and storm of that period made an abiding impression upon her mind, and she retained till the time of her death on her beauteous and angelic face evidences of its intense hardships.

Not until, however, she had been confined in the company of Bahá'u'lláh within the walls of the prison-city of Akká did she display, in the plenitude of her power and in the full abundance of her love for Him, more gifts that single her out, next to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, among the members of the Holy Family, as the brightest embodiment of that love which is born of God and of that human sympathy which few mortals are capable of evincing.

Banishing from her mind and heart every earthly attachment, renouncing the very idea of matrimony, she, standing resolutely by the side of a Brother whom she was to aid and serve so well, arose to dedicate her life to the service of her Father's glorious Cause. Whether in the management of the affairs of His Household in which she excelled, or in the social relationships which she so assiduously cultivated in order to shield both Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, whether in the unfailing attention she paid to

the every day needs of her Father, or in the traits of generosity, of affability and kindness, which she manifested, the Greatest Holy Leaf had by that time abundantly demonstrated her worthiness to rank as one of the noblest figures intimately associated with the life-long work of Bahá'u'lláh.

How grievous was the ingratitude, how blind the fanaticism, how persistent the malignity of the officials, their wives, and their subordinates, in return for the manifold bounties which she, in close association with her Brother, so profusely conferred upon them! Her patience, her magnanimity, her indiscriminating benevolence, far from disarming the hostility of that perverse generation, served only to inflame their rancour, to excite their jealousy, to intensify their fears. The gloom that had settled upon that little band of imprisoned believers, who languished in the Fortress of Akká, contrasted with the spirit of confident hope, of deep-rooted optimism that beamed upon her serene countenance. No calamity, however intense, could obscure the brightness of her saintly face, and no agitation, no matter how severe, could disturb the composure of her gracious and dignified behaviour.

That her sensitive heart instantaneously reacted to the slightest injury that befell the least significant of creatures, whether friend or foe, no one who knew her well could doubt. And yet such was the restraining power of her will—a will which her spirit of self-renunciation so often prompted her to suppress—that a superficial observer might well be led to question the intensity of her emotions or to belittle the range of her sympathies. In the school of adversity she, already endowed by Providence with the virtues of meekness and fortitude, learned through the example and exhortations of the Great Sufferer, who was her Father, the lesson she was destined to teach the great mass of His followers for so long after Him.

Armed with the powers with which an intimate and long-standing companionship with Bahá'u'lláh had already equipped her, and benefiting by the magnificent example which the steadi-

ly widening range of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s activities afforded her, she was prepared to face the storm which the treacherous conduct of the Covenant-breakers had aroused and to withstand its most damaging onslaughts.

Great as had been her sufferings ever since her infancy, the anguish of mind and heart which the Ascension of Bahá’u’lláh occasioned, nerved her, as never before, to a resolve which no upheaval could bend and which her frail constitution belied. Amidst the dust and heat of the commotion which that faithless and rebellious company engendered she found herself constrained to dissolve ties of family relationship, to sever long-standing and intimate friendships, to discard lesser loyalties for the sake of her supreme allegiance to a Cause she had loved so dearly and had served so well.

The disruption that ensued found her ranged by the side of Him Whom her departed Father had appointed as the Center of His Covenant and the authorized Expounder of His Word. Her venerated mother, as well as her distinguished paternal uncle, Áqáy-i-Kalím—the twin pillars who, all throughout the various stages of Bahá’u’lláh’s exile from the Land of His Birth to the final place of His confinement, had demonstrated, unlike most of the members of His Family, the tenacity of their loyalty—had already passed behind the Veil. Death, in the most tragic circumstances, had also robbed her of the Purest Branch, her only brother besides ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, while still in the prime of youth. She alone of the family of Bahá’u’lláh remained to cheer the heart and reinforce the efforts of the Most Great Branch, against whom were solidly arrayed the almost entire company of His faithless relatives. In her arduous task she was seconded by the diligent efforts of Munírih Khánum, the Holy Mother, and those of her daughters whose age allowed them to assist in the accomplishment of that stupendous achievement with which the name of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá will forever remain associated.

With the passing of Bahá’u’lláh and the fierce onslaught of the

forces of disruption that followed in its wake, the Greatest Holy Leaf, now in the hey-day of her life, rose to the height of her great opportunity and acquitted herself worthily of her task. It would take me beyond the compass of the tribute I am moved to pay to her memory were I to dwell upon the incessant machinations to which Muḥammad-'Alí, the arch-breaker of the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh, and his despicable supporters basely resorted, upon the agitation which their cleverly-directed campaign of misrepresentation and calumny produced in quarters directly connected with Sulṭán 'Abdu'l-Ḥamíd and his advisers, upon the trials and investigations to which it gave rise, upon the rigidity of the incarceration it reimposed, and upon the perils it revived. Suffice it to say that but for her sleepless vigilance, her tact, her courtesy, her extreme patience and heroic fortitude, grave complications might have ensued and the load of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's anxious care would have been considerably increased.

And when the storm-cloud that had darkened the horizon of the Holy Land had been finally dissipated and the call raised by our beloved 'Abdu'l-Bahá had stirred to a new life certain cities of the American and European continents, the Most Exalted Leaf became the recipient of the unbounded affection and blessings of One Who could best estimate her virtues and appreciate her merits.

The decline of her precious life had by that time set in, and the burden of advancing age was beginning to becloud the radiance of her countenance. Forgetful of her own self, disdaining rest and comfort, and undeterred by the obstacles that still stood in her path, she, acting as the honoured hostess to a steadily increasing number of pilgrims who thronged 'Abdu'l-Bahá's residence from both the East and the West, continued to display those same attributes that had won her, in the preceding phases of her career, so great a measure of admiration and love.

And when, in pursuance of God's inscrutable Wisdom, the ban on 'Abdu'l-Bahá's confinement was lifted and the Plan which

He, in the darkest hours of His confinement, had conceived materialized, He with unhesitating confidence, invested His trusted and honoured sister with the responsibility of attending to the multitudinous details arising out of His protracted absence from the Holy Land.

No sooner had ‘Abdu’l-Bahá stepped upon the shores of the European and American continents than our beloved Khánum found herself well-nigh overwhelmed with thrilling messages, each betokening the irresistible advance of the Cause in a manner which, not withstanding the vast range of her experience, seemed to her almost incredible. The years in which she basked in the sunshine of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s spiritual victories were, perhaps, among the brightest and happiest of her life. Little did she dream when, as a little girl, she was running about, in the courtyard of her Father’s house in Ṭihrán, in the company of Him Whose destiny was to be one day the chosen Center of God’s indestructible Covenant, that such a Brother would be capable of achieving, in realms so distant, and among races so utterly remote, so great and memorable a victory.

The enthusiasm and joy which swelled in her breast as she greeted ‘Abdu’l-Bahá on His triumphant return from the West, I will not venture to describe. She was astounded at the vitality of which He had, despite His unimaginable sufferings, proved Himself capable. She was lost in admiration at the magnitude of the forces which His utterances had released. She was filled with thankfulness to Bahá’u’lláh for having enabled her to witness the evidences of such brilliant victory for His Cause no less than for His Son.

The outbreak of the Great War gave her yet another opportunity to reveal the true worth of her character and to release the latent energies of her heart. The residence of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in Haifa was besieged, all throughout that dreary conflict, by a concourse of famished men, women and children whom the maladministration, the cruelty and neglect of the officials of the

Ottoman Government had driven to seek an alleviation to their woes. From the hand of the Greatest Holy Leaf, and out of the abundance of her heart, these hapless victims of a contemptible tyranny, received day after day unforgettable evidences of a love they had learned to envy and admire. Her words of cheer and comfort, the food, the money, the clothing she freely dispensed, the remedies which, by a process of her own, she herself prepared and diligently applied—all these had their share in comforting the disconsolate, in restoring sight to the blind, in sheltering the orphan, in healing the sick, and in succoring the homeless and the wanderer.

She had reached, amidst the darkness of the war days, the high water-mark of her spiritual attainments. Few, if any, among the unnumbered benefactors of society whose privilege has been to allay, in various measures, the hardships and sufferings entailed by that Fierce Conflict, gave as freely and as disinterestedly as she did; few exercised that undefinable influence upon the beneficiaries of their gifts.

Age seemed to have accentuated the tenderness of her loving heart, and to have widened still further the range of her sympathies. The sight of appalling suffering around her steeled her energies and revealed such potentialities that her most intimate associates had failed to suspect.

The ascension of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, so tragic in its suddenness, was to her a terrific blow, from the effects of which she never completely recovered. To her He, whom she called “Áqá,” had been a refuge in times of adversity. On Him she had been led to place her sole reliance. In Him she had found ample compensation for the bereavements she had suffered, the desertions she had witnessed, the ingratitude she had been shown by friends and kindreds. No one could ever dream that a woman of her age, so frail in body, so sensitive of heart, so loaded with the cares of almost eighty years of incessant tribulation, could so long survive so shattering a blow. And yet history, no less than the

annals of our immortal Faith, shall record for her a share in the advancement and consolidation of the world-wide community which the hand of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had helped to fashion, which no one among the remnants of His Family can rival.

Which of the blessings am I to recount, which in her unfailing solicitude she showered upon me, in the most critical and agitated hours of my life? To me, standing in so dire a need of the vitalizing grace of God, she was the living symbol of many an attribute I had learned to admire in ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. She was to me a continual reminder of His inspiring personality, of His calm resignation, of His munificence and magnanimity. To me she was an incarnation of His winsome graciousness, of His all-encompassing tenderness and love.

It would take me too long to make even a brief allusion to those incidents of her life, each of which eloquently proclaims her as a daughter, worthy to inherit that priceless heritage bequeathed to her by Bahá’u’lláh. A purity of life that reflected itself in even the minutest details of her daily occupations and activities; a tenderness of heart that obliterated every distinction of creed, class and color; a resignation and serenity that evoked to the mind the calm and heroic fortitude of the Báb; a natural fondness of flowers and children that was so characteristic of Bahá’u’lláh; an unaffected simplicity of manners; an extreme sociability which made her accessible to all; a generosity, a love, at once disinterested and indiscriminating, that reflected so clearly the attributes of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s character; a sweetness of temper; a cheerfulness that no amount of sorrow could becloud; a quiet and unassuming disposition that served to enhance a thousandfold the prestige of her exalted rank; a forgiving nature that instantly disarmed the most unyielding enemy—these rank among the outstanding attributes of a saintly life which history will acknowledge as having been endowed with a celestial potency that few of the heroes of the past possessed.

No wonder that in Tablets, which stand as eternal testimonies

to the beauty of her character, Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá have paid touching tributes to those things that testify to her exalted position among the members of their Family, that proclaim her as an example to their followers, and as an object worthy of the admiration of all mankind.

I need only, at this juncture, quote the following passage from a Tablet addressed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá to the Holy Mother, the tone of which reveals unmistakably the character of those ties that bound Him to so precious, so devoted a sister:

"To my honored and distinguished sister do thou convey the expression of my heartfelt, my intense longing. Day and night she liveth in my remembrance. I dare make no mention of the feelings which separation from her has aroused in my heart, for whatever I should attempt to express in writing will assuredly be effaced by the tears which such sentiments must bring to my eyes."

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 labored, for which Thou didst suffer years of ago-

nizing 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.

Intercede, O noble and well-favoured scion of a heavenly Father, for me no less than for the toiling masses of Thy ardent lovers, who have sworn undying allegiance to Thy memory, whose souls have been nourished by the energies of Thy love, whose conduct has been moulded by the inspiring example of Thy life, and whose imaginations are fired by the imperishable evidences of Thy lively faith, Thy unshakable constancy, Thy invincible heroism, Thy great renunciation.

Whatever betide us, however distressing the vicissitudes which the nascent Faith of God may yet experience, we pledge ourselves, before the mercy-seat of thy glorious Father, to hand on, unimpaired and undivided, to generations yet unborn, the glory of that tradition of which thou hast been its most brilliant exemplar.

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 forever.

SHOGHI.

Haifa, Palestine.

July 17, 1932.

[Editorial Note: Messages on the following pages, added to the 1968 edition of Bahá'í Administration, are also contained in Messages to America, 1932–1946.]

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