



The Universal House of Justice

Letter dated 28 November 2023

A Study Guide

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THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

28 November 2023

Reflections on the First Century of the Formative Age

INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPHS

1. On November 27, 2021, representatives from National Spiritual Assemblies, Regional Bahá'í Councils, the Universal House of Justice, the International Teaching Centre, and the Bahá'í World Centre gathered at the Holy Shrine of 'Abdu'l-Bahá to solemnly commemorate the centenary of His passing, while Bahá'í communities worldwide also gathered to honor His unparalleled religious contributions and reflect on the century of achievements He initiated.
2. The Bahá'í community, now millions strong and present in 235 countries and territories, has emerged from obscurity to become a global force, establishing thousands of institutions and vibrant local communities dedicated to spiritual transformation, social progress, and the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, with the translation of sacred writings into over 800 languages, the construction of Mashriqu'l-Adhkárs, and the establishment of the world spiritual and administrative center in 'Akká and Haifa, although it still faces limitations and strives towards the ultimate goal of realizing the oneness of humankind.
3. Since the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá a century ago, the Faith has made significant progress, with His funeral witnessing a diverse gathering of thousands, including people from different religions and backgrounds, who recognized Him as a champion of peace, unity, justice, and a beloved figure in 'Akká and Haifa.
4. The Bahá'ís, above all, deeply mourned the loss of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, recognizing Him as the precious gift and embodiment of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings, the protector of the Bahá'í community, and the one who tirelessly nurtured and advanced the Faith, leaving a sense of uncertainty and concern for the future in his absence.
5. Upon learning of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's passing, Shoghi Effendi, devastated and burdened with grief, quickly returned from his studies in England to the Holy Land, where he received the additional news that he had been appointed as the Guardian and Head of the Faith, leading him to assume his new responsibilities with the support of Bahíyyih Khánúm and diligently evaluate the state and future of the emerging Bahá'í community.
6. Upon the announcement of Shoghi Effendi's appointment as the Guardian, the majority of believers expressed relief, gratitude, and loyalty, finding solace in the reassurances of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will and Testament, while a few disloyal individuals, driven by personal ambitions, challenged the chosen heir, further complicated by opposition from external adversaries; nevertheless, Shoghi Effendi persevered, mobilizing scattered Bahá'í communities and guiding them towards establishing the foundations of the Administrative Order.
7. Shoghi Effendi emphasized to the Bahá'ís the vastness and significance of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation, acknowledging their limited understanding and the immense challenges they faced, expressing the need for time and the guidance of the Universal House of Justice to fully comprehend and unfold the treasures of wisdom contained in the Will of the Master and grasp the nature and implications of Bahá'u'lláh's vision for a new World Order.
8. The completion of a century of "actual working" provides an opportune moment to reflect on the wisdom of the provisions in the Will and Testament, observe the organic development and

coherence of the Faith, recognize the potential for progress, and appreciate the promise of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation in shaping society in the coming decades.

TRANSLATING WHAT IS WRITTEN INTO REALITY AND ACTION

9. Bahá'u'lláh's purpose is to bring about the unity of all peoples and nations, marking a new stage in human development characterized by the emergence of a global civilization and culture, through the revelation of teachings for inner and outer transformation, addressing the ills of humanity and emphasizing the importance of translating these teachings into action for the betterment of all.
10. The Bahá'í community invites all individuals and nations to actively participate in the task of building a mature, peaceful, just, and united world, overcoming the forces of disintegration and working towards the unfoldment of a new order through a spiritual enterprise during the Formative Age.
11. Shoghi Effendi provided guidance to the Bahá'ís, helping them understand their mission and purpose. He explained the significance of Bahá'u'lláh's arrival, His vision for humanity, the history of the Cause, and the societal changes taking place. Shoghi Effendi emphasized the transformative role the Bahá'ís must play in advancing humankind and outlined the ongoing development and transformations of the Bahá'í community. He prepared them for the challenges they would face, urging them to refine their characters and minds. Despite difficulties, he encouraged them to remain hopeful, as the promises of Bahá'u'lláh would be fully realized in the future. Shoghi Effendi called upon the Bahá'ís to be a positive influence, inspiring others to overcome divisions and conflicts, ultimately achieving humanity's highest aspirations.
12. Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian, guided the Bahá'ís in establishing the Administrative Order and effectively sharing Bahá'u'lláh's teachings. He provided step-by-step direction, gradually clarifying the nature, principles, and procedures of the Order while enhancing their capacity for teaching. The believers consulted with him, shared their experiences, and sought guidance when faced with challenges. Based on their accumulated experience, the Guardian offered additional guidance, enabling them to adjust their actions until they proved effective. The friends demonstrated unwavering faith, trust, and resolve in transforming their lives according to the Teachings. This approach cultivated a capacity for learning and was exemplified during the Ten Year Spiritual Crusade, where the Bahá'í community achieved unprecedented accomplishments by combining their efforts.
13. After Shoghi Effendi's passing, the Universal House of Justice continued his efforts to guide the believers towards a path of learning. By the end of the first century of the Formative Age, the Bahá'ís worldwide had consciously understood and systematically implemented the essential aspects of this learning process in all their endeavors.
14. The Bahá'í community today operates through a mode of study, consultation, action, and reflection. They are actively increasing their ability to apply the Teachings in various social contexts and collaborate with like-minded individuals in society to rejuvenate both the material and spiritual foundations of the social order. Within these spaces, individuals and communities become active participants in their own development, embracing the unity of humanity, nurturing the spiritual aspect of life through adherence to principles and strengthening devotional practices, and cultivating a capacity for learning directed towards personal and social transformation. The

understanding and application of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings have become an integral part of Bahá'í culture, with a conscious focus on learning processes extending globally. This approach will increasingly shape the work of institutions, communities, and individuals as the Bahá'í world faces greater challenges and harnesses the transformative power of the Faith in building a better society.

15. Shoghi Effendi, in his efforts to guide the Bahá'ís, highlighted the significance of three key documents: the Tablet of Carmel, the Will and Testament, and the Tablets of the Divine Plan. These documents initiated distinct processes for the development and propagation of the Faith, with the Administrative Order serving as the primary means for implementing the Divine Plan. The progress made at the World Centre influences the global Bahá'í community, and vice versa. As the Bahá'í world continues to evolve, individuals, communities, and institutions strive to actualize the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh. At the end of the first century of the Formative Age, the Bahá'í community has gained a deeper understanding of these foundational documents, enabling them to reflect on their past experiences and work more effectively towards Bahá'u'lláh's vision for humanity in the future.

THE PERPETUATION OF THE COVENANT

16. To ensure the unity, integrity, and progress of His Faith, Bahá'u'lláh established a unique Covenant with His followers. This Covenant, outlined in His Most Holy Book, the Book of His Covenant, and other Tablets, instructed the believers to turn to 'Abdu'l-Bahá after Bahá'u'lláh's passing for guidance. 'Abdu'l-Bahá, as the Centre of the Covenant, perpetuated the Covenant in His Will and Testament by establishing the Administrative Order as ordained by Bahá'u'lláh. This ensured the continuation of authority and leadership through the institutions of the Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice, as well as a harmonious relationship between individuals and institutions within the Faith.
17. The purpose of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation is to establish the unity of humanity and unite all people, as history has shown that religion can either be a powerful force for cooperation and civilization or a source of conflict. The decline of the unifying power of religion occurs when followers disagree on the interpretation and application of divine teachings, leading to divisions among sects and denominations. To achieve the highest stage of societal evolution, the Bahá'í Faith must avoid sectarianism and the dilution of the divine Message seen in the past. The unity of Bahá'ís is essential, as it is the dynamic power that safeguards Bahá'í unity and enables them to contribute to the unity of mankind.
18. One of the significant accomplishments of the past century is the triumph of the Covenant, which safeguarded the Faith from division and propelled it to contribute to the empowerment of all people and nations. Bahá'u'lláh's profound question about the foundation of faith and obedience gains new importance for those who recognize Him as the Manifestation of God for this era, calling for unwavering commitment to the Covenant. The Bahá'í community has responded by faithfully adhering to the provisions of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will and Testament, guided by conscious knowledge and love rather than coercive power. As the first century of the Formative Age comes to a close, the Bahá'í world has gained a deeper understanding of and acted upon Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant, establishing a unique set of relationships that unify and direct their efforts in fulfilling their sacred mission. This achievement, like many others, was the result of overcoming challenges and crises.

19. The existence of the Covenant does not prevent attempts to divide or harm the Bahá'í Faith, but it ensures that such attempts are destined to fail. Throughout history, there have been individuals who tried to undermine the authority of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Shoghi Effendi, and the Universal House of Justice, questioning their legitimacy and sowing doubt within the community. These attempts, including a misguided claim to the Guardianship, have been unsuccessful, as the Covenant remains steadfast in guiding the affairs of the Faith.
20. Over the course of more than a century, the Covenant established by Bahá'u'lláh and continued by 'Abdu'l-Bahá faced various internal and external challenges. However, these attacks were ultimately unsuccessful in diverting or redefining the Bahá'í Faith or causing a permanent division within the community. By seeking guidance from the designated authorities at the time, such as 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the Guardian, or the Universal House of Justice, questions were answered and problems were resolved. As the believers deepened their understanding of and commitment to the Covenant, they became resilient against attacks and misrepresentations that had previously threatened the Faith's existence. As a result, the integrity of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh remains secure.
21. Throughout the different generations of Bahá'ís, their understanding of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings is limited by their historical circumstances and the stage of the Faith's development. In the Heroic Age, believers faced challenging transitions from the Dispensation of the Báb to Bahá'u'lláh and then to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, which are now seen as sequential acts in a divine unfolding drama. Similarly, after a century of community efforts in the Formative Age, the significance and inviolability of the Covenant, a precious gift from Bahá'u'lláh, can be more fully grasped. Understanding the nature of the Covenant and the unity it fosters will remain crucial for progress throughout the Dispensation.
22. The Bahá'í Covenant establishes two authoritative centers: the first being the Book, which includes the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, along with the writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi that provide authoritative interpretation of the Divine Word. While the passing of Shoghi Effendi marked the end of his role in extending this authoritative center, the existence of the Book ensures that the Revelation remains accessible to all believers and humanity, free from any human misinterpretations or additions.
23. The Universal House of Justice is the second authoritative center in the Bahá'í Faith, guided by Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb. It is not influenced by personal opinions or concepts, but rather makes decisions and establishes laws through inspiration and confirmation from the Holy Spirit. The House of Justice is entrusted with divine guidance, which serves as the life-blood and ultimate safeguard of the Bahá'í Revelation, and they are inspired by God's will, independent of those who elect them.
24. The House of Justice has been entrusted with powers and responsibilities that encompass everything necessary to fulfill Bahá'u'lláh's purpose for humanity. Over the past fifty years, the Bahá'í community has witnessed firsthand the diverse ways in which these powers have been expressed, including the establishment of the Law of God, the preservation and dissemination of the Bahá'í Sacred Writings, the development of the Administrative Order and creation of new institutions, the formulation of successive stages in the Divine Plan, and the protection of the Faith and its unity. The House of Justice's elucidations provide resolutions for difficult problems, clarify obscure questions, address matters not explicitly mentioned in the Holy Texts, and offer guidance that adapts to the changing needs of society. Furthermore, it ensures that the essence of

Bahá'u'lláh's message remains unaltered and the fundamental characteristics of the Cause remain intact.

25. In the Kitáb-i-Íqán, Bahá'u'lláh highlights the distressing situation of individuals who seek truth and knowledge of God but struggle to find guidance. In a world that is increasingly divided and confused about matters of truth, morality, identity, and purpose, the Bahá'í community finds solace and clarity in the Covenant. The Covenant provides believers with the freedom to explore Bahá'u'lláh's teachings, form personal conclusions, share insights humbly, and strive to apply the teachings in their daily lives. Through consultation and guidance from institutions, collective efforts are harmonized, transforming relationships between individuals, families, and communities, and fostering social progress.
26. The concept of the Covenant in the Bahá'í Faith ensures that individuals, communities, and institutions have clear guidance for the development and preservation of the Faith. By following the instructions of Bahá'u'lláh, the founder of the Faith, and relying on the authoritative centers of the Covenant, unity and harmony are maintained within the community. This allows for meaningful dialogue, learning, and implementation of the teachings, without falling into endless disagreements. The Covenant fosters balanced relationships among individuals, communities, and institutions, empowering everyone to reach their full potential and contribute to the advancement of the Bahá'í community. Through investigation of reality and the generation of knowledge, the community can fulfill its vital purpose and extend its impact.

THE UNFOLDMENT OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER

27. The Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, a central figure in the Bahá'í Faith, not only ensured the continuation of the Covenant but also laid the foundation for the establishment of the Administrative Order. Over the course of a century, this administrative system expanded globally, connecting people from all nations and regions. The writings of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá not only called for the creation of these institutions but also provided them with a vision and spiritual mandate to contribute to the construction of a just and peaceful world. Thus, the Administrative Order serves as a means to assist humanity in achieving these noble goals.
28. Bahá'u'lláh, the founder of the Bahá'í Faith, established an unprecedented system called the Administrative Order, which involves individuals, communities, and institutions as active participants. In this new age of human maturity, Bahá'u'lláh abolished the traditional practice of religious authorities holding exclusive control over religious matters and guiding the community. Instead, he emphasized cooperation, truth-seeking, and the pursuit of human well-being to avoid conflicts between competing ideologies. The focus shifted from seeking power over others to cultivating individual potential and serving the common good. Trustworthiness, truthfulness, ethical conduct, forbearance, love, and unity are essential spiritual qualities that underpin the relationships among individuals, communities, and institutions. All efforts for social progress are guided by Bahá'u'lláh's vision for a better world.
29. At the time of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's passing, the institutions of the Bahá'í Faith were in their early stages of development. There were only a few local Assemblies operating independently, with limited coordination. There were also a small number of agencies that operated beyond the local level, but there were no National Spiritual Assemblies established yet. Bahá'u'lláh had appointed four Hands of the Cause in Iran, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá guided their activities for the advancement and

protection of the Faith. However, no additional Hands of the Cause were appointed after 'Abdu'l-Bahá's passing. Therefore, at that point, the Bahá'í Faith had not yet established a comprehensive administrative structure to systematize its efforts, despite its abundant potential and spiritual richness.

30. During the early stages of his ministry, Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith, initially contemplated establishing the House of Justice right away. However, upon assessing the global state of the Faith, he determined that the necessary conditions for its formation were not yet present. Instead, he directed the Bahá'ís worldwide to focus their efforts on establishing Local and National Spiritual Assemblies. These National Spiritual Assemblies, comparable to pillars, were to be gradually and firmly established in every country, built upon the strong foundations of the Local Assemblies. Shoghi Effendi envisioned that upon these pillars, the Universal House of Justice would eventually be erected, symbolizing its elevated position above the world and serving as the guiding institution for the Faith.
31. Shoghi Effendi emphasized that the Administrative Order of the Bahá'í Faith should be understood as a means to channel the spirit of the Faith, rather than an ultimate goal in itself. He described it as having an organic nature, stating that it was just the initial form of what would eventually develop into the social life and laws of community living. He also explained that the Administrative Order served as the foundation and model for a future order envisioned by Bahá'u'lláh to organize the affairs of humanity. As the friends of the Faith worked to establish and strengthen the administration, they would come to realize that the relationships between individuals, communities, and institutions would become more intricate over time. This growth in complexity would lead to an increase in capacity as the Faith expanded, ultimately creating a new way of life that could engage people from all around the world.
32. Shoghi Effendi played a crucial role in guiding the Bahá'í community through correspondence, helping them understand and apply the teachings related to the administration of the Faith. He provided guidance on various aspects, such as the purpose, necessity, methods, form, principles, flexibility, and operation of the administrative system, while also referencing the explicit basis for these matters in the Bahá'í Writings. Shoghi Effendi assisted in the development of Bahá'í elections, the establishment and management of the Bahá'í Fund, the organization of National Conventions, the relationship between National and Local Assemblies, and many other important matters. He addressed doubts and uncertainties regarding the continuity between the practices during 'Abdu'l-Bahá's time and the administrative foundations being laid for the Faith's future development as the Guardian. Shoghi Effendi patiently answered questions, resolved problems, and fostered the collective life of the global Bahá'í community as they managed their administrative affairs. Over time, the believers learned to work harmoniously, uphold institutional decisions, and support their progress, understanding that both comprehension and capacity for action would grow with time. Local Assemblies began to operate consistently in areas such as elections, consultation, finances, and community life. National Assemblies were initially formed in various regions, encompassing multiple countries, before being established at the national level as the number of believers and Local Assemblies increased. Alongside National Assemblies, numerous committees were formed at local and national levels to advance collective efforts in areas such as teaching, translation, publishing, education, pioneering, and organizing Nineteen Day Feasts and Holy Days.

33. After dedicating thirty years to building the administrative structure of the Bahá'í Faith at the local and national levels, Shoghi Effendi embarked on a new phase in the development of the Administrative Order during the final years of his life. This phase involved the establishment of institutions at the international and continental levels. It began with the long-awaited establishment of the World Administrative Centre of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh in the Holy Land. In 1951, Shoghi Effendi announced the formation of the International Bahá'í Council. He explained that this new institution would go through various stages of development, leading to its eventual transformation into the Universal House of Justice.
34. Following the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, a significant development occurred when Shoghi Effendi appointed twelve Hands of the Cause of God at the end of the same year. This marked the first group of Hands of the Cause to be appointed in accordance with the provisions outlined in 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will and Testament. These distinguished individuals were tasked with advancing the propagation and protection of the Bahá'í Faith. The unique aspect of this institution is that it does not possess legislative, executive, or judicial authority, nor does it have priestly functions or the right to make authoritative interpretations. This distinctive feature sets Bahá'í administration apart from previous religions. Shoghi Effendi, after nurturing the system of elected Assemblies and associated agencies for many years, began shaping this appointed institution and guiding the believers to understand, embrace, and support its unique functions. In 1952, a second group of Hands was appointed, bringing their total number to nineteen. Additionally, in 1954, Auxiliary Boards were established, with members serving as deputies to the Hands in each continent. Even until the final days of his life, the Guardian continued to expand this institution by appointing a final group of Hands, raising their number to twenty-seven. He also established an Auxiliary Board for Protection to complement the existing Board for Propagation.
35. Shoghi Effendi, in his reflections on the early stages of building the administrative structure of the Bahá'í Faith, acknowledged that many of the measures implemented under his guidance were temporary. He emphasized that the responsibility of defining the long-term direction and activities of the Faith's administration rested with the Universal House of Justice. Shoghi Effendi expressed that once this supreme governing body was properly established, it would have the authority to reassess the entire situation and establish principles to guide the affairs of the Faith for as long as it deemed necessary.
36. After the unexpected passing of Shoghi Effendi in November 1957, the responsibility for managing the affairs of the Bahá'í Faith temporarily fell upon the Hands of the Cause of God. Just a month prior, Shoghi Effendi had appointed them as the "Chief Stewards of Bahá'u'lláh's embryonic World Commonwealth," entrusting them with the crucial tasks of safeguarding the Faith and ensuring its propagation. The Hands of the Cause faithfully and unwaveringly followed the directives set by the Guardian. During their stewardship, the number of National Assemblies increased from twenty-six to fifty-six. By 1961, they successfully implemented the steps outlined by Shoghi Effendi for the transition of the International Bahá'í Council from an appointed body to an elected one, which paved the way for the election of the Universal House of Justice in 1963.
37. The administration of the Bahá'í Faith has undergone significant growth and development over more than 50 years. The Constitution of the Universal House of Justice was adopted in 1972, expanding the functions of the institution with the creation of Continental Boards of Counsellors in 1968 and the International Teaching Centre in 1973. Auxiliary Board members were authorized to appoint assistants to expand their efforts at the grassroots level. The number of National and

Local Assemblies increased, and their capabilities grew to serve the Bahá'í community and engage with society. Regional Bahá'í Councils were introduced in 1997 to address complex issues while maintaining a balance between centralization and decentralization. Education and decision-making structures were established at decentralized levels, reaching neighborhoods and villages. Training institutes, Regional Councils, and administrative arrangements were implemented in clusters across the world. The law of Ḥuqúqu'lláh was applied universally in 1992, and its institutional structure was consolidated through Boards of Trustees and Representatives. The construction of Mashriqu'l-Adhkárs, places of worship, was completed in several countries, with the process extended to national and local levels in 2012.

38. In the development of this century, the relationship between people, groups, and organizations has become more complex, and the basis of organizational management is that the design of the car reaches your eyes clearly and purely in a timely manner. Always copy. Formative Era At the beginning of the first century, a few select organizations began to arise, and by the end of the century, from the continent to the islands, a host of institutions and organizations had formed to unite Bahá'ís. The globalization of ideas and actions in the common business context of different cultures and societies.
39. Together they read the realities of their surroundings, explore the depth of existing guidance, find necessary information from teachings and other resources, create a positive environment and inspire the spirit, build strength, and initiate the work of inner growth. efficiency and time complexity. Among elite groups, villages and communities are important workplaces. People in society come with knowledge, interests and purposes, which contributes to the improvement of human creativity and combines them in different ways to inspire each other. . Behavior that cares about and respects all people. These societies are known for their sense of unity among their members, freedom from various jobs, culture of self-giving, commitment to equality between men and women, selfless service to the people and knowledge. Culture and cultivating goodness. , and their ability to systematically study and contribute to human, social, and spiritual advancement. People who are asked to work in organizations try to understand their responsibilities, separate their interests from negative things, do not see themselves in the middle or higher than others, and avoid everything that wants to control them. Based on the thoughts and actions of believers.
40. Through these new relationships and abilities for the three protagonists, the circle of people who have the ability to think and act strategically expands, providing help, resources, encouragement, and loving guidance when needed. The pattern of life created by this dynamic engagement includes millions of souls from all walks of life animated by Bahá'u'lláh's vision of a unified world. Nevertheless, the emergence of new functionality in one location indicates clear progress and serves as a sign that other locations will surely follow this path.
41. Shoghi Effendi predicted that "when the parts, its organic machines, begin to work efficiently and effectively," the Executive Order will "remain alive and show its potential, not only as a priority but as a model for the new order." The world is meant to embrace everyone when the time comes. In this process of organic evolution, relationships between individuals, communities and institutions develop in new and sometimes unexpected ways.

THE WORLDWIDE SPREAD AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE FAITH

42. Over time, fellows learn to work closely with like-minded individuals and organizations to lift people's spirits and contribute to the betterment of families, communities and society at large.
43. During Dispensation of the Bab → 2 countries. Ministry of Bahá'u'lláh → 15 countries. Ministry of 'Abdu'l-Bahá it had reached 35 countries. During the turbulent times of World War I, 'Abdu'l-Bahá created one of his precious legacies, the Tablets of the Divine Plan, a grand plan for the spiritual enlightenment of the earth through the dissemination of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings. This precious Charter calls for a collective and organized effort. But by the time of the Masters passing, this Faith had little penetration into the community's thinking and behavior, and only a few extraordinary heroes of the faith emerged in response, most notably Martha Root did.
44. The execution of the Divine Plan, revealed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, was delayed for twenty years until the friends of the Faith, guided by Shoghi Effendi, were able to establish and strengthen the administrative structure of the Faith. Once this initial structure was firmly in place, the Guardian could then articulate a vision for the advancement of the Faith based on 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Plan. As the administration of the Faith evolved, so did the efforts to share and apply Bahá'u'lláh's teachings. This organic evolution gave rise to new patterns of community life that could accommodate larger numbers of believers, tackle greater challenges, and contribute to personal and social transformation.
45. Shoghi Effendi initiated the systematic implementation of the Divine Plan by calling upon the communities in the United States and Canada to create a well-thought-out plan and actively pursue its execution. This led to the launch of the first Seven Year Plan in 1937, which aimed to spread the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh to Latin America. The success of this plan paved the way for the second Seven Year Plan in 1946, focusing on the development of the Faith in Europe. Shoghi Effendi also encouraged other national communities to adopt similar plans under his guidance. Various countries such as India and Burma, the British Isles, Persia, Australia and New Zealand, Iraq, Canada, Egypt and Sudan, Germany and Austria, and Central America adopted national plans following a similar pattern of teaching individuals, establishing local assemblies, expanding into new areas, and repeating the process. Once a strong foundation was established in a country or territory, a new National Assembly could be formed.
46. Shoghi Effendi continuously motivated and encouraged believers to fulfill their duty of teaching the Faith in accordance with the plans established by their National Assemblies. Various methods like pioneering, traveling teaching, fireside gatherings, summer schools, and collaboration with similar organizations were found to be effective in certain regions, and Shoghi Effendi encouraged the adoption of these practices in other parts of the world. Alongside the expansion efforts, there was a focus on internal development to strengthen the identity and character of the Bahá'í Faith as a unique religious community. Shoghi Effendi played a crucial role in this transformative process by providing insights into the history of the Faith, promoting the use of the Bahá'í calendar, emphasizing regular participation in Feasts and Holy Day commemorations, and guiding believers to adhere to Bahá'í laws, including those concerning marriage. Gradually, the Bahá'í Faith gained recognition as a global religion, occupying its rightful place amongst other major religions.
47. During this period, as international institutions were established, the activities of the Bahá'í Faith in the field of teaching expanded to include international cooperation. In 1951, five national communities came together to execute the African Campaign, which was described as highly

promising and profoundly significant, with the aim of spreading the Faith across the African continent. Furthermore, in 1953, the Ten Year Crusade began, marking the first-ever global Plan that united the efforts of all twelve existing National Assemblies. This stage of Shoghi Effendi's guardianship witnessed a culmination of the administrative structures established by the believers and the effective teaching methods they had developed. These were all utilized in a collective spiritual endeavor that was unprecedented in the history of the Bahá'í community.

48. The believers of the Bahá'í Faith embarked on extensive journeys to share their precious teachings, and they found that people from diverse backgrounds were highly receptive to the principles and teachings of the Faith. These populations discovered that the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh offered a deeper meaning and purpose to their lives, as well as fresh insights that would enable their communities to progress spiritually, socially, and materially. The divine light, initially transmitted gradually from one individual to another, rapidly started to spread among the masses of humanity. The phenomenon of entry by troops, which had been foretold by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, became evident through the enrollment of hundreds of believers in various countries such as Uganda, The Gambia, the Gilbert and Ellice Islands, and later, in Indonesia and Cameroon. Additionally, the process began in several other nations, with thousands or even tens of thousands embracing the Faith before the conclusion of that particular Plan.
49. After the passing of Shoghi Effendi, the Hands of the Cause diligently followed the path outlined by him, ensuring the successful completion of the Ten Year Crusade. The lessons learned under the guidance of the Guardian resulted in a significant advancement in the field of teaching the Faith during this decade, surpassing the achievements of the previous century. The Bahá'í Faith extended its reach to 131 new countries and territories, and the number of localities with Bahá'ís residing exceeded eleven thousand. This expansion led to the establishment of fifty-six National Spiritual Assemblies and over 3,500 Local Assemblies. The conclusion of this enterprise saw the election of the Universal House of Justice, following the provisions set by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, by the members of these National Assemblies.
50. Following its establishment, the Universal House of Justice continued the implementation of the Divine Plan, entering its second phase. During this period, the range of activities carried out by the Guardian was expanded and enhanced, and efforts were made to coordinate and unify the work of all National Assemblies. Key areas of focus included encouraging active participation of individuals in service to the Faith and deepening their understanding of its laws and teachings. Strengthening institutions involved close collaboration between the newly formed Boards of Counsellors and National Assemblies, as well as between Auxiliary Board members and Local Spiritual Assemblies. Community life was improved through the establishment of children's classes, youth and women's activities, and regular Assembly meetings. Other initiatives included widespread outreach and promotion of the Faith through various media channels, the development of educational centers like summer schools and teaching institutes, active engagement in wider society, and the fostering of Bahá'í scholarship.
51. By the 1990s, the Bahá'í Faith had expanded to numerous localities, with National Assemblies numbering around 180. The growth of national communities followed two patterns, influenced by the wider population's response. The first pattern involved small communities, often consolidating with strong Bahá'í identity. However, it became evident that despite shared beliefs and humanitarian efforts, such small communities couldn't serve as a model for restructuring society at large.

52. In countries experiencing the entry by troops phenomenon, the Bahá'í community saw exponential growth, reaching over one hundred thousand believers in several places, with India exceeding two million. Despite creative efforts, the process of consolidation struggled to match the rapid expansion. While over thirty thousand Local Assemblies were formed, only a fraction operated effectively. This highlighted the challenge of providing sufficient education and community activities for the increasing number of new believers, emphasizing that occasional courses and informal activities were insufficient for the vast needs of the growing community.
53. By 1996, the Bahá'í community recognized the need for reassessment and reorientation in its activities worldwide. It became essential to not only initiate actions reaching large numbers but also rapidly increase individuals engaged in service to match the accelerating expansion. The Four Year Plan emphasized a "significant advance in the process of entry by troops," aiming for sustained growth on a large scale. The objective was to systematically introduce the Faith to diverse populations globally, acknowledging that such expansion was crucial to realizing the transformative power of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings on humanity.
54. In the Four Year Plan, regional Bahá'í communities were urged to tailor approaches to their specific conditions and initiate a systematic process of community development. Emphasis was placed on continuous review, adjustment, and improvement of methods based on successes and challenges. In situations of uncertainty, diverse approaches to the challenges outlined in the Plan could be tested. Effective initiatives could be shared with national and international institutions, disseminating successful features to other regions and potentially becoming integral components of future Plans.
55. Over a quarter century, the Bahá'í community's learning process about growth led to the development of concepts, instruments, and approaches, enriching its evolving framework for action. Notable features included the establishment of a network of training institutes, offering educational programs for various age groups to empower and enhance the capabilities of individuals for service. Clusters, another key element, facilitated systematic teaching efforts in manageable geographic areas, accelerating the Faith's spread and development worldwide. Within growth programs, a new community life pattern emerged, featuring four core activities as entry portals for large numbers, along with diverse efforts like teaching, home visits, social gatherings, observing Feast and Holy Days, community affairs administration, and initiatives for social and economic development. Together, these activities aimed to transform the community's spiritual character and strengthen social ties among individuals and families.
56. Reflecting on a century of executing the Divine Plan, the Bahá'í world has witnessed a significant cultural advance. More individuals are actively learning and applying Teachings related to growth and development within a dynamic framework guided by the House of Justice. This learning process is marked by humility in success and resilience in challenges, strengthening Bahá'í identity while maintaining openness, and engaging in a systematic and coherent approach to the Cause. In numerous clusters, people see themselves as active contributors to knowledge acquisition, generation, and application for personal development. They participate in discussions on spiritual and social themes, initiate devotional activities, provide education for youth, and contribute to community progress, empowering them to contribute to global betterment. This engagement has deepened their understanding of the purpose of religion.

INVOLVEMENT IN THE LIFE OF SOCIETY

57. The unfolding of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Divine Plan includes a heightened involvement of the Bahá'í community in societal life. Shoghi Effendi consistently emphasized the transformative power of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation to bring about organic societal change, leading to the emergence of a spiritual civilization. Bahá'ís were urged to apply Bahá'u'lláh's teachings not just for personal spiritual growth but also for material and social transformation, starting within their communities and gradually extending their efforts to encompass broader society.
58. During 'Abdu'l-Bahá's time, certain Bahá'í communities in Iran and nearby countries achieved size and conditions conducive to systematic social and economic development. 'Abdu'l-Bahá actively guided and supported these efforts, promoting the establishment of inclusive schools, dispatching believers from the West to assist, and providing spiritual and material guidance to specific villages. Dependencies for education and social services were initiated around the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in 'Ishqábád at His direction, and schools were founded in Egypt and the Caucasus. After His passing, Shoghi Effendi continued to expand these initiatives, fostering activities in health, literacy, and the education of women and girls throughout the Iranian community. Despite contributing to the modernization of Iran, these schools were compelled to close in 1934 due to government actions.
59. Shoghi Effendi advised Bahá'ís to prioritize teaching and raising the Administrative Order, concentrating limited resources on these endeavors. A letter on his behalf emphasized that contributions to the Faith were the most effective way to address global issues and that Bahá'u'lláh's system was key to uplifting humanity. Although individuals could find personal avenues for material and social development, the general focus for Bahá'ís was on growth and community building. During the early years after the House of Justice's election, guidance aligned with this approach, acknowledging that, despite Bahá'u'lláh's teachings on social and economic development, circumstances made it impractical for most Bahá'í communities to undertake such activities.
60. In 1983, due to sustained teaching efforts and substantial growth globally, the Bahá'í community reached a stage where social and economic development became an integral part of its regular pursuits. The friends were encouraged to uplift themselves through the application of spiritual principles, ethical conduct, and the art of consultation, taking responsibility for their own development. The Office of Social and Economic Development was established at the World Centre to assist the House of Justice in promoting and coordinating these activities worldwide, fostering a global learning process about development. Individual believers initiated diverse activities, not only for Bahá'ís but also for the broader community.
61. Within a decade, hundreds of global development activities emerged, covering diverse areas such as women's advancement, education, health, mass communication, agriculture, economic initiatives, and environmental concerns. Activities varied in complexity, ranging from simple, short-term projects in response to local challenges, to sustained ventures like schools and clinics with organizational structures ensuring long-term viability. By 1996, a few individuals established Bahá'í-inspired organizations with complex programmatic structures, aiming to systematically address development issues and make a significant impact in regions. Throughout these endeavors, the friends aimed to apply spiritual principles to practical problems.
62. With the emergence of Bahá'í-inspired agencies and those under Bahá'í institutions' authority in various countries, their impact on both the community and broader society demonstrated a

dynamic coherence between material and spiritual dimensions of life. Progress was observed not only in actions but also in thought. Fundamental concepts were embraced, including the idea that the world doesn't neatly divide into developed and underdeveloped; all require transformation and an environment fostering spiritual, social, and material conditions for security and flourishing. Development isn't an external process but involves people as protagonists in their own development. Access to knowledge and active participation are central, starting small and growing in complexity over time. Proven programs can be systematically introduced to other regions. Applying these principles enhances the friends' ability to analyze social conditions, draw insights from the Writings and various fields of knowledge, and integrate activities seamlessly with community-building efforts.

63. In 2018, due to the extensive and increasingly complex Bahá'í development efforts worldwide, a new institution—the Bahá'í International Development Organization (BIC)—was established in the Holy Land. BIC inherited and expanded the functions and mandate of the Office of Social and Economic Development, reinforcing social action efforts globally by individuals, communities, institutions, and agencies. Similar to its predecessor, its primary goal is to facilitate the ongoing global learning process about development within the Bahá'í community. It achieves this by supporting action, reflection, experience gathering, systematization, conceptualization, and training—all guided by the teachings of the Faith. Ultimately, BIC aims to cultivate a distinctive Bahá'í approach to development.
64. In addition to the systematic processes of expansion, consolidation, and social and economic development, another significant area of action emerged for the Bahá'í community: increased participation in societal discourses. In various social settings where discussions on human problems occur, Bahá'ís aim to share insights drawn from Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation. Bahá'u'lláh himself initially proclaimed His healing remedy to the world's leaders, urging its adoption by all humanity. Despite leaders' failure to affirmatively respond to His divine claim, He called upon them to apply His principles for establishing world peace. 'Abdu'l-Bahá continued this effort through writings like the Tablets to The Hague and talks during His travels to the West, consistently proclaiming His Father's teachings to both powerful individuals and the masses grappling with humanity's myriad difficulties.
65. In the early years of his leadership, Shoghi Effendi recognized the crucial importance of disseminating the insights and wisdom contained in the Bahá'í teachings to the global populace and leaders. He initiated efforts such as establishing a Bahá'í information bureau in Geneva in 1925, publishing volumes of *The Bahá'í World*, and urging knowledgeable Bahá'ís to correlate the Teachings with contemporary thought regarding the world's pressing issues. After the formation of the United Nations in 1948, the Bahá'í International Community emerged as a non-governmental organization representing Bahá'í communities globally, engaging increasingly in the UN's work. This marked a new phase in the Faith's relationship with governments, international institutions, and civil society agencies worldwide. While emphasizing the primary importance of the teaching work, Shoghi Effendi encouraged Bahá'ís to acquaint wider society with the implications of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings. He urged establishing closer contact with leaders of public thought, associating rather than affiliating, remaining untainted by political involvement, and engaging with organizations focused on social issues to share the Faith's aims and teachings, particularly concerning world peace.

66. After the establishment of the Universal House of Justice, the Bahá'í community's participation in societal discourses expanded further. The House of Justice itself played a role in disseminating Bahá'í principles, notably in the message "The Promise of World Peace." The Bahá'í International Community strengthened its presence at the United Nations, establishing a more formal association with UN agencies in the 1970s. It published statements on world affairs, engaged with governments and non-governmental organizations, and actively participated in international symposia on topics like the environment, women's rights, social development, and more. Recognized for its selfless agenda focused on the well-being of humanity, it contributed constructively to various global events. In response to renewed persecution of Bahá'ís in Iran, several national communities initiated closer dialogue with national and international institutions, establishing external affairs offices to defend the Faith at the international level.
67. As the twenty-first century began, the organic progress of the Bahá'í Faith allowed for more systematic engagement in societal discourses. Bahá'í websites at both international and national levels significantly expanded the presentation of the Teachings across various topics. The Institute for Studies in Global Prosperity was established to research the implications of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings for pressing social issues and initiated seminars for Bahá'í university students. The Bahá'í International Community's work extended to regional centers, and national offices of external affairs systematically participated in specific discourses on behalf of their communities. Topics such as women's advancement, religion's role in society, youth empowerment, justice promotion, and social cohesion were intensively addressed globally. The Office of Public Discourse at the Bahá'í World Centre now facilitates a global learning process from contributing to national discourses. At the grassroots level, in neighborhoods, villages, professions, and other social spaces, Bahá'ís are learning to offer concepts from the Bahá'í Writings as contributions to the evolving thought and action necessary for constructive change among their compatriots.
68. In the face of the disintegration of the old world order and escalating polarized discourse leading to conflicts, Bahá'ís recognize the urgency of involvement at all levels of society. Understanding that Bahá'u'lláh's vision of transformation requires universal participation, Bahá'ís collaborate with sympathetic individuals and organizations sharing common objectives. In these collaborative efforts, they exchange insights from Bahá'u'lláh's teachings and practical lessons from community-building while learning from their partners' experiences. Working with diverse groups, including civic and governmental organizations, Bahá'ís remain conscious of potential contentiousness in social issue discussions linked with political ambitions. In their deepening engagement with wider society, Bahá'ís strive to foster consensus, unity of thought, and promote collaboration in seeking solutions to humanity's pressing problems. They emphasize that the means to achieve an end are as important as the end itself.
69. The involvement of Bahá'í communities in the wider society has evolved alongside the teaching work and administrative development. In recent decades, efforts for social action and engagement in societal discourses have become increasingly coherent with expansion and consolidation, guided by the conceptual framework for action in global Plans. As friends labor in their clusters, they naturally integrate into the surrounding society, extending the learning process from growth and community building to diverse activities. Community life now actively contributes to material, social, and spiritual progress, as friends understand societal conditions, explore Bahá'u'lláh's teachings and relevant human knowledge, apply insights to practical problems, and build capacity within the community. This coherence has led to significant growth in grassroots social and

economic development activities, from a few hundred in 1990 to tens of thousands by 2021. The Bahá'í community's engagement in societal discourse has received a positive response, offering fresh perspectives desperately sought by a divided world facing complex challenges. Leaders of thought increasingly associate the Bahá'í community with innovative ideas, marking the discernible rise of the Faith's society-building power in numerous countries. This emerging societal capacity, fueled by a new consciousness and enhanced learning, is poised to characterize the unfolding stages of the Divine Plan in the current and coming years.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BAHÁ'Í WORLD CENTRE

70. During the first century of the Formative Age, alongside the growth of the Faith and the establishment of its administration, equally significant developments unfolded at the Bahá'í World Centre. These developments were set in motion by the impetus of Bahá'u'lláh's Tablet of Carmel. The interplay among the processes associated with the three Charters, including the emergence of institutions and agencies of the administrative center of the Bahá'í world, has been previously mentioned. Now, reflections on the development of its spiritual center can be added to this narrative.
71. Upon Bahá'u'lláh's arrival in 'Akká, the climactic chapter of His ministry commenced, manifesting the Lord of Hosts in the Holy Land as foretold by Prophets over millennia. His presence there wasn't of His own volition but compelled by persecution, culminating in exile. His arrival was accompanied by a proclamation that soon all on earth would be enlisted under the banners of light. The spiritual potency of the Holy Land was immensely heightened by Bahá'u'lláh's presence and the interment of His sacred remains, along with those of His Herald. The Holy Land has become the focal point of every Bahá'í heart, the center of their devotions, and the pilgrimage goal. These Bahá'í Holy Places are open to people from the Holy Land and around the world, serving as a precious trust held for all humanity.
72. At the close of the Heroic Age and for many years afterward, the Bahá'ís faced tenuous circumstances regarding the spiritual center of their Faith. 'Abdu'l-Bahá, despite His station, encountered difficulties offering prayers at His Father's resting place. His situation worsened as He faced false charges for constructing the Shrine of the Báb. This perilous condition persisted into Shoghi Effendi's ministry, marked by the seizure of the keys of the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh by Covenant-breakers. Protecting, preserving, extending, and beautifying the Holy Shrines became a vital duty for Shoghi Effendi amid tumultuous changes in the Holy Land, including economic disruptions, war, political transitions, and social instability. Upholding Bahá'í principles during these challenges, he even contemplated the transfer of Bahá'u'lláh's remains to Mount Carmel for their protection. Despite directing local believers to disperse during times of turmoil, he steadfastly remained in Haifa. This duty continued until his final days, culminating in the recognition of the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh as a Bahá'í Holy Place by civil authorities, allowing the Bahá'í world to preserve and beautify its most sacred site.
73. In his endeavors to acquire, restore, and secure the Holy Places, Shoghi Effendi expanded properties around the Holy Shrine and the Mansion at Bahjí, initiating extensive formal gardens. On the Mountain of God, he completed the Shrine of the Báb, adding rooms, creating an arcade, raising a golden dome, and surrounding it with verdure. He set the trajectory for the World Bahá'í Administrative Order's edifices and built the International Archives Building at one end. The

Guardian's efforts continued under the Universal House of Justice, acquiring and beautifying additional land and Holy Places, raising buildings on the Arc, and extending terraces on Mount Carmel. By the end of the first century of the Formative Age, the property near the Shrine of the Báb exceeded 170,000 square meters, and the area around the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh expanded from 4,000 to over 450,000 square meters. In 2019, construction began on a Shrine in 'Akká near the Riḡván Garden to serve as the final resting place of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

74. Over the century, the development of the Bahá'í administrative center accelerated, initially hindered by the small size of the Bahá'í world. The Guardian's early longing for capable helpers became fulfilled as the community expanded, enabling the Universal House of Justice to receive continuous support from volunteers. These individuals contributed to establishing vital departments and agencies at the World Centre to meet the needs of the rapidly growing Faith globally. The flow of questions, advice, insights, and guidance between all parts of the planet and the heart of the Bahá'í world became ceaseless. In 1987, the patient efforts initiated by Shoghi Effendi to establish positive relations with civil authorities in Israel culminated in the formal recognition of the Bahá'í World Centre's status as the spiritual and administrative center of the worldwide Bahá'í community, operating under the aegis of the Universal House of Justice.
75. The evolution of relationships among individuals, communities, institutions, and the Bahá'í World Centre mirrors the continuous development of the Bahá'í world. The intimate association of the spiritual and administrative center with the global Bahá'í community was highlighted in a May 24, 2001 message during the completion of projects on Mount Carmel. The majestic buildings and terraced gardens on the slope of the Mountain of God stand as a testament to the immense power animating the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh. These structures signify the successful foundation of a worldwide community that transcends human divisions and the establishment of a unique Administrative Order shaping the community's life. The transformation on Mount Carmel symbolizes the Bahá'í Cause's emergence as a visible force on the global stage, destined to bring about the reconstruction of society and serve as a mystic source of spiritual renewal for all who turn to it.

PROSPECT

76. In the final weeks before His passing, 'Abdu'l-Bahá invited a friend to admire the beauty of the garden at His home. He marveled at the transformation, highlighting how the flourishing place was once just a heap of stones, now adorned with foliage and flowers. Expressing His desire for the loved ones to arise in service to the divine Cause after His departure, 'Abdu'l-Bahá prophesied the imminent appearance of those who would bring life to the world.
77. As the first century of the Formative Age concludes, the Bahá'í world witnesses unprecedented capacity and resources, surpassing the visions at the time of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's passing. Through successive generations, a global community has emerged, dedicated to constructing the Faith's Administrative Order, expanding community life, enhancing societal engagement, and advancing the spiritual and administrative center.
78. In the past century, the Bahá'í community has evolved into a new creation, fulfilling the vision set forth by 'Abdu'l-Bahá through the systematic execution of the three Divine Charters. Analogous to the stages of human growth, the community has developed organically, both in size and structure, understanding and vision, shouldering responsibilities, and fortifying relationships among individuals, communities, and institutions. These advances have empowered the Bahá'í

community to engage purposefully in a broad spectrum of endeavors on both local and global scales.

79. As the Heroic Age concluded, the Bahá'í community faced pivotal questions on organizing its administrative affairs for the Divine Plan, guided by the Guardian. This initial learning process laid the foundation for the nascent international arrangements at his passing. Subsequent decades saw the community grappling with new challenges and opportunities, building the capacity to address increasingly complex questions under the guidance of the Universal House of Justice. The ongoing process of learning and developing new capacities characterizes the Faith's progress, enabling it to meet evolving challenges and fulfill Bahá'u'lláh's purpose for humanity through the Formative and Golden Ages.
80. As the first century of the Formative Age neared its end, a shared framework for action had emerged within the Bahá'í community, shaping its work with evolving complexity. This framework, guided by spiritual truths, cardinal principles, values, attitudes, concepts, and knowledge insights, continues to evolve through experience and guidance from the Universal House of Justice. The community is learning to systematically apply Bahá'u'lláh's teachings to realize His lofty aims for the world's betterment, showcasing increased capacity for learning and its profound implications for humanity's advancement in the current stage of social development.
81. The Bahá'í community, having achieved much, faces a Nine Year Plan that outlines immediate tasks. The focus includes multiplying and intensifying growth programs, enhancing coherence in community building, social action, and discourse participation. The training institute will strengthen, evolving as an educational organization empowering individuals for service. Youth and women's roles will advance globally, while Bahá'í institutions' capacity will grow, emphasizing Local Assemblies and broader societal engagement. Intellectual life will flourish, providing clarity to demonstrate the applicability of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings. These efforts span generations, marking the Bahá'í world's journey into its third century.
82. Efforts to comprehend and live according to Bahá'u'lláh's teachings occur within the broader context of Shoghi Effendi's concept of disintegration and integration. Achieving the current series of Plans' goal, the release of the Faith's society-building power, requires an ability to understand how society responds to and is shaped by these dual processes of disintegration and integration.
83. The world grapples with destructive forces such as environmental degradation, pandemics, moral decline, and ideological conflicts, leaving an indelible mark on history. Concurrently, constructive trends emerge, fostering global solidarity, interdependence, collaborative action, and a yearning for justice and peace. Amidst halting steps, dramatic leaps, and occasional setbacks, humanity moves toward Bahá'u'lláh's vision of a united and peaceful world, undergoing a transformative process described by Shoghi Effendi as a "universal fermentation."
84. The Bahá'í community, like the world, faces destructive forces impacting its progress. National communities have experienced setbacks due to social tendencies, opposition, economic crises, and political upheavals. Despite these challenges, the Bahá'ís respond with perseverance. The Bahá'ís of Iran, in particular, have demonstrated an exceptional and noble response to the hostile forces opposing the advancement of the Cause over the past century.
85. Despite facing waves of violent repression, escalating with the Iranian Revolution, the Bahá'ís of Iran have displayed courage and resilience. Their achievements include the establishment of the Bahá'í Institute for Higher Education and efforts to transform views within and outside the country. Their endurance in the face of injustice, indignity, and privation serves as an example of

unswerving fortitude and mutual support, providing essential lessons for the Bahá'í world in responding to the anticipated acceleration of destructive forces in the years ahead.

86. The central challenge posed by the interplay of integration and disintegration processes is to adhere to Bahá'u'lláh's teachings while resisting divisive debates and seductive prescriptions influenced by limited human perspectives and materialist philosophies. Bahá'u'lláh, the "All-Knowing Physician," diagnoses humanity's afflictions, but self-conceited individuals obstruct the prescribed remedy. Bahá'ís must avoid entanglement in delusory notions, embracing values, attitudes, and practices of a self-absorbed age. Instead, they should rise heroically, confident that their greatest efforts coincide with the apocalyptic upheaval marking humanity's lowest ebb, contributing to the advancement of Bahá'u'lláh's rising World Order.
87. The future course of the forces of disintegration remains uncertain, with potential upheavals and challenges ahead until the realization of a Great Peace. However, the process of integration will accelerate, bringing together the efforts of those translating Bahá'u'lláh's teachings into reality with broader society's quest for justice and peace. Shoghi Effendi's guidance to the Bahá'ís of America about their eventual engagement in the betterment of their nation is now relevant globally, as the society-building power of the Faith is increasingly unleashed. The Bahá'ís worldwide are called to contribute to the healing and advancement of society.
88. The release of the society-building power of the Faith holds profound implications for the future, emphasizing the inclusive role of every people and nation in the ongoing reconstruction of human society. Bahá'ís, as bearers of Bahá'u'lláh's transformative message, carry the responsibility to assist populations in unlocking their latent potential for achieving their highest aspirations. Through sharing this message, demonstrating its efficacy, and collaborating with like-minded individuals, the friends contribute to Bahá'u'lláh's vision of a unified world. The Faith's spirit fosters a sense of civic responsibility, love, and shared identity, redirecting energies toward selfless service for the common good. As Bahá'í values increasingly permeate hearts, a constructive path for cooperation emerges, providing a hopeful direction for addressing societal challenges. The method of consultation, action, and reflection replaces conflict, promoting harmonized efforts across diverse societies, transcending rivalries, and nurturing spiritual and moral qualities essential for humanity's progress.
89. As the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh enters the second century of the Formative Age, the believers are urged to draw inspiration from the words of the beloved Guardian. Shoghi Effendi emphasized the vital role of the spirit and manner in conducting the tasks set by the Divine Plan. The clearness and steadiness of vision, unvitiated vitality of belief, incorruptibility of character, adamant force of resolve, unmatched superiority of aims, and unsurpassed range of accomplishments are highlighted as essential qualities for those laboring for the glory of the Most Great Name. This dedicated effort, rooted in a Divinely appointed Administrative Order, is envisioned as a haven of refuge for a society facing its challenges, demonstrating the power of the Bahá'í community to offer a path of hope and transformation.

OUTLINING KEY POINTS

INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPHS

Paragraph 1

1. **Date and Setting:** On November 27, 2021, nearly six hundred representatives from National Spiritual Assemblies and Regional Bahá'í Councils gathered at the Bahá'í World Centre to commemorate the centenary of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's passing.
2. **Diverse Participation:** The event included members of the Universal House of Justice, the International Teaching Centre, and the staff at the Bahá'í World Centre.
3. **Solemn Commemoration:** The commemoration took place in the precincts of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Holy Shrine, marked by due solemnity and reverence.
4. **Global Observance:** Concurrently, Bahá'í communities worldwide participated in the commemoration, spanning neighborhoods, villages, towns, and cities.
5. **Homage to 'Abdu'l-Bahá:** The gatherings were dedicated to paying homage to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, a Figure without parallel in religious history.
6. **Century of Achievement:** Participants reflected on the century of achievements initiated by 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the impact He had set in motion.

Paragraph 2

1. **Community Growth:** The Bahá'í community, consisting of ardent lovers of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, has grown to millions, spread across approximately one hundred thousand localities in 235 countries and territories.
2. **Global Presence:** From obscurity, the Bahá'í community has risen to occupy a prominent place on the world stage, establishing a presence in diverse regions worldwide.
3. **Institutional Network:** The community has established a network of thousands of institutions, ranging from grassroots to international levels, with the common purpose of expressing Bahá'u'lláh's teachings for spiritual transformation and social progress.
4. **Vibrant Local Communities:** In many regions, the community's approach to building vibrant local communities has impacted thousands, and in some cases, tens of thousands of individuals, fostering a new way of life.
5. **Distinctive Characteristics:** The emerging way of life is characterized by devotional practices, the commitment of youth to education and service, purposeful conversations on spiritual and social themes among families and friends, and collective efforts for material and social progress.

6. **Sacred Writings:** The Sacred Writings of the Bahá'í Faith have been translated into more than eight hundred languages, facilitating a wider reach and understanding.

7. **Mashriqu'l-Adhkárs:** The establishment of national and local Mashriqu'l-Adhkárs signifies the emergence of thousands of future centers dedicated to worship and service.

8. **Spiritual and Administrative Center:** The world spiritual and administrative center of the Faith has been established in the twin holy cities of 'Akká and Haifa.

9. **Historical Achievement:** Despite current limitations in relation to its ideals and highest aspirations, the Bahá'í community's resources, institutional capacity, systematic growth and development, engagement with like-minded institutions, and constructive influence on society represent an unprecedented height of historical achievement.

Paragraph 3

1. **Passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá:** Reflecting on the moment a century ago when 'Abdu'l-Bahá departed from this world, marking a significant point in the Faith's history.

2. **Widespread Grief:** The news of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's passing at dawn spread across the city of Haifa, leading to profound grief that touched hearts far and wide.

3. **Diverse Funeral Gathering:** Thousands, including people from all walks of life—young and old, high and low, officials and the masses, from various religious backgrounds including Jews, Muslims, Druze, Christians, and Bahá'ís—gathered for His funeral, creating an unprecedented assembly in the city.

4. **World Perception:** On the global stage, 'Abdu'l-Bahá was recognized as a champion of universal peace and the oneness of humanity, a defender of the oppressed, and a promoter of justice.

5. **Local Impact:** In 'Akká and Haifa, 'Abdu'l-Bahá was viewed as a loving father and friend, a wise counselor, and a refuge for all in need, leaving a lasting impact on the community.

6. **Funeral Expressions:** During His funeral, people poured out fervent expressions of love and lamentation, highlighting the deep emotional connection the community had with 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

Paragraph 4

1. **Unique Role for Bahá'ís:** 'Abdu'l-Bahá's loss was acutely felt by Bahá'ís, as He was perceived as the precious gift bestowed by the Manifestation of God—an essential guide, protector, and the Centre of Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant.

2. **Central Figure:** 'Abdu'l-Bahá was recognized as the perfect Exemplar of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings, the unerring Interpreter of His Word, and the embodiment of every Bahá'í ideal.

3. **Lifelong Service:** Throughout His life, 'Abdu'l-Bahá tirelessly labored in service to Bahá'u'lláh, fulfilling His Father's sacred trust and nurturing the precious seed of the Cause.

4. **Cradle of Administration:** 'Abdu'l-Bahá played a pivotal role in sheltering the Cause in its infancy, guiding its spread in the West, and establishing the cradle of its administration.

5. **Champion and Protector:** He set firm footsteps for believers, raised up champions and saints, interred the holy remains of the Báb, tended the Holy Shrines, and laid the foundations of the Faith's world administrative centre.

6. **Safeguarding the Faith:** 'Abdu'l-Bahá safeguarded the Faith from internal and external threats, revealing crucial Charters for sharing Bahá'u'lláh's teachings globally and establishing the Administrative Order.

7. **Unknown Future:** His ascension marked the end of the Heroic Age and ushered in a new Age, leaving believers uncertain about the future without His continual guidance, which seemed uncertain and bleak.

Paragraph 5

1. **Shoghi Effendi's Devastation:** The news of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's passing left His grandson, Shoghi Effendi, devastated. He quickly traveled from his studies in England to the Holy Land.

2. **Appointment as Guardian:** Upon arriving, Shoghi Effendi received another profound revelation—'Abdu'l-Bahá had appointed him as the Guardian and Head of the Faith, entrusting the Bahá'í world to his care.

3. **Weight of Responsibility:** Despite the grief and agony, Shoghi Effendi, supported by Bahá'u'lláh's beloved daughter Bahíyyih Khánum, took on the heavy mantle of his office, accepting the responsibility placed upon him.

4. **Assessing the Community:** In the face of this significant role, Shoghi Effendi began to assess the conditions and prospects of the fledgling Bahá'í community, setting the stage for his dedicated leadership.

Paragraph 6

1. **Positive Reception:** Shoghi Effendi's appointment as the Guardian was met with relief, gratitude, and declarations of fealty by the majority of believers, who found solace in the assurances in 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will and Testament that He had not left them alone.

2. **Challenges from Disloyal Few:** A small faction, driven by personal ambitions and ego, challenged Shoghi Effendi's leadership at this critical moment of transition, betraying 'Abdu'l-Bahá's chosen heir.

3. **External Opposition:** Concurrently, avowed opponents of 'Abdu'l-Bahá added to the challenges, creating a complex environment for Shoghi Effendi.

4. **Mobilization Efforts:** Despite heartache, trials, and formidable obstacles, Shoghi Effendi initiated the monumental task of laying the foundations of the Administrative Order, mobilizing widely scattered Bahá'í communities.

5. **Transition from 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Era:** Individuals, previously inspired by 'Abdu'l-Bahá's unique personality, gradually coordinated their efforts in a common enterprise under the patient yet resolute guidance of Shoghi Effendi.

6. **Coordination and Guidance:** Shoghi Effendi's leadership began to unify Bahá'í communities worldwide, as believers transitioned from being galvanized by 'Abdu'l-Bahá to working collectively under the guidance of the Guardian in building the Administrative Order.

Paragraph 7

1. **Rudimentary Grasp of Revelation:** Shoghi Effendi emphasized to the Bahá'ís that their understanding of the sacred Revelation was still rudimentary as they undertook new responsibilities, and he highlighted the vastness of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation and the challenges ahead.
2. **Colossal Revelation:** Shoghi Effendi acknowledged the magnitude of Bahá'u'lláh's blessings upon humanity and the immense nature of His Faith, emphasizing that the current generation stands too close to fully appreciate its significance and glory.
3. **Inadequate Conception:** Despite the greatness of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation, Shoghi Effendi noted how poor and inadequate their current conception was of its infinite possibilities, unprecedented character, and the mysterious dispensations of Providence.
4. **Time Needed for Understanding:** Shoghi Effendi, through his secretary, explained that the contents of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will were too much for the present generation to comprehend fully. He indicated that it would take at least a century of actual working before the hidden treasures of wisdom within it could be revealed.
5. **Trusting in Time and Guidance:** To comprehend the nature and dimensions of Bahá'u'lláh's vision of a new World Order, Shoghi Effendi expressed the need to trust in time and the guidance of God's Universal House of Justice for a clearer and fuller understanding of its provisions and implications.

Paragraph 8

1. **Century of Actual Working:** The present moment marks the completion of a full century of "actual working," providing a propitious vantage point to gather new insights into the Bahá'í Faith's development.
2. **Reflection on Wisdom:** On the occasion of this anniversary, there is a deliberate choice to pause and reflect on the wisdom enshrined in the provisions of the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.
3. **Unfoldment of the Faith:** The reflection aims to trace the course of the Faith's unfoldment and observe the coherence of the stages of its organic development over the past century.
4. **Discerning Progress:** The goal is to discern the possibilities inherent in the processes driving the Faith's progress, understanding how it has evolved and adapted over time.
5. **Appreciation for the Future:** This reflection also involves appreciating the promise the Bahá'í Faith holds for the decades ahead, recognizing its power to reshape society as it increasingly manifests through the growing impact of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation in the world.

TRANSLATING WHAT IS WRITTEN INTO REALITY AND ACTION

Paragraph 9

1. **Bahá'u'lláh's Purpose:** Bahá'u'lláh's ultimate purpose is to usher in a new stage in human development, characterized by the organic and spiritual unity of all peoples and nations worldwide. This signals the coming of age for the human race and envisions the emergence of a global civilization and culture.

2. **Inner and Outer Transformation:** Bahá'u'lláh revealed teachings for both the inner and outer transformation of human life. His verses serve as portals disclosing the glories of a saintly and pious life, emphasizing pure and stainless deeds.

3. **Divine Diagnosis and Remedy:** As the Divine Physician, Bahá'u'lláh diagnosed the ills afflicting humanity in countless Tablets. He provided a healing remedy for the elevation, advancement, education, protection, and regeneration of all peoples on Earth.

4. **Universal Intent:** Bahá'u'lláh emphasized that His summons and message were never intended for one specific land or people. The scope is universal, calling on every person of insight and understanding to translate His teachings into reality and action.

5. **Global Impact:** Every individual is encouraged to strive for the best interests of all peoples and kindreds of the earth. According to Bahá'u'lláh, those who arise to promote these interests are blessed and happy in their endeavors.

Paragraph 10

1. **Inclusive Task:** Building a mature, peaceful, just, and united world is a vast undertaking that requires the active participation of every people and nation.

2. **Bahá'í Community's Welcome:** The Bahá'í community extends a welcome to all, inviting them to join in this endeavor as protagonists in a spiritual enterprise. This collective effort aims to overcome the forces of disintegration eroding the old social order and pave the way for the emergence of a new integrative process.

3. **Protagonists in a Spiritual Enterprise:** The call is for individuals to become protagonists in a spiritual enterprise, contributing to the transformation of society and actively engaging in the unfoldment of a new order.

4. **Formative Age:** The Formative Age is a critical period in the Faith's development. During this time, Bahá'ís increasingly appreciate the mission entrusted to them by Bahá'u'lláh. They deepen their understanding of His revealed Word and systematically cultivate their own capacity and that of others to implement His teachings for the betterment of the world.

Paragraph 11

1. **Shoghi Effendi's Guidance:** From the outset of his ministry, Shoghi Effendi provided guidance to the Bahá'ís to gain a deeper understanding of their mission, defining their identity and purpose within the Faith.

2. **Explication of Bahá'u'lláh's Coming:** Shoghi Effendi explained the meaning of Bahá'u'lláh's coming, His vision for humanity, the history of the Cause, and the processes reshaping society, clarifying the Bahá'í role in contributing to the advancement of humankind.

3. **Development of the Bahá'í Community:** Shoghi Effendi outlined the nature of the Bahá'í community's development, emphasizing that it would undergo many transformations, often unexpected, over decades and centuries.

4. **Dialectic of Crisis and Victory:** Shoghi Effendi described the dialectic of crisis and victory, preparing the Bahá'ís for the challenging path they must traverse in the development of the Faith.

5. **Call to Refinement:** Shoghi Effendi called upon the Bahá'ís to refine their characters and hone their minds, preparing them to meet the challenges of building a new world.

6. **Resilience in the Face of Challenges:** Despite encountering problems in the nascent and rapidly evolving community or the challenges of a tumultuous age, Shoghi Effendi urged the Bahá'ís not to despair. He reminded them that the full expression of Bahá'u'lláh's promises lay in the future.

7. **Role as Leaven:** Shoghi Effendi explained that the Bahá'ís were to be like leaven—a permeating and vivifying influence. Their role was to inspire others to rise above entrenched patterns of divisiveness, conflict, and power struggles, contributing to the achievement of humanity's highest aspirations.

Paragraph 12

1. **Guiding Structural Basis:** Shoghi Effendi guided believers step by step in consolidating broad areas of understanding, focusing on establishing the structural basis of the Administrative Order and systematically sharing Bahá'u'lláh's teachings.

2. **Gradual Clarification:** The Guardian patiently directed believers by gradually clarifying the nature, principles, and procedures of the Administrative Order, while simultaneously raising their capacity for individual and collective teaching efforts.

3. **Consultative Process:** On vital matters, Shoghi Effendi provided direction, and believers consulted and strived to apply his guidance. They shared experiences, raised questions, and faced perplexing problems, engaging in a consultative process.

4. **Responsive Guidance:** Taking accumulated experience into consideration, Shoghi Effendi would offer additional guidance, elaborating on concepts and principles. The believers adjusted their actions based on his counsel until their efforts proved effective and could be applied more broadly.

5. **Faith and Trust:** The believers responded with unwavering faith in the revealed Word, trust in Shoghi Effendi's vision and infallible wisdom, and an unshakeable resolve to transform various aspects of their lives in accordance with the Teachings.

6. **Capacity for Learning:** This approach cultivated a capacity for learning how to apply the Teachings within the community, fostering a dynamic and evolving understanding of their spiritual and administrative responsibilities.

7. **Ten Year Spiritual Crusade:** The efficacy of this approach became most vivid during the climax of Shoghi Effendi's ministry when the Bahá'í world combined its forces for the unprecedented achievements of the Ten Year Spiritual Crusade, demonstrating the community's collective capacity for action.

Paragraph 13

1. **Shoghi Effendi's Learning Path:** Shoghi Effendi initiated efforts to set believers on a path of learning, focusing on understanding the Faith's teachings and the principles of the Administrative Order.

2. **Universal House of Justice's Direction:** Following Shoghi Effendi's passing, the Universal House of Justice continued and extended the efforts to promote learning within the Bahá'í community.

3. **Conscious Grasping of Learning:** By the final years of the first century of the Formative Age, Bahá'ís worldwide consciously grasped and systematically implemented essential aspects of a learning process initiated by Shoghi Effendi.

4. **Global Implementation:** The process of learning became a global phenomenon, extending across the full range of Bahá'í endeavors, encompassing spiritual, administrative, and social dimensions.

5. **Formative Age Progress:** The Bahá'í community, with conscious efforts towards learning, progressed significantly throughout the Formative Age, reaching a mature state by the close of the century.

Paragraph 14

1. **Mode of Operation:** The Bahá'í community today operates through a distinctive mode characterized by study, consultation, action, and reflection.

2. **Increasing Capacity:** Steadily, the community is enhancing its capacity to apply the Teachings in various social spaces and collaborates with like-minded individuals in wider society to revitalize both material and spiritual foundations.

3. **Protagonists of Development:** In transformative spaces, individuals and communities become protagonists of their own development, fostering the embrace of the oneness of humanity, eradicating prejudice and otherness.

4. **Spiritual Fostering:** Emphasis is placed on fostering the spiritual dimension of human life through adherence to principle and strengthening the community's devotional character.

5. **Learning for Transformation:** The capacity for learning is developed and directed towards personal and social transformation, with a conscious effort to understand and apply Bahá'u'lláh's revealed teachings.

6. **Explicit Cultural Shift:** The effort to understand and apply Bahá'u'lláh's teachings has become an explicit, deliberate, and indelible part of Bahá'í culture.

7. **Global Extension of Learning:** The conscious grasp of the learning process has extended worldwide, from grassroots to the international arena, marking one of the significant achievements of the first century of the Formative Age.

8. **Informing Future Challenges:** The process of learning will increasingly inform the work of every Bahá'í institution, community, and individual in facing future challenges and releasing the Faith's society-building power.

Paragraph 15

1. **Triple Impulse:** Shoghi Effendi highlighted the triple impulse generated through the revelation of the Tablet of Carmel, the Will and Testament, and the Tablets of the Divine Plan by Bahá'u'lláh—three Charters setting in motion distinct processes for the development of the Faith.

2. **Holy Land and Worldwide Propagation:** The first process operates in the Holy Land for the development of the Faith's institutions at its World Centre, while the other two processes, worldwide, focus on the propagation of the Faith and the establishment of its Administrative Order.

3. **Interdependence of Charters:** The processes associated with each Divine Charter are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. The Administrative Order is the chief instrument for the prosecution of the Divine Plan, and the Plan is the most potent agency for developing the Faith's administrative structure.

4. **Global Influence:** Advances at the World Centre significantly influence the worldwide community, and the vitality of the Bahá'í world, in turn, affects developments at the World Centre.

5. **Organic Evolution:** The Bahá'í world continually evolves and develops organically as individuals, communities, and institutions strive to translate the truths of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation into reality.

6. **Increased Understanding:** At the end of the first century of the Formative Age, the Bahá'í world has gained a fuller understanding of the implications inherent in the immortal Charters for the development of the Faith.

7. **Appreciation of Experience:** With increased understanding, the Bahá'í world can better appreciate its own experience over the past century and act more effectively to achieve Bahá'u'lláh's intended purpose for humanity in the decades and centuries ahead.

THE PERPETUATION OF THE COVENANT

Paragraph 16

1. **Unique Covenant:** Bahá'u'lláh established a unique Covenant with His followers, unparalleled in the annals of religious history, characterized by its authority and explicit and comprehensive nature.

2. **Preservation of Unity:** The Covenant aimed to preserve the unity of the Bahá'í Faith, maintain the integrity and flexibility of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings, and guarantee the progress of all humanity.

3. **Authority of 'Abdu'l-Bahá:** Bahá'u'lláh instructed, in His Most Holy Book, the Book of His Covenant, and other Tablets, that after His passing, the friends should turn to 'Abdu'l-Bahá—the Centre of the Covenant—to guide the affairs of the Faith.

4. **Perpetuation of Covenant:** 'Abdu'l-Bahá perpetuated the Covenant in His Will and Testament, establishing provisions for the Administrative Order outlined in Bahá'u'lláh's Writings.

5. **Twin Institutions:** The Will and Testament ensured the continuation of authority and leadership through the twin institutions of the Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice.

6. **Sound Relationship:** 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will and Testament also established a sound relationship between individuals and institutions within the Faith, providing a framework for the organization and functioning of the Bahá'í community.

Paragraph 17

1. **Religion's Dual Role:** History has shown that religion can serve as either a powerful instrument for cooperation, propelling the advancement of civilization, or as a source of conflict causing incalculable harm.
2. **Decline of Unifying Power:** The unifying and civilizing power of religion declines when followers disagree on the meaning and application of divine teachings. This division leads to the formation of contending sects and denominations within the community of the faithful.
3. **Purpose of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation:** Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation aims to establish the oneness of humanity, uniting all peoples. This ultimate stage in the evolution of society cannot be achieved if the Bahá'í Faith succumbs to sectarianism and the dilution of the divine Message witnessed in the past.
4. **Danger of Sectarianism:** 'Abdu'l-Bahá warns that if Bahá'ís cannot unite around one point, they will be unable to bring about the unity of mankind. He emphasizes the dynamic power of the Covenant as the force pulsating in the world of existence, protecting Bahá'í unity.
5. **Unity as Dynamic Power:** 'Abdu'l-Bahá asserts that the dynamic power of the world of existence is the Covenant, which functions like an artery pulsating in the body of the contingent world. This Covenant is essential for protecting Bahá'í unity and advancing the oneness of humanity.

Paragraph 18

1. **Victory of the Covenant:** The foremost achievement of the past century is the victory of the Covenant, protecting the Bahá'í Faith from division and propelling it to contribute to the empowerment of all peoples and nations.
2. **Bahá'u'lláh's Penetrating Question:** Bahá'u'lláh's question, "Where shalt thou secure the cord of thy faith and fasten the tie of thine obedience?", gains new significance, emphasizing the call for firmness in the Covenant.
3. **Unyielding Adherence:** The Bahá'í community's response has been unyielding adherence to the provisions of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will and Testament, demonstrating a commitment to the Covenant.
4. **Relationship Dynamics:** Unlike worldly power relationships, the relationship between the Manifestation of God and believers, and between Covenant authority and the community, is governed by conscious knowledge and love.
5. **Voluntary Covenant Adherence:** Believers voluntarily enter into Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant as an act of free conscience and remain steadfast in adherence to its requirements out of love for Him.
6. **Understanding and Action:** At the close of the first century of the Formative Age, the Bahá'í world has more fully understood and acted upon the provisions of Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant, establishing distinctive relationships among believers that unify and direct their energies.
7. **Achievement through Crises:** The achievement of understanding and acting upon the Covenant, like many others, was the fruit of crises overcome by the Bahá'í community.

Paragraph 19

1. **Covenant Guarantees:** The existence of the Covenant guarantees that attempts to divide the Faith, cause damage, or retard its progress are foredoomed to fail.
2. **Historical Attempts:** After Bahá'u'lláh's passing, ambitious individuals, including 'Abdu'l-Bahá's brothers, attempted to usurp authority, sow seeds of doubt, and test the community. Shoghi Effendi faced attacks from Covenant-breakers and internal challenges to the validity of the Administrative Order and the authority of the Guardianship.
3. **Attack on the Guardianship:** After Shoghi Effendi's passing, a misguided individual, once a Hand of the Cause, attempted to claim the Guardianship contrary to the conditions set forth in the Will and Testament.
4. **Universal House of Justice as Target:** Following the election of the Universal House of Justice, it became a target for active opponents of the Cause.
5. **Recent Challenges:** In recent decades, a few individuals within the community sought to reinterpret Bahá'í teachings related to the Covenant provisions. They attempted to cast doubt on the authority of the House of Justice and claim prerogatives without a living Guardian, aiming to influence the direction of the Faith independently.

Paragraph 20

1. **Century of Covenant Attacks:** Over a century, the Covenant established by Bahá'u'lláh and perpetuated by 'Abdu'l-Bahá faced various attacks from internal and external opponents.
2. **Unsuccessful Attempts:** Despite attempts to attack the Covenant, these efforts were ultimately unsuccessful. While some individuals were misled or became disaffected, the attacks did not divert or redefine the Cause or create a permanent breach in the community.
3. **Designated Centre of Authority:** In each instance of attack, turning to the designated centre of authority at the time—'Abdu'l-Bahá, the Guardian, or the Universal House of Justice—allowed for questions to be answered and problems to be resolved.
4. **Community Growth:** As the body of believers grew in understanding of and firmness in the Covenant, it became impervious to attacks and misrepresentations that, in an earlier era, had threatened the Faith's existence and purpose.
5. **Integrity of the Cause:** The integrity of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh remains ever secure, demonstrating resilience in the face of challenges and the steadfastness of the Bahá'í community in upholding the Covenant.

Paragraph 21

1. **Limited Comprehension:** Each generation of Bahá'ís, regardless of their spiritual perception, will have a circumscribed comprehension of the full implications of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings. This limitation is due to their historical circumstances and the particular stage of the Faith's organic development.
2. **Heroic Age Challenges:** In the Heroic Age of the Faith, believers navigated bewildering transitions from the Dispensation of the Báb to that of Bahá'u'lláh and then to the ministry of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Hindsight, with the illumination provided by Shoghi Effendi, allows us to comprehend these transitions as sequential acts in a single, divinely unfolding drama.

3. **Formative Age Insights:** After a century of tireless labors during the first of the Formative Age, the significance, purpose, and inviolability of the Covenant—Bahá'u'lláh's priceless bequest—are more completely understood.

4. **Essential Understanding:** The hard-won understanding of the nature of the Covenant and the firmness that such insight engenders remain essential for unity and progress over the course of the Dispensation. This knowledge is crucial for the Bahá'í community as it continues its journey through the unfolding stages of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation.

Paragraph 22

1. **Two Authoritative Centres:** Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant provides for two authoritative centres, the first being the Book—the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, accompanied by the authoritative interpretation and explication of the Creative Word found in the body of works of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi.

2. **Revelation and Interpretation:** The Book includes the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá's writings, and Shoghi Effendi's interpretations. Together, these form the authoritative foundation for understanding the Bahá'í Faith.

3. **Shoghi Effendi's Passing:** With the passing of Shoghi Effendi, more than a century of the extension of the authoritative centre of interpretation came to a close.

4. **Unadulterated Revelation:** The existence of the Book ensures that the Revelation is available to every believer and all humanity in an unadulterated form, free from human misinterpretations or accretions. The preservation of the pure Word of Bahá'u'lláh is a foundational aspect of the Covenant.

Paragraph 23

1. **Second Authoritative Centre:** The Universal House of Justice is identified as the second authoritative centre, under the care and unerring guidance of Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb.

2. **Divine Guidance:** 'Abdu'l-Bahá clarifies that the House of Justice will not make decisions based on its own concepts and opinions. Instead, it will take decisions and establish laws through the inspiration and confirmation of the Holy Spirit, safeguarded by the Ancient Beauty.

3. **God's Inspiration:** Bahá'u'lláh affirms that God will inspire the Universal House of Justice with whatsoever He wills, highlighting the divine source of guidance for this institution.

4. **Divine Guidance for the House:** Shoghi Effendi emphasizes that the Universal House of Justice, not the body that elects them, is the recipient of divine guidance—the life-blood and ultimate safeguard of the Bahá'í Revelation. The House serves as the central institution for the global Bahá'í community.

Paragraph 24

1. **Comprehensive Powers and Duties:** The Universal House of Justice has been invested with powers and duties necessary to ensure the fulfillment of Bahá'u'lláh's purpose for humanity.

2. **Demonstrated Range and Expression:** Over more than half a century, the House of Justice has demonstrated its range and expression through promulgating the Law of God, conserving and disseminating the Sacred Writings, raising the Administrative Order, designing stages in the unfoldment of

the Divine Plan, protecting the Faith, safeguarding unity, and contributing to the progress and illumination of the world.

3. Elucidation of Difficult Problems: The House of Justice provides elucidations that resolve difficult problems, clarify obscure questions, address matters not expressly recorded in the Book, and guide the Bahá'í community in its understanding of the teachings.

4. Adaptability and Preservation: The House of Justice ensures that the Cause adapts to the needs of an ever-changing society, acting as a living organism throughout the Dispensation. It guarantees the preservation of Bahá'u'lláh's message and the unalterable nature of the essential characteristics of the Cause.

Paragraph 25

1. Seeking the Truth: Bahá'u'lláh highlights in the Kitáb-i-Íqán the grievous oppression of a soul seeking the truth but not knowing where to go or whom to seek it from, emphasizing the importance of guidance and knowledge.

2. Divided and Disoriented World: In a world largely oblivious to the light of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation, society is increasingly divided and disoriented on matters of truth, morality, identity, and purpose, facing the corrosive forces of disintegration.

3. Covenant as Source of Clarity: For the Bahá'í community, the Covenant serves as a source of clarity, refuge, freedom, and strength amid the challenges of the world.

4. Freedom to Explore and Share: Every believer is free to explore Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation, form personal conclusions, share insights humbly, and strive to apply the Teachings, contributing to their own spiritual growth.

5. Collective Endeavor and Social Progress: The Covenant harmonizes and focuses collective endeavor through consultation and guidance from institutions, transforming bonds within families and communities, and fostering social progress.

Paragraph 26

1. Love for Bahá'u'lláh and Guidance: Individuals, communities, and institutions, guided by love for Bahá'u'lláh and His explicit instructions, find necessary guidance in the two authoritative centres of the Covenant for the unfoldment of the Faith and preservation of the Teachings' integrity.

2. Preservation of Dialogue and Learning: The Covenant safeguards the process of dialogue and learning about the meaning of the Revelation, avoiding the detrimental effects of endless contention, and ensuring the implementation of its prescriptions for humankind over the Dispensation.

3. Balanced Relationships: The Covenant preserves balanced relationships among individuals, communities, and institutions, allowing them to develop along their proper path, enabling all to attain their full potential and exercise agency and prerogatives.

4. United Advancement: The Bahá'í community can unitedly advance, fulfill its vital purpose, investigate reality, generate knowledge, extend its endeavors, and contribute to the advancement of civilization.

5. **Axis of Oneness:** More than a century later, the truth of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's affirmation remains evident: "the axis of the oneness of the world of humanity is the power of the Covenant and nothing else."

THE UNFOLDMENT OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER

Paragraph 27

1. **Foundation of Administrative Order:** 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will and Testament laid the foundation for the emergence and development of the Administrative Order, marking one of the most significant achievements of the first century of the Formative Age.

2. **Growth and Unfolding:** In a single century, the Administrative Order, initiated with a focus on establishing elected institutions, grew in breadth and complexity, unfolding globally and connecting all peoples, countries, and regions.

3. **Spiritual Vision and Mandate:** The Writings of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá not only called these institutions into being but also provided the vision and spiritual mandate for them to assist humanity in constructing a just and peaceful world.

Paragraph 28

1. **Protagonists in a Unique System:** Bahá'u'lláh, through His Administrative Order, has associated individuals, communities, and institutions as protagonists in a system without precedent, marking a departure from historical practices of ecclesiastical authority.

2. **Abrogation of Ecclesiastical Authority:** Reflecting the needs of an age of human maturity, Bahá'u'lláh abrogated the historical practice where ecclesiastics held religious authority, shifting towards a system of cooperation in the pursuit of truth and human well-being.

3. **Preventing Ideological Contest:** To prevent the contest of competing ideologies, arrangements were introduced to cultivate individual potential and foster cooperation instead of the quest for power over others.

4. **Spiritual Qualities as Basis:** Trustworthiness, truthfulness, rectitude of conduct, forbearance, love, and unity form the spiritual qualities at the core of the association between individuals, communities, and institutions in this new way of life.

5. **Bahá'u'lláh's Vision of Oneness:** All efforts for social advancement are shaped by Bahá'u'lláh's vision of the oneness of humanity, emphasizing a unified approach to progress and collaboration.

Paragraph 29

1. **Early State of Bahá'í Institutions:** At 'Abdu'l-Bahá's passing, Bahá'í institutions were in their infancy, consisting of a few local Assemblies with limited functionality. Only a small number of agencies operated beyond the local level, and National Spiritual Assemblies were nonexistent.

2. **Limited Administrative Structure:** The administrative structure was in its early stages, lacking the systematic organization needed for effective coordination of Bahá'í efforts globally.

3. **Hands of the Cause:** Bahá'u'lláh had appointed four Hands of the Cause in Iran, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá directed their activities. However, no additional Hands were appointed beyond four, even posthumously.

4. **Abundant Spirit and Potential:** Despite the nascent state of administrative machinery, the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh was described as abundant in spirit and potential, poised for further development and organization.

Paragraph 30

1. **Shoghi Effendi's Early Consideration:** In the initial phase of Shoghi Effendi's ministry, there was contemplation about establishing the Universal House of Justice promptly.

2. **Global Faith Assessment:** Upon reviewing the state of the Faith globally, Shoghi Effendi determined that the necessary conditions for the immediate formation of the House of Justice were lacking.

3. **Emphasis on Local and National Assemblies:** Instead of immediately forming the House of Justice, Shoghi Effendi directed Bahá'ís worldwide to focus on establishing and strengthening Local and National Spiritual Assemblies.

4. **Metaphor of Pillars:** Shoghi Effendi used the metaphor of pillars, describing National Spiritual Assemblies as pillars that needed to be gradually and firmly established, forming the foundation for the future Universal House of Justice.

Paragraph 31

1. **Instrument of the Faith:** Shoghi Effendi clarified that the Administrative Order was not an ultimate goal but a means to channel the spirit of the Faith effectively.

2. **Organic Character:** Emphasizing its organic nature, Shoghi Effendi described Bahá'í administration as the initial formation of the future social life and laws of community living.

3. **Evolution of Practice:** The believers, in Shoghi Effendi's perspective, were in the early stages of understanding and practicing the Administrative Order, with continuous growth anticipated.

4. **Nucleus and Pattern:** Shoghi Effendi positioned the Administrative Order as the nucleus and pattern that would later evolve into a new order organizing humanity's affairs, aligning with Bahá'u'lláh's vision.

Paragraph 32

1. **Guidance in Administration:** Shoghi Effendi provided detailed guidance through correspondence, assisting believers in understanding and applying administrative teachings, emphasizing its principles, methods, and necessity.

2. **Development of Administrative Practices:** Shoghi Effendi aided in the establishment of Bahá'í elections, Bahá'í Fund management, National Convention organization, and relationships between National and Local Assemblies.

3. **Dispelling Doubts:** The Guardian addressed doubts about the continuity between 'Abdu'l-Bahá's time and the evolving administrative foundations, fostering understanding of the Faith's development.

4. **Patient Problem Resolution:** Shoghi Effendi patiently answered questions, resolved issues, and nurtured collective life within the global Bahá'í community, fostering harmony and support.

5. **Formation of National Assemblies:** National Assemblies, initially established in several regions, operated at regional levels before being formed at national levels as the number of believers and Local Assemblies increased.

6. **Committee Formation:** Various committees, both local and national, were created to advance collective efforts in teaching, translation, publishing, education, pioneering, and organizing Feasts and Holy Days.

Paragraph 33

1. **Inauguration of International Institutions:** In the later years of Shoghi Effendi's life, he initiated a new phase in the Administrative Order's development, establishing international and continental institutions.

2. **Formation of World Administrative Centre:** The long-anticipated establishment of the World Administrative Centre in the Holy Land marked a significant milestone in the evolution of the Bahá'í Administrative Order.

3. **Creation of International Bahá'í Council:** In 1951, Shoghi Effendi proclaimed the formation of the International Bahá'í Council, elucidating its role in the stages leading to its eventual transformation into the Universal House of Justice.

4. **Evolutionary Process:** Shoghi Effendi emphasized that the International Bahá'í Council would undergo various stages, evolving and preparing for its ultimate development into the Universal House of Justice.

Paragraph 34

1. **Hands of the Cause of God Appointed:** In 1951, Shoghi Effendi appointed twelve Hands of the Cause of God, spread across three continents and the Holy Land, marking the establishment of this institution in line with 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will and Testament.

2. **Purpose of the Hands:** The Hands of the Cause were appointed to actively contribute to the propagation and protection of the Faith. Notably, their role lacked legislative, executive, or judicial authority, as well as priestly functions or the right to provide authoritative interpretations.

3. **Unique Feature of Bahá'í Administration:** The existence of an appointed institution, the Hands of the Cause, with significant responsibilities but without conventional authoritative powers, distinguishes Bahá'í administration from historical religious models.

4. **Expansion of the Institution:** Shoghi Effendi further expanded the institution of the Hands, appointing additional contingents in 1952 and 1957, reaching a total of twenty-seven Hands of the Cause. Auxiliary Boards were also introduced in 1954 to support the Hands on a continental level.

Paragraph 35

1. **Temporary Nature of Early Administrative Measures:** Shoghi Effendi emphasized that many aspects of the administrative framework he established were provisional. He made it clear that the Universal House of Justice, once established, would define the long-term guidelines for the Faith's activities.

2. **Guidance for the Future:** The Guardian articulated that the Universal House of Justice, once properly established, would be responsible for reevaluating the entire situation and establishing enduring principles to guide the affairs of the Faith as long as deemed necessary.

3. **Role of the Universal House of Justice:** Shoghi Effendi foresaw the Universal House of Justice as the institution that would provide more definitive and enduring guidance, setting broad lines for the future development of the Bahá'í administrative system.

4. **Adaptability of the Administrative Order:** The ability of the Bahá'í Administrative Order to adapt and evolve over time was recognized, with the Universal House of Justice having the authority to shape and define the guiding principles for the Faith's administration.

Paragraph 36

1. **Hands of the Cause of God as Chief Stewards:** Designated by Shoghi Effendi as "the Chief Stewards of Bahá'u'lláh's embryonic World Commonwealth," the Hands of the Cause of God assumed responsibility for the Faith after his unexpected passing in November 1957.

2. **Guardianship Transition:** During their brief stewardship, the Hands of the Cause adhered to the course outlined by Shoghi Effendi. They facilitated the transition from the appointed International Bahá'í Council to its elected form, as outlined by the Guardian.

3. **Rapid Growth in National Assemblies:** Under the guidance of the Hands, the number of National Assemblies increased significantly, from twenty-six to fifty-six, reflecting the global expansion of the Bahá'í Administrative Order.

4. **Preparation for Universal House of Justice:** The steps necessary for the establishment of the Universal House of Justice were taken during this period. By 1961, the International Bahá'í Council transitioned to an elected body, setting the stage for the election of the Universal House of Justice in 1963.

Paragraph 37

1. **Adoption of the Constitution of the Universal House of Justice:** - In 1972, the Constitution of the Universal House of Justice, referred to by Shoghi Effendi as the "Most Great Law," was adopted, establishing the framework for its functioning.

2. **Expansion of Functions through New Institutions:** - The Continental Boards of Counsellors (1968) and the International Teaching Centre (1973) were established, extending the functions of the Bahá'í administrative system and ensuring continued guidance.

3. **Authorization of Auxiliary Board Members:** - Auxiliary Board members were empowered to appoint assistants, expanding their reach and effectiveness in propagation and protection efforts at the grassroots level.

4. **Growth and Development of National and Local Assemblies:** - The number of National and Local Spiritual Assemblies increased, showcasing the growth of the Bahá'í community and enhancing their capabilities to serve and engage with wider society.

5. Introduction of Regional Bahá'í Councils: - In 1997, Regional Bahá'í Councils were introduced to address the complexities facing National Spiritual Assemblies while maintaining a balance between centralization and decentralization in administrative affairs.

6. Evolution of Administrative Structures: - Teaching committees, initially established during Shoghi Effendi's time, gradually gave way to structures responsible for planning and decision-making at decentralized levels, reaching down to neighborhoods and villages.

7. Establishment of Training Institutes and Regional Councils: - Over three hundred training institutes, more than two hundred Regional Councils, and administrative arrangements in over five thousand clusters were established, enhancing the capacity for learning and service.

8. Universal Application of Ḥuqúqu'lláh: - In Riḍván 1992, the law of Ḥuqúqu'lláh was applied universally across the Bahá'í world, leading to the consolidation of its institutional structure through Boards of Trustees and Representatives at regional and national levels.

9. Global Network of Houses of Worship: - Construction of Mashriqu'l-Adhkárs (Bahá'í Houses of Worship) was completed in Uganda, Australia, Germany, and Panama. Later, Houses of Worship were raised in Samoa, India, and Chile, with the process extended to national and local levels in 2012.

Paragraph 38

1. Evolution of Relationships: Over the century, relationships among individuals, communities, and institutions have undergone progressive development, evolving into more intricate forms.

2. Continuous Adaptation of Administrative Foundations: The foundations of the Bahá'í administration have been extended and continuously adapted to meet the needs of the evolving Bahá'í community.

3. Refinement of Collaboration Arrangements- Arrangements for collaboration have been clarified and continually refined to enhance the effectiveness of collective action within the Bahá'í community.

4. Transformation from a Network to a Vast Constellation: The initial network of elected bodies has transformed into a vast constellation of institutions and agencies. This expansion spans from grassroots initiatives to international endeavors, fostering unity in thought and action.

5. Common Enterprise Across Diverse Contexts: The Bahá'í world is united in a common enterprise, embracing diverse cultural contexts and social settings while maintaining a shared vision and purpose.

6. Integration of Thought and Action: - The intricate network of institutions ensures the integration of thought and action, allowing the Bahá'í community to collectively contribute to the betterment of society.

7. Collaboration Across All Levels: Collaboration extends from local communities to the global stage, exemplifying the interconnectedness of Bahá'í endeavors and the collaborative spirit that permeates the community.

8. Adaptation to Cultural Diversity: The administration has demonstrated adaptability to cultural diversity, recognizing and respecting the unique contexts in which Bahá'í communities exist worldwide.

9. Transformation from Local to International Engagement: From local initiatives, the administration has expanded to engage internationally, reflecting the global scope of Bahá'í activities and the commitment to worldwide betterment.

10. Culmination of a Century of Progress: The multifaceted evolution of the Bahá'í administration over the century represents the culmination of progress in organizational structures, methods, and collaborative efforts, positioning the community for continued growth and service.

Paragraph 39

1. System Maturing, Evidencing New Patterns: The Bahá'í administration, though not fully mature, reveals new patterns of interaction and dynamism among the three protagonists—individuals, communities, and institutions.

2. Consultative Process: Individuals engage in consultation, expressing views without insistence on correctness, exploring reality, drawing insights from the Teachings, and creating cooperative environments for capacity-building and action.

3. Discernment of Initiative Areas: Discernment occurs between areas where individuals can exercise initiative and those reserved for institutions, with a heartfelt welcome for institutional guidance and direction.

4. Community Formation: Advanced clusters and localities become vibrant communities, characterized by common identity, will, and purpose. They nurture individual capacities, uphold unity, embrace diversity, and pursue activities for the betterment of all.

5. Distinguishing Features of Communities: Communities distinguish themselves through unity, freedom from prejudices, devotion, gender equality, selfless service, educational processes, cultivation of virtue, and systematic contributions to societal progress.

6. Conscious Institutional Service: Members serving on institutions consciously set aside personal preferences, avoid considering themselves central ornaments, and refrain from exerting control. They focus on fostering consensus, overcoming challenges, and promoting spiritual health.

7. Facilitation of Creative Exchanges: Institutions facilitate creative and collaborative exchanges within the community, striving for consensus, spiritual vitality, and effective ways to pursue shared aims and purposes.

8. Spiritual and Intellectual Development: Educational agencies are established to foster the spiritual and intellectual development of believers, contributing to the overall progress of the community and society.

9. Unity in Diversity: Communities embrace diversity, recognizing it as a source of strength, and collectively work toward spiritual, social, and material progress, guided by the principles of the Bahá'í Faith.

10. Evolutionary Approach: The entire process reflects an evolutionary approach, acknowledging the dynamic nature of community life and the continuous learning and adaptation required for the organic development of the Faith.

Paragraph 40

1. **Widening Circle of Strategic Thinkers:** The relationships and capacities of individuals, communities, and institutions have expanded, creating a broader circle of strategic thinkers.
2. **Global Exchange of Experience and Insight:** Assistance, resources, encouragement, and guidance are extended globally, with the exchange of experience and insight occurring from grassroots to international levels.
3. **Dynamic Engagement:** A dynamic pattern of life emerges, involving millions of individuals worldwide, from diverse backgrounds, united by Bahá'u'lláh's vision of a united world.
4. **Recognition by Varied Audiences:** The dynamic engagement draws attention from parents, educators, traditional leaders, officials, and thought leaders in various countries, showcasing the power of Bahá'u'lláh's system to address global challenges.
5. **Diverse Manifestations of Capacity Growth:** While not every community mirrors the most advanced characteristics, the appearance of new capacities in any location indicates progress, with the expectation that others will follow suit.
6. **Bahá'í History:** The recognition that not all communities simultaneously exhibit advanced characteristics is grounded in Bahá'í history, highlighting the evolutionary nature of the Faith's development.
7. **Anticipation of Wider Adoption:** Advancements in specific locations serve as harbingers of wider adoption, signaling the ongoing unfoldment of Bahá'u'lláh's vision across diverse regions and contexts.

Paragraph 41

1. **Organic Evolution of Administrative Order:** In the coming epochs and centuries, the Administrative Order will continue to evolve organically in response to the Faith's growth and societal changes.
2. **Claim of the Administrative Order:** Shoghi Effendi foresaw the Administrative Order asserting its claim and demonstrating its capacity to be not only the nucleus but the very pattern of the New World Order destined to encompass humanity.
3. **Crystallization of Bahá'u'lláh's System:** As Bahá'u'lláh's system crystallizes, it will introduce new and more effective ways of organizing global affairs, offering humanity a transformative model for societal governance.
4. **Divine Protection of the House of Justice:** Despite the unpredictable paths of organic evolution, the House of Justice, under divine protection, will guide the Bahá'í world through the challenges of a perilous period in humanity's social evolution.
5. **Providence-Guided Course:** The unwavering divine protection ensures that the Bahá'í world, amidst the tumultuous period in human social evolution, will steadfastly follow the course set by Providence.
6. **Dynamic Relationships Among Entities:** In the unfolding evolution, relationships among individuals, communities, and institutions will take new and sometimes unexpected directions, contributing to the vitality and adaptability of the Administrative Order.

7. **Response to Exigencies of Changing Society:** The organic evolution of the Administrative Order will be responsive to both the exigencies of a changing society and the efficient and vigorous functioning of its organic institutions.

THE WORLDWIDE SPREAD AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE FAITH

Paragraph 42

1. **Inception of Bahá'u'lláh's community:** Small in numbers and geographically limited. Galvanized by Bahá'u'lláh's lofty teachings.
2. **Spiritual path and teachings:** Arising to share teachings liberally. Focus on personal and social transformation.
3. **Collaboration with like-minded entities:** Learning to work closely with organizations and individuals. Aimed at uplifting the human spirit and contributing to societal betterment.
4. **Global expansion:** Receptivity to Bahá'u'lláh's message found in every land. Devoted efforts led to the emergence of Bahá'í communities worldwide.
5. **Diversity in communities:** Communities established in far-flung cities and villages. Encompassing the diversity of the human race.

Paragraph 43

1. **Dispensation of the Báb:** Faith established in two countries.
2. **Bahá'u'lláh's ministry:** Faith extended to fifteen countries.
3. **'Abdu'l-Bahá's ministry:** Faith reached around thirty-five countries.
4. **Tablets of the Divine Plan:** Revealed during world war years by 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Grand design for global spiritual illumination through Bahá'u'lláh's teachings.
5. **Call for collective endeavor:** Tablets of the Divine Plan called for methodical efforts. At 'Abdu'l-Bahá's passing, it had not deeply influenced the community.
6. **Response to the call:** Only a few extraordinary heroes, including Martha Root, responded.
7. **Legacy of Martha Root:** Martha Root stood out among those responding to the call. Despite limited response, her efforts were significant in advancing the Faith.

Paragraph 44

1. **Divine Plan execution delay:** Divine Plan revealed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Execution held in abeyance for twenty years.
2. **Guidance of Shoghi Effendi:** Shoghi Effendi guided the friends in creating the Faith's administrative machinery.

3. **Administrative structure establishment:** Initial structure needed for proper functioning. Execution of the Divine Plan commenced when the administrative foundation was solid.
4. **Vision based on Divine Plan:** Shoghi Effendi articulated a vision following 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Divine Plan. Depended on a firmly established administrative structure.
5. **Evolution of administration:** Administration evolved through distinct stages of increasing complexity.
6. **Organic evolution of efforts:** Efforts to share and apply Bahá'u'lláh's teachings evolved organically. New patterns of community life emerged.
7. **Capacity for larger numbers:** Community life patterns embraced ever-larger numbers.
8. **Taking on greater challenges:** Enabled the friends to take on greater challenges.
9. **Contribution to transformation:** Resulted in an increased measure of personal and social transformation.

Paragraph 45

1. **Systematic endeavor initiated by Shoghi Effendi:** Call to communities in the United States and Canada. Designated as chief executors and allies for the Tablets of the Divine Plan.
2. **Call for a well-established plan:** Shoghi Effendi urged the creation of a systematic plan. Emphasis on vigorous pursuit and continuous extension.
3. **Launch of the first Seven Year Plan (1937):** Carried Bahá'u'lláh's teachings to Latin America.
4. **Second Seven Year Plan (1946):** Emphasized Faith development in Europe.
5. **Encouragement for teaching work worldwide:** Shoghi Effendi supported teaching work in various national communities.
6. **National plans under Shoghi Effendi's guidance:** Examples include plans adopted by India and Burma (1938), British Isles (1944), Persia (1946), Australia and New Zealand (1947), Iraq (1947), Canada, Egypt, and Sudan (1948), Germany and Austria (1948), and Central America (1952).
7. **Basic pattern of national plans:** Teaching individuals, establishing Local Assemblies, raising communities. Expanding to additional localities, repeating the pattern.
8. **Foundation building for National Assemblies:** Once a sound foundation was built, a new National Assembly could be raised.

Paragraph 46

1. **Shoghi Effendi's encouragement for teaching:** Encouraged friends to teach the Faith within the context of National Assembly plans.
2. **Diverse methods employed:** Pioneering, travelling teaching, fireside gatherings, summer schools, and collaboration with like-minded organizations were effective.

3. **Global adoption of effective methods:** Shoghi Effendi urged friends worldwide to adopt effective teaching methods.

4. **Balancing expansion and internal development:** Efforts expanded with a focus on internal development. Consolidation of Bahá'í Faith identity and character emphasized.

5. **Transformative process cultivated by the Guardian:** Guardian carefully cultivated the transformative process. Expounded Faith history, facilitated Bahá'í calendar use, and emphasized participation in Feasts and Holy Days.

6. **Obedience to Bahá'í laws:** Shoghi Effendi guided believers to embrace obedience to Bahá'í laws. This included provisions of Bahá'í marriage.

7. **Faith's emergence as a world religion:** Gradually, the Bahá'í Faith emerged as a world religion. Took its place among sister religions on the global stage.

Paragraph 47

1. **Inauguration of international institutions:** Alongside international institutions, collective Faith endeavors in teaching expanded globally.

2. **International cooperation in teaching (1951):** In 1951, five national communities collaborated in the African Campaign. Aimed at extending the Faith's spread across the continent.

3. **Initiation of the Ten Year Crusade (1953):** Uniting efforts of all twelve existing National Assemblies in a global Plan. The first of its kind in the history of the Bahá'í community.

4. **Crowning stage of the Guardian's ministry:** The network of administrative bodies and proven teaching methods were utilized. A collective spiritual enterprise unparalleled in Bahá'í history.

5. **Unprecedented collective effort:** The Bahá'í community witnessed a level of collective spiritual enterprise never seen before. The culmination of the Guardian's ministry and the global expansion of the Faith.

Paragraph 48

1. **Believers' widespread travels:** Believers traveled extensively to share the Bahá'í Faith.

2. **Great receptivity among diverse peoples:** Diverse populations showed great receptivity to Bahá'í principles and teachings.

3. **Deeper meaning and purpose:** People found a deeper meaning and purpose for their lives in Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation. Fresh insights enabled communities to overcome challenges and progress spiritually, socially, and materially.

4. **Diffusion of divine light:** Divine light disseminated gradually from individual to individual.

5. **Phenomenon of entry by troops:** Harbinger foretold by 'Abdu'l-Bahá became evident. Hundreds enrolled in Uganda, The Gambia, Gilbert and Ellice Islands, Indonesia, and Cameroon.

6. **Enrollment in tens of thousands:** As the Plan drew to a close, entry by troops began in many other countries. Individuals embracing the Faith reached into the tens of thousands or more.

Paragraph 49

1. **Hands of the Cause post-Shoghi Effendi:** Hands of the Cause ensured successful completion of the Ten Year Crusade. Followed the path outlined by Shoghi Effendi.

2. **Accomplishments in the teaching field:** Lessons learned under the guidance of the Guardian led to significant accomplishments. More achieved in a decade than in the previous century.

3. **Global Faith expansion (Ten Year Crusade):** Faith spread to 131 new countries and territories. Number of localities with Bahá'ís surpassed eleven thousand.

4. **Administrative growth:** Fifty-six National Spiritual Assemblies established. Over 3,500 Local Assemblies formed.

5. **Culmination of the enterprise:** Universal House of Justice elected by members of National Assemblies. Election conducted according to provisions set down by 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

Paragraph 50

1. **Continuation of the Divine Plan by the Universal House of Justice:** After establishment, the House of Justice systematically prosecuted the Divine Plan. Inaugurated its second epoch, broadening and augmenting activities cultivated by the Guardian.

2. Range of activities expanded: Added or extended various aspects of work. Coordinated and unified activities of National Assemblies.

3. Areas of emphasis and increased attention: Universal participation of individuals in service to the Cause. Deepening individuals' understanding of laws and teachings.

4. Strengthening institutions: Emphasis on collaboration between Boards of Counsellors and National Assemblies. Collaboration between Auxiliary Board members and Local Spiritual Assemblies.

5. Enhancement of community life: Focus on children's classes. Introduction of activities for youth and women. Regular holding of Assembly meetings.

6. Initiatives for Faith proclamation: Extensive proclamation of the Faith. Promotion through the media.

7. Development of centers of learning: Establishment of summer schools and teaching institutes.

8. Greater involvement in society: Active participation in the life of society.

9. Fostering Bahá'í scholarship: Initiatives to foster scholarly pursuits within the Bahá'í community.

Paragraph 51

1. **Faith's expansion by the 1990s:** Faith had spread to tens of thousands of localities. Number of National Assemblies more than tripled to around 180.

2. **Development of national communities:** Two broad patterns emerged, contingent upon the response of the wider population.

3. **Pattern one: Smaller local communities:** Many local communities were small in size. Some grew to number a hundred believers or more.

4. **Characteristics of smaller communities:** Characterized by a strong process of consolidation. Allowed for a broad range of activities and the emergence of a strong sense of Bahá'í identity.

5. **Limitations of smaller communities:** It became evident that despite prosperity and humanitarian efforts, small communities couldn't serve as a model for restructuring the whole of society.

6. **Unity, high ideals, and proficiency:** Small communities were united in shared beliefs, characterized by high ideals, and proficient in managing affairs.

7. **Limitations in societal restructuring:** Despite their positive attributes, small communities were limited in their capacity to serve as a model for broader societal restructuring.

Paragraph 52

1. **Second pattern in countries with entry by troops:** Emerged in countries where the process of entry by troops began. Resulted in an exponential increase in membership, new localities, and new institutions.

2. **Exponential growth in membership:** In several countries, the Bahá'í community grew to comprise more than one hundred thousand believers. India reached approximately two million believers.

3. **Rapid expansion in a two-year period (late 1980s):** In a single two-year period, more than one million souls embraced the Faith worldwide.

4. **Challenges of rapid expansion:** Despite creative and sacrificial efforts, the process of consolidation couldn't keep pace with expansion.

5. **Educational challenges:** Means did not exist for new believers to become sufficiently deepened in the fundamental verities of the Faith. Classes for Bahá'í education couldn't be established in numbers large enough to serve the increasing number of children and youth.

6. **Formation of Local Assemblies:** Over thirty thousand Local Assemblies were formed, but only a fraction began to function.

7. **Insufficiency of occasional courses and activities:** Occasional educational courses and informal community activities were not sufficient. Resulted in raising only a relatively small band of active supporters who couldn't meet the needs of thousands of new believers.

Paragraph 53

1. **Bahá'í world reassessment and reorientation (1996):** Many areas of activity needed reassessment and reorientation. Individuals, communities, and institutions needed to learn how to initiate action reaching large numbers.

2. **Rapid increase in individuals engaging in service:** The challenge was to rapidly increase the number of individuals engaging in acts of service. Consolidation needed to keep pace with accelerating expansion.

3. **Systematic introduction of the Faith:** The effort to introduce the Faith to the world had to become more systematic. The call in the Four Year Plan aimed at a significant advance in the process of entry by troops.

4. **Acknowledgment of changing circumstances:** The call acknowledged that the circumstances of the Faith and conditions of humanity allowed for and required sustained large-scale growth.

5. **Realizing the power of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings:** Sustained growth on a large scale was necessary for the increasing realization of the power of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings to transform the character of humankind.

Paragraph 54

1. **Four Year Plan initiation:** Friends in each region encouraged to identify approaches and methods specific to their conditions.

2. **Systematic community development:** Initiated a systematic process of community development. Continuous review of successes and difficulties.

3. **Adjustment and improvement of methods:** Emphasis on adjusting and improving methods based on experience and learning.

4. **Unclear courses of action:** When the course of action was unclear, a range of approaches could be tested in different places.

5. **Testing effective initiatives:** Effective initiatives identified through experience. Features shared with national or international institutions.

6. **Dissemination of successful features:** Successful features disseminated to other places. Features could become a component of future Plans.

7. **Iterative and adaptive approach:** Encouraged an iterative and adaptive approach to community development. Learning from experience and applying lessons for continuous improvement.

Paragraph 55

1. **Learning about growth over a quarter century:** Process gave rise to concepts, instruments, and approaches. Enhanced the community's evolving framework for action.

2. **Creation of a network of training institutes:** Institutes offering educational programs for children, junior youth, and adults. Empowered the friends in large numbers, enhancing their capabilities for service.

3. **Introduction of the construct of clusters:** Facilitated the systematization of teaching work in manageable geographic areas. Initiated and strengthened programs of growth, accelerating the spread and development of the Faith.

4. **Emergence of a new pattern of community life:** Multiplication of four core activities as portals for entry of large numbers. Combined with various efforts, such as individual and collective teaching, home visits, social gatherings, observing Feasts and Holy Days, administering community affairs, and promoting social and economic development.

5. **Focus on four core activities:** Four core activities served as a starting point for community transformation. Initiated a change in the spiritual character of the community and strengthened social ties among individuals and families.

Paragraph 56

1. **Significant advance in culture over a century:** Bahá'í world experienced a cultural advance in executing the provisions of the Divine Plan.

2. **Engagement in conscious learning process:** Greater numbers engaged in consciously learning and applying the Teachings pertaining to growth and development. Framework for action evolves through the experience of the friends and guidance of the House of Justice.

3. **Rise in capacity for learning:** Manifested in characteristics such as maintaining a humble posture of learning, strengthening Bahá'í identity while being welcoming, and acting in ever-wider spheres of endeavor while fostering a systematic and coherent approach.

4. **Protagonism in thousands of clusters:** Growing numbers see themselves as protagonists in acquiring, generating, and applying knowledge for their own development. Engaging in discussions on spiritual and social themes, shaping a devotional pattern of life, providing education for young people, and contributing to material and social progress.

5. **Empowerment for local and global contribution:** Empowered to contribute to the betterment of their local community and the world. Deeper appreciation of the purpose of religion through thinking and acting in this way.

INVOLVEMENT IN THE LIFE OF SOCIETY

Paragraph 57

1. **Greater involvement in society:** 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Divine Plan includes a dimension of increased involvement of the Bahá'í community in the life of society.

2. **Shoghi Effendi's emphasis on Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation:** From the start of his ministry, Shoghi Effendi emphasized the power of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation to effect an organic change in society.

3. **Process leading to a spiritual civilization:** The process would result in the emergence of a spiritual civilization.

4. **Application of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings:** Bahá'ís needed to apply Bahá'u'lláh's teachings for personal spiritual transformation. Emphasis on extending efforts to embrace material and social change within their communities and the wider society.

Paragraph 58

1. **'Abdu'l-Bahá's guidance on social and economic development:** During 'Abdu'l-Bahá's time, certain Bahá'í communities in Iran and nearby countries pursued systematic endeavors for social and economic development.

2. **'Abdu'l-Bahá's tireless efforts:** 'Abdu'l-Bahá worked tirelessly to guide and foster progress. Encouraged the establishment of schools in Iran open to girls and boys, offering training in good character, arts, and sciences.
3. **Dispatching believers for development work:** Believers from the West were dispatched to assist with development work.
4. **Guidance for spiritual and material flourishing:** 'Abdu'l-Bahá provided guidance for the spiritual and material flourishing of Bahá'í villages like 'Adasíyyih and Daidanaw.
5. **Creation of dependencies around the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár:** Dependencies were created for education and other social services around the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in 'Ishqábád.
6. **Expansion of efforts after 'Abdu'l-Bahá's passing:** Shoghi Effendi expanded efforts to promote health, literacy, and education of women and girls. Schools were founded in Egypt and the Caucasus.
7. **Closure of schools in Iran (1934):** Schools in Iran, initiated by 'Abdu'l-Bahá's impulse, flourished for a time. Contributed to the modernization of the nation until the government compelled their closure in 1934.

Paragraph 59

1. **Shoghi Effendi's advice on resource concentration:** Shoghi Effendi advised friends to concentrate limited resources on teaching and raising the Administrative Order.
2. **Contributions to the Faith for global upliftment:** Contributions to the Faith seen as the surest way to alleviate global hunger and misery. The system of Bahá'u'lláh, divine in origin, considered the key to getting the world on its feet.
3. **Primary obligation to support teaching work:** The primary obligation was to support the Bahá'í teaching work for the healing of nations.
4. **Individual contributions to material and social development:** While individuals could contribute personally to material and social development, the Bahá'í community generally focused on growth and community building.
5. **Early years following House of Justice election:** In the early years after the election of the House of Justice, guidance continued to focus on growth.
6. **Practicability of development activities:** Due to circumstances during the Guardian's ministry and subsequent years, it was impracticable for most of the Bahá'í world to undertake extensive development activities.

Paragraph 60

1. **Background (1983):** After years of dedicated teaching efforts, the global Bahá'í community reached a stage where social and economic development became a crucial aspect of its pursuits.
2. **Responsibility of the Friends:** The believers were encouraged to uplift themselves by applying spiritual principles, maintaining rectitude of conduct, and practicing the art of consultation.

3. **Establishment of the Office of Social and Economic Development:** In response to this shift, the World Centre established the Office of Social and Economic Development to assist the House of Justice in promoting and coordinating global activities in this field.

4. **Global Coordination:** Over time, the Office evolved to facilitate a global learning process about development, ensuring coordination and collaboration among Bahá'ís worldwide.

5. **Individual Initiatives:** Inspired believers took the lead in initiating various activities, extending beyond the Bahá'í community to encompass the wider society in their commitment to social and economic development.

Paragraph 61

1. **Global Expansion of Initiatives (Within a Decade):** Within a short timeframe, hundreds of development activities were launched worldwide, spanning various areas like women's advancement, education, health, mass communication, agriculture, economic activity, and environmental concerns.

2. **Diverse Activity Spectrum:** Initiatives varied in complexity, ranging from simple, short-term activities in villages and towns addressing specific challenges to sustained projects like schools and clinics, designed to meet long-term social needs. Organizational structures were often established for sustained projects.

3. **Evolution of Bahá'í-inspired Organizations:** By 1996, a few individuals founded Bahá'í-inspired organizations with complex programmatic structures. These organizations aimed to systematically pursue a coherent approach to development within a population, striving for a significant impact in a region.

4. **Application of Spiritual Principles:** Throughout these efforts, the Bahá'í community sought to apply spiritual principles to practical problems, emphasizing the integration of spiritual values into the development process.

Paragraph 62

1. **Emergence of Bahá'í-inspired agencies:** Agencies influenced by Bahá'í principles and those directly under Bahá'í institutions appear globally.

2. **Impact on community and society:** These agencies demonstrate a dynamic coherence between the material and spiritual dimensions of life, influencing both the community and the wider society.

3. **Advances in action and thought:** Progress is evident not only in tangible actions but also in the understanding of fundamental concepts, challenging the notion of developed and underdeveloped categories.

4. **Holistic transformation:** Recognizing the need for a comprehensive environment that addresses spiritual, social, and material conditions for security and flourishing.

5. **Decentralized development:** Rejecting the idea of one group developing another, emphasizing that individuals, regardless of location, are the protagonists of their own development.

6. **Knowledge as a core element:** Access to knowledge and active participation in its generation, application, and diffusion are central to the development process.

7. **Incremental growth:** Initiating efforts on a small scale that evolve in complexity as experience accumulates, with effective programs being systematically introduced into different regions.

8. **Analytical and integrated approach:** Application of principles and concepts involves adept analysis of social conditions, drawing insights from the Bahá'í Writings, and integrating activities with community-building efforts.

Paragraph 63

1. **Establishment of Bahá'í International Development Organization (BIDO):** Formed in 2018 due to the widespread and complex nature of Bahá'í development efforts worldwide.

2. **Successor to the Office of Social and Economic Development:** BIDO assumes and expands upon the functions and mandate of its predecessor, reinforcing social action globally.

3. **Facilitation of global learning process:** The primary purpose is to facilitate learning about development within the Bahá'í world, emphasizing action, reflection, experience gathering, systematization, conceptualization, and training.

4. **Alignment with Bahá'í teachings:** All activities are conducted in accordance with the teachings of the Bahá'í Faith, emphasizing a spiritual approach to development.

5. **Support for individuals, communities, institutions, and agencies:** BIDO strengthens the efforts for social action at various levels, promoting a collaborative approach to development.

6. **Focus on action and reflection:** The organization encourages a dynamic interplay between taking action and reflecting on the outcomes, contributing to a continuous learning process.

7. **Systematization of experience:** BIDO aims to gather and systematize experiences from development initiatives, enabling a more comprehensive understanding of effective practices.

8. **Development of a distinctly Bahá'í approach:** Ultimately, the organization seeks to foster and promote a unique Bahá'í perspective on development, integrating spiritual principles into the process.

Paragraph 64

1. **Parallel Development Processes:** Alongside the systematic expansion, consolidation, and social-economic development efforts, a significant focus emerges on participating in broader societal discourses.

2. **Sharing Bahá'í Insights:** In various social settings, Bahá'ís actively contribute by sharing insights drawn from Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation, aiming to address human problems with spiritual solutions.

3. **Bahá'u'lláh's Proclamation:** Bahá'u'lláh initiated the dissemination of His healing remedy directly to the world's leaders, calling for its adoption by all of humanity.

4. **Divine Appeal for World Peace:** Despite leaders' failure to affirm His divine claim, Bahá'u'lláh urged them to apply His principles for the establishment of world peace, introducing the concept of the "Lesser Peace."

5. **Abdu'l-Bahá's Proclamation:** 'Abdu'l-Bahá, in writings like the Tablets to The Hague and talks during His travels to the West, persistently conveyed His Father's teachings to both powerful figures and the masses facing various challenges.

6. **Unceasing Efforts:** 'Abdu'l-Bahá's continuous efforts involved addressing both influential leaders and the broader population, emphasizing the applicability of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings to the myriad difficulties humanity faced.

7. **Call for Lesser Peace:** Reflecting Bahá'u'lláh's earlier call, 'Abdu'l-Bahá reiterated the need for embracing the principles of the Lesser Peace as a means to improve individual and collective conditions.

8. **Spiritual Solutions to Human Problems:** The overarching theme is the application of spiritual principles to address the complex challenges faced by humanity, echoing Bahá'u'lláh's original proclamation for world peace.

Paragraph 65

1. **Shoghi Effendi's Initiatives:** Early in his ministry, Shoghi Effendi recognized the importance of sharing Bahá'í insights globally and initiated efforts for this purpose.

2. **Bahá'í Information Bureau in Geneva (1925):** Shoghi Effendi established a Bahá'í information bureau in Geneva, aiming to disseminate Bahá'í teachings and wisdom to a global audience.

3. **Publication of The Bahá'í World:** Initiatives included the publication of volumes of The Bahá'í World, serving as a means to present Bahá'í perspectives on contemporary issues.

4. **Correlation of Teachings with Contemporary Thought:** Knowledgeable Bahá'ís were called upon to correlate the Teachings with contemporary thought, addressing pressing problems of the world.

5. **Establishment of Bahá'í International Community (1948):** After the founding of the United Nations, the Bahá'í International Community was established as a non-governmental organization, engaging with the work of the international body.

6. **New Chapter in International Relations:** The establishment of the Bahá'í International Community marked a new chapter in the Faith's relationship with governments, global institutions, and civil society agencies on the international stage.

7. **Primary Focus on Teaching Work:** While emphasizing the primary importance of the teaching work, Shoghi Effendi encouraged Bahá'ís to acquaint wider society with the implications of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings.

8. **Engagement with Public Thought Leaders:** Shoghi Effendi urged Bahá'ís to establish closer contact with leaders of public thought, emphasizing association without political affiliation and encouraging engagement with organizations focused on social issues.

Paragraph 66

1. **Extension of Participation in Societal Discourses:** After the establishment of the Universal House of Justice, the engagement in societal discourses was expanded.

2. **House of Justice Initiatives:** The Universal House of Justice took a proactive role in disseminating Bahá'í principles, exemplified in messages like "The Promise of World Peace."

3. **Bahá'í International Community at the UN:** The Bahá'í International Community strengthened its position at the United Nations, forming formal associations with various UN agencies in the 1970s.

4. **Statements on World Affairs:** The organization published statements on world affairs, creating a unique platform for engagement with governments and non-governmental organizations.

5. **Constructive Role in International Symposia:** Recognized for its selfless agenda, the Bahá'í International Community played a constructive role in global events such as the Conference on Environment and Sustainable Development, the World Conference on Women, the World Summit for Social Development, and the Millennium Forum.

6. **Recognition as a Neutral Force:** Acknowledged by its associates as having no self-interested agenda but working for the well-being of all, the Bahá'í International Community became a respected and neutral force.

7. **National Response to Persecution:** Post the Iranian Revolution and renewed persecution of Bahá'ís, national communities engaged in closer dialogue with national and international institutions.

8. **Establishment of External Affairs Offices:** National communities established offices of external affairs to defend the Faith at the international level, reinforcing efforts to address the challenges faced by the Bahá'í community.

Paragraph 67

1. **Systematic Engagement in Discourses of Society:** In the 21st century, the organic progress of the Bahá'í Cause allowed for more systematic engagement in societal discourses.

2. **Expansion of Online Presence:** International and national Bahá'í websites significantly expanded the presentation of Bahá'í Teachings on a wide range of topics.

3. **Institute for Studies in Global Prosperity:** Established to research the implications of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings for pressing social issues, the institute initiated seminars to develop capacity among Bahá'í university students.

4. **Bahá'í International Community's Global Presence:** The Bahá'í International Community extended its presence to regional centres in Addis Ababa, Brussels, and Jakarta, beyond its initial locations in New York and Geneva.

5. **National Engagement on Specific Issues:** National offices of external affairs actively participated in specific national discourses, addressing topics such as the advancement of women, the role of religion, youth empowerment, justice promotion, and social cohesion.

6. **Global Learning Process:** The Office of Public Discourse at the Bahá'í World Centre facilitates a global learning process, allowing the Bahá'í community to learn from contributing to national discourses.

7. **Grassroots Contribution:** At the grassroots level, Bahá'ís in neighborhoods, villages, and professional spaces contribute Bahá'í concepts to the evolution of thought and action among their compatriots, promoting constructive change.

8. **Contribution to Constructive Change:** The friends actively offer insights from the Bahá'í Writings, contributing to the necessary evolution of thought and action for constructive change in various spheres of society.

Paragraph 68

1. **Pressing Involvement Amidst Disintegration:** In the face of the intensifying disintegration of the old world order and heightened polarization in discourse, involvement at various societal levels becomes more crucial.

2. **Recrudescence of Conflict:** The coarsening and polarization of discourse contribute to renewed conflict among factions and ideologies, emphasizing the urgency of engagement.

3. **Bahá'ís Embrace Inclusive Participation:** Understanding that Bahá'u'lláh's transformation requires universal participation, Bahá'ís collaborate with sympathetic individuals and organizations sharing common objectives.

4. **Collaborative Efforts:** Bahá'ís actively engage in collaborative efforts, sharing insights from Bahá'u'lláh's teachings and practical lessons from community-building, while learning from their collaborators.

5. **Navigating Contentious Discourse:** Recognizing that discourse on social issues may become contentious, the friends maintain awareness, particularly when engaging with civic and governmental entities.

6. **Fostering Consensus and Unity:** In deepening engagement with society, Bahá'ís aim to foster consensus, unity of thought, and collaboration, emphasizing a shared search for solutions to humanity's challenges.

7. **Importance of Means and Ends:** The friends emphasize that the means used to achieve an end are as crucial as the end itself, underscoring the ethical dimension of their actions.

8. **Promotion of Collaboration:** Bahá'ís actively promote collaboration as they work with diverse individuals, communities, and organizations, contributing to a collective effort to address pressing problems.

Paragraph 69

1. **Initial Parallel Unfoldment:** In Bahá'í communities worldwide, the involvement in the wider society initially unfolded alongside the teaching work and administrative development.

2. **Coherence with Global Plans:** In recent decades, efforts for social action and societal engagement have harmonized with expansion and consolidation, aligning with the conceptual framework for action in global Plans.

3. **Inexorable Integration in Clusters:** As friends labor in clusters, they naturally integrate into the society, expanding the learning process to a broader range of activities, contributing to material, social, and spiritual progress.

4. **Contribution to Community Life:** Community life increasingly contributes to progress as friends understand societal conditions, explore concepts from Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation, apply insights to practical problems, and build capacity within the community.
5. **Expanding Grassroots Activities:** Coherence across various areas has led to a significant increase in grassroots activities, with social and economic development initiatives growing from a few hundred in 1990 to tens of thousands by 2021.
6. **Affirmative Response to Engagement:** Bahá'í engagement in social discourse receives an overwhelmingly positive response, offering new insights sought by a divided humanity facing complex problems.
7. **Leaders of Thought's Association:** Leaders of thought at all levels increasingly associate the Bahá'í community with fresh conceptions and approaches vital for an increasingly disunited world.
8. **Discernible Society-Building Power:** The latent society-building power of the Faith in the Formative Age is now discernible in numerous countries, marking a transformative shift in the unfoldment of the Divine Plan.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BAHÁ'Í WORLD CENTRE

Paragraph 70

1. **Significant Developments at Bahá'í World Centre:** Concurrent with the Faith's growth and administrative unfoldment, notable developments took place at the Bahá'í World Centre during the first century of the Formative Age.
2. **Impulse from the Tablet of Carmel:** These developments were set in motion by the impulse of Bahá'u'lláh's Tablet of Carmel, another significant Charter shaping the trajectory of the Bahá'í World Centre.
3. **Interplay Among Three Charters:** The processes associated with the three Charters, including the Tablet of Carmel, influenced the emergence of institutions and agencies at the administrative center of the Bahá'í world.
4. **Spiritual Center Development:** Beyond administrative progress, the spiritual center at the Bahá'í World Centre also underwent significant development during the first century of the Formative Age.
5. **Interconnected Growth:** The spiritual and administrative dimensions of the Bahá'í World Centre experienced interconnected growth, reflecting the comprehensive nature of Bahá'í principles and guidance.
6. **Harmony with Bahá'u'lláh's Vision:** The developments at the Bahá'í World Centre align with Bahá'u'lláh's vision as articulated in the Tablet of Carmel, contributing to the realization of spiritual and administrative ideals.
7. **Holistic Approach:** The unfolding progress at the Bahá'í World Centre exemplifies a holistic approach, integrating both the spiritual and administrative aspects to advance the Bahá'í Faith globally.

8. **Contribution to Bahá'í World Dynamics:** The developments at the Bahá'í World Centre during the first century of the Formative Age significantly contributed to shaping the dynamics of the global Bahá'í community.

Paragraph 71

1. **Climactic Chapter in 'Akká:** Bahá'u'lláh's arrival in 'Akká marked the climactic chapter of His ministry, with the Lord of Hosts manifesting in the Holy Land.

2. **Prophesied Arrival:** His arrival in 'Akká had been foretold by Prophets in ancient scriptures, making the fulfillment of this prophecy a momentous event.

3. **Compelled by Persecution:** His exile to 'Akká was not a voluntary act but a consequence of persecution by avowed enemies, culminating in His arrival on its shores.

4. **Welcoming Banners of Light:** Upon arrival, Bahá'u'lláh described being welcomed with "banners of light," and a spiritual proclamation foresaw the enlistment of all on earth under these banners.

5. **Enhancement of Spiritual Potency:** The spiritual potency of the Holy Land was immeasurably enhanced by Bahá'u'lláh's presence and the interment of His sacred remains, along with those of His Herald, who was also a Manifestation of God.

6. **Central Devotional Focal Point:** 'Akká became the central point to which every Bahá'í heart is drawn, serving as the focal centre of their devotions and the ultimate goal for aspiring pilgrims.

7. **Universal Welcome:** The Bahá'í Holy Places in the Holy Land welcome people not only from the region but from every land, making them a universal and inclusive spiritual sanctuary.

8. **Precious Trust for Humanity:** The Bahá'í Holy Places are considered a precious trust held for all humanity, emphasizing the global significance of these sacred sites.

Paragraph 72

1. **Tenuous Hold on Spiritual Centre:** At the close of the Heroic Age and for many years thereafter, the Bahá'ís faced a tenuous hold on the spiritual centre of their Faith, notably struggling with access to the Holy Shrines.

2. **Challenges Faced by 'Abdu'l-Bahá:** 'Abdu'l-Bahá, even faced challenges in offering prayers at His Father's resting place, highlighting the dire situation and difficulties, including false charges of sedition.

3. **Perilous Situation Under 'Abdu'l-Bahá:** 'Abdu'l-Bahá faced peril as He was falsely accused when raising the structure for the earthly remains of the Báb, enduring the long journey from the place of His martyrdom.

4. **Guardian's Responsibilities:** Shoghi Effendi, in his ministry, faced the seizure of keys of the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh by Covenant-breakers, highlighting the perilous and insecure condition of the World Centre.

5. **Guardian's Vital Duties:** Protecting, preserving, extending, and beautifying the twin Holy Shrines and other Holy Places became among Shoghi Effendi's first and most vital duties, persistently pursued throughout his ministry.

6. **Challenges Navigated:** Shoghi Effendi navigated tumultuous changes in the Holy Land, facing global economic disruption, war, political transitions, and social instability while upholding Bahá'í principles of fellowship and respect for authority.

7. **Contemplation of Transfer:** Shoghi Effendi even considered the transfer of Bahá'u'lláh's remains to Mount Carmel to ensure their protection during challenging times.

8. **Steadfast Presence in Haifa:** Despite tumult and strife, Shoghi Effendi remained steadfast in Haifa, directing local believers to disperse globally, ensuring the preservation and beautification of the Holy Shrines continued until his final days.

Paragraph 73

1. **Expansion of Holy Places Properties:** The Guardian significantly expanded properties surrounding the Holy Shrine and the Mansion at Bahjí during efforts to acquire, restore, and secure the Holy Places.

2. **Creation of Extensive Formal Gardens:** The formal gardens at the Holy Places were initiated and eventually became extensive under the Guardian's efforts, enhancing the overall beauty of these sacred sites.

3. **Completion of the Shrine of the Báb:** On the Mountain of God, Shoghi Effendi brought the Shrine of the Báb to its long-delayed completion, adding rooms, creating an arcade, raising the golden dome, and surrounding it with verdure.

4. **Establishment of Arc for Administrative Order:** Shoghi Effendi traced the arc for the edifices of the World Bahá'í Administrative Order and raised its first structure, the International Archives Building, while placing the resting places of significant figures at its heart.

5. **Continuation of Development under Universal House of Justice:** After Shoghi Effendi, the Universal House of Justice continued his efforts for the development of the World Centre, acquiring additional land, beautifying Holy Places, raising buildings on the Arc, and extending terraces on Mount Carmel.

6. **Property Expansion on Mount Carmel:** The property in the vicinity of the Shrine of the Báb expanded to over 170,000 square meters, and land exchanges increased the property surrounding the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh from 4,000 to over 450,000 square meters.

7. **Construction of Shrine for 'Abdu'l-Bahá:** Construction began in 2019 near the Ridván Garden in 'Akká on a Shrine to serve as the final resting place of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, continuing the development of Holy Places in the Holy Land.

Paragraph 74

1. **Early Challenges:** The Guardian faced challenges in finding capable helpers due to the small size of the early Bahá'í world.

2. **Community Growth:** As the Bahá'í community expanded, a steady stream of volunteers became available to support the development of administrative centers and agencies.

3. **Global Expansion:** The growth of the community led to the establishment of departments and agencies crucial for the rapidly developing Faith, both at the World Centre and in communities worldwide.

4. **Flow of Communication:** A continuous exchange of questions, advice, insights, and guidance now occurs between different parts of the world and the heart of the Bahá'í community.

5. **Recognition in Israel:** After decades of effort, Shoghi Effendi's work to establish good relations with civil authorities in Israel culminated in 1987 with the formal recognition of the Bahá'í World Centre as the spiritual and administrative hub of the global Bahá'í community, operating under the Universal House of Justice.

Paragraph 75

1. **Evolution of Relationships:** Similar to the evolution of relationships among individuals and communities, the Bahá'í World Centre's connections with Bahá'ís worldwide have evolved over time.

2. **Spiritual and Administrative Integration:** The Bahá'í World Centre is intimately and inseparably associated with the development of the Bahá'í world, symbolized by the majestic buildings and terraces on Mount Carmel.

3. **Significance of Mount Carmel:** The buildings and terraces are seen as an outward expression of the immense power animating the Bahá'í Cause, bearing witness to the successful foundation of a worldwide community transcending human differences.

4. **Administrative Order:** The transformation on Mount Carmel signifies the establishment of the principal institutions of a unique and unassailable Administrative Order, shaping the life of the Bahá'í community.

5. **Global Stage Presence:** The Bahá'í Cause, through the developments on Mount Carmel, emerges as a visible and compelling reality on the global stage, representing the focal center of forces destined to bring about societal reconstruction.

6. **Mystic Source of Renewal:** Mount Carmel is described as a mystic source of spiritual renewal for all who turn to it, embodying a profound spiritual significance for the followers of Bahá'u'lláh.

PROSPECT

Paragraph 76

1. **'Abdu'l-Bahá's Invitation:** A few weeks before His passing, 'Abdu'l-Bahá invited a friend to admire the beauty of the garden at His home, highlighting the transformative power of devotion.

2. **Transformation of the Garden:** 'Abdu'l-Bahá pointed out the flourishing garden, emphasizing that it was once just a heap of stones, now vibrant with foliage and flowers.

3. **Spirit of Devotion's Impact:** He expressed the potential of the spirit of devotion, showcasing how it had played a crucial role in transforming the once barren place into a verdant garden.

4. **Desire for Service:** 'Abdu'l-Bahá expressed His desire for the loved ones to arise and serve the divine Cause after His passing, envisioning a future where they actively contribute to its progress.

5. **Promise of Life-Bearers:** 'Abdu'l-Bahá made a promise that soon there would be individuals emerging who would bring life to the world, indicating a new chapter of vitality and growth for the Bahá'í community.

Paragraph 77

1. **Formative Age Milestone:** At the close of the first century of the Formative Age, the Bahá'í world possesses unprecedented capacity and resources, surpassing earlier expectations from 'Abdu'l-Bahá's time.
2. **Multigenerational Efforts:** Successive generations have dedicated themselves to the cause, resulting in a multitude of consecrated souls spread across the globe.
3. **Collective Effort:** These consecrated souls are collectively engaged in building the Faith's Administrative Order, expanding the reach of community life, and strengthening connections with society.
4. **Development of Centers:** The spiritual and administrative center of the Faith is evolving, indicating progress in both its spiritual and organizational aspects.
5. **Global Impact:** The efforts of this multitude extend globally, showcasing the widespread influence and commitment to the growth and development of the Bahá'í community.

Paragraph 78

1. **Execution of Divine Charters:** The Bahá'í community's systematic pursuit of the three Divine Charters over the past hundred years has led to a transformation, aligning with 'Abdu'l-Bahá's vision of a new creation.
2. **Organic Development:** Similar to the stages of human growth, the Bahá'í community has undergone organic development in size, structure, understanding, and vision.
3. **Responsibilities and Relationships:** As the community matures, it embraces responsibilities and strengthens relationships among individuals, communities, and institutions.
4. **Local and Global Advances:** Over the century, the Bahá'í community has experienced significant local and global advances, allowing it to engage in purposeful action across a diverse range of endeavors.
5. **Wider Range of Endeavors:** The series of advances have empowered the Bahá'í community to extend its purposeful action, contributing to a broader array of initiatives on both local and global scales.

Paragraph 79

1. **End of Heroic Age:** As the Heroic Age concluded, the Bahá'í community faced pivotal questions on organizing its administrative affairs to fulfill the Divine Plan.
2. **Guidance from the Guardian:** The Guardian played a crucial role in guiding the community to address initial questions, leading to the establishment of nascent international arrangements by the time of his passing.
3. **Capacity Building:** The capacity built during this period enabled the Bahá'í world to tackle new challenges and questions under the direction of the Universal House of Justice.
4. **Progress Over Decades:** Marked progress over several decades prompted the emergence of further questions, particularly regarding the future direction of the Cause.

5. **Four Year Plan:** Before the Four Year Plan, new questions arose, emphasizing the need for a significant advance in the process of entry by troops globally.

6. **Learning Process:** The capacity to resolve complex questions and take on increasingly intricate challenges characterizes the ongoing learning process propelling the Faith's progress.

7. **Organic Unfoldment:** With each step forward, the Bahá'í world gains new powers and capacities, enabling it to confront greater challenges as it strives to achieve Bahá'u'lláh's purpose for humanity.

8. **Continued Unfoldment:** Despite the changes and chances of the world, through crisis and victory, the Bahá'í community is expected to continue its organic unfoldment through various stages of the Formative and Golden Ages until the end of the Dispensation.

Paragraph 80

1. **Emergence of Common Framework:** By the final years of the first century of the Formative Age, a common framework for action had emerged within the Bahá'í community.

2. **Central Role of the Framework:** This framework is central to the community's work, shaping increasingly complex and effective activities, and is continuously refined through experience and guidance from the Universal House of Justice.

3. **Pivotal Elements:** The framework is rooted in the spiritual truths and cardinal principles of the Revelation, providing a foundation for thought and action.

4. **Contributing Elements:** Values, attitudes, concepts, and methods are additional elements contributing to the framework, along with insights from various branches of knowledge regarding the physical and social world.

5. **Continual Evolution:** The framework is dynamic and continually evolving, reflecting the Bahá'í community's learning process and growth.

6. **Systematic Translation of Teachings:** Within this evolving framework, Bahá'ís are learning to systematically translate Bahá'u'lláh's teachings into action, working towards the realization of His high aims for the betterment of the world.

7. **Increased Capacity for Learning:** The significance of the community's increased capacity for learning, guided by this framework, has profound implications for the advancement of humanity in the current stage of its social development.

Paragraph 81

1. **Achievements and Challenges:** Acknowledges the achievements of the Bahá'í world but emphasizes the substantial work that remains to be done.

2. **Nine Year Plan:** Outlines the immediate tasks ahead, focusing on the multiplication and intensification of growth programs, increased coherence in community building, social action, and participation in prevalent discourses.

3. **Three Protagonists:** Highlights the concerted efforts of the Plan's three protagonists - likely referring to individuals, institutions, and communities.
4. **Strengthening the Training Institute:** Emphasizes the continuous strengthening and evolution of the training institute as an educational organization developing capabilities for service.
5. **Empowering Youth:** The movement of youth will be complemented by empowering women as full partners in community affairs.
6. **Capacity Building for Institutions:** Focuses on fostering the capacity of Bahá'í institutions at all levels, with particular attention to the establishment and development of Local Assemblies.
7. **Engagement with Society:** Enhancing the engagement of these institutions with the wider society and its leaders is a key aspect.
8. **Intellectual Development:** Cultivation of the intellectual life of the community is essential to provide the rigor and clarity of thought needed to demonstrate the applicability of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings to a sceptical humanity.
9. **Long-Term Challenge:** The efforts will continue through a series of Plans, spanning at least a generation, carrying the Bahá'í world into the threshold of its third century.

Paragraph 82

1. **Determined Efforts:** The community's determined efforts to understand and live in accordance with Bahá'u'lláh's teachings are highlighted.
2. **Twofold Process:** Emphasizes the larger context of the twofold process of disintegration and integration described by Shoghi Effendi.
3. **Objective of Current Plans:** The main objective of the ongoing series of Plans is to release ever-increasing measures of the society-building power of the Faith.
4. **Reading the Reality of Society:** To achieve this objective, there is a need for the ability to read the reality of society as it responds to and is shaped by the processes of disintegration and integration.
5. **Society-building Power of the Faith:** The release of this power is crucial for the transformation and betterment of society, aligning with the long-term goals of the Bahá'í community.

Paragraph 83

1. **Destructive Forces and Events:** Acknowledges a multitude of destructive forces and events, including environmental degradation, climate change, pandemics, moral decline, loss of meaning, erosion of truth and reason, unbridled technology, prejudices, corruption, political upheaval, and war, impacting billions.
2. **Hopeful Trends:** Despite the challenges, there are hopeful trends contributing to a "universal fermentation," purging and reshaping humanity in anticipation of unity.
3. **Shoghi Effendi's Vision:** Refers to Shoghi Effendi's vision of the Day when the unity of the human race will be recognized, emphasizing that current challenges are part of this transformative process.

4. **Constructive Trends:** Identifies constructive trends such as the diffusion of world solidarity, a growing consciousness of global interdependence, collaborative action, and an increased longing for justice and peace.

5. **Transformation of Human Relationships:** Highlights the profound transformation of human relationships as the spirit of solidarity, interdependence, collaboration, justice, and peace gains momentum.

6. **World towards Bahá'u'lláh's Vision:** Describes the movement of the world towards Bahá'u'lláh's vision, progressing through halting steps, occasional dramatic leaps, and intermittent setbacks as humanity builds the foundations of a united and peaceful world.

Paragraph 84

1. **Impact of Destructive Forces on Bahá'í Community:** Acknowledges that the destructive forces affecting the world also impact the Bahá'í community, leaving their mark on the history of each national Bahá'í community.

2. **Challenges to Progress:** Describes how social tendencies and opposition have at times retarded the progress of specific Bahá'í communities, either temporarily restricting or extinguishing it.

3. **Financial Constraints:** Periodic economic crises have further challenged the Bahá'í community by reducing already limited financial resources, hindering growth and development projects.

4. **World War Effects:** The effects of world wars temporarily paralyzed the ability of many communities to implement systematic plans.

5. **Political Upheavals:** The reshaping of the world's political map has created obstacles for some populations to fully participate in the work of the Cause.

6. **Resurgence of Prejudices:** Religious and cultural prejudices, once believed to be diminishing, have resurfaced with renewed intensity.

7. **Bahá'í Response:** Despite these challenges, Bahá'ís have addressed them with perseverance and resolve over the past century.

8. **Exemplary Response in Iran:** Highlights that, amidst adversities, the response of the Bahá'ís of Iran stands out as particularly noble in the face of hostile forces opposing the advance of the Cause.

Paragraph 85

1. **Continuous Persecution in Iran:** The persecution faced by the Bahá'ís of Iran, which began in the Heroic Age, persisted through waves of violent repression, intensifying notably after the Iranian Revolution and continuing unabated to the present day.

2. **Bahá'í Response:** Despite enduring persistent persecution, the Bahá'ís of Iran have responded with unwavering courage and constructive resilience.

3. **Achievements Amidst Adversities:** Notable achievements include establishing the Bahá'í Institute for Higher Education, efforts to transform the views of fair-minded compatriots, and enduring numerous injustices to protect fellow believers and maintain the integrity of Bahá'u'lláh's Faith in Iran.

4. **Endurance and Devotion:** The Bahá'ís of Iran have demonstrated unswerving fortitude, consecrated devotion, and mutual support, serving as essential lessons for how the global Bahá'í community must respond to the anticipated acceleration of destructive forces in the coming years.

Paragraph 86

1. **Challenge of Integration and Disintegration:** The central challenge lies in navigating the interplay of integration and disintegration processes while holding fast to Bahá'u'lláh's teachings and resisting the pull of controversial debates and beguiling prescriptions that reflect futile attempts to define human identity and social reality through limited conceptions, materialist philosophies, and competing passions.

2. **Bahá'u'lláh's Perspective:** Bahá'u'lláh's perspective is emphasized, stating that the All-Knowing Physician perceives humanity's afflictions and prescribes remedies with unerring wisdom.

3. **Humanity's Afflictions:** Acknowledges the encompassing afflictions faced by the whole human race.

4. **Obstruction by Self-Conceit:** Warns against the interference of those intoxicated by self-conceit, who entangle humanity in their devices, hindering the remedy.

5. **Entanglement in Delusory Notions:** If Bahá'ís become entangled in delusory notions of contending peoples and adopt self-absorbed values and practices, the release of forces necessary for humanity's redemption will be delayed.

6. **Noble Heights of Heroism:** The Guardian emphasizes that the builders of Bahá'u'lláh's World Order must scale nobler heights of heroism amid humanity's despair and distress.

7. **Confidence in the Future:** Despite upheavals, Bahá'ís are urged to forge ahead into the future with confidence, recognizing that their mightiest exertions coincide with the apocalyptic upheaval marking humanity's lowest ebb.

Paragraph 87

1. **Uncertainty of Disintegration Forces:** Acknowledges the uncertainty regarding the course of disintegration forces, anticipating violent convulsions and unknown obstacles and opportunities until the arrival of the Great Peace.

2. **Culmination in Great Peace:** The ultimate goal is the appearance of the Great Peace, symbolizing the stage where nations recognize the unity of humankind and shift from war to universal reconstruction.

3. **Certain Acceleration of Integration Process:** While the disintegration process is uncertain, it is certain that the integration process will accelerate, bringing together efforts to translate Bahá'u'lláh's teachings into reality with those in society seeking justice and peace.

4. **Shoghi Effendi's Guidance for Bahá'ís of America:** Refers to Shoghi Effendi's guidance to the Bahá'ís of America, in *The Advent of Divine Justice* emphasizes their focus on growth and development, with a promise that they would later engage in working for the healing and betterment of their nation.

5. **Global Call for Engagement:** Highlights that the time has now come not only for the Bahá'ís of America but for the Bahá'ís worldwide to engage in societal development as the society-building power inherent in the Faith is released in ever-greater measures.

Paragraph 88

1. **Release of Societal Power:** Releasing the society-building power of the Faith has profound implications for the decades to come.

2. **Role of Every People and Nation:** Every people and nation is called to play a part in the fundamental reconstruction of human society, contributing unique insights and experiences for the building of a unified world.

3. **Responsibility of the Friends:** The friends, as bearers of Bahá'u'lláh's restorative message, have the responsibility to assist populations in releasing their latent potentialities to achieve their highest aspirations.

4. **Sharing Bahá'u'lláh's Message:** The friends share Bahá'u'lláh's message with others, demonstrating its efficacy in individual and community lives, and collaborate with those who appreciate and share similar values and aspirations.

5. **Bahá'u'lláh's Vision for a Unified World:** Bahá'u'lláh's vision of a unified world offers a hopeful and clear direction, providing a constructive path for cooperation in solving long-standing social issues.

6. **Impact of Faith's Spirit:** As the spirit of the Faith permeates hearts, it enkindles love, reinforces shared humanity, instills a sense of civic responsibility, and redirects energies towards disinterested service for the common good.

7. **Method of Consultation, Action, and Reflection:** Consultation, action, and reflection replace endless contest and conflict as individuals, communities, and institutions harmonize efforts in common purpose, overcoming sectarian rivalries.

8. **Harmonizing Spiritual and Moral Qualities:** Spiritual and moral qualities foundational to humanity's progress and well-being take root in human character and social practice as a result of the growing influence of the Faith.

Paragraph 89

1. **Movement Towards Destiny:** The world is progressing toward its destiny as the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh enters the second century of the Formative Age.

2. **Inspiration from the Guardian:** Encourages all to draw inspiration from the words of the beloved Guardian, whose guiding hand shaped the past century.

3. **Execution of the Divine Plan in 1938:** Refers to the Guardian's words in 1938 about the execution of the first stage of the Divine Plan, emphasizing that achieving the purpose depends on the spirit and manner of the task.

4. **Qualities for Success:** The success of the Cause depends on the clearness and steadiness of vision, unvitiated vitality of belief, incorruptibility of character, adamantine force of resolve, matchless superiority of aims, purposes, and the unsurpassed range of accomplishments.

5. **Demonstrating Power to Society:** Those working for the glory of the Most Great Name can best demonstrate their power to society by offering a haven of refuge in the hour of its realized doom.

6. **Tender Sapling in Divinely Appointed Order:** Describes the Cause as a tender sapling embedded in the fertile soil of a Divinely appointed Administrative Order, energized by dynamic processes, destined to yield its richest fruit.

STUDY GUIDE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

PARAGRAPH 1

Question 1: When did the commemoration of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's passing take place, and who participated in this event?

Answer: The commemoration occurred on 27 November 2021, in the middle of the night, involving nearly six hundred representatives of National Spiritual Assemblies, Regional Bahá'í Councils, members of the Universal House of Justice, the International Teaching Centre, and the staff at the Bahá'í World Centre.

Question 2: Where did the central commemoration take place, and what was its significance?

Answer: The central commemoration took place in the precincts of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Holy Shrine. It held particular significance as a solemn event marking the centenary of His passing.

Question 3: How did Bahá'í communities worldwide participate in the commemoration of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's passing?

Answer: Bahá'í communities worldwide, as the globe turned, gathered in reverent devotion in neighborhoods, villages, towns, and cities to pay homage to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, a Figure without parallel in religious history.

Question 4: Who were some of the participants mentioned in the passage, aside from representatives of National Spiritual Assemblies and Regional Bahá'í Councils?

Answer: Members of the Universal House of Justice, the International Teaching Centre, and the staff at the Bahá'í World Centre participated in the commemoration.

Question 5: What was the focus of the gatherings during the commemoration, and what aspect of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's legacy did participants contemplate?

Answer: The gatherings focused on paying homage to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, a Figure without parallel in religious history, and participants contemplated the century of achievement that He Himself had set in motion.

PARAGRAPH 2

Question 1: How many localities has the Bahá'í community spread to, and in how many countries and territories?

Answer: The Bahá'í community, now millions strong, has spread to some one hundred thousand localities in 235 countries and territories.

Question 2: What is notable about the Bahá'í community's emergence on the world stage?

Answer: The Bahá'í community has emerged from obscurity to occupy its place on the world stage.

Question 3: What kind of institutions has the Bahá'í community established, and what is their purpose?

Answer: The Bahá'í community has raised a network of thousands of institutions, from grassroots to international levels, with the common purpose of giving expression to Bahá'u'lláh's teachings for spiritual transformation and social progress.

Question 4: In what regions has the pattern of building vibrant local communities embraced thousands, and in some cases, tens of thousands of souls?

Answer: In many regions, the Bahá'í community's pattern of building vibrant local communities has embraced thousands, and in some cases, tens of thousands of souls.

Question 5: What are some characteristics of the new way of life taking shape in the Bahá'í community, as mentioned in the passage?

Answer: The new way of life in the Bahá'í community is characterized by its devotional character, the commitment of youth to education and service, purposeful conversations on spiritual and social themes among families, friends, and acquaintances, and collective endeavors for material and social progress.

PARAGRAPH 3

Question 1: What is the significance of the moment being referred to, a century ago, in relation to the Faith?

Answer: The moment being referred to is when 'Abdu'l-Bahá departed from this world, marking a century of progress for the Faith.

Question 2: How did the news of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's passing affect the city of Haifa?

Answer: The news of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's passing spread across the city of Haifa, consuming the hearts with grief at dawn on that woeful day.

Question 3: Who gathered for 'Abdu'l-Bahá's funeral, and what was notable about this gathering?

Answer: Thousands gathered for 'Abdu'l-Bahá's funeral, including people from all walks of life—young and old, high and low, distinguished officials, and the masses, representing various religious backgrounds such as Jews, Muslims, Druze, Christians, and Bahá'ís. It was a gathering the like of which the city had never witnessed.

Question 4: How was ‘Abdu’l-Bahá perceived by the eyes of the world and by the people of ‘Akká and Haifa?

Answer: In the eyes of the world, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was perceived as a champion of universal peace and the oneness of humanity, a defender of the oppressed, and a promoter of justice. To the people of both ‘Akká and Haifa, He was a loving father and friend, a wise counsellor, and a refuge for all in need.

Question 5: What sentiments were expressed at ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's funeral, and what does this reveal about the impact He had on the community?

Answer: At His funeral, people poured out fervent expressions of love and lamentation, indicating the deep impact ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had on the community, both locally and globally.

PARAGRAPH 4

Question 1: According to the passage, how did the Bahá'ís view ‘Abdu’l-Bahá?

Answer: The Bahá'ís considered ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as the precious gift bestowed by the Manifestation of God, the Centre and Pivot of Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant, the perfect Exemplar of His teachings, and the embodiment of every Bahá'í ideal.

Question 2: What roles did ‘Abdu’l-Bahá play in service to Bahá'u'lláh during His life?

Answer: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá laboured tirelessly in service to Bahá'u'lláh, fulfilling His Father's sacred trust, nurturing and protecting the precious seed of the Cause, and guiding its spread in the West.

Question 3: How did ‘Abdu’l-Bahá contribute to the development of the Bahá'í Administrative Order?

Answer: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá laid the foundations of the Faith's world administrative centre, revealed a Charter for sharing Bahá'u'lláh's teachings globally, and set in motion the processes of the Administrative Order.

Question 4: What significant actions did ‘Abdu’l-Bahá take with regard to the Báb and the Holy Shrines?

Answer: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá interred the holy remains of the Báb in the mausoleum He raised on Mount Carmel, devotedly tended the twin Holy Shrines, and played a crucial role in safeguarding the Faith from internal and external enemies.

Question 5: How did ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's passing impact the Bahá'í community's perception of the future?

Answer: After ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's passing, the Bahá'í community perceived an uncertain and bleak future without His continual guidance, as His life spanned the entire Heroic Age, and His ascension marked the beginning of a new Age with unknown features for the believers.

PARAGRAPH 5

Question 1: How did Shoghi Effendi react to the news of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s passing?

Answer: Devastated by the news, Shoghi Effendi hastened from his studies in England to the Holy Land.

Question 2: What significant role did ‘Abdu’l-Bahá appoint Shoghi Effendi to after His passing?

Answer: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá appointed Shoghi Effendi as the Guardian and Head of the Faith, entrusting the Bahá’í world to his care.

Question 3: How did Shoghi Effendi respond to his appointment as Guardian and Head of the Faith?

Answer: In grief and agony, but sustained by the unfailing solicitude of Bahá’u’lláh’s beloved daughter Bahíyyih Khánum, Shoghi Effendi donned the heavy mantle of his office.

Question 4: What was Shoghi Effendi’s immediate task upon assuming his role as Guardian?

Answer: Shoghi Effendi, upon assuming his role as Guardian, began to assess the conditions and prospects of the fledgling Bahá’í community.

Question 5: Who played a supportive role for Shoghi Effendi during this challenging period?

Answer: Shoghi Effendi was sustained by the unfailing solicitude of Bahá’u’lláh’s beloved daughter, Bahíyyih Khánum, during this challenging period.

PARAGRAPH 6

Question 1: How was the announcement of Shoghi Effendi’s appointment as the Guardian received by the Bahá’í community?

Answer: The announcement of Shoghi Effendi’s appointment as the Guardian was received with relief, gratitude, and declarations of fealty by the body of the believers.

Question 2: What assurance did ‘Abdu’l-Bahá provide in His Will and Testament regarding the believers’ separation from Him?

Answer: In His Will and Testament, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá provided assurances that He had not left the believers alone despite the anguish of their separation from Him.

Question 3: How did some individuals react to Shoghi Effendi’s appointment as Guardian?

Answer: A disloyal few, motivated by their own ambitions and ego, challenged ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s chosen heir and rose against him.

Question 4: What challenges did Shoghi Effendi face in the early stages of his role as Guardian?

Answer: Shoghi Effendi faced challenges, including the betrayal of a few and opposition from avowed opponents of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, at a critical moment of transition.

Question 5: How did Shoghi Effendi respond to the challenges he faced in laying the foundations of the Administrative Order?

Answer: Shoghi Effendi, despite heartache, trials, and formidable obstacles, began to mobilize the widely scattered Bahá'í communities, guiding them with patient yet resolute leadership in the monumental task of laying the foundations of the Administrative Order.

PARAGRAPH 7

Question 1: According to Shoghi Effendi, how did he perceive the Bahá'ís' grasp of the sacred Revelation and the challenges they faced?

Answer: Shoghi Effendi emphasized that the Bahá'ís had a rudimentary grasp of the sacred Revelation in their possession and faced daunting challenges as they took on new responsibilities.

Question 2: What did Shoghi Effendi express about the vastness of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation and its significance?

Answer: Shoghi Effendi expressed that the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh is vast, with great blessings showered upon humanity, yet people stood too close to fully appreciate its significance and glory.

Question 3: Why did Shoghi Effendi mention that the contents of the Will of 'Abdu'l-Bahá were too much for the present generation to comprehend?

Answer: Shoghi Effendi stated that the contents of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will were too much for the present generation to comprehend, and it would require at least a century of actual working before the treasures of wisdom hidden in it could be revealed.

Question 4: What did Shoghi Effendi say about the generation's ability to comprehend Bahá'u'lláh's vision of a new World Order?

Answer: Shoghi Effendi explained that the generation's ability to comprehend Bahá'u'lláh's vision of a new World Order would require trust in time and the guidance of God's Universal House of Justice to obtain a clearer and fuller understanding of its provisions and implications.

Question 5: According to Shoghi Effendi's secretary, what did he say about the Will of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the time needed for its comprehension?

Answer: Shoghi Effendi's secretary mentioned that the contents of the Will of 'Abdu'l-Bahá were far too much for the present generation to comprehend and would need at least a century of actual working before the treasures of wisdom hidden in it could be revealed.

PARAGRAPH 8

Question 1: What does the present moment signify, considering a full century of "actual working"?

Answer: The present moment, following a full century of "actual working," provides a propitious vantage point from which to garner new insights.

Question 2: Why has the occasion of this anniversary been chosen to reflect on the provisions of the Will and Testament?

Answer: The occasion of this anniversary has been chosen to reflect on the provisions of the Will and Testament, to trace the course of the Faith's unfoldment, and to observe the coherence of the stages of its organic development.

Question 3: What is the purpose of reflecting on the wisdom enshrined in the provisions of the Will and Testament?

Answer: The purpose of reflecting on the wisdom enshrined in the provisions of the Will and Testament is to discern the possibilities inherent in the processes driving the Faith's progress.

Question 4: According to the passage, what is to be appreciated about the Faith for the decades ahead?

Answer: The passage suggests appreciating the Faith's promise for the decades ahead as its power to reshape society becomes increasingly manifest in the world through the growing impact of Bahá'u'lláh's stupendous Revelation.

Question 5: What impact is mentioned regarding Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation in the world?

Answer: The passage mentions the growing impact of Bahá'u'lláh's stupendous Revelation as it is increasingly made manifest in the world, shaping society in the decades ahead.

PARAGRAPH 9

Question 1: According to Bahá'u'lláh, what is His purpose in revealing His teachings?

Answer: Bahá'u'lláh's purpose in revealing His teachings is to usher in a new stage in human development – the organic and spiritual unity of the peoples and nations of the world.

Question 2: How does Bahá'u'lláh characterize the new stage in human development?

Answer: The new stage in human development is characterized by the organic and spiritual unity of the peoples and nations of the world, signifying the coming of age of the human race and the emergence of a world civilization and culture.

Question 3: How did Bahá'u'lláh describe the teachings revealed by Him?

Answer: Bahá'u'lláh described every verse revealed by His Pen as a bright and shining portal that discloses the glories of a saintly and pious life, of pure and stainless deeds.

Question 4: What did Bahá'u'lláh diagnose regarding humanity in His Tablets?

Answer: Bahá'u'lláh, the Divine Physician, diagnosed the ills afflicting humanity in countless Tablets and set forth His healing remedy for "the elevation, the advancement, the education, the protection, and the regeneration of the peoples of the earth."

Question 5: According to Bahá'u'lláh, was His message intended for a specific land or people?

Answer: Bahá'u'lláh clarified that the summons and the message He gave were never intended to reach or benefit one land or one people only. His teachings are universal in scope and application.

PARAGRAPH 10

Question 1: What is the task described for building a mature, peaceful, just, and united world?

Answer: The task is a vast undertaking in which every people and nation must be able to participate, aiming to overcome the forces of disintegration eroding the old social order and unfold a new integrative process.

Question 2: How does the Bahá'í community invite others to join in the endeavor for a mature and united world?

Answer: The Bahá'í community welcomes all to join in this endeavor as protagonists in a spiritual enterprise that can overcome the forces of disintegration, giving tangible form to an integrative process leading to the unfoldment of a new order.

Question 3: What is the significance of the Formative Age in the Faith's development?

Answer: The Formative Age is a critical period in the Faith's development where the friends increasingly appreciate the mission with which Bahá'u'lláh has entrusted them, deepen their understanding of the meaning and implications of His revealed Word, and systematically cultivate capacity to put into practice His teachings for the betterment of the world.

Question 4: What is the mission with which Bahá'u'lláh has entrusted the friends during the Formative Age?

Answer: During the Formative Age, Bahá'u'lláh has entrusted the friends with a mission to appreciate His teachings, deepen their understanding of His revealed Word, and systematically cultivate capacity for the betterment of the world.

Question 5: How is the Formative Age described in terms of the friends' engagement with Bahá'u'lláh's teachings?

Answer: The Formative Age is a period in which the friends increasingly come to appreciate the mission entrusted by Bahá'u'lláh, deepen their understanding of His revealed Word, and systematically cultivate capacity to put His teachings into practice for the betterment of the world.

PARAGRAPH 11

Question 1: What did Shoghi Effendi guide the Bahá'ís in understanding from the beginning of his ministry?

Answer: Shoghi Effendi guided the Bahá'ís in understanding their mission, defining their identity and purpose, the meaning of the coming of Bahá'u'lláh, His vision for humanity, the history of the Cause, the processes reshaping society, and the role the Bahá'ís must play in contributing to the advancement of humankind.

Question 2: According to Shoghi Effendi, what did he outline regarding the development of the Bahá'í community?

: Shoghi Effendi outlined the nature of the development of the Bahá'í community, emphasizing that it would undergo many transformations, often unexpected, over decades and centuries.

Question 3: How did Shoghi Effendi describe the dialectic of crisis and victory?

Answer: Shoghi Effendi described the dialectic of crisis and victory, preparing the Bahá'ís for the challenging path they must traverse in the development of the Faith.

Question 4: What did Shoghi Effendi call upon the Bahá'ís to do in the face of challenges?

Answer: Shoghi Effendi called upon the Bahá'ís to refine their characters and hone their minds to meet the challenges of building a new world.

Question 5: According to Shoghi Effendi, what role were the Bahá'ís meant to play in society?

Answer: Shoghi Effendi described the Bahá'ís as a leaven—a permeating and vivifying influence—that could inspire others to overcome entrenched patterns of divisiveness, conflict, and contest for power, so that the highest aspirations of humanity could ultimately be achieved.

PARAGRAPH 12

Question 1: What areas of understanding did Shoghi Effendi guide the believers in consolidating?

Answer: Shoghi Effendi guided believers in consolidating their understanding of how to effectively establish the structural basis of the Administrative Order and systematically share Bahá'u'lláh's teachings with others.

Question 2: How did Shoghi Effendi direct the efforts of the believers in establishing the Administrative Order?

Answer: Shoghi Effendi directed their efforts by gradually clarifying the nature, principles, and procedures of the Administrative Order, while raising their capacity for teaching the Faith, both individually and collectively.

Question 3: How did the Guardian respond when believers consulted him about perplexing problems and difficulties?

Answer: When believers consulted Shoghi Effendi about perplexing problems and difficulties, he provided direction, and the believers, in turn, would share their experiences with him, raising questions. The Guardian would then offer additional guidance, adjusting concepts and principles as needed.

Question 4: What qualities did the friends demonstrate in their response to Shoghi Effendi's guidance?

Answer: In response to Shoghi Effendi's guidance, the friends demonstrated unwavering faith in the truth of the revealed Word, unfaltering trust in his vision and infallible wisdom, and unshakeable resolve to transform various aspects of their lives according to the pattern set out in the Teachings.

Question 5: What notable achievements demonstrated the efficacy of Shoghi Effendi's approach during the climax of his ministry?

Answer: The efficacy of Shoghi Effendi's approach was vividly demonstrated at the climax of his ministry when the Bahá'í world combined its forces for the unprecedented achievements of the Ten Year Spiritual Crusade.

PARAGRAPH 13

Question 1: What was Shoghi Effendi's objective in setting the believers on a path of learning?

Answer: Shoghi Effendi aimed to set the believers on a path of learning, a process that was further extended after his passing under the direction of the Universal House of Justice.

Question 2: Under whose direction was the process of learning systematically implemented by Bahá'ís worldwide?

Answer: The process of learning was systematically implemented by Bahá'ís worldwide under the direction of the Universal House of Justice.

Question 3: When did the essential aspects of the process of learning become consciously grasped by Bahá'ís worldwide?

Answer: By the final years of the first century of the Formative Age, the essential aspects of the process of learning were consciously grasped and systematically implemented by Bahá'ís worldwide.

Question 4: What role did Shoghi Effendi play in initiating the process of learning among the believers?

Answer: Shoghi Effendi played a crucial role in initiating the process of learning among the believers, aiming to guide them on a path of continuous education and development.

Question 5: What age marked the conscious implementation of the process of learning by Bahá'ís worldwide?

Answer: The conscious implementation of the process of learning by Bahá'ís worldwide marked the final years of the first century of the Formative Age.

PARAGRAPH 14

Question 1: How is the Bahá'í community distinguished in its mode of operation today?

Answer: The Bahá'í community is distinguished by a mode of operation characterized by study, consultation, action, and reflection.

Question 2: What is the Bahá'í community steadily increasing its capacity for?

Answer: The Bahá'í community is steadily increasing its capacity to apply the Teachings in various social spaces and to collaborate with those in the wider society who share a yearning to revitalize the material and spiritual foundations of the social order.

Question 3: In the transformative spaces of the Bahá'í community, what happens to the extent possible?

Answer: In transformative spaces, individuals and communities become protagonists of their own development to the extent possible.

Question 4: What banishes prejudice and otherness within the Bahá'í community?

Answer: The embrace of the oneness of humanity banishes prejudice and otherness within the Bahá'í community.

Question 5: What has become more explicit, deliberate, and an indelible part of Bahá'í culture?

Answer: The effort to understand the implications of what Bahá'u'lláh has revealed and to apply His healing remedy has become more explicit, deliberate, and an indelible part of Bahá'í culture.

PARAGRAPH 15

Question 1: What are the three Charters mentioned by Shoghi Effendi that have set in motion distinct processes for the development of the Bahá'í Faith?

Answer: The three Charters mentioned by Shoghi Effendi are the Tablet of Carmel, the Will and Testament, and the Tablets of the Divine Plan.

Question 2: What is the chief instrument for the prosecution of the Divine Plan according to Shoghi Effendi?

Answer: The Administrative Order is the chief instrument for the prosecution of the Divine Plan.

Question 3: How are the processes associated with the three Divine Charters interdependent and mutually reinforcing?

Answer: The processes associated with the three Divine Charters are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. The Administrative Order is crucial for the execution of the Divine Plan, and the Plan, in turn, is a potent agency for the development of the Faith's administrative structure.

Question 4: How does the development at the World Centre influence the worldwide Bahá'í community?

Answer: Advances at the World Centre, the heart and nerve centre of the administration, exert a pronounced influence on the body of the worldwide Bahá'í community.

Question 5: At the end of the first century of the Formative Age, what has the Bahá'í world gained a better understanding of, and how does this understanding impact its future?

Answer: At the end of the first century of the Formative Age, the Bahá'í world has gained a better understanding of the implications inherent in the immortal Charters for the development of the Faith. This increased understanding allows for a better appreciation of the past century's experience and

enables more effective action to achieve Bahá'u'lláh's intended purpose for humanity in the decades and centuries ahead.

PARAGRAPH 16

Question 1: What unique and comprehensive Covenant did Bahá'u'lláh establish with His followers?

Answer: Bahá'u'lláh established a Covenant with His followers that is unique in the annals of religious history for its authority and its explicit and comprehensive nature.

Question 2: After Bahá'u'lláh's passing, to whom did He instruct the friends to turn for guidance in the affairs of the Faith?

Answer: After Bahá'u'lláh's passing, He instructed the friends to turn to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the Centre of that Covenant, for guidance in the affairs of the Faith.

Question 3: What did 'Abdu'l-Bahá do in His Will and Testament to perpetuate the Covenant?

Answer: In His Will and Testament, 'Abdu'l-Bahá perpetuated the Covenant by laying down the provisions for the Administrative Order ordained in Bahá'u'lláh's Writings.

Question 4: What are the twin institutions mentioned in the Covenant, as outlined in 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will and Testament?

Answer: The twin institutions mentioned in the Covenant are the Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice.

Question 5: What did 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will and Testament ensure in terms of the relationship within the Faith?

Answer: 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will and Testament ensured a sound relationship between individuals and institutions within the Faith.

PARAGRAPH 17

Question 1: What is the purpose of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation regarding the oneness of humanity?

Answer: The purpose of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation is to establish the oneness of humanity and unite all peoples.

Question 2: What role does the Covenant play in maintaining Bahá'í unity?

Answer: The Covenant is described as the dynamic power pulsating in the body of the contingent world, protecting Bahá'í unity.

Question 3: Why does 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasize the importance of Bahá'í unity?

Answer: 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasizes the importance of Bahá'í unity, stating that if Bahá'ís cannot unite around one point, they won't be able to bring about the unity of mankind.

Question 4: How does the decline of the unifying and civilizing power of religion manifest?

Answer: The decline occurs as followers disagree on the meaning and application of divine teachings, leading to divisions into contending sects and denominations.

Question 5: What does 'Abdu'l-Bahá consider as the dynamic power in the world of existence?

Answer: 'Abdu'l-Bahá considers the dynamic power of the world of existence to be the Covenant, likening it to an artery pulsating and protecting Bahá'í unity.

PARAGRAPH 18

Question 1: What is the significance of Bahá'u'lláh's question, "Where shalt thou secure the cord of thy faith and fasten the tie of thine obedience"?

Answer: The question emphasizes the importance of firmness in the Covenant, calling for unwavering adherence to the divine provisions.

Question 2: How has the Bahá'í community responded to the call for firmness in the Covenant?

Answer: The Bahá'í community has responded with unyielding adherence to the provisions of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will and Testament.

Question 3: What distinguishes the relationship between the Manifestation of God and believers from worldly power dynamics?

Answer: Unlike relationships of worldly power, the relationship between the Manifestation of God and believers is governed by conscious knowledge and love.

Question 4: How do believers voluntarily enter into Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant?

Answer: Believers voluntarily enter into Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant as an act of free conscience, recognizing Him and remaining steadfast in adherence out of love.

Question 5: What achievement marks the close of the first century of the Formative Age regarding Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant?

Answer: The achievement is the fuller understanding and application of the provisions of Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant, establishing distinctive relationships among believers for the pursuit of their sacred mission.

PARAGRAPH 19

Question 1: Does the existence of the Covenant mean that attempts to divide the Faith or cause damage to it will never happen?

Answer: No, the existence of the Covenant does not prevent attempts to divide the Faith, but it guarantees that every such attempt is foredoomed to fail.

Question 2: Who were among the individuals who attempted to sow seeds of doubt and test the believers after Bahá'u'lláh's passing?

Answer: After Bahá'u'lláh's passing, some ambitious individuals, including the brothers of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, attempted to usurp authority and sow seeds of doubt within the community.

Question 3: Whom did Shoghi Effendi face challenges from during his ministry?

Answer: Shoghi Effendi faced challenges not only from those who had broken the Covenant and opposed 'Abdu'l-Bahá but also from some within the community who questioned the validity of the Administrative Order and the authority of the Guardianship.

Question 4: After Shoghi Effendi's passing, who made an unfounded attempt to claim the Guardianship, contrary to the conditions set forth in the Will and Testament?

Answer: A misguided individual, despite having served as a Hand of the Cause of God, attempted to claim the Guardianship for himself after Shoghi Effendi's passing.

Question 5: In more recent decades, what attempts were made from within the community to reinterpret Bahá'í teachings about the Covenant?

Answer: A few individuals within the community sought to reinterpret Bahá'í teachings about the Covenant to cast doubt on the authority of the Universal House of Justice and claim certain prerogatives in the absence of a living Guardian.

PARAGRAPH 20

Question 1: How has the Covenant established by Bahá'u'lláh been attacked over the past century?

Answer: The Covenant established by Bahá'u'lláh has faced various attacks, both internal and external, over the past century.

Question 2: Have these attacks on the Covenant succeeded in redefining or permanently breaching the Bahá'í community?

Answer: No, the attacks on the Covenant failed to divert or redefine the Cause or to make a permanent breach in the Bahá'í community.

Question 3: How did the Bahá'í community respond to attacks on the Covenant?

Answer: In each instance of attack, the Bahá'í community turned to the designated centre of authority—'Abdu'l-Bahá, the Guardian, or the Universal House of Justice—for guidance, and questions were answered, problems resolved.

Question 4: What has been the result of the Bahá'í community's growth in understanding and firmness in the Covenant?

Answer: As the Bahá'í community grew in its understanding and firmness in the Covenant, it became impervious to attacks and misrepresentations that had threatened the Faith in earlier eras.

Question 5: Is the integrity of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh secure despite the attacks on the Covenant?

Answer: Yes, the integrity of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh remains ever secure, and the attacks on the Covenant have not compromised its stability.

PARAGRAPH 21

Question 1: Why might each generation of Bahá'ís have a circumscribed comprehension of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings?

Answer: Each generation of Bahá'ís may have a circumscribed comprehension due to the limitations of their historical circumstances and the specific stage of the Faith's organic development during their time.

Question 2: What challenges did believers face in the Heroic Age of the Faith?

Answer: In the Heroic Age, believers navigated transitions from the Dispensation of the Báb to that of Bahá'u'lláh and then to the ministry of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, which might have been bewildering at times.

Question 3: Why is it now easier to comprehend the transitions in the Heroic Age with hindsight?

Answer: With hindsight and the illumination provided by Shoghi Effendi, the transitions in the Heroic

Age are now easily comprehended as sequential acts in a single, divinely unfolding drama.

Question 4: What significance does the Covenant hold in the Bahá'í Faith?

Answer: The Covenant, as a priceless bequest of Bahá'u'lláh to His followers, holds great significance, purpose, and inviolability in the Bahá'í Faith.

Question 5: Why is understanding the nature of the Covenant and maintaining firmness in that understanding crucial for the Bahá'í community?

Answer: Understanding the nature of the Covenant and maintaining firmness in that insight is essential for unity and progress throughout the Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh.

PARAGRAPH 22

Question 1: What does Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant provide for in terms of authoritative centers?

Answer: Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant establishes two authoritative centers: the first is the Book, which includes the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh and authoritative interpretations by 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi.

Question 2: What constitutes the authoritative interpretation and explication of the Creative Word?

Answer: The body of works by 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi, along with the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, constitutes the authoritative interpretation and explication of the Creative Word.

Question 3: What purpose does the Book serve in relation to the Covenant?

Answer: The Book, comprising the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh and authoritative interpretations, ensures that the Revelation is available to every believer and all humanity, free from human misinterpretations or accretions.

Question 4: What came to a close with the passing of Shoghi Effendi?

Answer: More than a century of the extension of the authoritative center of the Book came to a close with the passing of Shoghi Effendi.

Question 5: How does the existence of the Book safeguard the Revelation?

Answer: The existence of the Book safeguards the Revelation by ensuring it is available to every believer and all humanity in an unadulterated form, free from human misinterpretations or accretions.

PARAGRAPH 23

Question 1: What is the second authoritative center established by Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant?

Answer: The second authoritative center is the Universal House of Justice.

Question 2: What guidance does the Universal House of Justice receive according to 'Abdu'l-Bahá?

Answer: The Universal House of Justice receives guidance through the inspiration and confirmation of the Holy Spirit and is under the care and unerring guidance of Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb.

Question 3: How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasize the decision-making process of the Universal House of Justice?

Answer: 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasizes that the Universal House of Justice will not make decisions based on its own concepts and opinions but through the inspiration and confirmation of the Holy Spirit.

Question 4: According to Bahá'u'lláh, what will inspire the Universal House of Justice?

Answer: Bahá'u'lláh proclaims that God will inspire the Universal House of Justice with whatsoever He wills.

Question 5: According to Shoghi Effendi, what is the ultimate safeguard of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation?

Answer: Shoghi Effendi states that the divine guidance, which is the life-blood and ultimate safeguard of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation, is bestowed upon the Universal House of Justice.

PARAGRAPH 24

Question 1: What is the scope of the powers and duties invested in the Universal House of Justice?

Answer: The powers and duties of the Universal House of Justice encompass all that is necessary to ensure the fulfillment of Bahá'u'lláh's purpose for humanity.

Question 2: How has the Bahá'í world witnessed the range and expression of the Universal House of Justice's powers and duties?

Answer: The Bahá'í world has witnessed the range and expression of the Universal House of Justice's powers and duties through various actions, including the promulgation of the Law of God, the conservation and dissemination of the Bahá'í Sacred Writings, the raising of the Administrative Order, the creation of new institutions, the design of stages in the unfoldment of the Divine Plan, and efforts conducive to the preservation of human honor, the progress of the world, and the illumination of its peoples.

Question 3: According to the text, what is the role of the House of Justice in resolving various issues?

Answer: The elucidations of the House of Justice resolve all difficult problems, questions that are obscure, problems that have caused difference, and matters not expressly recorded in the Book.

Question 4: How does the Universal House of Justice adapt to the needs of an ever-changing society?

Answer: The Universal House of Justice provides guidance throughout the Dispensation according to the exigencies of the time, ensuring that the Cause can adapt to the needs and requirements of an ever-changing society.

Question 5: What does the Universal House of Justice guarantee with regard to the nature of Bahá'u'lláh's message and the essential characteristics of the Cause?

Answer: The Universal House of Justice guarantees that no one can alter the nature of Bahá'u'lláh's message or change the essential characteristics of the Cause.

PARAGRAPH 25

Question 1: In the Kitáb-i-Íqán, what does Bahá'u'lláh emphasize as a grievous form of oppression?

Answer: In the Kitáb-i-Íqán, Bahá'u'lláh emphasizes the grievous oppression of a soul seeking the truth, wishing to attain knowledge of God, and not knowing where to go for it or from whom to seek it.

Question 2: In what ways is the world described in the text regarding its orientation on matters of truth, morality, identity, and purpose?

Answer: The world is described as largely oblivious to the light of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation, finding itself increasingly divided and disoriented on matters of truth, morality, identity, and purpose, and bewildered by the accelerating and corrosive effect of the forces of disintegration.

Question 3: What does the Covenant offer to the Bahá'í community, according to the text?

Answer: The Covenant offers the Bahá'í community a source of clarity and refuge, freedom and strength, allowing believers to explore the ocean of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation, come to personal conclusions, humbly share insights, and strive to apply the Teachings day by day.

Question 4: How is collective endeavor within the Bahá'í community harmonized and focused?

Answer: Collective endeavor within the Bahá'í community is harmonized and focused through consultation and the guidance of the institutions.

Question 5: What transformations are fostered within the Bahá'í community through collective endeavor, according to the text?

Answer: Collective endeavor fosters transformations between individuals, within families, and among communities, fostering social progress within the Bahá'í community.

PARAGRAPH 26

Question 1: What role do the two authoritative centers of the Covenant play in the Bahá'í Faith?

Answer: The two authoritative centers of the Covenant—Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation and the Universal House of Justice—provide necessary guidance for the unfoldment of the Faith and the preservation of the integrity of the Teachings in the Bahá'í Faith.

Question 2: How does the Covenant protect the process of dialogue and learning about the Bahá'í Revelation?

Answer: The Covenant protects and preserves the process of dialogue and learning about the meaning of the Revelation and the implementation of its prescriptions, preventing the detrimental effects of endless contention about meaning and practice within the Bahá'í community.

Question 3: What is the result of the balanced relationships among individuals, communities, and institutions within the Bahá'í community?

Answer: The result of balanced relationships is the safeguarding and proper development of relationships among individuals, communities, and institutions. This enables all to attain their full potential, exercise agency, and fulfill their prerogatives.

Question 4: How does the Bahá'í community advance its vital purpose?

Answer: The Bahá'í community advances its vital purpose by unitedly investigating reality, generating knowledge, extending the reach of its endeavors, and contributing to the advancement of civilization.

Question 5: According to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, what is the power that serves as the axis of the oneness of the world of humanity?

Answer: According to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the power that serves as the axis of the oneness of the world of humanity is the Covenant, and nothing else.

PARAGRAPH 27

Question 1: What achievement of the first century of the Formative Age is considered one of the most

significant?

Answer: One of the most significant achievements of the first century of the Formative Age is the emergence and development of the Administrative Order, which began with a focus on the establishment of elected institutions.

Question 2: What laid the foundation for the Administrative Order in the Bahá'í Faith?

Answer: 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will and Testament laid the foundation for the Administrative Order in the Bahá'í Faith, contributing to its emergence and development.

Question 3: How has the Administrative Order evolved over the past century?

Answer: Over the past century, the Administrative Order in the Bahá'í Faith has evolved, growing in breadth and complexity, unfolding throughout the world and linking all peoples, countries, and regions.

Question 4: What is the spiritual mandate provided by the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá for the institutions of the Administrative Order?

Answer: The Writings of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá provide the vision and spiritual mandate for the institutions of the Administrative Order to assist humanity in constructing a just and peaceful world.

Question 5: How is the Administrative Order described in relation to the Covenant?

Answer: The Administrative Order is referred to as the child of the Covenant, signifying its origin and connection to the Covenant within the Bahá'í Faith.

PARAGRAPH 28

Question 1: How did Bahá'u'lláh associate individuals, communities, and institutions within the Administrative Order?

Answer: Through the Administrative Order of His Faith, Bahá'u'lláh associated individuals, communities, and institutions as protagonists in a system without precedent.

Question 2: What historical practice did Bahá'u'lláh abrogate in the context of religious authority?

Answer: Bahá'u'lláh abrogated the historical practice whereby ecclesiastics held the reins of religious authority, directing the community of the faithful and instructing its affairs.

Question 3: What did Bahá'u'lláh introduce to prevent the contest of competing ideologies?

Answer: Bahá'u'lláh introduced arrangements that would cultivate the individual's latent powers and

their expression in service to the common good, preventing the contest of competing ideologies.

Question 4: What spiritual qualities form the basis of association within the Administrative Order?

Answer: Trustworthiness, truthfulness, rectitude of conduct, forbearance, love, and unity are among the spiritual qualities that form the basis of association between the three protagonists of the Administrative Order.

Question 5: How does Bahá'u'lláh's vision influence efforts for social advancement within the Administrative Order?

Answer: Efforts for social advancement within the Administrative Order are shaped by Bahá'u'lláh's vision of the oneness of humanity.

PARAGRAPH 29

Question 1: What was the state of the institutions of the Bahá'í Faith at the time of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's passing?

Answer: At the time of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's passing, the institutions of the Faith consisted of a small number of local Assemblies functioning in disparate ways. There were only a handful of agencies operating beyond a local level, and no National Spiritual Assemblies had been established.

Question 2: How many Hands of the Cause did Bahá'u'lláh appoint in Iran?

Answer: Bahá'u'lláh had appointed four Hands of the Cause in Iran.

Question 3: What did 'Abdu'l-Bahá direct the Hands of the Cause to do?

Answer: 'Abdu'l-Bahá directed the Hands of the Cause in their activities for the progress and protection of the Faith.

Question 4: Were there any posthumous appointments of Hands of the Cause beyond the original four?

Answer: Up to the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, there were no posthumous appointments of Hands of the Cause beyond the original four.

Question 5: What was lacking in the administrative machinery of the Bahá'í Faith at that point?

Answer: The Cause of Bahá'u'lláh, abundant in spirit and potential, had yet to form the administrative machinery that would enable it to systematize its efforts.

PARAGRAPH 30

Question 1: What did Shoghi Effendi consider in the first months of his ministry?

Answer: In the first months of his ministry, Shoghi Effendi considered establishing the House of Justice.

Question 2: Why did Shoghi Effendi decide against establishing the House of Justice immediately?

Answer: After reviewing the state of the Faith worldwide, Shoghi Effendi concluded that the conditions required for the formation of the House of Justice were not yet in place.

Question 3: What did Shoghi Effendi encourage the Bahá'ís to focus on instead?

Answer: Shoghi Effendi encouraged the Bahá'ís everywhere to concentrate their energies on raising Local and National Spiritual Assemblies.

Question 4: How did Shoghi Effendi describe the relationship between Local and National Spiritual Assemblies and the Universal House of Justice?

Answer: Shoghi Effendi described the National Spiritual Assemblies as pillars, which would be gradually and firmly established in every country on the strong and fortified foundations of the Local Assemblies. The Universal House of Justice would then be erected on these pillars.

Question 5: What image did Shoghi Effendi use to illustrate the development of the Bahá'í administrative institutions?

Answer: Shoghi Effendi used the image of pillars, with National Spiritual Assemblies being like pillars gradually and firmly established on the strong foundations of Local Assemblies, leading to the erection of the Universal House of Justice above them.

PARAGRAPH 31

Question 1: According to Shoghi Effendi, what was the Administrative Order meant to be?

Answer: Shoghi Effendi emphasized that the Administrative Order was not an end in itself but an instrument to canalize the spirit of the Faith.

Question 2: How did Shoghi Effendi describe the organic character of Bahá'í administration?

Answer: Shoghi Effendi explained that Bahá'í administration "is only the first shaping of what in future will come to be the social life and laws of community living."

Question 3: What did Shoghi Effendi say about the believers' understanding and practice of the Administrative Order?

Answer: Shoghi Effendi mentioned that “the believers are only just beginning to grasp and practice it properly.”

Question 4: What term did Shoghi Effendi use to describe the Administrative Order in relation to the future order for organizing the affairs of humanity?

Answer: Shoghi Effendi described the Administrative Order as the “nucleus and pattern” of what would eventually become a new order for organizing the affairs of humanity.

Question 5: How did Shoghi Effendi envision the relationships among individuals, communities, and institutions evolving over time?

Answer: Shoghi Effendi explained that these relationships would evolve in complexity, resulting in a growth in capacity over time as the Faith expanded, generating a new pattern of life that could engage ever more broadly the peoples of the world.

PARAGRAPH 32

Question 1: How did Shoghi Effendi guide the Bahá'í community in understanding and applying the administrative teachings?

Answer: Shoghi Effendi guided the community through a gradual exchange of correspondence, offering step-by-step assistance in applying administrative teachings and deepening their understanding.

Question 2: What were some specific areas Shoghi Effendi addressed in developing Bahá'í administration?

Answer: He actively assisted in the development of Bahá'í elections, the administration of the Bahá'í Fund, the arrangement of National Conventions, and establishing relationships between National and Local Assemblies.

Question 3: How did Shoghi Effendi address doubts and hesitancy within the community?

Answer: Shoghi Effendi dispelled doubts, clarifying the essential continuity between the culture of Bahá'í life during 'Abdu'l-Bahá's time and the steps he, as Guardian, took to lay administrative foundations for the Faith's development.

Question 4: How did Shoghi Effendi contribute to fostering unity and collective life in the Bahá'í community?

Answer: He patiently answered questions, resolved problems, and actively fostered the collective life of

the Bahá'í world community as it managed its administrative affairs.

Question 5: What organizational developments occurred under Shoghi Effendi's guidance?

Answer: Local Assemblies adopted consistent procedures, and National Assemblies were formed in various regions, often at a regional level first, along with committees supporting collective efforts in teaching, translation, publishing, education, pioneering, and organizing community events.

PARAGRAPH 33

Question 1: What marked a new stage in the development of the Bahá'í Administrative Order in the final years of Shoghi Effendi's life?

Answer: Shoghi Effendi inaugurated a new stage by establishing institutions at the international and continental levels after three decades devoted to local and national administration.

Question 2: What was the significant development in 1951 during this new stage?

Answer: In 1951, Shoghi Effendi proclaimed the formation of the International Bahá'í Council, marking a significant step toward the unfolding of the Administrative Order.

Question 3: How did Shoghi Effendi describe the purpose of the International Bahá'í Council?

Answer: Shoghi Effendi explained that the International Bahá'í Council would evolve through various stages, preparing for its transformation into the Universal House of Justice.

Question 4: What was the significance of the rise and establishment of the World Administrative Centre in the Holy Land?

Answer: The rise and establishment of the World Administrative Centre in the Holy Land marked a crucial step in the maturation of the Administrative Order.

Question 5: What was the ultimate vision for the International Bahá'í Council?

Answer: The International Bahá'í Council was envisioned to evolve and eventually effloresce into the Universal House of Justice, representing the apex of the Bahá'í Administrative Order.

PARAGRAPH 34

Question 1: What significant development followed the establishment of the International Bahá'í Council in 1951?

Answer: Shoghi Effendi appointed twelve Hands of the Cause of God at the end of the same year, representing the first contingent of Hands raised up in conformity with 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will and Testament.

Question 2: What was the role of the twelve Hands of the Cause appointed in 1951?

Answer: They were appointed to advance the work of the propagation and protection of the Faith.

Question 3: How did Shoghi Effendi describe the unique features of the institution of the Hands of the Cause?

Answer: The institution has no legislative, executive, or judicial authority, is devoid of priestly functions, and lacks the right to make authoritative interpretations.

Question 4: What marked a significant expansion of the Hands of the Cause in 1952?

Answer: In 1952, Shoghi Effendi appointed a second contingent of Hands, raising their number to nineteen.

Question 5: How did Shoghi Effendi further develop the institution of the Hands of the Cause, and what complementary institution was established?

Answer: The Guardian continued to expand the institution, appointing a final contingent of Hands to raise their number to twenty-seven. Additionally, he established an Auxiliary Board for Protection to complement the existing Board for Propagation.

PARAGRAPH 35

Question 1: What guidance did Shoghi Effendi provide regarding the nature of the administration instituted under his guidance?

Answer: Shoghi Effendi explained that much of what was instituted under his guidance was temporary.

Question 2: What was identified as the future function of the Universal House of Justice?

Answer: The Universal House of Justice was tasked with laying more definitively the broad lines that must guide the future activities and administration of the Faith.

Question 3: What did Shoghi Effendi suggest would be the role of the Universal House of Justice once established?

Answer: When established, the Universal House of Justice would have to consider afresh the whole situation and lay down principles guiding the affairs of the Cause.

Question 4: How did Shoghi Effendi describe the function of the Universal House of Justice in directing the affairs of the Faith?

Answer: The Universal House of Justice, once properly established, would lay down principles to direct the affairs of the Cause so long as it deemed advisable.

Question 5: What term did Shoghi Effendi use to describe the role of the Universal House of Justice in shaping the future administration?

Answer: He used the term "to lay more definitely the broad lines" to describe the future role of the Universal House of Justice.

PARAGRAPH 36

Question 1: Who assumed responsibility for the affairs of the Cause after the unexpected passing of Shoghi Effendi in November 1957?

Answer: The Hands of the Cause of God assumed responsibility for the affairs of the Cause.

Question 2: What dual function were the Hands of the Cause given by Shoghi Effendi, according to his designation a month before his passing?

Answer: The Hands of the Cause were designated as "the Chief Stewards of Bahá'u'lláh's embryonic World Commonwealth" with the dual function of guarding over the security and ensuring the propagation of His Father's Faith.

Question 3: Under the stewardship of the Hands of the Cause, what notable increase occurred in the number of National Assemblies?

Answer: The number of National Assemblies was raised from twenty-six to fifty-six.

Question 4: What significant transition occurred under the stewardship of the Hands of the Cause regarding the International Bahá'í Council?

Answer: The steps described by Shoghi Effendi for the transition of the International Bahá'í Council from an appointed to an elected body were implemented.

Question 5: What event did the implementation of the steps for the transition of the International Bahá'í Council set the stage for?

Answer: The election of the Universal House of Justice in 1963 was set in motion by the steps implemented for the transition of the International Bahá'í Council.

PARAGRAPH 37

Question 1: What was adopted in 1972 and referred to by Shoghi Effendi as the "Most Great Law"?

Answer: The Constitution of the Universal House of Justice was adopted in 1972.

Question 2: In 1968, what institution was created, extending the functions of the Universal House of Justice into the future?

Answer: The Continental Boards of Counsellors were created in 1968.

Question 3: In 1973, what institution was established to further extend the functions of the Universal House of Justice?

Answer: The International Teaching Centre was established in 1973.

Question 4: What significant law was applied universally across the Bahá'í world at Ríḍván 1992?

Answer: The law of Ḥuqúqu'lláh was applied universally across the Bahá'í world at Ríḍván 1992.

Question 5: How did the administrative structures evolve to address the growing complexity of issues and decision-making in the Bahá'í community?

Answer: Regional Bahá'í Councils were introduced in 1997 to address the growing complexity of issues facing National Spiritual Assemblies, maintaining a balance between centralization and decentralization in the community's administrative affairs.

PARAGRAPH 38

Question 1: How have relationships among individuals, communities, and institutions evolved over the century?

Answer: Over the century, relationships among individuals, communities, and institutions have progressively evolved into ever more complex forms.

Question 2: What was the nature of the network of elected bodies at the start of the first century of the Formative Age?

Answer: At the start of the first century of the Formative Age, it began as a network of elected bodies.

Question 3: How has the foundation of the administration been extended over the century?

Answer: The foundation of the administration has been extended through a series of developmental stages.

Question 4: What did the network of elected bodies become by the end of the first century of the Formative Age?

Answer: By the end of the first century of the Formative Age, it had become a vast constellation of institutions and agencies.

Question 5: How has the Bahá'í world been united in thought and action across diverse cultural contexts and social settings?

Answer: The Bahá'í world has been united in thought and action through a common enterprise across diverse cultural contexts and social settings, facilitated by a constellation of institutions and agencies.

PARAGRAPH 39

Question 1: What pattern of interactions characterizes the system inaugurated by Bahá'u'lláh in today's administration?

Answer: The system inaugurated by Bahá'u'lláh exhibits a new pattern of interactions and a marked dynamism among the three protagonists—individuals, communities, and institutions.

Question 2: How do individuals engage in the common purpose of working for the organic development of the Faith and the betterment of the world?

Answer: Individuals express their views and seek truth through consultation, exploring available guidance, drawing insights from the Teachings and experience, and initiating action that grows in effectiveness and complexity over time.

Question 3: What characterizes communities across advanced clusters and within villages and neighborhoods?

Answer: Communities exhibit a sense of common identity, will, and purpose. They nurture individual capacity, uphold unity, embrace equality, engage in selfless service, and contribute to material, social, and spiritual progress.

Question 4: How do institutions carry out their responsibilities in the community?

Answer: Institutions facilitate creative and collaborative exchanges, strive to build consensus, overcome challenges, foster spiritual health and vitality, and determine effective ways to pursue the community's aims and purposes.

Question 5: What is expected of community members serving on institutions?

Answer: Community members serving on institutions are expected to set aside personal preferences, avoid considering themselves central ornaments, eschew control over others, and consciously fulfill their duty to foster unity and spiritual well-being.

PARAGRAPH 40

Question 1: What has the widening of relationships and capacities among the three protagonists led to?

Answer: The widening relationships and capacities have resulted in an expanded circle of strategic thinkers, with assistance, resources, encouragement, and loving guidance extended globally.

Question 2: How is experience and insight shared throughout the world in the Bahá'í community?

Answer: Experience and insight are shared from the grassroots to the international level, fostering a dynamic pattern of life animated by Bahá'u'lláh's vision of a united world.

Question 3: What has Bahá'u'lláh's system drawn attention to in various countries?

Answer: In country after country, Bahá'u'lláh's system has drawn the attention of parents, educators, traditional leaders, officials, and leaders of thought, addressing the world's pressing needs.

Question 4: Does every community exhibit the characteristics of the most advanced?

Answer: No, not every community exhibits the characteristics of the most advanced. However, the appearance of new capacities in any one place signifies an evident advance, signaling that others will likely follow in that path.

Question 5: What does the widening circle of strategic thinkers and the evident advance in communities serve as?

Answer: The widening circle of strategic thinkers and evident advance serve as an augury, indicating a positive forecast that other communities will surely follow in the path of progress.

PARAGRAPH 41

Question 1: What does Shoghi Effendi anticipate regarding the future evolution of the Administrative Order?

Answer: Shoghi Effendi anticipates that the Administrative Order will continue its organic evolution in

response to the growth of the Faith and the changing needs of society.

Question 2: How does Shoghi Effendi describe the future role of the Administrative Order?

Answer: Shoghi Effendi envisions that as the Administrative Order's institutions function with efficiency, it will be regarded not only as the nucleus but the very pattern of the New World Order destined to embrace the whole of mankind.

Question 3: How will the relationships among individuals, communities, and institutions unfold during the organic evolution of the Administrative Order?

Answer: During the organic evolution, relationships among individuals, communities, and institutions will inevitably unfold in new directions and sometimes unexpected ways.

Question 4: What assurance is given for the Bahá'í world navigating challenging times in the future?

Answer: The unfailing divine protection that encompasses the House of Justice will ensure that, as the Bahá'í world faces the challenges of a perilous period, it will follow undeviatingly the course set by Providence.

Question 5: What does the crystallization of Bahá'u'lláh's system present to humanity?

Answer: The crystallization of Bahá'u'lláh's system will present humanity with new and more productive ways of organizing its affairs.

PARAGRAPH 42

Question 1: How did the Bahá'í community, despite its small size and limited geographical reach, respond to Bahá'u'lláh's teachings?

Answer: From its inception, the Bahá'í community, though small, was galvanized by Bahá'u'lláh's teachings and actively shared them with those seeking a spiritual path to personal and social transformation.

Question 2: How did the Bahá'í community learn to collaborate with others in its efforts for the betterment of society?

Answer: Over time, the Bahá'í community learned to work closely with like-minded people and organizations to uplift the human spirit and contribute to the betterment of families, communities, and society.

Question 3: Where was receptivity to Bahá'u'lláh's message found?

Answer: Receptivity to Bahá'u'lláh's message was found in every land.

Question 4: How did Bahá'í communities emerge globally?

Answer: Through devoted and sacrificial efforts over many generations, Bahá'í communities emerged globally, encompassing the diversity of the human race in cities and villages around the world.

Question 5: What was the driving force behind the emergence of Bahá'í communities around the globe?

Answer: The driving force behind the emergence of Bahá'í communities globally was the receptivity to Bahá'u'lláh's teachings and the dedicated efforts of the believers to share them with humanity.

PARAGRAPH 43

Question 1: How many countries did the Faith extend to during the Dispensation of the Báb?

Answer: During the Dispensation of the Báb, the Faith was established in two countries.

Question 2: How many countries did the Faith extend to by the time of Bahá'u'lláh?

Answer: By the time of Bahá'u'lláh, the Faith had extended to a total of fifteen countries.

Question 3: How many countries had the Faith reached by the close of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's ministry?

Answer: By the close of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's ministry, the Faith had reached some thirty-five countries.

Question 4: What did 'Abdu'l-Bahá reveal during the tumultuous years of world war, and what was its significance?

Answer: During the tumultuous years of world war, 'Abdu'l-Bahá revealed the Tablets of the Divine Plan, His grand design for the spiritual illumination of the planet through the spread of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings. This Charter called for collective and methodical endeavor.

Question 5: Who was one of the extraordinary heroes of the Faith mentioned, and what was her contribution?

Answer: Martha Root was one of the extraordinary heroes of the Faith who arose in response to the Tablets of the Divine Plan. She played a significant role in promoting the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh globally.

PARAGRAPH 44

Question 1: How long was the execution of the Divine Plan held in abeyance after its revelation by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá?

Answer: For twenty years after the Divine Plan was revealed by the pen of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, its execution was held in abeyance.

Question 2: Why was the execution of the Divine Plan held in abeyance for twenty years?

Answer: The execution of the Divine Plan was held in abeyance until the friends, guided by Shoghi Effendi, could create the administrative machinery of the Faith and foster its proper functioning.

Question 3: When did the Guardian begin to articulate a vision of the unfoldment of the Faith based on ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Divine Plan?

Answer: The Guardian began to articulate a vision of the unfoldment of the Faith based on ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Divine Plan only when the initial administrative structure was firmly in place.

Question 4: How did the administration and the effort to share and apply Bahá’u’lláh’s teachings evolve over time?

Answer: Just as the administration evolved through distinct stages of increasing complexity, the effort to share and apply Bahá’u’lláh’s teachings also evolved organically, giving rise to new patterns of community life.

Question 5: What were the outcomes of the organic evolution of the effort to share and apply Bahá’u’lláh’s teachings?

Answer: The organic evolution of the effort to share and apply Bahá’u’lláh’s teachings resulted in new patterns of community life that could embrace ever-larger numbers, enable the friends to take on greater challenges, and contribute to an increased measure of personal and social transformation.

PARAGRAPH 45

Question 1: In which countries were the first and second Seven Year Plans launched?

Answer: The first Seven Year Plan, launched in 1937, carried the teachings of Bahá’u’lláh to Latin America. The second Seven Year Plan, beginning in 1946, emphasized the development of the Faith in Europe.

Question 2: Which countries adopted national plans under the encouragement of Shoghi Effendi?

Answer: The National Spiritual Assembly of India and Burma, the British Isles, Persia, Australia and New

Zealand, Iraq, Canada, Egypt and Sudan, Germany and Austria, and Central America adopted national plans under Shoghi Effendi's encouragement.

Question 3: What was the basic pattern followed by each of these plans?

Answer: Each plan followed the same basic pattern: teaching individuals, establishing a Local Assembly and raising a community, and opening additional localities on the home front or in another land, and then repeating the pattern once more.

Question 4: When could a new National Assembly be raised in a country or territory?

Answer: A new National Assembly could be raised when a sound foundation was built in a country or territory.

Question 5: Who were the chosen recipients of the Tablets of the Divine Plan, designated by Shoghi Effendi as its chief executors and their allies?

Answer: The communities in the United States and Canada were chosen recipients of the Tablets of the Divine Plan, designated by Shoghi Effendi as its chief executors and their allies.

PARAGRAPH 46

Question 1: What methods were encouraged by Shoghi Effendi for teaching the Faith during the plans?

Answer: Shoghi Effendi encouraged methods such as pioneering, traveling teaching, fireside gatherings, summer schools, and participation in the activities of like-minded organizations, which proved to be effective in certain places.

Question 2: Besides expansion efforts, what did Shoghi Effendi emphasize to consolidate the identity and character of the Bahá'í Faith?

Answer: Shoghi Effendi emphasized internal development, carefully cultivating the transformative process necessary to consolidate the identity and character of the Bahá'í Faith as a distinct religious community.

Question 3: What aspects of the Faith's internal development were cultivated by the Guardian?

Answer: The Guardian cultivated aspects of internal development such as expounding the history of the Faith, facilitating the use of the Bahá'í calendar, emphasizing regular participation in Feasts and the commemoration of Holy Days, and guiding believers to embrace the obligation of obedience to Bahá'í laws, such as the provisions of Bahá'í marriage.

Question 4: What role did the Guardian play in the emergence of the Bahá'í Faith as a world religion?

Answer: The Guardian played a crucial role in the emergence of the Bahá'í Faith as a world religion by guiding believers in consolidating its identity, character, and adherence to Bahá'í laws.

Question 5: How did Shoghi Effendi contribute to the Bahá'í Faith taking its place among its sister religions?

Answer: Shoghi Effendi contributed to the Bahá'í Faith taking its place among its sister religions by fostering its internal development and guiding believers to fulfill their responsibility to teach the Faith within the context of adopted plans.

PARAGRAPH 47

Question 1: When did the international cooperation of the Faith in the teaching field begin, and what was the first significant campaign?

Answer: International cooperation in the teaching field began in 1951 with the African Campaign, which involved the collaboration of five national communities to extend the spread of the Faith across the continent of Africa.

Question 2: What significant global initiative was initiated in 1953, and how did it unite National Assemblies?

Answer: In 1953, the Ten Year Crusade was initiated, marking a significant global initiative. It united the efforts of all twelve existing National Assemblies in one common global Plan, the first of its kind.

Question 3: How were the administrative bodies and teaching methods developed by the Bahá'í community utilized during the Ten Year Crusade?

Answer: The network of administrative bodies and proven teaching methods developed by the Bahá'í community was employed during the Ten Year Crusade in a collective spiritual enterprise, representing a crowning stage of the ministry of the Guardian.

Question 4: What made the Ten Year Crusade a unique and unprecedented undertaking?

Answer: The Ten Year Crusade was unique and unprecedented as it united the efforts of all twelve existing National Assemblies in one common global Plan, showcasing a level of international collaboration and collective spiritual enterprise previously unseen in the Bahá'í community.

Question 5: How did the initiation of international institutions coincide with the Ten Year Crusade?

Answer: Along with the inauguration of international institutions, the Ten Year Crusade represented a period when the collective endeavors of the Faith in the teaching field moved into the arena of

international cooperation.

PARAGRAPH 48

Question 1: What did the believers find as they traveled to share the Bahá'í Faith, and what impact did it have on diverse populations?

Answer: As believers traveled to share the Bahá'í Faith, they discovered that diverse populations exhibited great receptivity to its principles and teachings. This led to a deeper meaning and purpose for their lives, providing fresh insights for communities to overcome challenges and progress spiritually, socially, and materially.

Question 2: How did the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh impact those who embraced it, and how was it diffused among the masses of humanity?

Answer: The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh brought a deeper meaning and purpose to the lives of those who embraced it. Initially disseminated gradually from individual to individual, this divine light began to be diffused rapidly among the masses of humanity.

Question 3: What phenomenon foretold by 'Abdu'l-Bahá became evident during the execution of the Plan?

Answer: The phenomenon of entry by troops, foretold by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, became evident during the execution of the Plan. This was reflected in the enrollment of hundreds of believers in countries such as Uganda, The Gambia, the Gilbert and Ellice Islands, Indonesia, and Cameroon.

Question 4: In which countries did the process of entry by troops begin during the Plan, and what was the scale of their enrollment?

Answer: Entry by troops began in countries like Uganda, The Gambia, the Gilbert and Ellice Islands, Indonesia, and Cameroon during the Plan. The scale of enrollment reached into the tens of thousands or even more in some of these countries.

Question 5: How did the process of entry by troops contribute to the diffusion of the Bahá'í Faith among diverse populations?

Answer: The process of entry by troops significantly contributed to the diffusion of the Bahá'í Faith among diverse populations. Enrollments in various countries reached substantial numbers, signaling a widespread and accelerating acceptance of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings.

PARAGRAPH 49

Question 1: How did the Hands of the Cause ensure the successful completion of the Ten Year Crusade after the passing of Shoghi Effendi?

Answer: The Hands of the Cause ensured the successful completion of the Ten Year Crusade by following undeviatingly the path outlined by Shoghi Effendi.

Question 2: What lessons learned under the guidance of Shoghi Effendi contributed to the accomplishments in the teaching field during the Ten Year Crusade?

Answer: Lessons learned under the guidance of Shoghi Effendi contributed to accomplishing more in the teaching field over a single decade than in the previous century during the Ten Year Crusade.

Question 3: How many new countries and territories did the Faith spread to during the Ten Year Crusade?

Answer: During the Ten Year Crusade, the Faith spread to 131 new countries and territories.

Question 4: What was the total number of localities where Bahá'ís resided at the culmination of the Ten Year Crusade?

Answer: At the culmination of the Ten Year Crusade, the total number of localities where Bahá'ís resided surpassed eleven thousand.

Question 5: How did the Ten Year Crusade conclude in terms of Bahá'í administrative institutions?

Answer: The Ten Year Crusade concluded with the election of the Universal House of Justice by the members of the fifty-six National Spiritual Assemblies and more than 3,500 Local Assemblies, in accordance with the provisions set down by 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

PARAGRAPH 50

Question 1: After the establishment of the Universal House of Justice, how did it continue the systematic prosecution of the Divine Plan?

Answer: The Universal House of Justice continued the systematic prosecution of the Divine Plan by gradually broadening and augmenting the range of activities cultivated by the Guardian.

Question 2: What were some areas of emphasis that emerged or received increased attention during the second epoch of the Universal House of Justice?

Answer: Areas of emphasis during the second epoch included the universal participation of individuals in service to the Cause, deepening individuals' understanding of the laws and teachings, collaboration between Boards of Counsellors and National Assemblies, and strengthening community life through various initiatives.

Question 3: How did the Universal House of Justice enhance community life during its second epoch?

Answer: The Universal House of Justice enhanced community life during its second epoch by focusing on children's classes, introducing activities for youth and women, and promoting regular Assembly meetings.

Question 4: What were some initiatives undertaken by the Universal House of Justice during its second epoch?

Answer: Initiatives included extensive proclamation of the Faith through the media, development of centres of learning, greater involvement in the life of society, and the fostering of Bahá'í scholarship.

Question 5: How did the Universal House of Justice coordinate and unify the activities of National Assemblies during its second epoch?

Answer: The Universal House of Justice coordinated and unified the activities of National Assemblies during its second epoch by emphasizing collaboration between newly constituted Boards of Counsellors and National Assemblies, as well as between Auxiliary Board members and Local Spiritual Assemblies.

PARAGRAPH 51

Question 1: By the 1990s, how had the Faith spread, and how many National Assemblies were there?

Answer: By the 1990s, the Faith had spread to tens of thousands of localities, and the number of National Assemblies had more than tripled to approximately 180.

Question 2: What were the two broad patterns observed in the development of national communities during the 1990s?

Answer: The development of national communities during the 1990s followed two broad patterns, largely contingent upon the response of the wider population.

Question 3: How were local communities characterized in the first pattern, and what challenges did they face?

Answer: In the first pattern, local communities tended to be small in size, with only some growing to number a hundred believers or more. These communities faced challenges despite their strong process of consolidation, such as the inability to serve as a model for restructuring the whole of society.

Question 4: What was increasingly evident about small communities despite their prosperity and humanitarian efforts?

Answer: It became increasingly evident that small communities, despite their prosperity and humanitarian efforts, could never hope to serve as a model for restructuring the whole of society.

Question 5: Besides being united in shared beliefs and characterized by high ideals, what did small communities become proficient in managing?

Answer: Small communities became proficient in managing their affairs and tending to their needs.

PARAGRAPH 52

Question 1: What characterized the second pattern of development in national communities during the 1990s?

Answer: The second pattern of development in national communities during the 1990s was characterized by the process of entry by troops, leading to an exponential increase in membership, new localities, and new institutions.

Question 2: In countries where entry by troops began, how did the Bahá'í community grow in terms of numbers?

Answer: In countries where entry by troops began, the Bahá'í community grew to comprise more than one hundred thousand believers in several countries, with India reaching some two million.

Question 3: Despite creative and sacrificial efforts in places with entry by troops, what challenge did the process of consolidation face?

Answer: In places with entry by troops, despite creative and sacrificial efforts, the process of consolidation could not keep pace with expansion. Many individuals became Bahá'ís, but there were challenges in sufficiently deepening them in the fundamental verities of the Faith and in developing vibrant communities.

Question 4: What issue arose in places with entry by troops regarding Bahá'í education and Local Assemblies?

Answer: In places with entry by troops, there were challenges in establishing enough classes for Bahá'í education to serve the increasing number of children and youth, and while over thirty thousand Local Assemblies were formed, only a fraction began to function effectively.

Question 5: Why did it become apparent that occasional educational courses and informal community activities were not sufficient?

Answer: It became apparent that occasional educational courses and informal community activities, while important, were not sufficient because they resulted in raising up only a relatively small group of

active supporters, unable to meet the needs of thousands upon thousands of new believers.

PARAGRAPH 53

Question 1: By 1996, what was the Bahá'í world facing in terms of its areas of activity?

Answer: By 1996, the Bahá'í world was facing the need for reassessment and reorientation of its many areas of activity that had contributed to significant progress over the years.

Question 2: What was the objective of the call for a "significant advance in the process of entry by troops" in the Four Year Plan?

Answer: The call for a "significant advance in the process of entry by troops" in the Four Year Plan aimed to acknowledge that circumstances allowed and required sustained growth of the Bahá'í world community on a large scale.

Question 3: Why did individuals, communities, and institutions need to learn new approaches by 1996?

Answer: By 1996, individuals, communities, and institutions needed to learn new approaches not only to initiate a mode of action reaching large numbers but also to rapidly increase the number of individuals engaged in acts of service so that consolidation could keep pace with accelerating expansion.

Question 4: What was the focus of the effort to introduce the Faith to the many populations of the world in the late 1990s?

Answer: In the late 1990s, the focus of the effort to introduce the Faith to the many populations of the world was to become more systematic.

Question 5: What did the call for a "significant advance" in the Four Year Plan aim to achieve regarding the power of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings?

Answer: The call for a "significant advance" in the Four Year Plan aimed to achieve the increasing realization of the power of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings to transform the character of humankind.

PARAGRAPH 54

Question 1: What were the friends encouraged to do at the outset of the Four Year Plan?

Answer: At the outset of the Four Year Plan, the friends were encouraged to identify approaches and methods applicable to their specific conditions and initiate a systematic process of community development.

Question 2: How were the friends advised to handle challenges during the Four Year Plan?

Answer: The friends were advised to review their successes and difficulties, adjust and improve their methods, learn, and move forward without hesitation when faced with challenges during the Four Year Plan.

Question 3: What was the recommended course of action when the path forward was unclear?

Answer: When the course of action was unclear during the Four Year Plan, a range of approaches to specific challenges could be tested in different places.

Question 4: How could effective initiatives in a particular area be shared during the Four Year Plan?

Answer: During the Four Year Plan, effective initiatives in a particular area could be shared with institutions at the national or international level and then disseminated to other places.

Question 5: What role did successful initiatives play in future Plans according to the guidance given?

Answer: Successful initiatives in specific areas, proven through experience, could become components of future Plans based on the guidance given during the Four Year Plan.

PARAGRAPH 55

Question 1: What process gave rise to a range of concepts, instruments, and approaches over a quarter century?

Answer: The process of learning about growth over a quarter century gave rise to a range of concepts, instruments, and approaches.

Question 2: What was among the most prominent features resulting from the learning process about growth?

Answer: The creation of a network of training institutes, offering educational programs for children, junior youth, youth, and adults, was among the most prominent features resulting from the learning process about growth.

Question 3: What construct facilitated the systematization of the teaching work in manageable geographic areas?

Answer: The construct of clusters facilitated the systematization of the teaching work in manageable geographic areas.

Question 4: What activities were part of the new pattern of community life within programs of growth?

Answer: The new pattern of community life within programs of growth included the multiplication of four core activities, individual and collective teaching, visiting homes, hosting social gatherings, observing Feast and Holy Days, administering community affairs, and promoting activities for social and economic development.

Question 5: What was the overarching goal of these efforts within programs of growth?

Answer: The overarching goal of these efforts within programs of growth was to effect a change in the spiritual character of the community and strengthen social ties among individuals and families.

PARAGRAPH 56

Question 1: What becomes apparent when looking back over a century of efforts to execute the provisions of the Divine Plan?

Answer: It becomes apparent that the Bahá'í world has experienced a significant advance at the level of culture.

Question 2: What characteristics are increasingly manifest in the Bahá'í community as a result of the learning process?

Answer: Characteristics increasingly manifest in the Bahá'í community include maintaining a humble posture of learning, strengthening Bahá'í identity while preserving an orientation welcoming to all, and acting in ever-wider spheres of endeavor while fostering a systematic and coherent approach to the work of the Cause.

Question 3: In what ways have people in thousands of clusters come to view themselves?

Answer: In thousands of clusters, growing numbers of people have come to view themselves as protagonists in the acquisition, generation, and application of knowledge for their own development and progress.

Question 4: What activities are these empowered individuals engaging in within their communities?

Answer: Empowered individuals are engaging in discussions on elevated spiritual themes, initiating activities that shape a devotional pattern of life, providing education for young people, increasing their capacity for service, and contributing to the material and social progress of their communities.

Question 5: What deeper appreciation have individuals gained as they think and act in this empowered way?

Answer: As individuals think and act in this empowered way, they have gained a deeper appreciation of the purpose of religion itself.

PARAGRAPH 57

Question 1: What is another dimension of the unfoldment of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Divine Plan?

Answer: Another dimension is a greater involvement of the Bahá'í community in the life of society.

Question 2: What did Shoghi Effendi draw the attention of the friends to from the inception of his ministry?

Answer: From the inception of his ministry, Shoghi Effendi drew the attention of the friends to the power of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation to effect an organic change in society.

Question 3: Besides personal spiritual transformation, for what did Bahá'ís need to learn to apply Bahá'u'lláh's teachings?

Answer: Bahá'ís needed to learn to apply Bahá'u'lláh's teachings not only for personal spiritual transformation but also for material and social change.

Question 4: Where did these efforts to apply Bahá'u'lláh's teachings begin?

Answer: These efforts began within their own communities.

Question 5: Where did these efforts gradually extend to?

Answer: These efforts gradually extended to embrace the wider society.

PARAGRAPH 58

Question 1: During the time of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, which Bahá'í communities pursued systematic endeavors for social and economic development?

Answer: Some Bahá'í communities in Iran, along with a few others in nearby countries, pursued systematic endeavors for social and economic development.

Question 2: What guidance did 'Abdu'l-Bahá offer to the believers in Iran regarding education?

Answer: 'Abdu'l-Bahá encouraged the believers in Iran to establish schools open to girls as well as boys, offering training in good character as well as in the arts and sciences.

Question 3: In which Bahá'í villages did 'Abdu'l-Bahá offer guidance for both the spiritual and material

flourishing of the communities?

Answer: ‘Adasiyyih and far-off Daidanaw were among the Bahá’í villages where ‘Abdu’l-Bahá offered guidance for both the spiritual and material flourishing of the communities.

Question 4: What dependencies did ‘Abdu’l-Bahá direct to be created around the Mashriqu’l-Adhkár in ‘Ishqábád?

Answer: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá directed that dependencies be created for education and other social services around the Mashriqu’l-Adhkár in ‘Ishqábád.

Question 5: After the passing of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, what guidance did Shoghi Effendi provide to expand these development efforts?

Answer: After the passing of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Shoghi Effendi provided guidance to expand these development efforts.

PARAGRAPH 59

Question 1: What guidance did Shoghi Effendi offer to the Bahá’ís regarding the allocation of limited human and financial resources?

Answer: Shoghi Effendi advised the friends to concentrate their limited human and financial resources on teaching and on raising the Administrative Order.

Question 2: According to a letter written on Shoghi Effendi's behalf, what was considered the surest way to lift the burden of hunger and misery from mankind?

Answer: Contributions to the Faith, particularly through the system of Bahá’u’lláh, were considered the surest way to lift the burden of hunger and misery from mankind.

Question 3: Why did the letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi emphasize supporting the Bahá’í teaching work as the first obligation?

Answer: Supporting the Bahá’í teaching work was emphasized as the first obligation because it would lead to the healing of the nations.

Question 4: What did Shoghi Effendi generally recommend the Bahá’ís to focus their resources on during the early years following the election of the House of Justice?

Answer: Generally, during the early years following the election of the House of Justice, Shoghi Effendi recommended that the Bahá’ís focus their resources on growth and on building their community.

Question 5: Despite the concept of social and economic development being enshrined in Bahá'u'lláh's teachings, why was it often impracticable for most of the Bahá'í world to undertake development activities during the ministry of Shoghi Effendi?

Answer: Owing to the circumstances of the Faith throughout Shoghi Effendi's ministry and the years that followed, it was often impracticable for most of the Bahá'í world to undertake development activities.

PARAGRAPH 60

Question 1: In 1983, what significant development took place in the Bahá'í community regarding social and economic development?

Answer: In 1983, after decades of unrelenting effort in the teaching field and significant growth worldwide, the Bahá'í community reached a stage where social and economic development became part of its regular pursuits.

Question 2: What were the friends urged to strive for in incorporating social and economic development into their pursuits?

Answer: The friends were urged to strive, through their application of spiritual principles, rectitude of conduct, and practice of the art of consultation, to uplift themselves and take responsibility as agents of their own development.

Question 3: What was established at the World Centre in 1983 to assist the House of Justice in promoting and coordinating social and economic development activities?

Answer: The Office of Social and Economic Development was established at the World Centre in 1983 to assist the House of Justice in promoting and coordinating social and economic development activities.

Question 4: How did the Office of Social and Economic Development evolve over time?

Answer: Over time, the Office of Social and Economic Development evolved to facilitate a global process of learning about development.

Question 5: Who initiated various social and economic development activities, encompassing not only Bahá'ís but also the wider community?

Answer: Individual believers arose to initiate various social and economic development activities, encompassing not only Bahá'ís but also the wider community.

PARAGRAPH 61

Question 1: What types of development activities were initiated within a decade, addressing various concerns in the Bahá'í community?

Answer: Within a decade, hundreds of development activities addressing concerns such as the advancement of women, education, health, mass communication, agriculture, economic activity, and the environment were initiated around the world.

Question 2: Describe the spectrum of complexity in the development activities undertaken by the Bahá'í community.

Answer: Development activities ranged along a spectrum of complexity. This included fairly simple, short-duration activities in villages and towns, as well as sustained projects like schools and clinics designed to meet social needs over an extended period. Additionally, some Bahá'í-inspired organizations with relatively complex programmatic structures were founded by individuals.

Question 3: What was the overarching aim of the development activities initiated by the Bahá'í community?

Answer: The overarching aim of these development activities was to apply spiritual principles to practical problems.

Question 4: How were the more sustained projects, such as schools and clinics, often organized?

Answer: Sustained projects, such as schools and clinics, were often established along with organizational structures to ensure their viability and effectiveness over an extended period of time.

Question 5: By what year did a few Bahá'í-inspired organizations with relatively complex programmatic structures emerge?

Answer: By 1996, a few Bahá'í-inspired organizations with relatively complex programmatic structures had been founded by individuals to systematically pursue a coherent approach to development within a population, resulting in a significant impact in a region.

PARAGRAPH 62

Question 1: What became increasingly evident as Bahá'í-inspired agencies and those under the authority of Bahá'í institutions emerged globally?

Answer: As Bahá'í-inspired agencies and those under the authority of Bahá'í institutions emerged globally, the impact of their efforts within the community and the wider society became increasingly evident, manifesting a dynamic coherence between the material and spiritual dimensions of life.

Question 2: What fundamental concepts did the Bahá'í community come to understand regarding

development?

Answer: The Bahá'í community came to understand fundamental concepts:

- The world is not divided into categories of developed and underdeveloped; all are in need of transformation.
- People themselves, wherever they reside, are the protagonists of their own development.
- Access to knowledge and participation in its generation, application, and diffusion is at the heart of the endeavor.
- Efforts start small and grow in complexity as experience accumulates.
- Programmes whose effectiveness has been demonstrated in one region can be systematically introduced into others.

Question 3: How did the Bahá'í community view the concept of development?

Answer: The Bahá'í community viewed development as not a process carried out by one person on behalf of another; rather, people themselves are the protagonists of their own development.

Question 4: According to the Bahá'í understanding, what is at the heart of the development endeavor?

Answer: According to the Bahá'í understanding, access to knowledge and participation in its generation, application, and diffusion is at the heart of the development endeavor.

Question 5: How do the friends become increasingly adept at applying principles and concepts within a particular setting?

Answer: The friends become increasingly adept at applying principles and concepts within a particular setting by analyzing their social conditions, drawing insights from the Writings and various relevant fields of knowledge, and initiating activities that are fully integrated with the work of community building.

PARAGRAPH 63

Question 1: What prompted the establishment of the Bahá'í International Development Organization (BIC)?

Answer: The extensive spread and increasing complexity of Bahá'í development efforts around the world prompted the establishment of the Bahá'í International Development Organization (BIC) by 2018.

Question 2: How does the Bahá'í International Development Organization (BIC) extend its functions and mandate?

Answer: The Bahá'í International Development Organization (BIC) assumes and further extends the

functions and mandate previously carried out by the Office of Social and Economic Development, reinforcing the efforts for social action of individuals, communities, institutions, and agencies everywhere.

Question 3: What is the primary purpose of the Bahá'í International Development Organization (BIC)?

Answer: The primary purpose of the Bahá'í International Development Organization (BIC) is to facilitate the global process of learning about development unfolding in the Bahá'í world. It fosters and supports action and reflection, the gathering and systematization of experience, conceptualization, and training—all carried out in the light of the teachings of the Faith.

Question 4: How does the Bahá'í International Development Organization (BIC) contribute to the global process of learning about development?

Answer: The Bahá'í International Development Organization (BIC) contributes to the global process of learning about development by fostering and supporting action and reflection, gathering and systematizing experience, conceptualization, and training—all carried out in the light of the teachings of the Faith.

Question 5: What does the Bahá'í International Development Organization (BIC) seek to foster?

Answer: The Bahá'í International Development Organization (BIC) seeks to foster a distinctly Bahá'í approach to development.

PARAGRAPH 64

Question 1: What major area of action emerged parallel to the systematic unfoldment of processes like expansion, consolidation, and social and economic development?

Answer: Parallel to the systematic unfoldment of processes like expansion, consolidation, and social and economic development, another major area of action emerged: greater participation in the prevalent discourses of society.

Question 2: What did Bahá'u'lláh do to proclaim His healing remedy to the world's leaders?

Answer: Bahá'u'lláh Himself initially proclaimed His healing remedy directly to the world's leaders and appealed for its adoption by all humanity.

Question 3: What principle did Bahá'u'lláh call upon the kings and rulers to apply for the establishment of world peace?

Answer: Bahá'u'lláh called upon the kings and rulers to apply His principles for the establishment of world peace, even though they had refused the Most Great Peace.

Question 4: How did 'Abdu'l-Bahá proclaim Bahá'u'lláh's teachings to the powerful and the masses?

Answer: 'Abdu'l-Bahá, through Writings like the Tablets to The Hague and talks delivered during His travels to the West, unceasingly proclaimed His Father's teachings to the powerful and the masses grappling with the myriad difficulties facing humanity.

Question 5: What did Bahá'u'lláh say when the Most Great Peace was refused?

Answer: When the Most Great Peace was refused, Bahá'u'lláh advised holding onto the Lesser Peace, expressing the hope that it might lead to an improvement in the condition of individuals and their dependents.

PARAGRAPH 65

Question 1: How did Shoghi Effendi foster initiatives to make known the insights and wisdom enshrined in the Bahá'í teachings early in his ministry?

Answer: Early in his ministry, Shoghi Effendi fostered initiatives such as opening a Bahá'í information bureau in Geneva in 1925, publishing volumes of The Bahá'í World, and calling for knowledgeable Bahá'ís to correlate the Teachings with contemporary thought regarding the pressing problems of the world.

Question 2: When was the Bahá'í International Community established, and what was its role?

Answer: The Bahá'í International Community was established in 1948 as a non-governmental organization representing Bahá'í communities worldwide. Its role involved increasing engagement in the work of international bodies, including the United Nations.

Question 3: How did the Guardian view the relationship between the Bahá'í Faith and governments, global institutions, and civil society in the international sphere?

Answer: While not allowing this area of endeavor to overshadow the primary importance of the teaching work, the Guardian viewed the relationship between the Bahá'í Faith and governments, global institutions, and civil society in the international sphere as an essential part of the Faith's mission.

Question 4: What did Shoghi Effendi encourage Bahá'ís to establish in terms of contact with society?

Answer: Shoghi Effendi encouraged Bahá'ís to establish closer contact with leaders of public thought and kindred organizations concerned with social issues. He stressed association rather than affiliation, urging the believers to remain untainted by any participation in political affairs.

Question 5: What was Shoghi Effendi's advice regarding Bahá'ís engaging with other organizations?

Answer: Shoghi Effendi advised Bahá'ís to engage with kindred organizations concerned with social issues, acquainting them with the aims and purposes of the Faith and the nature of its teachings, particularly on matters such as the establishment of world peace.

PARAGRAPH 66

Question 1: What message did the Universal House of Justice convey to the peoples of the world in relation to world peace?

Answer: The Universal House of Justice conveyed a message to the peoples of the world titled "The Promise of World Peace," disseminating the principles of the Faith widely.

Question 2: How did the Bahá'í International Community strengthen its position at the United Nations?

Answer: The Bahá'í International Community strengthened its position at the United Nations by securing a more formal association with various UN agencies in the 1970s. It published statements on world affairs and engaged with governments and non-governmental organizations.

Question 3: In which international symposia did the Bahá'í International Community play a constructive role?

Answer: The Bahá'í International Community played a constructive role in various international symposia, including the Conference on Environment and Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro, the World Conference on Women in Beijing, the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen, and the Millennium Forum in New York.

Question 4: What role did national Bahá'í communities play after the Iranian Revolution and renewed persecution of the Bahá'ís in Iran?

Answer: After the Iranian Revolution and renewed persecution of the Bahá'ís in Iran, several national Bahá'í communities entered into closer dialogue with various national and international institutions and agencies. They established national offices of external affairs to reinforce efforts at the international level to defend the Faith.

Question 5: How was the Bahá'í International Community recognized by those with whom it associated?

Answer: The Bahá'í International Community was recognized by those with whom it associated as harboring no self-interested agenda but working for the well-being of all peoples, playing a constructive role in various international forums and dialogues.

PARAGRAPH 67

Question 1: What significant developments occurred in the Bahá'í community's engagement with the discourses of society in the early 21st century?

Answer: In the early 21st century, the Bahá'í community experienced significant developments in engaging with the discourses of society. This included the expansion of international and national Bahá'í websites, the establishment of the Institute for Studies in Global Prosperity to research social issues, and the extension of the Bahá'í International Community's work to regional centres in Addis Ababa, Brussels, and Jakarta.

Question 2: How did the Institute for Studies in Global Prosperity contribute to the engagement with the discourses of society?

Answer: The Institute for Studies in Global Prosperity conducted research into the implications of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings for pressing social issues. Additionally, it initiated seminars to promote understanding and develop capacity among Bahá'í university students.

Question 3: In which regions were the regional centres of the Bahá'í International Community established?

Answer: The regional centres of the Bahá'í International Community were established in Addis Ababa, Brussels, and Jakarta.

Question 4: What topics were intensively addressed in national discourses across various nations by offices of external affairs?

Answer: Offices of external affairs addressed topics such as the advancement of women, the role of religion in society, the spiritual and moral empowerment of youth, the promotion of justice, and the strengthening of social cohesion in their systematic engagement in national discourses.

Question 5: How is the Bahá'í community contributing to the evolution of thought and action at the grassroots level?

Answer: At the grassroots level, in neighborhoods, villages, professions, and other social spaces, the Bahá'í community is learning to offer concepts from the Bahá'í Writings as a contribution to the evolution of thought and action among their compatriots, promoting constructive change.

PARAGRAPH 68

Question 1: Why is the involvement of the Bahá'í community in various levels of society becoming more pressing?

Answer: The involvement of the Bahá'í community in various levels of society is becoming more pressing due to the intensification of the disintegration of the old world order, the coarsening and polarization of discourse, and the recrudescence of conflict among competing factions and ideologies.

Question 2: How do Bahá'ís approach collaboration with other individuals and organizations?

Answer: Bahá'ís approach collaboration by working with sympathetic individuals and organizations that pursue common objectives. In these collaborative efforts, they share insights from the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, practical lessons from their community-building efforts, and learn from the experiences of their collaborating partners.

Question 3: What do Bahá'ís seek to promote in their engagement with the wider society?

Answer: In their engagement with the wider society, Bahá'ís seek to foster consensus, unity of thought, collaboration, and a common search for solutions to humanity's pressing problems. They emphasize that the means by which the end is attained is as important as the end itself.

Question 4: How do Bahá'ís navigate potential challenges in engaging with societal issues?

Answer: Bahá'ís maintain awareness that discourse on social issues may become contentious or entangled with political ambitions. Despite potential challenges, they seek to promote unity, collaboration, and a common pursuit of solutions in all settings where they engage with the wider society.

Question 5: Why is the participation of everyone emphasized in the transformation envisioned by Bahá'u'lláh?

Answer: The participation of everyone is emphasized in the transformation envisioned by Bahá'u'lláh because Bahá'ís understand that this vision calls for the collective effort of all individuals. They work with diverse individuals and organizations to involve everyone in the common pursuit of positive change and solutions to global challenges.

PARAGRAPH 69

Question 1: How has the involvement of Bahá'í communities in the wider society evolved in recent decades?

Answer: In recent decades, the involvement of Bahá'í communities in the wider society has evolved to achieve marked coherence with efforts related to expansion, consolidation, social action, and participation in societal discourses. This integration has become more pronounced as the conceptual framework for action from global Plans has been applied.

Question 2: How has community life changed as a result of Bahá'í engagement in the life of society?

Answer: Community life has changed significantly as Bahá'í communities contribute to material, social, and spiritual progress. The learning process driving efforts for growth and community building is extended to a broader range of activities. The friends cultivate their capability to understand societal

conditions, explore concepts from Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation and relevant human knowledge, address practical problems, and build capacity within the community.

Question 3: What is the impact of Bahá'í engagement in social discourse?

Answer: Bahá'í engagement in social discourse has received a resoundingly affirmative response at various levels of society, from neighborhoods to nations. In a world grappling with numerous problems, leaders of thought increasingly associate the Bahá'í community with fresh conceptions and approaches, seeking new insights offered by the Faith.

Question 4: How has the number of grassroots activities for social and economic development changed over the years?

Answer: The number of grassroots activities for social and economic development has experienced significant growth. Starting with a few hundred in 1990, it increased to several thousand by 2000 and further expanded to tens of thousands by 2021.

Question 5: What is becoming increasingly discernible in country after country as a result of the Faith's engagement in society?

Answer: The society-building power of the Faith, initially latent at the start of the first century of the Formative Age, is now increasingly discernible in country after country. This society-building power, resulting from a new consciousness and capacity for learning, is becoming the hallmark of the current and next several stages in the unfoldment of the Divine Plan.

PARAGRAPH 70

Question 1: What significant developments occurred at the Bahá'í World Centre during the first century of the Formative Age?

Answer: Significant developments at the Bahá'í World Centre during the first century of the Formative Age included the interplay among processes associated with the three Charters, particularly the emergence of institutions and agencies of the administrative centre of the Bahá'í world, guided by Bahá'u'lláh's Tablet of Carmel.

Question 2: How did the spiritual centre of the Bahá'í World Centre develop?

Answer: The spiritual centre of the Bahá'í World Centre developed in parallel with the growth of the Faith and the unfolding of the administration. This development was propelled by the impulse of Bahá'u'lláh's Tablet of Carmel, one of the three Charters shaping the evolution of the Bahá'í community.

Question 3: What role did the Tablet of Carmel play in the development of the Bahá'í World Centre?

Answer: The Tablet of Carmel played a crucial role in guiding the development of the Bahá'í World Centre. It served as one of the three Charters shaping the processes and institutions associated with the spiritual and administrative centre of the Bahá'í world.

Question 4: How did the processes associated with the three Charters interact?

Answer: The processes associated with the three Charters, including the Tablet of Carmel, interacted to shape the development of institutions and agencies at the administrative centre of the Bahá'í world. This interplay contributed to the unfolding of the spiritual and administrative dimensions of the Bahá'í community.

Question 5: Can you elaborate on the relationship between the spiritual and administrative dimensions at the Bahá'í World Centre?

Answer: The spiritual and administrative dimensions at the Bahá'í World Centre evolved in tandem. The spiritual centre, influenced by Bahá'u'lláh's Tablet of Carmel, and the administrative centre, guided by the administrative processes, worked synergistically to advance the development of the Bahá'í community during the first century of the Formative Age.

PARAGRAPH 71

Question 1: What significant chapter of Bahá'u'lláh's ministry began upon His arrival in 'Akká?

Answer: The climactic chapter of Bahá'u'lláh's ministry began upon His arrival in 'Akká, marking a crucial phase in the unfolding of His divine mission.

Question 2: How was Bahá'u'lláh's arrival in the Holy Land foretold by the Prophets?

Answer: The arrival of Bahá'u'lláh in the Holy Land had been foretold by the Prophets through the ages, and the fulfillment of this prophecy was compelled by the persecution He faced at the hands of His enemies, leading to His exile.

Question 3: What spiritual impact did Bahá'u'lláh's presence have in the Holy Land?

Answer: Bahá'u'lláh's presence in the Holy Land immeasurably enhanced its spiritual potency. His arrival was likened to the welcoming of banners of light, and His words foretold a future when all dwellers on earth would be enlisted under these banners.

Question 4: What role did the Bahá'í Holy Places in the Holy Land play?

Answer: The Bahá'í Holy Places in the Holy Land serve as the focal point of Bahá'í devotions and the goal of pilgrimage for Bahá'ís worldwide. They are a precious trust held for all of humanity, welcoming people from the Holy Land and every corner of the world.

Question 5: Whose sacred remains were interred in the Holy Land, contributing to its spiritual significance?

Answer: The sacred remains of Bahá'u'lláh and His Herald were interred in the Holy Land, adding to its spiritual significance. This sacred act elevates the Holy Land as a point of devotion for Bahá'ís and a symbol of unity for all of humanity.

PARAGRAPH 72

Question 1: Why was the hold of the Bahá'ís on the spiritual centre of their Faith tenuous at the close of the Heroic Age?

Answer: The hold of the Bahá'ís on the spiritual centre of their Faith was tenuous at the close of the Heroic Age due to various challenges, including difficulties in offering prayers at Bahá'u'lláh's resting place, false charges against 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and the perilous condition of the World Centre.

Question 2: What challenges did 'Abdu'l-Bahá face in relation to the Holy Places?

Answer: 'Abdu'l-Bahá faced challenges, including false charges of sedition, when raising the structure to house the remains of the Báb at the command of Bahá'u'lláh. He encountered difficulties, making it precarious to attend to the spiritual centre of the Faith.

Question 3: What was one of the early and vital duties of Shoghi Effendi?

Answer: One of the early and vital duties of Shoghi Effendi was the protection, preservation, extension, and beautification of the twin Holy Shrines and other Holy Places. This responsibility persisted throughout his ministry.

Question 4: How did Shoghi Effendi navigate challenges in the Holy Land during his ministry?

Answer: Shoghi Effendi navigated challenges in the Holy Land, including global economic disruption, war, political transitions, and social instability, while upholding Bahá'í principles of fellowship and respect for established governmental authority. He even considered the transfer of Bahá'u'lláh's remains to Mount Carmel for protection.

Question 5: What marked a significant milestone for the Holy Places during Shoghi Effendi's final days?

Answer: A significant milestone for the Holy Places occurred in Shoghi Effendi's final days when the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh was recognized as a Bahá'í Holy Place by civil authorities. This recognition granted the Bahá'í world the freedom to preserve and beautify its most sacred site.

PARAGRAPH 73

Question 1: What did Shoghi Effendi do to expand the properties surrounding the Holy Shrine and the Mansion at Bahjí?

Answer: Shoghi Effendi significantly expanded the properties surrounding the Holy Shrine and the Mansion at Bahjí, initiating extensive formal gardens and enhancing the surroundings to preserve and secure the Holy Places.

Question 2: What developments did Shoghi Effendi bring to the Shrine of the Báb on the Mountain of God?

Answer: Shoghi Effendi brought significant developments to the Shrine of the Báb, including its completion, addition of three rooms, creation of an arcade, raising of its golden dome, and the addition of verdure in its surroundings on the Mountain of God.

Question 3: How did Shoghi Effendi contribute to the establishment of the World Bahá'í Administrative Order?

Answer: Shoghi Effendi contributed to the establishment of the World Bahá'í Administrative Order by tracing the arc where its edifices were to be built, raising the International Archives Building at one end, and situating the resting places of the Greatest Holy Leaf, her brother, and their mother at the heart of this arc.

Question 4: How did the development of the World Centre continue after Shoghi Effendi's time?

Answer: After Shoghi Effendi's time, the development of the World Centre continued under the direction of the Universal House of Justice. Additional land and Holy Places were acquired, beautified, and buildings on the Arc were raised. Terraces on Mount Carmel were extended according to the original vision of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

Question 5: What construction project began in 'Akká in 2019?

Answer: In 2019, construction began in 'Akká, near the Riḍván Garden, on a fitting Shrine to serve as the final resting place of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

PARAGRAPH 74

Question 1: What were the early challenges faced by Shoghi Effendi in developing the Bahá'í administrative centre?

Answer: In the early years of Shoghi Effendi's ministry, he longed for capable helpers, but the Bahá'í world was too small to provide the necessary support for the development of the Bahá'í administrative centre.

Question 2: How did the availability of capable helpers change over the course of the century?

Answer: As the Bahá'í community grew, the House of Justice increasingly benefited from a continuous stream of volunteers who played a crucial role in establishing departments and agencies at the World Centre, meeting the needs of the rapidly developing Faith.

Question 3: What significant event occurred in 1987 regarding the Bahá'í World Centre's status?

Answer: In 1987, the patient efforts initiated by Shoghi Effendi to establish good relations with the civil authorities in Israel culminated in the formal recognition of the status of the Bahá'í World Centre as the spiritual and administrative centre of the worldwide Bahá'í community, operating under the aegis of the Universal House of Justice.

Question 4: How has communication evolved within the Bahá'í world over the century?

Answer: Over the course of the century, communication within the Bahá'í world has evolved significantly. Questions, advice, insights, and guidance now flow ceaselessly between all parts of the planet and the heart of the Bahá'í world, fostering a vibrant exchange.

Question 5: What role did volunteers play in the development of the Bahá'í administrative centre?

Answer: Volunteers played a crucial role in the development of the Bahá'í administrative centre by providing assistance to establish departments and agencies vital to the rapidly growing Faith, serving both the World Centre's needs and the communities worldwide.

PARAGRAPH 75

Question 1: What is the significance of the relationship between the Bahá'í World Centre and the Bahá'ís across the world?

Answer: The relationship between the Bahá'í World Centre and the Bahá'ís across the world is described as intimate and inseparable. The World Centre's development is intertwined with the progress of the Bahá'í world, and the buildings on Mount Carmel symbolize the immense power animating the Cause, bearing witness to the successful foundation of a global Bahá'í community.

Question 2: How is the association of the spiritual and administrative centre with the Bahá'í world described?

Answer: The association of the spiritual and administrative centre with the Bahá'í world is described as majestic and timeless. The buildings and garden terraces on Mount Carmel are considered an outward expression of the immense power animating the Cause and a testament to the successful foundation of a worldwide Bahá'í community.

Question 3: What is the significance of the transformation on Mount Carmel?

Answer: The transformation on Mount Carmel is deemed significant as it marks the emergence of the Bahá'í Cause as a visible and compelling reality on the global stage. The buildings and terraces symbolize the focal centre of forces that, in God's good time, will bring about the reconstruction of society and serve as a mystic source of spiritual renewal for all who turn to it.

Question 4: How are the buildings on Mount Carmel described in their relation to the Bahá'í Cause?

Answer: The buildings on Mount Carmel are described as offering timeless witness to the fact that the followers of Bahá'u'lláh have successfully laid the foundations of a worldwide community transcending all differences that divide the human race. They also signify the establishment of the principal institutions of a unique and unassailable Administrative Order shaping the community's life.

Question 5: What is the broader significance of the transformation on Mount Carmel for the Bahá'í Cause?

Answer: The transformation on Mount Carmel is seen as a broader manifestation of the Bahá'í Cause on the global stage, indicating its role as a focal centre of forces that will eventually bring about the reconstruction of society. It is also considered a mystic source of spiritual renewal for all who turn to it.

PARAGRAPH 76

Question 1: What did 'Abdu'l-Bahá invite the friend to witness a few weeks before His passing?

Answer: 'Abdu'l-Bahá invited the friend to witness the beauty of the garden a few weeks before His passing.

Question 2: What did 'Abdu'l-Bahá note about the transformation of the garden?

Answer: 'Abdu'l-Bahá observed that the flourishing garden, which was once a heap of stones, had been transformed through the spirit of devotion into a place verdant with foliage and flowers.

Question 3: What was 'Abdu'l-Bahá's desire for the loved ones after His passing?

Answer: 'Abdu'l-Bahá expressed His desire that after His passing, the loved ones would all arise to serve the divine Cause.

Question 4: What did 'Abdu'l-Bahá promise would appear after His passing?

Answer: 'Abdu'l-Bahá promised that "Ere long," there would appear those "who shall bring life to the world."

Question 5: What sentiment did 'Abdu'l-Bahá convey regarding the flourishing garden and the service to the divine Cause?

Answer: 'Abdu'l-Bahá conveyed the sentiment that the flourishing garden, transformed through devotion, was symbolic, and He expressed hope that after His passing, the loved ones would similarly arise to serve the divine Cause.

PARAGRAPH 77

Question 1: At the close of the first century of the Formative Age, what does the Bahá'í world find itself endowed with?

Answer: At the close of the first century of the Formative Age, the Bahá'í world finds itself endowed with capacity and resources only dimly imagined at the time of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's passing.

Question 2: What has generation after generation laboured for?

Answer: Generation after generation has laboured to build the Faith's Administrative Order, widen the reach of its community life, deepen its engagement with society, and develop its spiritual and administrative centre.

Question 3: Who has been raised up at the close of the first century of the Formative Age?

Answer: At the close of the first century of the Formative Age, a multitude of consecrated souls has been raised up, stretching across the globe.

Question 4: What are the consecrated souls collectively doing?

Answer: The consecrated souls, collectively, are building the Faith's Administrative Order, widening the reach of its community life, deepening its engagement with society, and developing its spiritual and administrative centre.

Question 5: What is happening across the globe at the close of the first century of the Formative Age?

Answer: Across the globe at the close of the first century of the Formative Age, consecrated souls are actively engaged in various aspects of Bahá'í community-building efforts.

PARAGRAPH 78

Question 1: How has the Bahá'í community developed organically over the past hundred years?

Answer: The Bahá'í community has developed organically over the past hundred years, evolving in size, structure, understanding, and vision, much like the growth of a human being from infancy to maturity.

Question 2: In what ways has the Bahá'í community embraced responsibilities?

Answer: The Bahá'í community has embraced responsibilities by actively participating in purposeful action across an ever-wider range of endeavors, both locally and on a global scale.

Question 3: What has the Bahá'í community strengthened over the course of the century?

Answer: Over the course of the century, the Bahá'í community has strengthened relationships among individuals, communities, and institutions.

Question 4: According to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, what did the Bahá'í community become as it executed the three Divine Charters?

Answer: According to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, as the Bahá'í community systematically executed the three Divine Charters, it became a new creation.

Question 5: What analogy is used to describe the development of the Bahá'í community over the past hundred years?

Answer: The analogy used to describe the development of the Bahá'í community over the past hundred years is that, like a human being passing through various stages of physical and intellectual growth until reaching maturity, the Bahá'í community has evolved in its understanding, vision, and capacity, embracing ever-expanding responsibilities.

PARAGRAPH 79

Question 1: How did the Bahá'í community address fundamental questions about organizing its administrative affairs as the Heroic Age drew to a close?

Answer: The Bahá'í community, guided by the Guardian, addressed fundamental questions about organizing its administrative affairs as the Heroic Age drew to a close, culminating in nascent international arrangements that were in place at the time of his passing.

Question 2: What capacity did the Bahá'í world build during the period following the Heroic Age?

Answer: The capacity built during the period following the Heroic Age allowed the Bahá'í world to take on new questions about how to carry on the work of the Faith at a greater level of breadth and complexity under the direction of the Universal House of Justice.

Question 3: What marked progress did the Bahá'í world make over several decades?

Answer: Over several decades, the Bahá'í world made marked progress, leading to the emergence of new questions about still greater opportunities for the future direction of the Cause before the beginning of the Four Year Plan.

Question 4: What characterized the process of learning that propelled the progress of the Faith?

Answer: The process of learning that propelled the progress of the Faith was characterized by the growing capacity of the Bahá'í world to resolve complex questions and take on even more complex questions, demonstrating an organic unfoldment and development of new powers and capacities.

Question 5: Despite the changes and chances of the world, what is the Bahá'í world expected to continue doing?

Answer: Despite the changes and chances of the world, the Bahá'í world is expected to continue developing new powers and capacities, taking on greater challenges as it strives to achieve Bahá'u'lláh's purpose for humanity through countless stages of the Formative and Golden Ages to the end of the Dispensation.

PARAGRAPH 80

Question 1: What has become central to the work of the Bahá'í community by the final years of the first century of the Formative Age?

Answer: By the final years of the first century of the Formative Age, a common framework for action has emerged that has become central to the work of the Bahá'í community.

Question 2: How does this framework continually evolve?

Answer: This framework continually evolves through the accumulation of experience and the guidance of the House of Justice.

Question 3: What are the pivotal elements of this framework?

Answer: The pivotal elements of this framework are the spiritual truths and cardinal principles of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation.

Question 4: Besides spiritual truths, what are other elements that contribute to thought and action within this framework?

Answer: Other elements that contribute to thought and action within this framework involve values, attitudes, concepts, and methods.

Question 5: Why is the increased capacity for learning within this framework significant?

Answer: The increased capacity for learning within this framework is significant because it allows Bahá'ís to systematically translate Bahá'u'lláh's teachings into action, realizing His high aims for the betterment of the world, with implications for the advancement of humanity at the current stage of its social development.

PARAGRAPH 81

Question 1: What are the immediate tasks outlined in the Nine Year Plan?

Answer: The immediate tasks outlined in the Nine Year Plan include the multiplication and intensification of programs of growth in clusters worldwide, increased coherence in the work of community building, social action, and participation in prevalent discourses.

Question 2: How will the training institute be further strengthened?

Answer: The training institute will be further strengthened and will continue to evolve as an educational organization that develops capabilities for service.

Question 3: What is the focus of strengthening the intellectual life of the community?

Answer: The focus of strengthening the intellectual life of the community is to provide the rigor and clarity of thought required to vindicate to a skeptical humanity the applicability of the healing remedy of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings.

Question 4: What will complement the movement of youth worldwide?

Answer: The movement of youth worldwide will be complemented by the unprecedented advancement of women as full partners in community affairs.

Question 5: How long is the challenge spanning the series of Plans in the Nine Year Plan?

Answer: The challenge spanning the series of Plans in the Nine Year Plan will carry the Bahá'í world across the threshold of its third century, lasting no less than a generation.

PARAGRAPH 82

Question 1: What larger context is the determined effort to understand and live in accordance with Bahá'u'lláh's teachings taking place within?

Answer: The determined effort to understand and live in accordance with Bahá'u'lláh's teachings takes place within the larger context of the twofold process of disintegration and integration described by Shoghi Effendi.

Question 2: What is the objective of the current series of Plans?

Answer: The objective of the current series of Plans is the release of ever-increasing measures of the society-building power of the Faith.

Question 3: What is required to attain the objective of the current series of Plans?

Answer: Attaining the objective of the current series of Plans requires an ability to read the reality of society as it responds to, and is shaped by, the twin processes of disintegration and integration.

Question 4: What is the significance of understanding the twin processes of disintegration and integration in the larger context?

Answer: Understanding the twin processes of disintegration and integration in the larger context is significant for comprehending how society responds to and is shaped by these processes.

Question 5: How does the society-building power of the Faith relate to the understanding of societal reality?

Answer: The release of ever-increasing measures of the society-building power of the Faith, the objective of the current series of Plans, is interconnected with the understanding of societal reality as it undergoes the processes of disintegration and integration.

PARAGRAPH 83

Question 1: What destructive forces and events have left their traces on the pages of history and the lives of billions?

Answer: Destructive forces and events such as environmental degradation, climate change, pandemics, the decline of religion and morals, loss of meaning and identity, erosion of truth and reason, unbridled technology, exacerbation of prejudices and ideological contention, pervasive corruption, political and economic upheaval, war, and genocide have left their traces on the pages of history and the lives of billions.

Question 2: According to Shoghi Effendi, what is purging and reshaping humanity in anticipation of a certain Day?

Answer: According to Shoghi Effendi, a "universal fermentation" is purging and reshaping humanity in anticipation of the Day when the wholeness of the human race will be recognized, and its unity

established.

Question 3: What hopeful constructive trends contribute to the universal fermentation?

Answer: Hopeful constructive trends, such as the diffusion of the spirit of world solidarity, greater consciousness of global interdependence, collaborative action among individuals and institutions, and a heightened longing for justice and peace, contribute to the universal fermentation.

Question 4: How does the movement of the world towards Bahá'u'lláh's vision advance?

Answer: The movement of the world towards Bahá'u'lláh's vision advances in countless halting steps, occasional dramatic leaps, and intermittent stretches where progress stalls or is reversed as humanity forges the relationships that constitute the foundations of a united and peaceful world.

Question 5: What is profoundly transforming human relationships, according to the passage?

Answer: The diffusion of the spirit of world solidarity, greater consciousness of global interdependence, collaborative action, and a heightened longing for justice and peace are profoundly transforming human relationships.

PARAGRAPH 84

Question 1: What marks the history of every national Bahá'í community, according to the passage?

Answer: The destructive forces that buffet the world mark the history of every national Bahá'í community.

Question 2: How have economic crises affected the Faith's financial resources?

Answer: Periodic economic crises have reduced the Faith's already limited financial resources, hindering projects for growth and development.

Question 3: What effect did world war have on the ability of most communities to implement systematic plans?

Answer: The effects of world war paralysed for a time the ability of most communities to implement systematic plans.

Question 4: What has created obstacles to the full participation of some populations in the work of the Cause?

Answer: The upheavals that have reshaped the political map of the world have created obstacles to the full participation of some populations in the work of the Cause.

Question 5: According to the passage, what response to hostile forces opposing the advance of the Cause has been witnessed?

Answer: Over the past century, no nobler response to the hostile forces unleashed to oppose the advance of the Cause has been witnessed than that of the Bahá'ís of Iran.

PARAGRAPH 85

Question 1: What has marked the history of the Bahá'ís of Iran from the earliest years of the Guardian's ministry?

Answer: The persecution endured by the Bahá'ís of Iran has marked their history from the earliest years of the Guardian's ministry.

Question 2: How has the intensity of repression against the Bahá'ís of Iran changed over time?

Answer: Waves of violent repression against the Bahá'ís of Iran escalated in intensity in the attacks and systematic campaign of oppression following the Iranian Revolution, continuing unremittingly to the present day.

Question 3: What achievements are highlighted in the passage regarding the Bahá'ís of Iran?

Answer: The establishment of the Bahá'í Institute for Higher Education to ensure education, efforts to transform views, and enduring countless injustices to protect fellow believers and safeguard the presence of Bahá'u'lláh's Faith in Iran.

Question 4: In the face of persecution, how have the Bahá'ís of Iran responded?

Answer: Despite enduring persecution, the Bahá'ís of Iran have responded with unbowed courage and constructive resilience.

Question 5: According to the passage, what lies in the endurance of the Bahá'ís of Iran?

Answer: In the endurance of the Bahá'ís of Iran lies essential lessons for how the Bahá'í world must respond to the acceleration of destructive forces in the years ahead.

PARAGRAPH 86

Question 1: According to the passage, what is the challenge presented by the interplay of integration and disintegration processes?

Answer: The challenge is holding fast to Bahá'u'lláh's description of reality and teachings while resisting

the pull of controversial debates and beguiling prescriptions.

Question 2: How does Bahá'u'lláh describe the role of the All-Knowing Physician in the passage?

Answer: Bahá'u'lláh describes the All-Knowing Physician as perceiving the disease of humanity and prescribing the remedy with unerring wisdom.

Question 3: What does Bahá'u'lláh state about the current state of the human race in the passage?

Answer: Bahá'u'lláh states, "We can well perceive how the whole human race is encompassed with great, with incalculable afflictions."

Question 4: According to the passage, what happens if Bahá'ís become entangled in delusory notions?

Answer: If Bahá'ís become entangled in delusory notions, the release of forces necessary to redeem humanity will be delayed and obstructed.

Question 5: How does the Guardian describe the role of the champion builders of Bahá'u'lláh's World Order?

Answer: The Guardian describes them as needing to scale nobler heights of heroism, particularly as humanity faces greater depths of despair and distress, coinciding with an apocalyptic upheaval.

PARAGRAPH 87

Question 1: What is certain, according to the passage?

Answer: One thing certain is that the process of integration will accelerate, bringing together those learning to translate Bahá'u'lláh's teachings with those in the wider society seeking justice and peace.

Question 2: What will signalize the arrival of the stage when nations recognize the unity and wholeness of humankind?

Answer: The arrival of that Great Peace will signalize the stage when nations recognize the unity and wholeness of humankind.

Question 3: According to Shoghi Effendi in *The Advent of Divine Justice*, what did he explain to the Bahá'ís of America?

Answer: Shoghi Effendi explained that, given the restricted size of their community and limited influence, they must focus on their own growth and development as they learned to apply the Teachings.

Question 4: What did Shoghi Effendi promise to the Bahá'ís of America in The Advent of Divine Justice?

Answer: Shoghi Effendi promised that the time would come when they would be called upon to engage their fellow citizens in a process of working for the healing and betterment of their nation.

Question 5: According to the passage, when has the time come for the Bahá'ís of the world?

Answer: The time has now come for the Bahá'ís of the world to engage in a process of working for the healing and betterment of their respective societies.

PARAGRAPH 88

Question 1: What responsibility do the friends, as bearers of Bahá'u'lláh's message, have?

Answer: The responsibility of the friends is to assist populations in releasing their latent potentialities to achieve their highest aspirations.

Question 2: What do the friends strive to demonstrate in their efforts?

Answer: The friends strive to demonstrate the efficacy of the divine remedy in the lives of individuals and communities.

Question 3: According to the passage, what will Bahá'u'lláh's vision offer to peoples?

Answer: Bahá'u'lláh's vision will offer a hopeful and clear direction to peoples distorted by confusion, providing a constructive path for cooperation in the search for solutions to long-standing social maladies.

Question 4: What does the spirit of the Faith increasingly instill in the hearts of people?

Answer: The spirit of the Faith increasingly instills a sense of loyal and conscientious civic responsibility, redirecting energies towards disinterested service in the pursuit of the common good.

Question 5: What method do populations increasingly adopt to displace contest and conflict?

Answer: Populations increasingly adopt the method of consultation, action, and reflection to displace endless contest and conflict.

PARAGRAPH 89

Question 1: What does the world's destiny signify as stated in the passage?

Answer: The world is moving on towards its destiny.

Question 2: According to the passage, what will enable the promoters of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh to achieve their purpose?

Answer: The potentialities endowed by an almighty Providence will enable the promoters to achieve their purpose.

Question 3: What factors, according to the passage, will depend on the spirit and manner of conducting the task?

Answer: The factors that will depend on the spirit and manner of conducting the task include the clearness and steadiness of vision, vitality of belief, incorruptibility of character, adamant force of resolve, superiority of aims, purpose, and the range of accomplishments.

Question 4: What is the metaphor used to describe those who labor for the glory of the Most Great Name?

Answer: They are described as a tender sapling embedded in the fertile soil of a Divinely appointed Administrative Order.

Question 5: When, according to the passage, will the sapling yield its richest and destined fruit?

Answer: The sapling will yield its richest and destined fruit when those who labor for the glory of the Most Great Name demonstrate their power to proffer a haven of refuge to society in the hour of its realized doom.