

MESSAGE

TO THE INDIAN AND ESKIMO BAHÁ'ÍS
OF THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE

By:

'AMATU'L-BAHÁ RÚHÍYYIH KHÁNUM

Axel & Elizabeth Aubichon

Toronto, Canada
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FOREWORD

The writer of this letter, 'Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khanum has served the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh with great distinction for many years. She was born of a distinguished Canadian Bahá'í family and raised in Montreal. In 1937 she had the great honour of being chosen as his wife by Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith. In more recent years, Rúhíyyih Khanum has served with the rank of a Hand of the Cause, and in the course of her world-wide travels has visited various tribes of Indian people throughout the Western Hemisphere. In Canada, one tribe, the Blackfoot, conferred upon her the name of "Blessed Mother".

In the letter printed here, Rúhíyyih Khanum speaks of the assurance given in the Bahá'í Writings that the future of the Indian Eskimo people is very great. She explains that the Indian and Eskimo believers can themselves best help to fulfill these promises by taking the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh to their own people.

It is with a great sense of happiness and privilege that Canada's National Spiritual Assembly is able to reproduce for wider distribution this inspiring letter which Rúhíyyih Khanum has written to those whom she regards as her "especially loved Brothers and Sisters".

National Spiritual Assembly
of the Bahá'ís of Canada



'AMATU'L-BAHÁ RÚHÍYYIH KHÁNUM

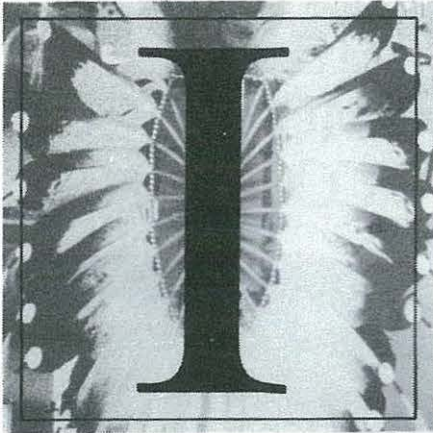
Haifa
March 16, 1969

TO THE INDIAN AND ESKIMO BAHÁ'ÍS OF THE AMERICAN CONTINENT



MY ESPECIALLY LOVED BROTHERS AND SISTERS

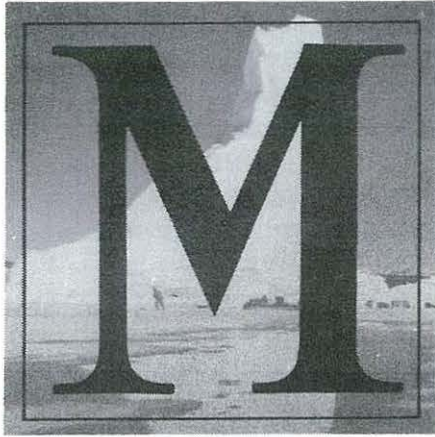
In these days when I arise before dawn and begin the Fast given to us by God as an added sign of His mercy in this age of Bahá'u'lláh, my thoughts go out to you with particular intensity, to you all, my brothers and sisters in the Cause of God.



remember my visit some years ago to the Navajos and to the Hopis in the United States and to the Blackfoot Indians in Canada, who gave me my beautiful Indian name, Natu-Okcist (Blessed Mother) and last year to the Chaco, the Guaymi and Kuna friends in Panama, to the Aymara and Quechua peoples in Bolivia, Peru and

Ecuador, to the Mapuche brothers and sisters in Chile, to the new-found Mataco friends in Argentina, to the group of Macá believers in Paraguay, to the many brothers and sisters among the Guajiras in Venezuela and Colombia and last but not least my dear Motilón friends in the mountains near Valledupar, Colombia, and I cannot describe to you how much I long to be with you again. As I write these words the tears come to my eyes, so deep is my love for you, so keen the sense that we are true brothers and sisters.

It has come to my mind that many of you do not know the destiny God has ordained for you in this age of His supreme mercy showered upon all mankind and that is one reason I am writing this general letter to all my old friends, and to the many Indian and Eskimo believers I have not had the opportunity to see or visit. The other reason is to send you my love and good wishes on the eve of our Bahá'í New Year, March 21st.



y friends, how can I convey to you the bounties of Almighty God showered upon your people in this day? And you ask yourselves, what people? We, the Mapuches, or we the Kunas? The answer is a wonderful one: the world is divided into two halves, two sides; on one of its sides, stretching between two seas, have lived the Indian and

Eskimo peoples for countless thousands of years. This side was their homeland. This homeland is such a vast distance that it would take a man at least two years to walk from one end to the other if he could walk every day fast and uninterruptedly —but there are so many mountains, rivers and deserts in between, that it would take him more than ten years! All of you tribes, and many, many hundreds more whose names I have not mentioned here because I have not been fortunate enough to visit them, are one great people, the Indian people of the American Continent. The Eskimo people of the extreme north are a different cousin-people but also belong to what the white man calls the “New World” because hundreds of years ago, when he sailed from his homeland across the seas to your homeland it was for him a new world. But for you, of course, it was an old world, your own homeland.

As you well know we men are not always kind to each other. We do not love each other as brothers. We have fought against each other and taken the land and homes and hunting grounds of each other as far back as memory goes. When the white man went to the Redman’s

half of the world hundreds of years ago, he fought against and defeated the Redman. This you all know. It was not a good thing he did, but he acted as men have in the past, taking away from people who were different from himself what he wanted because he was stronger. The reason he was stronger was not because his character was nobler and better but because his weapons were newer and better and he had gun powder which was unknown to the Redman. It is a very long story and we cannot go into it here. The reason I am mentioning it is because if you do not remember these facts about your own history, facts you yourself may not even know, you will not be able to understand how very great is the glad tiding God has sent you in this day through His Messenger, Bahá'u'lláh, and you will not grasp the importance for you of what is written in the Bahá'í teachings for you and about you.



ut before I tell you this I want to tell you that I am sure a day will come when the Redman will study and know the history of his people; the white man has been studying the Redman's history now for 400 years and the more he studies the more he admires you. You are a great race. Your people in the New World, before the white man

came, built mighty cities, beautiful cities and temples. You made with your hands wonderful statues and vessels of pottery, of gold, of silver and of jewels, as well a dresses and head-dresses of bead work and feathers, of woven wool and other materials. So beautiful were the ornaments you made of all these materials, that the white man has

collected them in special houses where thousands of people pay to enter and look at them and the school children are taken on special trips to see them. Other people in the world are more and more studying the history of the Redman, finding where his ancient cities and temples are hidden in the jungles, the mountains and the plains, uncovering them so that people may visit them and marvel at the greatness of the works of the Redman.

You must never feel that you are an inferior people, a people without knowledge. My friends, each of us has 5 fingers on his hand. We know that we need each one of our fingers. There are red men, black men, white men, brown men and yellow men (as we call them in our language) in this world; they are like the fingers of the hand, each one needed, each one a part of the same hand. How much our work would suffer if we lost one finger! We are like the children of one father who has placed his sons in different houses throughout the world. In this day the heavenly Father of us all, Bahá'u'lláh, has come looking for his beloved sons. He calls to them to come to Him for He has prepared a great feast on the occasion of His homecoming and wants His sons all gathered at His table to eat of His bounty together. You red men, you Indians and Eskimos of the New World, are one of those sons and you are being called by the voice of God to come and eat your share now. This is not a small thing. This is the greatest thing that has happened to you. This is shining upon you like the sun in the noon day heaven, so do not be blind to this blessed light!

Now let me tell you what is in the Bahá'í teachings on this subject which concerns you so deeply. The One Who came before Bahá'u'lláh, His Forerunner, Who was to Him as John the Baptist was to Jesus Christ, the One Who announced Him, already over 125 years ago, far away from your land, on the other side of the world, called the people of the West, and this included the red men as well as the white men, to arise and aid God and become as brothers in God's

religion which today is the religion of Bahá'u'lláh. This was the first call to you. Then Bahá'u'lláh Himself wrote and addressed the rulers of the American Continent, your homeland, and called upon them to recognize Himself Who had been sent by God in this day and enjoined upon them to deal justly and to fear God and remember God. This was a great honour to the nations of the New World that Bahá'u'lláh should address their rulers in such words. There are also other words of Bahá'u'lláh about the peoples of the West, and you are part of the many peoples of the West—indeed the red men, not the white men, are the true and original people of the West. So we may call the words of Bahá'u'lláh the second call to you.

The beloved son and successor of Bahá'u'lláh, Who was known as the Master, not only blessed the New World by visiting it but travelled from its East Coast to its West Coast in the United States and Canada. He wrote many wonderful things about the greatness and future of your homeland and its people. Among them are these words: "The continent of America is, in the eyes of the one true God, the land wherein the splendors of His light shall be revealed, where the mysteries of His Faith shall be unveiled, where the righteous will abide and the free assemble." See how great is the future of that half of the world which is your homeland! Because 'Abdu'l-Bahá was a very old man in frail health and there were no aeroplanes in His days, He was only able to visit North America. He told the followers of Bahá'u'lláh in that part of your continent: "Your mission is unspeakably glorious" and he assured them that if they made efforts to carry this message of God, which Bahá'u'lláh has brought to us in this age, to other peoples and nations then everyone would sing the praises of the greatness of this American Bahá'í Community. You Indian and Eskimo believers in North America are members of that Community. Your destiny as Bahá'ís is the same as that of other Bahá'ís, for there is no distinction, the sure promise affects all. And you Eskimo and Indian believers of Alaska and Canada, you Indian

believers of Central and South America, you are part of those peoples addressed by the Báb, by Bahá'u'lláh, by His son the Master, called 'Abdu'l-Bahá. And 'Abdu'l-Bahá's many words to the Bahá'ís of the West are, we may say, the third call to you.



ut your people, the red men, have been singled out for a special promise by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, a promise that is in many ways unique, a deep promise the words of which you can never ponder upon sufficiently and which I believe you should commit to memory. You are, many of you I know, faced by heavy problems: injustice, poverty,

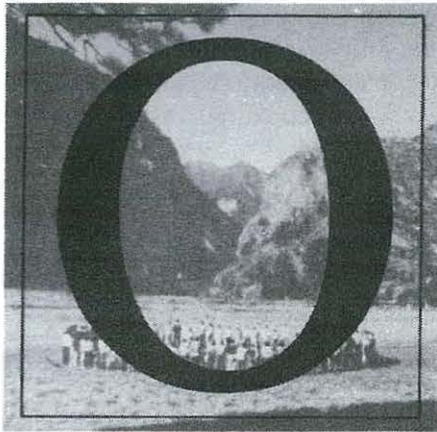
lack of education. If you could see with the eye of the spirit you would see that this promise of 'Abdu'l-Bahá is like a rope put in the hand of a man who has fallen in deep water and cannot swim. If you hold to this promise it will pull you, perhaps not you yourself at once, but slowly and surely your children and grandchildren out of the water to safely and is this not better than just saving yourself alone?

What 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote was this: "You must attach great importance to the Indians, the original inhabitants of America" and this was followed by His sure promise to you: "Should these Indians be educated and properly guided, there can be no doubt that through the Divine teachings they will become so enlightened that the whole earth will be illuminated." How is it 'Abdu'l-Bahá said such a wonderful thing about your people? Over 50 years ago He wrote to the Bahá'ís in North America — in those days the message of

Bahá'u'lláh had not reached Central and South America – and instructed them to go forth and teach this wonderful message to other nations and peoples. And He reminded them that in a past time, when God had sent one of His Divine Messengers to educate men spiritually, that Messenger had appeared among a very backward and ignorant people. But they memorized the words given them and these words entered their minds and their souls and filled them with such light and knowledge that that people became a great and famous people and carried the light they had received all over the world, and He likens your people to that other people who changed the world. Now you see how very great is this promise of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, for He says if you Indians accept Bahá'u'lláh's message and take His words and teachings into your minds and souls you will be a means of casting light upon the entire world. What a blessing has been given to you, my friends. This we may say is the fourth call to you. Know its worth.

'Abdu'l-Bahá likewise did not forget to mention the Eskimo brothers and sisters and promised that when this message of Bahá'u'lláh is shared with them the effect will be very great and its influence spread very far.

And now we come to days that are closer to us. You know that God, in this day, when He has sent the Father in our midst, has blessed us as never before. He gave us the Báb, the Herald, He gave us Bahá'u'lláh, the Father, He gave us 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the son of Bahá'u'lláh, to guide and interpret for us the words of Bahá'u'lláh, and when 'Abdu'l-Bahá died He appointed for us as Guardian, guide and interpreter of our teachings His own dear, eldest grandson, whose name was Shoghi Effendi. Shoghi Effendi's words to the Indians and about the Indians and the Eskimos are very important and dear friends, these are the fifth call addressed to you. So see how richly you have been blessed by God in this day!



On December 21, 1947, over 21 years ago, Shoghi Effendi replied to the first letter ever addressed to him by Indian Bahá'ís. It was from a group of the Omaha tribe of Indians in Macy, Nebraska, in the United States. Shoghi Effendi wrote to them in his own handwriting saying:

Dearly beloved co-workers:

Your joint message filled my heart with joy and gratitude. I welcome your historic letter, and regard it as a landmark in the history of our beloved Faith. I will pray for every one of you from the depth of my heart, and will supplicate the Almighty to bless and sustain you and aid you to deepen your knowledge of the Faith and promote effectively its best interests. Persevere in your task, and rest assured that Bahá'u'lláh will watch over you and guide you.

Your true brother,

SHOGHI.

It was the custom of our beloved Guardian Shoghi Effendi to instruct his secretary what to answer in the first part of the letter and then Shoghi Effendi himself would add in his own writing a special message. What you have just read is Shoghi Effendi's message; now I will quote what I who was his wife and acted as his secretary wrote

in the first part of that letter because this letter was, as Shoghi Effendi says, an historic one, the first one to Indian brothers and sisters.

Dear Bahá'í Friends:

Our beloved Guardian has received your letter to him, dated October 22nd, with feelings of great joy and he has instructed me to answer it on his behalf.

The original population of the United States was very dear to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's heart, and he foretold for the Indians a great future if they accepted and became enlightened by the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh.

To believe in the Mouthpiece of God in His Day confers very great blessings, not only on individuals, but on races, and he hopes that you who are now numbered amongst the followers of Bahá'u'lláh will give His Message to many more of your tribe, and in this way hasten for your people a bright and happy future.

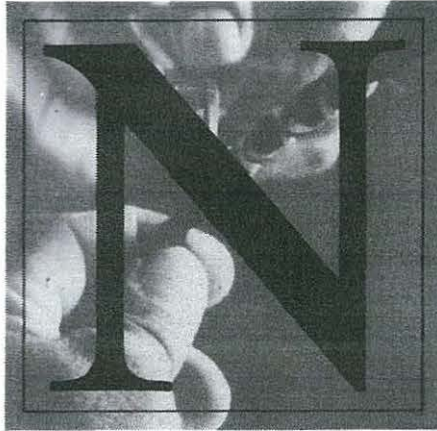
You may be sure he will pray for each and every one of you, that God may bless and protect your lives and increase your numbers.

With warmest Bahá'í love,

R. RABBANI

I am absolutely sure that had each one of you been able to write our Guardian during his lifetime he would have replied to each one of you with the same sentiments of love he has expressed here, the same joy in welcoming you as his brothers and sisters, the same instructions to teach and spread the message of Bahá'u'lláh among your own tribes? So please take his letter as your own letter from him.

So precious to Shoghi Effendi was the enrollment of members representing different tribes of Indians and Eskimos that he kept a separate list of their names and was very proud of it and hastened to add each new tribe as news reached him that a member of it had become a follower of Bahá'u'lláh and accepted His message.



Now I want to share with you some of the many words of Shoghi Effendi regarding the Indians and the Eskimos. You must remember that because many of your white Bahá'í brothers and sisters came from the big cities, where most of the people have gone to schools and can read and write, they were usually the first to hear about

Bahá'u'lláh and accept him and this is why Shoghi Effendi so repeatedly and insistently has urged them to go out and carry the message of Bahá'u'lláh to other people, especially those living far away and in the country. All the time Shoghi Effendi urged all the Bahá'ís, the Indian Bahá'ís also, as you see in his letter to the Omaha Indians, to teach this Faith to others.

In 1952, when word reached Shoghi Effendi that in Canada some of the Bahá'ís were teaching this faith to the Eskimos and the Indians his secretary wrote at his instruction to the Canadian National Bahá'í Assembly that "The Guardian was most happy to hear of the excellent work some of the Bahá'ís are doing with the Eskimos and the Indians, and considers their spirit most exemplary. They are rendering a far greater service than they, themselves, are aware of,

the fruits of which will be seen, not only in Canada, but because of their repercussions, in other countries where primitive populations must be taught.”

From these years when the first Indians and Eskimos were being attracted to this Faith and accepting Bahá'u'lláh until the time when he passed away in 1955 Shoghi Effendi refers to this subject many times in letters to National Bahá'í Assemblies throughout the length of the entire American Continent which is your own homeland. In another letter to the Canadian Assembly he speaks of “the strenuous yet highly meritorious obligation to add, steadily and rapidly, to the number of the American Indian and Eskimo adherents of the Faith, and to ensure their active participation in both the teaching and administrative spheres of Bahá'í activity – a task so clearly emphasized by the Pen of the Centre of the Covenant ('Abdu'l-Bahá), and in the consummation of which the Canadian Bahá'í Community is destined to play so conspicuous a part.”

In a letter to the Alaskan National Assembly Shoghi Effendi says “Nor must the vital obligation of converting, as speedily as possible, both the Eskimos and the American Indians, who, as time passes, must assume a notable share in the diffusion of the Faith and the establishment of its rising Order in those regions, be, under any circumstances neglected...”

As early as 1945, two years before the letter from the Omaha Indians reached him, Shoghi Effendi's secretary had written on his behalf that “He has always been very anxious to have the Indians taught and enlisted under the banner of the Faith, in view of the Master's remarkable statements about the possibilities of their future and that they represent the aboriginal American population.”

His secretary wrote the National Assembly in Central America

in 1951 that "Shoghi Effendi is also most anxious for the Message to reach the aboriginal inhabitants of the Americas. These people, for the most part down-trodden and ignorant, should receive from the Bahá'ís a special measure of love, and every effort be made to teach them. Their enrollment in the Faith will enrich them and us, and demonstrate our principle of the Oneness of Man far better than words or the wide conversion of the ruling races ever can."

To the National Assembly of South America he wrote that same year, through his secretary, expressing similar thoughts. "The Guardian feels that special efforts must be made to enroll the primitive peoples of South America in the Cause. These souls, often so exploited and despised, deserve to hear of the Faith, and will become a great asset to it once their hearts are enlightened."

In 1957, during the last months of his life, in letters of great importance to different National Bahá'í Assemblies throughout the American Continent – the last letters they were ever to receive from their beloved Guardian – he again emphasized the extreme importance of this subject, speaking of the "long overdue conversion" of both the Indian and Eskimo peoples to this Faith, saying that a fresh impetus must be given to the work of "the conversion of the American Indians" and that it should receive the "close and uninterrupted attention of all those" who were primarily responsible for carrying out the plan then being undertaken.

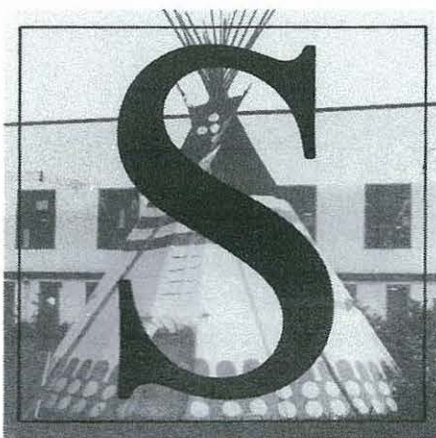
Shoghi Effendi's secretary wrote on his behalf to the National Assembly of the United States that "He understands from some pilgrims who have arrived since the annual Convention was held and who were present on that occasion, that there are many volunteers who offered to go out and teach the American Indians. This is a particularly important phase of Bahá'í activity, and long a sadly neglected one, and he urges your Assembly to do everything in its

power to facilitate these believers, desirous of teaching the Indians, getting to their posts as soon as possible.”

To the National Bahá'í Assemblies of Latin America, during the last years of his life, he wrote with his own hand that “The efforts exerted to enroll a great number of American Indians under the banner of the Faith must be redoubled. The translation of Bahá'í literature into the Spanish, the Portuguese and the Indian languages must be given a tremendous impetus...”; “The translation of Bahá'í literature into the Spanish and Indian American languages, its publication and dissemination, should likewise be carried out with efficiency and vigour. The all-important enterprise, aimed at winning the whole-hearted allegiance of the members of the various tribes of American Indians to the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh, and at ensuring their active and sustained participation in the conduct of its administrative affairs, must, likewise be seriously considered and strenuously pursued.” “The translation, publication and dissemination of Bahá'í literature in both the Spanish and American Indian languages...the acceleration of the process of converting the Negroes as well as the American Indians, and of encouraging them to take an active part in teaching the Faith to the members of their respective races, and to participate effectively in the administration of its affairs – these constitute additional and vital obligations which should, under no circumstances, be lost sight of nor be, for a moment, underrated...”

In 1957 Shoghi Effendi informed the Latin American National Assemblies, through his secretary, that “special attention must be focused on the work of converting the Indians to the Faith. The goal should be all-Indian assemblies, so that these much exploited and suppressed original inhabitants of the land may realize that they are equals and partners in the affairs of the Cause of God, and that Bahá'u'lláh is the Manifestation of God for them.” “He was particularly happy to see that some of the Indian believers were

present at the Convention. He attaches the greatest importance to teaching the original inhabitants of the Americas the Faith. 'Abdu'l-Bahá Himself has stated how great are their potentialities, and it is their right, and the duty of the non-Indian Bahá'ís, to see that they receive the Message of God for this day. One of the most worthy objectives of your Assembly must be the establishment of all-Indian Spiritual Assemblies."



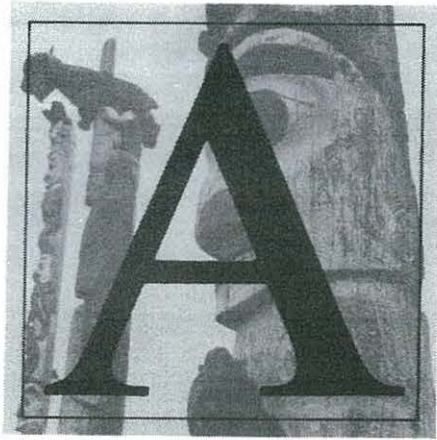
Shoghi Effendi had a plan, which he uninterruptedly pursued throughout the years, aimed at not only bringing the Redman into the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, but of ensuring that when he did become a Bahá'í he should exert his rights and privileges and assume his duties and responsibilities the same as any other Bahá'í, of any

other tribe or race, in any part of the world. In 1947, in a detailed letter to the North American Bahá'ís, Shoghi Effendi shows how much importance he attaches to the Indian tribes throughout the length and breadth of the New World hearing about and accepting Bahá'u'lláh. "The initial contact already established, in the concluding years of the first Bahá'í century, in obedience to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's mandate, with the Cherokee and Oneida Indians in North Carolina and Wisconsin, with the Patagonian, the Mexican and the Inca Indians, and the Mayans in Argentina, Mexico, Peru and Yucatan, respectively, should, as the Latin American Bahá'í communities gain in stature and strength, be consolidated and extended. A special effort should be exerted to secure the unqualified adherence of members of

some of their tribes to the Faith, their subsequent election to its councils, and their unreserved support of the organized attempts that will have to be made in the future by the projected National Assemblies for the large-scale conversion of Indian races to the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh."

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Not only did Shoghi Effendi attach the greatest importance to those who, at that time, were mostly Bahá'ís belonging to the white race going out to teach the Indians and Eskimos, he longed for the day when you would arise and teach your own people this Faith. These words written at his instruction by his secretary make this very clear: "He was gratified to see the large numbers of tribes which had been recently contacted in connection with the teaching of the Faith. However, he is very anxious that these contacts be changed into converts for the Faith. As you know, he attaches the utmost importance to the teaching of the American Indians; and he hopes your Committee will concentrate to see that actual converts are made among these tribes, so that the converts themselves can in turn teach their own people. He hopes that you will be able to give him in the near future a further report of conversions which have been made amongst these various tribes," and the joy of Shoghi Effendi when he heard that one of the Indian Bahá'ís had travelled hundreds of kilometres to go back to his own tribe and teach its members this good message from Bahá'u'lláh is shown in these words of Shoghi Effendi's secretary written in 1950 to the Canadian National Assembly: "The work being done by various Bahá'ís, including our dear Indian believer who returned from the United States in order to pioneer amongst his own people, in teaching the Canadian Indians, is one of the most important fields of activity under your jurisdiction. The Guardian hopes that ere long many of these original Canadians will take an active part in Bahá'í affairs and arise to redeem their brethren from the obscurity and despondency into which they have fallen."



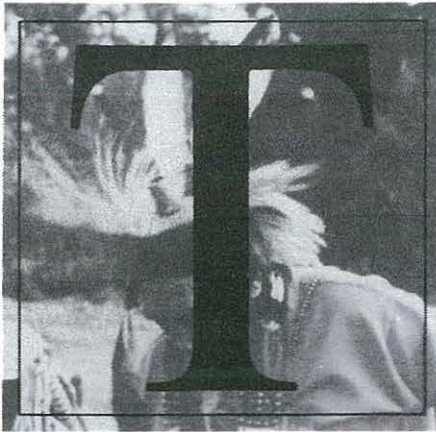
nd now my beloved brothers and sisters I come to the part of this letter that makes me the happiest to write. What can you yourselves do to win the good pleasure of God, to attract upon your people, your tribes, your families and your descendants His great blessings? Teach His Cause, this is your duty, this is your great privilege! Some

of you are very well educated people, in North America not only reading and writing in English, and in Central and South America in Spanish and Portuguese, but masters of your own native Indian tongues as well; and you have seen from the Guardian's words that he attached so much importance to your own languages he wished Bahá'í books to be translated and published in them. However, many of you dear friends, I know, do not know how to read and write at all and some one is reading these words to you and as you listen a feeling of sorrow comes into your heart and you say to yourself "What can I do, poor one that I am?" But there is no cause for this sorrow and I will prove this to you from the words of our Guardian, who based all he said on the words of our Father, Bahá'u'lláh. Our Guardian wrote: "How often – and the early history of the Faith in the land of its birth offers many a striking testimony – have the lowliest adherents of the Faith, unschooled and utterly inexperienced, and with no standing whatever, and in some cases devoid of intelligence, been capable of winning victories for their Cause, before which the most brilliant achievements of the learned, the wise, and the experienced have paled."

Now in the world today there is a great increase in schools and many more people can read and write than in the past. But this must never be confused with wisdom and knowledge. For thousands of years most men could never read or write, even the great chiefs and leaders, even Jesus Christ the Son of God could not read or write and many more of the holiest men who ever lived were illiterate. To not be able to read or write was normal, to be able to read and write was very exceptional; therefore we must never be ashamed we cannot read or write. We must seek to learn to read and write if this is possible, but never consider that because we cannot do so we are inferior. My friends, look at the world around you: admittedly there are many great things the white man has created and much of it is good, but what about all the evil he is creating? What about his terrible wars, his cruelty, his bad conduct, his lying and cheating and immorality and shamelessness –yet he reads and writes very well! So we must realize that to be a noble human being, a good man or woman, not to lie, not to steal, not to be cruel is more important than reading or writing and it makes me sad to have to confess that in the cities of the white man, with all his money and education, his conduct is much worse than the conduct of my Indian brothers and sisters in the villages, who are poor but believe in God, who are illiterate but still believe man has a spirit that goes on after death and whose moral standard is much higher than that of the people of the cities. Shoghi Effendi wrote these words through his secretary many years ago; they show how well he understood you and your problems and in what terms he spoke to the white Bahá'ís about you:

It is a great mistake to believe that because people are illiterate or live primitive lives, they are lacking in either intelligence or sensibility. On the contrary, they may well look on us, with the evils of our civilization, with its moral corruption, its ruinous wars, its hypocrisy and conceit, as people who merit watching with both suspicion and

contempt. We should meet them as equals, well-wishers, people who admire and respect their ancient descent, and who feel that they will be interested, as we are, in a living religion and not in the dead forms of present-day churches.



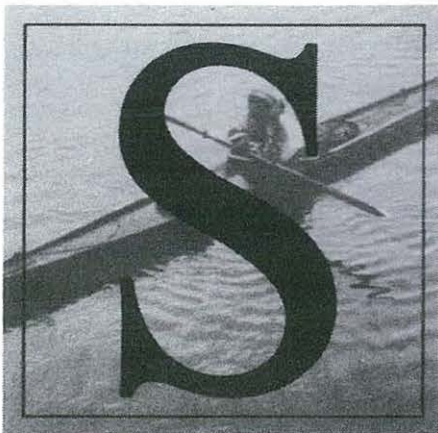
herefore friends, I beg of you never be ashamed of yourselves. You were created by God a great people, and God, through the message of Bahá'u'lláh, is calling you to meet the great destiny He has in store for you in this day. Ponder these wonderful words of Bahá'u'lláh, promising to each one of us who accepts Him and serves Him

an everlasting joy and happiness: "O my servants! Sorrow not if, in these days and on this earthly plane, things contrary to your wishes have been ordained and manifested by God, for days of blissful joy, of heavenly delight, are assuredly in store for you. Worlds, holy and spiritually glorious, will be unveiled to your eyes."

We Bahá'ís belong to what Shoghi Effendi called an all-embracing Bahá'í fraternity. He told us that we must call upon all men to enter into this great system, this great fraternity of Bahá'u'lláh, because it is destined for all men, was made by God in this day to suit all men. No matter what the colour of their skins, their past religions, their political beliefs, the languages they speak or the tribes and nations they belong to, we must call them to come to Bahá'u'lláh, in this day, accept His message and receive His laws which will bring justice and peace, love and brotherhood into the

world.

One of the fundamental teachings of Bahá'u'lláh is that the brotherhood of men is not to be made of men who are all alike, but men who are all different. Think of your own children, how terrible it would be if they all looked exactly alike! If each one had a face like the other so you could not tell them apart! How happy you are to see them different, to see the nose of one is larger, the eyes of another longer, the lips of a third one fuller, the cheeks of a fourth one fatter! So we Bahá'ís believe it is with the children of God, each people is different, each has his own colour, his own language, his own looks, his own gifts and to God they are all His children, no one to be loved more than another, each one wanted and needed in the family of man. When we Bahá'ís teach we must teach these things. Shoghi Effendi said we men of all races are like the thread in the cloth, each thread is different. When we are woven together by Bahá'u'lláh's teachings then His design, the great design of the Father for this day, will come out and be seen in all its beauty.



Shoghi Effendi said another thing which is of great importance to you Indians and Eskimos who are not white men. In the last months of his life, through the words of his secretary in his letter to one of the National Assemblies in your part of the world, he said that "the degree to which all over the world the Bahá'í Community is becoming

representative of the vast majority of the human race, in other words,

non-whites, is very salutary." What he is saying is very important and you must ponder it deeply, for it means this is not a white man's religion for white men, but a religion for all men and the majority of men are not white. In that same letter his important views on another subject are expressed: "You must help the believers to realize that ultimately it is upon each individual that the progress of the Faith depends. The Bahá'ís are prone to attaching too much emphasis to their being on Assemblies and Committees. This kind of work is essential, because somebody has to do it, but it is not the most important part. The individual responsibility to teach the Faith is the most important thing of all, and this has been clearly pointed out by Bahá'u'lláh Himself."

Perhaps, like all of us, you will make the excuse that you are not qualified, that you are ignorant of the teachings, that you have no tongue to speak and summon men to God. But Shoghi Effendi has already given this answer to all your excuses, in a letter he wrote shortly before he left this world, to the National Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States, through his secretary: "...It is not enough for the friends to make the excuse that their best teachers and exemplary believers have arisen and answered the call to pioneer. A 'best teacher' and an 'exemplary believer' is ultimately neither more nor less than an ordinary Bahá'í who has consecrated himself to the work of the Faith, deepened his knowledge and understanding of its Teachings, placed his confidence in Bahá'u'lláh, and arisen to serve Him to the best of his ability. This door is one which we are assured will open before the face of every follower of the Faith who knocks hard enough, so to speak. When the will and the desire are strong enough, the means will be found..."

In his own words, Shoghi Effendi has expressed his desire for you. He wished the Indians, he wrote, "to take an active part in

teaching the Faith to the members of their respective races, and to participate effectively in the administration of its affairs.”



wenty-two years ago Shoghi Effendi expressed the desire that when the countries of Latin America were in a position to have their own National Assemblies “the large-scale conversion of the Indian races to the Faith of Bahá’u’lláh” should be undertaken. That day, friends, has been reached and it is the time for your people to hear

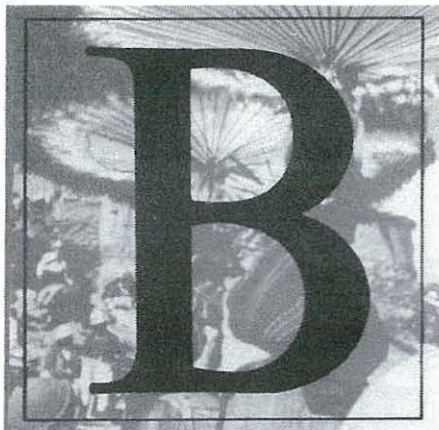
about Bahá’u’lláh and accept Him by the thousands. Who will tell them? The answer, my beloved brothers and sisters, must be you. Your white Bahá’í brothers and sisters will help you, but I firmly believe the greater part of this work must be undertaken by yourselves and there are many reasons for this. One is that we white people do not speak your languages which require much time for us to learn, and we do not seem to be very good at learning other peoples’ languages. Another is that city people have lived so long away from the beautiful wilderness God has given to all men that most of them have forgotten how to live in that wilderness. Many of them are become soft and weak and become sick easily if they have to walk too much, or go without food, or sleep where they are not used to sleeping, or it is too hot or too cold. Therefore you who are stronger, and speak your own languages, must give this wonderful message of Bahá’u’lláh to your fellow Indians and Eskimos.

It will no doubt comfort you and interest you to know that

Bahá'u'lláh, although He came of a wealthy family of great chiefs, walked in the wilderness for many months, slept on the ground, lived on a handful of food and patiently endured both extreme heat and extreme cold. He had the fortitude of the Redman and not the weakness of the white man. So friends, you must follow in Bahá'u'lláh's own footsteps and walk out to teach your own people His glad tidings in this new day we are living in.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, at that same period when he wrote of how great your peoples' destiny will be if they accept the message of Bahá'u'lláh, also wrote: "O, that I could travel, even on foot and in the utmost poverty, to these regions, and raising the call of 'Ya Bahá'u'-Abhá in cities, villages, mountains, deserts and oceans, promote the Divine teachings! This, alas, I cannot do. How immensely I deplore it! Please God, ye may achieve it." He was an old man at the end of His life when He wrote these words. But He called upon all of us to do it, so arise, dear friends, and heed His call!

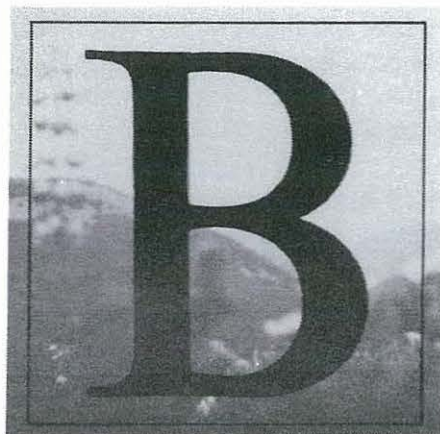
When I was in Bolivia last year talking with some of my new Indian Bahá'í brothers they said they would like to teach their relatives and friends and tribes this Faith, but they knew nothing about it, so how could they? I said to them, "You know it is a message from God, don't you? And you know its purpose is to unite all men as brothers and bring peace into the world, don't you? And you know it is a good thing, don't you? So get up and go and tell others this good news and if you find they are eager to hear more, when one of your travelling teachers comes along to visit you next time, take him to see these people you have found who are eager to learn more of Bahá'u'lláh and His teachings and he will tell them more." This is the only way, friends, there is no other way. And this each one of you can do, and others who know more will help you, and as you teach, the great miracle will take place and you will find you know more to teach. This is the promise of Bahá'u'lláh to assist all those who arise to serve Him.



ahá'u'lláh has taught us so much, and yet it is all very simple. Think of the sun. It is one sun and gives one light to everything everywhere in the world. But think of the thousands of things that grow in this world from that one sun and one light! If we plant potatoes, they will grow because of its light; if we plant corn it will grow because of

its light; if we plant beans they will grow because of its light. Whatever we plant will grow because of its light. Its light is the answer to each thing. So is it with Bahá'u'lláh's heavenly light today. We must make the people realize the sun of God is come and is shining on everything and everyone. All the details of His teachings are like the thousands of things that will grow from the light. We can tell others, "Accept the light. Your answer is in His teachings and I will try to bring you soon one who will tell you in detail the answer to your questions." This kind of teaching all of you can do, even little children can teach this way.

Gradually increase your own knowledge of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings. If you can read, then read all you can of the Bahá'í books, over and over again. If you cannot, then listen to someone reading or speaking of them. Make an effort, a great effort if necessary, to go to the Bahá'í schools, classes, congresses and institutes so as to learn more and meet other Bahá'ís.



ut above all pray to Bahá'u'lláh to enlighten you and guide you in His service and ponder His words. You will find that even a few words of His are like a seed that grows in your heart and mind. The reason for this is that as he is the Messenger of God, His words give life to the souls of men. Take for instance these words of His, "You are all

the leaves of one tree." If this sinks into your mind and heart, when you see a stranger you will say to yourself, "He is a leaf on the tree I am a leaf on", and this will make you kindly towards him. If your neighbour angers you, you will say to yourself, "Ah well, I suppose he is a leaf on the same tree, and I must be patient and forbearing!" When you see a white man and remember the past and perhaps feel afraid, indignant or resentful, you will say to yourself, "According to Bahá'u'lláh he is a leaf and I am a leaf and all the leaves on every tree are about the same size after all. He is a man like me who does good and evil, who lives and dies and we all go to be received and judged by the same God on high", and your heart will be more assured and peaceful. In other words, from these few words of Bahá'u'lláh, if you ponder them, many new thoughts will come into your mind and many better acts into your life; you will become both wiser and nobler through these few words. And we Bahá'ís are so rich, because we have thousands of words from Bahá'u'lláh!

God willing I will soon be setting out on a long journey to visit

other leaves on our tree -- the brothers and sisters of the black race in Africa. Please pray for my visit to be of help to them, and that I may be strong enough to go to the far places and see them as I visited you when I travelled in your part of the world.

I send you my deepest love. You are always in my thoughts in my prayers, in my heart, my beloved brothers and sisters.

Ruhigzih
