

SHOGHI EFFENDI,  
THE SIGN OF GOD ON  
EARTH

by Grace Shahrokh  
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*Shoghi Effendi, O Guardian, thou art divine,  
Shoghi Effendi, O God's Sign --  
The Priceless Pearl, a title of thine.  
Ghusn-i-Mumt'az, O Chosen Branch,  
Thou art divine.*

*O Shoghi, with name Yearning Divine  
Your lineage from the Most Holy Line.  
Shoghi Effendi, O Guardian,  
Thou art divine.*

*O Guardian, the Chosen Branch beyond compare --  
May it be worthy, this offering of mine.  
O Ghusn-i-Mumt'az, O Chosen Branch,  
Thou art divine.*

# Preface

*Windows to the Past* is a series of audio presentations on the history of the Bahá'í Faith, written and presented by Dr. Darius Shahrokh with the assistance of his wife, Grace Shahrokh. This series was inspired by the author's wish to make available to the Western audience details from a number of histories of the Faith unavailable in English. The audio series has become a convenient and valuable aid for those with limited time to read who wish to become acquainted with the history of the Faith and those noble persons whose lives are an example to others.

Since the original release of the *Windows to the Past* series, an interest has grown in making these brief and accessible histories available in printed form. Hence, the present publication, the first to be edited and to become available in a form other than a simple transcription.

It is appropriate that this first book in a series be devoted to Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith. It was due to the efforts of Shoghi Effendi that the English-speaking world was introduced to the early events of Bahá'í history. Through his translation of *Nabil's Narrative* and his masterful history, *God Passes By*, Western Bahá'ís gained a fuller understanding of what it was to be a "spiritual descendant of the Dawn-Breakers." But Shoghi Effendi's modesty prevented him from any mention of his own significant role in the formative period of Bahá'í history. Thanks to Hands of the Cause Amatu'l-Bahá Ruhiyyih Khanum,

Ugo Giachery, and Amelia Collins, and to Eunice Braun and Adib Taherzadeh, there are now published histories that begin the task of properly crediting Shoghi Effendi for his literary gifts, administrative genius, and sterling character, all of which have had an impact upon the life of every contemporary Bahá'í.

This modest history of the Guardian's life and works is designed to be used in Institute courses, as a supplement to workbooks and course materials. It makes no claim to be comprehensive; rather, it attempts to make accessible a rapid overview of the life of the Guardian. It is our hope that it might open a door for the current generation of youthful readers to a greater appreciation of the gifts of Shoghi Effendi.

Mary K. Radpour

*July, 1998*  
*Chattanooga, Tennessee*

# Shoghi Effendi: His Life and Person

## Family and Destiny

Shoghi Effendi was born on March 1, 1897 in 'Akká, Israel as his great-grandfather, Bahá'u'lláh, and his grandfather, 'Abdu'l-Bahá Abbás, had been exiled there from their native country of Irán. He was the firstborn of his mother, Díyá'íyyih Khánum, who was the eldest daughter of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. His father was Mírzá Hádí Shirází, a descendant of a relative of the Báb.

From the time of his birth, 'Abdu'l-Bahá was aware of the capacity and future of His first grandson. In 1897, in reply to an inquiry from a believer in America about the Biblical prophecy "*A little child shall lead them,*"<sup>1</sup> 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote "*O Maidservant of God! Verily, that child is born and is alive and from him will appear wondrous things that thou wilt hear of in the future. Thou shalt behold him endowed with the most perfect appearance, supreme capacity, absolute perfection, consummate power and unsurpassed might. His face will shine with a radiance that illumines all the horizons of the world; therefore forget this not as long as thou dost live inasmuch as ages and centuries will bear traces of him..*"<sup>2</sup>

'Abdu'l-Bahá gave him the surname Rabbáni, which means 'divine',<sup>3</sup> and Shoghi, meaning "*the one who yearns.*" 'Effendi'<sup>4</sup> is a term of respect, and the Master called him Shoghi Effendi from

childhood on, and required everyone else to address him as Shoghi Effendi.

### **His Character in Childhood**

There is an account left by a Western pilgrim, who observed the love between 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi: "*...a small figure appeared in the open doorway, directly opposite 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Having dropped off his shoes he stepped into the room, with his eyes focused on the Master's face. 'Abdu'l-Bahá returned his gaze with such a look of loving welcome it seemed to beckon the small one to approach Him. Shoghi, that beautiful little boy with his exquisite cameo face and his soulful appealing, dark eyes, walked slowly toward the divan, the Master drawing him as by an invisible thread, until he stood quite close in front of Him. As he paused there for a moment 'Abdu'l-Bahá did not offer to embrace him but sat perfectly still, only nodding His head . . . as if to say 'You see? This tie connecting us is not just that of a physical grandfather, but something far deeper and more significant.' While we breathlessly watched to see what he would do, the little boy reached down and picking up the hem of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's robe he touched it reverently to his forehead and kissed it, then gently replaced it, while never taking his eyes from the adored Master's face. The next moment he turned away, and scampered off to play . . .*"<sup>5</sup> This was 1899, and Shoghi Effendi was only two years old.

A pilgrim to the house of the Master in 1904 related the following to Hand of the Cause Dr. Ugo Giachery, "*Shoghi Effendi was at the time a child of seven or eight years of age. . . . When not engaged in his early morning studies, he followed his Grandfather ['Abdu'l-Bahá] wherever He went. He was almost like His shadow*



*and passed long hours . . . listening, quietly and silently, to every word He uttered. The child had a remarkably retentive memory . . . ,the Master would ask him either to recite some passage from Bahá'u'lláh's Writings, which he had memorized, or to chant a prayer. It was very moving to hear the limpid, crystal chanting of that child, because all his being and soul were engaged in communion with God. Eagerness was ever present and animated him like a flame of fire in all he did."*<sup>16</sup>

In addition to this remarkable reverential devotion and attachment to his beloved Grandfather 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Shoghi Effendi had boundless energy, irrepressible exuberance with his playmates and was so fair and tender-hearted that if any disagreements had occurred, he would not go to sleep until he had embraced his playmate and reestablished happiness. He urged his little companions to make up their differences before they went to bed.

Childhood photos of Shoghi Effendi portray a wistful, delicate face and large dark eyes with a gaze both penetrating and gentle. In the biography, *The Priceless Pearl*, his widow, Hand-of-the-Cause Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhiyyih Khánum writes that his eyes were a clear hazel that sometimes changed to a warm and luminous grey. *"I have never seen such an expressive face and eyes as those of the Guardian; every shade of feeling and thought was mirrored in his visage as light and shadow are reflected on water."*<sup>17</sup> She writes that Shoghi Effendi was more akin physically to his Great-Grandfather, Bahá'u'lláh, being short of stature and fine-boned. The Greatest Holy Leaf, his great-aunt, would say of his hands, *"These are like the hands of my father."*<sup>18</sup>

## Youth and Education

In 1912, when he was 15, 'Abdu'l-Bahá planned for Shoghi Effendi to accompany Him on His historic journey to Europe and America. They departed together from the port of Alexandria, Egypt, but at the first docking at Naples, Italy, health authorities denied landing privileges to Shoghi Effendi and two others in 'Abdu'l-Bahá's party, claiming they had eye disease. 'Abdu'l-Bahá made every effort to change this decision which had no basis in fact, but was a malicious interference by someone in the company of 'Abdu'l-Bahá who later became a covenant-breaker. One can hardly imagine the distress and grief of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi when they had to part, Shoghi Effendi returning to Haifa. As was constant in his life, Shoghi Effendi suffered many blows and heartaches from the malice of the Covenant-breakers throughout his life. He was reunited with his beloved Grandfather in August 1913.

A physician who attended the ladies of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's household left reminiscences of a visit in 1910. She reports that 'Abdu'l-Bahá spoke to her about Shoghi Effendi as follows: *"Before His ascension into eternal Light the blessed Manifestation reminded me that I . . . must observe among my sons and grandsons whom God would indicate for His office. My sons passed to eternity in their tenderest years, in my line, among my relatives, only little Shoghi has the shadow of a great calling in the depths of his eyes. . . . At the present time the British Empire is the greatest and is still expanding and its language is a world language. My future Vazir shall receive the preparation for his weighty office in England itself, after he has obtained here in Palestine a fundamental knowledge of the oriental languages and the wisdom of the East."*<sup>19</sup>

Shoghi Effendi attended school in Haifa, then at the American University in Beirut, graduating in 1918 as Bachelor of Arts. He then served the Master, as His secretary and chief aide. In August 1918, Palestine (now the country of Israel) was liberated by the rapid and victorious advance of British forces, frustrating the plan of the Turkish Commander in Chief Jamál Páshá to crucify 'Abdu'l-Bahá and His whole family.

After World War I, the doors were opened for communications and pilgrims, making the life of the Master extremely busy. Shoghi Effendi spent a happy and productive two years serving 'Abdu'l-Bahá as secretary and chief aide with boundless energy and devotion, helping to lift the burden from His shoulders, and receiving profound spiritual influence in close communication with his beloved Grandfather. As Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánúm writes, *"During these years, when the star of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's fame was rising . . . Shoghi Effendi had the opportunity of observing how the Master dealt with high officials and the numerous men of distinction drawn to one Whom many regarded as little less than an oriental prophet and the greatest religious figure in Asia, as well as how the Master conducted Himself in the face of the ever-present envy and intrigue of His enemies and ill-wishers. The lessons learned were to be reflected in the thirty-six years of Shoghi Effendi's own ministry to the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh."*<sup>10</sup>

However necessary Shoghi Effendi's assistance was to the Master, the decision had been made that Shoghi Effendi would further his education in England at Balliol college of Oxford University. He started his studies there in October, 1920. His course of study at Oxford was cut short when the most unexpected

and grievous news reached him that his beloved Grandfather had passed away on November 28, 1921. Shoghi Effendi arrived back in Haifa one month later which was as soon as possible for him, physically weakened and crushed with bereavement.

Before we take up the events following his learning that 'Abdu'l-Bahá had named him the Guardian of the Cause of God, we will digress to a few of the wonderful descriptions of his personality and character given to us by some who were very close to him, so we can have a better picture in mind of the qualities of intellect and spirit that became completely and sacrificially devoted to the awesome responsibility and rigors of fulfilling the station bestowed upon him.

### **Shoghi Effendi's Character**

Hand of the Cause Amelia Collins in *A Tribute to Shoghi Effendi* wrote, *"In 1923 I first met our beloved Guardian in Haifa. He was just a young man then, full of determination to carry forward the great work entrusted to his care. He was so spontaneous, so trusting and loving and outgoing in the buoyancy of his beautiful heart. Through the years we all watched with wonder and ever-deepening devotion to him and appreciation of his God-given gifts, the unfoldment of Bahá'u'lláh's Divine Order which he built up so patiently and wisely all over the world. But, oh friends, at what great cost to himself! . . . The Guardian had a profound and innate humility. Whenever the Faith was involved, he was fiery in its defense, kinglike in the loftiness of his bearing, the authority with which he spoke. But as a human being he was self-effacing, would brush aside our adulation and praise, turn everything we wished to shower on him towards the Central figures of our Faith. . . . he would never allow any photographs to*

*be taken of himself, or give any of himself, but invariably encouraged the friends to place the Master's picture in their rooms; . . . how he disliked any signs of personal worship-- though he could never control what was in our hearts for him! . . . How can I ever describe to you his eyes when he would come over to the Pilgrim House and announce to us a new achievement; they sparkled with light and enthusiasm and his beautiful face would be all smiles.*"<sup>11</sup>

In *The Priceless Pearl*, Hand of the Cause Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhiyyih Khánúm, writes in the chapter entitled "*Facets of Shoghi Effendi's Personality*," "He was fundamentally a very tender-hearted person and . . . expressed this innate kindness and tenderness not only to those who surrounded him but to the believers personally in many ways. . . ."<sup>12</sup> Shoghi Effendi, like his grandfather and great-grandfather before him, had a delightful sense of humour which was ready to manifest itself if he were given any chance to be happy or enjoy a little peace of mind. . . ."<sup>13</sup> He was very tenacious of his purposes, very determined, but never unreasonable. Although he never changed his objectives he sometimes changed the course he had planned to take to reach them. . . ."<sup>14</sup> Economy was a very rigid principle with Shoghi Effendi and he had very stern ideas on money matters . . . . I never saw the Guardian settle a bill he had not first carefully added up, whether it was for a meal or a payment of thousands of dollars! If there was an over-charge he pointed it out-- and also if there was an undercharge. . . . He was against extravagance, ostentation and luxury as such, denying himself . . . many things because he felt they were either not justified or not appropriate."<sup>15</sup>

*"The extreme reverence he showed to the twin Manifestations of God and to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, whether in his writings, his speech or the manner in which he approached Their resting-places, provides a permanent pattern for all Bahá'is to follow. Whenever Shoghi Effendi was near one of the Shrines one could sense his awareness of this in his whole being. The way he walked as he neared it, the way he quietly and with great dignity and reverence approached the threshold, knelt and placed his forehead upon it, the way he never turned his back when inside the Shrine on that spot where one of these infinitely holy and precious beings was interred, the tone of his voice, his dignified lack of any levity on such occasions, all bore witness to the manner in which man should approach a holy of holies, going softly on sacred ground."<sup>16</sup>*

Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhiyyih Khánum goes on to relate how the gardens in Bahjí and at the Bahá'í World Center in Haifa were designed exclusively by the Guardian, that the style of the Shrine of the Báb, the classic design of the International Archives Building were his, that the interior decorating in the Holy Shrines and other places connected with Bahá'u'lláh was chosen and placed by Shoghi Effendi, that he was unhampered by tradition and extremely original and ingenious in achieving effects. *"The Guardian was truly an extraordinary man. There is no end to the examples that come to mind when one thinks of his nature and his achievements. He had a heart so faithful to those who were faithful to him that its counterpart could scarcely be found."<sup>17</sup>*

In *Hand of the Cause* Ugo Giachery's book called simply *Shoghi Effendi, Recollections*, there is a chapter entitled *"His Spiritual Virtues."* The writer lovingly details

descriptions of Shoghi Effendi's great faith, humility and selflessness, his connection with the divine source, his eagerness and perseverance, his generosity. Dr. Giachery writes, *"Of all the characteristics that Shoghi Effendi possessed, the one that I believe was at the very core of his personality and was deeply rooted in his soul was the immense faith he had, his complete reliance on the efficacy of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation. He clung to His Teachings with a tenacity that cannot be likened to anything. His whole being was permeated with the power of the Revelation, and this is the reason that all who came near him or in contact with him felt so safe, so assured, so regenerated."*<sup>18</sup>

Of his humility and selflessness, he writes, *"Humility of a kind not yet known elsewhere was one of Shoghi Effendi's many unique virtues, a humility which came from the conviction that man's faculties are not self-created but are a precious trust from God, . . . yet he emanated true pride and dignity, such a regal dignity that raised him far above any man I have yet met or known. . . . He never placed his personal interests or desires ahead of his functions as Guardian. Those who were near to him inevitably felt that his life was something to be fully expended in the service of God and humanity, in a dedication unlike that of any other human being. . . . He was always ready to give comfort, . . . to encourage, to praise and to stimulate to such a degree that one felt the urge to place at his disposal life, time and possessions within the range of one's capacity . . ."*<sup>19</sup>

About Shoghi Effendi's involuntary connection with the Divine source, Dr. Giachery writes, *" . . . Shoghi Effendi, like a sensitive instrument connected to the Source of all powers, reacted involuntarily to the most imperceptible spiritual impulse which*

*activated his organism, making him capable of executing and discharging all functions and responsibilities related to the Cause of God without the slightest probability of error."*

*"This analysis, made at the very first meeting with him, explained to me clearly and conclusively the meaning of divine guidance and infallibility-- two things that Shoghi Effendi could not voluntarily choose or control."<sup>20</sup> "A few times I had the great blessing of being permitted to accompany Shoghi Effendi to the Shrines . . . . As we walked along the paths of the gardens, I was very close to him and there came a feeling I cannot well describe. He walked with much dignity and grace, his fine intelligent face glowing with an inner light; . . . During my lifetime I have met several kings and many great personages in the scientific, political and ecclesiastical worlds, but never have I had the feeling of rapture and bliss that I felt in those unforgettable moments when I was so close to Shoghi Effendi."<sup>21</sup>*

*Of his eagerness, Dr. Giachery wrote, ". . . I became aware of this burning flame within his soul, for it was manifested in the emphasis of his speech, in the penetrating and searching gaze of his intelligent eyes, in the swiftness of his action and in the rewarding smile with which he recompensed those who acted promptly."<sup>22</sup>*

*Of his perseverance, he wrote: "Perseverance was one of Shoghi Effendi's most noble qualities and taught me many a lesson. . . .His instructions to me . . . to persevere under all circumstances, became my second nature while I was privileged to work for the Cause under his personal guidance. In nearly every letter I received from him over a period of many years, the*



*word 'persevere' is repeated. It had the power of a talisman for me . . . .* <sup>1123</sup>

*Of his generosity, he wrote: "To be generous is one of the greatest qualities man can possess. It is rare to find on this earth an individual as generous as was Shoghi Effendi. . . .He always considered the needs of others before even thinking of himself. This was true not only for the spiritual wealth which was his greatest heritage, but also for material things as well, which he never sought, wanted or desired for himself."* <sup>1124</sup>

# Shoghi Effendi: His Life

## **The Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh**

'Abdu'l-Bahá made a declaration in his Will and Testament establishing His firstborn grandson, Shoghi Effendi, to be the sole interpreter and Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith after the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Studying this Will and Testament must be a high priority of every believer, new or old, in order to attempt to grasp the significance of the Guardian of the Cause of God, Shoghi Effendi.

In prior religious dispensations, the newly established faith, being unprotected by the written appointment of a clearly appointed successor, became subject to divisions and subdivisions for numerous causes, such as doctrinal disputes, power interests, nationalistic interests, differing rituals and ceremonies. However in this Day, called by Bahá'u'lláh the '*Day of God*,' a new phenomenon is created which protects this Faith from the human propensity for disagreement; and that phenomenon is known to the Bahá'ís as the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh. An excellent explanation of the meaning and historical impact of this Covenant on both the steadfast believers and the rebellious is the book by Mr. Adib Taherzadeh, entitled *The Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh*.

Briefly, to ensure the protection and growth of this Faith, Bahá'u'lláh in His Will appointed His eldest son, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, as

His Successor. 'Abdu'l-Bahá, in turn, prepared a *Will and Testament*, appointing His eldest grandson, Shoghi Effendi, to guard the Cause of God, and emphatically stated that Shoghi Effendi must be obeyed:

*"O ye the faithful, loved ones of 'Abdu'l-Bahá!*

*It is incumbent upon you to take the greatest care of Shoghi Effendi, the twig that hath branched from and the fruit given forth by the two hallowed and Divine Lote-Trees, that no dust of despondency and sorrow may stain his radiant nature, that day by day he may wax greater in happiness, in joy and, spirituality, and may grow to become even as a fruitful tree."*

*"For he is, after 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the guardian of the Cause of God, the Afán, the Hands [pillars] of the Cause and the beloved of the Lord must obey him and turn unto him. He that obeyeth him not, hath not obeyed God; he that turneth away from him, hath turned away from God and he that denieth him, hath denied the True One."<sup>25</sup>*

For those unfamiliar with some terminology, "*two hallowed and Divine Lote Trees*" refers to the two Manifestations of God, the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh to whom Shoghi Effendi is related. Through his mother he is related to Bahá'u'lláh, and through his father to the family of the Báb. "*Afnán*" refers to relatives of the Bab, "*Hands of the Cause*" refers to four especially devoted, selfless and capable believers chosen by Bahá'u'lláh for certain duties. Thirty years later Shoghi Effendi appointed several more believers as Hands of the Cause, being given the authority to do so by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in His *Will and Testament*.

'Abdu'l-Bahá's *Will and Testament* is about 23 pages in the English translation, and was written in three parts. In it are clear explanations about the power of the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá's grievous experiences caused by those who rebelled against that Covenant.

In this Will, 'Abdu'l-Bahá praises Shoghi Effendi as the ". . . most wondrous, unique and priceless pearl that doth gleam from out the Twin surging seas," and ". . . the blest and sacred bough that hath branched out from the Twin Holy Trees. Well is it with him that seeketh the shelter of his shade that shadoweth all mankind."<sup>26</sup> 'Abdu'l-Bahá declares that the Guardian and the Universal House of Justice are ". . . both under the care and protection of the Abhá Beauty, under the shelter and unerring guidance of His Holiness, the Exalted One . . . Whatsoever they decide is of God."<sup>27</sup> The term "*Abhá Beauty*" refers to Bahá'u'lláh, and "*His Holiness, the Exalted One*" refers to the Báb. Also in that document Shoghi Effendi was referred to as 'Ghusn-i-Mumt'áz,' or the '*Chosen Branch*.'

'Abdu'l-Bahá mandates Shoghi Effendi to expound the words of God, to appoint Hands of the Cause of God and direct them, to be the sacred Head of the Universal House of Justice, to accept money offerings to be expended for the advancement of the Faith and to appoint his successor. The Guardian was unable to appoint a successor because there was no one existing who could fulfill the specific requirements 'Abdu'l-Bahá laid down for the successor to Shoghi Effendi. For further details, the reader is referred to the *Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*.

# Shoghi Effendi: His Accomplishments

## **An Overview**

Despite having had only a bare minimum of people assisting him, and at times, no one, the Guardian's accomplishments are stupendous. These include his establishing the divinely ordained Administrative Order, setting into motion three teaching plans, purifying the Faith from destructive association with Covenant-breakers, engaging in an immense volume of communication with National Spiritual Assemblies and individuals, receiving the pilgrims, writing books, expounding and interpreting the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, erecting the superstructure of the Shrine of the Báb and the International Archives Building; making the gardens around both the Shrines of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh, translating into English the major writings of Bahá'u'lláh, maintaining relations with officials in Israel, extending Bahá'í properties on Mount Carmel, and appointing and directing the Hands of the Cause. Any one of these activities could have been a life work for one man.

## **'Abdu'l-Bahá's Passing and the Protection of the Faith**

In the same month, January 1922, that Shoghi Effendi learned that his beloved Grandfather, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, had appointed him to be the Guardian, the chief Covenant-breaker who had rebelled against 'Abdu'l-Bahá became emboldened, and demanded that the civil authorities make himself the custodian of Bahá'u'lláh's

shrine. When this failed, the keys of the Holy Tomb were forcibly seized from the Bahá'í caretaker. The Governor of 'Akká intervened, took the keys and posted guards at the Shrine. On top of this blow to the young Guardian came yet another - that the blessed House of Bahá'u'lláh in Baghḍad was confiscated by the government of Iráq.

Before the Guardian had any time to recover from his bereavement over the passing of the Master and his shock at being appointed the sole head of a loosely organized Cause, he found himself and the Cause facing malignant enemies. In March of 1922, he called a meeting of several of the most devoted and able Bahá'ís from Europe, Asia and America to consult about the feasibility of electing the Universal House of Justice for the protection of the Faith, but it was concurred that before this could be done, it must have a firm foundation, which would mean establishing local and national assemblies in those countries where there were Bahá'ís. The friends who had come to support and consult with him were then sent home with instructions to begin this work under his direction.

By April, though, the strain of what he was being put through became unbearable. He appointed his great-aunt, Bahíyyih Khánum, 'Abdu'l-Bahá's sister, entitled the Greatest Holy Leaf, to administer the affairs of the Faith while he went to Germany to first consult with physicians on his depleted physical state, and then to Switzerland to gain healing, spiritual and physical strength in seclusion in the Swiss Alps. His loving and tender relationship with the Greatest Holy Leaf, who protected him by carrying these responsibilities for a time, sustained the Guardian and enabled him to carry on.

Shoghi Effendi returned to Haifa in December of 1922 and resumed the work laid before him by the provisions of the *Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*. His first activities were to initiate correspondence with all Bahá'í centers in the world and receive pilgrims. This in itself was a full-time job, but the joy of it was beclouded by the continuing evil machinations of the Covenant-breakers, those souls lost in the wilderness of self and passion who imagined they could bring the Cause of God to naught.

He appealed to the civil authorities and had proof of his right through the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá to be the legitimate keeper of the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh. The matter was decided in his favor, and the safekeeping of the Qiblih, the point of adoration of the Bahá'í World, was secured, but all efforts to regain custody of the House of Bahá'u'lláh in Baghdád were frustrated and still are to this day. The final chapter and victory on that remains to be revealed.

### **His Clarification of his Station**

One of the first things the beloved Guardian did in 1922 was to clarify the relationship he wished the Bahá'ís to have with him. In letters to the Bahá'ís of several countries he stated that he wished to be known as one and only one of the many workers in the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh, to be regarded in no other light but that of a true brother united in common servitude to the Master's Sacred Threshold, and to refer to him only as Shoghi Effendi. In *The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh*, written in 1934, he stated, "*There is a far, far greater distance separating the Guardian from the Center of the Covenant than there is between the Center of the Covenant and its Author.*"<sup>28</sup> In that passage the "*Center of the*

*Covenant*" refers to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and *"Author"* refers to Bahá'u'lláh.

He further went on to say: *"Though overshadowed by the unfailing, the unerring protection of Bahá'u'lláh and of the Báb, and however much he may share with 'Abdu'l-Bahá the right and obligation to interpret the Bahá'í teachings, he remains essentially human and cannot . . . arrogate to himself under any pretense whatsoever, the rights, the privileges and prerogatives which Bahá'u'lláh has chosen to confer upon His Son."*<sup>29</sup> This chapter goes on to state that he must not be addressed as lord, master or his holiness, nor to be prayed to, nor to celebrate his birthday.

### **Raising Up of the Bahá'í Administrative Order**

Though today it is clear that the building up of the Administrative Order must be the firm foundation for the Universal House of Justice, in the early years not all the believers were aware of the need for an administrative organization to evolve within the Faith. Indeed, many felt that the lofty spiritual ideals and farsighted social principles in the Bahá'í teachings would somehow permeate the world at large, and effect changes for the better. Some actually felt that to impose organization would spoil the spirituality of the Cause they loved; therefore they had to be patiently and lovingly guided by the Guardian to accept the necessity and beauty of the Administrative Order conceived in the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, and expanded upon in the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

Shoghi Effendi did this by expounding and elucidating the basis and future of the Administrative Order in series of letters to National Spiritual Assemblies. He explained, for example: ". . . *the system of Bahá'í administration is not an innovation imposed*



*arbitrarily upon the Bahá'is of the world since the Master's passing, but derives its authority from the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, is specifically prescribed in unnumbered Tablets, and rests in some of its essential features upon the explicit provisions of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. . . . To dissociate the administrative principles of the Cause from the purely spiritual and humanitarian teachings would be tantamount to a mutilation of the body of the Cause, a separation that can only result in the disintegration of its component parts, and the extinction of the Faith itself.*<sup>160</sup>

In another place he states: " . . . . *the administration of the Cause is to be conceived as an instrument and not a substitute for the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh . . .*"<sup>161</sup> He goes on to explain that the international character of the Cause, the complexity of its affairs, the diversity of its adherents, necessitates administrative machinery that will insure the unity of the Faith, the preservation of its identity, and protection of its interests, yet warns us that we should not let undue concern for minute details in administering the Cause, partiality, ambition and worldliness impair the effectiveness of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh.

To those who would become impatient with the seemingly slow growth and influence of the Faith, Shoghi Effendi counseled: "*I consider it my duty to warn every beginner in the Faith that the promised glories of the Sovereignty which the Bahá'í teachings foreshadow can be revealed only in the fullness of time . . . .*"<sup>162</sup>

He further states in this letter, the first in the compilation called *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, that the implications of this sovereignty . . . *are too far-reaching for this generation to grasp*

*and fully appreciate. . . .*"<sup>33</sup> " . . . *that the storms which this struggling Faith of God must encounter as the disintegration of society advances, shall be fiercer than any which it has already experienced.*"<sup>34</sup>

### **Shoghi Effendi's Vision Implemented through His Plans**

Shoghi Effendi stated that the Administrative Order is both the nucleus and the pattern of the New World Order. A remarkable expansion of the Administrative Order was accomplished under his loving and patient, but always firm direction: the establishment of National Spiritual Assemblies from none in 1922 to 56 in 1963, which was the concluding year of the Ten Year Crusade; the acceleration of the formation of local Spiritual Assemblies; the formation of Bahá'í publishing trusts and summer schools; the establishment of local and national Bahá'í funds. The Declaration of Trust and By-Laws of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'í of the United States and Canada in 1927 became the pattern for Bahá'í National Assemblies around the world for incorporation and ownership of property. Many local Spiritual Assemblies were also incorporated. Buildings were acquired for National Centers, and land was purchased in many countries for future Houses of Worship.

All of this expansion and consolidation provided the strongly united framework upon which the Universal House of Justice was elected in 1963, exactly one hundred years after Bahá'u'lláh declared His mission.

The means by which such tremendous expansion took place was through a series of teaching plans formulated by Shoghi

Effendi. This inspired the believers to make an organized response to the directives given in 'Abdu'l-Bahá's *Tablets of the Divine Plan*.

### **The Charters of the Administrative Order**

It is useful to understand that the framework of the Cause of God is upheld by three charter documents. First, Bahá'u'lláh revealed the *Tablet of Carmel*, providing the impetus and authority for the development of the Bahá'í World Center in Haifa, the "*heart and nerve-center of a world-embracing Faith*"<sup>135</sup> secondly, *The Tablets of the Divine Plan* were revealed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá during 1916 and 1917, conferring upon the North American Bahá'ís the primary responsibility for the promulgation of the Faith throughout the world; and last, the *Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Baha* instituted the Guardianship and authorized development of the Administrative Order. Every Bahá'í who is able should be familiar with all three of these documents to understand the unassailable foundation upon which the Administrative Order rests.

The first plan the Guardian prepared was called the First Seven Year Plan and ran from 1937 to 1944. Its three chief objectives were the completion of the exterior of the Temple in Wilmette, Illinois; the formation of a local Spiritual Assembly in each state and province in North America; and the establishment of a center in each republic of Latin American and the Caribbean.

The Second Seven Year Plan began in 1946. It called for pioneers to go to the "*war-torn, spiritually famished European continent*,"<sup>136</sup> to consolidate and expand the Faith throughout the Americas, to complete the House of Worship in Wilmette, and to form National Spiritual Assemblies in Canada, Central and South

America. Additionally, many National Spiritual Assemblies were given concurrent teaching plans.

The last plan in the Guardian's lifetime was called the Ten Year World Crusade, and it ran from 1953 to 1963, to conclude with the great jubilee celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the Declaration of Bahá'u'lláh. It involved all the Bahá'ís worldwide, not just the North Americans, and had breathtaking and ambitious goals. Through the years prior to this last plan, Shoghi Effendi had prepared Bahá'u'lláh's army of light for this world spiritual conquest. It called for the development of the World Center, strengthening the bases of the twelve National Assemblies then existing with a special plan for each one of them, the consolidation of all new territories, and getting pioneers into unopened territories. It included goals to form 48 new National Spiritual Assemblies, to build two Temples, one in Persia and one in Europe, to purchase eleven Temple sites, to erect the International Archives building on Mount Carmel, to form six publishing trusts, and to secure historic sites in Persia.

With an unforeseen attack upon the lives, properties and activities of the Bahá'ís in Persia in 1955, the building of a Temple in that country had to be postponed. Instead, the Guardian announced, two Temples would rise, one in the heart of Africa and one in Australia.

Aside from the setback in Persia, great successes were won. The Guardian's 1957 Ridván message listing the victories was filled with joy. Little did anyone know that it would be the last Ridván celebration that would receive a message from the beloved Shoghi

Effendi. He was to live on this earthly plane only six months longer.

### **The Guardian's Constant Correspondence**

The enthusiasm and devotion that the Bahá'ís brought to these plans was for the most part generated by their contact with the Guardian. This contact was made in two ways; one, as pilgrims to the Shrines at the World Center, when they would also have the privilege of being in the presence of their beloved Guardian; and, two, through the incredible number of letters the Guardian wrote to individuals and Assemblies, both local and national.

The Hand of the Cause Dr. Ugo Giachery in his book *Shoghi Effendi, Recollections*, described the force of these letters. Some brief selections are as follows: *"To organize the affairs of the Cause, scattered over the continents of the globe, with the purpose of erecting on the unassailable foundation of the Administrative Order of the Faith . . . Shoghi Effendi had to provide instruments for the use of those . . . who would carry out his instructions. This he did mainly through patient, inspiring and illuminating letters of guidance, letters which unfold . . . the majestic and almost incredible plan of redemption for the whole of mankind."*<sup>187</sup>

*"All the letters he has written . . . are the essence of equity, wisdom and spirituality, and are at the same time literary gems. . . . He never denied the light of his wisdom and of his warm rewarding love to anyone who wrote to him."*<sup>188</sup> *"The thousands of questions put to him, either from the Institutions (the Administrative bodies) of the Faith or from individuals, were promptly and explicitly answered. On any given subject,*

*concerning any aspect of the Teachings . . . or on personal problems, the answers, even at intervals of many years, were identical in concept. . . . the constancy of his answers was another of the unfathomable prodigies of the incredible mind and guidance of Shoghi Effendi. This constancy was and is proof of his vast, complete, orderly and deep knowledge of the Sacred Writings, of his steadfast adherence to the principles and laws of the Faith, and, above all, of that conferred infallibility inherent in his station of Guardianship."*<sup>39</sup> A footnote in Dr. Giachery's book mentions that in a statistical report from the Universal House of Justice, they have record of Shoghi Effendi having replied to some 26,000 letters.

### **Entering His Presence**

As for coming into the beloved Guardian's presence, it was an experience that electrified the pilgrims and imbued them with a vision and devotion they never imagined possible. A number of published reports convey something of what would happen to those who came under the spell of the Guardian's magnetism.

Hand of the Cause Ugo Giachery recalls in his book *Shoghi Effendi, Recollections* the first time he came into the presence of the Guardian: "*At the far north-eastern side of the table, almost facing the door, sat Shoghi Effendi, his handsome face absorbed in deep thought. A few seconds elapsed as I paused, unable to utter a word or a cry, while my heart was ready to burst. . . . He lifted his head in my direction and then I met his luminous penetrating gaze. As he rose to greet me a broad smile illumined his whole face, while his eyes seemed to probe my innermost being, as if searching for proofs of love and trust. . . . I cannot relate the emotion I felt on going near to him."*

*"Welcome! Welcome!" he said with a gentle and yet compelling voice. 'At last you have come.' And with a rapid and unforeseen motion he embraced me with such a tenderness that for a time I felt I was in the arms of all the mothers in the world. "Satisfaction and contentment filled my heart; unable to utter a word and yet electrified by all the love expressed in this gesture, I had to steel myself not to fall at his feet. A strong urge to embrace him, again and again, to make myself inconspicuous, small, humble, was overpowering me. But Shoghi Effendi must have sensed this perplexity within me, and guided me to a place at the table. As soon as I was seated and had regained my control, I had the feeling that finally I had reached home. . . ." "This feeling of nothingness in his presence never left me. Even years afterwards, whenever I came near him, there was an overwhelming force that filled my heart with joy and awe, with the certainty that even my thoughts were visible to him."<sup>40</sup>*

The following are excerpts from the Hand of the Cause William Sears' pilgrim notes of 1954: *"My feelings were of mingled fear and courage, fear to stand before him and look into those eyes that must see all the stains that darken the inside of a person; courage that if only I could look upon him, tell him of my love and beg forgiveness in my heart, nothing else would really matter . . . I had stiffened my liquid knees for the moment of going through the dining room door into his presence. My business life had been filled for years with first nights, but never had there been one such as this. . . . I had tried to prepare myself to meet him by praying with such fervor as I had never used before in all my Bahá'í life. At this point, I realized that if I had used that fervor before during all my Bahá'í life, I would have been prepared to meet him now." " . . . Then I was in the room. I heard his voice for the first time.*

. . . He held out his arms and embraced me. 'We have been expecting you for a long time,' he said as he kissed me on the right cheek, then the left, then the right. I clung to him ever so tightly. My predominate feeling was, 'I have come home.' My chest hurt . . . My throat was stopped up. My eyes tried to shed tears that were pouring from every part of my being. . . . 'We have heard much about you,' he said. I held him tightly hoping I need never let go. 'Now we are happy that you are with us at last.'

" . . . When my vision cleared, I could see that every other eye was also misty. . . . " " My fears had all vanished now, and I felt only a transcendent happiness. . . . This was as close, in our day, as man could come to the direct source of the power of God, His Majesty, His Justice, His Mercy, His Love. I felt them all flowing from the Guardian" ". . . This Guardian could be impressed by only one thing, service to the Faith. Nothing would ever influence his judgment; not wealth, position, power or friendship. The only gift that could be given him was the gift of service" ". . . The Guardian calls you to a higher service. He lifts you up to heights of limitless joy, then sets you gently down. Having revealed the treasure, he requests the payment, which is service to the Faith of God."<sup>41</sup>

### **The Guardian's Literary Accomplishments**

In addition to transforming and edifying the believers through letters and personal contact with the pilgrims, the Guardian educated and inspired the Bahá'ís worldwide by his matchless translations of the major writings of Bahá'u'lláh, including parts of the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, plus translating and editing the first volume of *The Dawn-Breakers*.



This was no easy task as Hand of the Cause Dr. Giachery explains: *"To translate from one language to another is an art which requires knowledge, imagination and perfect mastery of both languages involved . . . . There are words in one language that cannot be translated into another because they actually do not exist. . . . from this point of view, Shoghi Effendi's translations into English from either Persian or Arabic -- two flowery languages so rich in imagery and abundant in synonyms, the structure of which is so different from any modern European language -- we can then better understand the immensity of his labor and the greatness of his accomplishment."*<sup>142</sup>

In *The Priceless Pearl*, the biography of the Guardian by his widow, Hand of the Cause Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum, an entire chapter is devoted to describing the Guardian's prodigious abilities in both translating and original writing.

We cherish the hope that our readers will be inspired to read the writings of the Guardian and study them again and again. His works, in addition to the biography *The Priceless Pearl*, provide a means to a deeper appreciation of the amazing accomplishments of the Guardian. His clear and beautiful writing offers an education, not attainable anywhere else in such depth, on the past, present and future of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. His insights into the processes of change and the role of spiritual transformation instill in the reader the resolve to be valiant, upright and steadfast.

These are a few statements from *The Priceless Pearl* on the writings of the Guardian: *" . . . the style of Shoghi Effendi stands out in dazzling beauty. His joy in words was one of his strongest personal characteristics. . . . Shoghi Effendi wrote what he meant*

*and meant exactly what he wrote. It is impossible to eliminate any word from one of his sentences without sacrificing part of the meaning, so concise, so pithy is his style. . . . The language in which Shoghi Effendi wrote, whether for the Bahá'is of the West or of the East, has set a standard which should effectively prevent them from descending to the level of illiterate literates which often so sadly characterizes the present generation as far as the use and appreciation of words are concerned. . . . Shoghi Effendi chose . . . the right vehicle for his thought and it made no difference to him whether the average person was going to know the word he used or not. After all, what one does not know, one can find out.*<sup>143</sup>

As for translating, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhiyyih Khánum writes, *"The supreme importance of Shoghi Effendi's English translations and communications can never be sufficiently stressed because of his function as sole and authoritative interpreter of the Sacred Writings, appointed as such by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in His Will. . . ."* *"Often by referring to Shoghi Effendi's translation into English the original meaning of the Báb, Bahá'u'lláh, or 'Abdu'l-Bahá becomes clear and is thus safeguarded against misinterpretation in the future."*<sup>44</sup> Every time we open a book of the Writings or prayers of Bahá'u'lláh translated into English, we owe a debt of gratitude to the Beloved Guardian for the countless hours, the complete sacrifice he made of personal time, so that we, who are untutored in Persian and Arabic, are not deprived of the transforming power of the Holy Words. The translations of the Holy Words into all other languages are based upon Shoghi Effendi's matchless English translations.

The first book he translated was the *Kitáb-i-Iqán*, or *Book of Certitude*, in 1930, which is Bahá'u'lláh's profound explanation of the Progressive Revelation, the persecution of successive Manifestations of God, the role of the divines, and the interpretation of scriptural prophecies. In 1932, Shoghi Effendi translated the first part of the narrative of Nabíl under the title *The Dawn-Breakers*, portraying in vivid language the life and times of the Báb and His followers. Additionally, *The Dawn-Breakers* includes photos of the Báb's tablets to the Letters of the Living, a concise history of Islam enabling the Western reader to better understand the circumstances of the Báb, the genealogy of the Báb showing connection with the descendants of Bahá'u'lláh, and also numerous photographs and copious footnotes. A translation of several of the major tablets of Bahá'u'lláh entitled *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh* was presented in 1935. In quick succession followed the translation of some of the *Prayers and Meditations of Baha'u'llah* and *The Hidden Words*.

### **The Guardian's Guidance of the Believers**

Between 1929 and 1936, Shoghi Effendi wrote several long general letters to the Baha'is of the West which are gathered in one volume entitled *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, designed to clarify for the believers the true meaning and purpose of the Faith, its destiny and future, and provide guidance about our responsibilities. The titles of the letters within this volume are *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh—Further Considerations*, *The Goal of a New World Order*, *The Golden Age of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh*, *America and the Most Great Peace*, *The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh*, and *The Unfoldment of World Civilization*. Amatu'l-Bahá writes "All this bounty the Guardian spread for the believers in feast after feast,

*nourished them and raised up a new strong generation of servants in the Faith. His words fired their imagination, challenged them to rise to new heights, drove their roots deeper in the fertile soil of the Cause.*<sup>145</sup>

Due to terrorist activities in Palestine during 1939, Shoghi Effendi stayed in Europe where he wrote a long general letter to the Bahá'ís of Canada and United States, entitled *The Advent of Divine Justice*. In it he set forth the role this community was destined to play in the unfolding plan of God for the planet, emphasized the spiritual requisites involved in a truly Bahá'í life, and among other topics, announced that the reason the Western believers had been chosen for the Cradle of the Administrative Order was not due to any inherent excellence, but by reason of the evils within that civilization. ". . . *Bahá'u'lláh can best demonstrate to a heedless generation His almighty power to raise up from the very midst of a people, immersed in a sea of materialism, a prey to one of the most virulent and long-standing forms of racial prejudice, and notorious for its political corruption, lawlessness and laxity in moral standards, men and women who as time goes by will increasingly exemplify those essential virtues of self-renunciation, of moral rectitude, of chastity, of indiscriminating fellowship, of holy discipline, and of spiritual insight that will fit them for the preponderating share they will have in calling into being that World Order and that World Civilization of which their country, no less than the entire human race, stands in desperate need.*<sup>146</sup>

After this he translated the last major work of Bahá'u'lláh, the book, *The Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*.

## The Guardian as Historian

In 1941 he composed another long, general letter called *The Promised Day is Come*, addressed to the Bahá'ís of the West in which he analyzes the events of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in relation to the kings and ecclesiastics having rejected the Message of Bahá'u'lláh. All the leaders who received Tablets from Bahá'u'lláh are described as well as what happened to them and their positions. Reading this book enables one to understand recent history in a way not possible by any other means.

*God Passes By*, published in 1944, is an exciting, moving, yet concise history of the first hundred years of the Bahá'í Cause. Amatu'l-Bahá describes it as one of the most concentrated and stupendous achievements of Shoghi Effendi's life, the only true book we have from his pen. She states that for one year he read about two hundred books as research; then for another year he wrote every page first by hand, then on a manual typewriter, sometimes ten hours on end. *"And how many more hours we spent late into the night, when the daily typing was over . . . each with three copies of the typescript before us, proof-reading, making corrections, putting in by hand the thousands of accents on transliterated words which Shoghi Effendi would read aloud, until his eyes were bloodshot and blurred, his back and arms stiff with exhaustion."* . . . *There was no possibility of working at a slower pace. He was racing against time to present the Bahá'ís of the West with this inimitable gift on the occasion of the One Hundredth Anniversary of the inception of their Faith.*<sup>147</sup>

Producing such a magnificent work would be all-consuming even if it could have been done in times of ease and tranquility. What were the circumstances for Shoghi Effendi at that time?

Amatu'l-Bahá writes such a heart-rending passage: *"Shoghi Effendi, already crushed and overburdened from the weight of twenty years of Guardianship, when the tides of World War II threatened to sweep over the Holy Land and engulf him and the World Centre of the Faith in one catastrophic flow, during a period when his home was convulsed by the repercussions of Covenant-breaking now affecting his own family, set himself the task of appraising for all time the significance of the events of the first century of the Bahá'í Era. On rare occasions it was my misfortune during these years to see him weep as if his heart would break -- so great was his agony, so overwhelming the pressures that bore down upon him!"*<sup>148</sup>

It is incomprehensible that we might ever, even slightly, appreciate the incredible sacrifices that the beloved Guardian made for us, out of his great loving heart, to tenderly educate us, to bring to us the spirit of true reverence for the Manifestations of God. However, we must try.

Amazingly, after *God Passes By* was finished, he wrote a shorter version in Persian for the long-suffering and persecuted followers in the native land of Bahá'u'lláh. It was the last book he could write, for the remaining thirteen years of his life were consumed with developing the World Centre and the international community. However, messages of guidance and encouragement continued to pour forth to Spiritual Assemblies and to individual believers up to his last days.

### **The Guardian's Challenges with Covenant-Breakers**

The Guardian accomplished the development of the Holy Places in Haifa and 'Akká as stunning successes in the face of

serious obstacles. The Bahá'í properties at the time that Shoghi Effendi became the Guardian were the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh, the Mansion of Bahjí, and the Ridván gardens, all in the countryside a little ways from the limits of 'Akká, and in 'Akká, the house of 'Abbúd in which Bahá'u'lláh revealed the Most Holy Book, the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*. On the slopes of Mt. Carmel in Haifa across the Bay from 'Akká, there was the Shrine of the Báb in its first stage of construction surrounded by some land, the house of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and a pilgrim house. The ownership registry of these were mostly in the names of individuals which rendered the properties' legal position insecure. Shoghi Effendi lost no time in registering them in the names of incorporated Bahá'í institutions, and securing tax exemptions. His goal was to win recognition for the Bahá'í Faith as a world religion entitled to the same status that other religions in Israel had possessed for centuries, and he achieved this with great success.

Shoghi Effendi brought his determination first to safeguarding the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh, and situated right next to it the last home of Bahá'u'lláh, known as the Mansion of Bahjí, meaning "*delight*," an architecturally unique building. It had been built by a very rich Christian man of 'Akká who occupied it briefly, and when he passed away, 'Abdu'l-Bahá rented it in 1879 for His Father, Bahá'u'lláh, and extended family. Some time later it was purchased. After the Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh, the half-brother of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Muhammad-'Alí and relatives continued living at the Mansion. 'Abdu'l-Bahá never moved Himself and His family to the Mansion of Bahjí, but remained in 'Akká, later moving to Haifa. Muhammad-Alí and his relatives all became Covenant-breakers by refusing to accept 'Abdu'l-Bahá as the Center of the Covenant and

sole authority of the Faith as was clearly defined in the last *Will and Testament* of Bahá'u'lláh.

Therefore the Covenant-breakers were wily and hardened adversaries of Shoghi Effendi as well. By the 1920's the Mansion was in a serious state of disrepair, almost in ruins. The occupants demanded that Shoghi Effendi repair it for them, but he would not unless they evacuated. At the end of 1929, when the roof was about to collapse, they did evacuate the Mansion, but occupied an adjacent house for the next 28 years.

It brought the Guardian and the Bahá'í World great joy when in mid-1957, State authorities granted an expropriation order for the buildings occupied by the Covenant-breakers; they had to move, and the precincts of the Holy Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh were finally cleansed from what Shoghi Effendi termed "*spiritual defilement*."<sup>49</sup> He was looking forward to the demolition of their unsightly apartments right next to the Shrine, but passed away before it was accomplished.

In 1929, when the Mansion was vacated, such was its deterioration at the hands of the former tenants that it took two years of reconstruction to bring the Mansion back to its original beauty. Upon completion, one of the first visitors to be invited by Shoghi Effendi was the British High Commissioner who agreed that the Mansion did indeed deserve to be preserved as a place of pilgrimage and historical museum rather than remain at the mercy of neglectful and inimical heirs. In 1952, Shoghi Effendi was able to obtain a good deal of land surrounding the Shrine and Mansion of Bahá'u'lláh, and designed gardens spreading out as rays from its center, the Holy Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh. When the last of the



Covenant-breakers' buildings were removed, the glorious landscaping was completed.

### **The Guardian as Builder**

At the same time that the Guardian was dealing with safeguarding and restoring the Mansion and Shrine of Baha'u'llah, he also had another immense project, the completion of the Shrine of the Báb which the Master, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, had started; the acquisition of a protective belt of land surrounding it; and the eventual erection of a beautiful and majestic domed superstructure over the plain stone building housing the precious remains of the Báb.

The Báb, which means the Gate, was not only the Herald of Bahá'u'lláh, but was also an independent prophet or Manifestation of God. He was martyred in Iran in 1850. His sacred remains were then kept in secret places, safeguarded from the enemies of His Cause. In the late 1890's, His precious casket was brought to the Holy Land and concealed in the Master's house.

Prior to that, Bahá'u'lláh had pointed out to the Master the very spot on the slope of Mt. Carmel where the mausoleum should be built to enshrine the holy Dust of the Blessed Báb. 'Abdu'l-Bahá was able to overcome incredible obstacles and opposition to purchase the plot of land and erect six rooms of a nine room mausoleum of native stone. In 1909, the building received its sacred Trust. Nineteen years later, Shoghi Effendi arranged for the excavation of solid rock, making space for the construction of the remaining three rooms. The next step was to bring into being the superstructure as envisioned by 'Abdu'l-Bahá. It was to have an

arcade surrounding the nine rooms and to be surmounted by a dome.

Time passed until the right architect was found. Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum's father was a deeply devoted Bahá'í and a well-known architect in Canada. After her mother, May Bolles Maxwell, passed away in 1940 at a pioneering post, her father, Mr. William Sutherland Maxwell came to live with them in Haifa. The Guardian invited Mr. Maxwell (whom he later honoured with the station of Hand of the Cause of God) to design the superstructure for the Shrine of the Bab. Working in close and loving collaboration, a unique design was formulated that was neither eastern nor western in style, nor did it resemble either a mosque or a church. On May 22, 1944, it was announced that a design for the Shrine of the Báb had been chosen, an auspicious date, the One Hundredth Anniversary of the Declaration of the Báb. However, because of the impact of World War II on the economy and availability of materials, over three years passed before a building permit was requested.

Because of civil strife in Palestine, soon to become the State of Israel in 1948, it was impossible to get stone from Palestinian quarries. Knowing that costs would keep rising by delaying, Shoghi Effendi decided to investigate obtaining carved stone from Italy. Dr. Giachery, a very energetic, educated and devoted Bahá'í, living in Rome, served as the Guardian's personal representative in locating stone that would endure over five hundred years.

This was not an easy task as Italy had not recovered from the devastation of World War II. Through fortuitous and a near miraculous chain of events, the proper granite and marble was

located in addition to all other building materials. Shipments of over one hundred fifty tons of cut, carved and polished stone began in November 1948. The interior decoration includes one immense crystal chandelier in the inner chamber and numerous precious Persian carpets on the floors. The Holy Threshold fronting the inner chamber is covered every morning with fresh fragrant flowers. The tomb of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, in an adjacent room, is also decorated with a crystal chandelier, Persian carpets and fresh flowers. The fascinating details of the materials, workmanship and sacred symbolisms of the design of the Shrine of the Báb are reported in Dr. Giachery's book, entitled *Shoghi Effendi, Recollections*.

The beloved Guardian joyously announced to the Bahá'í World the completion of the Holy Edifice in October 1953. In the message he poetically describes the Shrine: ". . . *Queen of Carmel enthroned on God's Mountain, crowned in glowing gold, robed in shimmering white, girdled in emerald green, enchanting every eye from air, sea, plain and hill.*"<sup>50</sup> He also stated that it was not only the first and most holy Edifice at the World Centre of the Faith, but was the "*initial international institution heralding the establishment of the Supreme Legislative Body of the World Administrative Centre.*"<sup>51</sup> It was only ten years later, in 1963, that the Supreme Legislative Body, the Universal House of Justice, was born.

### **The Guardian's Plans for the Future**

Such accomplishments constitute a tribute to the visionary capacity of Shoghi Effendi. His vision extended far into the future, even anticipating the future construction of a majestic superstructure over the basic building now known as the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh. Dr. Giachery recounts in his book a discussion Shoghi

Effendi gave on the future embellishment of the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh. The beloved Guardian contemplated surrounding the Sepulchre with a colonnade which would dramatize it from far and near, ninety-five monolithic columns of Carrara marble, seven metres high, arrayed in pairs, over a platform of the same marble, the whole ensemble like arms stretching ready to embrace--an awesome complex whose brilliant majesty would glorify and enshrine the precious and sacred Holy of Holies. The future glorification of the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh is referred to in some messages from Shoghi Effendi to the Bahá'í World.

One more monumental building on Mt. Carmel was to be erected in the Guardian's lifetime. It is known as the International Archives Building and its purpose is to reverently preserve and display precious original sacred writings and historical articles which had been associated with the lives of the Báb, Bahá'u'lláh, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, as well as the martyrs and heroes. The collection steadily grew as families who had safeguarded these articles for generations found that the proper place for their preservation would be at the Bahá'í World Centre.

In 1954, Shoghi Effendi decided to begin the planning of an archives building. He announced the plan with far-sighted certitude of its meaning for the future; *"the first of the major edifices destined to constitute the seat of the World Bahá'í Administrative Centre to be established on Mt Carmel."*<sup>52</sup> Shoghi Effendi held great admiration for ancient Greek architecture as it is dignified and timeless in style. He chose the proportions of the Parthenon as his model for the Archives building and as a precedent for the type of future buildings at the Bahá'í World Centre. Again, Dr. Giachery was his agent in Italy for the acquisition of carved white marble.

Interestingly, its one immense stained glass window is from Sicily, the roof tiles from Holland, the crystal chandeliers from Czechoslovakia, the floor tiles from England, cabinets of Japanese and Chinese work -- truly international in more than one way. The stunningly beautiful building was finished in mid-1957, set into gardens already planned and planted before the construction started.

Shoghi Effendi planned the site for the Archives building at the far right side of a large arc which sweeps across the slope of the mountain. At the top of the center of the arc now stands the Seat of the Universal House of Justice. At this time (1998) construction is under way for the magnificently landscaped terraces below and above the Shrine of the Bab, the International Bahá'í Library, the International Teaching Center, the Center for the Study of the Texts, plus a basement expansion to the International Archives, all in fulfillment of the beloved Guardian's vision of mystical allusions by Bahá'u'lláh in the Tablet of Carmel, "*Erelong will God sail His Ark upon thee.*"<sup>153</sup>

The year 1957 was the one hundred thirteenth year from the beginning of the Bahá'í Era. The Ten Year World Crusade was progressing with marvelous advances. The Holiest House of Worship, Mother Temple of the West, after fifty years of struggle, had been finished and dedicated four years earlier. Three Temples were under construction; in Africa, Europe, and Australia; sites for future temples had been purchased in many countries. Record numbers of valiant pioneers were establishing the Faith in countries previously unopened.

## **The Guardian's Anticipation of the Need for Protection**

For many years the weighty messages from the Guardian had become the guiding light and focus of attention for Bahá'ís around the world. No one could anticipate that a happy and victorious message to the Bahá'í World from the Guardian in October 1957 was to be his last. But the Guardian himself made preparations for his own passing. In this message he appointed eight more Hands of the Cause, doubled the number of Auxiliary Board members who assisted the Hands, and charged them with the specific duty of watching over the security of the Faith. He now designated the Hands of the Cause as the Chief Stewards of Bahá'u'lláh's embryonic World Commonwealth, an act which assured the Faith the protection it would surely require.

# Shoghi Effendi: His Passing

## **The Events of His Passing**

The closing of the earthly life of the Guardian came so unexpectedly, so quietly and swiftly, that the Bahá'ís of the world who had relied upon him unremittingly for thirty-six years were sent reeling in shock and dismay. In the fall of 1957, Shoghi Effendi and his beloved wife, closest companion and helper, Hand of the Cause Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhiyyih Khánum were in London to purchase furnishings for the Archives building. He had a brief illness from influenza and was recuperating. His last evening was spent listing names and places on a map of the world, recording the victories won for the Faith by the pioneers. It was at last finished, but then he stayed up to read the vast amount of reports that came to him from Bahá'ís all over the world.

On the morning of November 4th, Amatu'l-Bahá spoke to him as he appeared to be awake and resting as if quietly thinking, but this time there was no answer. Shoghi Effendi, that Priceless Pearl, had joined his beloved Grandfather, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, at the court of the Blessed Beauty.

The funeral was in a chapel of a cemetery in London, attended by hundreds of his inconsolable loved ones from every race and nation. The monument to his memory is a single white marble column with a Corinthian capital, surmounted by a globe,

atop of which is a bronze eagle, with wings outspread, a symbol of victory. Inscribed on the column are these words from the *Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*:

*“Behold he is the blest  
And sacred bough that has  
Branched out from the  
Twin Holy Trees. Well is it  
With him that seeketh the  
Shelter of his shade that  
Shadoweth all mankind.”*<sup>54</sup>

After the blinding heat of sorrow had passed, the Hands of the Cause then undertook the new responsibilities which the Guardian had laid upon them in his last messages. They guided and guarded the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh through the added sorrow of realizing that no one existed who met the requirements in 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will for Shoghi Effendi's successor. This became a great test to the insincere and ambitious. The ocean of the Covenant surged and the bodies of the dead were cast out.

### **The Successful Conclusion of the Ten Year Crusade**

Through the guidance of the Chief Stewards, the Ten Year World Crusade came to a glorious conclusion in the Centenary year of the Declaration of Bahá'u'lláh, which was celebrated by a World Congress held in London. With 56 National Assemblies established, the fruit of the Guardian's labors, these pillars of the Universal House of Justice were ready to support it, according to the plans of Shoghi Effendi. Therefore, under the direction of the



Hands of the Cause, the Universal House of Justice was elected, and its members were introduced to the Bahá'í World Congress in London, in 1963.

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It is impossible to do justice to the accomplishments of Shoghi Effendi, the Priceless Pearl and the Sign of God on Earth, no matter how monumental the effort. This brief presentation, therefore, is far from adequate. But it is hoped that it will inspire our reader to understand and appreciate our beloved Guardian more deeply.

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# Notes

1. *Holy Bible*, Isaiah 11:16
2. R. Rabbani, *The Priceless Pearl*, p. 2
3. *Ibid.*, p. 17
4. *Ibid.*, p. 4
5. *Ibid.*, p. 5-6
6. U. Giachery, *Shoghi Effendi, Recollections*, p. 15
7. R. Rabbani, *The Priceless Pearl*, p. 7
8. *Ibid.*, p. 7
9. *Ibid.*, p.12
10. *Ibid.*, p. 29
11. A. Collins, *A Tribute to Shoghi Effendi*, p. 1-3
12. R. Rabbani, *The Priceless Pearl*, p. 125
13. *Ibid.*, p. 129
14. *Ibid.*, p. 130
15. *Ibid.*, p. 131
16. *Ibid.*, p. 139
17. *Ibid.*, p. 143
18. U. Giachery, *Shoghi Effendi, Recollections*, p. 16
19. *Ibid.*, p. 19-20
20. *Ibid.*, p. 21
21. *Ibid.*, p. 21-22
22. *Ibid.*, p. 24
23. *Ibid.*, p. 25
24. *Ibid.*, p. 27
25. *'Abdu'l-Bahá Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 25
26. *Ibid.*, p. 3
27. *Ibid.*, p. 11
28. S. Effendi, *World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 151
29. *Ibid.*, p. 151
30. *Ibid.*, p. 5

31. Ibid., p. 9
32. Ibid., p. 16
33. Ibid., p. 16
34. Ibid., p. 17
35. S. Effendi, *Advent of Divine Justice*, p. 3-4
36. S. Effendi, *Messages to America*, p. 88
37. U. Giachery, *Shoghi Effendi, Recollections*, p. 30
38. Ibid., p. 41
39. Ibid., p. 41-42
40. Ibid., p. 10-11
41. William Sears, *Pilgrim's Notes*, manuscript
42. U. Giachery, *Shoghi Effendi, Recollections*, p. 36
43. R. Rabbani, *The Priceless Pearl*, p. 196-197
44. Ibid., p. 202
45. Ibid., p. 214
46. S. Effendi, *Advent of Divine Justice*, p. 16
47. R. Rabbani, *The Priceless Pearl*, p. 224
48. Ibid., p. 224
49. Ibid., p. 234
50. Ibid., p. 246
51. Ibid., p. 247
52. Ibid., p. 264
53. Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 16
54. U. Giachery, *Shoghi Effendi, Recollections*, p. 186

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