

26 August 2004

Dear Friends,

In its 2003 Ridván message, The Universal House of Justice wrote:

Let them [‘the friends of God’] strive to understand more deeply the Teachings that are relevant by reviewing letters of Shoghi Effendi which have been published in *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, particularly those entitled "The Goal of a New World Order", "America and the Most Great Peace", and "The Unfoldment of World Civilization".

This interactive pdf version of “America and the Most Great Peace” was created for a study class in a cluster in Colorado. Enhancements to the document include synonyms for words that might be new to students for whom the English language is not their mother tongue. There are 70 links to background information for allusions made by the Guardian to events, places and personalities in the letter. Graphics in the form of photographs, charts and symbols have been added to enhance nonverbal understanding.

The remaining two letters will also be transformed into interactive pdfs when time permits.

With loving Bahá’í greetings,

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This pdf version of Shoghi Effendi’s 1933 letter—“America and the Most Great Peace”—has not yet undergone review by the Office of Research and Literature Review in Wilmette, IL. —DKT

Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánúm's Comments
on
"America and the Most Great Peace"

In 1933 he [Shoghi Effendi] gave the North American Bahá'ís *America and the Most Great Peace*, which dealt largely with the role this part of the world has been destined by God to play during this period in history, recalled the self-sacrificing journeys and services of the Master in the West and recapitulated the victories already won for the Faith by this favoured Community. (page 213)

In *America and the Most Great Peace* ... Shoghi Effendi states America's position in unmistakable terms: out of the anguish following the Master's passing, he wrote, "the Administration of Bahá'u'lláh's invincible Faith was born". The ascension of 'Abdu'l-Bahá released "potent energies" which "crystallized into this supreme, this infallible Organ for the accomplishment of a Divine Purpose." The Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá had set forth its character and provisions, America had espoused the cause of the Administration: "It was given to her, and to her alone,...to become the fearless champion of that Administration, the pivot of its new-born institutions and the leading promoter of its influence." (pages 340-341)

—Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánúm, *The Priceless Pearl*, 213; 340-341

CHRONOLOGY OF BAHÁ'Í & WORLD EVENTS: 1931-1933

“America and the Most Great Peace” was written in 1933. This chronology lists events from 1931—when Shoghi Effendi wrote “The Goal of a New World Order”—to 1933.

- 1931: Shoghi Effendi's translation of Bahá'u'lláh's chief doctrinal work—The Kitáb-i-Íqán (The Book of Certitude)—first published.
- 1931: There are still only 30 Bahá'ís in Canada.
- 1931: The first Chinese translation of *Bahá'u'lláh & the New Era* published.
- 1931: Unemployment in America reaches 8 million.
- 1931: Britain abandons gold standard; pound sterling falls from \$4.86 to \$3.49.
- 1931: Bankruptcy of German Danatbank leads to closure of all German banks.
- 1931: April Marion (“General”) Jack arrives in Sofia, Bulgaria to begin her historic pioneering service.
- 1931: 1 May The superstructure of the Wilmette House of Worship is completed and dedicated.
- 1931: Japanese invade Manchuria (northern China)
- 1931: Nov. The New York Bahá'í community drafts the by-laws of a Bahá'í local assembly. They become the pattern for all local Bahá'í constitutions throughout the world.
- 1932: In this year the Persian (later Iranian) government imposes restrictions on the import of Bahá'í books and periodicals by post and the publication of Bahá'í literature. Bahá'í marriages are not recognized.
- 1932: Hitler refuses Hindenburg's offer to become Vice Chancellor.
- 1932: Famine in U.S.S.R.
- 1932: April Pilgrims are allowed—for the first time—to stay overnight at Bahjí.
- 1932: June The NSA of the USA and Canada address a petition to the Sháh of Iran requesting he removed the ban on Bahá'í literature. The Guardian's representative to deliver this petition is Mrs. Keith Ransom-Kehler.
- 1932: July The Greatest Holy Leaf—Bahiyih Khánum—'outstanding heroine of the Bahá'í Dispensation' dies in Haifa.
- 1932: Nov-Dec. Bahá'í representatives plead their case for the possession of the House of Bahá'u'lláh in Baghdád before the 22nd Session of the Permanent Mandates Commission of the League of Nations in Geneva.
- 1933: Japan withdraws from the League of Nations.
- 1933: Adolf Hitler becomes German Chancellor.
- 1933: FDR inaugurated as 32nd President of the United States.
- 1933: Hitler granted dictatorial powers (Enabling Law).
- 1933: The first concentrations camps are erected by the Nazis in Germany.
- 1933: U.S. recognizes the U.S.S.R. and resumes trade.

America and the Most Great Peace

Study Guide

The following are study materials for “America and the Most Great Peace”, one of the Guardian’s letters included in *The World Order of Bahá’u’lláh* and cited for review in the Ridván Message 2003 from the Universal House of Justice. “America and the Most Great Peace” was written in April 21, 1933, when the world and the United States in particular, were in the depths of the Great Depression.

Some quotations appearing in this letter were indented and have therefore been counted as individual paragraphs. Paragraphs begin after the salutations.

OUTLINE OF THEMES

I. Introduction (paragraphs 1-8)

1. Circumstances of the first public reference to Bahá’u’lláh in America.
2. The American Bahá’í community has achieved the distinction of leadership among its sister communities of East and West in hastening the advent of the Golden Age anticipated by Bahá’u’lláh.
3. The American Bahá’í community has weathered grave crises in its history: defections, treachery, ridicule, abuse and calumny, vicissitudes and reverses beset both individuals and the community as they strive to reach heights Master summoned them to attain.
4. Attacks of enemies who assailed the tenets of the Faith, its Founder, its Forerunner, its fundamental verities, its administrative machinery, the principle of unification, and process of purification.
5. Future historians will analyze how the Administrative center of the Faith has gravitated away from its cradle to the American continent, the chief bulwark of its fast evolving institutions and will immortalize the men and women who have participated in building the Administrative Order.
6. Both Christianity and Islam offer a striking parallel to the development of the Faith: flourishing in lands more hospitable than the lands of origin.
7. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá attests “the light of Divine Revelation hath arisen in the East and shed its radiance upon the West.” Such was the case with Christianity.

II. The Destiny of America (paragraphs 9-15)

1. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá prays that America will be the first nation to establish the foundation of international agreement and unfurl the standard of the Most Great Peace.
2. He forecasts America will “become the distributing center of the spiritual enlightenment” and will “lead all nations spiritually”.
3. Establishment of the Faith in America was the most outstanding of the three objectives of His ministry.
4. He laid cornerstone of the Temple, infused into followers principles and sentiments which could sustain them through trials, explained His station as Center of the Covenant, and bequeathed the Tablets of the Divine Plan.
5. He encourages us to take the Faith to all continents of the globe, to extend the scope of our exertions.
6. While the American nation is disintegrating, the followers of Bahá’u’lláh are exhibiting qualities of calm, discipline, unity, consolidation, cohesiveness, conviction, loyalty and self-sacrifice.

III. The Development of the Faith in America-Overview (paragraphs 16-17)

Four distinct periods of first forty years:

1. 1893-1903, slow and steady fermentation, culminated in pilgrimages by American believers to Shrine of Bahá’u’lláh.
2. 1903-1913, tests and trials which agitated, cleansed and energized; earliest pioneers of Faith and climaxed with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s visit to America.
3. 1913-1923, quiet consolidation, birth of Administration.
4. 1923-1933, further internal development and international activities, completion of superstructure of Temple.

IV. 1893-1903 (paragraph 18)

1. Pilgrims received blessings at Master's feet and became heralds of the Covenant upon their return to America.
2. Through pilgrimages splendor of Covenant emerged triumphant, dispelled gloom surrounding disconsolate members of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's family and sounded the death-knell to would-be wrecker of Cause.
3. 'Abdu'l-Bahá provided spiritual sustenance which would enable them to survive severe trials they would soon experience.

V. 1903-1913 (paragraphs 19-27)

A. Tests for the American Bahá'í Community

1. Bahá's Peter [Ibrahim Khayrullah] seceded from 'Abdu'l-Bahá, allied himself to the Arch Enemy of the Faith [Mírzá Muhammad Álí] and reinforced the efforts of Christian ecclesiastical enemies of the Faith were beginning to exert.
2. This caused a transitory cleavage in ranks of American Bahá'ís; Master sent four deputies to lay foundation of Administration.
3. In response to internal and external tests 'Abdu'l-Bahá inaugurated the precursors of permanent, official administrative institutions: the Chicago House of Spirituality, Bahá'í Publishing Trust, Green Acre Fellowship, and incorporation of Bahá'í Temple Unity.
4. American pioneers opened new territories in Great Britain, France, Germany, China, Pacific islands, and Japan.

B. 'Abdu'l-Bahá visits America

1. Calls for this visit from believers and the public.
2. Indescribable spiritual significance of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit; purpose of His symbolic acts: confer spiritual primacy on American believers.
3. Parting message of 'Abdu'l-Bahá prepared believers for severe tests.

VI. 1913-1923 (paragraphs 28-35)

A. WWI and the Tablets of the Divine Plan

1. 'Abdu'l-Bahá predicted WWI. Revealed Tablets of Divine Plan during war. These Tablets unfold His Plan for the mission He wished American Bahá'ís to undertake.
2. Response to Tablets of the Divine Plan: unprecedented impetus to teaching work.
3. Headed by illustrious representative who circled world twice [Martha Root], pioneers rose heroically to take Faith to far corners of earth, in response to Tablets of Divine Plan.
4. Brought happiness to Master in last years of His life.

B. Ascension of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and His Will and Testament

1. American believers arose to uphold provisions of His Will and Testament.
2. Championed Administrative Order.
3. American Bahá'ís raised up the chief pillar of future House of Justice – the last refuge of a tottering civilization.
4. Despite new internal attacks against Covenant, American Bahá'ís remain untrammelled.

VII. 1923-33 (paragraphs 36-37)

1. American Bahá'í community developed legal instruments for establishing communities on sound basis; were to be applied worldwide.
2. Aided Egyptian brethren to enfranchise itself from fetters of Muslim orthodoxy.
3. Aided persecuted brethren in Soviet Republics.
4. Aided persecuted brethren in Persia, several times; mitigated the severity of tyrannical persecutions.
5. Forced attention of world's highest Tribunal [League of Nations] to appeal misappropriation of House of Bahá'u'lláh in Baghdad.
6. American believer [Martha Root] obtained written testimonials from Queen Marie.
7. Completed superstructure of Mashriqu'l-Adhkar, forging link between American believers and Center of Faith.

- VIII. The Future of American Bahá'í Community (paragraphs 38-39)
1. Temple (Edifice) still needs exterior.
 2. House of Justice still needs to be reared.
 3. Standard must be raised in country.
 4. Unity to be established.
 5. Machinery for unity must be created.
 6. Will America maintain her spiritual primacy?
 7. Her past testifies to her faith. Let her future confirm it.

STUDY QUESTIONS

(Paragraphs which may shed light on each of the following questions are cited at the end of each question.)

1. The American Bahá'í community has achieved the distinction of leadership among its sister communities of East and West in hastening the advent of the Golden Age anticipated by Bahá'u'lláh. What is this distinction based upon? (3)
2. What tests had the American Bahá'í community weathered in the first forty years of its history? (4-5)
3. Christianity and Islam's centers moved from the land of their birth to other centers in the West. What do the Bahá'í Writings say about the Faith in the West? (7-9)
4. What does 'Abdu'l-Bahá say about America's role in establishing international agreement and world peace? (9-10)
5. What does 'Abdu'l-Bahá call the American believers to do in the Tablets of the Divine Plan? (11-12)
6. What is the contrast between the American nation and the American Bahá'í community? (14)
7. What was the impact of the earliest pilgrimages of the American Bahá'ís to the Shrines and their visits to 'Abdu'l-Bahá? (18-19)
8. How did the Master handle the internal enemies of the Faith in America and what was the positive outcome? (22)
9. What were the activities that are to be the precursors of permanent officially recognized administrative institutions? (23)
10. What documents unfolded 'Abdu'l-Bahá's conception of their spiritual destiny, His Plan for the mission He wished them to undertake? (28)
11. What exploits enabled the American standard-bearers of the Faith to win such laurels and to confer such distinction on the generation to which they belong? (30)
12. How did the American Bahá'ís respond to the establishment of the administrative Order in the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá? (33)
13. What were some of the internal tests afflicting the American Bahá'í community after the Master's passing? (34)
14. How did the American Bahá'í community emerge from this second wave of internal assaults? (35)
15. What were some of the main achievements of the American Bahá'í community in their own country and around the world? (37)
16. What are to be the future achievements of the American Bahá'í community? (38)

REFLECTION, DISCUSSION AND APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. Why has the North American continent been selected for such an incredible spiritual destiny in the Bahá'í Dispensation? (8-9, 11-12)
2. What are the implications of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's promise that America "will lead all nations spiritually"? (8-15)
3. Given the history of crisis and victory in the development of the American Bahá'í community, what types of internal and external tests are we likely to face in the future? (21-24)
4. Out of His deep love for the American Bahá'í community, the Master made a long and arduous journey to be with us, teach us, and raise the Call to the American public. He laid the cornerstone of the Temple. He gave the American Bahá'í community the Tablets of the Divine Plan. He left in His Will and Testament

twin successors, The Guardian, Shoghi Effendi and the Universal House of Justice, each guaranteed infallibility. Given our distinguished spiritual birthright, what would be signs of our gratitude? How can we respond to the plans and guidance of the Universal House of Justice today? What shall we do in response to recent guidance from that Body, which the Master wrote, was “the source of all good and freed from all error”?

5. What have been the achievements of the members of the American Bahá’í community in the fields of teaching and administration? How do these and future achievements in these fields relate to the spiritual destiny of America? (37-38)
6. What must the American Bahá’í community do to maintain its spiritual primacy in the Bahá’í world? (38-39)

IF TIME IS SHORT...

Some communities will be able to conduct multiple sessions to thoroughly review these letters of the Guardian. As for those communities that may be able to have one or a few sessions, facilitators may want to consider focusing on the most significant portions of these letters in the limited time available (as opposed to starting out at the beginning of each letter and possibly never reaching the most important sections). It is suggested that the following sections may contain the most salient points of *America and the Most Great Peace*:

- Destiny of America, paragraphs 8-15
- Importance of first pilgrimages, paragraph 18
- American believers overcome first internal attacks, paragraph 21
- ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s response to internal and external attacks, 23
- First American Bahá’í pioneers settle abroad, 24
- ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s visit to America, paragraphs 25-27
- Tablets of the Divine Plan addressed to American Bahá’ís paragraphs 28-31
- Rise of Administrative Order, 33
- Most outstanding accomplishments of American Bahá’ís, 36-37
- American Bahá’í community’s spiritual primacy is conditional, paragraph 38

AMERICA AND THE MOST GREAT PEACE

by
Shoghi Effendi



AMERICA AND THE MOST GREAT PEACE

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

Friends and fellow-promoters of the Faith of God:

1 Forty years will have elapsed ere the close of this coming summer since the name of Bahá'u'lláh was first mentioned on the American continent. Strange indeed must appear to every observer, pondering in his heart the significance of so great a landmark in the spiritual history of the great American Republic, the circumstances which have attended this first public reference to the Author of our beloved Faith. Stranger still must seem the associations which the brief words uttered on that historic occasion must have evoked in the minds of those who heard them.

2 Of pomp and circumstance, of any manifestations of public rejoicing or of popular applause, there were none to greet this first intimation to America's citizens of the existence and purpose of the Revelation proclaimed by Bahá'u'lláh. Nor did he who was its chosen instrument profess himself a believer in the indwelling potency of the tidings he conveyed, or suspect the magnitude of the forces which so cursory a mention was destined to release.

evoked

Stir up; bring to mind; suggest.

pomp

Ceremony; spectacle; display; pagentry.

intimation

Hint; inkling; suggestion; allusion..

potency

Great power; authority; strength.

cursory

Brief; hasty; fleeting; superficial; perfunctory.

3 Announced through the mouth of an **avowed** supporter of that narrow **ecclesiasticism** which the Faith itself has challenged and seeks to **extirpate**, characterized at the moment of its birth as an **obscure** offshoot of a contemptible **creed**, the Message of the Most Great Name, fed by streams of unceasing trial and warmed by the sunshine of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s tender care, has succeeded in driving its roots deep into America’s **genial** soil, has in less than half a century sent out its **shoots** and **tendrils** as far as the remotest corners of the globe, and now stands, clothed in the majesty of the **consecrated Edifice** it has reared in the heart of that continent, determined to proclaim its right and **vindicate** its capacity to redeem a stricken people. Unsupported by any of the advantages which talent, rank and riches can **confer**, the community of the American believers, despite its tender age, its numerical strength, its limited experience, has by virtue of the inspired wisdom, the united will, the **incorruptible** loyalty of its administrators and teachers achieved the distinction of an **undisputed** leadership among its sister communities of East and West in **hastening** the **advent** of the **Golden Age** anticipated by Bahá’u’lláh.

4 And yet how grave the crises which this infant, this blessed, community has weathered in the course of its **checkered** history! How slow and painful the process that gradually brought it forth from the **obscurity** of **unmitigated** neglect to the broad daylight of public recognition! How severe the shocks which the ranks of its devoted **adherents** have sustained through the **defection** of the faint in heart, the **malice** of

avowed

Affirmed; declared; acknowledged; confirmed.

ecclesiasticism

Religious principles; beliefs; priesthood; clergy.

extirpate

Uproot; cut out; destroy; exterminate.

obscure

Dim; dark; hidden; murky; vague; doubtful.

creed

Faith; doctrine; belief; statement of faith.

genial

Warm; welcoming; amiable; pleasant; hospitable.

shoots

Young leaves.

tendrils

Vines; a plant that clings to a support.

consecrated

Holy; sanctified; set apart; hallowed.

vindicate

Prove; justify; claim; support; prove right; defend.

confer

Award; bestow; grant; give.

incorruptible

Morally right; honest; not to be bought; honorable.

undisputed

Certain; undeniable; definite; unchallenged.

hastening

Speeding up; hurrying; quickening; rushing.

advent

Start; beginning; dawn; initiation.

checkered

Marked by great changes in fortune; varied.

obscurity

Dim; dark; hidden; vague.

unmitigated

Sheer; pure. absolute; unadulterated; complete.

adherents

Followers; members; supporters; advocates.

defection

Followers; members; supporters; advocates.

malice

Hate; spite; meanness; wickedness.

the mischief-maker, the **treachery** of the proud and the ambitious! What storms of ridicule, of abuse and of **calumny** its representatives have had to face in their **staunch** support of the **integrity**, and their **valiant** defense of the fair name, of the Faith they had **espoused**! How **persistent** the **vicissitudes** and **disconcerting** the reverses with which its privileged members, young and old alike, individually and collectively, have had to contend in their heroic endeavors to scale the heights which a loving Master had summoned them to attain!

5 Many and powerful have been its enemies who, as soon as they discovered the evidences of the growing **ascendancy** of its declared supporters, have **vied** with one another in hurling at its face the vilest **imputations** and in pouring out upon the **Object of its devotion** the vials of their fiercest wrath. How often have these sneered at the **scantiness** of its resources and the seeming stagnation of its life! How bitterly they ridicule its origins and, **misconceiving** its purpose, dismissed it as a useless **appendage** of an expiring creed! Have they not in their written attacks **stigmatized** the heroic person of the Forerunner of so holy a Revelation as a coward **recanter**, a **perverted apostate**, and denounced the entire range of His **voluminous** writings as the idle chatter of a thoughtless man? Have they not chosen to ascribe to its divine Founder the basest motives which an unscrupulous plotter and **usurper** can conceive, and regarded the Center of His Covenant as the embodiment of **ruthless tyranny**, a stirrer of mischief, and a **notorious** exponent of **expediency** and **fraud**? Its world-unifying principles these **impotent** enemies

treachery

Betrayal; deceit; disloyalty; treason; sedition.

calumny

Slander; lie; libel; misrepresentation; smear; slur.

staunch

Loyal; faithful; steadfast; reliable; firm; devoted.

integrity

Honesty; truthfulness; honor; reliability; veracity.

valiant

Brave; courageous; heroic; noble; fearless; bold.

espoused

Take up; support; adopt; back; advocate; champion.

persistent

Constant; continual; determined; relentless.

vicissitudes

Unexpected change; alterations; mutability.

disconcerting

Confusing; alarming; perplexing; upsetting.

ascendancy

Dominance; superiority; upper hand; control.

vied

Competed with; struggled; fought; rivaled; opposed.

imputations

Charges; complaints; allegations; accusations.

scantiness

Lack; insufficiency; shortage; meagerness.

misconceiving

False conception; misunderstanding; wrong notion.

appendage

Limb; add-on; accessory; attachment; adjunct.

stigmatized

Brand as disgraceful; marked; reproached.

recanter

Retract earlier statement; renounced; withdraw.

perverted

Corrupted; distorted; debased; tainted.

apostate

On who abandons his faith; traitor; unfaithful.

voluminous

Huge; many volumes; many books; great size.

usurper

Seize unlawfully; takes over; grabs; seizes.

ruthless

Merciless; callous; brutal; unfeeling; coldblooded.

tyranny

Dictatorship; cruelty; oppression; despotism.

notorious

Infamous; disreputable; tarnished; dishonorable.

expediency

Convenience; self-serving; take advantage.

fraud

Con; scam; hoax; scheme; swindle; deceit.

impotent

Powerless, helpless, ineffective; physically weak, decrepit.

of a steadily-rising Faith have time and again denounced as fundamentally defective, have pronounced its all-embracing program as utterly fantastic, and regarded its vision of the future as **chimerical** and positively deceitful. The fundamental **verities** that constitute its doctrine its foolish ill-wishers have represented as a cloak of idle dogma, its administrative machinery they have refused to **differentiate** from the soul of the Faith itself, and the mysteries it reveres and upholds they have identified with sheer superstition. The principle of unification which it advocates and with which it stands identified they have misconceived as a shallow attempt at uniformity, its repeated assertions of the reality of **supernatural** agencies they have condemned as a vain belief in magic, and the glory of its idealism they have rejected as mere **utopia**. Every process of purification whereby an **inscrutable** Wisdom [God] chose from time to time to purge the body of His chosen followers of the defilement of the undesirable and the unworthy, these victims of an **unrelenting** jealousy have hailed as a symptom of the invading forces of **schism** which were soon to **sap** its strength, **vitate** its **vitality**, and complete its ruin.

6 Dearly-loved friends! It is not for me, nor does it seem within the **competence** of any one of the present generation, to trace the exact and full history of the rise and gradual consolidation of this **invincible** arm, this mighty organ, of a continually advancing Cause. It would be **premature** at this early stage of its **evolution**, to attempt an **exhaustive analysis**, or to arrive at a just estimate, of the **impelling** forces that have urged it forward

chimerical

Imaginary; unreal; given to fantasies; fanciful.

verities

Truths; realities; true statements.

differentiate

Distinguish between; tell apart; discriminate.

supernatural

System beyond nature; divine power; transcendent.

utopia

Impossibly idealistic scheme; impractical.

inscrutable

Hard to make out; impenetrable; unfathomable.

unrelenting

Resistless; implacable; remorseless; insistent.

schism

Division; split; rupture; break; rift; producing sects.

sap

Exhaust; weaken; drain of vitality.

vitate

Corrupt; debase; contaminate; reduce the value of.

vitality

Strength; vigor; liveliness; life; energy.

competence

Skill; ability; aptitude; fitness; know-how; experience.

invincible

Supreme; indestructible; unshakeable; indomitable.

premature

Untimely; hasty; rash; early; impulsive.

evolution

Progressive development; unfolding; becoming more complex.

exhaustive

Thorough; complete; full; meticulous; comprehensive.

analysis

Study; examination; scrutiny; breakdown.

impelling

Driven; incited; pressed; prompted.

to occupy so exalted a place among the various instruments which the Hand of **Omnipotence** [God] has fashioned, and is now perfecting, for the execution of His divine Purpose. Future historians of this mighty Revelation, **endowed** with pens abler than any which its present-day supporters can claim to possess, will no doubt transmit to posterity a masterly **exposition** of the origins of those forces which, through a remarkable swing of the **pendulum**, have caused the administrative center of the Faith to **gravitate**, away from its cradle, to the shores of the American continent and towards its very heart—the present mainspring and chief **bulwark** of its fast evolving institutions. On them will devolve the task of recording the history, and of estimating the significance, of so **radical** a revolution in the fortunes of a slowly maturing Faith. Theirs will be the opportunity to extol the virtues and to **immortalize** the memory of those men and women who have participated in its accomplishment. Theirs will be the privilege of evaluating the share which each of these champion-builders of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh has had in ushering in **that golden Millennium**, the promise of which lies enshrined in His teachings.

7 Does not the history of **primitive** Christianity and of the rise of Islam, each in its own way, offer a striking **parallel** to this strange **phenomenon** the beginnings of which we are now witnessing in this, the first century of the Bahá'í Era? Has not the Divine Impulse which gave birth to each of these great religious systems been driven, through the operation of those forces which the irresistible growth of the Faith itself had released, to seek

Omnipotence

All-Powerful

endowed

Gifted; able; capable; enabled.

exposition

Show; exhibit; systematic explanation; interpretation.

pendulum

Something that swings back and forth from a fixed point.

gravitate

Sink; settle; drop; drift; descend from.

bulwark

Fortification; wall; mole; rampart; safeguard.

radical

Extreme; dramatic; departing from the fundamental..

immortalize

Make everlasting; enduring; commemorate; undying.

primitive

Primal; original stage; ancient; primeval..

parallel

Comparable; corresponding; equivalent; match.

phenomenon

Very notable or remarkable; extraordinary, exceptional.

away from the land of its birth and in more propitious climes a ready field and a more adequate medium for the incarnation of its spirit and the propagation of its cause? Have not the Asiatic churches of Jerusalem, of Antioch and of Alexandria, consisting chiefly of those Jewish converts, whose character and temperament inclined them to sympathize with the traditional ceremonies of the Mosaic Dispensation, been forced as they steadily declined to recognize the growing ascendancy of their Greek and Roman brethren? Have they not been compelled to acknowledge the superior valor and the trained efficiency which have enabled these standard-bearers of the Cause of Jesus Christ to erect the symbols of His world-wide dominion on the ruins of a collapsing Empire? Has not the animating spirit of Islam been constrained, under the pressure of similar circumstances, to abandon the inhospitable wastes of its Arabian Home, the theatre of its greatest sufferings and exploits, to yield in a distant land the fairest fruit of its slowly maturing civilization?

8 “From the beginning of time until the present day,” `Abdu’l-Bahá Himself affirms, “the light of Divine Revelation hath risen in the East and shed its radiance upon the West. The illumination thus shed hath, however, acquired in the West an extraordinary brilliancy. Consider the Faith proclaimed by Jesus. Though it first appeared in the East, yet not until its light had been shed upon the West did the full measure of its potentialities become manifest.” “The day is approaching,” He, in another passage, assures us, “when ye shall witness how, through the splendor of the Faith of Bahá’u’lláh, the West will have

propitious

Favorable; encouraging; promising; bodes well..

climes

Climates; regions of various climates.

incarnation

Embodiment; personification; living from.

propagation

Spread; broadcast; circulation; transmission.

temperament

Nature; character; personality; disposition; outlook..

ascendancy

Dominance; upper hand; control; power over..

brethren

Brother; religious fellows; kinsmen; counterpart.

valor

Courage; nerve; heroism; bravery; boldness.

symbols

Signs; visual language; object that represents something sacred.

animating

Imparting life; vitality; motion.

theatre

Region of activity; setting; arena.

inhospitable

Bleak; hostile; unwelcoming; unfriendly; unreceptive

exploits

Feats; deeds; adventures; activities.

potentialities

Possibilities; impending; prospective; would-be

manifest

Obvious; apparent; evident; clear; visible; marked.

‘Most Great Peace’ . . . The American people are indeed worthy of being the first to build the **tabernacle** of the great peace and proclaim the **oneness of mankind** . . . May America become the **distributing** center of spiritual enlightenment and all the world receive this heavenly blessing. For America has developed powers and **capacities** greater and more wonderful than other nations . . . May the **inhabitants** of this country become like **angels** of heaven with faces turned continually toward God. May all of them become servants of the omnipotent One. May they rise from their present material **attainments** to such a height that heavenly illumination may stream from this center to all the peoples of the world . . . This American nation is equipped and empowered to accomplish that which will **adorn** the pages of history, to become the **envy** of the world and be blest in both the East and the West for the triumph of its people . . . The American continent gives signs and evidences of very great advancement. Its future is even more promising, for its influence and illumination are far-reaching. It will lead all nations **spiritually**.”

10 Would it seem **extravagant**, in the light of so **sublime** an **utterance**, to expect that in the **midst** of so **enviable** a region of the earth and out of the agony and wreckage of an **unprecedented** crisis there should burst forth a spiritual **renaissance** which, as it **propagates** itself through the **instrumentality** of the American believers, will **rehabilitate** the **fortunes** of a **decadent** age? It was ‘Abdu’l-Bahá Himself, His most intimate associates testify, Who, on more than one occasion, **intimated** that the establishment of His

tabernacle

Enshrines spirit.

distributing

Hand out; allocate; issue; allot.

capacities

Abilities; faculties; competence; power.

inhabitants

Population; people; residents.

angels

Heavenly beings; divine messengers.

attainments

Accomplishments; achievements; realization.

adorn

Decorate; embellish; ornament; beautify; enhance.

envy

Covet; resent; grudge; be envious of.

spiritually

Immaterial; related to the soul or spirit.

extravagant

Showy; profuse; overstated; exaggerated.

sublime

Uplifting; awe-inspiring; moving; magnificent.

utterance

Word; sound; statement; speech; remark.

midst

Middle; center.

enviable

Desired; fortunate; lucky; happy.

unprecedented

First-time; unique; extraordinary; unmatched.

renaissance

Rebirth; new start; revival; recovery; new beginning.

propagates

Spread; publicize; broadcast; circulate; transmit.

Instrumentality

Means; agency; a thing used for a purpose.

rehabilitate

Restore; recover; mend repair; recuperate.

fortunes

Luck; chance; destiny; fate.

decadent

Corrupt; depraved; immoral; depraved.

Intimated

Mention indirectly; implied.

Father's Faith in the North American continent ranked as the most outstanding among the **threefold aims** which, as He **conceived** it, constituted the principal **objective** of His **ministry**. It was He Who, in the **heyday** of His life and almost immediately after His Father's ascension, conceived the idea of **inaugurating** His mission by enlisting the inhabitants of so promising a country under the banner of Bahá'u'lláh. He it was Who in His **unerring** wisdom and out of the abundance of His heart chose to bestow on His favored disciples, to the very last day of His life, the **tokens** of His unfailing **solicitude** and to overwhelm them with the marks of His special favor. It was He Who, in His declining years, as soon as delivered from the **shackles** of a long and cruel **incarceration**, decided to visit the land which had remained for so many years the object of His infinite care and love. It was He Who, through the power of His presence and the charm of His utterance, **infused** into the entire body of His followers those sentiments and principles which could alone sustain them amidst the trials which the very **prosecution** of their task would **inevitably engender**. Was He not, through the several functions which He exercised whilst He dwelt amongst them, whether in the laying of the corner-stone of their **House of Worship**, or in the Feast which He offered them and at which He chose to serve them in person, or in the emphasis which He on a more solemn occasion placed on the implications of His spiritual station—was He not, thereby, deliberately bequeathing to them all the essentials of that spiritual **heritage** which He knew they would ably safeguard and by their deeds continually enrich? And finally who can doubt that in the **Divine Plan** which, in

conceived

Picture; visualize; imagine.

objective

Purpose; aim; goal; intent; reason.

ministry

Period of service; ministering to followers.

heyday

Prime; zenith; peak success; glory days.

inaugurating

Launch; start up; unveil; open.

unerring

Certain; correct; spot on; infallible; sure.

tokens

Signs; symbols; indications; proofs.

solicitude

Concern; care; kindness; consideration.

shackles

Fetters; manacles; chains; restraints.

incarceration

Imprisonment; captivity; confinement; internment.

infused

Poured; shed; instill; introduce.

prosecution

To pursue until completion.

inevitably

Unavoidably; inescapably; without doubt; certainty.

engender

Cause; produce; create; stimulate.

heritage

Inheritance; legacy; birthright; tradition.

replaced the East, **radiating** the light of Divine Guidance.” “In the books of the Prophets,” He again asserts, “certain glad-tidings are recorded which are absolutely true and free from doubt. The East hath ever been the dawning-place of the Sun of Truth. In the East all the Prophets of God have appeared . . . The West hath acquired illumination from the East but in some respects the reflection of the light hath been greater in the **Occident**. This is specially true of Christianity. Jesus Christ appeared in **Palestine** and His teachings were founded in that country. Although the doors of the Kingdom were first opened in that land and the bestowals of God were spread broadcast from its center, the people of the West have embraced and **promulgated** Christianity more fully than the people of the East.”

9 Little wonder that from the same unerring pen there should have flowed, after ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s memorable visit to the West, these often-quoted words, the significance of which it would be impossible for me to overrate: “The continent of America,” He announced in a **Tablet unveiling His Divine Plan** to the believers residing in the North-Eastern States of the American Republic, “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.” “May this American **democracy**,” He Himself, while in America, was heard to remark, “be the first nation to establish the foundation of international agreement. May it be the first nation to proclaim the unity of mankind. May it be the first to unfurl the standard of the

radiating

Illuminate from center; send out in waves or rays.

occident

Western part of the world; Western hemisphere.

Palestine

The former name of the area now called Israel.

promulgate

Spread; publicize; broadcast; circulate; transmit.

righteous

Virtuous; moral; good; just; upright; honorable.

democracy

Equality; people rule; consensus; classlessness.

the evening of His life, He unveiled to their eyes He was **investing** them with that spiritual **primacy** on which they could rely in the fulfillment of their high **destiny**?

11 “O ye apostles of Bahá’u’lláh!” He thus addresses them in one of His Tablets, “May my life be sacrificed for you! . . . Behold the portals which Bahá’u’lláh hath opened before you! Consider how exalted and lofty is the station you are destined to attain; how unique the favors with which you have been endowed.” “My thoughts,” He tells them in another passage, “are turned towards you, and my heart leaps within me at your mention. Could ye know how my soul glows with your love, so great a happiness would flood your hearts as to cause you to become enamored with each other.” “The full measure of your success,” He declares in another Tablet, “is as yet unrevealed, its significance still unapprehended. Ere long ye will, with your own eyes, witness how brilliantly every one of you, even as a shining star, will radiate in the **firmament** of your country the light of Divine Guidance and will bestow upon its people the glory of an everlasting life.” “The range of your future achievements,” He once more affirms, “still remains undisclosed. I fervently hope that in the near future the whole earth may be stirred and shaken by the results of your achievements.” “The Almighty,” He assures them, “will no doubt grant you the help of His grace, will invest you with the tokens of His might, and will endue your souls with the sustaining power of His holy Spirit.” “Be not concerned,” He admonishes them, “with the smallness of your numbers, neither be oppressed by the multitude of an unbelieving world . . . Exert

Investing

Provide; supply; empower; endow.

primacy

First; foremost; dominance; predominance.

destiny

Fate; fortune; future; providence.

firmament

Heavens; sky; vault of heaven.

yourselves; your mission is **unspeakably** glorious. Should success crown your enterprise, America will assuredly evolve into a center from which waves of spiritual power will **emanate**, and the throne of the Kingdom of God will, in the **plentitude** of its majesty and glory, be firmly established.”

12 “The hope which `Abdu’l-Bahá cherishes for you,” He thus urges them, “is that the same success which has attended your efforts in America may crown your endeavors in other parts of the world, that through you the fame of the Cause of God may be diffused throughout the East and the West and the advent of the Kingdom of the Lord of Hosts be proclaimed in all the five continents of the globe . . . Thus far ye have been untiring in your labors. Let your **exertions**, henceforth, increase a thousandfold. Summon the people in these countries, capitals, islands, assemblies and churches to enter the Abha Kingdom. The scope of your exertions must needs be extended. The wider its range, the more striking will be the evidences of Divine assistance . . . Oh! that I could travel, even though on foot and in the utmost poverty, to these regions and, raising the call of **Ya Bahá’u’l-Abha** in cities, villages, mountains, deserts and oceans, promote the Divine teachings! This, **alas**, I cannot do! How intensely I deplore it! Please God, ye may achieve it.” And finally, as if to crown all His previous utterances, is this solemn **affirmation embodying** His Vision of America’s spiritual destiny: “The moment this Divine Message is carried forward by the American believers from the shores of America and is **propagated** through the continents of Europe, of Asia, of Africa and of **Australasia**, and as far as the

unspeakably

Indescribably; beyond description; appallingly.

emanate

Impart; ooze; emit; radiate; give off.

plentitude

Abundance; fullness.

exertions

Efforts; actions; applications.

Ya Bahá’u’l-Abha

O Thou Glory of the All-Glorious

alas

Sadly; unfortunately; regrettably.

affirmation

Confirmation; declaration; statement; assertion.

embodying

Incorporate in a larger whole. Of a material or actual thing or person; exemplify; represent; symbolize.

propagated

Spread; publicize; broadcast; circulate; transmit.

islands of the Pacific, this community will find itself securely established upon the throne of an everlasting **dominion**. Then will all the peoples of the world witness that this community is spiritually illumined and divinely guided. Then will the whole earth resound with the praises of its majesty and greatness.”

13 It is in the light of these above-quoted words of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá that every thoughtful and **conscientious** believer should ponder the significance of this **momentous utterance** of Bahá’u’lláh: “In the East the light of His Revelation hath broken; in the West have appeared the signs of His dominion. Ponder this in your hearts, O people, and be not of those who have turned a deaf ear to the **admonitions** of Him Who is the Almighty, the All-Praised . . .

Should they attempt to **conceal** its light on the continent, it will assuredly rear its head in the midmost heart of the ocean, and, raising its voice, proclaim: ‘I am the life-giver of the world!’”

14 Dearly-beloved friends! Can our eyes be so dim as to fail to recognize in the **anguish** and **turmoil** which, greater than in any other country and in a manner **unprecedented** in its history, are now afflicting the American nation, evidences of the beginnings of that spiritual **renaissance** which these **pregnant** words of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá so clearly foreshadow? The **throes** and **twinges** of agony which the soul of a nation in **travail** is now beginning to experience abundantly proclaim it. Contrast the sad **plight** of the nations of the earth, and in particular this great Republic

Australasia

Australasia, in physical geography, is a designation sometimes applied to all the lands and islands of the Pacific Ocean lying between the equator and latitude 47° South. The region includes Australia, Tasmania, New Zealand, New Caledonia and Dependencies, the Marquesas Islands, and a large part of the Malay Archipelago.

The term Australasia is occasionally used to designate Oceania, which includes most of the islands of the Pacific Ocean.

dominion

Authority; power; command; domination.

conscientious

Reliable; diligent; thorough; careful.

momentous

Important; significant; historic; crucial.

utterance

Word; sound; statement; speech; remark.

admonitions

Warnings; cautions; rebukes; scoldings; reproaches.

conceal

Hide; cover up; obscure; mask.

anguish

Distress; agony; torment; suffering.

turmoil

Chaos; disorder; confusion uproar.

unprecedented

First-time; unique; extraordinary; unmatched.

renaissance

Rebirth; new start; revival; recovery; new beginning.

pregnant

Loaded; charged; significant; weighty; meaningful.

Expectant; expecting; with child.

throes

Severe spasms; agonizing struggles.

twinges

Pangs; pain; aches; cramps; spasms.

travail

Strenuous work; toil; tribulation or agony; anguish. the labor of childbirth.

plight

Difficulty; dilemma; predicament; quandary.

of the West, with the rising fortunes of that handful of its citizens, whose mission, if they be faithful to their trust, is to heal its wounds, restore its confidence and revive its shattered hopes. Contrast the dreadful convulsions, the **Internecline** conflicts, the petty disputes, the outworn controversies, the **interminable** revolutions that agitate the masses, with the calm new light of Peace and of Truth which envelops, guides and sustains those **valiant** inheritors of the law and love of Bahá'u'lláh. Compare the disintegrating institutions, the discredited **statesmanship**, the exploded theories, the **appalling degradation**, the **follies** and **furies**, the shifts, **shams** and compromises that characterize the present age, with the steady consolidation, the holy discipline, the unity and **cohesiveness**, the assured conviction, the **uncompromising** loyalty, the heroic self-sacrifice that constitute the **hallmark** of these faithful **stewards** and **harbingers** of the golden age of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh.

15 Small wonder that these prophetic words should have been revealed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá: "The East," He assures us, "hath verily been illumined with the light of the Kingdom. Ere long will this same light shed a still greater illumination upon the West. Then will the hearts of its people be vivified through the potency of the teachings of God and their souls be set aglow by the undying fire of His love." "The **prestige** of the Faith of God," He asserts, "has immensely increased. Its greatness is now manifest. The day is approaching when it will have cast a tremendous **tumult** in men's hearts. Rejoice, therefore, O **denizens** of America, rejoice with

Internecline

Great slaughter; mutually destructive.

Interminable

Endless; ceaseless; perpetual; never-ending.

valiant

Brave; heroic; courageous; noble; gallant; bold.

statesmanship

Service in behalf of one's country; highmindedness.

appalling

Awful; terrible; dreadful; unspeakable.

degradation

Disgrace; humiliation; shame; misery; infamy.

follies

Lack of good sense; foolish; ridiculous.

furies

Anger; rage; wrath; passion; ferocity.

shams

Pretense; deception; charade; fraud.

cohesiveness

Held together; stuck together; cohere.

uncompromising

Inflexible; adamant; stubborn; unbending; rigid.

hallmark

Seal; stamp; trademark.

stewards

Manages affairs on behalf of others.

harbingers

Forerunners; heralds; omen; indication.

prestige

Standing; stature; esteem; reputation; regard.

exceeding gladness!”

16 Most prized and best-beloved brethren! As we look back upon the forty years which have passed since the **auspicious** rays of the Bahá'í Revelation first warmed and illuminated the American continent we find that they may well fall into four distinct periods, each **culminating** in an event of such significance as to constitute a **milestone** along the road leading the American believers towards their promised victory. The first of these four decades (1893-1903), characterized by a process of slow and steady **fermentation**, may be said to have culminated in the **historic pilgrimages** undertaken by 'Abdu'l-Bahá's American disciples to the shrine of Bahá'u'lláh. The ten years which followed (1903-1913), so full of the **tests** and trials which **agitated**, cleansed and energized the body of the earliest **pioneers** of the Faith in that land, had as their happy **climax** 'Abdu'l-Bahá's memorable visit to America. The third period (1913-1923), a period of quiet and uninterrupted consolidation, had as its inevitable result the birth of that divinely-appointed Administration, the foundations of which the **Will** of a departed Master had unmistakably established. The remaining ten years (1923-1933), distinguished throughout by further internal development, as well as by a notable expansion of the international activities of a growing community, witnessed the completion of the superstructure of the **Mashriqu'l-Adhkar**—the Administration's mighty bulwark, the symbol of its strength and the sign of its future glory.

17 Each of these **successive** periods would seem to have contributed its **distinct** share in

tumult

Uproar; clamor; commotion; din; mayhem; furor.

denizens

Residents; citizens; dwellers; natives; occupiers.

auspicious

Favorable; promising; good; fortunate.

culminating

Terminate; finish; close; conclude; end.

milestone

Objective; goal; achievement; record; target.

fermentation

State of excitement or agitation. Uproar.

agitated

Restless; troubled; disturbed; stressed.

pioneers

Open up; lead the way; establish; prepare.

climax

Peak; high point; pinnacle.

Mashriqu'l-Adhkar (mash-rack-el-as-car)

Arabic for the 'dawning-place of the mention/remembrance of God.' (This instance specifically refers to the Bahá'í House of Worship in Wilmette, IL.)

successive

Consecutive; following; succeeding.

distinct

Clear; definite; marked; apparent; manifest.

enriching the spiritual life of that community, and in preparing its members for the **discharge** of the tremendous responsibilities of their unique mission. The pilgrimages which its foremost representatives were moved to undertake in that earliest period of its history fired the souls of its members with a love and **zeal** which no amount of **adversity** could **quench**. The tests and **tribulations** it **subsequently** suffered enabled those who survived them to obtain a grasp of the implications of their faith that no opposition, however determined and well-organized, could ever hope to weaken. The institutions which its tried and tested adherents later on established furnished their promoters with that **poise** and stability which the increase of their numbers and the ceaseless extension of their activities urgently demanded. And finally the Temple which the exponents of an already firmly established Administration were inspired to **erect** gave them the vision which neither the storms of internal disorder nor the whirlwinds of international commotion could possibly **obscure**.

18 It would take me too long to attempt even a brief description of the first stirrings which the introduction of the Bahá'í Revelation into the New World, as conceived, initiated and directed by our beloved Master, immediately created. Nor does space permit me to narrate the circumstances attending the **epoch-making** visit of the first American pilgrims to Bahá'u'lláh's **hallowed** shrine, to relate the deeds which **signalized** the return of these bearers of a new-born Gospel to their **native** country, or to assess the immediate consequences of their achievements. No word of mine would **suffice** to express how

discharge

Fulfill; carry out; accomplish; execute; perform.

zeal

Fervent love or devotion. Intense or passionate desire.

adversity

Hardship; difficulty; danger; misfortune.

quench

Slake; satisfy; satiate.

tribulations

Great afflictions or distress.

subsequently

Then; next; later; after; consequently.

poise

Dignity; composure; self-confidence; self-assurance.

erect

Put up; raise; build; construct; assemble; set up.

obscure

Vague; doubtful; murky; unclear; incomprehensible.

epoch-making

Beginning a distinctive period; origin of period of time.

hallowed

Sacred; holy; sanctified; blessed; consecrated.

signalized

To make remarkable or conspicuous. To point out particularly.

native

Indigenous; local; resident.

suffice

Be sufficient; be adequate; be enough.

instantly the revelation of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s hopes, expectations and purpose for an awakened continent, **electrified** the minds and hearts of those who were privileged to hear Him, who were made the **recipients** of His **inestimable** blessings and the chosen repositories of His confidence and trust. I can never hope to interpret adequately the feelings that surged within those heroic hearts as they sat at their Master’s feet, beneath the shelter of His prison-house, eager to absorb and intent to preserve the **effusions** of His divine Wisdom. I can never pay sufficient **tribute** to that spirit of unyielding determination which the impact of a magnetic personality and the spell of a mighty utterance kindled in the entire company of these returning pilgrims, these **consecrated heralds** of the Covenant of God, at so decisive an epoch of their history. The memory of such names as **Lua, Chase, MacNutt, Dealy, Goodall, Dodge, Farmer and Brittingham**—to mention only a few of that **immortal galaxy** now gathered to the glory of Bahá’u’lláh—will for ever remain associated with the rise and establishment of His Faith in the American continent, and will continue to shed on its **annals** a **lustre** that time can never dim.

19 It was through these pilgrimages, as they succeeded one another in the years immediately following the **ascension** of Bahá’u’lláh, that the splendor of the **Covenant**, beclouded for a time by the apparent **ascendancy** of its **Arch-Breaker**, emerged triumphant amidst the **vicissitudes** which had afflicted it. It was through the arrival of these pilgrims, and these alone, that the gloom which had enveloped the disconsolate members of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s

electrified

Thrilled; excited; amazed; astonished; surprised.

recipients

Receivers; beneficiaries; heirs.

inestimable

Immeasurable; incalculable; tremendous; infinite.

effusions

Pouring forth; unrestrained.

tribute

Compliment; honor; praise; acknowledgment; accolade.

consecrated

Holy; sacred; sanctified; hallowed.

heralds

Messengers; bearers of news.

immortal

Eternal; everlasting; perpetual; endless; unending.

galaxy

An assembly of brilliant, glamorous, or distinguished persons or things.

annals

Records; chronicles; history; archives.

lustre

Shine; gleam; patina; sheen.

ascension

Soul passing to next world; death; rising.

covenant

Contract; promise; pledge; agreement.

ascendancy

Superiority; dominance; upper hand; control.

vicissitudes

Unexpected change or shift; mutability; succession of opposites.

family was finally **dispelled**. Through the agency of these successive visitors the **Greatest Holy Leaf**, who alone with her Brother among the members of her Father's household had to confront the **rebellion** of almost the entire company of her relatives and associates, found that **consolation** which so powerfully sustained her till the very close of her life. By the forces which this little band of returning pilgrims was able to release in the heart of that continent the **death-knell** of every scheme initiated by the would-be wrecker of the Cause of God was sounded.

20 The Tablets which were **subsequently** revealed by the untiring pen of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, embodying in passionate and **unequivocal** language His instructions and counsels, His appeals and comments, His hopes and wishes, His fears and warnings, soon began to be translated, published and circulated throughout the length and breadth of the North American continent, providing the ever-widening circle of the first believers with that spiritual **sustenance** which could alone enable them to survive the severe trials they were soon to experience.

21 The hour of an **unprecedented** crisis was, however, **inexorably** approaching. Evidences of dissension, **actuated** by pride and ambition, were beginning to obscure the radiance and retard the growth of the newly-born community which the apostolic teachers of that continent had labored to establish. He who had been instrumental in inaugurating so splendid an era in the history of the Faith, on whom the Center of Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant had conferred the titles of "**Bahá's Peter**," of the "Shepherd of God's Flocks,"

dispelled

Dismiss; drive out; disperse; scatter.

rebellion

Revolt; uprising; rising; revolution.

consolation

Comfort; solace; relief; support.

death-knell

Announcement of the end; termination.

subsequently

Then; next; later; after; consequently.

unequivocal

Plain; explicit; obvious; unmistakable.

sustenance

Nourishment; provisions; rations.

unprecedented

First-time; unique; extraordinary; unmatched.

inexorably

Relentlessly; unalterably; unavoidably.

actuated

Start; trigger; activate; set in motion.

of the “Conqueror of America,” upon whom had been bestowed the **unique** privilege of helping `Abdu’l-Bahá lay the foundation-stone of the Báb’s **Mausoleum** on Mount Carmel—such a man, blinded by his extraordinary success and aspiring after an uncontrolled domination over the beliefs and activities of his fellow-disciples, **insolently** raised the standard of revolt. Seceding from `Abdu’l-Bahá and allying himself with the **Arch-Enemy of the Faith of God**, this **deluded apostate** sought, by **perverting** the teachings and directing a campaign of **unrelenting vilification** against the person of `Abdu’l-Bahá, to undermine the faith of those believers whom he had during no less than eight years, so **strenuously** toiled to convert. By the **tracts** he published, through the active collaboration of the **emissaries** of his chief Ally, and reinforced by the efforts which the Christian ecclesiastical enemies of the Bahá’í Revelation were beginning to exert, he succeeded in dealing the **nascent** Faith of God a blow from which it could only slowly and painfully recover.

22 I need not dwell on the immediate effects of this serious yet **transitory cleavage** in the ranks of the American adherents of the Cause of Bahá’u’lláh. Nor do I need to **expatiate** on the character of the **defamatory** writings that poured upon them. Nor does it seem necessary to recount the measures to which an ever-**vigilant** Master resorted in order to **assuage** and eventually to **dissipate** their **apprehensions**. It is for the future historian to appraise the value of the mission of each of the **four chosen messengers** of `Abdu’l-Bahá who, in rapid succession, were dispatched by Him to **pacify** and **reinvigorate**

unique

Single; exclusive; one of a kind; matchless.

mausoleum

Crypt; burial chamber; tomb; catacomb.

Insolently

Rudely; disrespectfully; impertinently.

deluded

Mislead; con; fool; trick; dupe; hoodwink.

apostate

Abandons vows or faith; traitor; renegade.

perverting

Corrupting; debasing; misuse.

unrelenting

Remorseless; insistent; pitiless; inexorable.

vilification

Criticism; slander; disparagement; libel; backbiting.

strenuously

Vigorously; tirelessly; energetically; doggedly.

tracts

Articles; pieces; treatises; pamphlets.

emissaries

Representatives; messengers; agents.

nascent

Budding; promising; emerging; hopeful.

transitory

Fleeting; passing; briefly; momentarily.

cleavage

Split; divide; fissure.

expatiate

Expound; elaborate; expand; amplify; elucidate.

defamatory

Insulting; offensive; slanderous; libelous.

vigilant

Watchful; alert; way; observant; heedful.

assuage

Lesson; tone down; ease; alleviate.

dissipate

Squander; waste; throw away; fritter away.

apprehensions

Anxiety; worry; dread; hesitation.

pacify

Calm; placate; appease; soothe; mollify.

reinvigorate

Revive; give a boost to; bolster; strengthen.

that troubled community. His will be the task of tracing, in the work which these **deputies** of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá were **commissioned** to undertake, the beginnings of that vast Administration, the corner-stone of which these messengers were instructed to lay—an Administration whose symbolic **Edifice** He, at a later time, was to found in person and whose basis and scope the provisions of **His Will** were destined to widen.

23 **Suffice** it to say that at this stage of its evolution the activities of an **invincible** Faith had assumed such dimensions as to force on the one hand its enemies to devise fresh weapons for their projected assaults, and on the other to encourage its supreme Promoter to instruct its followers, through qualified representatives and teachers, in the rudiments of an Administration which, as it evolved, would at once incarnate, safeguard and foster its spirit. The works of such stubborn assailants as those of **Vatralisky, Wilson, Jessup** and **Richardson** vie with one another in their futile attempts to stain its purity, to arrest its march and compel its surrender. To the charges of Nihilism, of heresy, of Muhammadan Gnosticism, of immorality, of Occultism and Communism so freely leveled against them, the undismayed victims of such outrageous denunciations, acting under the instructions of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, retorted by initiating a series of activities which by their very nature were to be the **precursors** of permanent, officially recognized administrative institutions. The inauguration of Chicago’s first House of Spirituality designated by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as that city’s “**House of Justice**”; the establishment of the Bahá’í Publishing Society; the founding of

deputies

Act on behalf of another; commissioned to perform some act.

commissioned

Specially made; custom-built; made to order.

suffice

Be sufficient; be adequate; be enough.

Invincible

Unbeatable; unconquerable; unshakable; supreme.

precursors

Forerunners; pioneers; heralds; predecessors.

the **Green Acre Fellowship**; the publication of the **Star of the West**; the holding of the **first Bahá'í National Convention**, synchronizing with the transference of the sacred remains of the Báb to its final resting-place on Mount Carmel; the **incorporation** of the Bahá'í Temple Unity and the formation of the Executive Committee of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkar—these stand out as the most **conspicuous** accomplishments of the American believers which have immortalized the memory of the most **turbulent** period of their history. Launched through these very acts into the troublesome seas of ceaseless tribulation, piloted by the mighty arm of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and manned by the bold initiative and abundant vitality of a band of sorely-trying **disciples**, the Ark of Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant has, ever since those days, been steadily pursuing its course **contemptuous** of the storms of bitter misfortune that have raged, and which must continue to assail it, as it forges ahead towards the promised haven of undisturbed security and peace.

24 Unsatisfied with the achievements which crowned the concerted efforts of their elected representatives within the American continent, and **emboldened** by the initial success of their pioneer teachers, beyond its confines, in Great Britain, France and Germany, the community of the American believers resolved to win in distant climes fresh **recruits** to the advancing army of Bahá'u'lláh. Setting out from the western shores of their native land and **impelled** by the **indomitable** energy of a new-born faith, these **itinerant** teachers of the **Gospel** of Bahá'u'lláh pushed on towards the islands of the Pacific, and as far as China and Japan,

synchronizing

Harmonize; coordinate; orchestrate; match.

conspicuous

Clear; noticeable; striking; evident; plain.

turbulent

Violent; rowdy; unruly; riotous; restless.

contemptuous

Scornful; disapproving; sneering; condescending.

emboldened

Encourage; make confident; bolster; hearten.

recruits

Workforce; workers; staff; employees.

impelled

Driven; incited; pressed; prompted.

indomitable

Unconquerable; determined; resolute; invincible.

itinerant

Traveling; roving; wandering; roaming; nomadic.

gospel

Unquestionably true.

determined to establish beyond the farthest seas the outposts of their beloved Faith. Both at home and abroad this community had by that time demonstrated its **capacity** to widen the range and **consolidate** the foundations of its vast endeavors. The angry voices that had been raised in protest against its rise were being drowned amid the **acclamations** with which the East greeted its recent victories. Those ugly features that had **loomed** so threateningly were gradually **receding** into the distance, furnishing a still wider field to these noble **warriors** for the exercise of their latent energies.

25 The Faith of Bahá'u'lláh in the continent of America had indeed been resuscitated. **Phoenix**-like it had risen in all its freshness, vigor and beauty and was now, through the voice of its triumphant exponents, insistently calling to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, imploring Him to undertake a journey to its shores. The first fruits of the mission **entrusted** to its worthy upholders had lent such **poignancy** to their call that 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Who had just been delivered from the **fetters** of a **galling** **tyranny**, found Himself unable to resist. His great, His **incomparable**, love for His own favored children **impelled** Him to respond. Their passionate **entreaty** had, moreover, been reinforced by the numerous invitations which representatives of various interested organizations, whether religious, educational or **humanitarian**, had extended to Him, expressing their eagerness to receive from His own mouth an **exposition** of His Father's teachings.

26 Though bent with age, though suffering from **ailments** resulting from the

capacity

Ability; capability; facility; gift.

consolidate

Unite; merge; join; fuse; combine.

acclamations

Praise; commendation; approval; acclaim; approval.

loomed

Emerge; become visible; appear; came out.

About to happen; threaten; impend.

receding

Withdrawing; losing ground; diminishing.

warriors

Fighter; combatant; soldier.

Phoenix

Mythical bird in Egyptian mythology that is consumed in fire every 500 years but rises from the ashes.

entrusted

Hand over; trust; commend; delegate; assign.

entrusted

Hand over; trust; commend; delegate; assign.

poignancy

Deeply moving; emotional; touching.

fetters

Shackles; chains; restraints; irons.

galling

Annoying; irritating; infuriating; maddening.

tyranny

Oppression; dictatorship; despotism; domination.

incomparable

Without equal; unmatched; unique; unrivaled.

impelled

Driven; incited; pressed; prompted.

entreaty

Appeal; plea; petition; request.

humanitarian

Caring; kind; compassionate; charitable.

exposition

Explanation; description; clarification; elucidation.

Show; exhibit; systematic explanation; interpretation.

ailments

Illness; sickness; disease; weakness.

accumulated cares of fifty years of exile and captivity, 'Abdu'l-Bahá set out on His memorable journey across the seas to the land where He might bless by His presence, and sanctify through His deeds, the mighty acts His spirit had led His disciples to perform. The circumstances that have attended His triumphal progress through the chief cities of the United States and Canada my pen is utterly incapable of describing. The joys which the announcement of His arrival evoked, the publicity which His activities created, the forces which His utterances released, the opposition which the implications of His teachings excited, the significant episodes to which His words and deeds continually gave rise these future generations will, no doubt, minutely and befittingly register. They will carefully delineate their features, will cherish and preserve their memory, and will transmit unimpaired the record of their minutest details to their descendants. It would indeed be presumptuous on our part to attempt, at the present time, to sketch even the bare outline of so vast, so enthralling a theme. Contemplating after the lapse of above twenty years this notable landmark in America's spiritual history we still find ourselves compelled to confess our inability to grasp its import or to fathom its mystery. I have alluded in the preceding pages to a few of the more salient features of that never-to-be-forgotten visit. These incidents, as we look back upon them, eloquently proclaim 'Abdu'l-Bahá's specific purpose to confer through these symbolic functions upon the first-born of the communities of the West that spiritual primacy which was to be the birthright of the American believers.

accumulated

Collect; amass; gather; add; build up.

sanctify

Bless; make holy; purify; consecrate.

triumphal

Rejoicing; victorious; celebrating victory.

evoked

Called to mind; suggested; reminded.

utterances

Words; sounds; statements; speeches; remarks.

episodes

Incidents; affairs; events; periods.

minutely

With great precision or exactness.

delineate

Define; outline; describe; explain; mark out.

unimpaired

Without weaken or loss of function.

presumptuous

Insolent; bold; rash; conceited; arrogant.

enthralling

Gripping; fascinating; riveting; absorbing.

lapse

Failure; slip; mistake; blunder.

landmark

Milestone; breakthrough; pioneering.

import

Meaning; importance; significance; seriousness.

fathom

Understand; grasp; make out; work out..

salient

Most important; relevant; significant; prominent; main.

eloquently

Movingly; fluently; powerfully; expressively.

primacy

First; foremost; dominance; predominance.

27 The seeds which ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s ceaseless activities so **lavishly** scattered had endowed the United States and Canada, nay the entire continent, with **potentialities** such as it had never known in its history. On the small band of His trained and beloved **disciples**, and through them on their descendants, He, through that visit, had **bequeathed** a priceless **heritage**—a heritage which carried with it the sacred and primary obligation to arise and carry on in that **fertile** field the work He had so gloriously **initiated**. We can dimly picture to ourselves the wishes that must have **welled** from His eager heart as He bade His last farewell to that promising country. An **inscrutable** Wisdom, we can well imagine Him remark to His disciples on the eve of His departure, has, in His **infinite** bounty singled out your native land for the execution of a mighty purpose. Through the agency of Bahá’u’lláh’s Covenant I, as the ploughman, have been called upon since the beginning of my ministry to turn up and break its ground. The mighty confirmations that have, in the opening days of your career, rained upon you have prepared and **invigorated** its soil. The **tribulations** you subsequently were made to suffer have driven deep **furrows** into the field which my hands had prepared. The seeds with which I have been entrusted I have now scattered far and wide before you. Under your loving care, by your ceaseless exertions, every one of these seeds must **germinate**, every one must yield its destined fruit. A winter of **unprecedented severity** will soon be upon you. Its storm-clouds are fast gathering on the horizon. **Tempestuous** winds will assail you from every

lavishly

Plentifully; generously; abundantly; bountifully. Extravagantly; wastefully; immoderately.

potentialities

Latent power or capacity; embodied potential.

bequeathed

Bestow; hand down; will; confer; give.

heritage

Inheritance; legacy; birthright; tradition.

fertile

Productive; fruitful; rich; bountiful; fecund.

initiated

Started; begin; kick off; commence.

welled

Fountain fed from a spring.

inscrutable

Hard to make out; unreadable; sphinx-like.

infinite

Never-ending; endless; vast; boundless.

invigorated

Refreshed; recharged; revived; revitalized.

tribulations

Great afflictions or distress.

furrows

Grooves; channels; creases; troughs.

germinate

Sprout; grow; develop; take root; evolve.

unprecedented

First-time; unique; extraordinary; unmatched.

severity

Harshness; sternness; strictness; rigorousness.

tempestuous

Emotional; stormy; passionate; wild.

side. The Light of the Covenant will be **obscured** through my departure. These mighty blasts, this wintry **desolation**, shall however pass away. The **dormant** seed will burst into fresh activity. It shall put forth its buds, shall reveal, in mighty institutions, its leaves and blossoms. The **vernal** showers which the tender mercies of my heavenly Father will cause to descend upon you will enable this tender plant to spread out its branches to regions far beyond the confines of your native land. And finally the steadily mounting sun of His Revelation, shining in its **meridian** splendor, will enable this mighty Tree of His Faith to yield, in the fullness of time and on your soil, its golden fruit.

28 The implications of such a parting message could not long remain unrevealed to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s initiated disciples. No sooner had He concluded His long and **arduous** journey across the American and European continents than the tremendous happenings to which He had **alluded** began to be made manifest. A conflict, such as He had predicted, severed for a time all means of communication with those on whom He had come to place such **implicit** trust and from whom He was expecting so much in return. The wintry desolation, with all its **havoc** and **carnage**, pursued during four years its **relentless** course, while He, repairing to the quiet **solitude** of His residence in the close neighborhood of Bahá’u’lláh’s **hallowed** shrine, continued to communicate His thoughts and wishes to those whom He had left behind and on whom He had conferred the **unique** tokens of His favor. In the immortal Tablets which, in the long hours of His communion with His dearly-beloved

obscured

Hidden; covered; buried; masked.

desolation

Barrenness; isolation; bleakness; emptiness. Unhappiness; misery; despair; sadness.

dormant

Resting; sleeping; latent; undeveloped.

vernal

Of or occurring in the spring.

meridian

Highest point; zenith; noon-day height.

arduous

Hard; difficult; tough; tiring; laborious.

alluded

Hint; suggest; refer to indirectly.

implicit

Unspoken; inherent; understood; contained.

havoc

Chaos; mayhem; destruction; mess; disaster.

carnage

Killing; slaughter; massacre; butchery.

relentless

Persistent; insistent; unrelenting; unyielding.

solitude

Isolation; privacy; seclusion; loneliness.

hallowed

Sacred; holy; sanctified; blessed; consecrated.

unique

Single; exclusive; one of a kind; matchless.

friends He was moved to reveal, He unfolded to their eyes His **conception** of their spiritual destiny, His Plan for the mission He wished them to undertake. The seeds His hands had sown He was now watering with that same care, that same love and patience, which had characterized His previous endeavors whilst He was laboring in their midst.

29 The **clarion** call which ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had raised was the signal for an outburst of renewed activity which, alike in the motives it inspired and the forces it set in motion, America had scarcely experienced. Lending an unprecedented **impetus** to the work which the enterprising **ambassadors** of the Message of Bahá’u’lláh had initiated in distant lands, this mighty movement has continued to spread until the present day, has gathered **momentum** as it extended its **ramifications** over the surface of the globe, and will continue to **accelerate** its march until the last wishes of its original Promoter are completely fulfilled.

30 Forsaking home, **kindred**, friends and position a handful of men and women, fired with a **zeal** and confidence which no human **agency** can **kindle**, arose to carry out the mandate which ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had issued. Sailing northward as far as Alaska, pushing on to the West Indies, penetrating the South American continent to the banks of the Amazon and across the Andes to the southernmost ends of the Argentine Republic, pressing on westward into the island of Tahiti and beyond it to the Australian continent and still beyond it as far as New Zealand and Tasmania, these **intrepid heralds** of the Faith

conception

Beginning; start; outset; origin; commencement. Idea; notion; concept; thought; theory; model.

clarion

Loud; clear.

impetus

Motivation; incentive; energy; drive; impulse.

ambassadors

Representatives; envoys; emissaries.

momentum

Impetus; drive; thrust; force.

ramifications

Consequences; results; effects; outcomes.

accentuate

Stress; highlight; play up; emphasize.

kindred

Family; relatives; family members.

zeal

Fervent love or devotion. Intense or passionate desire.

agency

Organization; bureau; group.

kindle

Stir up; inspire; stimulate; encourage; rouse.

intrepid

Fearless; brave; bold; heroic.

of Bahá'u'lláh have succeeded by their very acts in setting to the present generation of their fellow-believers throughout the East an example which they may well emulate. Headed by their illustrious representative, who ever since the call of 'Abdu'l-Bahá was raised has been twice round the world and is still, with marvellous courage and fortitude, enriching the matchless record of her services, these men and women have been instrumental in extending, to a degree as yet unsurpassed in Bahá'í history, the sway of Bahá'u'lláh's universal dominion. In the face of almost insurmountable obstacles they have succeeded in most of the countries through which they have passed or in which they have resided, in proclaiming the teachings of their Faith, in circulating its literature, in defending its cause, in laying the basis of its institutions and in reinforcing the number of its declared supporters. It would be impossible for me to unfold in this short compass the tale of such heroic actions. Nor can any tribute of mine do justice to the spirit which has enabled these standard-bearers of the Religion of God to win such laurels and to confer such distinction on the generation to which they belong.

31 The Cause of Bahá'u'lláh had by that time encircled the globe. Its light, born in darkest Persia, had been carried successively to the European, the African and the American continents, and was now penetrating the heart of Australia, encompassing thereby the whole earth with a girdle of shining glory. The share which such worthy, such stout-hearted, disciples have had in brightening the last days of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's earthly life He alone has truly recognized and can sufficiently estimate. The unique and eternal significance of such

emulate

Imitate; copy; follow; be like.

matchless

Perfect; without equal; beyond compare; unrivaled.

unsurpassed

Unmatched; incomparable; matchless; unrivaled.

tribute

Compliment; honor; praise; acknowledgment; accolade.

laurels

Success; glory; award.

girdle

Strap; belt; restraint.

accomplishments the labors of the rising generation will assuredly reveal, their memory its works will befittingly preserve and **extol**. How deep a satisfaction ‘Abdu’l-Bahá must have felt, while conscious of the approaching hour of His departure, as He witnessed the first fruits of the international services of these heroes of His Father’s Faith! To their keeping He had committed a great and goodly **heritage**. In the **twilight** of His earthly life He could rest content in the **serene** assurance that such able hands could be relied upon to preserve its **integrity** and **exalt** its virtue.

32 The passing of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, so sudden in the circumstances which caused it, so dramatic in its **consequences**, could neither **impede** the operation of such a dynamic force nor **obscure** its purpose. Those **fervid** appeals, embodied in the Will and Testament of a departed Master, could not but confirm its aim, define its character and reinforce the promise of its ultimate success.

33 Out of the pangs of anguish which His **bereaved** followers have suffered, amid the heat and dust which the attacks launched by a sleepless enemy had precipitated, the Administration of Bahá’u’lláh’s **invincible** Faith was born. The **potent** energies released through the **ascension** of the Center of His Covenant **crystallized** into this supreme, this **infallible** Organ for the accomplishment of a Divine Purpose. The Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá unveiled its character, reaffirmed its basis, supplemented its principles, asserted its **indispensability**, and **enumerated** its chief institutions. With that self-same **spontaneity** which had

extol

Praise; exalt; admire; commend.

heritage

Inheritance; legacy; birthright; tradition.

twilight

Nightfall; evening; sunset; sundown; dusk.

serene

Calm; tranquil; peaceful; quiet; still.

integrity

Honesty; truthfulness; uprightness; honor.

exalt

Praise; laud; acclaim; applaud; pay tribute to.

consequences

Upshot; result; effect; outcome; end result.

impede

Obstruct; hinder; hold back; inhibit.

obscure

Vague; doubtful; murky; unclear; incomprehensible.

fervid

Intense; burning; passionate; hot.

bereaved

Sorrowing; suffering loss of loved one.

invincible

Unbeatable; unconquerable; unshakable; supreme.

potent

Strong; powerful; effective; compelling.

ascension

Soul passing to next world; death; rising.

crystallized

Assume permanent form or shape.

infallible

Foolproof; surefire; flawless; dependable.

indispensability

Crucial; vital; essential; very important.

enumerated

List; named; specified; itemized; catalog.

spontaneity

Impulsiveness; naturalness; artlessness.

characterized her response to the Message proclaimed by Bahá'u'lláh America had now arisen to **espouse** the cause of the Administration which the Will and Testament of His Son had unmistakably established. It was given to her, and to her alone, in the **turbulent** years following the revelation of so momentous a Document, to become the fearless champion of that Administration, the **pivot** of its new-born institutions and the leading promoter of its influence. To their Persian brethren, who in the **heroic age** of the Faith had won the crown of **martyrdom**, the American believers, forerunners of its golden age, were now worthily succeeding, bearing in their turn the **palm** of a hard-won victory. The unbroken record of their illustrious deeds had established beyond the shadow of a doubt their **preponderating** share in shaping the destinies of their Faith. In a world **writhing** with pain and declining into chaos this community the **vanguard** of the **liberating** forces of Bahá'u'lláh—succeeded in the years following 'Abdu'l-Bahá's passing in raising high above the institutions established by its sister communities in East and West what may well constitute the **chief pillar** of that future House—a House which **posterity** will regard as the last **refuge** of a **tottering** civilization.

34 In the prosecution of their task neither the whisperings of the **treacherous** nor the **virulent** attacks of their avowed enemies were allowed to **deflect** them from their high purpose or to **undermine** their faith in the **sublimity** of their calling. The **agitation** provoked by him who in his **incessant** and **sordid** pursuit of earthly riches would have, but for 'Abdu'l-Bahá's warning, **sullied** the

espouse

Champion; support; adopt; take up; back.

turbulent

Violent; rowdy; unruly; riotous; restless.

pivot

Spin around; revolve; rotate; turn.

martyrdom

Dying for a cause, esp. religious.

palm

An emblem of victory, triumph; laurel.

preponderating

Having greater moral or intellectual weight; superior
In power or amount.

writhing

To twist or squirm, as in pain.

vanguard

Front line; advance guard; forerunner; forefront.

liberating

Energizing; cathartic; beneficial.

posterity

Future generations; future recognition.

refuge

Shelter; safe haven; asylum; sanctuary.

tottering

Faltering; staggering; shaking; teetering.

treacherous

Unfaithful; disloyal; deceitful; two-faced.

virulent

Strong; dangerous; active; powerful.

deflect

Turn aside; ward off; avert; repel.

undermine

Weaken; chip away at; destabilize.

sublimity

Lofty; exalted; impressive.

agitated

Restless; troubled; disturbed; stressed.

incessant

Nonstop; continual; relentless; constant; persistent.

sordid

Sleazy; disgusting; base; disreputable.

sullied

Dishonored; desecrated; despoiled; violated.

fair name of their Faith, had left them in the main undisturbed. Schooled by tribulation and secure within the stronghold of their fast evolving institutions they **scorned** his **insinuations** and by their unswerving loyalty were able to shatter his hopes. They refused to allow any consideration of the admitted prestige and past services of his father and of his associates to weaken their determination to ignore entirely the person whom ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had so emphatically condemned. The veiled attacks with which a handful of **deluded enthusiasts** subsequently sought in the pages of their **periodical** to check the growth and blight the prospects of an infant Administration had likewise failed to achieve their purpose. The attitude which a **besotted woman** later on assumed, her **ludicrous** assertions, her boldness in **flouting** the Will of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and in challenging its **authenticity** and her attempts to **subvert** its principles were again powerless to produce the slightest **breach** in the ranks of its valiant upholders. The treacherous schemes which the ambition of a **perfidious** and still more recent enemy has devised and through which he is still striving to **deface** ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s noble handiwork and corrupt its administrative principles are being once more completely frustrated. These **intermittent** and **abortive** attempts on the part of its assailants to force the surrender of the newly built stronghold of the Faith its defenders have from the very beginning **utterly disdained**. No matter how fierce the assaults of the enemy or skillful his **stratagem** they have refused to yield one jot or one **tittle** of their cherished **convictions**. His **insinuations** and **clamor** they have consistently ignored. The motives which animated his actions, the methods he steadily

scorned

Disdain toward; disrespectful; ridiculed.

insinuations

Hints; suggestions; allusions; intimations.

deluded

Mislead; con; fool; trick; dupe; hoodwink.

enthusiasts

Fans; devotees; aficionados.

periodical

Bulletin; journal; publication; monthly.

besotted

Smitten; stupefied with liquor; fanatical; obsessed.

ludicrous

Absurd; ridiculous; foolish; stupid.

flouting

Breaching; breaking; infringement.

authenticity

Genuineness; validity; legitimacy.

subvert

Undermine; challenge; threaten; weaken.

breach

Rift; separation; division; rupture.

perfidious

Untrue; dishonest; treacherous; lying.

deface

Mar; ruin; disfigure; mutilate.

intermittent

Alternating; sporadic; irregular; discontinuous.

abortive

Failed; fruitless; bungled; futile.

utterly

Completely; absolutely; totally; wholly; outright.

disdained

Contempt; scorn; derision; disregard.

stratagem

Trick; ruse; ploy; wile; scheme.

tittle

The tiniest bit; iota; minute amount.

convictions

Beliefs; principles; faith; opinions.

insinuations

Hints; suggestions; allusions; intimations.

clamor

Uproar; racket; din; commotion.

pursued, the **precarious** privileges he seemed **momentarily** to enjoy they could not but despise. Thriving for a time through the **devices** which their **scheming** minds had conceived and supported by the **ephemeral** advantages which fame, ability or fortune can confer these **notorious exponents** of corruption and **heresy** have succeeded in **protruding** for a time their ugly features only to sink, as rapidly as they had risen, into the **mire** of an **ignominious** end.

35 From the midst of these **afflictive** trials, **reminiscent** in some of their aspects of the violent storm that had accompanied the birth of the Faith in their **native** land, the American believers had again triumphantly emerged, their course **undeflected**, their fame **unsullied**, their heritage **unimpaired**. A series of magnificent accomplishments, each more significant than the previous, were to shed increasing **lustre** on an already **illustrious** record. In the dark years immediately following ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s ascension their deeds shone with a radiance that made them the object of the envy and the admiration of the less privileged among their brethren. The entire community, **untrammeled** and supremely confident, was rising to a great and glorious opportunity. The forces that had motivated its birth, that had assisted in its rise, were now accelerating its growth, in a manner and with such rapidity that neither the **pangs** of a world-wide sorrow nor the unceasing **convulsions** of a distracted age could **paralyze** its efforts or **retard** its march.

36 Internally the community had **embarked** in a number of enterprises that were to enable it on the one hand to extend still

precarious

Uncertain; insecure; unsafe; unsteady; shaky.

momentarily

For a moment; briefly; temporarily; shortly.

devices

Plans; strategy; policy; procedure.

scheming

Wily; tricky; devious; calculating; conniving.

ephemeral

Short-lived; passing; fleeting; brief; temporary.

notorious

Infamous; disreputable; dishonorable.

exponents

Supporters; fans; promoters; advocates.

heresy

Dissent; deviation; unorthodoxy; sacrilege;

protruding

Stick out; jut; overhang; extend beyond.

mire

Swampy area where one can get dirty and stuck.

ignominious

Humiliating; embarrassing; shameful; disgraceful.

afflictive

Bother; worry; upset; distress; trouble.

reminiscent

Evocative; suggestive; reminding one of something.

native

Indigenous; local; resident; land of birth.

undeflected

Immoveable; unyielding.

unsullied

Pure; clean faultless; immaculate.

unimpaired

Without weaken or loss of function.

lustre

Shine; gleam; patina; sheen.

illustrious

Well-known; famous; memorable.

untrammeled

Unimpeded; unconstrained; unhampered.

pangs

Twinges; spasms; cramps; shooting pains.

convulsions

Fit; spasm; seizure; tremor; paroxysm.

paralyze

Powerless; inactive; ineffective; paralysis.

retard

Hold back; delay; check; hinder; impede.

embarked

Board; get on; start out.

further the scope of its spiritual **jurisdiction** and on the other to **fashion** the essential instruments for the creation and consolidation of the institutions which such an extension **imperatively** demanded. Externally its undertakings were inspired by the twofold objective of **prosecuting**, even more **intensely** than before, the admirable work which in each of the five continents its international teachers had initiated, and of assuming an increasing share in the handling and solution of the delicate and complex problems with which a newly-**emancipated** Faith was being confronted. The birth of the Administration in that continent had **signalized** these praiseworthy **exertions**. Its gradual consolidation was destined to insure their continuance and to **accentuate** their effectiveness.

37 To enumerate only the most outstanding accomplishments which, in their own country and beyond its **confines**, have so greatly enhanced the **prestige** of the American believers and have **redounded** to the glory and honor of the Most Great Name is all I can presently undertake, leaving to future generations the task of explaining their import and of **affixing** a fitting estimate to their value. To the body of their elected representatives must be attributed the honor of having been the first among their sister Assemblies of East and West to **devise**, **promulgate** and **legalize** the essential **instruments** for the effective discharge of their collective duties—instruments which every properly constituted Bahá'í community must regard as a pattern worthy to be adopted and copied. To their efforts must likewise be ascribed the historic achievement of

jurisdiction

Authority; control; influence; power; sway.

fashion

Shape; mold; form; make; create.

imperatively

Demand; command; obligatory.

prosecuting

To pursue until completion.

intensely

Powerfully; strongly; hugely; extremely.

emancipated

Liberated; released; open; unbound; uncontrolled.

signalized

To make remarkable or conspicuous. To point out particularly.

exertions

Efforts; actions; applications.

accentuate

Stress; highlight; play up; emphasize.

confines

Limits; borders; restrictions; margins.

prestige

Standing; stature; esteem; reputation; regard.

redounded

Contributed; accrued; come again; resounded.

affixing

Attach; fix; fasten; stick; pin; glue.

devise

Plan; develop; create; think up; work out.

promulgate

Spread; publicize; broadcast; circulate; transmit.

legalize

Make legal; authorize; sanction; permit.

instruments

Means; agency; method; medium; mechanism.

establishing their national endowments upon a permanent and **unassailable** basis and of creating the necessary agency for the formation of those **subsidiary** organs whose function is to administer on behalf of their **trustees** such possessions as these may acquire beyond the limits of their immediate **jurisdiction**. By the weight of their moral support so freely extended to their Egyptian brethren they were able to remove some of the most **formidable** obstacles which the Faith had to **surmount** in its struggle to **enfranchise** itself from the fetters of Muslim **orthodoxy**. Through the effective and timely intervention of these same elected representatives they were able to **avert** the woes and dangers which had **menaced** their persecuted fellow-workers in the Soviet Republics, and to ward off the rage which had threatened with immediate ruin one of the most precious and noblest of Bahá'í institutions. Nothing short of the whole-hearted assistance, whether moral or financial which the American believers, individually and collectively, were moved to extend on several occasions to the needy and **harassed** among their brethren in Persia could have saved these **hapless** victims of the consequences of the **calamities** that had visited them in the years following 'Abdu'l-Bahá's ascension. It was the publicity which the efforts of their American brethren had created, the protests they were led to make, the appeals and **petitions** they had submitted, which **mitigated** these sufferings and curbed the violence of the worst and most tyrannical opponents of the Faith in that land. **Who else**, if not one of their most distinguished representatives, has risen to force upon the attention of the **highest Tribunal** the world has yet seen the grievances which a Faith,

unassailable

Invincible; unbeatable; invulnerable.

subsidiary

Supplementary; additional; secondary.

trustees

Persons or agents holding legal title to and administering property for a beneficiary.

jurisdiction

Authority; control; influence; power; sway.

formidable

Impressive; remarkable; astounding; awesome.

surmount

Overcome; prevail; conquer; triumph.

enfranchise

Grant rights; give liberty.

orthodoxy

Accepted view or belief: tenet; belief.

avert

Avoid; prevent; turn away.

menaced

Threatened; potentially dangerous; possibly hazardous.

harassed

Stressed; hassled; beleaguered; under duress.

hapless

Unfortunate; unlucky; wretched; miserable.

calamities

Disaster; catastrophe; tragedy; blow.

petitions

Formally request in writing; appeal; plead; implore.

mitigated

Lessened; allay; diminish; alleviate.

robbed of **one of its holiest sanctuaries**, had suffered at the hand of the **usurper**? Who else has succeeded in securing, through patient and **persistent** effort, those written **affirmations** which proclaim the justice of a **persecuted** cause and tacitly recognize its right to an independent religious status? “The Commission,” is the resolution passed by the Permanent Mandates Commission of the League of Nations, “recommends that the Council should ask the British Government to make representations to the ‘Iraqi Government with a view to the immediate **redress** of the denial of justice from which the **petitioners** (the Bahá’í Spiritual Assembly of Baghdad) have suffered.” Has any one else except an **American believer** been led to obtain from royalty such remarkable and repeated testimonies to the **regenerating** power of the Faith of God, such striking references to the universality of its teachings and the **sublimity** of its mission. “The Bahá’í teaching,” such is the **Queen**’s written testimony, “brings peace and understanding. It is like a wide embrace gathering together all those who have long searched for words of hope. It accepts all great Prophets gone before, it destroys no other creeds and leaves all doors open. Saddened by the continual **strife** amongst believers of many confessions and wearied of their **intolerance** towards each other, I discovered in the Bahá’í teaching the real spirit of Christ so often denied and misunderstood: Unity instead of strife, Hope instead of **condemnation**, Love instead of hate, and a great **reassurance** for all men.” Have not the American adherents of the Faith of Bahá’u’lláh, through the courage displayed by one of the most brilliant members of their community, been instrumental in paving the

usurper

One who seizes without legal authority.

persistent

Constant; determined; continual; relentless.

affirmations

Confirmations; declarations; statements; assertions.

persecuted

Wronged; mistreated; victimized; offended.

redress

Compensation; reparation; damages; amends.

petitioners

Those who formally request in writing; appeal; plead; implore.

regenerating

Renewing; restoring; reviving; stimulating; restarting.

sublimity

Uplifting; awe-inspiring; moving; magnificent.

strife

Trouble; conflict; fighting; discord; friction.

intolerance

Bigotry; prejudice; narrow-mindedness; fanaticism.

condemnation

Censure; blame; disapproval; criticism.

reassurance

Comfort; assurance; support; hope; encouragement.

way for the removal of those barriers which have, for well-nigh a century, **hampered** the growth and crippled the energy of their fellow-believers in Persia? Is it not America who, ever mindful of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s passionate **entreaty**, has sent out to the ends of the earth a steadily increasing number of its most consecrated citizens—men and women the one wish of whose lives is to consolidate the foundations of Bahá’u’lláh’s world-embracing dominion? In the northernmost capitals of Europe, in most of its central states, throughout the Balkan Peninsula, along the shores of the African, the Asiatic and South American continents are to be found this day a small band of women pioneers who, single-handed and with **scanty** resources, are toiling for the advent of the Day ‘Abdu’l-Bahá has foretold. Did not the attitude of the **Greatest Holy Leaf**, as she approached the close of her life, bear eloquent testimony to the **incomparable** share which her steadfast and self-sacrificing lovers in that continent have had in **lightening** the burden which had weighed so long and so heavily on her heart? And finally who can be so bold as to deny that the completion of The superstructure of the Mashriqu’l-Adhkar—the crowning glory of America’s past and present achievements—has **forged** that **mystic** chain which is to link, more firmly than ever, the hearts of its champion-builders with Him Who is the Source and Center of their Faith and the Object of their truest adoration?

38 Fellow-believers in the American continent! Great indeed have been your past and present achievements! **Immeasurably** greater are the wonders which the future has

hampered

Held back; hindered; weak position.

entreaty

Appeal; plea; petition; request.

scanty

Very little; insufficient; sparse; scarce; meager.

incomparable

Without equal; unmatched; unique; unrivaled.

lightening

Lessen; reduce; alleviate; ease.

forged

Fashioned; construct; make.

mystic

Supernatural; magical; spiritual; numinous.

immeasurably

Vastly; infinitely; immensely; greatly; hugely.

in store for you! The Edifice your sacrifices have raised still remains to be clothed. The House which must needs be supported by the highest administrative institution your hands have reared, is as yet unbuilt. The provisions of the chief **Repository** of those laws that must govern its operation are thus far mostly **undisclosed**. The Standard which, if ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s wishes are to be fulfilled, must be raised in your own country has yet to be unfurled. The Unity of which that standard is to be the symbol is far from being yet established. The machinery which must needs **incarnate** and preserve that unity is not even created. Will it be America, will it be one of the countries of Europe, who will arise to assume the leadership essential to the shaping of the **destinies** of this troubled age? Will America allow any of her sister communities in East or West to achieve such **ascendancy** as shall deprive her of that spiritual primacy with which she has been **invested** and which she has thus far so nobly retained? Will she not rather contribute, by a still further revelation of those **inherent** powers that motivate her life, to **enhance** the priceless heritage which the love and wisdom of a departed Master have **conferred** upon her?

39 Her past has been a testimony to the **inexhaustible vitality** of her faith. May not her future confirm it?

Your true brother,
SHOGHI.

Haifa, Palestine, April 21, 1933.

undisclosed

Unrevealed; nameless; hidden; secret.

incarnate

Embodied; made flesh; alive; in person.

destinies

Fates; fortunes; futures; providence.

ascendancy

Superiority; dominance; upper hand; control.

invested

Endowed; provided; supplied; empowered; armed.

inherent

Inbuilt; inborn; natural; intrinsic.

enhance

Improve; add to; increase; boost; develop.

conferred

Awarded; bestowed; granted; give; presented.

inexhaustible

Infinite; unlimited; limitless; vast; boundless.

vitality

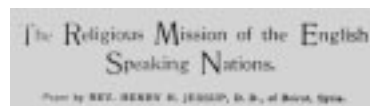
Energy; strength; life; vigor; animation.

'chosen instrument'



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**Rev. Henry H. Jessup,
D.D. (1832-1910)**

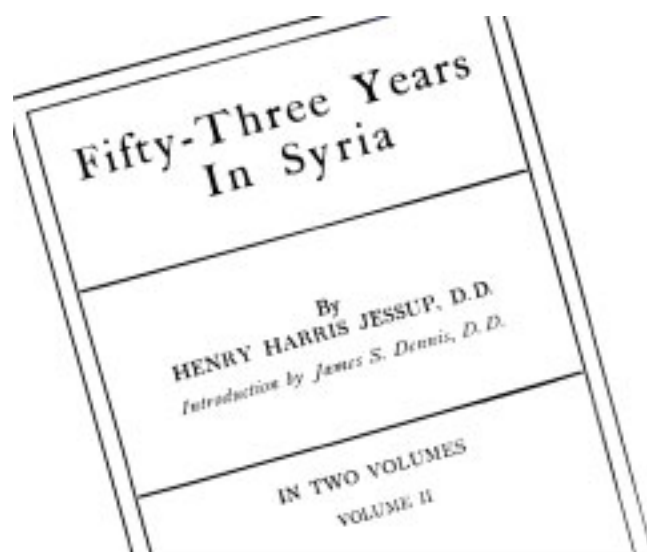


The Rev. Henry H. Jessup, D.D. (1832-1910)—Director of Presbyterian Missionary Operations in Syria—prepared a paper titled, “The Religious Mission of the English Speaking Nations,” which was read by his colleague, the Rev. George A. Ford at the World Parliament of Religions—held in conjunction with the Chicago’s World Fair of 1893.

Rev. Jessup’s paper closed with the following words, which are the first public mention of the Bahá’í Faith in the West:

“In the place of Bahji, or Delight, just outside the fortress of Acca, on the Syrian Coast, there died, a few months since, a famous Persian sage named BAHÁ’O’LLAH—the Glory of God. “Three years ago he was visited by a Cambridge scholar [Prof. E.G. Browne] to whom he uttered sentiments so noble, so Christ-like that we repeat them as our closing words— ‘We desire but the good of the world and the happiness of the nations—that all nations should become one in faith and all men as

brothers; that the bonds of affection and unity between the sons of men should be strengthened; that diversity of religion should cease and differences of race be annulled—and so shall it be; these fruitless strifes, these ruinous wars shall pass away, and the most great peace shall come.

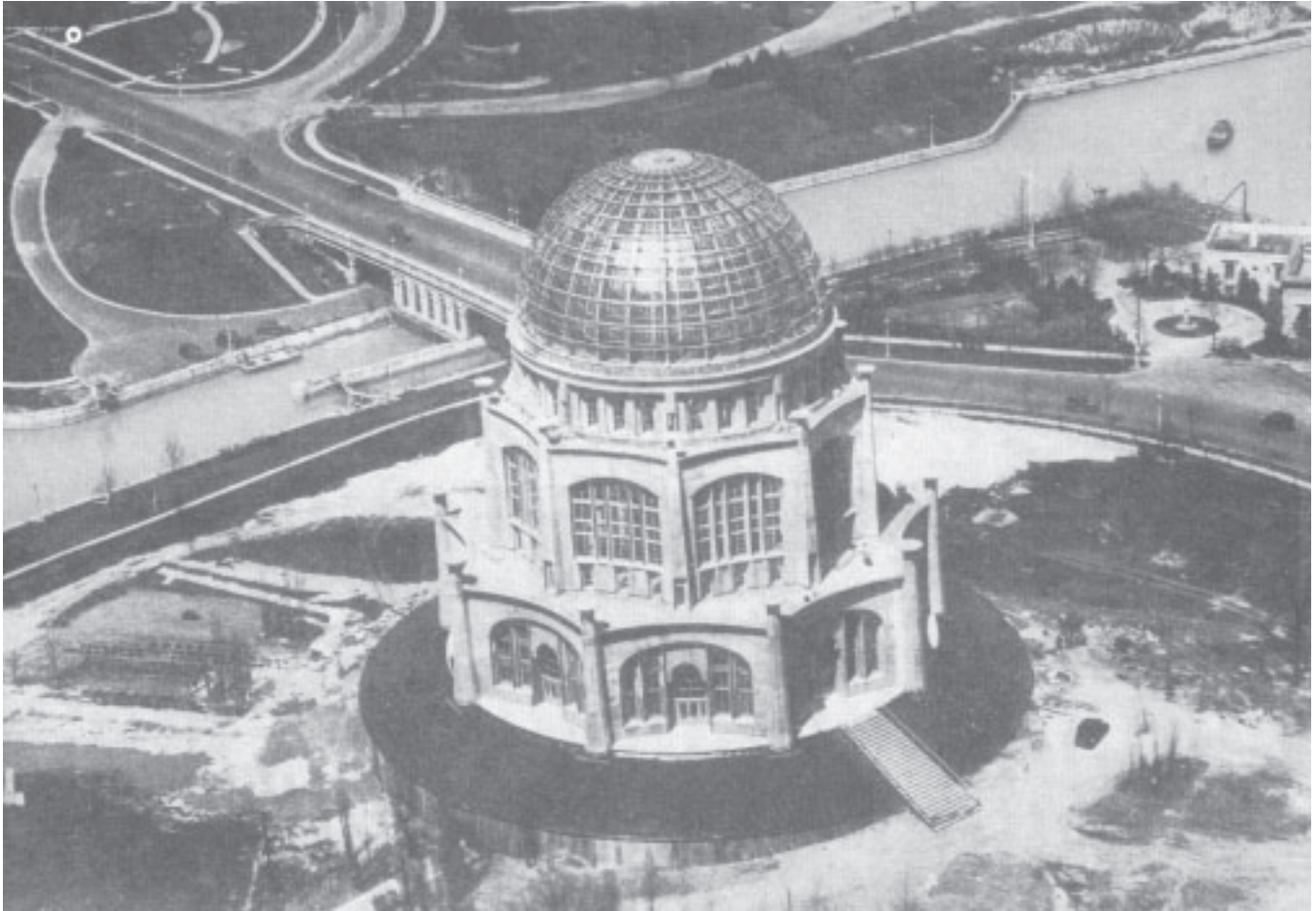


Rev. Jessup proved he was no friend to the Bahá’í Faith when he attacked ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in volume two of his autobiography, Fifty-Three Years in Syria. In that work Jessup charges that “Abbas Effendi, succeeded Him [Bahá’u’lláh] and is running the incarnation fraud for all that it is worth...”. page 637.

Rev. Jessup attacked the Bahá’í Faith in an article he wrote titled “The Babites”, published in *The Outlook*, New York 22 June 1901, pp. 451-6; condensed in *Missionary Review of the World*, Vol. 25, New York Oct. 1902, pp. 771-5

'Edifice'

The "Edifice" referred to is the Bahá'í House of Worship in Wilmette, IL.



Bahá'í House of Worship in Wilmette, Illinois, USA in 1931

'Abdu'l-Bahá gave permission for the construction of this house of worship in 1903. The Master laid the cornerstone of the building in 1912. In 1933—when this letter was written—construction had been underway since 20 December 1920. *GPB* 303. The above photograph was taken shortly after the dome was put in place in 1931. The ornamentation of the dome was completed

in 1934, however the remaining exterior ornamentation was not completed until World War II.

The House of Worship was dedicated May 1, 1953.

—Photograph and most of the foregoing information taken from *The Bahá'í World, 1932-1934*.

“Golden Age”

1626. Ages of the Faith and Epochs of the Ages

"The Guardian wishes me to explain that there is no relationship between the epochs of the Divine Plan, and the epochs of the Ages of the Faith.

"The Faith is divided into three Ages, the **Heroic, the Formative, the Golden Age**, as has been outlined in his writings. The Heroic Age closed with the Ascension of Abdu'l-Bahá. The Formative age is divided into epochs.

The first epoch lasted 25 years. We are now actually in the second epoch of the Formative Age. How long the Formative Age will last is not known -- and there will probably be a number of epochs in it."

(From letter written on behalf of the Guardian to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, January 18, 1953) *Lights*, 487.

“During this Formative Age of the Faith, and in the course of present and succeeding epochs, the last and crowning stage in the erection of the framework of the Administrative Order of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh—the election of the Universal House of Justice—will have been completed, the *Kitab-i-Aqdas*, the Mother-Book of His Revelation, will have been codified and its laws promulgated, the Lesser peace will have been established, the unity of mankind will have been achieved and its maturity attained, the plan conceived by `Abdu'l-Bahá will have been executed, the emancipation of the Faith from the fetters of religious

orthodoxy will have been effected, and its independent religious status will have been universally recognized, whilst in the course of the Golden Age, destined to consummate the Dispensation itself, the banner of the Most Great Peace, promised by its Author, will have been unfurled, the World Bahá'í Commonwealth will have emerged in the plenitude of its power and splendor, and the birth and efflorescence of a world civilization, the child of that Peace, will have conferred its inestimable blessings upon all mankind.”

—Shoghi Effendi, *Citadel of Faith*, 6.

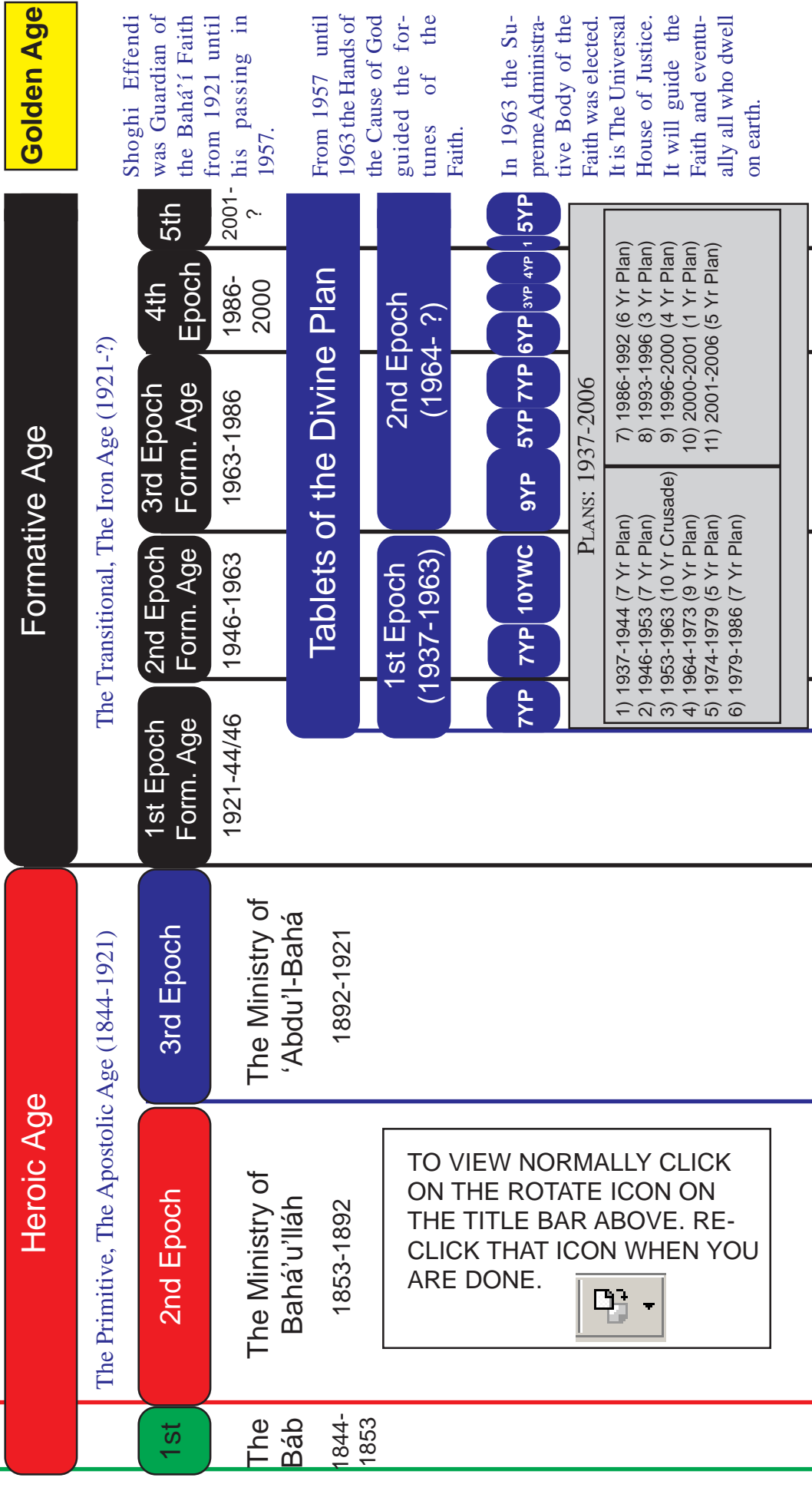
Go to the next page for a chart of the “Ages and Epochs of the Bahá'í Faith.” When you get there, click on the rotate symbol to see the chart in a horizontal (landscape) orientation.



BAHÁ'Í CYCLE - DESTINED TO LAST FOR 500,000 YEARS (5,000 CENTURIES)

Bahá'í Era (comprising the Dispensations of the Báb & Bahá'u'lláh)

Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh (destined to last at least 1,000 years)



1844 1853 1892 1921 1937 1946 1963 1986 2001

“Object of its devotion”



'Abdu'l-Bahá (1844-1921)
Head of the Bahá'í Faith 1892-1921

In the Will and Testament of Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá was named Center of the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh and authorized Interpreter of the Bahá'í Revelation.

The Master was freed from Prison by the Young Turk Revolution of 1908. In 1909 He placed the remains of the Báb in His tomb on Mt. Carmel.

Between 1911 and 1913 'Abdu'l-Bahá embarked on a Western Tour. He visited Europe (twice) and spent nine months (April-December) in the United States and Canada.

He passed away in Haifa in November 1921 and is buried within the Shrine of the Báb on Mr. Carmel in Haifa.

“that golden Millennium”

“A period of one thousand years. The period of one thousand years during which (according to one interpretation of Rev. 20:1–5) Christ will reign in person on earth.”

—*The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*

“He Who in such dramatic circumstances was made to sustain the overpowering weight of so glorious a Mission was none other than the One Whom posterity will acclaim, and Whom innumerable followers already recognize, as the Judge, the Lawgiver and Redeemer of all mankind, as the Organizer of the entire planet, as the Unifier of the children of men, as the Inaugurator of the long-awaited millennium, as the Originator of a new "Universal Cycle," as the Establisher of the Most Great Peace, as the Fountain of the Most Great Justice, as the Proclaimer of the coming of age of the entire human race, as the Creator of a new World Order, and as the Inspirer and Founder of a world civilization.” —Shoghi Effendi, *GPB* 93-94.

“Let no one, while this System is still in its infancy, misconceive its character, belittle its significance or misrepresent its purpose. The bedrock on which this Administrative Order is founded is God's immutable Purpose for mankind in this day. The Source from which it derives its inspiration is no one less than Bahá'u'lláh Himself. Its shield and defender are the embattled hosts of the Abha Kingdom. Its seed is the blood of no less than twenty thousand martyrs who have offered up their lives that it may be born and flourish. The axis round which its institutions revolve are the authentic provisions of the Will and Testament of `Abdu'l-Bahá. Its guiding principles are the truths which He Who is the unerring Interpreter of the teachings of our Faith has so clearly enunciated in His public addresses throughout the West. The laws that govern its operation and limit its functions are those which have been expressly ordained

in the Kitab-i-Aqdas. The seat round which its spiritual, its humanitarian and administrative activities will cluster are the Mashriqu'l-Adhkar and its Dependencies. The pillars that sustain its authority and buttress its structure are the twin institutions of the Guardianship and of the Universal House of Justice. The central, the underlying aim which animates it is the establishment of the New World Order as adumbrated by Bahá'u'lláh. The methods it employs, the standard it inculcates, incline it to neither East nor West, neither Jew nor Gentile, neither rich nor poor, neither white nor colored. Its watchword is the unification of the human race; its standard the "Most Great Peace"; its consummation the advent of that golden millennium—the Day when the kingdoms of this world shall have become the Kingdom of God Himself, the Kingdom of Bahá'u'lláh.

SHOGHI.

Haifa, Palestine,
February 8, 1934.”

—Shoghi Effendi, *WOB* 156-157.

See also *Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh* on the Chart of Ages and Epochs.

“Mosaic Dispensation”

Moses was a Messenger of God Who appeared around 1300 BCE. He brought teachings identified as the Pentatuch (the first five books of the Bible).

He successfully opposed Pharaoh and led the Jews out of Egypt and received the Ten Commandments on Mt. Sinai.

The “Mosaic Dispensation” can be thought of as that period of time between Abraham—the Messenger before Moses—and Jesus—the Messenger Who appeared after Moses. A Dispensation can also be thought of as that period of time of the influence of a Revelation dominates previous Revelations.

“collapsing Empire”

The reference here is to the development of the organization of early Christianity which modeled itself on the Roman Empire. The Roman Empire collapsed in 476 CE; nevertheless, Christianity was able to continue its expansion and development.

The Fall of the Roman Empire

The West was severely shaken in 410, when the city of Rome was sacked by the Visigoths, a wandering nation of Germanic peoples from the northeast. The fall of Rome was completed in 476, when the German chieftain Odoacer deposed the last Roman emperor of the West, Romulus Augustulus. The East, always richer and stronger, continued as the Byzantine Empire through the European Middle Ages.

TABLETS OF THE DIVINE PLAN

"Likewise, 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, the home of the righteous, and the gathering place of the free. Therefore, every section thereof is blessed: but because these nine states have been

it were a shining star. It is lighted with the oil of a blessed tree, an olive neither of the East, nor of the West; it wanteth little but that the oil thereof would give light, although no fire touched it. This is the light added unto light. God will direct unto His light whom He pleaseth."

—*Tablets of the Divine Plan*, 59-60



favoured in faith and assurance, hence through this precedence they have obtained spiritual privilege. They must realize the value of this bounty; because they have obtained such a favor and in order to render thanksgiving for this most great bestowal, they must arise in the diffusion of divine fragrances so that the blessed verse of the Qur'an: "God is the light of heaven and earth: the similitude of His light is a niche in a wall, wherein a lamp is placed, and the lamp enclosed in a case of glass; the glass appears as if

The Unveiling of the *Tablets of the Divine Plan* at the McAlpine Hotel in New York City, April, 1919. The young ladies unveiled the Tablets as they were called to do so. Mary Maxwell unveiled the Tablet for the Dominion of Canada.

x Mary Maxwell, age 9. xx Bahiyiyh Randall [Winckler]

TABLETS OF THE DIVINE PLAN

Series of fourteen letters by 'Abdu'l-Bahá on the importance Of TEACHING the Bahá'í Faith. They were addressed to the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada during World War I. The first eight letters were composed in 1916 (26 March-22 April), and five of these

had been received and published before communications between Palestine and America were severed because of the war. A further six letters were composed in 1917 (2 February-8 March). Letters were addressed to the North American Bahá'ís as a whole as well as by region (Canada, the North-eastern, Southern, Central and Western United States). The complete set was ceremonially 'unveiled' to the Bahá'í at a special convention in New York in April 1919. 'Abdu'l-Bahá's instructions were that Bahá'í should systematically teach the Faith in those American states and Canadian provinces in which there were as yet few or no Bahá'í; establish it throughout' Latin America; and propagate it throughout the rest of the world 'as far as the islands of the Pacific'. Long lists of territories and islands where the Bahá'í should go were given. The American continent was where God's light would be revealed, and if the North American Bahá'ís responded to his call, waves of spiritual power would emanate, and the Bahá'í become 'established upon the throne of an everlasting dominion'. Particular significance was attached to teaching the Eskimos and other indigenous Americans, and to establishing the Faith in Alaska, Greenland, Mexico, Panama and the Brazilian city of Bahia (Salvador). The teachers should seek to become 'Apostles of Bahá'u'lláh. (This required three conditions: to be firm in the COVENANT; fellowship and love amongst the Bahá'ís; and that the teachers were dedicated and severed from the world, continually travelling, sanctified, and like a shining torch in God's love.) Those who travelled to foreign countries should learn the local languages. Bahá'í literature needed to be translated or composed in the world's various languages. The war had made the peoples of the world yearn for peace and become receptive to the

Bahá'í message. Specific prayers were given for the teachers to Use. AB 420-5 TDP

'Abdu'l-Bahá had written that 'this is the time' for teaching, but at first only a few Bahá'ís responded to his appeal (these included Martha ROOT, who travelled to Latin America, John and Clara Hyde-DUNN, who settled in Australia, and Leonora ARMSTRONG, who settled in Brazil). [Agnes Alexander who settled in Japan.] Only from 1937 onwards did Shoghi Effendi direct the Bahá'ís to undertake a series of systematic teaching PLANS intended to fulfil the objectives of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's letters. He referred to the fulfilment of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Divine Plan as passing through a series of stages [Chart].

A Concise Encyclopedia of the Bahá'í Faith, 331-332.

‘Most Great Peace’

“In his letters to the rulers and elsewhere Bahá’u’lláh appealed for world peace, referring both to a ‘Great Peace’ (*sulh-i-akbar*, translated by Shoghi Effendi as the ‘Lesser Peace’) and a ‘Most Great Peace’ (*sulh-i-a’zam*). Peace was the chief means for the protection of humanity (*ESW* 30). The Most Great Peace apparently represented the union of all the world’s peoples in one common faith. This was the ‘sovereign remedy’ for the healing of the world, for it was RELIGION that provided the best means for human welfare. This remedy could only be achieved through the power of ‘an all-powerful and inspired Physician’ (i.e. Bahá’u’lláh). However, as the world’s rulers had refused this Most Great Peace (by not accepting Bahá’u’lláh), they should instead strive to establish the ‘Lesser Peace’, a political peace between nations (Proclamation 12 13, 67 8). Conflicts between the nations were the cause of calamity. It was imperative to end them. This would also relieve the people of the world from ‘the burden of exorbitant expenditures’ (*TB* 89). An ‘all embracing’ assembly attended by the world’s rulers must be held to establish the foundations of this peace, and the great powers must become reconciled amongst themselves. Thereafter, peace would be upheld by collective security: all other nations acting together in unison against any aggressor nation. This would obviate the need for ARMAMENTS, apart from the limited quantities required to maintain internal order in each country (*ESW* 30 1; *TB* 165). The ministers of the HOUSE OF JUSTICE Must also promote this peace (*TB* 89). Those who upheld peace would be greatly blessed (*TB* 23). Ultimately, however, the ‘overwhelming corruptions’ of the world would only be purged through uniting the peoples of the world in one universal faith and the pursuit of one common aim (*TB* 69).

‘Abdu’l-Bahá stated that true civilization would only be established in the world once a number of the world’s RULERS had come together ‘with firm resolve and clear vision’ to establish universal peace. They would have to establish a binding treaty which would delimit all international frontiers, define international relations and restrict the size of each nation’s military forces. Breach of this sacred agreement would lead to international intervention against any aggressor nation. Under such circumstances each government would only need a small force in order to maintain internal order, and there would no longer be any need for large stockpiles of armaments or an international arms race. Human energies and resources could instead be devoted to fostering the development and well-being of the world’s peoples (SDC 64-7). He ‘emphasized that the work towards peace needed to be combined with the achievement of a wider reconstruction of society. Thus, the expansion of democratic forms of government, and in particular the education, enfranchisement and growing political power of WOMEN were of major importance in bringing about international peace (PI 108, 134 5, 167, 375). He also predicted that the excessive costs of military expenditure would ultimately force nations to seek peace; stressed that disarmament should be multilateral (CC2: 171, 172); and called on the United States and Canada to take the lead in establishing peace (PUP 36 7, 83 4, 318).

Shoghi Effendi reiterated these teachings, distinguishing between the Lesser Peace, to be established by the governments of the world, and the Most Great Peace, to be established by the expansion of the Faith,

and characterized by the development of what he termed the 'Bahá'í World Commonwealth' (see WORLD ORDER). In 1985 the Universal House of Justice issued its 'peace statement', *The Promise of World Peace*, a forceful expression of the Bahá'í 'peace programme', addressed to the peoples of the world and widely distributed to world leaders. CC2: 151-200; SBBR 74-7; 140-3; Lee, *Circle of Peace*."

A Concise Encyclopedia of the Bahá'í Faith, 266-267.

**'Most Great
Peace'**

“oneness of mankind”

The Principle of Oneness

“ Let there be no mistake. The principle of the Oneness of Mankind the pivot round which all the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh revolve—is no mere outburst of ignorant emotionalism or an expression of vague and pious hope. Its appeal is not to be merely identified with a reawakening of the spirit of brotherhood and good-will among men, nor does it aim solely at the fostering of harmonious cooperation among individual peoples and nations. Its implications are deeper, its claims greater than any which the Prophets of old were allowed to advance. Its message is applicable not only to the individual, but concerns itself primarily with the nature of those essential relationships that must bind all the states and nations as members of one human family. It does not constitute merely the enunciation of an ideal, but stands inseparably associated with an institution adequate to embody its truth, demonstrate its validity, and perpetuate its influence. It implies an organic change in the structure of present-day society, a change such as the world has not yet experienced. It constitutes a challenge, at once bold and universal, to outworn shibboleths of national creeds—creeds that have had their day and which must, in the ordinary course of events as shaped and controlled by Providence, give way to a new gospel, fundamentally different from, and infinitely superior to, what the world has already conceived. It calls for no less than the reconstruction and the demilitarization of the whole civilized world—a world organically unified in all the essential aspects of its life, its political machinery, its spiritual aspiration, its trade and finance, its script and language, and yet infinite in the diversity of the national characteristics of its federated units.

It represents the consummation of human evolution—an evolution that has had its earliest beginnings in the birth of family life, its subsequent development in the achievement of tribal solidarity, leading in turn to the constitution of the city-state, and expanding later into the institution of independent and sovereign nations.

The principle of the Oneness of Mankind, as proclaimed by Bahá'u'lláh, carries with it no more and no less than a solemn assertion that attainment to this final stage in this stupendous evolution is not only necessary but inevitable, that its realization is fast approaching, and that nothing short of a power that is born of God can succeed in establishing it.

So marvellous a conception finds its earliest manifestations in the efforts consciously exerted and the modest beginnings already achieved by the declared adherents of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh who, conscious of the sublimity of their calling and initiated into the ennobling principles of His Administration, are forging ahead to establish His Kingdom on this earth. It has its indirect manifestations in the gradual diffusion of the spirit of world solidarity which is spontaneously arising out of the welter of a disorganized society.”

—*World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, 41.

“threefold aims”

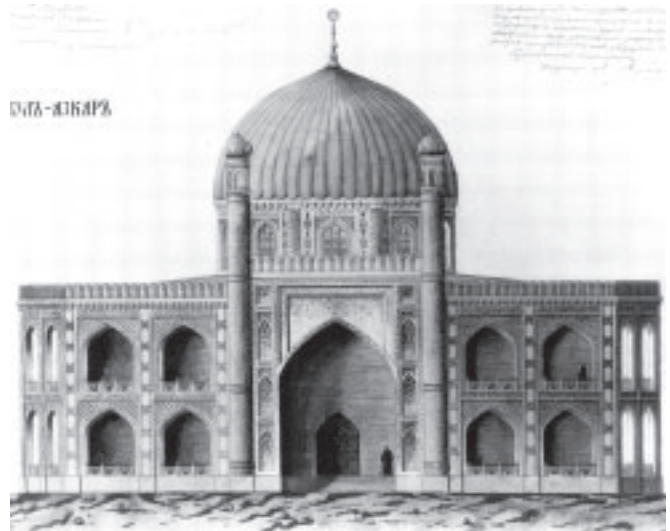
1616. Chief Objectives of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Ministry

“As to the three aims which Shoghi Effendi as stated in his *America and the Most Great Peace* to have been chief objectives of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Ministry, it should be pointed out that the first was the establishment of the Cause in America. The erection of the Bahá'í Temple in 'Ishqabad, and the building on Mt. Carmel of a **mausoleum** marking the resting-place of the Báb were the two remaining ones.” —*Lights of Guidance*, 485. (From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, December 14, 1933: *Bahá'í News*, No.51. February 1934. p. 5)



1

Between April and December 1912 Abdu'l-Bahá traveled and taught across North America.



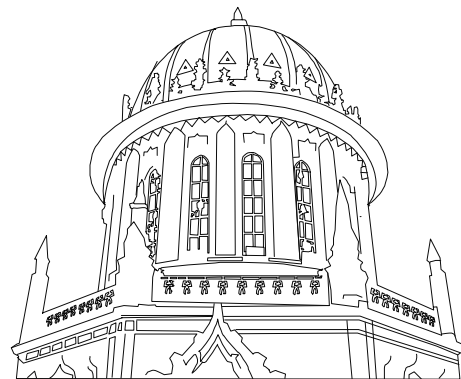
2

Drawing of the House of Worship in Ishqabad, Turkmenistan. The building was dedicated in 1902 and completed in 1907. The external ornamentation was completed in 1919. (The building was demolished in 1963.)

In 1891 Bahá'u'lláh traveled to Mt. Carmel where He pointed out to 'Abdu'l-Bahá the spot where the Shrine of the Báb was to be erected. 'Abdu'l-Bahá completed a six room masonry structure in 1907. On March 21st, 1909 'Abdu'l-Bahá interred the remains of the Báb in the Shrine.

In 1944 Shoghi Effendi approved William Sutherland Maxwell's design of the Shrine. The structure was completed in September 1953. (A line drawing of the completed Shrine is shown below.)

3



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On 1 May 1912 'Abdu'l-Bahá laid the cornerstone of the first Bahá'í House of Worship (Mashriqu'l-Adhkár) of the West in Chicago. The cornerstone had been brought to the building site with great difficulty by Mrs. Nettie Tobin.



x — Lua Getsinger, “Mother Teacher of the West”.

“historic pilgrimages”

In 1898-1899 Mrs. Phoebe Hearst financed the journey of the first Western Pilgrims from America to visit the Holy Land and attain the presence of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.



The Most Holy Tomb of Bahá'u'lláh c.1899.



1901 Western Pilgrims — Standing L-R: Charles Mason Remey; Sigurd Russell; Edward Getsinger; Laura Barney. Seated L-R: Ethel Rosenberg; Unknown; Shoghi Effendi seated in lap of unknown woman; Lua Getsinger; Emoene Hoaaa.



Some of the those who made the first pilgrimages in 1898-1899. Back row standing L-R: Robert Turner—first African-American to embrace the Faith; Unknown; Unknown. Seated L-R: Kheiralla's daughter; Marion Miller Kheiralla's wife; Ibrahim Kheiralla; Lua Getsinger; Kheiralla's daughter.

“tests”

Most of the tests visited upon the American believers between 1903 and 1913 were created by America’s first Bahá’í teacher, Ibrahim George Kheiralla.

Ibrahim George Kheiralla was a Christian Arab born in a mountain village of what is now Lebanon. He was taught the Faith in Cairo, Egypt by ‘Abdu’l-Karím-i-Tihrání a Persian merchant.

He accepted the Faith in 1890 and received a Tablet from Bahá’u’lláh. In 1892 he emigrated to America and began teaching his version of the Bahá’í Faith* in Chicago in 1894. Though his teaching was a mixture of half-truths and falsehoods concerning the Faith he was nonetheless successful in enrolling many Bahá’ís.

In 1898 he accompanied the first group of Western pilgrims to visit ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Who was then a Prisoner of the Ottoman Turks in Acre, Syria (now, Israel).

Kheiralla wrote a book on the Bahá’í Faith that he hoped to publish. At the time of his pilgrimage it was still in manuscript form. He soon discovered that many of his ideas about the Faith were not in agreement with the teachings of the Báb, Bahá’u’lláh and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. He nevertheless still determined to publish his book regardless.

* Among the teaching he wrongly ascribed to the Bahá’í Faith were his beliefs that:

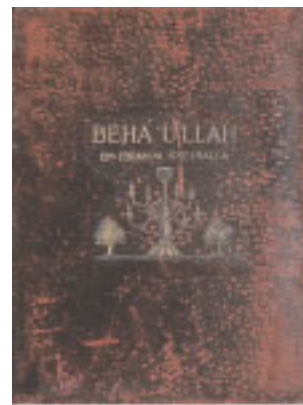
- Bahá’u’lláh was God incarnate.
- ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was Christ returned.
- Abraham founded Hinduism.
- Bahá’ís believed in reincarnation!

Of course none of these ideas are part of Bahá’í Scripture or teachings.

When Kheiralla returned to America he made an attempt to establish himself as the head of the Bahá’í Faith in North America. His best friend—Anton Haddad—a countryman and one who had accepted the Faith with him in Egypt was alarmed at his ambition and lust for leadership. Haddad went to ‘Akká and received guidance from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá which he published upon his return to the U.S.



Ibrahim George Kheiralla 1849-1929
Titled by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, “Bahá’s Peter,”
“The Second Columbus,” “The Conqueror of
America.” —GPB, 275



In 1900 Kheiralla began to collaborate with **Mírzá Muhammad ‘Alí**—‘The Arch-Breaker’ of Bahá’u’lláh’s Covenant.’ That same year he published his own version of Bahá’í teachings in his book *Behá U’llah*. After that he formed “The Church of the Manifestation,” with himself as head. From that time until his death Bahá’ís shunned him. □

“Will”

WILL AND TESTAMENT OF ‘ABDU’L BAHÁ

‘Abdu’l Bahá’s Will is a lengthy document, written in three parts over a seven year period (1901-8) during the early period of his ministry. He wrote it in his own hand, and addressed it to Shoghi Effendi. Its contents were not known by the Bahá’ís until after ‘Abdu’l Bahá’s death (28 November 1921), and it was apparently not even read to Shoghi Effendi until ‘a few days’ after his arrival in Haifa (29 December) (Rabbani, *Priceless Pearl* 42). The Will identified Shoghi as the ‘primal and chosen’ branch (see Aghsán); appointed him as the first in a projected line of Guardians of the Cause and head of the as yet unelected Universal House of Justice; and directed all Bahá’ís to turn to him and take the greatest care of him. Both he and the House were assured of divine protection and guidance. All should obey them. Those who disputed with them disputed with God, and would be subject to divine wrath. There would be no excuse for any attack on the Covenant, such as had been mounted by Muhammad ‘Alí and his partisans after the passing of Bahá’u’lláh. The Will also stated that Muhammad ‘Alí (the ‘Center of Sedition’ and ‘the focal Center of Hate’) had ‘Passed out from under the shadow of the Cause’ and been ‘cut off from the Holy Tree’ by dint of Covenant Breaking (some details of which are given), thus implicitly setting aside the original successorship established by Bahá’u’lláh in his Book of the Covenant. Other provisions include instructions to the Bahá’ís to teach the Cause, manifest spiritual qualities, lovingly associate with all peoples, be loyal to their rulers, avoid contention, and shun Covenant Breakers; and descriptions of

the duties and manner of election of the Universal House of Justice, and the obligations of the Hands of the Cause. *Will*, AB 484 †93.

The Will was first read officially on 3 January 1922, and copies were subsequently sent to Bahá’ís in the East. Shoghi Effendi himself prepared an English language translation, but copies of the whole Will were not widely circulated in the West. The provisions were almost universally accepted by the Bahá’ís with the exception of Ruth White and a few Western followers, who later challenged the Will’s authenticity (a charge rebutted by those who read Persian and were familiar with ‘Abdu’l Bahá’s handwriting, including opponents of Shoghi Effendi). Shoghi addressed some of the issues raised by this challenge in the first two of his World Order of Bahá’u’lláh letters. Elsewhere he described the Will as being the ‘Charter’ for a new World Order (*GPB* 325-6; *WOB* 143-4). Rabbani, *Priceless Pearl* 41-52.

A Concise Encyclopedia of the Bahá’í Faith, 356-357.

“Lua, Chase, MacNutt, Dealy, Goodall, Dodge, Brittingham”



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LOUISA AURORA “LUA” (NEE MOORE) GETSINGER was born 1 November 1871 in Hume, New York, USA. She became a Bahá’í in 1897 and married Dr Edward Getsinger that same year. Lua was in the very first group of pilgrims from the West to meet ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in the Holy Land. The Master entrusted Lua with a number of important missions; on one she presented a petition to the Shah for the protection of the Iranian Bahá’ís. The Master sent her to India in 1914. She achieved such renown as a Bahá’í teacher ‘Abdu’l-Bahá titled her ‘Livá’ (“Banner”). She died in Cario on 3 May 1916 and is buried near the tomb of the Fifth Apostle of Bahá’u’lláh, Mírzá ‘Abu’l-Fadl. Shoghi Effendi called her “The immortal Lua, mother-teacher of the American Bahá’í Community, herald of the dawn of the Day of the Covenant,…”



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(JAMES BROWN) THORNTON CHASE was born 22 February 1847 in Springfield, Massachusetts, USA. He served as a Captain in the Union Army during the American Civil War. He accepted the Bahá’í Faith in 1894 and was later named America’s first Bahá’í by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Who also gave him the name *Thábit* (pronounced, saw-bet) meaning *steadfast*. He played a very important leadership role in the organization of the Bahá’í Faith in America. As a result his pilgrimage to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in 1907 he wrote *In Galilee*. He wrote a number of Bahá’í pamphlets. He died on 30 September 1912 in Los Angeles, California. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá visited his grave in Englewood Cemetery on 19 October 1912 and revealed a prayer in his honor and then kissed his gravestone.



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HOWARD MACNUTT was born 13 June 1859 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA. He embraced the Bahá’í Revelation in 1898. He assisted Ibrahim Kheiralla with his unauthorized and erroneous book: *Beha’u’llah*. He made a pilgrimage in 1905 and is mentioned in Julia Grundy’s pilgrimage book: *Ten Days in the Light of ‘Akká*. MacNutt became a staunch Bahá’í when ‘Abdu’l-Bahá visited America in 1912 and he collected the Master’s addresses and published them in two volumes under the title: *Promulgation of Universal Peace*. It was at the MacNutt house that the only motion picture film was made of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in 1912. He acquired proficiency in Arabic and Persian which enabled him to assist with translations of some Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh. In 1919 he chaired the second session of the unveiling of the *Tablets of Divine Plan* at the McAlpin Hotel in New York City. He died in Miami, Florida on 26 December 1926.



Paul Kingston Dealy was born in Saint John, New Brunswick in 1848 and became a Bahá’í in Chicago in 1897. He was Kheiralla’s chief assistant in Chicago. In 1902 he published *The Dawn of Knowledge and the Most Great Peace*. He and his wife Addie and their four son moved to Fairhope, Alabama making it the first Bahá’í community in the deep south.

—R.H. Stockman, Vols. 1-2, *BFA*

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[GO TO NEXT PAGE FOR THE LAST FOUR NAMED.]



HELEN S. GOODALL was born Helen Mirrell on 12 January 1847 in Maine, USA. She married Edwin Goodall in 1868. Her daughter Ella Frances was born in 1870. Helen and her daughter studied the Bahá'í Faith with Anton Haddad in 1898. In 1907 Helen went on her first pilgrimage accompanied by her daughter Ella. They arrived in the Holy Land in 1908 and later wrote *Daily Lessons Received at Acca* to describe their experiences and the lessons taught by 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Helen served on the Executive Board of Bahá'í Temple Unity, America's first national Bahá'í administrative body. She was later elected to the first San Francisco Bahá'í Assembly. She died in San Francisco on 19 February 1922.



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ARTHUR PILLSBURY DODGE was born 28 May 1849 in Enfield, New Hampshire, USA. He was at various times a lawyer, an inventor, and a publisher. He was a member of the bar in New York, New Hampshire and Massachusetts. He founded and published the *New England Magazine*. He later gave up publishing and made efforts to develop railroad inventions. He embraced the Faith in October 1897. He was president of the Bahá'í Chicago Board of Counsel in 1900. In 1912 the Dodges hosted 'Abdu'l-Bahá during His visit to America. On 12 October 1915 he died in Freeport, New York. 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote of Arthur Dodge, "Although his star set in the horizon of this world yet he dawned with the utmost brilliancy from the horizon of eternity."

Mini-biographies © 2004 Duane K. Troxel



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SARAH JANE FARMER was born 22 July 1847 in Dover, New Hampshire, USA. When Sarah was two she was stricken with what appeared to be a fatal illness. Her parents prayed that if it were God's will to spare her life they "would train her for a life of usefulness here on earth and as a messenger in His service." While on a ship enroute to Egypt in 1900 she heard of the Master and determined to meet Him. She journeyed to 'Akká on the 23rd of March described him as "our Lord" in her diary. She will forever be remembered for developing Green Acre in Eliot, Maine which she left to the Faith upon her passing there on 23 November 1916. It is today one of the most famous Bahá'í schools in the world. The Master wrote her in 1900 saying, "O maidservant of God, thou who hast given up thy life to the service of the Kingdom of God."



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ISABELLA D. BRITTINGHAM was born on 21 February 1852 in Morristown, Pennsylvania, USA. In 1886 she married James D. Brittingham. She embraced the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh in 1898. Early on she taught the Faith in California and other parts of America. In 1901 she went on a pilgrimage to 'Akká. In 1902 Brittingham wrote one of the most scholarly and popular early introductory books, *The Revelation of Baha-ullah in a Sequence of Four Lessons*. Isabella Brittingham died in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on 28 January 1924.

“Arch-Breaker”

Mírzá Muhammad ‘Alí “Arch-Breaker of the Covenant of Bahá’u’lláh’



Mírzá Muhammad ‘Alí (1853-1937) Second surviving son of Bahá’u’lláh, born in Baghdad. His mother was Mahd-i-’Ulyá. In his early teens in Edirne [Adrianople] he advanced claims to divine revelation, for which he was chastised by his father. He rose to prominence as a transcriber of Bahá’u’lláh’s writings. His father named him *ghusn-i-akbar* (the ‘Greatest Branch’) and in the *Kitáb-i-’Ahd* (Book of the Covenant) appointed him to be second in succession after ‘Abdu’l-Bahá) (Who was nine years his senior).

“Despite the support of Jamál Burújirdí in Iran and Ibrahim Kheiralla in the United States he was unable to gain extensive support amongst the Bahá’ís, He was able to alienate the majority of Bahá’u’lláh’s family from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, however. In this he was principally supported by his brother-in-law, Mírzá Majdi’d-dín (d. 1955). He sought unsuccessfully to gain the leadership of the Bahá’í community after ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s death. Shoghi Effendi described him as ‘the archbreaker of Bahá’u’lláh’s Covenant’”.

[Most of the above quoted from page 252 of *A Concise Encyclopedia of the Bahá’í Faith* by Peter Smith.]

“Greatest Holy Leaf”

Bahíyyih Khánum (1846-1932)

Eldest daughter of Bahá'u'lláh by his first wife, Navvab, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá's full sister. She was devoted to Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi, and on several occasions acted Bahíyyih Khánum with Shoghi Effendi before he left to study in England as head of the Faith. She was only six or seven years old when her father was imprisoned in the Siyah-Chal in 1852, and thereafter shared the poverty, exile and sufferings of Bahá'u'lláh's family. Dedicated to serving her father, she renounced the idea of marriage. In Akká (1868-1909/10) she managed the affairs of the household; attended to her father's daily needs; and cultivated social relationships with the wives of local notables and officials which might shield her father and brother. In the aftermath of Bahá'u'lláh's passing she led the minority of family members who supported 'Abdu'l-

Bahá against the 'machinations' of Muhammad-'Alí and his associates. With the end of the government's restrictions on the family (1908) - though already in poor health - she received the increasing number of Bahá'í pilgrims from both East and West, and during 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Western tours (1911-13) she assumed management of Bahá'í affairs in the Holy Land. During World War 1 (1914-18) she superintended with her brother the distribution of considerable amounts of food, clothing and medical aid to a local population suffering both from maladministration and potential starvation. After 'Abdu'l-Bahá's death (1921) she supported and advised the youthful Shoghi Effendi during the early years of his guardianship, and during his several prolonged absences from Haifa acted as head of the Faith. In the late 1920s her health suffered further decline. She died at the age of eighty-six, one hour after midnight on 15 July 1932, from respiratory failure, and was buried on Mount Carmel



Circa, 1890

1919

1931

Bahíyyih Khánum
The Supreme Woman of the Bahá'í Dispensation

near the joint shrine of the Báb and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Her funeral was massively attended by the general public, and was reminiscent of that of ‘Abdu’l-Baha in the prestige and religious diversity of the mourners.

Shoghi Effendi was devastated by her death, recalling her resignation, serenity, cheerfulness and love for all, and praying that she would intercede for him and for ‘the toiling masses of thy ardent lovers’. He quickly had constructed a domed, pillared, Carrara marble monument to mark her grave, this later coming to mark the focal centre for the administrative buildings of the ‘Arc’. He praised her heavenly qualities, describing her as a ‘pure angelic soul’, and attributed to her the power of intercession for all humankind: she was in direct communion with God, and watched over the Bahá’ís and sent them her blessings. For their part, Bahá’ís should take her as a model of how they should live a spiritual life of self-abnegation and service. He compared her station to that of the heroines of previous religions: Sarah, wife of Abraham; Asíya, the wife of Pharaoh who sought to intercede for Moses; the Virgin Mary; Fátima, the daughter of Muhammad and wife of the Imam ‘Alí; and the Bábí leader Tahirih. *BA* 187-96; *GPB* 347; *UHJRD*, Bahíyyih Khánum.

—*A Concise Encyclopedia of the Bahá’í Faith*, 86-87

“four chosen messengers” of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

“[Four] ...successive messengers despatched by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá ... Hájí ‘Abdul-Karim-i-Tihrani, Hájí Mírzá Hasan-i-Khurasani, Mírzá Asadu’llah and Mírzá Abu’l-Fadl ... succeeded in rapidly dispelling the doubts, and in deepening the understanding, of the believers, in holding the community together, and in forming the nucleus of those administrative institutions which, two decades later, were to be formally inaugurated through the explicit provisions of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s will and Testament.”

—Shoghi Effendi, *GPB*, 260.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá sent a series of emissaries to America to counter the effects of Covenant-Breaking and to deepen the believers. In the order He sent them, they are:

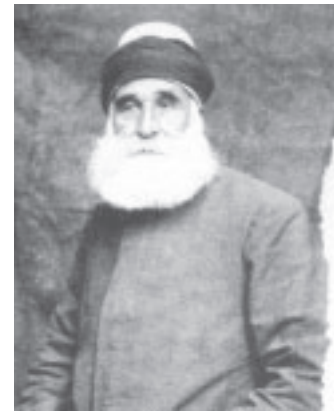


- ‘Abdu’l-Karim-i-Tihrání, a Persian merchant of Cairo, Egypt.

‘Abdu’l-Karim-i-Tihrání vainly attempted to save Kheiralla during his visit to the U.S. between 26 April and 5 August of 1900.

- Hájí Hasan-i-Khurasáni
Nov 1900 to mid-July or Aug 1901
[No photograph available for this publication.]

- Mírzá Asadu’llah-i-Isfahani (1826-1930) (‘Abdu’l-Baha’s brother-in-law). He was responsible for transporting the remains of the Báb from Iran to Haifa. He later became a Covenant-Breaker along with his son, Dr. Amín Fareed. He was in the States from 4 November 1900 to 12 May 1902.



Mírzá Asadu’llah-i-Isfahani



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- Mírzá Abu’l-Fadl—foremost Bahá’í scholar in the world—visited America between August 1901 and December 1904.

MÍRZÁ ABU’L-FADL-I-GULPÁYGÁNÍ was born a village near Gulpáygán in 1844. ‘Abdu’l-Baha sent Abu’l-Fadl to the United States to deepen American Bahá’ís in the fundamentals of their Faith. To this end he wrote *The Bahai Proofs*, translated into English by ‘Alí Kuli Khan and published in 1902. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá named one of the doors of the Shrine of Báb in his honor. He is unquestionably the most celebrated scholar the Bahá’í Faith has yet produced. He died 21 January 1914 in Cairo, Egypt.

“Vatralsky, Wilson, Jessup and Richardson”

Stoyan Krstoff Vatralsky

1899 Oct-Nov A series of talks was delivered by Stoyan Vatralsky, a Harvard educated, Bulgarian Christian, in a church in Kenosha attacking the teachings of the "Truth-knowers" as the early Bahá'ís were known. He had been commissioned by the Baptist, Methodist and Congregational churches to expose the new faith as false. About this time the Bahá'í population of Kenosha had grown to about 2 percent of the population. SBBH2p111 232 BFA114

—Taken from *A Basic Bahá'í Chronology*

Mr Stoyan Krstoff Vatralsky of Boston, Mass., in a remarkable attack on the Bahá'í religion published in the *American Journal of Theology* for January, 1902 (pp.57-78), and entitled "Mohammedan Gnosticism in America: the Origin, Character, and Esoteric Doctrines of the Truth-Knowers," writes as follows (p.58):

"Ibrahim Khayru'llah, the propagandist of the sect, claims to have converted two thousand Americans in the space of two years. How far this boast is true I am unable in every particular to verify; but there is no room to doubt that the man has had incredible success. I have personally seen large, well-organized congregations of his converts both in Kenosha, Wis., and in Chicago. I have also reasons to believe their claims that similarly growing assemblies are holding their secret meetings in every large city of the United States. This is the more remarkable when we recall the fact that never before in the history of the world has a Mohammedan sect taken root among a Christian people without the aid of the sword. I believe it would not have happened to-day had it come bearing its own proper name, flying its own native colours. It has succeeded because, like a counterfeit coin, it has passed for what it is not. Most of the converts hardly realize what they have embraced, and whither they are drifting. I consider it a duty, therefore, to tell the American people what I

know of this secret and mysterious sect, and what are its origin, character, and purposes."

—Quoted from *Materials for the Study of the Babi Religion*, by E.G. Browne, 149.

Samuel Graham Wilson, D.D., who lived thirty-two years in Persia, published his *Bahaism and Its Claims* in 1915.

—H.M. Balyuzi, *'Abdu'l-Bahá*, 533.

Rev. Henry H. Jessup

Robert P. Richardson

An American Protestant missionary—published articles attacking the Bahá'í Faith in *The Outlook* and *The Moslem World*. In 1932 The London Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge published his book: *The Religion of the Bahá'ís*.

“When we note that in the Holy Land, in Persia, and in the United States of America certain exponents of Christian ecclesiasticism such as Vatralsky, Wilson, Richardson or Easton, observing, and in some cases fearing, the vigorous advances made by the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh in Christian lands, arose to stem its progress; and when we watch the recent and steady deterioration of their influence, the decline of their power, the confusion in their ranks and the dissolution of some of their old standing missions and institutions, in Europe, in the Middle East and in Eastern Asia—may we not attribute this weakening to the opposition which members of various Christian sacerdotal orders began, in the course of 'Abdu'l Bahá's ministry, to evince towards the followers and institutions of a Faith which claims to be no less than the fulfilment of the Promise given by Jesus Christ, and the establisher of the Kingdom He Himself had prayed for and foretold?”

—GPB, 319.

“And some Pharisees* among the missionaries of the Gospel will hasten thither from Persia [Iran] and say, "We are aware of the secret of the matter." All they may say is sheer slander.”

—'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Tablets of Abdul Baha*, Vol. 2, 252.

* "A person of the spirit or disposition attributed to the Pharisees in the New Testament; a hypocrite, a self-righteous person"

—*Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*

“House of Justice”

The forerunner of the future local House of Justice established around the Bahá'í world are currently designated “Local Spiritual Assembly”. Bahá'u'lláh called for the creation these consultative councils in each city in His Most Holy Book:

“The Lord hath ordained that in every city a House of Justice be established wherein shall gather counsellors to the number of Bahá, and should it exceed this number it does not matter. They should consider themselves as entering the Court of the presence of God, the Exalted, the Most High, and as beholding Him Who is the Unseen. It behoveth them to be the trusted ones of the Merciful among men and to regard themselves as the guardians appointed of God for all that dwell on earth. It is incumbent upon them to take counsel together and to have regard for the interests of the servants of God, for His sake, even as they regard their own interests, and to choose that which is meet and seemly. Thus hath the Lord your God, the Gracious, the Pardoner, commanded you. Beware lest ye put away that which is clearly revealed in His Tablet. Fear God, O ye that perceive.”*

—Bahá'u'lláh, *Kitab-i-Aqdas*, paragraph 30, page 29.

In the early days of the Bahá'ís in America a number of cities applied the designation “House of Justice” to their consultative councils. ‘Abdu'l-Bahá sent a Tablet asking them to name those bodies “House of Spirituality” instead.

“O ye who are firm in the Covenant!

The report of the Spiritual Gathering, which is dated ... and sent by you, was received and its contents were a source of great fragrance and spirituality. I was

glad to read the names of the revered members.

The signature of that meeting should be the Spiritual Gathering (House of Spirituality) and the wisdom therein is that hereafter the government should not infer from the term “House of Justice” that a court is signified, that it is connected with political affairs, or that at any time it will interfere with governmental affairs.

Hereafter, enemies will be many. They would use this subject as a cause for disturbing the mind of the government and confusing the thoughts of the public. The intention was to make known that by the term Spiritual Gathering (House of Spirituality), that Gathering has not the least connection with material matters, and that its whole aim and consultation is confined to matters connected with spiritual affairs. This was also instructed (performed) in all Persia.”

—*Tablets of ‘Abdul Baha, Vol. 1, 5-6*

Local and Secondary Houses of Justice are, for the present, known as Local Spiritual Assemblies and National Spiritual Assemblies. Shoghi Effendi has indicated that this is a “temporary appellation” which, as the position and aims of the Bahá'í Faith are better understood and more fully recognized, will gradually be superseded by the permanent and more appropriate designation of House of Justice. Not only will the present-day Spiritual Assemblies be styled differently in future, but they will be enabled also to add to their present functions those powers, duties, and prerogatives necessitated by the recognition of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, not merely as one of the recognized religious systems of the world, but as the State Religion of an independent and Sovereign Power.

— *Kitab-i-Aqdas*, note 49, 189.

“Green Acre Fellowship”

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

—Shoghi Effendi, *Bahá’í News*, #10, Feb. 1926

Sarah Farmer (1847-1916)

Sarah Farmer put her property at the disposal of the Faith after her 1900 visit to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. In 1912 the Master spoke four times at Green Acre. In 1925 the NSA of the USA and Canada was elected at Green Acre. The Bahá’í Summer School was established at Green Acre in 1929.

—*A Basic Bahá’í Chronology*



Sarah Farmer Inn at Green Acre in Eliot, ME.

“Star of the West”

Star of the West succeeded the earliest American Bahá'í periodical—*The Bahai Bulletin* (1909-1910)—in 1910 and continued publication to 1935 when it was replaced by *World Order Magazine* (1935-1949). *Star of the West*—named by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá—was published in Chicago and became the most important international Bahá'í publication of its time.

—Ed.

**“first Bahá’í National Convention,”
synchronizing with the transference
of the sacred remains of the Báb**

Bahá’í Temple Unity in 1909 grew out of the need for administrative oversight to construct the first Bahá’í House of Worship in North America. This national body would in time evolve to become—in 1926—the first National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of the United States and Canada. (The two countries have elected in their respective National Assemblies since they separated in 1948.

—Ed.



“1909 Mar 21 The sacred remains of the Báb were laid in the final resting place in the Shrine in Haifa. At this time the Shrine was a simple rectangular structure of six rooms. The sarcophagus used for the remains of the Báb had been carved in the village of Daidahnaw, Burma.” —BBChronology



Delegates and others attending the BTU convention in 1909. 1) **Thornton Chase** 2) Corinne True 3) Harry Randall 4) John Bosch 5) Howard MacNutt 6) Dr. Susan Moody 7) Arthur Agnew 8) Charles Mason Remey 9) Dr. Edward Getsinger

**“incorporation”
of Bahá’í Temple Unity**

“The opening of the first American Bahá’í Convention in Chicago. It was attended by thirty-nine delegates from thirty-six cities. The Bahá’í Temple Unity was incorporated to hold title to the Temple property and to provide for its construction. At the same convention a constitution was framed and the Executive Board of the Bahá’í Temple Unity was elected. The Bahá’í Temple Unity was superseded in 1925 by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of United States and Canada.

MBW142 GPB262 349 PP397 SBBH1p146
SBR55 BBD39 BBR2pg106 CT82-3 BW13p849
SBR85 BFA2pg309”

—*A Basic Bahá’í Chronology*, March 21, 1909

“disciples”

THE 19 DISCIPLES WERE CHOSEN BY SHOGHI EFFENDI AND ARE PICTURED AND IDENTIFIED ON PAGES 84 AND 85 OF *THE BAHÁ'Í WORLD*, VOL. III (APRIL 1928-APRIL 1930).



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1 DR. JOHN EBENEZER ESSELMONT

2 (JAMES BROWN) THORNTON CHASE

3 HOWARD MACNUTT

4 SARAH JANE FARMER

5 HIPPOLYTE DREYFUS-BARNEY

6 LILLIAN FRANCES KAPPES

7 ROBERT TURNER

8 DR. ARTUR EDUARD HEINRICH BRAUNS

9 WILLIAM HENRY “HARRY” RANDALL

10 LOUISA AURORA “LUA” GETSINGER

11 JOSEPH H. HANNEN

12 DR. CHESTER IRA THACHER

13 CHARLES HERMAN GREENLEAF

14 ISABELLA D. BRITTINGHAM

15 MARY VIRGINIA THORNBURGH-CROPPER

16 HELEN S. GOODALL

17 ARTHUR PILLSBURY DODGE

18 WILLIAM H. HOAR

19 DR. GEORGE JACOB AUGUR

“heralds”

These are some of the first Bahá'ís to respond to the **Tablets of the Divine Plan**. It wasn't until 1937 that Shoghi Effendi formally launched the first **Seven Year Plan** to inaugurate 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Divine Plan.



Agnes Baldwin Alexander (1878-1971) who pioneered to Japan (1914) and was the first to take the Faith to Korea (1921). Named a Hand of the Cause of God in 1957.



Dr. George Jacob Augur (1853-1927) who was the first to pioneer to Japan and who was named the 19th Disciple of 'Abdu'l-Bahá by Shoghi Effendi.



John Bosch—who along with his wife Louise—pioneered the Faith to Tahiti in 1920.



Clara (1869-1941) and Hyde (1855-1941) Dunn pioneered to Australia in 1920. Hyde was posthumously named a Hand of the Cause of God.



Australia

“illustrious herald”
“American believer”



“[Martha Root] ... that archetype of Bahá'í itinerant teachers and the foremost Hand raised by Bahá'u'lláh since `Abdu'l-Baha's passing”

“The first to arise, in the very year the Tablets of the Divine Plan were unveiled in the United States of America, in response to the epoch-making summons voiced in them by `Abdu'l-Baha; embarking, with unswerving resolve and a spirit of sublime detachment, on her world journeys, covering an almost uninterrupted period of twenty years and carrying her four times round the globe, in the course of which she traveled four times to China and Japan and three times to India, visited every important city in South America, transmitted the message of the New Day to kings, queens, princes and princesses, presidents of republics, ministers and statesmen, publicists, professors, clergymen and poets, as well as a vast number of people in various walks of life, and contacted, both officially and informally, religious congresses, peace societies, Esperanto associations, socialist congresses, Theosophical societies, women's clubs and other kindred organizations, this indomitable soul has, by virtue of the character of her exertions and the quality of the victories she

has won, established a record that constitutes the nearest approach to the example set by `Abdu'l-Baha Himself to His disciples in the course of His journeys throughout the West.”

—Shoghi Effendi, *GPB*, 386-387

Martha L. Root (1872-1939) embraced the Faith in 1909. She was a journalist and public lecturer. In 1919 she traveled throughout South America teaching the Cause. In 1923 she embarked on a teaching journey that kept her out of the U.S. until 1930. After a brief respite she set out again from 1932 to 1936. Her final journey began in May of 1937 when she sailed out of San Francisco never to return. In June 1939 she arrived in Honolulu ravaged by cancer. On September 28, 1939 she died in Honolulu.

SHOGHI EFFENDI'S CABLE TO THE BAHÁ'I WORLD

“Martha's unnumbered admirers throughout Bahá'í world lament with me the earthly extinction of her heroic life. Concourse on high acclaim her elevation to rightful position in galaxy of Bahá'í immortals. Posterity will establish her as foremost Hand which 'Abdu'l-Bahá's will has raised up in first Bahá'í century. Present generation of her fellow-believers recognize her to be the first, finest fruit which the **Formative Age** of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh has as yet produced. Advise hold befitting memorial gathering in Temple to honor one whose acts shed imperishable lustre on American Bahá'í community. Impelled share with National Assembly expenses of erection of monument in symbolic spot, the meeting-place of East and West, to both of which she unsparingly dedicated the full force of her mighty energies.”

—Shoghi Effendi, *Messages to America*, 30.

“the “Queen’s written testimony:



Queen Marie of Rumania (1875-1938)

“With the acknowledgment of the Baha’i Faith by Queen Marie, the Faith had gained another strong proponent of its message, for the queen was a gifted writer. Taking two hours every morning to work at this craft, she produced literature in a variety of forms—essays, articles, short semifictional pieces, biography, autobiography, history, playlets. Her broad experience in grand and unusual settings, her interaction with the Rumanian people, her ties to almost all the royal houses of Europe, all had a romantic fascination for the reading public.

The queen also wrote articles that were syndicated in more than two hundred newspapers in the United States and Canada. Here she made her first public statements on the Baha’i Faith, inviting readers to examine the teachings that taught love, unity, peace. The first of these statements appeared in May 1926, and others were published soon thereafter. Many of the statements were translated and published in China, Japan, Australasia, and other parts of the world. Portions of the first article from the *Toronto Daily Star*—4 May 1926—follows:

‘A woman [Martha Root] brought me the other day a Book [*Bahá’u’lláh and the New Era*]. I spell it with a capital letter because it is a glorious Book of love and goodness, strength and beauty. . . .

[The] writings are a great cry toward peace, reaching beyond all limits of frontiers, above all dissension about rites and dogmas. . . . It teaches that all hatreds, intrigues, suspicions, evil words, all aggressive patriotism even, are outside the one essential law of God, and that special beliefs are but surface things whereas the heart that beats with divine love knows no tribe nor race.

It is a wondrous that Bahá’u’lláh and his son ‘Abdu’l-Bahá have given us. They have not set it up aggressively knowing that the germ of eternal truth which lies at its core cannot but take root and spread. . . .

I commend it to you all. If ever the name of Bahá’u’lláh or Abdu’l-Bahá comes to your attention, do not put their writings from you. Search out their Books, and let their glorious, peace-brining, love-creating words and lessons sink into your hearts as they have into mine.’”

—*Martha Root: Lioness at the Threshold*, 244-245.

Martha Root gave Queen Marie the Message 30 January 1926.

—*Martha Root: Lioness at the Threshold*, 242.

“the chief Repository of those laws”

The above phrase refers to the ‘Most Holy Book’, the Kitab-i-Aqdas.

Shoghi Effendi has written:

“Unique and stupendous as was this Proclamation,* it proved to be but a prelude to a still mightier revelation of the creative power of its Author, and to what may well rank as the most signal act of His ministry--the promulgation of the Kitab-i-Aqdas. Alluded to in the Kitab-i-Iqán; the principal repository of that Law which the Prophet Isaiah had anticipated, and which the writer of the Apocalypse had described as the "new heaven" and the "new earth," as "the Tabernacle of God," as the "Holy City," as the "Bride," the "New Jerusalem coming down from God," this "Most Holy Book," whose provisions must remain inviolate for no less than a thousand years, and whose system will embrace the entire planet, may well be regarded as the brightest emanation of the mind of Bahá'u'lláh, as the Mother Book of His Dispensation, and the Charter of His New World Order.

* *The Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh* to the kings and rulers of the earth.

“chief pillar” of that future House—a House which posterity will regard as the last refuge of a tottering civilization.

The NSA of the USA is that "chief pillar":

“In a world writhing with pain and declining into chaos this (American Bahá'í) community—the vanguard of the liberating forces of Bahá'u'lláh—succeeded in the years following Abdu'l-Baha's passing in raising high above the institutions established by its sister communities in East and West what may well constitute the chief pillar of that future House—a House which posterity will regard as the last refuge of a tottering civilization.

—U.S. Bahá'í News, #86.

1070. The Universal House of Justice is the "Last Refuge of a Tottering Civilization"

"The Universal House of Justice, which the Guardian said would be regarded by posterity as 'the last refuge of a tottering civilization' is now, in the absence of the Guardian, the sole infallibly guided institution in the world to which all must turn, and on it rests the responsibility for ensuring the unity and progress of the Cause of God in accordance with the revealed Word. There are statements from the Master and the Guardian indicating that the Universal House of Justice, in addition to being the Highest Legislative Body of the Faith, is also the body to which all must turn, and is the 'apex' of the Baha'i Administrative Order, as well as the 'supreme organ of the Baha'i Commonwealth'. The Guardian has in his writings specified for the House of Justice such fundamental functions as the formulation of future worldwide teaching plans, the conduct of the administrative affairs of the Faith, and the guidance, organisation and unification of the affairs of the Cause throughout the world. Furthermore in 'God Passes By' the Guard-

ian makes the following statement: 'The Kitab-i-Aqdas ... not only preserves for posterity the basic laws and ordinances on which the fabric of His future World Order must rest, but ordain, in addition to the function of interpretation which it confers upon His Successor, the necessary institutions through which the integrity and unity of His Faith can alone safeguard.' He has also, in 'The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh written that the members of the Universal House of Justice 'and not the body of those who either directly or indirectly elect them, have thus been made the recipients of the divine guidance which is at once the life-blood and ultimate safeguard of this Revelation'."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to as individual believer, May 27, 1966)

—*Lights of Guidance*, 318.

“Who else”, if not one of their most distinguished representatives

Mountfort Mills (d. 1949)

“Prominent American Bahá’í. He converted in 1906 and made several pilgrimages to visit ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. In 1922 he was one of the Bahá’ís consulted by Shoghi Effendi about the future development of the Faith. He was extensively involved in the development of Bahá’í Administration in North America, and served on both the Bahá’í Temple Unity Executive Board and the later national spiritual Assembly. A lawyer, it was he who prepared the assembly’s Declaration of Trust and By-Laws (1927), which became the model for similar documents in other countries. He prepared the legal appeals concerning the House of Bahá’u’lláh in Baghdad, and also represented the Bahá’ís at various international gatherings.”

—*A Concise Encyclopedia of the Bahá’í Faith*, 248.

**“the highest Tribunal
the world has yet seen”**

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

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

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

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

—Shoghi Effendi, *Bahá'í Administration*,
164-165.

The League of Nations

League of Nations, international alliance for the preservation of peace. The league existed from 1920 to 1946. The first meeting was held in Geneva, on November 15, 1920, with 42 nations represented. The last meeting was held on April 8, 1946; at that time the league was superseded by the United Nations (UN). During the league's 26 years, a total of 63 nations belonged at one time or another; 28 were members for the entire period (see accompanying table).

The Covenant and the United States

In 1918, as one of his Fourteen Points summarizing Allied aims in World War I, United States president Woodrow Wilson presented a plan for a general association of nations. The plan formed the basis of the Covenant of the League of Nations, the 26 articles that served as operating rules for the league. The covenant was formulated as part of the Treaty of Versailles, which ended World War I, in 1919.

Although President Wilson was a member of the committee that drafted the covenant, it was never ratified by the U.S. Senate because of Article X, which contained the requirement that all members preserve the territorial independence of all other members, even to joint action against aggression. During the next two decades, American diplomats encouraged the league's activities and attended its meetings unofficially, but the United States never became a member. The efficacy of the league was, therefore, considerably lessened.

League Structure

The machinery of the league consisted of an assembly, a council, and a secretariat. Before World War II (1939-1945), the assembly convened regularly at Geneva in September; it was composed of three representatives for every member state, each state having one vote. The council met at least three times each year to consider political disputes and reduction of armaments; it was composed of several permanent members—France, Great Britain, Italy, Japan, and later Germany and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR)—and several nonpermanent members elected by the assembly. The decisions of the council had to be unanimous. The secretariat was the administrative branch of the league and consisted of a secretary general and a staff of 500 people. Several other bodies were allied with the league, such as the Permanent Court of International Justice, called the World Court, and the International Labor Organization.

World Involvement

The league was based on a new concept: collective security against the "criminal" threat of war. Unfortunately, the league rarely implemented its available resources, limited though they were, to achieve this goal.

One important activity of the league was the disposition of certain territories that had been colonies of Germany and Turkey before World War I. Supervision of these territories was awarded to league members in the form of mandates. Mandated territories were given different degrees of independence, in accordance with their stage of development, their geographic situation, and their economic status.

The league may be credited with certain social achievements. These include curbing international traffic in narcotics and prostitution, aiding refugees of World War I, and surveying and improving health and labor conditions around the world.

In the area of preserving peace, the league had some minor successes, including settlement of disputes between Finland and Sweden over the Åland Islands in 1921 and between Greece and Bulgaria over their mutual border in 1925. The Great Powers, however, preferred to handle their own affairs; France occupied the Ruhr, and Italy occupied Corfu (Kérkira), both in 1923, in spite of the league.

Although Germany joined the league in 1926, the National Socialist (Nazi) government withdrew in 1933. Japan also withdrew in 1933, after Japanese attacks on China were condemned by the league. The league failed to end the war between Bolivia and Paraguay over the Chaco Boreal between 1932 and 1935 and to stop the Italian conquest of Ethiopia begun in 1935.

Finally, the league was powerless to prevent the events in Europe that led to World War II. The USSR, a member since 1934, was expelled following the Soviet attack on Finland in 1939. In 1940 the secretariat in Geneva was reduced to a skeleton staff, and several small service units were moved to Canada and the United States.

In 1946 the league voted to effect its own dissolution, whereupon much of its property and organization were transferred to the UN.

Legacy

Never truly effective as a peacekeeping organization, the lasting importance of the League of Nations lies in the fact that it provided the groundwork for the UN. This international alliance, formed after World War II, not only profited by the mistakes of the League of Nations but borrowed much of the organizational machinery of the league.

Membership

The accompanying table lists the countries that were members of the international organization. Where no date is given, the country was an original member of the league. The year in parentheses is the year of admission to the league unless otherwise indicated.

“Persia”



Extending about 2,200 miles (3,540 km) from northwest to southeast and 1,200 miles (1,900 km) from northeast to southwest at its widest point, Iran is bordered on the north by Turkmenistan, the Caspian Sea, Armenia, and Azerbaijan, on the east by Pakistan and Afghanistan, on the south by the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman, and on the west by Turkey and Iraq. The population in 1991 was estimated to be 57,050,000.

Iran

Mohammad Reza Shah.

In difficult wartime conditions, Reza Shah's son, Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, succeeded to the throne to begin the long process of restoration in a country subjected to the inflation stemming from occupation and to take up the struggle for power between the throne and landed notables, who had emerged once again to influence the Majles after Reza Shah's abdication. The Soviet Union and a Communist "popular" regime were removed from Azerbaijan (then the Northwestern Province of Iran) in 1946 after a tense moment when it appeared that it would become a Soviet satellite. In 1951 the Majles passed an act, introduced by Mohammad

Mosaddeq, nationalizing Iranian oil; the British Oil Company withdrew. The disturbed political situation during Mosaddeq's premiership and the grip held by Western oil companies on the marketing of the commodity turned his nationalization triumph into a Pyrrhic victory. His period in office ended in turmoil in 1953. By 1961 the Shah was able finally to take the initiative. Dissolving the 20th Majles in May of that year, he cleared the way for the first Land Reform Law, enacted in 1962. The landed minority had to give up its lands to the government for redistribution to cultivators. (Among those stripped of land was the Shi'ah Muslim religious establishment.) Profit sharing in industry was introduced, and the former landlords could receive compensation for their holdings in the form of shares in industries. Cultivators and workers were given more voice in national affairs, and cooperatives in rural areas began to replace the former landowners as sources of capital for irrigation and agrarian maintenance and development. A campaign was organized to reduce illiteracy, and education was further removed from the control of the clergy. The country's power structure was radically changed in a program termed the "White Revolution."

On January 26, 1963, the White Revolution was overwhelmingly endorsed by the nation. By 1971, when land distribution ended, about 2,500,000 families, comprising a farming population of more than 12,000,000, were estimated to have benefitted from the reforms. During 1960-72 the percentage of owner-occupied farmland in Iran rose from 26 to 78 percent.

The new policies did not go unopposed, however; many clerical leaders were critical of land reform, liberalization of laws concerning women, and the extension of government and royal authority. The arrest in 1963 of Ruhollah Musawi Khomeini—an Islamic jurist accorded the honorific title of ayatollah ("sign of God")—after he had made a speech directly attacking

the Shah and his policies, touched off rioting; the riots were severely suppressed, and Khomeini was exiled, first to Turkey and then to Iraq, in 1964.

Per capita income rose from about \$176 in 1960 to about \$2,500 in 1978. During 1970-77 the gross national product was reported to have increased to an average annual rate of 7.8 percent. Oil revenues financed the extraordinary growth of investment under Iran's successive development plans, rising from \$68,455,000 under the 1949-56 plan to \$9,802,300,000 (50 percent from oil) under the Fourth Plan of 1968-73 and to some \$68,600,000,000 (more than two-thirds from oil) under the Fifth Plan of 1973-78.

Improvement and construction after 1961 were accompanied by an "independent national policy" in foreign relations. The main principles of this foreign policy were support for the United Nations and peaceful coexistence, with a positive approach in cementing friendly and mutually beneficial ties with other nations. Relations with the United States remained close, reflected by the strong American presence in the country and the increasing predominance of Western culture. Iran played a major role in the Central Treaty Organization (Cento) and Regional Co-operation for Development (RCD) with Turkey and Pakistan. It also embarked upon trade and cultural relations with eastern Europe, the Soviet Union, France, Germany, and Scandinavia. (P.W.A. /Ed.)

Iranian oil development was accelerated after 1954 by a multinational Western consortium led by British Petroleum. The National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) embarked on all-around expansion. It formed a petrochemical subsidiary and concluded agreements, mainly on the basis of equal shares, with several

international companies for exploitation of oil outside the area of the consortium.

In July 1973 a new 20-year oil agreement with the consortium of Western firms was concluded. It had the effect of initiating a plain seller-buyer relationship between Iran and the oil companies and of giving Iran control over field operations. These operations, along with all facilities and installations previously worked by the consortium, were vested in NIOC. The consortium agreement was cancelled in 1979, leaving NIOC in control of the Iranian oil industry.

World monetary instability and fluctuations in Western oil consumption dangerously threatened an economy rapidly expanded after 1954 and directed on an unprecedented scale to high-cost development programs. Acutely aware of the danger of dependence on a diminishing asset, the Shah pursued a policy of diversification. Assembly of motor vehicles started in 1957, and in the early 1970s Iran became an exporter of motor vehicles to Egypt and Yugoslavia. Copper reserves were exploited, and in early 1972 Iran's first steel mill began producing structural steel. Iran purchased a major share in the Krupp firm of West Germany in 1974 and continued to press for barter agreements for the marketing of its oil and gas. Population continued to rise, and the flight from rural areas to towns, particularly to the capital and other northern centres, presented a serious problem. Employment was artificially increased by loans and credits, while businesses were obliged to offer 49 percent of their stock for sale to workers. In 1975 a government-sponsored war on high prices resulted in arrests and fines of traders and manufacturers, injuring the market's confidence.

“one of its holiest sanctuaries”

HOUSE OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH IN BAGHDAD

Referred to as ‘The Most Great House’ (Bayt-i-a’zam) of God. Located in the in Karkh district in the west of the city, the house is a large but simple mud brick structure of two to three storeys surrounding a central courtyard. It was at first rented by Mírzá Músa [Bahá’u’lláh’s faithful full brother], whilst Bahá’u’lláh was in Kurdistan. Bahá’u’lláh lived in the house from his return [from two years absence] on 19 March 1856 until his departure for the Ridván garden on 22 April 1863, and at some point purchased it. It was here that he both wrote most of his early writings and received the increasing throng of visitors who recognized his role as the premier Bábí leader- He later named it as a place of Bahá’í pilgrimage, the ‘Throne of His Glory’, and the ‘Lamp of Salvation between earth and heaven’. Specific rites of pilgrimage were detailed.

Bahá’u’lláh prophesied that the house would later be so abused by the infidels as to cause tears to flow, but that God would eventually exalt it, causing it to become ‘the Standard of His Kingdom’. Bahá’ís interpret subsequent in the light of these statements.

After Bahá’u’lláh’s departure from Baghdad the house was held in the name of various custodians and allowed to fall into a state of disrepair. At the time of the establishment of the British mandate over Iraq (1920) ‘Abdu’l-Baha’ authorized extensive restoration work under the supervision of Hájí Mahmúd Qasábachí. This activity attracted the hostile attention of local Shí’ís, and after the death of the old custodian they sued for possession (January 1921). In the of proper deeds the Shí’í religious court found against the Bahá’ís. A lengthy and complex legal struggle then ensued, which took the case through the Iraqi courts and then, through the work of Mountfort Mills, to the Permanent Mandates Commission and Council of the League of Nations. The upshot was twofold: (1) the Iraqi authori-

ties first took possession of the house (February 1922) and subsequently handed it over to the Shí’ís (November 1925), who have remained in possession to the present day (it is now used as a place to commemorate the sufferings and martyrdom of the Imám Husayn); (2) enormous international publicity and sympathy was generated for the Bahá’ís, who were regarded as having suffered a considerable injustice by the League authorities. With the attainment of Iraqi independence in 1932, international interest in the case dropped. BW2: 33-4; 3: 50-5,198-209; 4: 97-8, 237-47; 5: 31-3, 351-9; GPB 110, 356-60; GWB 111-14 no. 57; Walbridge, Sacred 140-3.

—A *Concise Encyclopedia of the Bahá’í Faith*

CHRONOLOGY OF THE HOUSE OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH IN BAGHDAD

- 1920 The possession of House of Bahá’u’lláh in Baghdad was seized from the Bahá’ís illegally by the Shi’ah enemies of the Faith. It has not been returned. GPB356-7 GBF33 BBD109 CB76 -in GWB115 it is predicted that the House will become a centre of pilgrimage.
- 1924 Nov The Supreme Court of Iraq decided against the Bahá’ís in the dispute over Bahá’u’lláh’s residential house in Baghdad. The house had been in the possession of the Faith for thirty years. The decision overturned the verdicts of two lower courts. UD37-8
- 1928 Nov The case of the Holy House in Baghdad was brought before the League of Nations Permanent Mandate Commission and the right of the Bahá’ís to the House was

upheld; however, restitution was not made in spite of a concerted world-wide effort on the part of the Bahá'ís. PP97 BW4p237-47 GT54 GBF35 BS12/13P70 note189 CoB306

The House of Bahá'u'lláh was changed into a Husayniyyih by the Shihs when it was awarded to them. A Husayniyyih is a place used to morn the death of the Imam Husayn. BBD114

- 1928 Dec 6 See UD83-4 for Shoghi Effendi's comments on the Bahá'í World.
- 1929 Mar 4 A resolution was passed at the Council of the League of Nations upholding the claim of the Bahá'í community to the House of Bahá'u'lláh in Baghdad. -See also BW2p33 RoB1p211-12

—*A Basic Bahá'í Chronology*

“besotted woman”

Ruth White—an American Bahá'í—charged that the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá was a forgery; something Shoghi Effendi said that even the enemies of the Faith in the Holy Land didn't question.

In 1930 the “Bahá'í World Union” was formed in Germany by Covenant-Breaker Wilhelm Herrigel as a result of the activities of Ruth White.

She renewed her activities in 1940 with no result. At the age of 100 she became a devotee of Meher Baba.

—Most of the above taken from Peter Smith, *The Bábí and Bahá'í Religions*, 124.