

Glossary

Note: **Boldface** terms within entries are cross-references to other entries that define or amplify essential terms. A number of entries are based on explanations found in “Definitions of Some of the Oriental Terms Used in Bahá’í Literature” in *The Bahá’í World: An International Record, Volume XVIII, 1979–1983*, pp. 897–904. Other entries are based on explanations found in the notes and glossary in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. References to Tablets of the Divine Plan cite Tablet and paragraph numbers, e.g., “TDP 6.8.”

A

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ *Servant of Bahá*: the title assumed by ‘Abbás Effendi (23 May 1844–28 November 1921), eldest son and appointed successor of Bahá’u’lláh and the Center of His Covenant. Upon Bahá’u’lláh’s ascension in 1892, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá became Head of the Bahá’í Faith in accordance with provisions revealed by Bahá’u’lláh in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas and the Book of the Covenant. Among the titles by which He is known are the Center of the Covenant, the Mystery of God, the Master, and the Perfect Exemplar of Bahá’u’lláh’s teachings. See **Tablets of the Divine Plan** and **Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá**.

ABHÁ *Most Glorious*. See **Alláh-u-Abhá**; **Yá Bahá’u’l-Abhá**.

ABHÁ BEAUTY A translation of *Jamál-i-Abhá*, a title of **Bahá’u’lláh**.

ABHÁ KINGDOM *The Most Glorious Kingdom*: the spiritual world beyond this world.

ABHÁ PARADISE See **Abhá Kingdom**.

ADAMIC CYCLE See **Cycle**.

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER The international system for the administration of the affairs of the Bahá’í community. Ordained by Bahá’u’lláh, it is the agency through which the spirit of His revelation is to exercise its transforming effects on humanity and through which the **Bahá’í World Commonwealth** will be ushered in. Its twin, crowning institutions are the **Guardianship** and the **Universal House**

of Justice. The institutions that make it up and the principles by which it operates are set forth in the writings of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Its structure was further clarified and raised up by Shoghi Effendi during his ministry as Guardian of the Faith (1921–57). This process of elucidation continues through guidance from the Universal House of Justice, the supreme governing and legislative body of the Bahá'í Faith, which is supported by National and Local **Spiritual Assemblies** elected by members of the Bahá'í community. These local and national bodies are invested with the authority to direct the Bahá'í community's affairs and to uphold Bahá'í laws and standards. They are also responsible for the education, guidance, and protection of the community. The Administrative Order also comprises the institutions of the **Hands of the Cause of God**, the **International Teaching Center**, and the **Continental Boards of Counselors** and their **Auxiliary Boards** and assistants, who bear particular responsibility for the protection and propagation of the Faith and share with the Spiritual Assemblies the functions of educating, counseling, and advising members of the Bahá'í community. Other institutions of the Administrative Order include **Huqúqu'lláh**, the Bahá'í **Fund**, the **Mashriqu'l-Adhkár**, and the **Nineteen Day Feast**. The present Bahá'í Administrative Order is the precursor of the **World Order of Bahá'u'lláh** and is described by Shoghi Effendi as its “nucleus” and “pattern.”

AFNÁN *Twigs*: the Báb's kindred; specifically, descendants of His three maternal uncles and His wife's two brothers.

AGES The Bahá'í Dispensation is divided into three Ages: the Heroic, Formative, and Golden Ages. The Heroic Age, also called the Apostolic or Primitive Age, began in 1844 with the Declaration of the Báb and spanned the ministries of the Báb (1844–53), Bahá'u'lláh (1852–92), and 'Abdu'l-Bahá (1892–1921). The transitional event most often identified with the end of the Heroic Age and the beginning of the Formative Age is the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in 1921. The Formative Age, also known as the Age of Transition or the Iron Age, began in 1921 when Shoghi Effendi, according to instructions in 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will and Testament, became the Guardian of the Cause of God and began to build Bahá'u'lláh's Administrative Order. The Formative Age is the second and current Age; it is to be followed by the third and final Age, the Golden Age destined to witness the proclamation of the Most Great Peace and the establishment of the Bahá'í World Commonwealth. “The emergence of a world community, the consciousness of world citizenship, the founding of a world civilization and culture,” Shoghi Effendi wrote, “—all of which must synchronize with the initial stages in the unfoldment of the Golden Age of the Bahá'í Era—should, by their very nature, be regarded, as far as this planetary life is concerned, as the furthestmost limits in the organization of human society, though man, as an individual, will, nay must indeed as a result of such a consummation, continue indefinitely to progress and develop.” See also **Dispensation; Epochs; Bahá'í World Commonwealth**.

AGHŞĀN *Branches*: the sons and male descendants of Bahá' u'lláh.

'AKKÁ A four-thousand-year-old seaport and prison-city in northern Israel surrounded by fortress-like walls facing the sea. In the mid-1800s 'Akká became a penal colony to which the worst criminals of the Ottoman Empire were sent. In 1868 Bahá' u'lláh and His family and companions were banished to 'Akká by Sulţán 'Abdu'l-'Azíz. Bahá' u'lláh was incarcerated within its barracks for two years, two months, and five days. Restrictions were gradually relaxed, and He lived in a series of houses within 'Akká until June 1877, when He moved outside the city walls to the Mansion of Mazra'ih. Bahá' u'lláh named 'Akká "the Most Great Prison."

ALLÁH-U-ABHÁ *God is Most Glorious*: the **Greatest Name**, adopted as a greeting among Bahá'ís during the period of Bahá' u'lláh's exile in Adrianople (1863–68).

AMATU'L-BAHÁ RÚHÍYYIH KHĀNUM Née Mary Maxwell (1910–2000), also called Rúhíyyih Rabbání; daughter of May Bolles Maxwell and Sutherland Maxwell of Montreal, and wife of Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith. On 26 March 1952, succeeding her illustrious father, she was appointed a Hand of the Cause of God residing in the Holy Land. *Rúhíyyih* (meaning "spiritual") is a name given to her by Shoghi Effendi on their marriage. *Khānum* is a Persian title meaning "lady," "Madame," or "Mrs." The title *Amatu'l-Bahá* (meaning "Maid-servant of Bahá") was used by the Guardian in a cable to a conference in Chicago in 1953. *Rabbání* is a surname given to Shoghi Effendi by 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

ANCIENT BEAUTY A translation of *Jamál-i-Qadím*, a name of God that is also used as a title of Bahá' u'lláh, Who is the latest Manifestation of God to humankind. One cannot always say categorically in any passage whether the reference is to God, to Bahá' u'lláh, or to both.

ANCIENT OF DAYS See **Ancient Beauty**.

APOSTOLIC AGE See **Ages**.

AQDAS *Most Holy*. See **Kitáb-i-Aqdas**, **The**.

ARC The line of a curved path laid out by Shoghi Effendi on Mount Carmel, stretching across the Bahá'í properties near the Shrine of the Báb and centered on the Monument Gardens. On this Arc the seats of the "world-shaking, world-embracing, world-directing administrative institutions" of the World Order of Bahá' u'lláh are to be located (MA, pp. 32–33). Within the Arc are the resting-places of the Greatest Holy Leaf; her brother, the Purest Branch; and her mother, the Most Exalted Leaf. Edifices already constructed on the Arc include the International Bahá'í Archives building (completed in 1957), the seat of the Universal House of

Justice (completed in 1982 and occupied in 1983), the International Teaching Center, and the Center for the Study of the Texts. The International Bahá'í Library has yet to be completed. See also **Administrative Order; World Order of Bahá'u'lláh**.

ARK The word “ark” means, literally, a boat or ship, something that affords protection and safety, or a chest or box. It is used in two senses in the Bible. In the first sense it refers to the Ark of Noah, which He was bidden to build of gopher wood to preserve life during the Flood. In the second sense it refers to the Ark of the Covenant, the sacred chest representing to the Hebrews God’s presence among them. It was constructed to hold the Tablets of the Law in Moses’ time and was later placed in the Holy of Holies in the Temple of Jerusalem. The Ark, as a symbol of God’s Law and the Divine Covenant that is the salvation of the people in every age and Dispensation, appears in various ways in the Bahá'í writings. Bahá'u'lláh refers to His faithful followers as “the denizens of the Crimson Ark”; He refers to the Ark of the Cause and also to the Ark of His Laws. A well-known passage in which this term is used appears in the Tablet of Carmel: “Ere long will God sail His Ark upon thee, and will manifest the people of Bahá who have been mentioned in the Book of Names.” Shoghi Effendi explains that the Ark in this passage refers to the Bahá'í Administrative Center on Mount Carmel and that the dwellers of the Ark are the members of the Universal House of Justice.

ARMY OF LIGHT Generally, the Bahá'í community, but more particularly the “heavenly armies . . . those souls,” according to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, “who are entirely freed from the human world, transformed into celestial spirits and have become divine angels. Such souls are the rays of the Sun of Reality who will illumine all the continents” (TDP 8.2).

ÁSÍYIH KHÁNUM *Navváb* (an honorific implying “Grace” or “Highness”); *the Most Exalted Leaf*: wife of Bahá'u'lláh and mother of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Bahíyyih Khánum, and Mírzá Mihdí. She was married to Bahá'u'lláh in 1835, accompanied Him in His exiles, and died in 1886. Bahá'u'lláh named her His “perpetual consort in all the worlds of God.” Her resting-place is in the Monument Gardens on Mount Carmel, next to the tomb of Mírzá Mihdí and near that of the Greatest Holy Leaf.

AUTHOR OF THE BAHÁ'Í REVELATION Bahá'u'lláh.

AUXILIARY BOARDS An institution established by Shoghi Effendi in 1954 to act as “deputies, assistants and advisers” to the **Hands of the Cause of God** as they carry out their twin duties of protection and propagation. With the formation of the **Continental Boards of Counselors** in 1968, the Hands of the Cause of God were freed of responsibility for appointing, supervising, and coordinating the work of the Auxiliary Boards, and these functions were transferred by the Universal House of Justice to the Continental Boards of Counselors. There are two Auxiliary Boards, one for protection and one for propagation; members serve on one of the

two boards. In a letter dated 7 October 1973, the Universal House of Justice authorized the appointment of assistants to Auxiliary Board members.

B

BÁB, THE *The Gate*: title assumed by Siyyid ‘Alí Muḥammad (20 October 1819–9 July 1850) after declaring His mission in *Shíráz* in 1844. The Báb’s station is two-fold: He is a Manifestation of God and the Founder of the Bábí Faith, and He is the Herald of Bahá’u’lláh. A detailed, moving, and authoritative work titled *The Dawn-Breakers* (written by Nabil-i-Zarandí and translated by Shoghi Effendi) recounts the Báb’s life and His followers’ exploits. See Balyuzi, *The Báb*.

BÁBÍYYIH, THE *The Bábí place or the center of the Bábís*: a house in *Mashhad*, Iran, that served as a residence for Mullá Ḥusayn (the first of the **Letters of the Living**) and Quddús (also a Letter of the Living, whose rank was second only to that of the Báb) and as a place to which inquirers came to learn about the Bábí Faith. The Bahá’í historian Nabil writes that “A steady stream of visitors, whom the energy and zeal of Mullá Ḥusayn had prepared for the acceptance of the Faith, poured into the presence of Quddús, acknowledged the claim of the Cause, and willingly enlisted under its banner. The all-observing vigilance with which Mullá Ḥusayn labored to diffuse the knowledge of the new Revelation, and the masterly manner in which Quddús edified its ever-increasing number of adherents, gave rise to a wave of enthusiasm which swept over the entire city of *Mashhad*, and the effects of which spread rapidly beyond the confines of *Khurásán*. The house of Bábíyyih was soon converted into a rallying center for a multitude of devotees who were fired with an inflexible resolve to demonstrate, by every means in their power, the great inherent energies of their Faith.” (DB, p. 267)

BAHÁ’Í ELECTIONS See **Elections, Bahá’í**.

BAHÁ’Í FUND See **Fund**.

BAHÁ’Í INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY An international body made up of Bahá’í institutions, local and national, continental and international, all closely interrelated, and comprising the worldwide membership of the Bahá’í Faith. Since 1948 the Bahá’í International Community has been affiliated with the United Nations’ Office of Public Information. In 1967 the Universal House of Justice assumed the function (shouldered for many years by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of the United States) of representing the Bahá’í International Community in its capacity as a nongovernmental organization at the United Nations. In 1970 the Bahá’í International Community was granted consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), and in 1976 it became affiliated with the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF, formerly named the United Nations Children’s Emergency Fund). It is also affiliated with the United

Nations Environment Program (UNEP). In its work with the United Nations, the Bahá'í International Community participates in meetings of United Nations bodies concerned with such issues as human rights, social development, the status of women, the environment, human settlement, food, science and technology, population, the law of the sea, crime prevention, substance abuse, youth, children, the family, disarmament, and the United Nations University.

BAHÁ'Í WORLD CENTER The world spiritual and administrative centers of the Bahá'í Faith located in the twin cities of 'Akká and Haifa in Israel. See also **Arc; Administrative Order**.

BAHÁ'Í WORLD COMMONWEALTH The future Bahá'í community of nations, Shoghi Effendi explains, that will operate “solely in direct conformity with the laws and principles of Bahá'u'lláh” and will be animated wholly by His spirit. Its “supreme organ” will be the Universal House of Justice functioning in “the plenitude of its power.” Its advent will “signalize the long-awaited advent of the Christ-promised Kingdom of God on earth.” It will serve as both “the instrument and the guardian of the Most Great Peace.” Within the Bahá'í World Commonwealth “all nations, races, creeds and classes” will be “closely and permanently united,” and “the autonomy of its state members and the personal freedom and initiative of the individuals that compose them” will be “definitely and completely safeguarded. This commonwealth must, as far as we can visualize it, consist of a world legislature, whose members will, as the trustees of the whole of mankind, ultimately control the entire resources of all the component nations, and will enact such laws as shall be required to regulate the life, satisfy the needs and adjust the relationships of all races and peoples. A world executive, backed by an international Force, will carry out the decisions arrived at, and apply the laws enacted by, this world legislature, and will safeguard the organic unity of the whole commonwealth. A world tribunal will adjudicate and deliver its compulsory and final verdict in all and any disputes that may arise between the various elements constituting this universal system. . . . A world metropolis will act as the nerve center . . . , the focus towards which the unifying forces of life will converge and from which its energizing influences will radiate.” The world commonwealth will include a system of international communication; an international auxiliary language; a world script and literature; a uniform and universal system of currency, weights, and measures; and an integrated economic system with coordinated markets and regulated channels of distribution. See also **World Order of Bahá'u'lláh**.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH *The Glory of God*: title of Mírzá Ḥusayn-'Alí Núrí (12 November 1817–29 May 1892), Founder of the Bahá'í Faith. For accounts of His life, see Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*; Nabíl, *Dawn-Breakers*; and Balyuzi, *Bahá'u'lláh: The King of Glory*. Bahá'u'lláh is referred to by a variety of titles, including the Promised One of All Ages, the Blessed Beauty, the Blessed Perfection, the Morn of Truth, the Abhá Luminary, the Dayspring of the Most Divine Essence, the Ancient Beauty,

the Ancient Root, the Ancient of Days, the Author of the Bahá'í Revelation, the Mystic Dove, the Sovereign Revealer, the Judge, the Redeemer, the Divine Physician, the Prince of Peace, the Pen of Glory, the Pen of the Most High, the Supreme Pen, the Lord of Hosts, and the Lord of the Age. See also **Book of the Covenant; Hidden Words, The; Kitáb-i-Aqdas, The.**

BAHÍYYIH KHÁNUM *The Greatest Holy Leaf; the Most Exalted Leaf*: saintly daughter of Bahá'u'lláh and outstanding heroine of the Bahá'í Dispensation (1846–1932). Her death in 1932 marked the final end of the Heroic Age of the Bahá'í Faith, which had drawn to a close with the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in 1921. A monument erected in her memory symbolizes the Bahá'í World Order; its location is Mount Carmel, within the Arc and in close proximity to the resting-places of her brother, Mírzá Mihdí; her mother, Ásíyih Khánum; and the wife of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Munírih Khánum. Her station as “foremost woman of the Bahá'í Dispensation” and her rank among women are paralleled only by such heroines of previous Dispensations as Sarah, Ásíyih, the Virgin Mary, Fátimih, and Táhírih. For a compilation of Bahá'í writings about Bahíyyih Khánum and for some of her own letters, see *Bahíyyih Khánum: The Greatest Holy Leaf* (1982).

BAHJÍ *Delight, gladness, joy*: the name of the property north of 'Akká where the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh is situated and where Bahá'u'lláh lived from 1880 until His ascension in 1892. Its extensive gardens were created by Shoghi Effendi and expanded by the Universal House of Justice. The Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh at Bahjí is the **Qiblih** of the Bahá'í world.

BAYÁN *Exposition, explanation, lucidity, eloquence, utterance*: the title given by the Báb to two of His major works, one in Persian, the other in Arabic. It is also used sometimes to denote the entire body of His writings.

B.E. Bahá'í Era: denotes the nineteen-month Badí' calendar, which is reckoned from 21 March 1844, the year of the Báb's declaration of His mission.

BEST BELOVED See **Ancient Beauty.**

BLESSED BEAUTY A translation of *Jamál-i-Mubárak*, a title of Bahá'u'lláh. See also **Ancient Beauty.**

BLESSED PERFECTION A translation of *Jamál-i-Mubárak*, a title of Bahá'u'lláh. See also **Ancient Beauty.**

BOOK OF THE COVENANT A translation of *Kitáb-i-'Abd* (sometimes referred to as *Kitáb-i-'Abdí*, meaning “the Book of My Covenant”): Bahá'u'lláh's last will and testament, designated by Him as His “Most Great Tablet” and alluded to by Him as the “Crimson Book.” The last Tablet revealed before His ascension, it was writ-

ten in His own hand and entrusted, shortly before His passing, to His eldest son, 'Abdu'l-Bahá. In it Bahá'u'lláh clearly designates 'Abdu'l-Bahá as His successor and as the Center of His **Covenant**, providing for the continuation of divine authority over the affairs of the Faith in the future.

C

CARMEL See **Mount Carmel**.

CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF THE TEXTS The seat of an institution of Bahá'í scholars, which will assist the Universal House of Justice in consulting the Sacred Writings, and will prepare translations of and commentaries on the authoritative texts of the Faith.

CENTER OF THE COVENANT A title of 'Abdu'l-Bahá referring to His appointment by Bahá'u'lláh as the successor to whom all must turn after Bahá'u'lláh's passing. See also **Covenant**; **Book of the Covenant**.

CENTRAL FIGURES A collective reference to Bahá'u'lláh, the Founder of the Bahá'í Faith; the Báb, Forerunner of Bahá'u'lláh and Founder of the Bábí Faith; and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, authorized Interpreter of the Bahá'í writings.

CHIEF STEWARDS See **Hands of the Cause of God**.

CITY OF THE COVENANT A title designated to New York City by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, where he unveiled for Western believers the authority given to him by Bahá'u'lláh for the definitive interpretation of His Revelation.

COMMUNITY OF THE MOST GREAT NAME The Bahá'í community. See also **Greatest Name**.

CONCOURSE ON HIGH The company of holy souls of the spiritual world.

CONSTITUTION OF THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE A document adopted by the Universal House of Justice on 26 November 1972. It consists of two parts: the Declaration of Trust, which sets forth the origins and duties of the Universal House of Justice, and the By-Laws, which specify the terms under which the Universal House of Justice operates and define its relationship to other institutions of the Bahá'í Administrative Order.

CONSULTATION In Bahá'í usage, a technical term referring to the process of collective decision-making. The aim of Bahá'í consultation is to arrive at the best solution or to uncover the truth of a matter. Among the requisites for consultation that are set out in the Bahá'í writings are love, harmony, purity of motive, humil-

ity, lowliness, patience, and long-suffering. Individuals not only have the right to express their views, but they are expected to express them fully and with the utmost devotion, courtesy, dignity, care, and moderation. If unanimity is not achieved, decisions are arrived at by majority vote. Once a decision is reached, all parties, having had the opportunity to express their views fully, are to work together wholeheartedly to implement it. If the decision is wrong, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá says, through unity the truth will become evident and “the wrong made right.”

CONTINENTAL BOARDS OF COUNSELORS An institution of the Bahá’í Administrative Order established by the Universal House of Justice in 1968 to extend into the future the functions of protection and propagation of the Faith assigned to the Hands of the Cause of God by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in His Will and Testament. Its members are appointed to five-year terms by the Universal House of Justice and serve in five zones—Africa, the Americas, Asia, Australasia, and Europe. The International Teaching Center coordinates the work of the Continental Boards of Counselors, who are assisted in their work by Auxiliary Board members, whom they appoint and supervise. See also **Auxiliary Boards; Hands of the Cause of God; International Teaching Center.**

CONTINENTAL FUND See **Fund.**

CONTINENTAL PIONEER COMMITTEES Responsible for gathering and supplying information for and about pioneers and international traveling teachers. Their work complements the functions of the Continental Boards of Counselors and National Spiritual Assemblies. There are five such committees: one each for Africa, the Americas, Asia, Australasia, and Europe. Members are appointed by the Universal House of Justice; their work is directed by the International Teaching Center.

COVENANT Generally, an agreement or contract between two or more people, usually formal, solemn, and binding. The Universal House of Justice explains, in a letter dated 23 March 1975, that a religious covenant is “a binding agreement between God and man, whereby God requires of man certain behavior in return for which He guarantees certain blessings, or whereby He gives man certain bounties in return for which He takes from those who accept them an undertaking to behave in a certain way.” The Universal House of Justice also explains that there are two types of religious covenant: “There is . . . the Greater Covenant which every Manifestation of God makes with His followers, promising that in the fullness of time a new Manifestation will be sent, and taking from them the undertaking to accept Him when this occurs. There is also the Lesser Covenant that a Manifestation of God makes with His followers that they will accept His appointed successor after Him. If they do so, the Faith can remain united and pure. If not, the Faith becomes divided and its force spent.” In the Bahá’í Dispensation the Greater Covenant refers to the renewal of God’s ancient Covenant through the appearance

of the twin Manifestations of God, the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh, and the promise of another Manifestation to come in the future after the passage of at least one thousand years. The Lesser Covenant, in this case, refers to Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant with His followers, which establishes 'Abdu'l-Bahá as the Center of the Covenant. It confers upon 'Abdu'l-Bahá the authority to interpret Bahá'u'lláh's writings in order "to perpetuate the influence" of the Faith and to "insure its integrity, safeguard it from schism, and stimulate its world-wide expansion." The Lesser Covenant also establishes the Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice as the twin successors of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

COVENANT-BREAKER A Bahá'í who attempts to disrupt the unity of the Faith by defying and opposing the authority of Bahá'u'lláh as the Manifestation of God for this Age, or His appointed successor, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, or after Him, the Guardian and the Universal House of Justice. Bahá'ís who continue, despite remonstrances, to violate the Covenant are expelled from the Faith by the Universal House of Justice. This provision preserves the unity of the Faith, which is essential to achieving its cardinal purpose of unifying humankind. It also preserves the purity of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings from the disruptive influence of egoistic individuals who, in past Dispensations, have been responsible for dividing every religion into sects, disrupting its mission, and frustrating to a large degree the intention of its Founder. See also **Covenant**.

CRADLE OF THE FAITH Iran, the homeland of the Bábí and Bahá'í Faiths and of Bahá'u'lláh, the Báb, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

CRUSADE, TEN YEAR WORLD The international teaching plan inaugurated by Shoghi Effendi in 1953 and completed in 1963, some six years after his death. It was the first global plan in which all national Bahá'í communities pursued their respective goals in one coordinated effort. It culminated with the first election of the Universal House of Justice at Riḍván 1963.

CYCLE A unit of time comprising the Dispensations of numerous consecutive Manifestations of God. For example, the Adamic, or Prophetic, Cycle began with Adam and ended with the Dispensation of Muḥammad. The Bahá'í Cycle began with the Báb and is to last at least five hundred thousand years.

D

DANIEL'S PROPHECY The prophecy contained in Daniel 12:12: "Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days." 'Abdu'l-Bahá comments in a Tablet to a Kurdish Bahá'í, "Now concerning the verse in Daniel, the interpretation whereof thou didst ask. . . . These days must be reckoned as solar and not lunar years. For according to this calculation a century will have elapsed from the dawn of the Sun of Truth, then will the teachings of God be

firmly established upon the earth, and the Divine Light shall flood the world from the East even unto the West. Then, on this day, will the faithful rejoice!" 'Abdu'l-Bahá further explains in the same Tablet that the 1,335 years must be reckoned from 622 A.D., the year of Muḥammad's flight from Mecca to Medina.

Shoghi Effendi associates Daniel's reference to the 1,335 days and 'Abdu'l-Bahá's statements about the prophecy with the centenary of Bahá'u'lláh's declaration of His mission in 1863 and with the worldwide triumph of the Faith. He stressed that the prophecy refers to occurrences within the Bahá'í community, rather than to events in the outside world.

While Shoghi Effendi clearly allied the Faith's triumph with the successful completion of the third teaching plan to be undertaken by the Bahá'ís, in his letters and in those written on his behalf, four specific dates are mentioned as marking the fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy: 1953, 1957, 1960, and 1963. Regarding the year 1960 (derived by a lunar reckoning), Shoghi Effendi anticipated, in *God Passes By*, p. 151, and in a number of his letters, the successful completion of a third Seven Year Plan that was to be inaugurated. Had there been a third Seven Year Plan, it would have concluded in 1960, one hundred lunar years after Bahá'u'lláh's declaration. When the Ten Year Crusade (1953–63) was announced in 1952, Shoghi Effendi linked its completion with the fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy. There are also several references in letters written on Shoghi Effendi's behalf that give 1957 as the date of the prophecy's fulfillment. In still other letters Shoghi Effendi allies the "hundred lunar years" after Bahá'u'lláh's declaration with the year 1953, although the significance of this hundred years is unclear.

Thus it seems the prophecy is not fulfilled by a single date but, rather, by a process that extended over a period of time. A letter dated 7 March 1955 written on Shoghi Effendi's behalf says, "In the Ten Year Crusade, we are actually fulfilling the prophecy of Daniel, because with the completion of the Ten Year Crusade in 1963 we will have established the Faith in every part of the globe." Thus the fulfillment of the prophecy coincided with the period of the Ten Year Crusade, a span of time that included 1953, 1957, 1960, and 1963.

DAWN-BREAKERS The Bábís and early Bahá'ís, many of whom gave their lives as martyrs.

DAWNING PLACE OF REVELATION A title of Bahá'u'lláh, or of any **Manifestation of God**.

DAY OF THE COVENANT 26 November, the day 'Abdu'l-Bahá selected for commemorating the inauguration of Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant. The Bahá'ís wished to celebrate 'Abdu'l-Bahá's birthday, but He did not want this because it coincides with the anniversary of the Declaration of the Báb (23 May), when all attention should be given to that sacred event. He gave them instead the Day of the Covenant to celebrate, choosing a date that is six Gregorian months away from the commemoration of Bahá'u'lláh's Ascension. See also **Covenant**.

DAY OF GOD An expression used variously, according to context, to refer to the appearance of a Manifestation of God, to the duration of His life on earth, or to the duration of His Dispensation. It is also used to refer specifically to the advent of Bahá'u'lláh.

DAY OF JUDGMENT The time of the appearance of the Manifestation of God, when the true character of souls is judged according to their response to His Revelation. Also known as the Day of Resurrection.

DAYSRING OF DIVINE GUIDANCE Bahá'u'lláh.

DISPENSATION The period of time during which the laws and teachings of a Prophet of God have spiritual authority. For example, the Dispensation of Jesus Christ lasted until the beginning of the Muḥammadan Dispensation, usually fixed at the year 622 A.D., the year Muḥammad emigrated from Mecca to Medina. The Islamic Dispensation lasted until the advent of the Báb in 1844. The Dispensation of the Báb ended when Bahá'u'lláh experienced the intimation of His mission in the Siyáh-Chál, the subterranean dungeon in Tehran in which He was imprisoned between August and December 1852. The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh will last until the advent of the next Manifestation of God, which Bahá'u'lláh asserts will occur in no less than one thousand years.

DIVINE ESSENCE God.

DIVINE PEN A title of Bahá'u'lláh.

DIVINE PLAN The Plan for the dissemination of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh throughout the world, conceived by 'Abdu'l-Bahá and entrusted to the Bahá'ís of North America in fourteen letters called the Tablets of the Divine Plan. The Divine Plan was implemented by Shoghi Effendi and is pursued today under the guidance of the Universal House of Justice. Teaching Plans undertaken within the framework of the Divine Plan include the first Seven Year Plan (1937–44); the second Seven Year Plan (1946–53) pursued at first by the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada and extended by supplementary plans adopted with the approval or at the behest of Shoghi Effendi by the British Isles, Egypt and the Sudan, Germany, India, Iran, and Iraq; and the Ten Year World Crusade (1953–63), all of which were inaugurated by Shoghi Effendi, and the Nine, Five, Seven, Six, Three, Four Year, and Twelve Month Plans launched by the Universal House of Justice. The Divine Plan is divided into epochs. The first epoch included the years 1937–46; the second epoch spanned the years 1946–63; the third epoch ranged from 1963–86; and the fourth epoch was from 1986–2001. See also **Crusade, Ten Year World; Epochs; Plans; Tablets of the Divine Plan.**

DIVINE THRESHOLD See **Sacred Threshold.**

E

ELECTIONS, BAHÁ'Í Elections conducted according to Bahá'í principles to select individuals to serve as members of Local and National Spiritual Assemblies and the Universal House of Justice. Elections for Local Spiritual Assemblies are generally held on 21 April, the first day of the Ríḍván Festival (21 April–2 May), but in certain circumstances can be held on any day during Ríḍván. Elections for National Spiritual Assemblies are held annually during Ríḍván. Elections for the Universal House of Justice are held every five years. All adult members in good standing in a Bahá'í community may vote for the members of their Local Spiritual Assembly; Bahá'ís in an electoral unit elect one or more delegates who, in turn, elect the members of the National Spiritual Assembly at the national convention. The members of the National Spiritual Assemblies elect the members of the Universal House of Justice at an international convention. Shoghi Effendi advises electors “to consider without the least trace of passion and prejudice, and irrespective of any material consideration, the names of only those who can best combine the necessary qualities of unquestioned loyalty, of selfless devotion, of a well-trained mind, of recognized ability and mature experience.” There are no nominations. Campaigning and electioneering are forbidden. Ballots are cast in a prayerful atmosphere, and the nine persons receiving the most votes are considered chosen by God. Members of a minority race or group are given preference when tied for the ninth position; otherwise, ballots are cast to break the tie. A unique and significant aspect of all Bahá'í elections is the fact that voters elect with the understanding that they are free to choose whomever their consciences prompt them to select, and they freely accept the authority of the outcome.

EPISTLE A formal or elegant letter or treatise; a composition in the form of a letter. In Bahá'í usage it refers to certain writings of Bahá'u'lláh—for example, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*.

EPOCHS Major units of time used to mark the unfoldment of the **Divine Plan** and the Formative Age. The first epoch of the Formative Age (1921–46) began with the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in 1921 and ended with the conclusion of the first Seven Year Plan pursued by the Bahá'ís of North America under Shoghi Effendi's direction. The second epoch of the Formative Age (1946–63) began with the launching of the second Seven Year Plan and the adoption of similar plans by other national communities throughout the Bahá'í world and ended with the conclusion of the Ten Year Crusade and the election of the Universal House of Justice. The third epoch of the Formative Age (1963–86) included the Nine, Five, and Seven Year Plans formulated by the Universal House of Justice. The fourth epoch of the Formative Age (1986–2001), included the Six, Three, Four Year, and Twelve Month Plans from the Universal House of Justice, as well as the commemoration for the centenary of the Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh. See also **Ages**.

F

FAST, THE A nineteen-day period (2–21 March, the Bahá'í month of 'Alá, or Loftiness) of spiritual renewal and development during which Bahá'ís abstain from food and drink from sunrise to sunset. A symbol of self-restraint, the Fast is a time of meditation, prayer, and spiritual recuperation and readjustment.

FEAST See **Nineteen Day Feast**.

FIRESIDE An informal Bahá'í gathering held for the purpose of discussing the Bahá'í Faith and sharing its teachings.

FOLLOWERS OF THE GREATEST NAME Bahá'ís; followers of **Bahá'u'lláh**. See also **Greatest Name**.

FORMATIVE AGE See **Ages**.

FRIENDS Bahá'ís.

FUND The institution of the Bahá'í Fund, of which there are four main funds, operates on the international, continental, national, and local levels.

The Bahá'í International Fund is administered by the Universal House of Justice and is used to support the work of the Faith at the Bahá'í World Center and to sustain national communities unable to meet their own expenses. The International Deputization Fund, a subsidiary of the Bahá'í International Fund, supports the work of pioneers and traveling teachers and is administered by the International Teaching Center. The Persian Relief Fund, originally established by the National Spiritual Assembly of Iran to assist victims of persecution by the Islamic Republic, is also a subsidiary of the Bahá'í International Fund and is administered by the Universal House of Justice.

The Continental Bahá'í Fund supports the work of the Continental Boards of Counselors and the work of their Auxiliary Boards.

Each National Spiritual Assembly and Local Spiritual Assembly administers its own National and Local Fund, respectively.

The funds of the Bahá'í Faith are managed according to principles laid down by Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and Shoghi Effendi. Foremost among the principles are: (1) Except for the portion of the Bahá'í Funds devoted exclusively to charitable, philanthropic, or humanitarian purposes, contributions are accepted only from those who have identified themselves with the Bahá'í Faith and are regarded as its avowed and unreserved supporters. (2) Contributing to the Funds is both a spiritual privilege and a responsibility. (3) All contributions to the Bahá'í Funds are voluntary. (4) The degree of sacrifice and love of the contributor is more important than the amount given. (5) Appeals for donations must be dignified and general in character. (6) Confidentiality of contributions is to be strictly preserved. (7)

Receipts are to be issued. Shoghi Effendi referred to the Funds as “the life-blood” of the Bahá’í institutions.

G

GOD’S HOLY MOUNTAIN See **Mount Carmel**.

GOD’S MAJOR PLAN See **Major Plan of God**.

GOD’S MINOR PLAN See **Minor Plan of God**.

GOLDEN AGE See **Ages**.

GREATEST HOLY LEAF See **Bahíyyih Khánum**.

GREATEST NAME The name Bahá’u’lláh (“the Glory of God”) and its derivatives, such as Alláh-u-Abhá (“God is Most Glorious”), *Bahá* (“glory,” “splendor,” or “light”), and Yá Bahá’u’l-Abhá (“O Thou the Glory of the Most Glorious!”). Also referred to as the Most Great Name.

GUARDIANSHIP The institution, anticipated by Bahá’u’lláh in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas and established by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in His Will and Testament, to which Shoghi Effendi was appointed. Shoghi Effendi explains that the Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice constitute the twin pillars of the World Order of Bahá’u’lláh and are the twin successors of Bahá’u’lláh and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. The Guardian’s chief functions are to interpret the writings of Bahá’u’lláh, the Báb, and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and to be the permanent head of the Universal House of Justice. See also **Shoghi Effendi**.

H

HANDS OF THE CAUSE OF GOD Eminent Bahá’ís appointed by Bahá’u’lláh to stimulate the propagation and ensure the protection of the Faith. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in His Will and Testament conferred authority on the Guardian to appoint Hands of the Cause and specified their duties. Shoghi Effendi, in a message dated October 1957 to the Bahá’í world, called the Hands of the Cause of God “the Chief Stewards of Bahá’u’lláh’s embryonic World Commonwealth.” After his death on 4 November 1957 the Hands of the Cause of God assumed responsibility for preserving the unity of the Bahá’í Faith and for guiding the Bahá’í world community to the victorious completion of the Ten Year World Crusade planned by Shoghi Effendi. They also called for the election of the Universal House of Justice in 1963 and requested the friends not to elect them, leaving them free to discharge their own specific responsibilities. Following the formation of the Universal House of Justice, five Hands of the Cause of God were selected by fellow Hands of the Cause to serve at the Bahá’í World Center, while the rest continued their continental responsibili-

ties, which included overseeing the work of the Auxiliary Board members. Finding itself unable to appoint or legislate in order to appoint additional Hands of the Cause of God, the Universal House of Justice, in a cable dated 21 June 1968 and a letter dated 24 June 1968, announced the establishment of the institution of the Continental Boards of Counselors to extend the functions of the Hands of the Cause of God into the future. The Hands of the Cause of God were then freed of responsibility for directing the work of Auxiliary Board members and were all given worldwide responsibilities. See also **Auxiliary Boards; Continental Boards of Counselors; International Teaching Center.**

ḤAZÍRATU'L-QUDS *The Sacred Fold*: official title designating the headquarters of Bahá'í administrative activity in a particular country or region.

HEROIC AGE See **Ages**.

HIDDEN WORDS, THE Bahá'u'lláh's most important ethical work. Revealed circa 1858. Described by Shoghi Effendi as a "marvelous collection of gem-like utterances . . . with which Bahá'u'lláh was inspired, as He paced, wrapped in His meditations, the banks of the Tigris." Originally designated "The Hidden Book of Fáṭimih," the title of this work is an allusion to the Muslim tradition that the Angel Gabriel revealed a Book to Fáṭimih to console her following the death of the Prophet Muḥammad, her Father, and that this Book remained hidden in the spiritual worlds thereafter.

HOLY DAY A day commemorating a significant Bahá'í anniversary or feast. The nine Bahá'í holy days on which work should be suspended include:

The Feast of **Naw-Rúz** (New Year), 21 March

The first day of **Riḍván**, 21 April

The ninth day of Riḍván, 29 April

The twelfth day of Riḍván, 2 May

The anniversary of the Declaration of the Báb, 23 May

The anniversary of the Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh, 29 May

The anniversary of the Martyrdom of the Báb, 9 July

The anniversary of the Birth of the Báb, 20 October

The anniversary of the Birth of Bahá'u'lláh, 12 November

The **Day of the Covenant**, 26 November, and the Ascension of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, 28 November, are commemorated annually, but are not days on which work is to be suspended.

HOLY PLACES Sites in Iran, Iraq, Turkey, and Israel that are associated with significant events in the lives of Bahá'u'lláh, the Báb, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

HOLY SHRINES See **Shrine**.

HOLY TEXTS See **Sacred Scriptures**.

HOLY THRESHOLD See **Sacred Threshold**.

HOSTS ‘Abdu’l-Bahá explains that “The blessed Person of the Promised One [Bahá’u’lláh] is interpreted in the Holy Book as the Lord of Hosts—the heavenly armies. By heavenly armies those souls are intended who are entirely freed from the human world, transformed into celestial spirits and have become divine angels. Such souls are the rays of the Sun of Reality who will illumine all the continents” (TDP 8.2).

HOUSE OF ‘ABDU’LLÁH PÁSHÁ The house in ‘Akká that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá rented in 1896 and that served as His residence until He moved to Haifa in 1910.

HOUSES OF WORSHIP See **Mashriqu’l-Adhkár**.

ḤUQÚQU’LLÁH *The Right of God*: one of the fundamental Bahá’í ordinances of the Bahá’í Faith, it is a great law and a sacred institution laid down by Bahá’u’lláh in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. It is one of the key instruments for constructing the foundation and supporting the structure of the World Order of Bahá’u’lláh. Its far-reaching ramifications extend from enabling individuals to express their devotion to God in a private act of conscience that attracts divine blessings and bounties for the individual, promotes the common good, and directly connects individuals with the Central Institution of the Faith, to buttressing the authority and extending the activity of the Head of the Faith. The law prescribes that each Bahá’í shall pay a certain portion of his accumulated savings after the deduction of all expenses and of certain exempt properties such as one’s residence. These payments provide a fund at the disposition of the Head of the Faith for carrying out beneficent activities. Ḥuqúqu’lláh is administered by the Universal House of Justice, and payments are made to trustees appointed by the Universal House of Justice in every country or region. In providing a regular and systematic source of revenue for the Central Institution of the Cause, Bahá’u’lláh has assured the means for the independence and decisive functioning of the World Center of His Faith. The fundamentals of the law of Ḥuqúqu’lláh are promulgated in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. Further elaborations of its features are found in other writings of Bahá’u’lláh and in those of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Shoghi Effendi, and the Universal House of Justice. The law was codified in 1987 and made universally applicable as of Riḍván 1992 to all who profess belief in Bahá’u’lláh. For further information, see *Ḥuqúqu’lláh: Extracts from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Shoghi Effendi and The Universal House of Justice* (1986).

I

INSTITUTE See **training institute**.

INTERNATIONAL BAHÁ'Í ARCHIVES An institution at the Bahá'í World Center that preserves the writings and sacred relics of the Central Figures of the Faith and Shoghi Effendi as well as other historical documents and items. The International Archives Building, completed in 1957, was the first of five buildings on the Arc on Mount Carmel to be constructed.

INTERNATIONAL BAHÁ'Í CONVENTION An event held every five years in Haifa, Israel, at which members of National Spiritual Assemblies from around the world gather to elect the members of the Universal House of Justice.

INTERNATIONAL BAHÁ'Í LIBRARY The central depository of all literature published on the Faith, and an essential source of information for the institutions of the World Center on all subjects relating to the Cause of God and the conditions of mankind.

INTERNATIONAL FUND See **Fund**.

INTERNATIONAL TEACHING CENTER An institution established by the Universal House of Justice in 1973, the members of which are the Hands of the Cause of God and Counselors appointed by the Universal House of Justice to serve at the Bahá'í World Center. Among the institution's many responsibilities are making reports and recommendations to the Universal House of Justice, coordinating and directing the work of the Continental Boards of Counselors, being fully informed of the Faith's condition throughout the world, watching over the security and ensuring the protection of the Faith, and being alert to possibilities for extending the teaching work and for developing social and economic life both inside and outside the Bahá'í community.

K

KING OF GLORY A title of Bahá'u'lláh.

KITÁB-I-'AHD See **Book of the Covenant**.

KITÁB-I-AQDAS, THE *The Most Holy Book* (*Kitáb* means "book"; *Aqdas* means "Most Holy"): the chief repository of Bahá'u'lláh's laws and the Mother Book of His revelation, revealed in 'Akká in 1873 and termed by Shoghi Effendi "the Charter of the future world civilization." For a summary of its contents, see GPB, pp. 214–15.

KNIGHTS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH The title given by Shoghi Effendi to Bahá'ís who settled in the goal countries enumerated at the outset of the Ten Year World Crusade as having no Bahá'ís living in them. All those who settled in such territories

during the Holy Year October 1952–October 1953 and, thereafter, the first to settle in the remaining territories were designated Knights of Bahá'u'lláh. The names of the Knights of Bahá'u'lláh are inscribed on a scroll that was laid beneath the floor inside the entrance door of the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh in May 1992 during the Holy Year commemorating the centenary of Bahá'u'lláh's ascension.

L

LESSER PEACE The first of two major stages in which Bahá'ís believe peace will be established. The Lesser Peace will come about through a binding treaty among the nations for the political unification of the world. It will involve fixing every nation's boundaries, strictly limiting the size of their armaments, laying down the principles underlying the relations among governments, and ascertaining all international agreements and obligations. Its inception will synchronize with two processes operating within the Bahá'í Faith—the maturation of local and national Bahá'í institutions and the completion of specified buildings around the **Arc** on Mount Carmel—and will portend the coming of the **Most Great Peace**.

LETTERS OF THE LIVING A translation of *Hurúf-i-Ḥáyy*. The first eighteen people who independently recognized and believed in the Báb. Together with Him, they form the first *Váhid* (“Unit”) of the Bábí Dispensation. The word *Ḥáyy*, which is the Name of God “The Living,” has the numerical value of eighteen in the *abjad* system of notation in which each letter of the Arabic alphabet is assigned a specific numerical value. The word “Váhid” has the numerical value of nineteen.

LIFEBLOOD OF THE CAUSE The Bahá'í **Fund**.

LORD OF HOSTS A title of **Bahá'u'lláh**. ‘Abdu'l-Bahá explains that “what is meant in the prophecies by the ‘Lord of Hosts’ and the ‘Promised Christ’ is the Blessed Perfection [Bahá'u'lláh] and His holiness the Exalted One [the Báb].” See also **Hosts**.

LORD OF THE AGE A designation of the Manifestation of God in each Dispensation. In Islam it was a title given to the promised Qá'im and, therefore, is applied in Bahá'í terminology particularly to the Báb.

M

MAJOR PLAN OF GOD God's plan for humanity that is tumultuous and mysterious in its progress. Its purpose in this cycle is to unify the human race and to establish the Kingdom of God on earth. See also **Minor Plan of God**.

MANIFESTATION OF GOD Designation of a Prophet “endowed with constancy” Who is the Founder of a religious Dispensation, inasmuch as in His words, His

person, and His actions He manifests the nature and purpose of God in accordance with the capacity and needs of the people to whom He comes.

MASHRIQU'L-ADHKÁR *The Dawning-place of the Praise of God*: a title designating a Bahá'í House of Worship or Temple. Houses of Worship have been constructed in Wilmette, near Chicago, Illinois; Kampala, Uganda; Ingleside, near Sydney, Australia; Langenhain, near Frankfurt am Main, Germany; Panama City, Panama; Apia, Western Samoa; and New Delhi, India. The first Bahá'í House of Worship, built in 1902 in 'Ishqábád, Turkmenistan, was damaged by an earthquake in 1948 and, following heavy rains, had to be razed in 1963. For a full description of the institution of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, see BW 18:568–88.

MASTER A title of 'Abdu'l-Bahá referring to the virtues He manifested and to His role as an enduring model for humanity to emulate.

MAZRA'IH A country mansion near the village of Mazra'a, several miles north of the prison-city of 'Akká and about a half-mile from the Mediterranean Sea. Bahá'u'lláh lived at Mazra'ih for about two years after leaving 'Akká in 1877. The mansion looks eastward to the hills of Galilee and has a pool and gardens.

MECCA The holy city of Islam, the birthplace of Muḥammad (570 A.D.). In Mecca, the principal place of pilgrimage of the Muslim world, stands the Great Mosque surrounding the Ka'bih (Kaaba), the ancient cubical temple believed to have been built by Abraham and Ishmael, which is the Muslim **Qiblih**.

MIHDÍ, MÍRZÁ *The Purest Branch*: a son of Bahá'u'lláh and brother of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. He died at the age of twenty-two in 1870 when he fell through a skylight while rapt in prayer on the roof of the prison-barracks in 'Akká. He asked Bahá'u'lláh to accept his life as a ransom so that pilgrims prevented from attaining Bahá'u'lláh's presence would be enabled to do so. Bahá'u'lláh, in a prayer, made this astounding proclamation: "Glorified art Thou, O Lord my God! Thou seest Me in the hands of Mine enemies, and My son blood-stained before Thy face, O Thou in Whose hands is the kingdom of all names. I have, O My Lord, offered up that which Thou hast given Me, that Thy servants may be quickened and all that dwell on earth be united."

MINOR PLAN OF GOD The part of God's Plan that is revealed by Bahá'u'lláh to His followers and is laid out for them in detailed instructions and successive plans by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Shoghi Effendi, and the Universal House of Justice. In contrast to the **Major Plan of God**, it proceeds in a methodical, ordered way, disseminating His teachings and raising up the structure of a united world society.

MOST EXALTED LEAF See Ásiyih **Khánum** and Bahíyyih **Khánum**.

MOST GREAT FESTIVAL See **Riḍván**.

MOST GREAT JUBILEE The centenary of the declaration of Bahá'u'lláh's prophetic mission in the Garden of Riḍván in Baghdad, 22 April–3 May 1863. It was commemorated by the first Bahá'í World Congress, held in Royal Albert Hall, London, during the Riḍván Festival (28 April–2 May) 1963. The Most Great Jubilee coincided with the victorious completion of the Ten Year World Crusade Shoghi Effendi launched in April 1953 (fulfilling the prophecy of Daniel 12:12 regarding the spread of the Bahá'í Faith throughout the world) and the establishment of the Universal House of Justice elected a few days earlier in Haifa, Israel. See also **Daniel's Prophecy**.

MOST GREAT NAME See **Greatest Name**.

MOST GREAT OCEAN See **Ancient Beauty**.

MOST GREAT PEACE The second of two major stages in which Bahá'ís believe peace will be established. The Most Great Peace will be the practical consequence of the spiritualization of the world and the fusion of all its races, creeds, classes, and nations. It will rest on the foundation of, and be preserved by, the ordinances of God. See also **Lesser Peace**.

MOST GREAT PRISON The prison-city of 'Akká in which Bahá'u'lláh, His family, and companions were confined from 31 August 1868 until June 1877.

MOST HOLY BOOK See **Kitáb-i-Aqdas, The**.

MOST HOLY SHRINE The Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh in **Bahjí**.

MOTHER TEMPLE Refers to the first Bahá'í House of Worship to be built in a hemisphere or continent. For example, the Bahá'í House of Worship outside of Frankfurt am Main, Germany, is known as the Mother Temple of Europe; the House of Worship in Wilmette, Illinois, the Mother Temple of the West.

MOUNT CARMEL A mountain in Israel on which the Shrine of the Báb and the Bahá'í World Center are located. The home of the prophet Elijah, it is referred to by Bahá'u'lláh as "the Hill of God and His Vineyard" and was extolled by Isaiah as the "mountain of the Lord" to which "all nations shall flow." On it Bahá'u'lláh pitched His tent and revealed the **Tablet of Carmel**, the charter of the world spiritual and administrative centers of the Bahá'í Faith. See also **Arc; Bahá'í World Center**.

MYSTERY OF GOD A translation of *Sirru'lláh*, a title Bahá'u'lláh gave to 'Abdu'l-Bahá referring to His unique spiritual station in which the incompatible character-

istics of human nature and superhuman knowledge and perfection are blended and completely harmonized.

N

NATIONAL CONVENTION The institution that elects the members of the National Spiritual Assembly during the annual Riḍván Festival (April 21–May 2). At unit or “district” conventions, adult Bahá’ís elect delegates who, in turn, attend the National Convention. There the delegates vote to elect the members of the National Spiritual Assembly, consult about the affairs of the Faith, and offer recommendations to the National Spiritual Assembly. See also **Elections, Bahá’í**.

NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES See **Spiritual Assemblies**.

NAW-RÚZ *New Day*: Bahá’í New Year’s Day, the date of the vernal equinox. A Bahá’í holy day on which work is suspended, it is celebrated in the West on 21 March, until such time as the Universal House of Justice fixes the standard for the date throughout the world in accordance with astronomical data.

NIGHTINGALE OF PARADISE See **Ancient Beauty**.

NINE YEAR PLAN The first teaching plan launched by the Universal House of Justice. It encompassed the years 1964–73. See also **Plans**.

NINETEEN DAY FEAST A Bahá’í institution inaugurated by the Báb and confirmed by Bahá’u’lláh in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. It is held on the first day of every Bahá’í month, each consisting of nineteen days and bearing the name of one of the attributes of God. The Feast is the heart of Bahá’í community life at the local level and consists of devotional, consultative, and social elements.

O

ORDER OF BAHÁ’U’LLÁH See **World Order of Bahá’u’lláh**.

P

PEERLESS BELOVED See **Ancient Beauty**.

PEN OF GLORY, PEN OF THE MOST HIGH See **Ancient Beauty**.

PEOPLE OF BAHÁ Generally, the members of the Bahá’í community. Shoghi Effendi explains that in the Tablet of Carmel “the people of Bahá” refers to the members of the Universal House of Justice.

PILGRIM HOUSE A house for visiting pilgrims that Mírzá Ja‘far Raḥmání built, with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s permission, near the Shrine of the Báb. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá composed a dedicatory inscription that appears above its entrance: “This is a spiritual Hostel for Pilgrims, and its founder is Mírzá Ja‘far Raḥmání 1327 A.H. [1909].” It was completed in 1909 and was known as the Eastern or Oriental Pilgrim House. In 1969 the increasing number of pilgrims led the Universal House of Justice to decide that pilgrims should be accommodated in hotels, thereby enabling it to convert the pilgrim house into a reception center.

A Western Pilgrim House was built across the street from the House of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in Haifa, shortly after His passing, with funds American Bahá’ís had contributed and in accordance with a design ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had selected and modified. In 1963 the Universal House of Justice established its offices in the Western Pilgrim House. In 1983, after the completion of the Seat of the Universal House of Justice, the Western Pilgrim House became the seat of the International Teaching Center.

Another pilgrim house is located at Bahjí, near the Shrine of Bahá’u’lláh.

PILGRIMAGE A journey made with the intention of visiting a shrine or holy place. For Bahá’ís it is both a privilege and an obligation, although it is only obligatory for men who are able to make the journey. In the Kitáb-i-Aqdas Bahá’u’lláh specifically ordains pilgrimage to the House of Bahá’u’lláh in Baghdad and to the House of the Báb in Shíráz. On the day of Bahá’u’lláh’s Ascension, the room where His Holy Dust was laid became a third center of pilgrimage—the most holy spot and the **Qiblih** of the Bahá’í world—for at least the next thousand years. Under current conditions, Bahá’ís assume that the obligation of pilgrimage is satisfied by a visit to the Shrine of Bahá’u’lláh and the Shrine of the Báb in the Holy Land.

The first group of Western pilgrims arrived in ‘Akká on 10 December 1898 and included Edward and Lua Getsinger; Phoebe Hearst; Mrs. Hearst’s butler, Robert Turner, who was the first African-American in the West to become a Bahá’í; and Mrs. Thornburgh.

PILLARS OF THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE National Spiritual Assemblies. See also **Spiritual Assemblies**.

PIONEERS Bahá’ís who leave their hometown or country to reside elsewhere for the purpose of teaching the Bahá’í Faith.

PLANS Refers to the courses of action devised by Shoghi Effendi and, later, by the Universal House of Justice for expanding and consolidating the Bahá’í Faith within the framework of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s **Divine Plan**. Teaching Plans launched by Shoghi Effendi include the first Seven Year Plan (1937–44) and the second Seven Year Plan (1946–53) pursued by the Bahá’ís of the United States; a Six Year Plan pursued by the Bahá’ís of the British Isles (1944–50); plans of varying durations separately pursued between 1947–53 by the National Spiritual Assemblies of Canada, of Central

America, of South America, of Australia and New Zealand, of India, Pakistan, and Burma, of Germany and Austria, of Iran, of Iraq, and of Egypt and the Sudan; the Two Year Plan for the development of the Faith in Africa; and the Ten Year World Crusade (1953–63) pursued by the worldwide Bahá'í community. The Universal House of Justice has launched the Nine Year Plan (1964–73), the Five Year Plan (1974–79), the Seven Year Plan (1979–86), the Six Year Plan (1986–92), the Three Year Plan (1993–1996), the Four Year Plan (1996–2000), the Twelve Month Plan (2000–2001), and two Five Year Plans (2001–2006 and 2006–2011). See also **Major Plan of God** and **Minor Plan of God**.

PROMISED ONE Bahá'u'lláh.

PUREST BRANCH, THE See **Mihdí, Mírzá.**

Q

QIBLIH *“That which one faces; prayer-direction; point of adoration”*: the focus to which the faithful turn in prayer. The Qiblih for Muslims is the Ka'bih in **Mecca**; for Bahá'ís it is the Most Holy Tomb of Bahá'u'lláh at **Bahjí**, “the Heart and Qiblih of the Bahá'í world.”

R

REGIONAL COUNCILS Established by the Universal House of Justice in 1997, this new element of the Bahá'í **Administrative Order**, serves as a link between the local and national levels. These institutions are formed only in certain countries where the growing complexity of the issues which are facing National Spiritual Assemblies requires this development. A Regional Council is established either through election by the members of the **Local Spiritual Assemblies** in a region or through appointment by the **National Spiritual Assembly**.

REMOTE PRISON The city of Adrianople (now Edirne, Turkey), to which Bahá'u'lláh was banished from 12 December 1863 through 12 August 1868. Adrianople is in western Turkey, on its border with Greece and Bulgaria.

REVELATION The conveying of truth from God to humanity. The word is used to refer to the process of divine communication from God to His Manifestation and from the Manifestation to His people; to the words and acts of such communication themselves; and to the entire body of teachings given by a Prophet of God.

RIḌVÁN The Islamic name of the gardener and custodian of Paradise. In Bahá'í terminology the word denotes both “garden” and “paradise”; however, it has also been used to denote God's good-pleasure and His divine acceptance. The Riḍván Festival, the holiest and most significant of all Bahá'í festivals, commemorates

Bahá'u'lláh's declaration of His mission to His companions in the Garden of Ridván in Baghdad in 1863. It is a twelve-day period celebrated annually, 21 April–2 May. It is also called the Most Great Festival. During each Ridván Festival Local and National Spiritual Assemblies are elected, and, once every five years, the Universal House of Justice is elected.

RUHI INSTITUTE A system whose materials seek to integrate focused study of the Bahá'í writings with specific acts of service for the community. Organized as a series of levels of study, which aim to develop an understanding of the essential spiritual verities taught by Bahá'u'lláh, the courses are self-perpetuating in nature, developing human resources who in turn are able to arise to serve the community and teach the courses to others.

RUHÍYYIH KHÁNUM, AMATU'L-BAHÁ See **Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum**.

S

SACRED SCRIPTURES, SACRED TEXTS The Holy Books of the world's religions. Also refers to the writings of Bahá'u'lláh, the Báb, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

SACRED THRESHOLD A term used metaphorically and respectfully to denote approach to the Presence of God and, hence, to the precincts of a holy place such as a shrine. It is also sometimes used literally to denote the actual outer or inner threshold of a holy shrine.

SEAL OF THE PROPHETS Muḥammad.

SHOGHI EFFENDI The title by which Shoghi Rabbání (1 March 1897–4 November 1957), great-grandson of Bahá'u'lláh, is generally known to Bahá'ís. (*Shoghi* is an Arabic name meaning “the one who longs”; *Effendi* is a Turkish honorific signifying “sir” or “master.”) He was appointed Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in His Will and assumed the office upon 'Abdu'l-Bahá's passing in 1921.

SHRINE The original meaning of the word is a casket or case for books, but it later acquired the special meaning of a casket containing sacred relics, and thence a tomb of a saint, a chapel with special associations, or a place hallowed by some memory. It is used to denote the latter in Bahá'í terminology. The term “Holy Shrines,” for example, refers to the burial places of Bahá'u'lláh, the Báb, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá. The House associated with the visit of 'Abdu'l-Bahá to Montreal was designated by Shoghi Effendi as a Bahá'í shrine. Also, when referring to the All-American Convention held in 1944 to commemorate the one hundredth anniversary of the inception of the Bahá'í Faith, the Guardian wrote of the representatives of the American

Bahá'í community's being "Gathered within the walls of its national Shrine—the most sacred Temple ever to be reared to the glory of Bahá'u'lláh" (GPB p. 400).

SÍYÁH-CHÁL *Black Pit*: the subterranean dungeon in Tehran in which Bahá'u'lláh was imprisoned August-December 1852. Here, chained in darkness three flights of stairs underground, in the company of his fellow-Bábís and some 150 thieves and assassins, He received the first intimations of His world mission.

SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES Administrative institutions of Bahá'u'lláh's World Order that operate at the local and national levels and are elected according to Bahá'í principles. They are responsible for coordinating and directing the affairs of the Bahá'í community in their areas of jurisdiction. The institution of the Local Spiritual Assembly is ordained by Bahá'u'lláh in the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* (referred to there as the "House of Justice"); the institution of the National Spiritual Assembly is established by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in His Will and Testament. The term "Spiritual Assembly" was introduced by 'Abdu'l-Bahá so that, while the Faith is still generally unknown, people will not make the false deduction from the term "House of Justice" that it is a political institution. Regional Spiritual Assemblies have been elected in many areas and are gradually reduced in size and eventually replaced by National Spiritual Assemblies as the Faith expands and consolidates itself. See also **Elections, Bahá'í**.

SUPREME HOUSE OF JUSTICE See **Universal House of Justice**.

SUPREME PEN A title of **Bahá'u'lláh**.

SÚRIY-I-MULÚK *Tablet to the Kings*: revealed by Bahá'u'lláh in Adrianople, referred to by Shoghi Effendi as "the most momentous Tablet revealed by Bahá'u'lláh." In it Bahá'u'lláh addresses collectively the monarchs of East and West, the Sulṭán of Turkey, the kings of Christendom, the French and Persian ambassadors to the Ottoman Empire, the Muslim clergy in Constantinople, the people of Persia, and the philosophers of the world. In the *Súriy-i-Mulúk* Bahá'u'lláh unequivocally and forcefully proclaims His station. See *Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh* (pp. 7–12, 47–54, 102–03) for passages of the *Súriy-i-Mulúk* that have been translated into English.

T

TABLET OF CARMEL The charter of the world spiritual and administrative centers of the Bahá'í Faith, revealed by Bahá'u'lláh in 1890 during one of His visits to Mount Carmel. See *GW*, no. 11, or *TB*, pp. 3–5.

TABLETS Refers to letters revealed by Bahá'u'lláh, the Báb, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

TABLETS OF THE DIVINE PLAN Fourteen Tablets revealed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in 1916 and 1917 and referred to as the charter for propagating the Bahá'í Faith.

Addressed to the Bahá'ís of North America, the Tablets convey His mandate for the transmission of the Bahá'í Faith throughout the world. See also **Divine Plan**.

TEN YEAR WORLD CRUSADE See **Crusade, Ten Year World**.

TONGUE OF GRANDEUR See **Ancient Beauty**.

TRAINING INSTITUTE. A program designed to enrich the spiritual life of the participants and enable them to perform specific acts of service such as engaging in teaching activities, giving deepening courses, teaching children's classes, and activating Bahá'í community life.

TRANSITION, AGE OF or **PERIOD OF** See **Ages**.

TWIN HOLY CITIES Haifa and 'Akká, Israel.

TWIN HOLY SHRINES The Shrines of Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb. See also **Shrines**.

U

UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE The supreme governing and legislative body of the Bahá'í Faith. The Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice are the twin, crowning institutions of the Bahá'í Administrative Order. Elected every five years at an international Bahá'í convention, the Universal House of Justice gives spiritual guidance to and directs the administrative activities of the worldwide Bahá'í community. It is the institution Bahá'u'lláh ordained as the agency invested with authority to legislate on matters not covered in His writings. In His Will and Testament 'Abdu'l-Bahá elaborates on its functions and affirms that it is infallibly guided.

W

WILL AND TESTAMENT OF 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ A document that Shoghi Effendi says is "unique in the annals of the world's religious systems," the Will and Testament is the charter of the Administrative Order of the Bahá'í Faith. Written, signed, and sealed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the Will and Testament consists of three sections written at three different times between 1901 and the year of His passing. The Will and Testament affirms "the two-fold character of the Mission of the Báb," which was to bring an independent revelation from God and to herald the coming of another, greater revelation through Bahá'u'lláh. It also "discloses the full station of" Bahá'u'lláh as the "Supreme Manifestation of God," declares the fundamental beliefs of the Bahá'í Faith, establishes the institution of the Guardianship, and appoints Shoghi Effendi as Guardian. It provides for the election of the Universal House of Justice and defines its scope. It also creates the institution of the National

Spiritual Assembly, provides for the appointment of the Hands of the Cause of God and prescribes their obligations, and exposes the conduct of the Covenant-breakers.

WORLD CENTER See **Bahá'í World Center**.

WORLD CONGRESS See **Most Great Jubilee**.

WORLD CRUSADE See **Crusade, Ten Year World**.

WORLD ORDER OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH Bahá'u'lláh's "scheme for world-wide solidarity" that is "destined to embrace in the fullness of time the whole of mankind." The current Bahá'í Administrative Order is its nucleus and pattern, providing the "rudiments of the future all-enfolding Bahá'í Commonwealth."

Y

YÁ 'ALÍYYU'L-A'LÁ *O Thou the Exalted, the Most Exalted!* A form of the **Báb's** name that is used as an invocation.

YÁ BAHÁ'U'L-ABHÁ *O Thou the Glory of the Most Glorious!* A form of **Bahá'u'lláh's** name (the **Greatest Name**) that is used as an invocation.