



THE WORLD ORDER OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

STUDY GUIDE

EHSAN BAYAT

Need to read - 'The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh'

- “The collected messages of Shoghi Effendi to the American community published in such well-read and familiar titles as 'Bahá'í Administration', 'The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh', 'The Advent of Divine Justice', 'Messages to America', 'The Promised Day is Come' and 'Citadel of Faith', form part of the primary literature of the Faith.”

(From a letter dated 1 October 1987 written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to a Bahá'í Publishing Trust, quoted in the compilation “Studying the Writings of Shoghi Effendi”, no. 15)

"The sorrows, fears and perplexities evoked by this latest conflict in the unfoldment of the Lesser Peace have intensified the feelings of grievance and outrage at the recurrent crises agitating the planet. The anxieties of people across the globe are even now being played out publicly in angry demonstrations too overwhelming to be ignored. The issues they protest and the emotions they arouse often add to the chaos and confusion they hope by such public displays to resolve. For the friends of God, there is an unambiguous explanation for what is occurring; they have only to recall the vision and principles offered by the Faith if they are to respond effectively to the challenges posed by the spread of distress and dismay. Let them 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"."

(Universal House of Justice, Ridván 2003)

Know Your Baha'i Literature "The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh"

by Shoghi Effendi

(Reviewed by Marion Hofman)

The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh is a legacy to the Bahá'ís and to the world which our generation can but dimly appreciate. This series of essays, written from 1929 to 1936, by Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith, embody in bold, vast, and certain outline the pattern and the evolving momentum of World Order.

It is a unique book, the first and only one of its kind, for its appearance depended upon a fitting climax in history and upon the assured knowledge which only the Guardian of God's Faith could bring. Here is no tentative approach to the events of our time, no deduction of trend based upon reasonable observation and subject to all the limitations of the human mind. Here, rather, is the consummate revelation of a process, divine and irresistible, which today is surrounding and motivating the actions of humanity on the threshold of its mightiest age—the epoch of world civilization.

Pathetic Efforts of World Leaders

The seven years which produced these essays can be seen in retrospect as a critical but stagnant time, when beneath a relative calm the roots of disintegration were fastening on every social institution. In the experience of nations they represent the culmination of that period of respite and fatuous security between two wars, which in reality was a breeding-ground of superficial panaceas obscuring the true and bitter situation. While some sixty governments renounced war as an instrument of national policy, through their indifference, lack of vision, or unscrupulous acts they were preparing the most frightful war in recorded history. They believed or professed to believe, that peace could be had for no price but a promise and the ink on a piece of paper. The intricate and solemn responsibilities of interdependence, and the sacrifices and labors which the building of a peaceful international society would require were passed by with a thoughtlessness nothing short of suicidal. Barely-repressed hostilities, warning signals of economic disruption, the introduction of shameless philosophies of government, and finally the outbreak of conquest in two widely-separated areas—all were neglected and glossed over by a world unwilling to abandon its traditional divisions for the dynamic task of universal reconstruction. "How pathetic indeed," came the Guardian's penetrating judgment in 1931, "are the efforts of those leaders of human institutions who, in utter disregard of the spirit of the age, are striving to adjust national processes, suited to the ancient days of self-contained nations, to an age which must either achieve the unity of the world, as adumbrated by Bahá'u'lláh, or perish."

For Bahá'ís a Seed-Time

For the Bahá'ís these seven years will also be remembered as a seed-time of relative quiet, not of evil

but of vigorous and fruitful days. For these were the years immediately preceding the opening of the greatest collective enterprise in the first century of the Faith, the inception of that Divine Plan which is so intimately entwined with the world's destiny. They were, moreover, in the most literal sense the last stretch of calm before the Judgment Day. And it was precisely through the influence of the Guardian's writings, which poured in a continuous flow from Haifa, that the tiny community of followers of Bahá'u'lláh was quickened and trained to take up its role in the world-shaking events so soon to be unleashed upon an unsuspecting generation.

A Vision of Persuasive Power

As humanity neared its zero-hour and the clash of irreconcilable forces loomed ahead, upon the very eve of that final and universal struggle for the destruction of outworn systems, which is still raging and can only end with the emergence of a world society, the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith raised a clear and unequivocal call summoning men of all nations, races, classes, and beliefs to a single and a sacred goal. "It is towards this goal—the goal of a new World Order, Divine in origin, all-embracing in scope, equitable in principle, challenging in its features—that a harassed humanity must strive."

In some such terms as these, sweeping and irresistible as the movement of nations at their crucial hour, we who support the life-germ of a potent Faith must seek the meaning of this remarkable guidebook, *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*. Toward it Bahá'ís have a special responsibility, for here are contained the indispensable truths which will clarify and invigorate our every activity. Above all, here is a vision of persuasive power—the vision of a world in birth—whose dynamic impact is certain to unlock the convictions of masses of men who, in the not distant future, will rally to the standard of Bahá'u'lláh.

All the Fundamentals of World Order

To study this book is to realize that, within its scope, are all the fundamentals of World Order. Why world civilization must be spiritually based, the unique fusion of Bahá'u'lláh's "regenerating Spirit" with His "supreme instrument for the establishment of the Most Great Peace," the social principles which will buttress world society, its root in the organic oneness of mankind, its structure and key institutions, the distinction of this Divine Economy from all other religious and political systems, the authentic sources and explicit safeguards of world unity, the significance and function of World Order as the consummation of "man's collective life on this planet," the challenge of its inevitable unfolding to all resistant institutions, America's predominant role as its "champion-builder," the "fire of ordeal" through which humanity is bound to pass with its assured outcome in the gradual welding together of discordant elements into one all-encompassing world commonwealth, and finally the entrancing vista of a "Day when the kingdoms of this world shall have become the Kingdom of Bahá'u'lláh"—these are but some of the themes which the Guardian unfolds in seven matchless essays.

No Single Word Dispensable

These are pages so packed with meaning that they cannot by any effort be truly summarized. In the writings of Shoghi Effendi no single word is dispensable. Nothing less than his own two hundred pages can encompass the essence of World Order which he portrays. Nor is one essay to be preferred above another, for like the World Order itself, they are organic and progressive; each supplements and evolves the Guardian's thought with its own individual purpose and use. So compact are these chapters, so revealing, inexhaustible, and often astonishing, even to Bahá'ís, that they exercise a constant claim and bestow an ever-renewing stimulus and joy.

Particular Essays for Prior Attention

Perhaps for those approaching the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh for the first time, it is wise to point out two sections in particular, *The Goal of a New World Order* (1931) and *The Unfoldment of World Civilization* (1936). The first is a classic statement, perfect and irrefutable, of the world's plight, its travail, and the promise and foundation of the coming Order. It is a statement which grows more valid with every passing day, and ought to be known by the intelligent citizenry of this and every land. Both essays are without doubt the creative source of concepts which even now are transforming and elevating the currents of contemporary thought to a recognition of humanity's coming of age and the steady unfoldment of world commonwealth.

Still a third section indispensable to students is *The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh* (1934), giving definitive form to the essentials of Bahá'í belief which are requisite to membership. Yet basic as this chapter is for students, it has a thousand-fold interest for Bahá'ís themselves whose "first obligation" is "to strive to obtain a more adequate understanding of the signifi-

cance of Bahá'u'lláh's stupendous Revelation." Here is the Guardian's own explanation and measuring-rod of "certain fundamental verities . . . which lie at the basis of our Faith and the integrity of which it is our first duty to safeguard." The marvellous virility of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh is vividly glimpsed in this description of its source and development, for "the bedrock on which this Administrative Order is founded is God's immutable Purpose for mankind in this day."

Impact on First Recipients

Those who open *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh* for the first time will always have in store a vital and lasting experience. Yet it is something to have lived through the impact of these messages as published from year to year, absorbing them with passionate concentration, and discovering within one's inmost nature the traces of their steadily-maturing effect. With consummate wisdom and skill the Guardian led out the small band of Bahá'u'lláh's followers, expanding their wisdom, deepening their understanding, rousing their energies, until no longer immersed in the processes of a dying civilization they stood, ready and poised for their task, upon the threshold of that new World Order which is the chief object of Divine Revelation in our age.

Transmuting Potency

The fulfillment of Bahá'u'lláh's great remedy for society requires the instrumentality of conscious and willing lives who, recognizing in the daily struggles of our time the birthpangs of World Order, will become its first and loyal citizens. This book contains the potency to transmute all those who respond to its import into men and women for whom "the earth is but one country and mankind its citizens." In *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh* the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith has unloosed in his readers such energies and hopes as shall never be stilled until the wondrous edifice of the Most Great Peace has been forever reared.

Know Your Baha'í Literature "The World Order of Baha'u'llah" by Shoghi Effendi (Reviewed by Marion Hofman) Bahá'í News Feb. 1966

The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh is a legacy to the Bahá'ís and to the world which our generation can but dimly appreciate. This series of essays, written from 1929 to 1936, by Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith, embody in bold, vast, and certain outline the pattern and the evolving momentum of World Order.

It is a unique book, the first and only one of its kind, for its appearance depended upon a fitting climax in history and upon the assured knowledge which only the Guardian of God's Faith could bring. Here is no tentative approach to the events of our time, no deduction of trend based upon reasonable observation and subject to all the limitations of the human mind. Here, rather, is the consummate revelation of a process, divine and irresistible, which today is surrounding and

motivating the actions of humanity on the threshold of its mightiest age—the epoch of world civilization.

Pathetic Efforts of World Leaders

The seven years which produced these essays can be seen in retrospect as a critical but stagnant time, when beneath a relative calm the roots of disintegration were fastening on every social institution. In the experience of nations they represent the culmination of that period of respite and fatuous security between two wars, which in reality was a breeding-ground of superficial panaceas obscuring the true and bitter situation. While some sixty governments renounced war as an instrument of national policy, through their indifference, lack of vision, or unscrupulous acts they were preparing the most frightful war in recorded history. They believed or professed to believe, that peace could be had for no price but a promise and the ink on a piece of paper. The intricate and solemn responsibilities of interdependence, and the sacrifices and labors which the building of a peaceful international society would require were passed by with a thoughtlessness nothing short of suicidal. Barely-repressed hostilities, warning signals of economic disruption, the introduction of shameless philosophies of government, and finally the outbreak of conquest in two widely-separated areas—all were neglected and glossed over by a world unwilling to abandon its traditional divisions for the dynamic task of universal reconstruction. “How pathetic indeed,” came the Guardian’s penetrating judgment in 1931, “are the efforts of those leaders of human institutions who, in utter disregard of the spirit of the age, are striving to adjust national processes, suited to the ancient days of self-contained nations, to an age which must either achieve the unity of the world, as adumbrated by Bahá’u’lláh, or perish.”

For Bahá’ís a Seed-Time

For the Bahá’ís these seven years will also be remembered as a seed-time of relative quiet, not of evil but of vigorous and fruitful days. For these were the years immediately preceding the opening of the greatest collective enterprise in the first century of the Faith, the inception of that Divine Plan which is so intimately entwined with the world’s destiny. They were, moreover, in the most literal sense the last stretch of calm before the Judgment Day. And it was precisely through the influence of the Guardian’s writings, which poured in a continuous flow from Haifa, that the tiny community of followers of Bahá’u’lláh was quickened and trained to take up its role in the world-shaking events so soon to be unleashed upon an unsuspecting generation.

A Vision of Persuasive Power

As humanity neared its zero-hour and the clash of irreconcilable forces loomed ahead, upon the very eve of that final and universal struggle for the destruction of outworn systems, which is still raging and can only end with the emergence of a world society, the Guardian of the Bahá’í Faith raised a clear and unequivocal call summoning men of all nations, races, classes, and beliefs to a single and a sacred goal. “It is towards this goal—the goal of a new World Order, Divine in origin, all-embracing in scope, equitable in principle, challenging in its features—that a harassed humanity must strive.”

In some such terms as these, sweeping and irresistible as the movement of nations at their crucial hour, we who support the life-germ of a potent Faith must seek the meaning of this remarkable guidebook, *The World Order of Bahá’u’lláh*. Toward it Bahá’ís have a special responsibility, for

here are contained the indispensable truths which will clarify and invigorate our every activity. Above all, here is a vision of persuasive power—the vision of a world in birth—whose dynamic impact is certain to unlock the convictions of masses of men who, in the not distant future, will rally to the standard of Bahá'u'lláh.

All the Fundamentals of World Order

To study this book is to realize that, within its scope, are all the fundamentals of World Order. Why world civilization must be spiritually based, the unique fusion of Bahá'u'lláh's "regenerating Spirit" with His "supreme instrument for the establishment of the Most Great Peace," the social principles which will buttress world society, its root in the organic oneness of mankind, its structure and key institutions, the distinction of this Divine Economy from all other religious and political systems, the authentic sources and explicit safeguards of world unity, the significance and function of World Order as the consummation of "man's collective life on this planet," the challenge of its inevitable unfoldment to all resistant institutions, America's predominant role as its "champion-builder," the "fire of ordeal" through which humanity is bound to pass with its assured outcome in the gradual welding together of discordant elements into one all-encompassing world commonwealth, and finally the entrancing vista of a "Day when the kingdoms of this world shall have become the Kingdom of Bahá'u'lláh"—these are but some of the themes which the Guardian unfolds in seven matchless essays.

No Single Word Dispensable

These are pages so packed with meaning that they cannot by any effort be truly summarized. In the writings of Shoghi Effendi no single word is dispensable. Nothing less than his own two hundred pages can encompass the essence of World Order which he portrays. Nor is one essay to be preferred above another, for like the World Order itself, they are organic and progressive; each supplements and evolves the Guardian's thought with its own individual purpose and use. So compact are these chapters, so revealing, inexhaustible, and often astonishing, even to Bahá'ís, that they exercise a constant claim and bestow an ever-renewing stimulus and joy.

Particular Essays for Prior Attention

Perhaps for those approaching the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh for the first time, it is wise to point out two sections in particular, *The Goal of a New World Order* (1931) and *The Unfoldment of World Civilization* (1936). The first is a classic statement, perfect and irrefutable, of the world's plight, its travail, and the promise and foundation of the coming Order. It is a statement which grows more valid with every passing day, and ought to be known by the intelligent citizenry of this and every land. Both essays are without doubt the creative source of concepts which even now are transforming and elevating the currents of contemporary thought to a recognition of humanity's coming of age and the steady unfoldment of world commonwealth.

Still a third section indispensable to students is *The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh* (1934), giving definitive form to the essentials of Bahá'í belief which are requisite to membership. Yet basic as this chapter is for students, it has a thousand-fold interest for Bahá'ís themselves whose "first obligation" is "to strive to obtain a more adequate understanding of the significance of Bahá'u'lláh's stupendous Revelation." Here is the Guardian's own explanation and measuring-

rod of “certain fundamental verities ... which lie at the basis of our Faith and the integrity of which it is our first duty to safeguard.” The marvellous virility of the World Order of Bahá’u’lláh is vividly glimpsed in this description of its source and development, for “the bedrock on which this Administrative Order is founded is God’s immutable Purpose for mankind in this day.”

Impact on First Recipients

Those who open *The World Order of Bahá’u’lláh* for the first time will always have in store a vital and lasting experience. Yet it is something to have lived through the impact of these messages as published from year to year, absorbing them with passionate concentration, and discovering within one’s inmost nature the traces of their steadily-maturing effect. With consummate wisdom and skill the Guardian led out the small band of Bahá’u’lláh’s followers, expanding their wisdom, deepening their understanding, rousing their energies, until no longer immersed in the processes of a dying civilization they stood, ready and poised for their task, upon the threshold of that new World Order which is the chief object of Divine Revelation in our age.

Transmuting Potency

The fulfillment of Bahá’u’lláh’s great remedy for society requires the instrumentality of conscious and willing lives who, recognizing in the daily struggles of our time the birthpangs of World Order, will become its first and loyal citizens. This book contains the potency to transmute all those who respond to its import into men and women for whom “the earth is but one country and mankind its citizens.” In *The World Order of Bahá’u’lláh* the Guardian of the Bahá’í Faith has unloosed in his readers such energies and hopes as shall never be stilled until the wondrous edifice of the Most Great Peace has been forever reared.

Extract from Ruhiyyih (Mary Maxwell) Khanum's *The Priceless Pearl*

Aside from the stream of letters of moderate length that constantly flowed from him to the Bahá'ís of the West and their National Assemblies, there are certain general letters of a different nature, some addressed to the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada, some to the Bahá'ís of the West, which have been gathered together in one volume under the title of *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*. *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh* and *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh Further Considerations* were written in 1929 and 1930 respectively; they were designed to clarify for the believers the true meaning and purpose of their Faith, its tenets, its implications, its destiny and future and to guide the unfolding and slowly maturing Community in North America and in the West to a better understanding of its duties, its privileges and its destiny. This was followed in 1931 by a letter known as *The Goal of a New World Order*, which with a new mastery and assurance in its tone, rises above the level of a letter to co-workers in a common field and begins to reflect the extraordinary power of exposition of thought that must characterize a great leader and a great writer. In a letter of the Guardian written in January 1932 his secretary, obviously referring to *The Goal of a New World Order*, states: "Shoghi Effendi wrote his last [page 213] general letter to the Western friends because he felt that the public should be made to understand the attitude the Bahá'í Faith maintains towards prevailing economic and political problems. We should let the world know what the real aim of Bahá'u'lláh was." Shoghi Effendi associated this letter with the tenth anniversary of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's passing and in it dwells at length on the condition of the world and the change which must be brought about between its component parts in the light of the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

The Golden Age of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh followed in 1932 and was a masterly exposition of the Divinity of His Faith which, Shoghi Effendi wrote, feeds itself upon "hidden springs of celestial strength". Once again he clarified the relationship of this Dispensation to those of the past and to the solution of the present problems facing the world. In 1933 he 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. The weighty treatise known as *The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh*, written in 1934, burst upon the Bahá'ís like a blinding white light. I remember when I first read it I had the most extraordinary feeling as if the whole universe had suddenly expanded around me and I was looking out into its dazzling star-filled immensity; all the frontiers of our understanding flew outwards; the glory of this Cause and the true station of its Central Figures were revealed to us and we were never the same again. One would have thought that the stunning impact of this one communication from the Guardian would kill puniness of soul forever! However Shoghi Effendi felt in his inmost heart about his other writings, I know from his remarks that he considered he had said all he had to say, in many ways, in the Dispensation.

In 1936 he wrote *The Unfoldment of World Civilization*; once again, as he so often did, Shoghi Effendi links this to the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. It was a further exposition of the state of the world, the rapid political, moral and spiritual decline evident in it, the weakening of both Christianity and Islam, the dangers humanity in its heedlessness was running, and the strong, divine, hopeful remedy the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh had to offer. Important and educative as these wonderful letters of the Guardian were [page 214] they provided, in their wealth of

apposite quotations from Bahá'u'lláh's own words which the Guardian had translated and lavishly cited, spiritual sustenance for the believers, for we know that the World of the Manifestation of God is the food of the soul. They also contained innumerable beautifully translated passages from the beloved Master's Tablets. All this bounty the Guardian spread for the believers in feast after feast, nourished them and raised up a new strong generation of servants in the Faith. His words fired their imagination, challenged them to rise to new heights, drove their roots deeper in the fertile soil of the Cause.

Ruhiyyih (Mary Maxwell) Khanum's *The Priceless Pearl*, p. 212-214

Extract from
Shoghi Effendi:
The Range and Power of His Pen
by Ali Nakhjavani

‘The World Order of Bahá’u’lláh’

During the year that saw the start of the Great Depression, two very important letters, dated 27 February 1929 and 21 March 1930, treating similar themes, streamed from the pen of the beloved Guardian. Shoghi Effendi felt it was time to explain to the Bahá’ís of the West the sources and broad outlines of the World Order of Bahá’u’lláh. He drew the attention of the friends to the close relationship existing between the Kitáb-i-Aqdas and the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. These two documents, authored respectively by the Founder of the Faith and the Centre of its Covenant, in Shoghi Effendi’s estimation, constitute *‘the chief depository wherein are enshrined those priceless elements of that Divine Civilization, the establishment of which is the primary mission of the Bahá’í Faith’* (WOB 3–4). He stated that these two seminal works have the same purpose and adopt identical methods in the provisions related to successorship. They are complementary, mutually confirm one another, and are *‘inseparable parts of one complete unit’* (WOB 4). Shoghi Effendi clearly states that the Will and Testament *‘confirms, supplements, and correlates the provisions of the Aqdas’* (WOB 19). It is in the implications of the Bahá’í Covenant, its distinction in having been incorporated into a written document, the explicit character of its stipulations, and the binding effect of its terms, that the Bahá’í Faith differs radically from all past religions. This aspect of the Bahá’í Revelation ensures that there is always a central authority *‘to apply the principles, promulgate the laws, protect the institutions, adapt loyally and intelligently the Faith to the requirements of progressive society, and consummate the incorruptible inheritance which the Founders of the Faith have bequeathed to the world’* (WOB 20). Thus the system revealed by Bahá’u’lláh, Shoghi Effendi asserts, provides both *‘immutability’* and *‘elasticity’*. *‘The first preserves the identity of His Faith, and guards the integrity of His law. The second enables it, even as a living organism, to expand and adapt itself to the needs and requirements of an ever-changing society’* (WOB 23).

Human society has embarked on a process of an everadvancing civilization. Every Revelation brings about a new phase in the transformation *‘in the ways, thoughts and manners’* of humanity. In support of this theme, Shoghi Effendi quotes the following words from the Kitáb-i-Íqán:
Is not the object of every Revelation to effect a transformation in the whole character of mankind, a transformation that shall manifest itself, both outwardly and inwardly, that shall affect both its inner life and external conditions? For if the character of mankind be not changed, the futility of God’s universal Manifestation would be apparent. (WOB 25)

A few passages are quoted below to give us further glimpses of these two important letters of the Guardian:

Bahá’u’lláh, we should readily recognize, has not only imbued mankind with a new and regenerating Spirit. He has not merely enunciated certain universal principles, or propounded a particular philosophy, however potent, sound and universal these may be. In addition to these He, as well as ‘Abdu’l-Bahá after Him, has, unlike the Dispensations of the past, clearly and specifically laid down a set of Laws, established definite institutions, and provided for the

essentials of a Divine Economy. These are destined to be a pattern for future society, a supreme instrument for the establishment of the Most Great Peace, and the one agency for the unification of the world, and the proclamation of the reign of righteousness and justice upon the earth. (WOB 19)

Leaders of religion, exponents of political theories, governors of human institutions, who at present are witnessing with perplexity and dismay the bankruptcy of their ideas, and the disintegration of their handiwork, would do well to turn their gaze to the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, and to meditate upon the World Order which, lying enshrined in His teachings, is slowly and imperceptibly rising amid the welter and chaos of present-day civilization. They need have no doubt or anxiety regarding the nature, the origin or validity of the institutions which the adherents of the Faith are building up throughout the world. For these lie embedded in the teachings themselves, unadulterated and unobscured by unwarrantable inferences, or unauthorized interpretations of His Word.

How pressing and sacred the responsibility that now weighs upon those who are already acquainted with these teachings! How glorious the task of those who are called upon to vindicate their truth, and demonstrate their practicability to an unbelieving world! Nothing short of an immovable conviction in their divine origin, and their uniqueness in the annals of religion; nothing short of an unwavering purpose to execute and apply them to the administrative machinery of the Cause, can be sufficient to establish their reality, and insure their success. How vast is the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh! How great the magnitude of His blessings showered upon humanity in this day! And yet, how poor, how inadequate our conception of their significance and glory! This generation stands too close to so colossal a Revelation to appreciate, in their full measure, the infinite possibilities of His Faith, the unprecedented character of His Cause, and the mysterious dispensations of His Providence. (WOB 24)

‘The Goal of a New World Order’

‘The Goal of a New World Order’ was written in late 1931, on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of ‘Abdu'l-Bahá’s passing, and addressed to the Bahá’í community as a whole. In this letter Shoghi Effendi explains that as the moral decline of humanity had been so acute, no amount of diplomacy or statesmanship, economic rejuvenation or mutual tolerance could form a sustainable basis for its renewal. ‘*Not even*’, he states, ‘*would the very act of devising the machinery required for the political and economic unification of the world . . . provide in itself the antidote against the poison that is steadily undermining the vigor of organized peoples and nations*’ (WOB 34). The Guardian reminds the Bahá’ís that it is only through worldwide and unqualified acceptance of Bahá'u'lláh's message that humanity can hope to reverse this crippling, though inevitable, process of ‘*internal disintegration*’ (WOB 34). Shoghi Effendi emphasizes that the ailing economies, social degradation and political fallout of the post-war era were not, in and of themselves, the fundamental cause of humanity’s depraved state, but were simply a consequence of ‘*the failure of those in whose hands the immediate destinies of peoples and nations have been committed, to adjust their system of economic and political institutions to the imperative needs of a rapidly evolving age*’ (WOB 36). Economic and social upheaval, escalating political tension and an overriding sense of misery on a global scale were, rather, attributable to the inability, or indeed the unwillingness, of world leaders to ‘*reshape the machinery of their respective governments according to those standards that are implicit in Bahá'u'lláh's supreme declaration of the Oneness of Mankind*’ (WOB 36). The Guardian

includes in his letter a series of extracts from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá that demonstrate how imperative it is for humanity to curtail absolute state sovereignty and replace it with an international executive, legislature and judiciary. He explains how this form of 'world Super-State', which would transmute *'the fury of a capricious and militant nationalism . . . into an abiding consciousness of world citizenship'* (WOB 40–1), should be a counterpart to the seemingly contradictory principle of 'unity in diversity'. In conveying this concept, Shoghi Effendi stresses that the implementation of world governance should not in any way homogenise existing domestic traditions and institutions or suppress national history and ethnic heritage. The principle of unity in diversity, he states, *'repudiates excessive centralization on one hand and disclaims all attempts at uniformity on the other'* (WOB 42).

Shoghi Effendi also clarifies that the Oneness of Mankind, as the central tenet of the Bahá'í Faith, should not be confused with a superficial or sanctimonious appeal for a *'reawakening of the spirit of brotherhood and good-will among men'* (WOB 43). On the contrary, it necessitates a complete, and organic reworking of the very parameters around which contemporary human society is based. *'It calls for . . . 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'* (WOB 43).

As in some of his other letters, the Guardian draws a parallel between the violence and conflict which eventually *'welded'* the fiercely independent, and hitherto irreconcilable, American states into one nation, and the process of *'mental'* and *'physical agony'* (WOB 45) which humanity as a whole would have to overcome on its path towards unification.

That the forces of a world catastrophe can alone precipitate such a new phase of human thought is, alas, becoming increasingly apparent. That nothing short of the fire of a severe ordeal, unparalleled in its intensity, can fuse and weld the discordant entities that constitute the elements of presentday civilization, into the integral components of the world commonwealth of the future, is a truth which future events will increasingly demonstrate. (WOB 46)

Shoghi Effendi concludes by reaffirming the responsibility of every individual believer to aid, *'with undimmed vision and unabated zeal'*, the further propagation of the message of Bahá'u'lláh (WOB 48). He also reminds the Bahá'ís that the turmoil of the time, threatening as it may seem, is a requisite stage in mankind's maturation, and will in due course culminate in lasting peace and worldwide harmony.

In a letter written on his behalf in January 1932, Shoghi Effendi made the following comments about 'The Goal of a New World Order':

Concerning the general letter he has sent lately to the Western friends, to which you refer . . . Shoghi Effendi thinks that the friends should spread the message it conveys to the public. It should undoubtedly be done in a very judicious way lest the people think that we have entered the arena of politics with rather drastic programmes of reform. But we should at the same time show the lead that the teachings take towards the realization of the international ideal. The primary importance of the Cause among the existing religions of the world is that, whereas the others have no coherent programme upon which they are united, the Movement is rich with the very spirit and teachings the world needs for solving its present international problems. It is a wonderful chance for the Cause to absorb the interest of the intelligent elements in the public. (SWSE 5)

Extracts from this illuminating document follow below:

Ten years of unceasing turmoil, so laden with anguish, so fraught with incalculable consequences to the future of civilization, have brought the world to the verge of a calamity too

awful to contemplate. Sad indeed is the contrast between the manifestations of confident enthusiasm in which the Plenipotentiaries at Versailles so freely indulged and the cry of unconcealed distress which victors and vanquished alike are now raising in the hour of bitter delusion. (WOB 30)

Never indeed have there been such widespread and basic upheavals, whether in the social, economic or political spheres of human activity as those now going on in different parts of the world. Never have there been so many and varied sources of danger as those that now threaten the structure of society. (WOB 32)

Are we, the privileged custodians of a priceless Faith, called upon to witness a cataclysmical change, politically as fundamental and spiritually as beneficent as that which precipitated the fall of the Roman Empire in the West? Might it not happen – every vigilant adherent of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh might well pause to reflect – that out of this world eruption there may stream forces of such spiritual energy as shall recall, nay eclipse, the splendor of those signs and wonders that accompanied the establishment of the Faith of Jesus Christ? Might there not emerge out of the agony of a shaken world a religious revival of such scope and power as to even transcend the potency of those worlddirecting forces with which the Religions of the Past have, at fixed intervals and according to an inscrutable Wisdom, revived the fortunes of declining ages and peoples? Might not the bankruptcy of this present, this highly-vaunted materialistic civilization, in itself clear away the choking weeds that now hinder the unfoldment and future efflorescence of God's struggling Faith? (WOB 33)

The call of Bahá'u'lláh is primarily directed against all forms of provincialism, all insularities and prejudices. If long-cherished ideals and time-honored institutions, if certain social assumptions and religious formulae have ceased to promote the welfare of the generality of mankind, if they no longer minister to the needs of a continually evolving humanity, let them be swept away and relegated to the limbo of obsolescent and forgotten doctrines. Why should these, in a world subject to the immutable law of change and decay, be exempt from the deterioration that must needs overtake every human institution? For legal standards, political and economic theories are solely designed to safeguard the interests of humanity as a whole, and not humanity to be crucified for the preservation of the integrity of any particular law or doctrine. (WOB 42)

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. (WOB 42–3)

‘The Golden Age of the Cause of Bahá’u’lláh’

In this 17-page message addressed to the friends in the United States and Canada, Shoghi Effendi begins by lauding the propelling force of the Faith of God which has, 10 years after the passing of the beloved Master, *‘in the face of tremendous obstacles, maintained its unity, resisted the malignant onslaught of its ill-wishers, silenced its calumniators [and] broadened the basis of its far-flung administration . . .’* (WOB 51). The letter goes on to pay warm tribute to the community of Bahá’ís in North America, to their efforts in aiding the progress of the Faith and in defence of its interests in the oppressed lands of the East. In order to contrast Bahá’u’lláh’s Revelation to other, mancreated, movements, Shoghi Effendi poses this question for reflection: *‘Where else, if not in the Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh, can the unbiased student of comparative religion cite instances of a claim as stupendous as that which the Author of that Faith advanced, foes as relentless as those which He faced, a devotion more sublime than that which He kindled, a life as eventful and as enthralling as that which He led?’* (WOB 55). The Guardian draws a parallel between the early beginnings of past religions and the thrilling episodes which accompanied the birth and rise of the Bahá’í Faith, and gives a highly illuminating statement establishing the principle of the progressiveness and relativity of religious truth, and the unity and complementarity of all divinely revealed religions. He further, categorically, states the preeminent character of the Báb’s Faith, and the fact that He was not only a Forerunner to Bahá’u’lláh, but an independent Manifestation of God in His own right.

The letter also deals with the importance and implications of the principle of non-interference in political affairs, pointing out that this in no way means that Bahá’ís are indifferent to the interests of their own country or the concept of sane patriotism. It is clear from this statement that the current circumstances in the world demand that such an attitude of non-involvement in political and party pursuits should be uppermost in the minds of the friends. This of course does not entail avoidance of purely administrative positions in government, or association with movements that are humanitarian in their pursuits and in harmony with the Bahá’í principles. The concluding paragraphs of the letter address the need to carry out to a successful conclusion the great enterprise of completing the Wilmette temple. Some passages from this document are set forth below:

That the Cause associated with the name of Bahá’u’lláh feeds itself upon those hidden springs of celestial strength which no force of human personality, whatever its glamour, can replace; that its reliance is solely upon that mystic Source with which no worldly advantage, be it wealth, fame, or learning can compare; that it propagates itself by ways mysterious and utterly at variance with the standards accepted by the generality of mankind, will, if not already apparent, become increasingly manifest as it forges ahead towards fresh conquests in its struggle for the spiritual regeneration of mankind.

Indeed, how could it, unsupported as it has ever been by the counsels and the resources of the wise, the rich, and the learned in the land of its birth, have succeeded in breaking asunder the

shackles that weighed upon it at the hour of its birth, in emerging unscathed from the storms that agitated its infancy, had not its animating breath been quickened by that spirit which is born of God, and on which all success, wherever and however it be sought, must ultimately depend? (WOB 51–2)

Not by the material resources which the members of this infant community can now summon to their aid; not by the numerical strength of its present-day supporters; nor by any direct tangible benefits its votaries can as yet confer upon the multitude of the needy and the disconsolate among their countrymen, should its potentialities be tested or its worth determined. Nowhere but in the purity of its precepts, the sublimity of its standards, the integrity of its laws, the reasonableness of its claims, the comprehensiveness of its scope, the universality of its program, the flexibility of its institutions, the lives of its founders, the heroism of its martyrs, and the transforming power of its influence, should the unprejudiced observer seek to obtain the true criterion that can enable him to fathom its mysteries or to estimate its virtue. (WOB 54)

Let them refrain from associating themselves, whether by word or by deed, with the political pursuits of their respective nations, with the policies of their governments and the schemes and programs of parties and factions. In such controversies they should assign no blame, take no side, further no design, and identify themselves with no system prejudicial to the best interests of that worldwide Fellowship which it is their aim to guard and foster. Let them beware lest they allow themselves to become the tools of unscrupulous politicians, or to be entrapped by the treacherous devices of the plotters and the perfidious among their countrymen. Let them so shape their lives and regulate their conduct that no charge of secrecy, of fraud, of bribery or of intimidation may, however ill-founded, be brought against them. Let them rise above all particularism and partisanship, above the vain disputes, the petty calculations, the transient passions that agitate the face, and engage the attention, of a changing world. It is their duty to strive to distinguish, as clearly as they possibly can, and if needed with the aid of their elected representatives, such posts and functions as are either diplomatic or political from those that are purely administrative in character, and which under no circumstances are affected by the changes and chances that political activities and party government, in every land, must necessarily involve. Let them affirm their unyielding determination to stand, firmly and unreservedly, for the way of Bahá'u'lláh, to avoid the entanglements and bickerings inseparable from the pursuits of the politician, and to become worthy agencies of that Divine Polity which incarnates God's immutable Purpose for all men. (WOB 64–5)

‘America and the Most Great Peace’

In this 23-page letter, dated 21 April 1933, addressed to the believers in the United States and Canada on the occasion of the passage of 40 years after the first public reference to Bahá'u'lláh and His Faith in the United States, Shoghi Effendi outlines the distinctions achieved by the American Bahá'í community in service to the Cause. He refers to them as a community which has attained ‘*an undisputed leadership among its sister communities of East and West*’ (WOB 72).

In this letter he recounts the attacks on the Faith, the ‘*vilest imputations*’ hurled at its face, and the false assumption made by its enemies that it was ‘*an expiring creed*’ (WOB 72). He recalls that the Báb had been labelled by these opponents as a ‘*perverted apostate*’ (WOB 72) and Bahá'u'lláh was denounced as ‘*an unscrupulous plotter and usurper*’, while ‘Abdu'l-Bahá was

branded a *‘stirrer of mischief and a notorious exponent of expediency and fraud’* (WOB 73). The principle of the oneness of the human race has been referred to by these same detractors as *‘a shallow attempt at uniformity’*, the supernatural forces animating the Faith condemned as *‘a vain belief in magic’* and its teachings on universal peace as *‘a mere utopia’* (WOB 73). They have hailed the efforts of the Covenant-breakers as *‘invading forces of schism’* which would lead the Faith to complete *‘ruin’* (WOB 73).

It is God’s design, Shoghi Effendi further points out, that the centre of Bahá’í activity should gravitate *‘away from its cradle to the shores of the American continent’*, from East to West (WOB 74). He then draws a parallel to the rise of Christianity in the East and the manner in which, at its appointed time, the *‘standard-bearers of the Cause of Jesus Christ’* succeeded in establishing *‘His worldwide dominion on the ruins’* of the Roman Empire (WOB 74). The spread of the Faith from Iran to the West was one of the most outstanding aims adopted by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá for His Ministry. Shoghi Effendi describes the infinite love which ‘Abdu’l-Bahá showered, incessantly but wisely, on the American friends, culminating in His choice to address the Tablets of the Divine Plan specifically to the North American Bahá’í community.

He then reviews the developments of the Faith during each of the four decades since its appearance in North America. He lauds the influence exerted by the early Western pilgrims to the Holy Land, and the manner in which the Faith struck its roots in American soil. The passing of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, he points out, released *‘potent energies’* which crystallized in the system of Bahá’í Administration. After referring to Covenant-breakers and their vicious onslaughts on the Faith, he assures the friends that *‘these notorious exponents of corruption and heresy’* succeed *‘in protruding for a time their ugly features only to sink, as rapidly as they had risen, into the mire of an ignominious end’* (WOB 90).

Shoghi Effendi then lavishly extols the American Bahá’í community for its success in formulating the legal instruments to incorporate the National Assembly, in transferring national endowments into its name, in succouring its Egyptian brethren, in intervening on behalf of its fellow workers in the Soviet Republics, and in extending its support for its harassed brethren in Persia. He particularly praises the efforts of such members of the community as Mountfort Mills for his defence of the right of the Bahá’ís to the ownership of the House of Bahá’u’lláh in Baghdád, and Martha Root for her confirmed teaching work and particularly her success in obtaining from royalty repeated testimonies to the power of God’s Holy Faith. He also mentions the courageous efforts of Keith Ransom-Kehler to obtain for the Persian Bahá’í community a greater measure of freedom and recognition, and finally the band of American women pioneers who scattered throughout the continents to raise the standard of the Faith in different countries. He ends this stirring message with these questions, which he puts to the American Bahá’í community:

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? Her past has been a testimony to the inexhaustible vitality of her faith. May not her future confirm it? (WOB 94)

A few more quotes from the letter follow:

Contrast the sad plight of the nations of the earth, and in particular this great Republic of the West, with the rising fortunes of that handful of its citizens [the Bahá'ís], 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 internecine 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. (WOB 79)

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.

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 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. (WOB 89)

‘The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh’

‘The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh’ is one of the major works of Shoghi Effendi, written at a time when both Communism and Fascism were spreading their influence across Europe. In this work, 60 pages in length, Shoghi Effendi gives us the basic and doctrinal verities of the Faith, which lie at its very core. In a letter of 10 January 1935 to an individual believer, the Guardian points out

that his ‘Dispensation’ constitutes an ‘invaluable supplement’ to Bahá’u’lláh’s Book of the Covenant, and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Will and Testament (LDG Vol. 1, 65). It is worthy of note that Shoghi Effendi states that the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá itself ‘supplements’ (WOB 19) the Kitáb-i-Aqdas in matters related to the World Order.

Of such importance is ‘*The Dispensation*’ that Rúhíyyih Khánúm, in *The Priceless Pearl*, relates that Shoghi Effendi had remarked more than once that he ‘*considered he had said all he had to say, in many ways, in the Dispensation*’ (PP 213). To many pilgrims, including Hands of the Cause, he stated that his ‘*Dispensation*’ should be regarded as his will and testament. At the very outset of the document, Shoghi Effendi states that he intends in this letter to ‘*lay special stress . . . upon certain truths which lie at the basis of our Faith and the integrity of which it is our first duty to safeguard. These verities, if valiantly upheld and properly assimilated, will, I am convinced, powerfully reinforce the vigor of our spiritual life, and greatly assist in counteracting the machinations of an implacable and vigilant enemy*’ (WOB 99–100).

The purpose of this remarkable document is for the believers to attain to a clear understanding of the unique stations of Bahá’u’lláh, the Báb and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. He describes these three Figures in the following paragraph:

Dominating the entire range of this fascinating spectacle [the mysterious workings of God’s Revelation] towers the incomparable figure of Bahá’u’lláh, transcendental in His majesty, serene, awe-inspiring, unapproachably glorious. Allied, though subordinate in rank, and invested with the authority of presiding with Him over the destinies of this supreme Dispensation, there shines upon this mental picture the youthful glory of the Báb, infinite in His tenderness, irresistible in His charm, unsurpassed in His heroism, matchless in the dramatic circumstances of His short yet eventful life. And finally there emerges, though on a plane of its own and in a category entirely apart from the one occupied by the twin Figures that preceded Him, the vibrant, the magnetic personality of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, reflecting to a degree that no man, however exalted his station, can hope to rival, the glory and power with which They who are the Manifestations of God are alone endowed. (WOB 97–8)

The first section of this letter is the citation of several excerpts from the Writings of the Central Figures of the Faith, to disclose to the reader ‘*the sublimity of this unique Cycle in the world’s religious history*’ (WOB 112). In explaining the station of Bahá’u’lláh, Shoghi Effendi makes it very clear that the Manifestation of God and the divinity attributed to Him should not be confused with the idea of divine incarnation in the person of the Manifestation. Shoghi Effendi categorically states:

[T]hat invisible yet rational God Who, however much we extol the divinity of His Manifestations on earth, can in no wise incarnate His infinite, His unknowable, His incorruptible and all-embracing Reality in the concrete and limited frame of a mortal being. Indeed, the God Who could so incarnate His own reality would, in the light of the teachings of Bahá’u’lláh, cease immediately to be God. (WOB 112)

This belief, he maintains, ‘*should never be obscured, and [its] integrity . . . no one of His followers should allow to be compromised*’ (WOB 114). The last part of the section dealing with Bahá’u’lláh quotes from the Writings to indicate the oneness that unites all Divine Revelations, their continuity and progressiveness, and the fact that Bahá’u’lláh, despite the vast range of His

Dispensation, ‘repudiates the claim to be regarded as the final revelation of God’s will and purpose for mankind’ (WOB 115).

The next section considers the station of the Báb. Shoghi Effendi writes: ‘Indeed the greatness of the Báb consists primarily, not in His being the divinely-appointed Forerunner of so transcendent a Revelation, but rather in His having been invested with the powers inherent in the inaugurator of a separate religious Dispensation, and in His wielding, to a degree unrivalled by the Messengers gone before Him, the scepter of independent Prophethood’ (WOB 123). This forthright statement is substantiated by him with several quotations from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh, the Báb Himself, and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

The third section discusses the distinctive station of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Shoghi Effendi writes,

It would be indeed difficult for us, who stand so close to such a tremendous figure and are drawn by the mysterious power of so magnetic a personality, to obtain a clear and exact understanding of the role and character of One Who, not only in the Dispensation of Bahá’u’lláh but in the entire field of religious history, fulfills a unique function . . . He towers, in conjunction with them [Bahá’u’lláh and the Báb], above the destinies of this infant Faith of God from a level to which no individual or body ministering to its needs after Him, and for no less a period than a full thousand years, can ever hope to rise. (WOB 131–2)

A series of quotations follows from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh to support his statement. He ends the section by asserting that the belief of some early Western Bahá’ís to the effect that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was the return of Christ, and that He and Bahá’u’lláh possessed the same station and reality, was completely erroneous. Such an identity applies indeed to the Báb and Bahá’u’lláh Themselves.

The final section of the letter deals with the Administrative Order and its twin institutions of the Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice. In describing its significance, Shoghi Effendi writes:

This Administrative Order, as it expands and consolidates itself, will no doubt manifest the potentialities and reveal the full implications of this momentous Document [the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá] – this most remarkable expression of the Will of One of the most remarkable Figures of the Dispensation of Bahá’u’lláh. It will, as its component parts, its organic institutions, begin to function with efficiency and vigor, assert its claim and demonstrate its capacity to be regarded not only as the nucleus but the very pattern of the New World Order destined to embrace in the fullness of time the whole of mankind. (WOB 144)

He further stresses the point that in the scripture of none of the religions of the past ‘do we find any provisions establishing a covenant, or providing for an administrative order, that can compare in scope and authority with those that lie at the very basis of the Bahá’í Dispensation’ (WOB 145).

This section goes on to explain the character and functions of the twin pillars that support this administrative structure, described by him as ‘two fundamental organs of the Will of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’ (WOB 147) and clarifies the relationship between the two. The final pages of this section deal with the similarities and dissimilarities between this Administrative Order and the theory and practice of other systems of governance in the world. Further quotations are included below:

Significant as are the origins of this mighty administrative structure, and however unique its features, the happenings that may be said to have heralded its birth and signalized the initial stage of its evolution seem no less remarkable. How striking, how edifying the contrast between the process of slow and steady consolidation that characterizes the growth of its infant strength and the devastating onrush of the forces of disintegration that are assailing the outworn institutions, both religious and secular, of present-day society!

The vitality which the organic institutions of this great, this ever-expanding Order so strongly exhibit; the obstacles which the high courage, the undaunted resolution of its administrators have already surmounted; the fire of an unquenchable enthusiasm that glows with undiminished fervour in the hearts of its itinerant teachers; the heights of self-sacrifice which its champion-builders are now attaining; the breadth of vision, the confident hope, the creative joy, the inward peace, the uncompromising integrity, the exemplary discipline, the unyielding unity and solidarity which its stalwart defenders manifest; the degree to which its moving Spirit has shown itself capable of assimilating the diversified elements within its pale, of cleansing them of all forms of prejudice and of fusing them with its own structure – these are evidences of a power which a disillusioned and sadly shaken society can ill afford to ignore.

Compare these splendid manifestations of the spirit animating this vibrant body of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh with the cries and agony, the follies and vanities, the bitterness and prejudices, the wickedness and divisions of an ailing and chaotic world. Witness the fear that torments its leaders and paralyzes the action of its blind and bewildered statesmen.

How fierce the hatreds, how false the ambitions, how petty the pursuits, how deep-rooted the suspicions of its peoples! How disquieting the lawlessness, the corruption, the unbelief that are eating into the vitals of a tottering civilization! Might not this process of steady deterioration which is insidiously invading so many departments of human activity and thought be regarded as a necessary accompaniment to the rise of this almighty Arm of Bahá'u'lláh? Might we not look upon the momentous happenings which, in the course of the past twenty years, have so deeply agitated every continent of the earth, as ominous signs simultaneously proclaiming the agonies of a disintegrating civilization and the birthpangs of that World Order – that Ark of human salvation – that must needs arise upon its ruins? (WOB 154–5)

‘The Unfoldment of World Civilization’

In 1936, in the context of escalating political turmoil and dire socio-economic conditions in Europe and America, Shoghi Effendi addressed the Bahá'ís of the West. Although, he stated, the signs of progress in the development of the New World Order were evident to any ‘fair-minded observer’, he warned that concurrent with that rise was the ‘downfall of those powers and principalities that have either ignored or opposed’ the onward march of the Faith (WOB 161). This process of ‘mystic, allpervasive’ change which the Guardian describes is twofold (WOB 163–4). On one hand, it increasingly engenders oneness and cohesion. On the other, it disrupts an already ailing world, forcing mankind to abandon its ‘hollow and outworn institutions’ and its ‘obsolescent doctrines and beliefs’ (WOB 170). In further elaborating on this simultaneous and paradoxical process of integration and disintegration, Shoghi Effendi draws an interesting

parallel between the incremental evolution of global government and society and the period of crisis preceding the eventual foundation of the United States of America. He explains that the '*moral and social gloom*' which characterizes humanity's state of collective adolescence would lead to its maturation and prepare it for its inevitable unification (WOB 168). He also emphasizes that this '*coming of age*' would accord with the existing operational structure and animating spirit of the Administrative Order (WOB 163).

Shoghi Effendi attributed the fall of Shi'ah Islam and the Qájár dynasty, and the receding power of the Sunni caliphs of Constantinople, to the rampant rise of secularism in the East. He explained that the sovereign leaders of these Faiths and Empires were the authors of their own demise by attempting to obstruct the advancement of the Faith, and by failing to heed Bahá'u'lláh's warnings. In demonstrating this, the Guardian provides examples of Bahá'u'lláh's messages and describes the fate that befell those who disregarded His Call. He parallels the plight of Islam with that of Christianity, foretelling that '*the forces of irreligion, of a purely materialistic philosophy [and] of unconcealed paganism*' (WOB 180) would trigger its downfall. Unbridled industrialism had overcome the erstwhile '*Christian*' world, and a concomitant rise in nationalism – inculcating in due course the deification of the state – would unavoidably result in '*a marked weakening of the Church and . . . a grave diminution of its spiritual influence*' (WOB 182). The Guardian also points to a widening gulf between liberal and fundamentalist denominations within the Christian and Muslim Faiths as being a contributory factor to the weakening of their influence. The Guardian explains that the progressive decay of these religions would result in a phase of decadence, perversion and corruption in human conduct; and that political disarray and economic strangulation, as well as the inefficacy of multilateral governance structures on the global stage, were a direct consequence of humanity's morally retarded state. However, he applauds efforts made by the League of Nations Member States in attempting to develop a sufficiently forceful collective security system, and quotes passages from Bahá'u'lláh's Writings on the subject. He also stresses that it is only through the regulation of the use of force and the development of a commonly acceptable international executive mechanism that '*the oneness of the whole body of nations will be made the ruling principle of international life*' (WOB 193). The time of nation-building, he underlines, is at an end, and the insistence on preserving absolute state sovereignty is counterproductive to '*the oneness and wholeness of human relationships*' (WOB 202).

Shoghi Effendi concludes by emphasizing the non-sectarian, '*rigidly non-partisan*' (WOB 198) and supranational nature of the Faith. He explains that Bahá'u'lláh foresaw the inauguration of a universal system of governance, and the establishment of a world language, currency, script and system of measurement.

Some further quotes from this remarkable document are given below:

The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, whose supreme mission is none other but the achievement of this organic and spiritual unity of the whole body of nations, should, if we be faithful to its implications, be regarded as signaling through its advent the coming of age of the entire human race. It should be viewed not merely as yet another spiritual revival in the ever-changing fortunes of mankind, not only as a further stage in a chain of progressive Revelations, nor even as the culmination of one of a series of recurrent prophetic cycles, but rather as marking the last and highest stage in the stupendous evolution of man's collective life on this planet. The emergence of a world community, the consciousness of world citizenship, the founding of a world civilization and culture – 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. (WOB 163)

Deep as is the gloom that already encircles the world, the afflictive ordeals which that world is to suffer are still in preparation, nor can their blackness be as yet imagined. We stand on the threshold of an age whose convulsions proclaim alike the death-pangs of the old order and the birth-pangs of the new. (WOB 169)

The recrudescence of religious intolerance, of racial animosity, and of patriotic arrogance; the increasing evidences of selfishness, of suspicion, of fear and of fraud; the spread of terrorism, of lawlessness, of drunkenness and of crime; the unquenchable thirst for, and the feverish pursuit after, earthly vanities, riches and pleasures; the weakening of family solidarity; the laxity in parental control; the lapse into luxurious indulgence; the irresponsible attitude towards marriage and the consequent rising tide of divorce; the degeneracy of art and music, the infection of literature, and the corruption of the press; the extension of the influence and activities of those 'prophets of decadence' who advocate companionate marriage, who preach the philosophy of nudism, who call modesty an intellectual fiction, who refuse to regard the procreation of children as the sacred and primary purpose of marriage, who denounce religion as an opiate of the people, who would, if given free rein, lead back the human race to barbarism, chaos, and ultimate extinction – these appear as the outstanding characteristics of a decadent society, a society that must either be reborn or perish. (WOB 187–8)

Ceasing to designate to itself a movement, a fellowship and the like – designations that did grave injustice to its everunfolding system – dissociating itself from such appellations as Bábí sect, Asiatic cult, and offshoot of Shi'ih Islám, with which the ignorant and the malicious were wont to describe it, refusing to be labeled as a mere philosophy of life, or as an eclectic code of ethical conduct, or even as a new religion, the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh is now visibly succeeding in demonstrating its claim and title to be regarded as a World Religion, destined to attain, in the fullness of time, the status of a world-embracing Commonwealth, which would be at once the instrument and the guardian of the Most Great Peace announced by its Author. (WOB 196)

How can a Faith, it should moreover be borne in mind, whose divinely-ordained institutions have been established within the jurisdiction of no less than forty different countries, the policies and interests of whose governments are continually clashing and growing more complex and confused every day – how can such a Faith, by allowing its adherents, whether individually or through its organized councils, to meddle in political activities, succeed in preserving the integrity of its teachings and in safeguarding the unity of its followers? How can it insure the vigorous, the uninterrupted and peaceful development of its expanding institutions? How can a Faith, whose ramifications have brought it into contact with mutually incompatible religious systems, sects and confessions, be in a position, if it permits its adherents to subscribe to obsolescent observances and doctrines, to claim the unconditional allegiance of those whom it is striving to incorporate into its divinely-appointed system? How can it avoid the constant friction, the misunderstandings and controversies which formal affiliation, as distinct from association, must inevitably engender? (WOB 199)

The long ages of infancy and childhood, through which the human race had to pass, have receded into the background. Humanity is now experiencing the commotions invariably associated with the most turbulent stage of its evolution, the stage of adolescence, when the impetuosity of youth and its vehemence reach their climax, and must gradually be superseded by the calmness, the wisdom, and the maturity that characterize the stage of manhood. Then will the human race reach that stature of ripeness which will enable it to acquire all the powers and capacities upon which its ultimate development must depend. (WOB 202)

The unity of the human race, as envisaged by Bahá'u'lláh, implies the establishment of a world commonwealth in which all nations, races, creeds and classes are closely and permanently united, and in which the autonomy of its state members and the personal freedom and initiative of the individuals that comprise them are definitely and completely safeguarded. (WOB 203)

A world federal system, ruling the whole earth and exercising unchallengeable authority over its unimaginably vast resources, blending and embodying the ideals of both the East and the West, liberated from the curse of war and its miseries, and bent on the exploitation of all the available sources of energy on the surface of the planet, a system in which Force is made the servant of Justice, whose life is sustained by its universal recognition of one God and by its allegiance to one common Revelation – such is the goal towards which humanity, impelled by the unifying forces of life, is moving. (WOB 204)

INTRODUCTION

The general communications written to the American Bahá'í community by the Guardian of the Faith between 1922 and 1929 explained and encouraged the development of the administrative institutions created by Bahá'u'lláh and promulgated by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in His Will and Testament. These letters have been published in a volume entitled "Bahá'í Administration," the source of information on the institutions of Local and National Spiritual Assemblies, the Annual Convention, and the nature of those relationships organically uniting Bahá'ís in their collective worship and activity.

The letters now collected and published under the title of "The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh" have a different aim and a far larger scope. These later communications unfold a clear vision of the relation between the Bahá'í community and the entire process of social evolution under the Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh. The vital distinction between the Bahá'í community and the sects and congregations of former religions had already been made apparent, but the present volume establishes the Bahá'í Administrative Order as the nucleus and pattern of the world civilization emerging under divine inspiration at this focal point of human history. While, therefore, it represents a continuance of the Guardian's special task of teaching and guiding the Bahá'ís throughout the development of a rapidly maturing Faith, the volume discloses the full degree to which Bahá'u'lláh's Message applies to the world of humanity and not merely to those who are believers at this time. The title and subtitles were not part of the original text, but have been added with Shoghi Effendi's approval for the convenience of the reader.

In "The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh" we are enabled to perceive the significance of the new dimension which Bahá'u'lláh gave to religion in this era: the supremacy of Divine Law in civilization,

fulfilling that supremacy which in previous Dispensations religion had exercised over individual souls. Shoghi Effendi's exposition of the Teachings, his unique realization of the ultimate aim and purpose of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation, are no static commentary upon a sacred text but the very essence of world statesmanship evoked in the hour of man's direst need. No longer do the Bahá'ís require 'Abdu'l-Bahá's written Testament to prove the existence of the Guardianship—the successive communications from Shoghi Effendi, and especially those devoted to the subject of World Order, in themselves contain the highest demonstration that Bahá'u'lláh's Spirit continues to bless His Cause and assure its victory in the reconciliation of the peoples of earth and their union in "one Faith and one Order."

For those who have inclined to believe that even the realization of the mighty dream of the "return of Christ" would mean nothing more than the vindication of personal spirituality and individual righteousness, the idea of religion giving a law to the nation is the most revolutionary conception which can enter the mind of man. "For Bahá'u'lláh, we should readily recognize, has not only imbued mankind with a new and regenerating Spirit. He has not merely enunciated certain universal principles, or propounded a particular philosophy, however potent, sound and universal these may be. In addition to these He, as well as 'Abdu'l-Bahá after Him, has, unlike the Dispensations of the past, clearly and specifically laid down a set of Laws, established definite institutions, and provided for the essentials of a Divine Economy. These are destined to be a pattern for future society, a supreme instrument for the establishment of the Most Great Peace, and the one agency for the unification of the world, and the proclamation of the reign of righteousness and justice upon the earth." . . . "Does not the very operation of the world-unifying forces that are at work in this age necessitate that He Who is the Bearer of the Message of God in this day should not only reaffirm that self-same exalted standard of individual conduct inculcated by the Prophets gone before Him, but embody in His appeal, to all governments and peoples, the essentials of that social code, that Divine Economy, which must guide humanity's concerted efforts in establishing that all-embracing federation which is to signalize the advent of the Kingdom of God on this earth?"

Such words as these, charged with the potency of a Faith that is not merely a written book but the very dynamic Spirit transforming the life of the entire world, make "The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh" a work of consummate importance to every sincere seeker and not to Bahá'ís alone. In the light of the existing international chaos, they reveal the most significant Truth of this era, namely that the old conception of religion, which separated spirituality from the fundamental functions of civilization, compelling men to abide by conflicting principles of faith, of politics and of economics, has been forever destroyed. The command, "Render unto God that which is of God, and unto Cæsar that which is of Cæsar," has been annulled by the law of the oneness of humanity revealed by Bahá'u'lláh.

"Leaders of religion, exponents of political theories, governors of human institutions, who at present are witnessing with perplexity and dismay the bankruptcy of their ideas, and the disintegration of their handiwork, would do well to turn their gaze to the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, and to meditate upon the World Order which, lying enshrined in His teachings, is slowly and imperceptibly rising amid the welter and chaos of present-day civilization."

NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS
OF THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA

By: HORACE HOLLEY
Secretary

The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh

Selected Letters

by Shoghi Effendi

• • •

Table of Contents

The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh	
The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh: Further Considerations	
The Goal of a New World Order	
The Golden Age of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh	
America and the Most Great Peace	
The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh	
Bahá'u'lláh	
The Báb	
‘Abdu'l-Bahá	
The Administrative Order	
The Unfoldment of World Civilization	

• • •

*

The world's equilibrium hath been upset through the vibrating influence of this most great, this new World Order.

– Bahá'u'lláh

*

The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh

To the members of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada.

Dearly-beloved co-workers:

I have been acquainted by the perusal of your latest communications with the nature of the doubts that have been publicly expressed, by one who is wholly misinformed as to the true precepts of the Cause, regarding the validity of institutions that stand inextricably interwoven with the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. Not that I for a moment view such faint misgivings in the light of

an open challenge to the structure that embodies the Faith, nor is it because I question in the least the unyielding tenacity of the faith of the American believers, if I venture to dwell upon what seems to me appropriate observations at the present stage of the evolution of our beloved Cause. I am indeed inclined to welcome these expressed apprehensions inasmuch as they afford me an opportunity to familiarize the elected representatives of the believers with the origin and the character of the institutions which stand at the very basis of the World Order ushered in by Bahá'u'lláh. We should feel truly thankful for such futile attempts to undermine our beloved Faith—attempts that protrude their ugly face from time to time, seem for a while able to create a breach in the ranks of the faithful, recede finally into the obscurity of oblivion, and are thought of no more. Such incidents we should regard as the interpositions of Providence, designed to fortify our faith, to clarify our vision, and to deepen our understanding of the essentials of His Divine Revelation.

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi, in his communication addressed to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada, addresses doubts and misgivings expressed by individuals regarding the validity of certain institutions associated with the Bahá'í Faith. Shoghi Effendi views these expressions of doubt not as a challenge to the faith itself but as an opportunity to clarify the origins and significance of these institutions within the context of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh.

He acknowledges the unwavering faith of the American believers while also recognizing the importance of addressing concerns and providing clarity on foundational aspects of the Bahá'í Faith. Effendi expresses gratitude for such challenges as they serve to strengthen the faith of believers, deepen their understanding of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings, and fortify the foundations of the Faith.

Shoghi Effendi emphasizes the role of divine providence in guiding the Bahá'í community through challenges and obstacles, viewing them as opportunities for growth and deepening of spiritual understanding. He highlights the resilience of the Bahá'í Faith in the face of skepticism and opposition, noting that attempts to undermine it ultimately fade into obscurity.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to the communication addressed to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada.
2. Recognition of doubts and misgivings expressed regarding certain Bahá'í institutions.
3. Perspective on these challenges as opportunities for clarification and deepening of understanding.
4. Gratitude for the resilience of the Bahá'í community in the face of skepticism and opposition.
5. Emphasis on divine providence and the role of challenges in strengthening the faith of believers.

Questions and Answers:

1. How do doubts and challenges to the validity of Bahá'í institutions contribute to the spiritual growth and understanding of believers?
 - Doubts and challenges prompt believers to delve deeper into the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, strengthening their understanding and commitment to the Faith.
2. In what ways can the Bahá'í community effectively address and respond to skepticism and opposition from individuals outside the Faith?
 - By providing clear explanations of Bahá'í principles and institutions, demonstrating the positive impact of the Faith on individuals and society, and embodying its teachings through exemplary conduct, the Bahá'í community can effectively address skepticism and opposition.

3. How does divine providence play a role in guiding the Bahá'í community through challenges and obstacles?

- Divine providence provides believers with strength, guidance, and insights to navigate challenges, helping them to emerge stronger and more resilient in their faith.

4. What lessons can be drawn from past instances of skepticism and opposition within the Bahá'í community, and how can these lessons inform the community's response to future challenges?

- Past instances can serve as reminders of the resilience and perseverance of the Bahá'í community, as well as the transformative power of steadfast adherence to Bahá'í principles in the face of adversity.

5. How can doubts and challenges within the Bahá'í community be viewed as opportunities for spiritual growth and deepening of understanding, rather than threats to the integrity of the Faith?

- By recognizing doubts and challenges as natural aspects of spiritual growth, believers can approach them with openness, curiosity, and a willingness to learn, thereby deepening their understanding of Bahá'í teachings and strengthening their connection to the Faith.

Sources of the Bahá'í World Order

It would, however, be helpful and instructive to bear in mind certain basic principles with reference to the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, which, together with the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, constitutes the chief depository wherein are enshrined those priceless elements of that Divine Civilization, the establishment of which is the primary mission of the Bahá'í Faith. A study of the provisions of these sacred documents will reveal the close relationship that exists between them, as well as the identity of purpose and method which they inculcate. Far from regarding their specific provisions as incompatible and contradictory in spirit, every fair-minded inquirer will readily admit that they are not only complementary, but that they mutually confirm one another, and are inseparable parts of one complete unit. A comparison of their contents with the rest of Bahá'í sacred Writings will similarly establish the conformity of whatever they contain with the spirit as well as the letter of the authenticated writings and sayings of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá. In fact, he who reads the Aqdas with care and diligence will not find it hard to discover that the Most Holy Book itself anticipates in a number of passages the institutions which 'Abdu'l-Bahá ordains in His Will. By leaving certain matters unspecified and unregulated in His Book of Laws, Bahá'u'lláh seems to have deliberately left a gap in the general scheme of Bahá'í Dispensation, which the unequivocal provisions of the Master's Will have filled. To attempt to divorce the one from the other, to insinuate that the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh have not been upheld, in their entirety and with absolute integrity, by what 'Abdu'l-Bahá has revealed in His Will, is an unpardonable affront to the unswerving fidelity that has characterized the life and labors of our beloved Master.

I will not attempt in the least to assert or demonstrate the authenticity of the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, for that in itself would betray an apprehension on my part as to the unanimous confidence of the believers in the genuineness of the last written wishes of our departed Master. I will only confine my observations to those issues which may assist them to appreciate the essential unity that underlies the spiritual, the humanitarian, and the administrative principles enunciated by the Author and the Interpreter of the Bahá'í Faith.

I am at a loss to explain that strange mentality that inclines to uphold as the sole criterion of the truth of the Bahá'í Teachings what is admittedly only an obscure and unauthenticated translation of an oral statement made by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, in defiance and total disregard of the available text of all of His universally recognized writings. I truly deplore the unfortunate distortions that have resulted in days past from the incapacity of the interpreter to grasp the meaning of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and from his incompetence to render adequately such truths as have been revealed to him by the Master's statements. Much of the confusion that has obscured the understanding of the believers should be attributed to this double error involved in the inexact rendering of an only partially understood statement. Not infrequently has the interpreter even failed to convey the exact purport of the inquirer's specific questions, and, by his deficiency of understanding and expression in conveying the answer of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, has been responsible for reports wholly at variance with the true spirit and purpose of the Cause. It was chiefly in view of the misleading nature of the reports of the informal conversations of 'Abdu'l-Bahá with visiting pilgrims, that I have insistently urged the believers of the West to regard such statements as merely personal impressions of the sayings of their Master, and to quote and consider as authentic only such translations as are based upon the authenticated text of His recorded utterances in the original tongue.

It should be remembered by every follower of the Cause that the system of Bahá'í administration is not an innovation imposed arbitrarily upon the Bahá'ís of the world since the Master's passing, but derives its authority from the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, is specifically prescribed in unnumbered Tablets, and rests in some of its essential features upon the explicit provisions of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. It thus unifies and correlates the principles separately laid down by Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and is indissolubly bound with the essential verities of the Faith. To dissociate the administrative principles of the Cause from the purely spiritual and humanitarian teachings would be tantamount to a mutilation of the body of the Cause, a separation that can only result in the disintegration of its component parts, and the extinction of the Faith itself.

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi addresses the importance of understanding the relationship between the Kitáb-i-Aqdas and the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in the context of the Bahá’í World Order. He emphasizes that these two sacred documents are not contradictory but complementary, mutually confirming one another and serving as inseparable parts of one complete unit. Shoghi Effendi highlights the significance of the provisions in the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in filling gaps left unspecified in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, thus completing the framework of the Bahá’í Dispensation.

Shoghi Effendi expresses concern over attempts to discredit the authenticity of the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, emphasizing the unwavering fidelity of Bahá’í believers to the teachings of Bahá’u’lláh and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. He criticizes the reliance on obscure translations of oral statements made by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, urging believers to prioritize authenticated texts and translations of His writings.

Shoghi Effendi underscores the importance of understanding that the Bahá’í administrative system is not a new imposition but is derived from the explicit provisions of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas and the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. He warns against dissociating administrative principles from spiritual and humanitarian teachings, as such a separation would threaten the integrity and unity of the Bahá’í Faith.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to the communication addressing the relationship between the Kitáb-i-Aqdas and the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.
2. Emphasis on the complementary nature of these sacred documents and their mutual confirmation.
3. Concern over attempts to discredit the authenticity of the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.
4. Critique of reliance on obscure translations of oral statements made by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.
5. Importance of understanding the unity between administrative principles and spiritual/humanitarian teachings within the Bahá’í Faith.

Questions and Answers:

1. How do the Kitáb-i-Aqdas and the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá complement each other in establishing the framework of the Bahá’í World Order?
 - The Kitáb-i-Aqdas provides foundational principles while the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá fills gaps and specifies administrative details, creating a comprehensive framework for the Bahá’í World Order.
2. What challenges might arise from relying on obscure translations of oral statements made by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, and how can believers ensure the authenticity of their understanding of His teachings?

- Challenges may include misinterpretations and misunderstandings of His teachings. Believers can ensure authenticity by prioritizing authenticated texts and translations of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s writings and teachings.

3. How does the Bahá’í administrative system derive its authority from both the Kitáb-i-Aqdas and the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, and why is this unity important for the Faith?

- The administrative system is grounded in explicit provisions of both sacred documents, unifying spiritual principles with practical governance. This unity ensures the integrity and cohesion of the Bahá’í Faith.

4. In what ways can the teachings of Bahá’u’lláh and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá be seen as interconnected and mutually reinforcing within the Bahá’í World Order?

- The teachings of Bahá’u’lláh provide spiritual guidance and foundational principles, while ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s writings and guidance offer practical applications and administrative structures, reinforcing the implementation of Bahá’u’lláh’s teachings.

5. Why is it important for believers to understand and appreciate the relationship between spiritual/humanitarian teachings and administrative principles within the Bahá’í Faith?

- Understanding this relationship ensures the holistic implementation of Bahá’u’lláh’s teachings in both individual spiritual growth and collective societal progress, fostering unity and coherence within the Bahá’í community.

Local and National Houses of Justice

It should be carefully borne in mind that the local as well as the international Houses of Justice have been expressly enjoined by the Kitáb-i-Aqdas; that the institution of the National Spiritual Assembly, as an intermediary body, and referred to in the Master’s Will as the “Secondary House of Justice,” has the express sanction of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá; and that the method to be pursued for the election of the International and National Houses of Justice has been set forth by Him in His Will, as well as in a number of His Tablets. Moreover, the institutions of the local and national Funds, that are now the necessary adjuncts to all local and national spiritual assemblies, have not only been established by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in the Tablets He revealed to the Bahá’ís of the Orient, but their importance and necessity have been repeatedly emphasized by Him in His utterances and writings. The concentration of authority in the hands of the elected representatives of the believers; the necessity of the submission of every adherent of the Faith to the considered judgment of Bahá’í Assemblies; His preference for unanimity in decision; the decisive character of the majority vote; and even the desirability for the exercise of close supervision over all Bahá’í publications, have been sedulously instilled by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, as evidenced by His authenticated and widely-scattered Tablets. To accept His broad and humanitarian Teachings on one hand, and to reject and dismiss with neglectful indifference His more challenging and distinguishing precepts, would be an act of manifest disloyalty to that which He has cherished most in His life.

That the Spiritual Assemblies of today will be replaced in time by the Houses of Justice, and are to all intents and purposes identical and not separate bodies, is abundantly confirmed by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá Himself. He has in fact in a Tablet addressed to the members of the first Chicago Spiritual Assembly, the first elected Bahá’í body instituted in the United States, referred to them

as the members of the “House of Justice” for that city, and has thus with His own pen established beyond any doubt the identity of the present Bahá’í Spiritual Assemblies with the Houses of Justice referred to by Bahá’u’lláh. For reasons which are not difficult to discover, it has been found advisable to bestow upon the elected representatives of Bahá’í communities throughout the world the temporary appellation of Spiritual Assemblies, a term 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. And as the Bahá’í Faith permeates the masses of the peoples of East and West, and its truth is embraced by the majority of the peoples of a number of the Sovereign States of the world, will the Universal House of Justice attain the plenitude of its power, and exercise, as the supreme organ of the Bahá’í Commonwealth, all the rights, the duties, and responsibilities incumbent upon the world’s future super-state.

It must be pointed out, however, in this connection that, contrary to what has been confidently asserted, the establishment of the Supreme House of Justice is in no way dependent upon the adoption of the Bahá’í Faith by the mass of the peoples of the world, nor does it presuppose its acceptance by the majority of the inhabitants of any one country. In fact, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Himself, in one of His earliest Tablets, contemplated the possibility of the formation of the Universal House of Justice in His own lifetime, and but for the unfavorable circumstances prevailing under the Turkish régime, would have, in all probability, taken the preliminary steps for its establishment. It will be evident, therefore, that given favorable circumstances, under which the Bahá’ís of Persia and of the adjoining countries under Soviet rule, may be enabled to elect their national representatives, in accordance with the guiding principles laid down in ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s writings, the only remaining obstacle in the way of the definite formation of the International House of Justice will have been removed. For upon the National Houses of Justice of the East and the West devolves the task, in conformity with the explicit provisions of the Will, of electing directly the members of the International House of Justice. Not until they are themselves fully representative of the rank and file of the believers in their respective countries, not until they have acquired the weight and the experience that will enable them to function vigorously in the organic life of the Cause, can they approach their sacred task, and provide the spiritual basis for the constitution of so august a body in the Bahá’í world.

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi's communication underscores the importance of understanding the institutions of the Bahá'í Faith, particularly the Houses of Justice, as outlined in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas and the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. He emphasizes that the local and national Houses of Justice are not separate entities but are intended to replace the Spiritual Assemblies, serving as integral components of the Bahá'í administrative structure. Shoghi Effendi clarifies that the term "Spiritual Assemblies" is a temporary appellation, to be replaced eventually by the more appropriate designation of House of Justice.

Shoghi Effendi asserts that the establishment of the Supreme House of Justice does not depend on the widespread adoption of the Bahá'í Faith by the masses, nor does it require acceptance by the majority in any particular country. He highlights 'Abdu'l-Bahá's contemplation of forming the Universal House of Justice during His lifetime, indicating that favorable circumstances could facilitate its establishment. Shoghi Effendi explains that the formation of the International House of Justice hinges on the ability of National Houses of Justice to function effectively and representatively, as they are tasked with directly electing its members.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to the significance of understanding Bahá'í institutions, particularly the Houses of Justice.
2. Explanation of the identity and role of the local and national Houses of Justice.
3. Clarification of the temporary designation of "Spiritual Assemblies" and the eventual transition to the title of House of Justice.
4. Assertion that the establishment of the Supreme House of Justice is independent of widespread Bahá'í conversion.
5. Explanation of the prerequisites for the formation of the International House of Justice and the role of National Houses of Justice in this process.

Questions and Answers:

1. How do the local and national Houses of Justice function within the Bahá'í administrative structure, and what distinguishes them from Spiritual Assemblies?
 - The local and national Houses of Justice serve as integral components of the Bahá'í administrative system, replacing Spiritual Assemblies. They hold legislative, executive, and judicial functions, ensuring the smooth operation of Bahá'í communities at various levels.
2. What challenges might arise in transitioning from the term "Spiritual Assemblies" to "Houses of Justice," and how can believers navigate this change effectively?
 - Challenges may include adjusting to a new terminology and understanding the expanded roles and responsibilities associated with Houses of Justice. Believers can navigate this change effectively by studying the writings of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá and consulting with knowledgeable individuals within the community.

3. Why is it significant that the establishment of the Supreme House of Justice is not contingent upon widespread Bahá'í conversion?

- This highlights the inherent universality and independence of the Bahá'í administrative order, demonstrating that its establishment is based on spiritual principles rather than numerical dominance.

4. How can National Houses of Justice ensure they are fully representative of the Bahá'í community in their respective countries, and what steps can they take to acquire the necessary experience and weight?

- National Houses of Justice can strive for inclusivity by actively engaging with diverse segments of the Bahá'í community and ensuring that all voices are heard in the electoral process. They can acquire experience through training programs, consultation with experienced individuals, and hands-on participation in the administration of Bahá'í affairs.

5. What role can individual believers play in supporting the establishment and functioning of Houses of Justice at the local, national, and international levels?

- Individual believers can contribute by actively participating in Bahá'í community life, promoting unity and harmony, and striving to embody the principles of the Bahá'í Faith in their personal conduct. They can also support the education and training of individuals who serve on Bahá'í administrative bodies, thereby strengthening the capacity of these institutions to fulfill their mandate.

The Institution of Guardianship

It must be also clearly understood by every believer that the institution of Guardianship does not under any circumstances abrogate, or even in the slightest degree detract from, the powers granted to the Universal House of Justice by Bahá'u'lláh in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, and repeatedly and solemnly confirmed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in His Will. It does not constitute in any manner a contradiction to the Will and Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, nor does it nullify any of His revealed instructions. It enhances the prestige of that exalted assembly, stabilizes its supreme position, safeguards its unity, assures the continuity of its labors, without presuming in the slightest to infringe upon the inviolability of its clearly-defined sphere of jurisdiction. We stand indeed too close to so monumental a document to claim for ourselves a complete understanding of all its implications, or to presume to have grasped the manifold mysteries it undoubtedly contains. Only future generations can comprehend the value and the significance attached to this Divine Masterpiece, which the hand of the Master-builder of the world has designed for the unification and the triumph of the world-wide Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. Only those who come after us will be in a position to realize the value of the surprisingly strong emphasis that has been placed on the institution of the House of Justice and of the Guardianship. They only will appreciate the significance of the vigorous language employed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá with reference to the band of Covenant-breakers that has opposed Him in His days. To them alone will be revealed the suitability of the institutions initiated by 'Abdu'l-Bahá to the character of the future society which is to emerge out of the chaos and confusion of the present age. In this connection, I cannot but feel amused at the preposterous and fantastic idea that Muḥammad-'Alí, the prime mover and the focal center of unyielding hostility to the person of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, should have freely associated himself with the members of the family of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in the forging of a will

which in the words of the writer herself, is but a “recital of the plottings” in which for thirty years Muḥammad-‘Alí has been busily engaged. To such a hopeless victim of confused ideas, I feel I can best reply by a genuine expression of compassion and pity, mingled with my hopes for her deliverance from so profound a delusion. It was in view of the aforesaid observations, that I have, after the unfortunate and unavoidable delay occasioned by my ill health and absence from the Holy Land during the Master’s passing, hesitated to resort to the indiscriminate circulation of the Will, realizing full well that it was primarily directed to the recognized believers, and only indirectly concerned the larger body of the friends and sympathizers of the Cause.

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi clarifies the role and significance of the institution of Guardianship within the Bahá'í Faith, emphasizing that it does not diminish the authority of the Universal House of Justice established by Bahá'u'lláh. He asserts that the Guardianship complements the functions of the Universal House of Justice, enhancing its prestige, ensuring its unity, and safeguarding its continuity. Shoghi Effendi acknowledges that the full implications and mysteries of the institution of Guardianship will only be understood by future generations, who will appreciate its value and significance in unifying and advancing the Bahá'í Faith worldwide. He also addresses the erroneous claims and criticisms made by Covenant-breakers, particularly Muḥammad-‘Alí, highlighting their misguided opposition to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and the authenticity of His Will and Testament.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to the institution of Guardianship and its relationship with the Universal House of Justice.
2. Explanation of how the Guardianship enhances the prestige and stability of the Universal House of Justice without encroaching on its jurisdiction.
3. Recognition that the true value and significance of the Guardianship will be understood by future generations.
4. Addressing erroneous claims and criticisms made by Covenant-breakers regarding ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and His Will and Testament.
5. Explanation of Effendi's decision to delay the widespread circulation of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's Will, considering its intended audience and purpose.

Questions and Answers:

1. How does the institution of Guardianship complement the functions of the Universal House of Justice, and why is it important for maintaining the unity and continuity of the Bahá'í Faith?
 - The Guardianship enhances the prestige and stability of the Universal House of Justice by providing guidance and ensuring the continuity of Bahá'í leadership. This dual system of governance ensures that the Bahá'í community remains united and cohesive, with both institutions working in harmony to advance the Faith's objectives.
2. Why do you think Shoghi Effendi emphasized that the full implications of the institution of Guardianship would only be understood by future generations?
 - Shoghi Effendi likely recognized that the true significance of the Guardianship would become more apparent as the Bahá'í Faith continued to evolve and spread globally. Future generations would have the perspective and context to fully appreciate its role in guiding the Faith's development and fulfilling its mission.
3. How do you interpret Shoghi Effendi's response to the criticisms and accusations made by Covenant-breakers regarding ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's Will and Testament?

- Shoghi Effendi's response demonstrates his commitment to defending the integrity of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's authority and the authenticity of His Will and Testament. He dismisses the claims of Covenant-breakers as misguided and erroneous, emphasizing their opposition to the fundamental principles of the Bahá'í Faith.

4. What challenges might arise from the dual leadership structure of the Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice, and how can these challenges be addressed within the Bahá'í community?

- Challenges may include potential conflicts or disagreements between the Guardian and the Universal House of Justice, as well as issues related to succession within the Guardianship. These challenges can be addressed through consultation, adherence to Bahá'í principles of unity and harmony, and trust in the guidance provided by both institutions.

5. Why do you think Shoghi Effendi decided to delay the widespread circulation of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will and Testament, and what considerations do you think influenced this decision?

- Shoghi Effendi likely delayed the circulation of the Will and Testament to ensure that it was primarily disseminated among recognized believers who were best equipped to understand its implications and act upon its instructions. His decision may have also been influenced by the need to avoid potential misunderstandings or misinterpretations among a broader audience of friends and sympathizers of the Faith.

The Animating Purpose of Bahá'í Institutions

And now, it behooves us to reflect on the animating purpose and the primary functions of these divinely-established institutions, the sacred character and the universal efficacy of which can be demonstrated only by the spirit they diffuse and the work they actually achieve. I need not dwell upon what I have already reiterated and emphasized that the administration of the Cause is to be conceived as an instrument and not a substitute for the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, that it should be regarded as a channel through which His promised blessings may flow, that it should guard against such rigidity as would clog and fetter the liberating forces released by His Revelation. I need not enlarge at the present moment upon what I have stated in the past, that contributions to the local and national Funds are of a purely voluntary character; that no coercion or solicitation of funds is to be tolerated in the Cause; that general appeals addressed to the communities as a body should be the only form in which the financial requirements of the Faith are to be met; that the financial support accorded to a very few workers in the teaching and administrative fields is of a temporary nature; that the present restrictions imposed on the publication of Bahá'í literature will be definitely abolished; that the World Unity activity is being carried out as an experiment to test the efficacy of the indirect method of teaching; that the whole machinery of assemblies, of committees and conventions is to be regarded as a means, and not an end in itself; that they will rise or fall according to their capacity to further the interests, to coördinate the activities, to apply the principles, to embody the ideals and execute the purpose of the Bahá'í Faith. Who, I may ask, when viewing the international character of the Cause, its far-flung ramifications, the increasing complexity of its affairs, the diversity of its adherents, and the state of confusion that assails on every side the infant Faith of God, can for a moment question the necessity of some sort of administrative machinery that will insure, amid the storm and stress of a struggling civilization,

the unity of the Faith, the preservation of its identity, and the protection of its interests? To repudiate the validity of the assemblies of the elected ministers of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh would be to reject those countless Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá wherein they have extolled the station of the "trustees of the Merciful," enumerated their privileges and duties, emphasized the glory of their mission, revealed the immensity of their task, and warned them of the attacks they must needs expect from the unwisdom of their friends as well as from the malice of their enemies. It is surely for those to whose hands so priceless a heritage has been committed to prayerfully watch lest the tool should supersede the Faith itself, lest undue concern for the minute details arising from the administration of the Cause obscure the vision of its promoters, lest partiality, ambition, and worldliness tend in the course of time to becloud the radiance, stain the purity, and impair the effectiveness of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh.

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi emphasizes the animating purpose and primary functions of the Bahá'í institutions, highlighting their sacred character and universal efficacy. He stresses that these institutions should be seen as instruments, not substitutes, for the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, serving as channels through which His blessings may flow. Shoghi Effendi reiterates the voluntary nature of contributions to the local and national Funds, prohibiting coercion or solicitation of funds within the Faith. He also clarifies that the assemblies, committees, and conventions within the Bahá'í community are means to further the interests, principles, ideals, and purpose of the Faith, rather than ends in themselves. Shoghi Effendi defends the necessity of administrative machinery to ensure the unity, identity, and protection of the Bahá'í Faith amidst the challenges of a struggling civilization, referencing numerous Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá that extol the station and duties of Bahá'í administrative bodies.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to the animating purpose and primary functions of Bahá'í institutions.
2. Emphasis on the voluntary nature of contributions to Bahá'í Funds and the prohibition of coercion or solicitation.
3. Clarification that assemblies, committees, and conventions are means to further the interests and principles of the Faith, not ends in themselves.
4. Defense of the necessity of administrative machinery to ensure the unity, identity, and protection of the Bahá'í Faith.
5. Warning against undue concern for administrative details that may obscure the vision of the Faith's promoters and the potential dangers of partiality, ambition, and worldliness within Bahá'í administrative bodies.

Questions and Answers:

1. How can Bahá'í institutions effectively balance the need for administrative organization with the spiritual principles of the Faith?
 - Bahá'í institutions can maintain this balance by ensuring that administrative structures are guided by the spiritual principles of unity, justice, consultation, and service. They should prioritize spiritual growth and community building alongside organizational efficiency.
2. In what ways can Bahá'í communities encourage voluntary contributions to the Funds while ensuring financial sustainability?
 - Bahá'í communities can foster a culture of generosity and stewardship by educating members about the importance of financial contributions to support the activities and goals of the Faith. Transparent communication about financial needs and responsible budgeting can also promote trust and confidence in the use of funds.
3. How might Bahá'í administrative bodies guard against the potential dangers of partiality, ambition, and worldliness?

- Bahá'í administrative bodies can guard against these dangers by fostering a culture of humility, service, and detachment from personal agendas or desires for power or recognition. Regular reflection, consultation, and adherence to Bahá'í principles of consultation and justice can help mitigate these risks.

4. What role do you think consultation plays in Bahá'í administrative processes, and how can it be effectively practiced within assemblies and committees?

- Consultation is a central principle of Bahá'í administration, emphasizing the importance of collective decision-making, unity of thought, and respect for diverse perspectives. Assemblies and committees can effectively practice consultation by creating inclusive environments where all members feel heard, fostering open dialogue, and making decisions based on consensus whenever possible.

5. How can Bahá'í administrative bodies ensure that their focus remains on serving the needs of the community and advancing the principles of the Faith, rather than becoming overly preoccupied with bureaucratic details?

- Bahá'í administrative bodies can maintain their focus on service and principle by regularly revisiting their goals and priorities, seeking feedback from the community, and aligning their actions with the spiritual teachings of the Faith. They should prioritize activities and initiatives that contribute to the spiritual and material well-being of the community, while delegating administrative tasks as necessary to streamline operations.

Situation in Egypt

I have already referred in my previous communications of January 10, 1926, and February 12, 1927, to the perplexing yet highly significant situation that has arisen in Egypt as a result of the final judgment of the Muslim ecclesiastical court in that country pronounced against our Egyptian brethren, denouncing them as heretics, expelling them from their midst, and refusing them the application and benefits of the Muslim Law. I have also acquainted you with the difficulties with which they are faced, and the plans which they have conceived, in order to obtain from the Egyptian civil authorities a recognition of the independent status of their Faith. It must be explained, however, that in the Muslim countries of the Near and Middle East, with the exception of Turkey which has lately abolished all ecclesiastical courts under its rule, every recognized religious community has, in matters of personal status such as marriage, divorce and inheritance, its own ecclesiastical court, totally independent of the civil and criminal tribunals, there being in such instances no civil code promulgated by the government and embracing all the different religious communities. Hitherto regarded as a sect of Islám, the Bahá'ís of Egypt, who for the most part are of Muslim origin, and unable therefore to refer for purposes of marriage and divorce to the recognized religious tribunals of any other denomination, find themselves in consequence in a delicate and anomalous position. They have naturally resolved to refer their case to the Egyptian Government, and have prepared for this purpose a petition to be addressed to the head of the Egyptian Cabinet. In this document they have set forth the motives compelling them to seek recognition from their rulers, have asserted their readiness and their qualifications to exercise the functions of an independent Bahá'í court, have assured them of their implicit obedience and loyalty to the State, and of their abstinence from interference in the politics of their country. They have also decided to accompany the text of their petition with a copy of the

judgment of the Court, with selections from Bahá'í writings, and with the document that sets forth the principles of their national constitution which, with few exceptions, is identical with the Declaration and By-laws promulgated by your Assembly.

I have insisted that the provisions of their constitution should, in all its details, conform to the text of the Declaration of Trust and By-laws which you have established, endeavoring thereby to preserve the uniformity which I feel is essential in all Bahá'í National Constitutions. I would like, therefore, in this connection to request of you what I have already intimated to them, that whatever amendments you may decide to introduce in the text of the Declaration and By-laws should be duly communicated to me, that I may take the necessary steps for the introduction of similar changes in the text of all other National Bahá'í Constitutions.

It will be readily admitted that in view of the peculiar privileges granted to recognized religious Communities in the Islamic countries of the Near and Middle East, the request which is to be submitted by the Bahá'í Egyptian National Assembly to the Government of Egypt is more substantial and far-reaching than what has already been granted by the Federal Authorities to your Assembly. For their petition is chiefly concerned with a formal request for recognition by the highest civil authorities in Egypt of the Egyptian National Spiritual Assembly as a recognized and independent Bahá'í court, free and able to execute and apply in all matters of personal status such laws and ordinances as have been promulgated by Bahá'u'lláh in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas.

I have asked them to approach informally the authorities concerned, and to make the fullest possible inquiry as a preliminary measure to the formal presentation of their historic petition. Any assistance which your Assembly, after careful deliberation, may find it advisable to offer to the valiant promoters of the Faith in that land will be deeply appreciated, and will serve to confirm the solidarity that characterizes the Bahá'í Communities of East and West. Whatever the outcome of this mighty issue—and none can fail to appreciate the incalculable possibilities of the present situation—we can rest assured that the guiding Hand that has released these forces will, in His inscrutable wisdom and by His omnipotent power, continue to shape and direct their course for the glory, the ultimate emancipation, and the unqualified recognition of His Faith.

Your true brother,

Shoghi.

Haifa, Palestine.
February 27, 1929.

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi addresses the situation in Egypt, where Bahá'ís face challenges due to the final judgment of the Muslim ecclesiastical court denouncing them as heretics and expelling them from their community. He explains the unique legal framework in Muslim countries where each religious community has its own ecclesiastical court for matters of personal status. The Bahá'ís, unable to refer to any other recognized religious tribunal, seek recognition from the Egyptian government to establish an independent Bahá'í court. Shoghi Effendi describes the preparations made by the Egyptian Bahá'ís, including drafting a petition to the head of the Egyptian Cabinet outlining their motives, qualifications, and loyalty to the state. They accompany the petition with supporting documents, including selections from Bahá'í writings and their national constitution.

Shoghi Effendi emphasizes the need for conformity between the Egyptian National Constitution and the Declaration of Trust and By-laws established by other National Spiritual Assemblies. He requests that any amendments made by the American Assembly to its constitution be communicated to him to ensure uniformity across all Bahá'í National Constitutions. Effendi acknowledges the substantial request made by the Bahá'í Egyptian National Assembly for recognition as an independent Bahá'í court by the highest civil authorities in Egypt, allowing them to apply Bahá'í laws in matters of personal status.

Shoghi Effendi encourages the Egyptian Bahá'ís to approach the authorities informally and conduct thorough inquiries before formally presenting their petition. He expresses appreciation for any assistance the American Assembly may offer to the Bahá'í promoters in Egypt, underscoring the solidarity among Bahá'í communities worldwide. Shoghi Effendi concludes by expressing confidence in the guidance of a higher power in shaping the outcome of the situation for the glory and recognition of the Bahá'í Faith.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to the situation in Egypt and the challenges faced by Bahá'ís.
2. Explanation of the legal framework in Muslim countries regarding religious communities and ecclesiastical courts.
3. Description of the preparations made by Egyptian Bahá'ís to seek recognition from the government for an independent Bahá'í court.
4. Emphasis on the need for conformity between national constitutions and the request for communication of amendments.
5. Encouragement for informal approaches to authorities, appreciation for assistance, and confidence in the guidance of higher powers.

Questions and Answers:

1. How do the unique legal frameworks in Muslim countries impact the status and rights of religious minorities like the Bahá'ís?

- The legal frameworks in Muslim countries often grant certain privileges to recognized religious communities, but this can also lead to challenges for minority groups like the Bahá'ís who may not fit into established categories. Understanding these dynamics can shed light on the complexities of religious freedom and minority rights.

2. What strategies can Bahá'í communities employ to navigate legal challenges and seek recognition from government authorities while upholding their principles?

- Bahá'í communities may need to engage in careful diplomacy, legal advocacy, and community outreach to address legal challenges and seek recognition from government authorities. Building alliances, educating policymakers, and promoting interfaith dialogue can be effective strategies in this regard.

3. How might the Bahá'í principles of loyalty to the state and non-interference in politics influence their approach to seeking recognition from government authorities?

- Bahá'ís strive to be loyal citizens and avoid involvement in partisan politics, but they also seek to assert their rights and freedoms within legal frameworks. Balancing these principles requires careful navigation and adherence to Bahá'í teachings on obedience to government authority and commitment to justice.

4. What role can international Bahá'í institutions play in supporting local communities facing legal challenges or seeking recognition from government authorities?

- International Bahá'í institutions can provide guidance, resources, and advocacy support to local communities facing legal challenges or seeking recognition from government authorities. They can also facilitate collaboration and coordination among Bahá'í communities worldwide to address common issues and share best practices.

5. How might the Bahá'í teachings on unity and solidarity among believers influence the response of Bahá'í communities worldwide to the situation in Egypt?

- The Bahá'í teachings emphasize the importance of unity and solidarity among believers, regardless of geographical or cultural differences. In response to the situation in Egypt, Bahá'í communities worldwide may feel a sense of solidarity with their Egyptian counterparts and seek to support them through various means, including advocacy, prayers, and practical assistance.

. . .

The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh: Further Considerations

The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh Further Considerations

To the beloved of the Lord and the handmaids of the Merciful throughout the West.

Dearly-beloved co-workers:

Amid the reports that have of late reached the Holy Land, most of which witness to the triumphant march of the Cause, a few seem to betray a certain apprehension regarding the validity of the institutions which stand inseparably associated with the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. These expressed misgivings appear to be actuated by certain whisperings which have emanated from quarters which are either wholly misinformed regarding the fundamentals of the Bahá'í Revelation, or which deliberately contrive to sow the seeds of dissension in the hearts of the faithful.

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi addresses concerns that have arisen among Bahá'ís in the West regarding the validity of Bahá'í institutions, prompted by reports and whisperings from misinformed or intentionally divisive sources. He reassures the believers of the unyielding validity and significance of these institutions, which are integral to the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh. Shoghi Effendi emphasizes the importance of understanding and appreciating the origins and character of these institutions, which serve as the foundation of the Bahá'í Faith's administrative structure. He views the expression of doubts as an opportunity to deepen believers' understanding and fortify their faith in the face of challenges.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to the concerns and apprehensions among Bahá'ís in the West regarding the validity of Bahá'í institutions.
2. Identification of the sources of these concerns, which may be misinformed or intentionally divisive.
3. Reassurance of the unyielding validity and significance of Bahá'í institutions within the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh.
4. Emphasis on the importance of understanding the origins and character of Bahá'í institutions as the foundation of the Faith's administrative structure.
5. View of doubts and challenges as opportunities for believers to deepen their understanding and fortify their faith.

Questions and Answers:

1. How can Bahá'ís discern between genuine concerns about the validity of Bahá'í institutions and misinformation propagated by divisive sources?
 - Bahá'ís can discern between genuine concerns and misinformation by studying the authoritative writings of Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and Shoghi Effendi, consulting with knowledgeable individuals, and relying on their own spiritual discernment guided by prayer and reflection.
2. In what ways do doubts and challenges regarding Bahá'í institutions contribute to the spiritual growth and maturity of believers?
 - Doubts and challenges can prompt believers to deepen their understanding of Bahá'í teachings, strengthen their commitment to the Faith, and develop resilience in the face of adversity. They provide opportunities for spiritual growth, reflection, and reaffirmation of one's faith.
3. How can Bahá'í institutions effectively address concerns and apprehensions among the believers while maintaining unity and cohesion within the community?

- Bahá'í institutions can address concerns by providing clear and accurate information, fostering open dialogue and consultation, and exemplifying the principles of unity, love, and understanding. Transparency, inclusivity, and adherence to Bahá'í principles can help maintain unity within the community.

4. What role do Bahá'í leaders and institutions play in addressing misinformation and divisive influences within the community?

- Bahá'í leaders and institutions have a responsibility to counter misinformation and divisive influences by providing accurate information, promoting unity, and fostering an environment of trust and collaboration. They can serve as sources of guidance, support, and encouragement for believers facing doubts and challenges.

5. How can Bahá'ís cultivate resilience and steadfastness in their faith in the face of doubts and challenges?

- Bahá'ís can cultivate resilience and steadfastness by deepening their knowledge of Bahá'í teachings, maintaining regular practices of prayer and meditation, seeking guidance from Bahá'í institutions and knowledgeable individuals, and actively participating in community activities and service projects.

A Blessing in Disguise

Viewed in the light of past experience, the inevitable result of such futile attempts, however persistent and malicious they may be, is to contribute to a wider and deeper recognition by believers and unbelievers alike of the distinguishing features of the Faith proclaimed by Bahá'u'lláh. These challenging criticisms, whether or not dictated by malice, cannot but serve to galvanize the souls of its ardent supporters, and to consolidate the ranks of its faithful promoters. They will purge the Faith from those pernicious elements whose continued association with the believers tends to discredit the fair name of the Cause, and to tarnish the purity of its spirit. We should welcome, therefore, not only the open attacks which its avowed enemies persistently launch against it, but should also view as a blessing in disguise every storm of mischief with which they who apostatize their faith or claim to be its faithful exponents assail it from time to time. Instead of undermining the Faith, such assaults, both from within and from without, reinforce its foundations, and excite the intensity of its flame. Designed to becloud its radiance, they proclaim to all the world the exalted character of its precepts, the completeness of its unity, the uniqueness of its position, and the pervasiveness of its influence.

I do not feel for one moment that such clamor, mostly attributable to impotent rage against the resistless march of the Cause of God, can ever distress the valiant warriors of the Faith. For these heroic souls, whether they be contending in America's impregnable stronghold, or struggling in the heart of Europe, and across the seas as far as the continent of Australasia, have already abundantly demonstrated the tenacity of their Faith and the abiding value of their conviction.

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi addresses the persistent attacks and criticisms faced by the Bahá'í Faith, whether from avowed enemies or from those who claim to be its faithful exponents. He views these challenges as blessings in disguise, opportunities for believers to deepen their understanding, fortify their faith, and purify the community from detrimental elements. Shoghi Effendi asserts that such attacks, whether from within or without, serve to reinforce the foundations of the Faith, intensify its flame, and proclaim its exalted character to the world. He expresses confidence in the steadfastness and resilience of Bahá'í believers, who have demonstrated their unwavering commitment to the Cause despite adversity.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to the persistent attacks and criticisms faced by the Bahá'í Faith.
2. View of these challenges as blessings in disguise, opportunities for believers to deepen their understanding and fortify their faith.
3. Recognition of the purifying effect of these challenges on the Bahá'í community, removing detrimental elements and strengthening its unity.
4. Assertion that attacks on the Faith ultimately reinforce its foundations, intensify its flame, and proclaim its exalted character to the world.
5. Confidence in the steadfastness and resilience of Bahá'í believers, who have demonstrated their unwavering commitment to the Cause despite adversity.

Questions and Answers:

1. How do attacks and criticisms against the Bahá'í Faith serve to reinforce its foundations and intensify its flame, as asserted by Shoghi Effendi?
 - Attacks and criticisms provide opportunities for believers to reflect on and deepen their understanding of Bahá'í teachings, fostering a stronger sense of conviction and commitment. Additionally, adversity can unite believers and inspire them to redouble their efforts in promoting the Faith, thereby reinforcing its foundations and intensifying its impact.
2. In what ways can challenges from within the Bahá'í community contribute to its purification and unity, as suggested by Shoghi Effendi?
 - Challenges from within the Bahá'í community can prompt believers to reevaluate their beliefs and practices, leading to a purification of the community from detrimental elements such as discord, hypocrisy, and moral laxity. Addressing internal challenges can strengthen unity and foster a sense of collective responsibility and solidarity among believers.
3. How can Bahá'ís effectively respond to attacks and criticisms against their Faith while maintaining a spirit of resilience and steadfastness?

- Bahá'ís can respond to attacks and criticisms with patience, humility, and a commitment to truth and justice. They can engage in constructive dialogue, provide accurate information about the Faith, and exemplify its teachings through their actions and behavior. Cultivating inner strength, resilience, and reliance on spiritual principles can help believers maintain steadfastness in the face of adversity.

4. What role does the Bahá'í community play in supporting and encouraging believers facing challenges and attacks against their Faith?

- The Bahá'í community plays a crucial role in providing emotional, spiritual, and practical support to believers facing challenges and attacks against their Faith. Through acts of solidarity, encouragement, and collective action, the community can strengthen the resolve of individual believers and help them navigate difficult circumstances with grace and resilience.

5. How can Bahá'í teachings about the unity of religion and the oneness of humanity serve as sources of inspiration and resilience for believers facing adversity?

- Bahá'í teachings about the unity of religion and the oneness of humanity offer believers a broader perspective on the purpose and significance of their faith. By emphasizing the interconnectedness of all people and the common spiritual principles underlying diverse religious traditions, these teachings provide a source of inspiration and resilience for believers facing adversity, reminding them of the universal principles that guide their actions and aspirations.

Distinguishing Features of Bahá'í World Order

I feel it, however, incumbent upon me by virtue of the responsibility attached to the Guardianship of the Faith, to dwell more fully upon the essential character and the distinguishing features of that world order as conceived and proclaimed by Bahá'u'lláh. I feel impelled, at the present stage of the evolution of the Bahá'í Revelation, to state candidly and without any reservation, whatever I regard may tend to insure the preservation of the integrity of the nascent institutions of the Faith. I strongly feel the urge to elucidate certain facts, which would at once reveal to every fair-minded observer the unique character of that Divine Civilization the foundations of which the unerring hand of Bahá'u'lláh has laid, and the essential elements of which the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá has disclosed. I consider it my duty to warn every beginner in the Faith that the promised glories of the Sovereignty which the Bahá'í teachings foreshadow, can be revealed only in the fullness of time, that the implications of the Aqdas and the Will of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, as the twin repositories of the constituent elements of that Sovereignty, are too far-reaching for this generation to grasp and fully appreciate. I cannot refrain from appealing to them who stand identified with the Faith to disregard the prevailing notions and the fleeting fashions of the day, and to realize as never before that the exploded theories and the tottering institutions of present-day civilization must needs appear in sharp contrast with those God-given institutions which are destined to arise upon their ruin. I pray that they may realize with all their heart and soul the ineffable glory of their calling, the overwhelming responsibility of their mission, and the astounding immensity of their task.

For let every earnest upholder of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh realize that the storms which this struggling Faith of God must needs encounter, as the process of the disintegration of society advances, shall be fiercer than any which it has already experienced. Let him be aware that so soon as the full measure of the stupendous claim of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh comes to be

recognized by those time-honored and powerful strongholds of orthodoxy, whose deliberate aim is to maintain their stranglehold over the thoughts and consciences of men, this infant Faith will have to contend with enemies more powerful and more insidious than the cruellest torture-mongers and the most fanatical clerics who have afflicted it in the past. What foes may not in the course of the convulsions that shall seize a dying civilization be brought into existence, who will reinforce the indignities which have already been heaped upon it!

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi emphasizes the essential character and distinguishing features of the Bahá'í World Order as conceived by Bahá'u'lláh. He feels compelled to elucidate certain facts to ensure the preservation of the integrity of the nascent institutions of the Faith. Shoghi Effendi warns that the promised glories of the Sovereignty foretold by Bahá'í teachings can only be revealed in the fullness of time and may be beyond the grasp of the current generation. He urges believers to disregard prevailing notions and fleeting fashions, recognizing that the institutions of present-day civilization will eventually crumble, making way for the divine institutions destined to arise. Shoghi Effendi also highlights the challenges the Bahá'í Faith will face, especially as society disintegrates, warning that future storms will be fiercer than those experienced in the past.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to the letter's purpose: to elucidate the essential character and distinguishing features of the Bahá'í World Order.
2. Emphasis on the preservation of the integrity of the nascent institutions of the Faith.
3. Warning about the limitations of the current generation in fully appreciating the implications of Bahá'í teachings.
4. Encouragement for believers to disregard prevailing notions and recognize the eventual downfall of present-day civilization.
5. Highlighting the challenges the Bahá'í Faith will face in the future, especially as society disintegrates.

Questions and Answers:

1. What are the distinguishing features of the Bahá'í World Order as envisioned by Bahá'u'lláh, according to Shoghi Effendi?

- The distinguishing features include divine institutions destined to arise upon the ruin of present-day civilization, as well as the preservation of the integrity of nascent institutions of the Faith.

2. How can believers reconcile their understanding of the promised glories of the Bahá'í Faith with the limitations of the current generation in fully appreciating its implications?

- Believers can maintain faith in the promised glories of the Faith while recognizing that their full realization may occur in the future. They can strive to deepen their understanding of Bahá'í teachings and remain steadfast in their commitment to the Faith's principles.

3. In what ways can believers prepare themselves for the fiercer storms and challenges predicted by Shoghi Effendi?

- Believers can prepare themselves by deepening their spiritual understanding, strengthening their unity, and actively participating in the advancement of the Faith. They can cultivate resilience, patience, and steadfastness in the face of adversity.

4. How can the Bahá'í community navigate the tension between engaging with present-day civilization and recognizing its eventual downfall?

- The Bahá'í community can engage with present-day civilization while maintaining a broader perspective informed by Bahá'í teachings. They can work towards constructive social change while recognizing the impermanence of current systems and institutions.

5. What strategies can believers employ to uphold the integrity of the nascent institutions of the Faith in the face of challenges and opposition?

- Believers can uphold the integrity of Bahá'í institutions by adhering to Bahá'í principles, fostering unity within the community, and actively promoting the teachings of the Faith. They can also respond to challenges and opposition with wisdom, patience, and resilience.

The Onslaught of All Peoples and Kindreds

We have only to refer to the warnings uttered by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in order to realize the extent and character of the forces that are destined to contest with God's holy Faith. In the darkest moments of His life, under 'Abdu'l-Hamíd's régime, when He stood ready to be deported to the most inhospitable regions of Northern Africa, and at a time when the auspicious light of the Bahá'í Revelation had only begun to break upon the West, He, in His parting message to the cousin of the Báb, uttered these prophetic and ominous words: "*How great, how very great is the Cause! How very fierce the onslaught of all the peoples and kindreds of the earth. Ere long shall the clamor of the multitude throughout Africa, throughout America, the cry of the European and of the Turk, the groaning of India and China, be heard from far and near. One and all, they shall arise with all their power to resist His Cause. Then shall the knights of the Lord, assisted by His grace from on high, strengthened by faith, aided by the power of understanding, and reinforced by the legions of the Covenant, arise and make manifest the truth of the verse: 'Behold the confusion that hath befallen the tribes of the defeated!'*"

Stupendous as is the struggle which His words foreshadow, they also testify to the complete victory which the upholders of the Greatest Name are destined eventually to achieve. Peoples, nations, adherents of divers faiths, will jointly and successively arise to shatter its unity, to sap its force, and to degrade its holy name. They will assail not only the spirit which it inculcates, but the administration which is the channel, the instrument, the embodiment of that spirit. For as the authority with which Bahá'u'lláh has invested the future Bahá'í Commonwealth becomes more and more apparent, the fiercer shall be the challenge which from every quarter will be thrown at the verities it enshrines.

Summary:

In this letter, Shoghi Effendi reflects on the warnings issued by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá regarding the challenges and opposition that the Bahá’í Faith will face. He recounts ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s prophetic words, uttered during dark moments under oppressive regimes, about the fierce onslaught that all peoples and kindreds will launch against the Faith. Despite these daunting prospects, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá also foretells the eventual triumph of the Faith, with the assistance of divine grace and the legions of the Covenant. Shoghi Effendi emphasizes the magnitude of the struggle ahead, with peoples of all backgrounds and nations rising against the Faith to resist its teachings and administration. However, he asserts that the ultimate victory of the Faith and the realization of its divine purpose are inevitable, despite the formidable challenges it will encounter.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s warnings regarding the challenges facing the Bahá’í Faith.
2. Prophetic words of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá about the fierce onslaught that all peoples and kindreds will launch against the Faith.
3. Assurance of eventual triumph through divine assistance and the power of the Covenant.
4. Emphasis on the magnitude and diversity of the opposition that the Faith will face.
5. Affirmation of the Faith’s ultimate victory and the fulfillment of its divine purpose.

Questions and Answers:

1. How do ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s prophetic words about the onslaught against the Bahá’í Faith resonate with contemporary challenges faced by the Bahá’í community?
 - ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s prophetic words serve as a reminder of the ongoing opposition and challenges faced by the Bahá’í community, especially in regions where religious intolerance and persecution persist.
2. What role does divine grace and the concept of the Covenant play in the eventual triumph of the Bahá’í Faith, as described by Shoghi Effendi?
 - Divine grace and the Covenant are seen as sources of strength and assistance for the Bahá’í community in overcoming the challenges and opposition it faces. They provide believers with spiritual fortitude and resilience.
3. How can believers maintain faith and perseverance in the face of daunting challenges, as foretold by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá?
 - Believers can maintain faith by focusing on the enduring principles and teachings of the Bahá’í Faith, seeking solace in prayer and spiritual practices, and drawing strength from the examples of perseverance set by the Central Figures of the Faith.
4. What strategies can the Bahá’í community employ to navigate and respond to the diverse forms of opposition mentioned by Shoghi Effendi?

- The Bahá'í community can respond to opposition through constructive engagement, dialogue, and peaceful advocacy for human rights and religious freedom. Strengthening unity within the community and fostering interfaith understanding can also mitigate opposition.

5. In what ways can the Bahá'í community contribute to the eventual realization of the Faith's divine purpose, as envisioned by 'Abdu'l-Bahá?

- The Bahá'í community can contribute by actively promoting the teachings of the Faith, fostering unity, and striving to embody its principles of justice, compassion, and service to humanity. Through dedicated efforts to advance social progress and spiritual transformation, believers can help fulfill the Faith's divine purpose.

Difference Between Bahá'í Faith and Ecclesiastical Organizations

It behooves us, dear friends, to endeavor not only to familiarize ourselves with the essential features of this supreme Handiwork of Bahá'u'lláh, but also to grasp the fundamental difference existing between this world-embracing, divinely-appointed Order and the chief ecclesiastical organizations of the world, whether they pertain to the Church of Christ, or to the ordinances of the Muḥammadan Dispensation.

For those whose priceless privilege is to guard over, administer the affairs, and advance the interests of these Bahá'í institutions will have, sooner or later, to face this searching question: "Where and how does this Order established by Bahá'u'lláh, which to outward seeming is but a replica of the institutions established in Christianity and Islám, differ from them? Are not the twin institutions of the House of Justice and of the Guardianship, the institution of the Hands of the Cause of God, the institution of the national and local Assemblies, the institution of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, but different names for the institutions of the Papacy and the Caliphate, with all their attending ecclesiastical orders which the Christians and Moslems uphold and advocate? What can possibly be the agency that can safeguard these Bahá'í institutions, so strikingly resemblant, in some of their features, to those which have been reared by the Fathers of the Church and the Apostles of Muḥammad, from witnessing the deterioration in character, the breach of unity, and the extinction of influence, which have befallen all organized religious hierarchies? Why should they not eventually suffer the self-same fate that has overtaken the institutions which the successors of Christ and Muḥammad have reared?"

Upon the answer given to these challenging questions will, in a great measure, depend the success of the efforts which believers in every land are now exerting for the establishment of God's kingdom upon the earth. Few will fail to recognize that the Spirit breathed by Bahá'u'lláh upon the world, and which is manifesting itself with varying degrees of intensity through the efforts consciously displayed by His avowed supporters and indirectly through certain humanitarian organizations, can never permeate and exercise an abiding influence upon mankind unless and until it incarnates itself in a visible Order, which would bear His name, wholly identify itself with His principles, and function in conformity with His laws. That Bahá'u'lláh in His Book of Aqdas, and later 'Abdu'l-Bahá in His Will—a document which confirms, supplements, and correlates the provisions of the Aqdas—have set forth in their entirety those essential elements for the constitution of the world Bahá'í Commonwealth, no one who has read them will deny. According to these divinely-ordained administrative principles, the Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh—the Ark of human salvation—must needs be modeled. From them, all future blessings must flow, and upon them its inviolable authority must ultimately rest.

For Bahá'u'lláh, we should readily recognize, has not only imbued mankind with a new and regenerating Spirit. He has not merely enunciated certain universal principles, or propounded a particular philosophy, however potent, sound and universal these may be. In addition to these He, as well as 'Abdu'l-Bahá after Him, has, unlike the Dispensations of the past, clearly and specifically laid down a set of Laws, established definite institutions, and provided for the essentials of a Divine Economy. These are destined to be a pattern for future society, a supreme instrument for the establishment of the Most Great Peace, and the one agency for the unification of the world, and the proclamation of the reign of righteousness and justice upon the earth. Not only have they revealed all the directions required for the practical realization of those ideals which the Prophets of God have visualized, and which from time immemorial have inflamed the imagination of seers and poets in every age. They have also, in unequivocal and emphatic language, appointed those twin institutions of the House of Justice and of the Guardianship as their chosen Successors, destined to apply the principles, promulgate the laws, protect the institutions, adapt loyally and intelligently the Faith to the requirements of progressive society, and consummate the incorruptible inheritance which the Founders of the Faith have bequeathed to the world.

Should we look back upon the past, were we to search out the Gospel and the Qur'án, we will readily recognize that neither the Christian nor the Islamic Dispensations can offer a parallel either to the system of Divine Economy so thoroughly established by Bahá'u'lláh, or to the safeguards which He has provided for its preservation and advancement. Therein, I am profoundly convinced, lies the answer to those questions to which I have already referred.

None, I feel, will question the fact that the fundamental reason why the unity of the Church of Christ was irretrievably shattered, and its influence was in the course of time undermined, was that the Edifice which the Fathers of the Church reared after the passing of His First Apostle was an Edifice that rested in nowise upon the explicit directions of Christ Himself. The authority and features of their administration were wholly inferred, and indirectly derived, with more or less justification, from certain vague and fragmentary references which they found scattered amongst His utterances as recorded in the Gospel. Not one of the sacraments of the Church; not one of the rites and ceremonies which the Christian Fathers have elaborately devised and ostentatiously observed; not one of the elements of the severe discipline they rigorously imposed upon the primitive Christians; none of these reposed on the direct authority of Christ, or emanated from His specific utterances. Not one of these did Christ conceive, none did He specifically invest with sufficient authority to either interpret His Word, or to add to what He had not specifically enjoined.

For this reason, in later generations, voices were raised in protest against the self-appointed Authority which arrogated to itself privileges and powers which did not emanate from the clear text of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and which constituted a grave departure from the spirit which that Gospel did inculcate. They argued with force and justification that the canons promulgated by the Councils of the Church were not divinely-appointed laws, but were merely human devices which did not even rest upon the actual utterances of Jesus. Their contention centered around the fact that the vague and inconclusive words, addressed by Christ to Peter, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church," could never justify the extreme measures, the elaborate ceremonials, the fettering creeds and dogmas, with which His successors have gradually burdened and obscured His Faith. Had it been possible for the Church Fathers, whose unwarranted authority was thus fiercely assailed from every side, to refute the denunciations heaped upon them by quoting specific utterances of Christ regarding the future administration of

His Church, or the nature of the authority of His Successors, they would surely have been capable of quenching the flame of controversy, and preserving the unity of Christendom. The Gospel, however, the only repository of the utterances of Christ, afforded no such shelter to these harassed leaders of the Church, who found themselves helpless in the face of the pitiless onslaught of their enemy, and who eventually had to submit to the forces of schism which invaded their ranks.

In the Muḥammadan Revelation, however, although His Faith as compared with that of Christ was, so far as the administration of His Dispensation is concerned, more complete and more specific in its provisions, yet in the matter of succession, it gave no written, no binding and conclusive instructions to those whose mission was to propagate His Cause. For the text of the Qur'án, the ordinances of which regarding prayer, fasting, marriage, divorce, inheritance, pilgrimage, and the like, have after the revolution of thirteen hundred years remained intact and operative, gives no definite guidance regarding the Law of Succession, the source of all the dissensions, the controversies, and schisms which have dismembered and discredited Islám.

Not so with the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh. Unlike the Dispensation of Christ, unlike the Dispensation of Muḥammad, unlike all the Dispensations of the past, the apostles of Bahá'u'lláh in every land, wherever they labor and toil, have before them in clear, in unequivocal and emphatic language, all the laws, the regulations, the principles, the institutions, the guidance, they require for the prosecution and consummation of their task. Both in the administrative provisions of the Bahá'í Dispensation, and in the matter of succession, as embodied in the twin institutions of the House of Justice and of the Guardianship, the followers of Bahá'u'lláh can summon to their aid such irrefutable evidences of Divine Guidance that none can resist, that none can belittle or ignore. Therein lies the distinguishing feature of the Bahá'í Revelation. Therein lies the strength of the unity of the Faith, of the validity of a Revelation that claims not to destroy or belittle previous Revelations, but to connect, unify, and fulfill them. This is the reason why Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá have both revealed and even insisted upon certain details in connection with the Divine Economy which they have bequeathed to us, their followers. This is why such an emphasis has been placed in their Will and Testament upon the powers and prerogatives of the ministers of their Faith.

For nothing short of the explicit directions of their Book, and the surprisingly emphatic language with which they have clothed the provisions of their Will, could possibly safeguard the Faith for which they have both so gloriously labored all their lives. Nothing short of this could protect it from the heresies and calumnies with which denominations, peoples, and governments have endeavored, and will, with increasing vigor, endeavor to assail it in future.

We should also bear in mind that the distinguishing character of the Bahá'í Revelation does not solely consist in the completeness and unquestionable validity of the Dispensation which the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá have established. Its excellence lies also in the fact that those elements which in past Dispensations have, without the least authority from their Founders, been a source of corruption and of incalculable harm to the Faith of God, have been strictly excluded by the clear text of Bahá'u'lláh's writings. Those unwarranted practices, in connection with the sacrament of baptism, of communion, of confession of sins, of asceticism, of priestly domination, of elaborate ceremonials, of holy war and of polygamy, have one and all been rigidly suppressed by the Pen of Bahá'u'lláh; whilst the rigidity and rigor of certain observances, such as fasting, which are necessary to the devotional life of the individual, have been considerably abated.

Summary:

In this letter, Shoghi Effendi addresses the fundamental difference between the Bahá'í Faith and ecclesiastical organizations of other religions, particularly Christianity and Islam. He emphasizes the need for Bahá'ís to understand and articulate this distinction, especially when confronted with questions about the similarities between Bahá'í institutions and those of other faiths. Shoghi Effendi asserts that the Bahá'í World Order, established by Bahá'u'lláh, differs fundamentally from ecclesiastical organizations in its divine origin, laws, and institutions. He highlights the unique features of the Bahá'í Faith, such as the explicit guidance provided by Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá regarding its administration and succession, which are absent in previous dispensations. Shoghi Effendi contrasts the lack of specific guidance on succession in Christianity and Islam with the clear instructions given by Bahá'u'lláh for the succession of leadership in the Bahá'í Faith. He argues that the explicit directives and detailed provisions laid out by Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá are essential for safeguarding the Faith from schisms and heresies.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to the need for Bahá'ís to understand the difference between the Bahá'í Faith and ecclesiastical organizations.
2. Discussion of the questions and challenges faced by Bahá'í institutions regarding their distinctiveness.
3. Emphasis on the divine origin and explicit guidance provided by Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá for the Bahá'í World Order.
4. Comparison between the lack of specific guidance on succession in Christianity and Islam and the clear instructions given in the Bahá'í Faith.
5. Assertion of the superiority of the Bahá'í Revelation in excluding harmful practices and providing clear directives for the administration of the Faith.

Questions and Answers:

1. How does Shoghi Effendi's explanation of the distinction between the Bahá'í Faith and ecclesiastical organizations enhance our understanding of the unique features of the Bahá'í World Order?
 - Shoghi Effendi's elucidation highlights the divine origins, explicit guidance, and distinct institutions of the Bahá'í Faith, underscoring its uniqueness compared to other religious systems.
2. What role do the explicit directives provided by Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá play in safeguarding the unity and integrity of the Bahá'í Faith?
 - The explicit directives serve as a blueprint for Bahá'í institutions, ensuring consistency, coherence, and resilience in the face of external challenges and internal disputes.
3. How does the Bahá'í approach to succession differ from that of Christianity and Islam, and what implications does this have for the long-term stability of the Faith?

- The Bahá'í approach to succession, with its clear instructions and institutional framework, contrasts with the ambiguous succession processes in Christianity and Islam, offering greater stability and continuity for the Bahá'í community.

4. What are some practical ways in which Bahá'ís can articulate and demonstrate the distinctiveness of the Bahá'í Faith when engaging with individuals from other religious backgrounds?

- Bahá'ís can emphasize the unique features of the Bahá'í World Order, such as its administrative institutions, succession mechanisms, and adherence to explicit divine guidance, when discussing the Faith with others.

5. How does the exclusion of certain practices, such as priestly domination and holy war, contribute to the moral and spiritual integrity of the Bahá'í Faith?

- The exclusion of harmful practices fosters a more inclusive, egalitarian, and peaceful community, aligning with the principles of unity, justice, and compassion central to the Bahá'í teachings.

A Living Organism

It should also be borne in mind that the machinery of the Cause has been so fashioned, that whatever is deemed necessary to incorporate into it in order to keep it in the forefront of all progressive movements, can, according to the provisions made by Bahá'u'lláh, be safely embodied therein. To this testify the words of Bahá'u'lláh, as recorded in the Eighth Leaf of the exalted Paradise: *“It is incumbent upon the Trustees of the House of Justice to take counsel together regarding those things which have not outwardly been revealed in the Book, and to enforce that which is agreeable to them. God will verily inspire them with whatsoever He willeth, and He, verily, is the Provider, the Omniscient.”* Not only has the House of Justice been invested by Bahá'u'lláh with the authority to legislate whatsoever has not been explicitly and outwardly recorded in His holy Writ, upon it has also been conferred by the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu'l-Bahá the right and power to abrogate, according to the changes and requirements of the time, whatever has been already enacted and enforced by a preceding House of Justice. In this connection, He revealed the following in His Will: *“And inasmuch as the House of Justice hath power to enact laws that are not expressly recorded in the Book and bear upon daily transactions, so also it hath power to repeal the same. Thus for example, the House of Justice enacteth today a certain law and enforceth it, and a hundred years hence, circumstances having profoundly changed and the conditions having altered, another House of Justice will then have power, according to the exigencies of the time, to alter that law. This it can do because that law formeth no part of the divine explicit text. The House of Justice is both the initiator and the abrogator of its own laws.”* Such is the immutability of His revealed Word. Such is the elasticity which characterizes the functions of His appointed ministers. The first preserves the identity of His Faith, and guards the integrity of His law. The second enables it, even as a living organism, to expand and adapt itself to the needs and requirements of an ever-changing society.

Dear friends! Feeble though our Faith may now appear in the eyes of men, who either denounce it as an offshoot of Islám, or contemptuously ignore it as one more of those obscure sects that abound in the West, this priceless gem of Divine Revelation, now still in its embryonic state, shall evolve within the shell of His law, and shall forge ahead, undivided and unimpaired,

till it embraces the whole of mankind. Only those who have already recognized the supreme station of Bahá'u'lláh, only those whose hearts have been touched by His love, and have become familiar with the potency of His spirit, can adequately appreciate the value of this Divine Economy—His inestimable gift to mankind.

Leaders of religion, exponents of political theories, governors of human institutions, who at present are witnessing with perplexity and dismay the bankruptcy of their ideas, and the disintegration of their handiwork, would do well to turn their gaze to the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, and to meditate upon the World Order which, lying enshrined in His teachings, is slowly and imperceptibly rising amid the welter and chaos of present-day civilization. They need have no doubt or anxiety regarding the nature, the origin or validity of the institutions which the adherents of the Faith are building up throughout the world. For these lie embedded in the teachings themselves, unadulterated and unobscured by unwarrantable inferences, or unauthorized interpretations of His Word.

How pressing and sacred the responsibility that now weighs upon those who are already acquainted with these teachings! How glorious the task of those who are called upon to vindicate their truth, and demonstrate their practicability to an unbelieving world! Nothing short of an immovable conviction in their divine origin, and their uniqueness in the annals of religion; nothing short of an unwavering purpose to execute and apply them to the administrative machinery of the Cause, can be sufficient to establish their reality, and insure their success. How vast is the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh! How great the magnitude of His blessings showered upon humanity in this day! And yet, how poor, how inadequate our conception of their significance and glory! This generation stands too close to so colossal a Revelation to appreciate, in their full measure, the infinite possibilities of His Faith, the unprecedented character of His Cause, and the mysterious dispensations of His Providence.

In the *Íqán*, Bahá'u'lláh, wishing to emphasize the transcendent character of this new Day of God, reinforces the strength of His argument by His reference to the text of a correct and authorized tradition, which reveals the following: *“Knowledge is twenty and seven letters. All that the Prophets have revealed are two letters thereof. No man thus far hath known more than these two letters. But when the Qá'im shall arise, He will cause the remaining twenty and five letters to be made manifest.”* And then immediately follow these confirming and illuminating words of Bahá'u'lláh: *“Consider: He hath declared knowledge to consist of twenty and seven letters, and regarded all the prophets, from Adam even unto Muḥammad, the ‘seal,’ as expounders of only two letters thereof. He also saith that the Qá'im will reveal all the remaining twenty and five letters. Behold from this utterance how great and lofty is His station! His rank excelleth that of all the prophets, and His revelation transcendeth the comprehension and understanding of all their chosen ones. A revelation, of which the prophets of God, His saints and chosen ones have either not been informed or which, in pursuance of God's inscrutable decree, they have not disclosed—such a revelation, these vile and villainous people have sought to measure with their own deficient minds, their own deficient learning and understanding.”*

In another passage of the same Book, Bahá'u'lláh, referring to the transformation effected by every Revelation in the ways, thoughts and manners of the people, reveals these words: *“Is not the object of every Revelation to effect a transformation in the whole character of mankind, a transformation that shall manifest itself, both outwardly and inwardly, that shall affect both its inner life and external conditions? For if the character of mankind be not changed, the futility of God's universal Manifestations would be apparent.”*

Did not Christ Himself, addressing His disciples, utter these words: *“I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth”*?

From the text of this recognized tradition, as well as from the words of Christ, as attested by the Gospel, every unprejudiced observer will readily apprehend the magnitude of the Faith which Bahá'u'lláh has revealed, and recognize the staggering weight of the claim He has advanced. No wonder if 'Abdu'l-Bahá has portrayed in such lurid colors the fierceness of the agitation that shall center in the days to come round the nascent institutions of the Faith. We can now but faintly discern the beginnings of that turmoil which the rise and ascendancy of the Cause of God is destined to cast in the world.

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi delves into the dynamic and evolving nature of the Bahá'í Faith, highlighting its capacity for growth and adaptation to the needs of an ever-changing society. Shoghi Effendi emphasizes the flexibility and resilience embedded within the administrative structure of the Bahá'í Faith, citing Bahá'u'lláh's and 'Abdu'l-Bahá's provisions for the House of Justice to legislate and repeal laws as necessary. He asserts that despite the current perception of the Faith as embryonic and feeble, it possesses the potential to evolve and encompass all of humanity. Shoghi Effendi calls upon leaders of religion and politics to recognize the unfolding World Order outlined in Bahá'u'lláh's teachings as a solution to the crises facing contemporary civilization. He urges believers to uphold and demonstrate the truth of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings, emphasizing the immovable conviction required to establish and apply them effectively.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to the adaptable nature of the Bahá'í Faith and its capacity for growth.
2. Explanation of the authority granted to the House of Justice to legislate and repeal laws according to changing circumstances.
3. Affirmation of the potential of the Bahá'í Faith to encompass all of humanity despite its current perception.
4. Call to leaders to recognize the Bahá'í World Order as a solution to contemporary crises.
5. Exhortation to believers to uphold and demonstrate the truth of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings with unwavering conviction.

Questions and Answers:

1. How does the provision for the House of Justice to legislate and repeal laws reflect the adaptability of the Bahá'í Faith to changing societal needs?
 - The authority granted to the House of Justice enables the Bahá'í Faith to remain relevant and responsive to the evolving challenges and circumstances of society, showcasing its adaptability and resilience.
2. In what ways can believers demonstrate the truth of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings in their daily lives and interactions with others?
 - Believers can exemplify the principles of the Bahá'í Faith through their actions, attitudes, and contributions to their communities, serving as living embodiments of its transformative power and moral values.
3. How might leaders of religion and politics benefit from embracing the World Order outlined in Bahá'u'lláh's teachings?
 - Embracing the Bahá'í World Order can provide leaders with a comprehensive framework for addressing contemporary crises, fostering unity, justice, and prosperity within their societies, and promoting global harmony and cooperation.

4. What role does unwavering conviction play in establishing and applying Bahá'u'lláh's teachings in the world?

- Unwavering conviction empowers believers to overcome obstacles, withstand opposition, and effectively promote the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh with confidence, integrity, and perseverance.

5. How can believers cultivate a deeper understanding of the transformative potential of the Bahá'í Faith and its implications for humanity's future?

- By studying the writings of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, engaging in consultation with fellow believers, and actively participating in the community-building efforts of the Bahá'í Faith, believers can deepen their understanding of its transformative potential and contribute to its realization in the world.

The Greatest Drama of the World's Spiritual History

Whether in the ferocious and insidious campaign of repression and cruelty which the rulers of Russia have launched against the upholders of the Faith under their rule; whether in the unyielding animosity with which the Shiites of Islám are trampling upon the sacred rights of the adherents of the Cause in connection with Bahá'u'lláh's house in Baghdád; whether in the impotent rage which has impelled the ecclesiastical leaders of the Sunnite sect of Islám to expel our Egyptian brethren from their midst—in all of these we can perceive the manifestations of the relentless hate which peoples, religions, and governments entertain for so pure, so innocent, so glorious a Faith.

Ours is the duty to ponder these things in our heart, to strive to widen our vision, and to deepen our comprehension of this Cause, and to arise, resolutely and unreservedly, to play our part, however small, in this greatest drama of the world's spiritual history.

Your brother and co-worker,

Shoghi.

Haifa, Palestine,
March 21, 1930.

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi reflects on the ongoing persecution faced by the Bahá'í community in various parts of the world. He highlights the relentless campaign of repression and cruelty launched against Bahá'ís in Russia, the animosity shown by Shiite Muslims towards Bahá'ís in Baghdad, and the expulsion of Egyptian Bahá'ís by Sunnite ecclesiastical leaders. Shoghi Effendi emphasizes the purity, innocence, and glory of the Bahá'í Faith in the face of such hatred and persecution. He calls upon believers to reflect on these challenges, broaden their understanding of the Faith, and actively participate in its advancement. Shoghi Effendi portrays the struggles of the Bahá'í community as part of the greatest drama in the world's spiritual history, urging believers to rise resolutely to play their part, no matter how small, in this monumental endeavor.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to the ongoing persecution faced by the Bahá'í community in various parts of the world.
2. Reflection on the manifestations of relentless hate towards the Bahá'í Faith by governments, religions, and peoples.
3. Call to believers to ponder these challenges, widen their vision, and deepen their comprehension of the Bahá'í Cause.
4. Emphasis on the purity, innocence, and glory of the Bahá'í Faith amidst persecution and adversity.
5. Exhortation to believers to actively participate in the greatest drama of the world's spiritual history by playing their part in the advancement of the Bahá'í Cause.

Questions and Answers:

1. How do the examples of persecution highlighted by Shoghi Effendi reflect broader patterns of religious intolerance and discrimination in the world?
 - The examples of persecution underscore the challenges faced by religious minorities in societies where intolerance and discrimination are prevalent, shedding light on broader issues of human rights and religious freedom.
2. What strategies can believers employ to deepen their understanding of the Bahá'í Cause and strengthen their resolve in the face of persecution?
 - Believers can deepen their understanding through studying the writings of Bahá'u'lláh and engaging in reflective practices such as meditation and prayer. They can also draw inspiration from the stories of courage and resilience within the Bahá'í community.
3. How can awareness of the persecution faced by Bahá'ís around the world inspire believers to advocate for justice and human rights in their own communities?
 - Awareness of persecution can motivate believers to become advocates for justice and human rights, both within the Bahá'í community and in broader society, by speaking out against discrimination and promoting tolerance and understanding.

4. In what ways can believers support their fellow Bahá'ís who are facing persecution, both locally and globally?

- Believers can support persecuted Bahá'ís by offering moral and emotional support, raising awareness about their plight, advocating for their rights, and providing practical assistance such as humanitarian aid and legal representation.

5. How does Shoghi Effendi's characterization of the Bahá'í community's struggles as the greatest drama of the world's spiritual history inspire believers to persevere in their efforts to advance the Bahá'í Cause?

- Shoghi Effendi's characterization underscores the significance and magnitude of the Bahá'í community's struggles in the context of humanity's spiritual evolution, serving as a source of inspiration and motivation for believers to persevere in their efforts to advance the Bahá'í Cause despite challenges and obstacles.

. . .

The Goal of a New World Order

The Goal of a New World Order

Fellow-believers in the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh:

The inexorable march of recent events has carried humanity so near to the goal foreshadowed by Bahá'u'lláh that no responsible follower of His Faith, viewing on all sides the distressing evidences of the world's travail, can remain unmoved at the thought of its approaching deliverance.

It would not seem inappropriate, at a time when we are commemorating the world over the termination of the first decade since 'Abdu'l-Bahá's sudden removal from our midst, to ponder, in the light of the teachings bequeathed by Him to the world, such events as have tended to hasten the gradual emergence of the World Order anticipated by Bahá'u'lláh.

Ten years ago, this very day, there flashed upon the world the news of the passing of Him Who alone, through the ennobling influence of His love, strength and wisdom, could have proved its stay and solace in the many afflictions it was destined to suffer.

How well we, the little band of His avowed supporters who lay claim to have recognized the Light that shone within Him, can still remember His repeated allusions, in the evening of His earthly life, to the tribulation and turmoil with which an unregenerate humanity was to be increasingly afflicted. How poignantly some of us can recall His pregnant remarks, in the presence of the pilgrims and visitors who thronged His doors on the morrow of the jubilant celebrations that greeted the termination of the World War—a war, which by the horrors it evoked, the losses it entailed and the complications it engendered, was destined to exert so far-reaching an influence on the fortunes of mankind. How serenely, yet how powerfully, He stressed the cruel deception which a Pact, hailed by peoples and nations as the embodiment of triumphant justice and the unfailing instrument of an abiding peace, held in store for an

unrepented humanity. Peace, Peace, how often we heard Him remark, the lips of potentates and peoples unceasingly proclaim, whereas the fire of unquenched hatreds still smoulders in their hearts. How often we heard Him raise His voice, whilst the tumult of triumphant enthusiasm was still at its height and long before the faintest misgivings could have been felt or expressed, confidently declaring that the Document, extolled as the Charter of a liberated humanity, contained within itself seeds of such bitter deception as would further enslave the world. How abundant are now the evidences that attest the perspicacity of His unerring judgment!

Ten years of unceasing turmoil, so laden with anguish, so fraught with incalculable consequences to the future of civilization, have brought the world to the verge of a calamity too awful to contemplate. Sad indeed is the contrast between the manifestations of confident enthusiasm in which the Plenipotentiaries at Versailles so freely indulged and the cry of unconcealed distress which victors and vanquished alike are now raising in the hour of bitter delusion.

Summary:

In his message titled "The Goal of a New World Order," Shoghi Effendi reflects on the state of the world and the approaching deliverance foreseen by Bahá'u'lláh. Commemorating the tenth anniversary of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's passing, Effendi urges believers to ponder recent events in light of the teachings left by 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the vision of Bahá'u'lláh for a new world order. He recalls 'Abdu'l-Bahá's warnings about the tribulations and turmoil that humanity would face, particularly in the aftermath of World War I. Despite the jubilant celebrations that followed the war's end, 'Abdu'l-Bahá foresaw the bitter deception inherent in the peace treaties and the continuation of hatred among nations. Shoghi Effendi highlights the contrast between the enthusiastic optimism of the post-war era and the distressing reality of the present, marked by unending turmoil and the looming threat of calamity.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to the message reflecting on the state of the world and the approaching deliverance foreseen by Bahá'u'lláh.
2. Commemoration of the tenth anniversary of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's passing and reflection on His warnings about humanity's tribulations.
3. Recall of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's remarks on the peace treaties following World War I and His foresight regarding the continuation of hatred and turmoil.
4. Contrast between the enthusiastic optimism of the post-war era and the distressing reality of the present marked by unending turmoil.
5. Call to believers to ponder recent events in light of the teachings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the vision of Bahá'u'lláh for a new world order.

Questions and Answers:

1. How do 'Abdu'l-Bahá's warnings about the consequences of the peace treaties following World War I resonate with the current state of global affairs?
 - 'Abdu'l-Bahá's warnings about the peace treaties' potential to lead to further conflict and deception can be seen in contemporary geopolitical tensions and unresolved conflicts around the world.
2. In what ways can the Bahá'í community contribute to the realization of Bahá'u'lláh's vision for a new world order amidst the ongoing turmoil and uncertainty?
 - The Bahá'í community can contribute by promoting unity, justice, and peace at the grassroots level, fostering understanding and collaboration among diverse peoples, and advocating for the principles outlined in Bahá'u'lláh's teachings.
3. How can believers reconcile the vision of a new world order with the current state of global instability and the persistence of conflict and injustice?
 - Believers can find hope and resilience in the vision of a new world order, recognizing that the process of social transformation is gradual and requires sustained effort and perseverance, even in the face of challenges and setbacks.

4. What lessons can be drawn from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s foresight and wisdom in anticipating the consequences of historical events and trends?

- ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s foresight underscores the importance of spiritual insight and moral clarity in understanding the complexities of human affairs, guiding believers to navigate challenges with wisdom and discernment.

5. How does Shoghi Effendi’s message inspire believers to reflect on their role in advancing the cause of peace and justice in the world today?

- Shoghi Effendi’s message calls upon believers to reflect on the urgency of their mission in promoting peace and justice, reminding them of their responsibility to contribute to the realization of Bahá’u’lláh’s vision for a new world order amidst the tumult of the present age.

A War-Weary World

Neither the force which the framers and guarantors of the Peace Treaties have mustered, nor the lofty ideals which originally animated the author of the Covenant of the League of Nations, have proved a sufficient bulwark against the forces of internal disruption with which a structure so laboriously contrived had been consistently assailed. Neither the provisions of the so-called Settlement which the victorious Powers have sought to impose, nor the machinery of an institution which America’s illustrious and far-seeing President had conceived, have proved, either in conception or practice, adequate instruments to ensure the integrity of the Order they had striven to establish. *“The ills from which the world now suffers,”* wrote ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in January, 1920, *“will multiply; the gloom which envelops it will deepen. The Balkans will remain discontented. Its restlessness will increase. The vanquished Powers will continue to agitate. They will resort to every measure that may rekindle the flame of war. Movements, newly-born and world-wide in their range, will exert their utmost effort for the advancement of their designs. The Movement of the Left will acquire great importance. Its influence will spread.”*

Economic distress, since those words were written, together with political confusion, financial upheavals, religious restlessness and racial animosities, seem to have conspired to add immeasurably to the burdens under which an impoverished, a war-weary world is groaning. Such has been the cumulative effect of these successive crises, following one another with such bewildering rapidity, that the very foundations of society are trembling. The world, to whichever continent we turn our gaze, to however remote a region our survey may extend, is everywhere assailed by forces it can neither explain nor control.

Europe, hitherto regarded as the cradle of a highly-vaunted civilization, as the torch-bearer of liberty and the mainspring of the forces of world industry and commerce, stands bewildered and paralyzed at the sight of so tremendous an upheaval. Long-cherished ideals in the political no less than in the economic sphere of human activity are being severely tested under the pressure of reactionary forces on one hand and of an insidious and persistent radicalism on the other. From the heart of Asia distant rumblings, ominous and insistent, portend the steady onslaught of a creed which, by its negation of God, His Laws and Principles, threatens to disrupt the foundations of human society. The clamor of a nascent nationalism, coupled with a recrudescence of skepticism and unbelief, come as added misfortunes to a continent hitherto regarded as the symbol of age-long stability and undisturbed resignation. From darkest Africa the first stirrings of a conscious and determined revolt against the aims and methods of political and

economic imperialism can be increasingly discerned, adding their share to the growing vicissitudes of a troubled age. Not even America, which until very recently prided itself on its traditional policy of aloofness and the self-contained character of its economy, the invulnerability of its institutions and the evidences of its growing prosperity and prestige, has been able to resist the impelling forces that have swept her into the vortex of an economic hurricane that now threatens to impair the basis of her own industrial and economic life. Even far-away Australia, which, owing to its remoteness from the storm-centers of Europe, would have been expected to be immune from the trials and torments of an ailing continent, has been caught in this whirlpool of passion and strife, impotent to extricate herself from their ensnaring influence.

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi reflects on the aftermath of World War I and the subsequent turmoil that has engulfed the world. He begins by acknowledging the failure of peace treaties and international institutions to prevent internal disruptions and maintain global order. Shoghi Effendi quotes 'Abdu'l-Bahá's warnings from 1920 about the multiplication of ills and deepening gloom in the world, foretelling continued discontent, agitation, and the resurgence of war-like tendencies. He describes how economic distress, political confusion, financial upheavals, religious restlessness, and racial animosities have compounded the burdens faced by a war-weary world. Shoghi Effendi observes that Europe, once seen as the cradle of civilization, is now bewildered and paralyzed by the upheaval, with long-cherished ideals being severely tested by reactionary and radical forces. He notes the rise of radical creeds in Asia, nascent nationalism in Africa, and economic challenges even in traditionally prosperous regions like America and Australia.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to the failure of peace treaties and international institutions to prevent global turmoil.
2. Quoting 'Abdu'l-Bahá's warnings from 1920 about the worsening state of the world and the resurgence of war-like tendencies.
3. Description of the various factors contributing to the burdens faced by a war-weary world, including economic distress, political confusion, financial upheavals, religious restlessness, and racial animosities.
4. Examination of the state of Europe, once seen as the cradle of civilization, now bewildered and paralyzed by upheaval.
5. Analysis of global trends, including the rise of radical creeds in Asia, nascent nationalism in Africa, and economic challenges in traditionally prosperous regions like America and Australia.

Questions and Answers:

1. How do 'Abdu'l-Bahá's warnings from 1920 about the multiplying ills and deepening gloom in the world resonate with the challenges faced by contemporary society?
 - 'Abdu'l-Bahá's warnings about the persistence of discontent, agitation, and the resurgence of war-like tendencies are reflected in ongoing global issues such as political unrest, economic inequality, and regional conflicts.
2. What role can international institutions and diplomatic efforts play in addressing the internal disruptions and maintaining global order in today's interconnected world?
 - International institutions and diplomatic efforts can facilitate dialogue, promote cooperation, and establish mechanisms for conflict resolution, humanitarian aid, and peacekeeping to address internal disruptions and maintain global order.
3. How can individuals and communities navigate the complexities of the current global landscape marked by economic distress, political confusion, and social unrest?

- Individuals and communities can foster resilience, solidarity, and mutual support, uphold values of justice and compassion, and actively engage in efforts to address root causes of economic distress, political confusion, and social unrest.

4. In what ways can the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá provide guidance and solace to individuals and societies grappling with the challenges of a war-weary world?

- The teachings of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá offer principles of unity, justice, and peace, encouraging individuals and societies to strive for reconciliation, understanding, and collective action in addressing the root causes of conflict and suffering.

5. How can the Bahá'í community contribute to efforts aimed at alleviating the burdens faced by a war-weary world and fostering pathways towards global peace and prosperity?

- The Bahá'í community can contribute by promoting spiritual principles, engaging in grassroots initiatives, collaborating with like-minded organizations, and advocating for social transformation based on principles of justice, equity, and unity.

The Signs of Impending Chaos

Never indeed have there been such widespread and basic upheavals, whether in the social, economic or political spheres of human activity as those now going on in different parts of the world. Never have there been so many and varied sources of danger as those that now threaten the structure of society. The following words of Bahá'u'lláh are indeed significant as we pause to reflect upon the present state of a strangely disordered world: *“How long will humanity persist in its waywardness? How long will injustice continue? How long is chaos and confusion to reign amongst men? How long will discord agitate the face of society? The winds of despair are, alas, blowing from every direction, and the strife that divides and afflicts the human race is daily increasing. The signs of impending convulsions and chaos can now be discerned, inasmuch as the prevailing order appears to be lamentably defective.”*

The disquieting influence of over thirty million souls living under minority conditions throughout the continent of Europe; the vast and ever-swelling army of the unemployed with its crushing burden and demoralizing influence on governments and peoples; the wicked, unbridled race of armaments swallowing an ever-increasing share of the substance of already impoverished nations; the utter demoralization from which the international financial markets are now increasingly suffering; the onslaught of secularism invading what has hitherto been regarded as the impregnable strongholds of Christian and Muslim orthodoxy—these stand out as the gravest symptoms that bode ill for the future stability of the structure of modern civilization. Little wonder if one of Europe's preëminent thinkers, honored for his wisdom and restraint, should have been forced to make so bold an assertion: “The world is passing through the gravest crisis in the history of civilization.” “We stand,” writes another, “before either a world catastrophe, or perhaps before the dawn of a greater era of truth and wisdom.” “It is in such times,” he adds, “that religions have perished and are born.”

Might we not already discern, as we scan the political horizon, the alignment of those forces that are dividing afresh the continent of Europe into camps of potential combatants, determined upon a contest that may mark, unlike the last war, the end of an epoch, a vast epoch, in the history of human evolution? Are we, the privileged custodians of a priceless Faith, called upon to witness a cataclysmical change, politically as fundamental and spiritually as beneficent as that

which precipitated the fall of the Roman Empire in the West? Might it not happen—every vigilant adherent of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh might well pause to reflect—that out of this world eruption there may stream forces of such spiritual energy as shall recall, nay eclipse, the splendor of those signs and wonders that accompanied the establishment of the Faith of Jesus Christ? Might there not emerge out of the agony of a shaken world a religious revival of such scope and power as to even transcend the potency of those world-directing forces with which the Religions of the Past have, at fixed intervals and according to an inscrutable Wisdom, revived the fortunes of declining ages and peoples? Might not the bankruptcy of this present, this highly-vaunted materialistic civilization, in itself clear away the choking weeds that now hinder the unfoldment and future efflorescence of God's struggling Faith?

Let Bahá'u'lláh Himself shed the illumination of His words upon our path as we steer our course amid the pitfalls and miseries of this troubled age. More than fifty years ago, in a world far removed from the ills and trials that now torment it, there flowed from His Pen these prophetic words: *“The world is in travail and its agitation waxeth day by day. Its face is turned towards waywardness and unbelief. Such shall be its plight that to disclose it now would not be meet and seemly. Its perversity will long continue. And when the appointed hour is come, there shall suddenly appear that which shall cause the limbs of mankind to quake. Then and only then will the Divine Standard be unfurled and the Nightingale of Paradise warble its melody.”*

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi reflects on the widespread upheavals and imminent dangers facing society in various spheres of human activity. He quotes Bahá'u'lláh's poignant questions about humanity's persistence in waywardness, injustice, chaos, and discord, emphasizing the signs of impending convulsions and chaos in the lamentably defective prevailing order. Shoghi Effendi highlights several grave symptoms threatening the stability of modern civilization, including the disquieting conditions of over thirty million people living as minorities in Europe, the growing army of unemployed, the race of armaments, financial market demoralization, and the onslaught of secularism challenging religious orthodoxy. Quoting Europe's preeminent thinkers, Shoghi Effendi underscores the gravity of the crisis facing civilization, with some suggesting the possibility of a world catastrophe or the dawn of a greater era of truth and wisdom.

Shoghi Effendi prompts reflection on the alignment of forces dividing Europe into potential combatant camps, raising questions about the potential cataclysmic change akin to the fall of the Roman Empire in the West. He speculates about the emergence of spiritual forces amidst the world eruption, envisioning a religious revival surpassing past epochs and reviving the fortunes of declining ages and peoples. Shoghi Effendi suggests that the bankruptcy of materialistic civilization could pave the way for the unfoldment and future efflorescence of God's struggling Faith, quoting Bahá'u'lláh's prophetic words about the world's travail and agitation, the sudden appearance of a cause of widespread fear, and the eventual unfurling of the Divine Standard.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to the widespread upheavals and imminent dangers facing society.
2. Quoting Bahá'u'lláh's questions about humanity's persistence in waywardness, injustice, chaos, and discord.
3. Highlighting grave symptoms threatening the stability of modern civilization, including minority conditions, unemployment, armament races, financial market demoralization, and secularism.
4. Quoting Europe's preeminent thinkers to underscore the gravity of the crisis facing civilization.
5. Prompting reflection on the alignment of forces dividing Europe, the potential cataclysmic change, and the emergence of spiritual forces amidst the turmoil.

Questions and Answers:

1. How do the signs of impending convulsions and chaos described by Bahá'u'lláh and Shoghi Effendi resonate with the contemporary challenges facing society?
 - The signs of impending convulsions and chaos, including social, economic, and political upheavals, resonate with contemporary challenges such as geopolitical tensions, economic inequality, environmental degradation, and social unrest.
2. What role can spiritual principles and religious revival play in addressing the root causes of societal upheavals and fostering greater unity, justice, and peace?

- Spiritual principles and religious revival can inspire individuals and communities to uphold values of compassion, solidarity, and reconciliation, fostering greater unity, justice, and peace amidst societal upheavals.

3. How might the bankruptcy of materialistic civilization create opportunities for the unfoldment and future efflorescence of spiritual faiths, as envisioned by Shoghi Effendi?

- The bankruptcy of materialistic civilization could prompt individuals to seek deeper meaning and purpose, leading to a renewed interest in spiritual values and faith traditions as sources of guidance, solace, and inspiration.

4. In what ways can individuals and communities navigate the challenges of a troubled age and contribute to efforts aimed at fostering resilience, empathy, and social cohesion?

- Individuals and communities can cultivate resilience, empathy, and social cohesion by promoting dialogue, understanding, and cooperation, supporting marginalized groups, and advocating for systemic reforms that address root causes of injustice and inequality.

5. How can Bahá'í teachings and principles provide guidance and hope amidst the turmoil and uncertainty described by Shoghi Effendi?

- Bahá'í teachings and principles can provide guidance and hope by emphasizing the importance of unity, justice, and service to humanity, offering spiritual insights and practical solutions to navigate the complexities of a troubled age and work towards a more peaceful and harmonious world.

The Impotence of Statesmanship

Dearly-beloved friends! Humanity, whether viewed in the light of man's individual conduct or in the existing relationships between organized communities and nations, has, alas, strayed too far and suffered too great a decline to be redeemed through the unaided efforts of the best among its recognized rulers and statesmen—however disinterested their motives, however concerted their action, however unsparing in their zeal and devotion to its cause. No scheme which the calculations of the highest statesmanship may yet devise; no doctrine which the most distinguished exponents of economic theory may hope to advance; no principle which the most ardent of moralists may strive to inculcate, can provide, in the last resort, adequate foundations upon which the future of a distracted world can be built. No appeal for mutual tolerance which the worldly-wise might raise, however compelling and insistent, can calm its passions or help restore its vigor. Nor would any general scheme of mere organized international coöperation, in whatever sphere of human activity, however ingenious in conception, or extensive in scope, succeed in removing the root cause of the evil that has so rudely upset the equilibrium of present-day society. Not even, I venture to assert, would the very act of devising the machinery required for the political and economic unification of the world—a principle that has been increasingly advocated in recent times—provide in itself the antidote against the poison that is steadily undermining the vigor of organized peoples and nations. What else, might we not confidently affirm, but the unreserved acceptance of the Divine Program enunciated, with such simplicity and force as far back as sixty years ago, by Bahá'u'lláh, embodying in its essentials God's divinely appointed scheme for the unification of mankind in this age, coupled with an indomitable conviction in the unfailing efficacy of each and all of its provisions, is eventually

capable of withstanding the forces of internal disintegration which, if unchecked, must needs continue to eat into the vitals of a despairing society. It is towards this goal—the goal of a new World Order, Divine in origin, all-embracing in scope, equitable in principle, challenging in its features—that a harassed humanity must strive.

To claim to have grasped all the implications of Bahá'u'lláh's prodigious scheme for world-wide human solidarity, or to have fathomed its import, would be presumptuous on the part of even the declared supporters of His Faith. To attempt to visualize it in all its possibilities, to estimate its future benefits, to picture its glory, would be premature at even so advanced a stage in the evolution of mankind.

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi laments the decline of humanity to a point where it cannot be redeemed by the efforts of even the most capable rulers and statesmen. He argues that no scheme, doctrine, or principle put forth by statesmen, economists, or moralists can adequately address the root causes of the world's distress. Shoghi Effendi dismisses the idea that mere appeals for mutual tolerance or organized international cooperation can resolve the deep-seated issues plaguing society. Even proposals for political and economic unification, while valuable, are insufficient on their own to counteract the pervasive poison undermining societal vigor. Instead, Shoghi Effendi asserts that only the unreserved acceptance of Bahá'u'lláh's Divine Program for the unification of mankind, along with unwavering conviction in its efficacy, can withstand the forces of disintegration and lead humanity toward a new World Order.

Shoghi Effendi acknowledges the complexity and profundity of Bahá'u'lláh's scheme for human solidarity, cautioning against claiming full understanding of its implications or future benefits. He suggests that humanity is still at an early stage in comprehending the potential of this divine plan and must strive toward its realization.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to the decline of humanity and the inadequacy of statesmanship to redeem it.
2. Rejection of various proposed solutions to societal distress, including appeals for tolerance and international cooperation.
3. Assertion of the necessity of accepting Bahá'u'lláh's Divine Program for human unification.
4. Dismissal of claims to fully grasp the implications and benefits of Bahá'u'lláh's scheme.
5. Emphasis on the ongoing journey towards understanding and realizing the potential of Bahá'u'lláh's plan for a new World Order.

Questions and Answers:

1. Why does Shoghi Effendi argue that statesmanship alone is insufficient to address the deep-seated issues facing humanity?
 - Shoghi Effendi believes that the decline of humanity is too profound for statesmanship to remedy, as it requires a divine program and unwavering conviction to counteract the forces of disintegration.
2. What distinguishes Bahá'u'lláh's Divine Program from other proposed solutions to societal distress?
 - Bahá'u'lláh's Divine Program is seen as divine in origin, all-embracing in scope, and equitable in principle, offering a comprehensive solution that transcends the limitations of mere human efforts.
3. Why does Shoghi Effendi caution against claiming full understanding of Bahá'u'lláh's scheme for human solidarity?

- Shoghi Effendi suggests that humanity is still in the early stages of comprehending the implications and benefits of Bahá'u'lláh's plan, indicating that further exploration and realization are necessary.

4. How can individuals and communities foster the acceptance and realization of Bahá'u'lláh's Divine Program in the face of societal distress?

- Individuals and communities can promote education about Bahá'u'lláh's teachings, demonstrate the principles of unity and justice in their actions, and engage in efforts to build inclusive and harmonious societies based on these principles.

5. What steps can be taken to cultivate unwavering conviction in the efficacy of Bahá'u'lláh's plan for a new World Order, particularly in times of uncertainty and upheaval?

- Cultivating unwavering conviction may involve deepening one's understanding of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings, reflecting on their application to contemporary challenges, and actively participating in efforts to advance the principles of unity, justice, and peace in the world.

The Guiding Principles of World Order

All we can reasonably venture to attempt is to strive to obtain a glimpse of the first streaks of the promised Dawn that must, in the fullness of time, chase away the gloom that has encircled humanity. All we can do is to point out, in their broadest outlines, what appear to us to be the guiding principles underlying the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, as amplified and enunciated by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the Center of His Covenant with all mankind and the appointed Interpreter and Expounder of His Word.

That the unrest and suffering afflicting the mass of mankind are in no small measure the direct consequences of the World War and are attributable to the un wisdom and shortsightedness of the framers of the Peace Treaties only a biased mind can refuse to admit. That the financial obligations contracted in the course of the war, as well as the imposition of a staggering burden of reparations upon the vanquished, have, to a very great extent, been responsible for the maldistribution and consequent shortage of the world's monetary gold supply, which in turn has, to a very great measure, accentuated the phenomenal fall in prices and thereby relentlessly increased the burdens of impoverished countries, no impartial mind would question. That inter-governmental debts have imposed a severe strain on the masses of the people in Europe, have upset the equilibrium of national budgets, have crippled national industries, and led to an increase in the number of the unemployed, is no less apparent to an unprejudiced observer. That the spirit of vindictiveness, of suspicion, of fear and rivalry, engendered by the war, and which the provisions of the Peace Treaties have served to perpetuate and foster, has led to an enormous increase of national competitive armaments, involving during the last year the aggregate expenditure of no less than a thousand million pounds, which in turn has accentuated the effects of the world-wide depression, is a truth that even the most superficial observer will readily admit. That a narrow and brutal nationalism, which the post-war theory of self-determination has served to reinforce, has been chiefly responsible for the policy of high and prohibitive tariffs, so injurious to the healthy flow of international trade and to the mechanism of international finance, is a fact which few would venture to dispute.

It would be idle, however, to contend that the war, with all the losses it involved, the passions it aroused and the grievances it left behind, has solely been responsible for the unprecedented

confusion into which almost every section of the civilized world is plunged at present. Is it not a fact—and this is the central idea I desire to emphasize—that the fundamental cause of this world unrest is attributable, not so much to the consequences of what must sooner or later come to be regarded as a transitory dislocation in the affairs of a continually changing world, but rather to the failure of those into whose hands the immediate destinies of peoples and nations have been committed, to adjust their system of economic and political institutions to the imperative needs of a rapidly evolving age? Are not these intermittent crises that convulse present-day society due primarily to the lamentable inability of the world's recognized leaders to read aright the signs of the times, to rid themselves once for all of their preconceived ideas and fettering creeds, and to reshape the machinery of their respective governments according to those standards that are implicit in Bahá'u'lláh's supreme declaration of the Oneness of Mankind—the chief and distinguishing feature of the Faith He proclaimed? For the principle of the Oneness of Mankind, the cornerstone of Bahá'u'lláh's world-embracing dominion, implies nothing more nor less than the enforcement of His scheme for the unification of the world—the scheme to which we have already referred. *“In every Dispensation,”* writes ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *“the light of Divine Guidance has been focussed upon one central theme. . . . In this wondrous Revelation, this glorious century, the foundation of the Faith of God and the distinguishing feature of His Law is the consciousness of the Oneness of Mankind.”*

How pathetic indeed are the efforts of those leaders of human institutions who, in utter disregard of the spirit of the age, are striving to adjust national processes, suited to the ancient days of self-contained nations, to an age which must either achieve the unity of the world, as adumbrated by Bahá'u'lláh, or perish. At so critical an hour in the history of civilization it behooves the leaders of all the nations of the world, great and small, whether in the East or in the West, whether victors or vanquished, to give heed to the clarion call of Bahá'u'lláh and, thoroughly imbued with a sense of world solidarity, the *sine quâ non* of loyalty to His Cause, arise manfully to carry out in its entirety the one remedial scheme He, the Divine Physician, has prescribed for an ailing humanity. Let them discard, once for all, every preconceived idea, every national prejudice, and give heed to the sublime counsel of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, the authorized Expounder of His teachings. You can best serve your country, was ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's rejoinder to a high official in the service of the federal government of the United States of America, who had questioned Him as to the best manner in which he could promote the interests of his government and people, if you strive, in your capacity as a citizen of the world, to assist in the eventual application of the principle of federalism underlying the government of your own country to the relationships now existing between the peoples and nations of the world.

In “The Secret of Divine Civilization” (“The Mysterious Forces of Civilization”), ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's outstanding contribution to the future reorganization of the world, we read the following:

“True civilization will unfurl its banner in the midmost heart of the world whenever a certain number of its distinguished and high-minded sovereigns—the shining exemplars of devotion and determination—shall, for the good and happiness of all mankind, arise, with firm resolve and clear vision, to establish the Cause of Universal Peace. They must make the Cause of Peace the object of general consultation, and seek by every means in their power to establish a Union of the nations of the world. They must conclude a binding treaty and establish a covenant, the provisions of which shall be sound, inviolable and definite. They must proclaim it to all the world and obtain for it the sanction of all the human race. This supreme and noble undertaking—the real source of the peace and well-being of all the world—should be regarded as sacred by all

that dwell on earth. All the forces of humanity must be mobilized to ensure the stability and permanence of this Most Great Covenant. In this all-embracing Pact the limits and frontiers of each and every nation should be clearly fixed, the principles underlying the relations of governments towards one another definitely laid down, and all international agreements and obligations ascertained. In like manner, the size of the armaments of every government should be strictly limited, for if the preparations for war and the military forces of any nation should be allowed to increase, they will arouse the suspicion of others. The fundamental principle underlying this solemn Pact should be so fixed that if any government later violate any one of its provisions, all the governments on earth should arise to reduce it to utter submission, nay the human race as a whole should resolve, with every power at its disposal, to destroy that government. Should this greatest of all remedies be applied to the sick body of the world, it will assuredly recover from its ills and will remain eternally safe and secure.”

“A few,” He further adds, “unaware of the power latent in human endeavor, consider this matter as highly impracticable, nay even beyond the scope of man’s utmost efforts. Such is not the case, however. On the contrary, thanks to the unfailing grace of God, the loving-kindness of His favored ones, the unrivaled endeavors of wise and capable souls, and the thoughts and ideas of the peerless leaders of this age, nothing whatsoever can be regarded as unattainable. Endeavor, ceaseless endeavor, is required. Nothing short of an indomitable determination can possibly achieve it. Many a cause which past ages have regarded as purely visionary, yet in this day has become most easy and practicable. Why should this most great and lofty Cause—the day-star of the firmament of true civilization and the cause of the glory, the advancement, the well-being and the success of all humanity—be regarded as impossible of achievement? Surely the day will come when its beauteous light shall shed illumination upon the assemblage of man.”

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi outlines the principles underlying Bahá'u'lláh's vision for a new World Order, as elucidated by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the appointed Interpreter of His teachings. Shoghi Effendi attributes much of the unrest and suffering in the world to the consequences of World War I and the subsequent failure of statesmanship to adapt to the evolving needs of humanity. He highlights economic maldistribution, inter-governmental debts, competitive armaments, and narrow nationalism as contributing factors to the present turmoil. Shoghi Effendi emphasizes the failure of world leaders to recognize the imperative of unity and adjust their systems accordingly.

Shoghi Effendi draws attention to Bahá'u'lláh's principle of the Oneness of Mankind as the cornerstone of His world-embracing dominion, calling on leaders to discard national prejudices and pursue world solidarity. He quotes 'Abdu'l-Bahá's call for distinguished sovereigns to establish a Union of the nations of the world, proclaiming a binding treaty for Universal Peace. Shoghi Effendi underscores the necessity of limiting armaments and ensuring the stability of international agreements to prevent war and maintain global security.

Questions and Answers:

1. Why does Shoghi Effendi assert that the unrest and suffering in the world are largely attributable to the failure of statesmanship?
 - Shoghi Effendi believes that world leaders have not adequately adapted to the changing needs of humanity, leading to economic disparities, political instability, and the perpetuation of conflict.
2. How does Shoghi Effendi characterize the principle of the Oneness of Mankind, and why does he consider it essential for addressing global challenges?
 - Shoghi Effendi describes the Oneness of Mankind as Bahá'u'lláh's fundamental principle, emphasizing its potential to unite humanity and foster world solidarity. He sees it as a remedy for national prejudices and a catalyst for peace and progress.
3. What role does 'Abdu'l-Bahá envision for distinguished sovereigns in establishing Universal Peace, and why is their leadership crucial?
 - 'Abdu'l-Bahá calls on sovereigns to prioritize the cause of peace and cooperate in establishing a Union of the nations of the world. Their leadership is essential for securing widespread support and sanction for peace initiatives.
4. How does Shoghi Effendi propose limiting armaments and enforcing international agreements to prevent conflict and maintain global security?
 - Shoghi Effendi suggests establishing clear limits on armaments and ensuring strict adherence to international agreements. He advocates for collective action by all nations to enforce these provisions and hold violators accountable.
5. Why does Shoghi Effendi reject the notion that achieving Universal Peace is impracticable, and what factors does he identify as essential for its realization?

- Shoghi Effendi believes that with determination, divine grace, capable leadership, and collective endeavor, achieving Universal Peace is attainable. He cites past achievements once considered visionary but now realized, emphasizing the potential of human effort guided by divine inspiration.

Seven Lights of Unity

In one of His Tablets ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, elucidating further His noble theme, reveals the following:

“In cycles gone by, though harmony was established, yet, owing to the absence of means, the unity of all mankind could not have been achieved. Continents remained widely divided, nay even among the peoples of one and the same continent association and interchange of thought were well nigh impossible. Consequently intercourse, understanding and unity amongst all the peoples and kindreds of the earth were unattainable. In this day, however, means of communication have multiplied, and the five continents of the earth have virtually merged into one.... In like manner all the members of the human family, whether peoples or governments, cities or villages, have become increasingly interdependent. For none is self-sufficiency any longer possible, inasmuch as political ties unite all peoples and nations, and the bonds of trade and industry, of agriculture and education, are being strengthened every day. Hence the unity of all mankind can in this day be achieved. Verily this is none other but one of the wonders of this wondrous age, this glorious century. Of this past ages have been deprived, for this century—the century of light—has been endowed with unique and unprecedented glory, power and illumination. Hence the miraculous unfolding of a fresh marvel every day. Eventually it will be seen how bright its candles will burn in the assemblage of man.

“Behold how its light is now dawning upon the world’s darkened horizon. The first candle is unity in the political realm, the early glimmerings of which can now be discerned. The second candle is unity of thought in world undertakings, the consummation of which will ere long be witnessed. The third candle is unity in freedom which will surely come to pass. The fourth candle is unity in religion which is the corner-stone of the foundation itself, and which, by the power of God, will be revealed in all its splendor. The fifth candle is the unity of nations—a unity which in this century will be securely established, causing all the peoples of the world to regard themselves as citizens of one common fatherland. The sixth candle is unity of races, making of all that dwell on earth peoples and kindreds of one race. The seventh candle is unity of language, i.e., the choice of a universal tongue in which all peoples will be instructed and converse. Each and every one of these will inevitably come to pass, inasmuch as the power of the Kingdom of God will aid and assist in their realization.”

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi elaborates on 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Tablet, which outlines seven essential pillars for achieving unity in the world. 'Abdu'l-Bahá acknowledges the challenges faced in previous cycles due to limited means of communication and widespread divisions among continents and peoples. However, He asserts that in the present age, advancements in communication technology have facilitated unprecedented interconnectedness, enabling the realization of unity among all mankind.

'Abdu'l-Bahá identifies seven lights of unity that represent key facets of global harmony and cooperation. The first light is unity in the political realm, symbolizing the increasing interdependence of nations through political ties and alliances. The second light is unity of thought in world undertakings, indicating the convergence of diverse perspectives and efforts towards common goals. The third light is unity in freedom, signifying the eventual attainment of individual and collective liberties for all humanity.

The fourth light is unity in religion, emphasizing the importance of spiritual harmony as the foundation of global unity. 'Abdu'l-Bahá foresees a future where the diverse religions of the world will recognize their essential unity and contribute to the advancement of humankind. The fifth light is the unity of nations, envisioning a world where national boundaries are transcended, and all people consider themselves citizens of a single global community.

The sixth light is unity of races, portraying a future where racial distinctions cease to divide humanity, and all individuals recognize their shared humanity. The seventh light is unity of language, advocating for the adoption of a universal tongue to facilitate communication and understanding among people of diverse backgrounds.

'Abdu'l-Bahá expresses confidence in the eventual realization of these lights of unity, attributing their fulfillment to the assistance of the Kingdom of God. He believes that each of these aspects of unity will inevitably come to pass, contributing to the transformation of human society and the establishment of a more harmonious and unified world.

Key Points:

1. **Unity in the Political Realm:** The beginnings of political unity are emerging, marking the first candle of unity.
2. **Unity of Thought in World Undertakings:** Progress towards a unified approach to global endeavors, symbolized by the second candle.
3. **Unity in Freedom:** The assurance of freedom for all, anticipated as the third candle of unity.
4. **Unity in Religion:** Foundational to unity, the revelation of religious unity will shine brightly as the fourth candle.
5. **Unity of Nations:** The secure establishment of global unity among nations, fostering a sense of shared citizenship, represented by the fifth candle.

6. Unity of Races: The dissolution of racial divides, leading to a unified humanity, embodied in the sixth candle.

7. Unity of Language: The adoption of a universal language for communication and instruction, the seventh and final candle of unity.

Each of these candles represents a facet of unity that will inevitably manifest, supported by the power of the Kingdom of God.

Questions and Answers:

1. How does ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's assertion about the unique opportunities for achieving unity in the present age resonate with contemporary advancements in technology and globalization?

- ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's statement about the increasing interconnectedness of humanity due to advancements in communication technology aligns with contemporary trends towards globalization and the proliferation of digital connectivity.

2. What significance does ‘Abdu’l-Bahá attribute to unity in the political realm, and how might this concept inform contemporary efforts towards international cooperation and diplomacy?

- ‘Abdu’l-Bahá sees unity in the political realm as a crucial step towards global harmony, suggesting that nations must work together through alliances and agreements to address shared challenges such as climate change, conflict resolution, and economic development.

3. How does ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's vision of unity in religion differ from traditional understandings of religious diversity, and what implications does this have for interfaith dialogue and cooperation?

- ‘Abdu’l-Bahá envisions unity in religion as a recognition of the essential spiritual truths shared by all faiths, rather than the imposition of a single religious doctrine. This perspective encourages interfaith dialogue and cooperation based on mutual respect and understanding.

4. In what ways might the achievement of unity in race and language contribute to the promotion of social justice and cultural diversity on a global scale?

- Unity in race and language could lead to the dismantling of racial hierarchies and linguistic barriers, fostering greater inclusivity, equality, and cultural exchange across diverse communities worldwide.

5. How does ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's confidence in the eventual realization of these lights of unity inspire contemporary efforts towards social change and global cooperation?

- ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's unwavering belief in the inevitability of unity encourages individuals and communities to actively work towards fostering understanding, collaboration, and reconciliation in pursuit of a more harmonious and unified world.

A World Super-State

Over sixty years ago, in His Tablet to Queen Victoria, Bahá'u'lláh, addressing “the concourse of the rulers of the earth,” revealed the following:

“Take ye counsel together, and let your concern be only for that which profiteth mankind and bettereth the condition thereof.... Regard the world as the human body which, though created

whole and perfect, has been afflicted, through divers causes, with grave ills and maladies. Not for one day did it rest, nay its sicknesses waxed more severe, as it fell under the treatment of unskilled physicians who have spurred on the steed of their worldly desires and have erred grievously. And if at one time, through the care of an able physician, a member of that body was healed, the rest remained afflicted as before. Thus informeth you the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.... That which the Lord hath ordained as the sovereign remedy and mightiest instrument for the healing of all the world is the union of all its peoples in one universal Cause, one common Faith. This can in no wise be achieved except through the power of a skilled, an all-powerful and inspired Physician. This verily is the truth, and all else naught but error.”

In a further passage Bahá'u'lláh adds these words: *“We see you adding every year unto your expenditures and laying the burden thereof on the people whom ye rule; this verily is naught but grievous injustice. Fear the sighs and tears of this Wronged One, and burden not your peoples beyond that which they can endure.... Be reconciled among yourselves, that ye may need armaments no more save in a measure to safeguard your territories and dominions. Be united, O concourse of the sovereigns of the world, for thereby will the tempest of discord be stilled amongst you and your peoples find rest. Should any one among you take up arms against another, rise ye all against him, for this is naught but manifest justice.”*

What else could these weighty words signify if they did not point to the inevitable curtailment of unfettered national sovereignty as an indispensable preliminary to the formation of the future Commonwealth of all the nations of the world? Some form of a world super-state must needs be evolved, in whose favor all the nations of the world will have willingly ceded every claim to make war, certain rights to impose taxation and all rights to maintain armaments, except for purposes of maintaining internal order within their respective dominions. Such a state will have to include within its orbit an international executive adequate to enforce supreme and unchallengeable authority on every recalcitrant member of the commonwealth; a world parliament whose members shall be elected by the people in their respective countries and whose election shall be confirmed by their respective governments; and a supreme tribunal whose judgment will have a binding effect even in such cases where the parties concerned did not voluntarily agree to submit their case to its consideration. A world community in which all economic barriers will have been permanently demolished and the interdependence of Capital and Labor definitely recognized; in which the clamor of religious fanaticism and strife will have been forever stilled; in which the flame of racial animosity will have been finally extinguished; in which a single code of international law—the product of the considered judgment of the world's federated representatives—shall have as its sanction the instant and coercive intervention of the combined forces of the federated units; and finally a world community in which the fury of a capricious and militant nationalism will have been transmuted into an abiding consciousness of world citizenship—such indeed, appears, in its broadest outline, the Order anticipated by Bahá'u'lláh, an Order that shall come to be regarded as the fairest fruit of a slowly maturing age.

“The Tabernacle of Unity,” Bahá'u'lláh proclaims in His message to all mankind, “has been raised; regard ye not one another as strangers.... Of one tree are all ye the fruit and of one bough the leaves.... The world is but one country and mankind its citizens.... Let not a man glory in that he loves his country; let him rather glory in this, that he loves his kind.”

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi explores Bahá'u'lláh's vision of global unity and the establishment of a world super-state as the ultimate solution to humanity's ailments. Bahá'u'lláh's Tablet to Queen Victoria emphasizes the need for rulers to prioritize the well-being of humanity above all else, likening the world to a sick body in need of healing. He identifies the union of all peoples in a universal Cause and common Faith as the sovereign remedy for the world's afflictions. This union, Bahá'u'lláh asserts, requires the establishment of a skilled and inspired Physician, symbolizing the need for visionary leaders to guide the process of global unification.

Bahá'u'lláh's words also address the injustice of excessive taxation and militarization imposed by rulers on their subjects, advocating for reconciliation and disarmament among nations. He calls for unity among sovereigns to quell discord and ensure the welfare of their peoples. Shoghi Effendi interprets these passages as pointing towards the necessity of curtailing national sovereignty to pave the way for the formation of a world super-state.

The envisioned world super-state would require nations to relinquish their right to make war, impose taxation, and maintain armaments, except for internal security purposes. It would feature an international executive with supreme authority, a world parliament elected by the people, and a supreme tribunal with binding jurisdiction. Economic barriers would be abolished, religious strife quelled, racial animosity extinguished, and a single code of international law established.

Bahá'u'lláh's message emphasizes the unity of humanity, urging people to view themselves as citizens of one global community rather than strangers divided by national borders. He envisions a world where love for humanity transcends patriotism, where the welfare of all is prioritized over narrow national interests. The ultimate goal is the establishment of a harmonious and just world order, where peace, justice, and unity prevail.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Bahá'u'lláh's vision for a unified world and the necessity for a global super-state.
2. Analogy of the Human Body: Comparing the world to a diseased body in need of healing through unity.
3. The Sovereign Remedy: Emphasizing the union of all peoples under one common cause and faith as the ultimate solution.
4. Call for Unity Among Rulers: Advising rulers to prioritize the welfare of humanity over personal interests and to reconcile differences.
5. Curtailment of National Sovereignty: The inevitable need to limit national sovereignty to establish a future Commonwealth of all nations.
6. Features of the World Super-State:
 - International executive with supreme authority to enforce peace.
 - World parliament elected by people globally and confirmed by governments.
 - Supreme tribunal with binding judgments.
7. Economic and Social Integration: Breaking down economic barriers, ending religious and racial strife, and promoting world citizenship.

8. Bahá'u'lláh's Message of Unity: The Tabernacle of Unity raised, emphasizing the oneness of humanity and the need for universal love and citizenship.

9. Conclusion: The envisioned Order as the culmination of a maturing age and the fairest fruit of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings.

Questions and Answers:

1. How does Bahá'u'lláh's vision of a world super-state resonate with contemporary efforts towards global governance and cooperation, such as the United Nations?

- Bahá'u'lláh's vision shares similarities with contemporary initiatives like the United Nations, highlighting the need for global cooperation and the resolution of international conflicts through diplomatic means.

2. What challenges might arise in the establishment of a world super-state, and how can these be addressed in light of Bahá'u'lláh's principles of unity and justice?

- Challenges in establishing a world super-state may include resistance from sovereign nations, cultural and religious differences, and power struggles. Addressing these challenges requires fostering dialogue, promoting understanding, and prioritizing justice and equality for all.

3. How might the proposed world super-state impact individual freedoms and cultural diversity, and how can these concerns be addressed in its design and implementation?

- The establishment of a world super-state raises questions about individual freedoms and cultural diversity. Balancing the need for global unity with respect for cultural differences requires ensuring that the rights and identities of individuals and communities are respected and protected within the framework of the super-state.

4. What role can grassroots movements and civil society play in advancing the vision of a world super-state, and how can they effectively advocate for global unity and cooperation?

- Grassroots movements and civil society have a vital role in advancing the vision of a world super-state by promoting awareness, mobilizing support, and holding leaders accountable. By organizing campaigns, fostering dialogue, and advocating for policies that promote unity and cooperation, grassroots actors can contribute to building a more just and inclusive world order.

5. How might Bahá'u'lláh's emphasis on the unity of humanity influence contemporary discussions on nationalism, patriotism, and global citizenship?

- Bahá'u'lláh's emphasis on the unity of humanity challenges conventional notions of nationalism and patriotism, urging individuals to prioritize their identity as global citizens. This perspective encourages reflection on the interconnectedness of humanity and the need to transcend divisive barriers in pursuit of collective well-being.

Unity in Diversity

Let there be no misgivings as to the animating purpose of the world-wide Law of Bahá'u'lláh. Far from aiming at the subversion of the existing foundations of society, it seeks to broaden its basis, to remold its institutions in a manner consonant with the needs of an ever-changing world.

It can conflict with no legitimate allegiances, nor can it undermine essential loyalties. Its purpose is neither to stifle the flame of a sane and intelligent patriotism in men's hearts, nor to abolish the system of national autonomy so essential if the evils of excessive centralization are to be avoided. It does not ignore, nor does it attempt to suppress, the diversity of ethnical origins, of climate, of history, of language and tradition, of thought and habit, that differentiate the peoples and nations of the world. It calls for a wider loyalty, for a larger aspiration than any that has animated the human race. It insists upon the subordination of national impulses and interests to the imperative claims of a unified world. It repudiates excessive centralization on one hand, and disclaims all attempts at uniformity on the other. Its watchword is unity in diversity such as 'Abdu'l-Bahá Himself has explained:

“Consider the flowers of a garden. Though differing in kind, color, form and shape, yet, inasmuch as they are refreshed by the waters of one spring, revived by the breath of one wind, invigorated by the rays of one sun, this diversity increaseth their charm and addeth unto their beauty. How unpleasing to the eye if all the flowers and plants, the leaves and blossoms, the fruit, the branches and the trees of that garden were all of the same shape and color! Diversity of hues, form and shape enricheth and adorneth the garden, and heighteneth the effect thereof. In like manner, when divers shades of thought, temperament and character, are brought together under the power and influence of one central agency, the beauty and glory of human perfection will be revealed and made manifest. Naught but the celestial potency of the Word of God, which ruleth and transcendeth the realities of all things, is capable of harmonizing the divergent thoughts, sentiments, ideas and convictions of the children of men.”

The call of Bahá'u'lláh is primarily directed against all forms of provincialism, all insularities and prejudices. If long-cherished ideals and time-honored institutions, if certain social assumptions and religious formulae have ceased to promote the welfare of the generality of mankind, if they no longer minister to the needs of a continually evolving humanity, let them be swept away and relegated to the limbo of obsolescent and forgotten doctrines. Why should these, in a world subject to the immutable law of change and decay, be exempt from the deterioration that must needs overtake every human institution? For legal standards, political and economic theories are solely designed to safeguard the interests of humanity as a whole, and not humanity to be crucified for the preservation of the integrity of any particular law or doctrine.

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi explores the animating purpose of the world-wide Law of Bahá'u'lláh, the principle of the Oneness of Mankind emphasizing its aim to broaden the foundations of society and remold its institutions to meet the evolving needs of humanity. Contrary to subversion, it seeks to enhance existing structures while accommodating diversity in all its forms. The Law of Bahá'u'lláh does not suppress patriotism or national autonomy but calls for a wider loyalty and aspiration that transcends narrow allegiances. It acknowledges and celebrates the diversity of humanity in terms of ethnicity, climate, history, language, tradition, thought, and habit.

The concept of unity in diversity, as elucidated by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, likens humanity to a garden where diverse flowers, though differing in color, shape, and form, contribute to its beauty when nourished by the same source. Similarly, the unity of humanity under one central agency enriches and enhances human civilization, revealing the beauty of human perfection. Bahá'u'lláh's teachings reject excessive centralization and uniformity, advocating instead for unity amidst diversity.

Bahá'u'lláh's call is directed against provincialism, insularities, and prejudices that hinder human progress. If long-held ideals and institutions no longer serve the welfare of humanity, they should be discarded to make way for new ones that better meet the evolving needs of society. Legal standards, political and economic theories should prioritize the interests of humanity as a whole, rather than sacrificing humanity for the preservation of outdated doctrines.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Clarification of Bahá'u'lláh's purpose, which aims to enhance societal foundations rather than undermine them.
2. Respect for Diversity: Acknowledgment of diverse elements such as ethnicity, climate, history, language, and tradition as integral to humanity's richness.
3. Wider Loyalty: Advocacy for a broader loyalty beyond national boundaries, fostering a larger aspiration for humanity.
4. Subordination of National Impulses: Emphasis on prioritizing the unity of the world over national interests.
5. Rejecting Excessive Centralization and Uniformity: Bahá'u'lláh's teachings discourage both excessive centralization and attempts to impose uniformity.
6. Unity in Diversity Analogy: Using the metaphor of a garden with diverse flowers to illustrate the beauty and enrichment brought by diversity.
7. Harmonization through the Word of God: Highlighting the capacity of divine influence to harmonize divergent thoughts and beliefs.
8. Opposition to Provincialism and Prejudices: Bahá'u'lláh's message stands against narrow-mindedness and biases in all forms.
9. Adaptation to Changing Times: Advocacy for discarding outdated ideals and institutions that no longer serve the evolving needs of humanity.
10. Prioritizing Human Welfare: The necessity of prioritizing the welfare of humanity over the preservation of specific laws or doctrines.

Questions and Answers:

1. How can societies balance the preservation of cultural diversity with the promotion of unity and cooperation on a global scale, as advocated by Bahá'u'lláh?
 - Societies can promote unity amidst diversity by fostering dialogue, understanding, and respect for different cultures while emphasizing common values and aspirations that transcend cultural boundaries.
2. What role can education play in promoting unity in diversity, and how can educational systems be reformed to reflect Bahá'u'lláh's principles?
 - Education can play a crucial role in promoting unity in diversity by fostering tolerance, empathy, and appreciation for different perspectives. Educational systems can be reformed to include curriculum that promotes intercultural understanding, global citizenship, and the principles of unity and justice advocated by Bahá'u'lláh.
3. How can individuals overcome personal prejudices and biases to embrace diversity and contribute to the advancement of a unified world community?
 - Individuals can overcome personal prejudices by engaging in self-reflection, challenging their own assumptions and biases, seeking exposure to diverse perspectives, and cultivating empathy and understanding towards others.
4. In what ways can Bahá'u'lláh's concept of unity in diversity inform efforts to address contemporary issues such as racism, xenophobia, and religious intolerance?
 - Bahá'u'lláh's concept of unity in diversity provides a framework for addressing contemporary issues by emphasizing the inherent value of diversity while promoting unity based on shared humanity. Efforts to combat racism, xenophobia, and religious intolerance can benefit from embracing this principle and working towards creating inclusive and equitable societies.
5. How might the principle of unity in diversity be applied in the context of global governance and diplomacy to foster cooperation and resolve conflicts between nations?
 - The principle of unity in diversity can inform global governance and diplomacy by promoting dialogue, collaboration, and mutual respect among nations. By recognizing and celebrating cultural diversity while emphasizing common goals and interests, nations can work together to address shared challenges and build a more peaceful and prosperous world.

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 coöperation 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.

It would be stimulating to follow the history of the growth and development of this lofty conception which must increasingly engage the attention of the responsible custodians of the destinies of peoples and nations. To the states and principalities just emerging from the welter of the great Napoleonic upheaval, whose chief preoccupation was either to recover their rights to an independent existence or to achieve their national unity, the conception of world solidarity seemed not only remote but inconceivable. It was not until the forces of nationalism had succeeded in overthrowing the foundations of the Holy Alliance that had sought to curb their rising power, that the possibility of a world order, transcending in its range the political institutions these nations had established, came to be seriously entertained. It was not until after the World War that these exponents of arrogant nationalism came to regard such an order as the object of a pernicious doctrine tending to sap that essential loyalty upon which the continued existence of their national life depended. With a vigor that recalled the energy with which the members of the Holy Alliance sought to stifle the spirit of a rising nationalism among the peoples liberated from the Napoleonic yoke, these champions of an unfettered national sovereignty, in their turn, have labored and are still laboring to discredit principles upon which their own salvation must ultimately depend.

The fierce opposition which greeted the abortive scheme of the Geneva Protocol; the ridicule poured upon the proposal for a United States of Europe which was subsequently advanced, and the failure of the general scheme for the economic union of Europe, may appear as setbacks to the efforts which a handful of foresighted people are earnestly exerting to advance this noble ideal. And yet, are we not justified in deriving fresh encouragement when we observe that the

very consideration of such proposals is in itself an evidence of their steady growth in the minds and hearts of men? In the organized attempts that are being made to discredit so exalted a conception are we not witnessing the repetition, on a larger scale, of those stirring struggles and fierce controversies that preceded the birth, and assisted in the reconstruction, of the unified nations of the West?

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi delves into the profound significance and implications of the principle of the Oneness of Mankind as proclaimed by Bahá'u'lláh. This principle is not a mere sentiment or idealistic notion but represents a fundamental truth about the nature of humanity and its evolution. It asserts that all human beings are interconnected and belong to one human family, and it calls for a radical transformation in the structure of society to reflect this reality.

The principle of the Oneness of Mankind challenges outdated nationalistic creeds and calls for the reconstruction and demilitarization of the entire civilized world. It envisions a world that is unified in its essential aspects—politically, spiritually, economically, linguistically—while celebrating the diversity of its constituent parts. This vision represents the culmination of human evolution, starting from the birth of family life and progressing through tribal solidarity, city-states, and independent nations.

Efforts to advance the principle of the Oneness of Mankind are already underway, both through the conscious efforts of Bahá'u'lláh's followers and the spontaneous emergence of world solidarity in response to the disorganization of society. While the idea of world solidarity may have seemed remote or inconceivable in the past, it is increasingly gaining traction as people recognize the interconnectedness of human destiny.

Despite opposition and setbacks, such as the failure of proposals for European unity, the growing consideration of these ideas reflects their steady growth in the collective consciousness of humanity. Just as the struggles for national unity in the past eventually led to the formation of unified nations, the current challenges to the principle of Oneness may ultimately pave the way for its realization on a global scale.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Clarification of the profound significance of the principle of the Oneness of Mankind in Bahá'u'lláh's teachings.
2. Deeper Implications: Beyond fostering brotherhood and cooperation, it addresses essential relationships between states and nations.
3. Organic Change in Society: Calls for a fundamental restructuring of society, including demilitarization and unification in various aspects of life.
4. Evolutionary Progression: Traces the evolution of human society from family life to independent nations, leading to the necessity of global unity.
5. Inevitability and Necessity: Asserts that the realization of global unity is both necessary and inevitable, requiring divine intervention.
6. Manifestations of the Concept: Illustrated through the efforts of Bahá'u'lláh's followers and the emerging spirit of world solidarity.
7. Historical Context: Reflects on historical opposition to the idea of world solidarity, countered by the gradual acceptance of its importance.
8. Opposition and Challenges: Highlights opposition from nationalist forces and setbacks in proposals for global unity, yet sees them as evidence of growing awareness.

9. Encouragement in Struggle: Despite challenges, the consideration and debate around such proposals indicate progress towards the realization of global unity.

Questions and Answers:

1. How can societies navigate the tension between promoting the principle of Oneness and preserving cultural diversity and national identities?

- Societies can promote the principle of Oneness while respecting and celebrating cultural diversity by fostering dialogue, understanding, and mutual respect among different communities. Emphasizing common values and aspirations can help bridge the gap between diverse cultural identities.

2. What role do religious and spiritual principles play in advancing the principle of Oneness, and how can religious communities contribute to global unity?

- Religious and spiritual principles often emphasize the interconnectedness of all beings and promote values such as compassion, empathy, and solidarity. Religious communities can contribute to global unity by advocating for these principles and working towards common goals that benefit humanity as a whole.

3. How can individuals overcome entrenched prejudices and nationalistic biases to embrace the principle of Oneness and contribute to a more unified world?

- Individuals can overcome prejudices and biases by educating themselves about different cultures, engaging in meaningful dialogue with people from diverse backgrounds, and challenging their own assumptions and stereotypes. Building empathy and understanding can help individuals recognize the inherent dignity and worth of all human beings.

4. What are some practical steps that governments and international organizations can take to promote the principle of Oneness and foster global cooperation?

- Governments and international organizations can promote the principle of Oneness by prioritizing diplomacy, conflict resolution, and cooperation over conflict and competition. Investing in international development, humanitarian aid, and peacebuilding efforts can also contribute to building a more unified and equitable world.

5. How can advancements in technology and communication facilitate the realization of the principle of Oneness, and what risks or challenges might arise from increased global interconnectedness?

- Advancements in technology and communication have the potential to connect people from diverse backgrounds and facilitate cross-cultural exchange and collaboration. However, they also raise concerns about privacy, security, and the spread of misinformation. Balancing the benefits of increased interconnectedness with these challenges will be essential in realizing the principle of Oneness in the digital age.

The Federation of Mankind

To take but one instance. How confident were the assertions made in the days preceding the unification of the states of the North American continent regarding the insuperable barriers that

stood in the way of their ultimate federation! Was it not widely and emphatically declared that the conflicting interests, the mutual distrust, the differences of government and habit that divided the states were such as no force, whether spiritual or temporal, could ever hope to harmonize or control? And yet how different were the conditions prevailing a hundred and fifty years ago from those that characterize present-day society! It would indeed be no exaggeration to say that the absence of those facilities which modern scientific progress has placed at the service of humanity in our time made of the problem of welding the American states into a single federation, similar though they were in certain traditions, a task infinitely more complex than that which confronts a divided humanity in its efforts to achieve the unification of all mankind.

Who knows that for so exalted a conception to take shape a suffering more intense than any it has yet experienced will have to be inflicted upon humanity? Could anything less than the fire of a civil war with all its violence and vicissitudes—a war that nearly rent the great American Republic—have welded the states, not only into a Union of independent units, but into a Nation, in spite of all the ethnic differences that characterized its component parts? That so fundamental a revolution, involving such far-reaching changes in the structure of society, can be achieved through the ordinary processes of diplomacy and education seems highly improbable. We have but to turn our gaze to humanity's blood-stained history to realize that nothing short of intense mental as well as physical agony has been able to precipitate those epoch-making changes that constitute the greatest landmarks in the history of human civilization.

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi explores the historical context and challenges surrounding the unification of states into larger federations, drawing parallels between past achievements and the vision of a unified global society. Shoghi Effendi reflects on the example of the North American continent, where the seemingly insurmountable barriers to federation were eventually overcome through intense struggle and sacrifice. He highlights how the conditions prevailing a hundred and fifty years ago were vastly different from those of modern society, making the task of unification even more complex.

Shoghi Effendi emphasizes the transformative power of suffering and adversity in precipitating significant social and political changes throughout history. He points to the American Civil War as a pivotal moment that not only united the states into a single federation but also forged a sense of national identity amidst ethnic diversity. Shoghi Effendi suggests that similar intense experiences may be necessary for humanity to achieve the unification of all mankind on a global scale.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Reflection on historical examples, particularly the unification of the North American states, to illustrate the potential for global federation.
2. Preceding Assertions: Recall of past doubts and declarations regarding the impossibility of uniting diverse states due to conflicting interests and differences.
3. Contrast with Present Conditions: Comparison between the complexities faced by the North American states during their unification and the challenges of global unification in the modern era.
4. Historical Context: Examination of the conditions and limitations that characterized the era preceding the unification of the North American states.
5. Necessity of Intense Suffering: Suggestion that achieving global federation may require suffering and upheaval comparable to the intensity of a civil war.
6. Impact of Civil War: Analysis of how the Civil War in the United States, despite its violence and turmoil, contributed to the formation of a unified nation.
7. Revolutionary Changes: Recognition that fundamental revolutions in societal structure often necessitate intense struggle and suffering.
8. Doubts about Diplomacy and Education: Skepticism regarding the effectiveness of traditional diplomatic and educational approaches in achieving such monumental changes.
9. Historical Precedents: Examination of humanity's history to understand that significant transformations often require intense physical and mental upheaval.
10. Implications for Global Federation: Consideration of the potential challenges and sacrifices that may be required to achieve the federation of mankind on a global scale.

Questions and Answers:

1. How can humanity harness the lessons learned from past struggles, such as the American Civil War, to navigate the challenges of achieving global unity in the modern world?

- Humanity can learn from past struggles by recognizing the importance of perseverance, compromise, and collective action in overcoming barriers to unity. Studying historical examples of successful federation and acknowledging the sacrifices made can inform strategies for addressing contemporary challenges to global cooperation.

2. What role do leadership and statesmanship play in advancing the cause of global federation, and how can leaders inspire collective action towards this goal?

- Effective leadership is essential for inspiring and mobilizing individuals and nations towards the vision of global federation. Leaders must demonstrate vision, courage, and statesmanship in promoting cooperation, diplomacy, and conflict resolution on an international scale. By fostering dialogue and collaboration, leaders can build momentum towards achieving shared goals of unity and peace.

3. How can the international community address the diverse interests and perspectives of different nations and cultures in the process of forging a global federation?

- The international community must prioritize inclusivity, respect for diversity, and dialogue in the pursuit of global federation. Recognizing and valuing the unique contributions of different nations and cultures is essential for building trust and cooperation. Through transparent and inclusive decision-making processes, nations can work together to address common challenges and promote shared prosperity.

4. What role do grassroots movements, civil society organizations, and individuals play in advocating for global unity and influencing political change at the national and international levels?

- Grassroots movements, civil society organizations, and individuals have a critical role to play in advocating for global unity and influencing political change. By raising awareness, mobilizing support, and holding leaders and institutions accountable, grassroots initiatives can shape public opinion and policy decisions. Empowering individuals to participate in democratic processes and engage in civic activism strengthens the foundation for global cooperation and solidarity.

5. How can humanity cultivate a shared sense of responsibility and stewardship towards the planet and future generations as part of the broader effort to achieve global federation?

- Cultivating a shared sense of responsibility and stewardship towards the planet and future generations is essential for building a sustainable and resilient global community. By recognizing our interconnectedness and the finite resources of our planet, humanity can prioritize environmental conservation, sustainable development, and equitable resource distribution. Through collaborative efforts and collective action, nations can address global challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and social inequality, paving the way for a more unified and prosperous future for all.

The Fire of Ordeal

Great and far-reaching as have been those changes in the past, they cannot appear, when viewed in their proper perspective, except as subsidiary adjustments prelude that transformation of unparalleled majesty and scope which humanity is in this age bound to undergo. That the forces

of a world catastrophe can alone precipitate such a new phase of human thought is, alas, becoming increasingly apparent. That nothing short of the fire of a severe ordeal, unparalleled in its intensity, can fuse and weld the discordant entities that constitute the elements of present-day civilization, into the integral components of the world commonwealth of the future, is a truth which future events will increasingly demonstrate.

The prophetic voice of Bahá'u'lláh warning, in the concluding passages of the Hidden Words, "*the peoples of the world*" that "*an unforeseen calamity is following them and that grievous retribution awaiteth them*" throws indeed a lurid light upon the immediate fortunes of sorrowing humanity. Nothing but a fiery ordeal, out of which humanity will emerge, chastened and prepared, can succeed in implanting that sense of responsibility which the leaders of a new-born age must arise to shoulder.

I would again direct your attention to those ominous words of Bahá'u'lláh which I have already quoted: "*And when the appointed hour is come, there shall suddenly appear that which shall cause the limbs of mankind to quake.*"

Has not 'Abdu'l-Bahá Himself asserted in unequivocal language that "*another war, fiercer than the last, will assuredly break out*"?

Upon the consummation of this colossal, this unspeakably glorious enterprise—an enterprise that baffled the resources of Roman statesmanship and which Napoleon's desperate efforts failed to achieve—will depend the ultimate realization of that millennium of which poets of all ages have sung and seers have long dreamed. Upon it will depend the fulfillment of the prophecies uttered by the Prophets of old when swords shall be beaten into ploughshares and the lion and the lamb lie down together. It alone can usher in the Kingdom of the Heavenly Father as anticipated by the Faith of Jesus Christ. It alone can lay the foundation for the New World Order visualized by Bahá'u'lláh—a World Order that shall reflect, however dimly, upon this earthly plane, the ineffable splendors of the Abhá Kingdom.

One word more in conclusion. The proclamation of the Oneness of Mankind—the head corner-stone of Bahá'u'lláh's all-embracing dominion—can under no circumstances be compared with such expressions of pious hope as have been uttered in the past. His is not merely a call which He raised, alone and unaided, in the face of the relentless and combined opposition of two of the most powerful Oriental potentates of His day—while Himself an exile and prisoner in their hands. It implies at once a warning and a promise—a warning that in it lies the sole means for the salvation of a greatly suffering world, a promise that its realization is at hand.

Uttered at a time when its possibility had not yet been seriously envisaged in any part of the world, it has, by virtue of that celestial potency which the Spirit of Bahá'u'lláh has breathed into it, come at last to be regarded, by an increasing number of thoughtful men, not only as an approaching possibility, but as the necessary outcome of the forces now operating in the world.

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi discusses the necessity of a severe ordeal, unparalleled in intensity, to bring about the transformation of present-day civilization and the establishment of a world commonwealth of the future. Shoghi Effendi suggests that humanity is bound to undergo significant changes of unparalleled majesty and scope, which can only be precipitated by the forces of a world catastrophe. He emphasizes that nothing short of a fiery ordeal can fuse and weld the discordant elements of modern civilization into the integral components of a unified global society.

Shoghi Effendi draws attention to the prophetic warnings of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá regarding the inevitability of severe calamities and wars, signaling the need for humanity to be chastened and prepared for the responsibilities of a new age. He underscores the significance of these warnings in light of the current state of the world and the urgent need for collective action to address global challenges.

Shoghi Effendi concludes by highlighting the profound implications of achieving the vision of a unified global society, as foretold by Bahá'u'lláh and other prophets. He emphasizes that the realization of this vision will bring about the fulfillment of age-old prophecies and the establishment of a new world order reflective of the heavenly kingdom. Shoghi Effendi asserts that the proclamation of the Oneness of Mankind, as advocated by Bahá'u'lláh, is not merely a pious hope but a warning and a promise—a warning of the sole means for humanity's salvation and a promise of its imminent realization.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Recognition of past changes as precursors to a monumental transformation humanity is destined to undergo.
2. Need for Catastrophe: Acknowledgment that only a global catastrophe of unprecedented intensity can catalyze the necessary changes for global unity.
3. Prophetic Warning: Bahá'u'lláh's warnings of unforeseen calamities and grievous retribution shed light on humanity's current predicament.
4. Sense of Responsibility: The fiery ordeal will instill a sense of responsibility in leaders to shoulder the challenges of a new age.
5. Prophecies and Forewarnings: References to Bahá'u'lláh's and 'Abdu'l-Bahá's prophecies of future wars and upheavals.
6. Colossal Enterprise: The realization of global unity will surpass the achievements of past empires and fulfill prophecies of peace and harmony.
7. Millennium and New World Order: The establishment of global unity will fulfill ancient prophecies of peace and lay the foundation for a New World Order.
8. Comparison with Past Expressions: The proclamation of the Oneness of Mankind is not merely a pious hope but a divine mandate with tangible promises and warnings.
9. Celestial Potency: Despite initial skepticism, the concept of global unity is increasingly seen as a necessary outcome of current global forces, infused with celestial potency by Bahá'u'lláh.

Questions and Answers:

1. What historical examples can we draw upon to understand the transformative power of severe ordeals and catastrophes in shaping human civilization?

- Historical examples such as the American Civil War and World War II demonstrate how severe ordeals can lead to significant societal changes, including the reconfiguration of political boundaries, the emergence of new ideologies, and shifts in global power dynamics.

2. How can humanity prepare itself to navigate and mitigate the impact of future catastrophes and world crises while fostering resilience and unity?

- Humanity can prepare for future catastrophes by investing in disaster preparedness, promoting international cooperation and diplomacy, and addressing underlying social, economic, and environmental vulnerabilities. Building resilience at individual, community, and global levels is essential for effectively responding to crises and minimizing their impact.

3. What role do moral and ethical leadership play in guiding humanity through times of adversity and upheaval towards the realization of a more just and unified world?

- Moral and ethical leadership is crucial for inspiring hope, fostering unity, and promoting collective action in times of adversity. Leaders who prioritize the common good, uphold principles of justice and equity, and demonstrate compassion and empathy can help steer humanity towards a more harmonious and unified future.

4. How can the lessons learned from past conflicts and crises inform efforts to prevent future wars and promote lasting peace and reconciliation?

- Studying the root causes of past conflicts and crises can provide valuable insights into the factors that contribute to war and instability. By addressing underlying grievances, promoting dialogue and reconciliation, and investing in conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms, humanity can work towards building a more peaceful and inclusive world.

5. In what ways can individuals and communities contribute to the realization of a unified global society, even in the face of daunting challenges and uncertainties?

- Individuals and communities can contribute to the realization of a unified global society by promoting empathy, understanding, and cooperation across cultural, religious, and national divides. By advocating for social justice, environmental sustainability, and human rights, individuals can help create a more equitable and inclusive world for future generations.

The Mouthpiece of God

Surely the world, contracted and transformed into a single highly complex organism by the marvellous progress achieved in the realm of physical science, by the world-wide expansion of commerce and industry, and struggling, under the pressure of world economic forces, amidst the pitfalls of a materialistic civilization, stands in dire need of a restatement of the Truth underlying all the Revelations of the past in a language suited to its essential requirements. And what voice other than that of Bahá'u'lláh—the Mouthpiece of God for this age—is capable of effecting a transformation of society as radical as that which He has already accomplished in the hearts of

those men and women, so diversified and seemingly irreconcilable, who constitute the body of His declared followers throughout the world?

That such a mighty conception is fast budding out in the minds of men, that voices are being raised in its support, that its salient features must fast crystallize in the consciousness of those who are in authority, few indeed can doubt. That its modest beginnings have already taken shape in the world-wide Administration with which the adherents of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh stand associated only those whose hearts are tainted by prejudice can fail to perceive.

Ours, dearly-beloved co-workers, is the paramount duty to continue, with undimmed vision and unabated zeal, to assist in the final erection of that Edifice the foundations of which Bahá'u'lláh has laid in our hearts, to derive added hope and strength from the general trend of recent events, however dark their immediate effects, and to pray with unremitting fervor that He may hasten the approach of the realization of that Wondrous Vision which constitutes the brightest emanation of His Mind and the fairest fruit of the fairest civilization the world has yet seen.

Might not the hundredth anniversary of the Declaration of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh mark the inauguration of so vast an era in human history?

Your true brother,

SHOGHI

Haifa, Palestine,
November 28, 1931

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi reflects on the urgent need for a restatement of spiritual truths in a language suited to the requirements of the modern world. He emphasizes that amidst the complexities of modern society and the challenges of materialistic civilization, the world is in dire need of a transformative message capable of uniting humanity. Shoghi Effendi asserts that Bahá'u'lláh, as the Mouthpiece of God for this age, is uniquely equipped to effect such a radical transformation, as evidenced by the profound impact of His teachings on diverse individuals worldwide.

Shoghi Effendi highlights the growing recognition of Bahá'u'lláh's message and the increasing support for its principles among people of different backgrounds. He points to the establishment of a world-wide Administration by the adherents of the Bahá'í Faith as evidence of the modest beginnings of Bahá'u'lláh's vision taking shape in the world. Shoghi Effendi calls upon his fellow believers to continue their efforts with undimmed vision and unabated zeal, emphasizing their paramount duty to assist in the final erection of the spiritual Edifice laid by Bahá'u'lláh.

In conclusion, Shoghi Effendi expresses hope and confidence in the eventual realization of Bahá'u'lláh's vision, urging believers to derive strength from recent events and to pray fervently for the hastening of its fulfillment. He suggests that the hundredth anniversary of the Declaration of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh could mark the inauguration of a vast era in human history, characterized by the widespread recognition and implementation of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Urgent need for a restatement of spiritual truths in the modern world.
2. Bahá'u'lláh as the Mouthpiece of God for this age.
3. Evidence of the transformative impact of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings.
4. Modest beginnings of Bahá'u'lláh's vision taking shape in the world-wide Bahá'í Administration.
5. Call to action for believers to continue their efforts with zeal and vision.
6. Hope and confidence in the eventual realization of Bahá'u'lláh's vision.
7. Suggestion that the hundredth anniversary of the Declaration of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh could mark the inauguration of a new era.

Questions and Answers:

1. How can spiritual teachings be effectively communicated in a language and format that resonates with the needs and challenges of the modern world?
 - Shoghi Effendi suggests that Bahá'u'lláh's teachings are uniquely suited to addressing the complexities of modern society. Exploring innovative methods of communication and engagement may be key to effectively conveying spiritual truths in a relevant and accessible manner.
2. What role do individuals and communities play in advancing the realization of Bahá'u'lláh's vision for humanity?

- Shoghi Effendi emphasizes the collective responsibility of believers to assist in the realization of Bahá'u'lláh's vision. Reflecting on ways to actively contribute to the advancement of spiritual and social transformation can inspire meaningful action and engagement.

3. How can believers maintain unwavering faith and commitment in the face of challenges and setbacks?

- Shoghi Effendi encourages believers to continue their efforts with undimmed vision and unabated zeal, despite the challenges they may encounter. Exploring strategies for cultivating resilience and sustaining motivation can help believers navigate obstacles on their spiritual journey.

4. What lessons can be drawn from the modest beginnings of Bahá'u'lláh's vision taking shape in the world-wide Bahá'í Administration?

- Shoghi Effendi points to the establishment of the Bahá'í Administration as evidence of the gradual realization of Bahá'u'lláh's vision. Examining the growth and development of the Bahá'í community can provide insights into the process of building spiritual and organizational capacity over time.

5. How can believers balance hope and patience while actively working towards the realization of Bahá'u'lláh's vision?

- Shoghi Effendi expresses hope and confidence in the eventual realization of Bahá'u'lláh's vision while acknowledging the need for patience and perseverance. Reflecting on the interplay between hope and patience can help believers maintain a sense of optimism and determination in their efforts.

. . .

The Golden Age of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh

The Golden Age of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh

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

Friends and fellow-defenders of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh:

Significant as have been the changes that have lately overtaken a swiftly awakening humanity at this transitional phase of its checkered history, the steady consolidation of the institutions which the administrators of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh are, in every land, toiling to establish should appear no less remarkable to even those who are as yet imperfectly acquainted with the obstacles they have had to surmount or the meagre resources on which they could rely.

That a Faith which, ten years ago, was severely shaken by the sudden removal of an incomparable Master should have, in the face of tremendous obstacles, maintained its unity, resisted the malignant onslaught of its ill-wishers, silenced its calumniators, broadened the basis

of its far-flung administration, and raised upon its institutions symbolizing its ideals of worship and service, should be deemed sufficient evidence of the invincible power with which the Almighty has chosen to invest it from the moment of its inception.

That the Cause associated with the name of Bahá'u'lláh feeds itself upon those hidden springs of celestial strength which no force of human personality, whatever its glamour, can replace; that its reliance is solely upon that mystic Source with which no worldly advantage, be it wealth, fame, or learning can compare; that it propagates itself by ways mysterious and utterly at variance with the standards accepted by the generality of mankind, will, if not already apparent, become increasingly manifest as it forges ahead towards fresh conquests in its struggle for the spiritual regeneration of mankind.

Indeed, how could it, unsupported as it has ever been by the counsels and the resources of the wise, the rich, and the learned in the land of its birth, have succeeded in breaking asunder the shackles that weighed upon it at the hour of its birth, in emerging unscathed from the storms that agitated its infancy, had not its animating breath been quickened by that spirit which is born of God, and on which all success, wherever and however it be sought, must ultimately depend?

It is not necessary for me to recall, even in their briefest outline, the heart-rending details of that appalling tragedy which marked the birth-pangs of our beloved Faith, enacted in a land notorious for its unrestrained fanaticisms, its crass ignorance, its unbridled cruelty. Nor do I need to expatiate on the valor, the sublime fortitude, that defied the cruel torture-mongers of that race, or stress the number, or emphasize the purity of the lives, of those who died willingly that their Cause might live and prosper. Nor is it necessary to dwell upon the indignation which those atrocities evoked, and the feelings of unqualified admiration that surged, in the breasts of countless men and women, in regions remote from the scene of those indescribable cruelties. Suffice it to say that upon these heroes of Bahá'u'lláh's native land was bestowed the inestimable privilege of sealing with their life-blood the early triumphs of their cherished Faith, and of paving the way for its approaching victory. In the blood of the unnumbered martyrs of Persia lay the seed of the Divinely-appointed Administration which, though transplanted from its native soil, is now budding out, under your loving care, into a new order, destined to overshadow all mankind.

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi, in his letter to the believers of Bahá'u'lláh in the United States and Canada, reflects on the remarkable progress and resilience of the Bahá'í Faith despite daunting challenges. He acknowledges the significant changes occurring in the world and praises the steadfastness of the believers in consolidating Bahá'í institutions worldwide. Despite the sudden passing of Bahá'u'lláh, the Faith has maintained unity, withstood opposition, and expanded its administrative structures. Shoghi Effendi attributes this success to the spiritual power inherent in the Faith, which transcends worldly influences.

He emphasizes the mysterious ways in which the Faith propagates itself, relying not on worldly advantages but on divine guidance. Shoghi Effendi highlights the contrast between the humble origins of the Faith and its enduring impact, noting that it emerged from a land characterized by fanaticism and cruelty. He pays tribute to the early martyrs of the Faith in Persia, whose sacrifices laid the foundation for its growth and establishment.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to the remarkable progress of the Bahá'í Faith despite challenges.
2. Recognition of the changes in the world and the efforts of believers in establishing Bahá'í institutions.
3. Acknowledgment of the Faith's unity and resilience after the passing of Bahá'u'lláh.
4. Emphasis on the spiritual power and divine guidance sustaining the Faith.
5. Tribute to the early martyrs of the Faith and their role in its establishment and growth.

Questions and Answers:

1. How has the Bahá'í Faith demonstrated resilience in the face of challenges?
 - The Bahá'í Faith has maintained unity, resisted opposition, and expanded its administrative structures despite obstacles.
2. What distinguishes the propagation of the Bahá'í Faith from conventional methods?
 - The Faith relies on divine guidance and spiritual power rather than worldly advantages or conventional strategies.
3. What role did early martyrs play in the establishment of the Bahá'í Faith?
 - The sacrifices of early martyrs in Persia laid the foundation for the Faith's growth and endurance.
4. How does Shoghi Effendi characterize the origins of the Bahá'í Faith?
 - The Faith emerged from a land marked by fanaticism and cruelty, yet it has endured and thrived beyond its humble beginnings.
5. What does the success of the Bahá'í Faith despite adversity reveal about its nature?
 - The Faith's resilience and enduring impact demonstrate its inherent spiritual power and divine origin.

America's Contribution to the Cause

For great as have been the attainments and unforgettable the services of the pioneers of the heroic age of the Cause in Persia, the contribution which their spiritual descendants, the American believers, the champion-builders of the organic structure of the Cause, are now making towards the fulfillment of the Plan which must usher in the golden age of the Cause is no less meritorious in this strenuous period of its history. Few, if any, I venture to assert, among these privileged framers and custodians of the constitution of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh are even dimly aware of the preponderating rôle which the North American continent is destined to play in the future orientation of their world-embracing Cause. Nor does any appreciable number among them seem sufficiently conscious of the decisive influence which they already exercise in the direction and management of its affairs.

“The continent of America,” wrote ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in February, 1917, *“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.”*

That the supporters of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh, throughout the United States and Canada, are increasingly demonstrating the truth of this solemn affirmation is evident to even a casual observer of the record of their manifold services, whether in their individual capacities or through their concerted endeavors. The manifestations of spontaneous loyalty which marked their response to the expressed wishes of a departed Master; the generosity with which they have, on more than one occasion, arisen to lend a helping hand to the needy and harassed among their brethren in Persia; the vigor with which they have resisted the shameless attacks which unrelenting enemies, both from within and without, have, with increasing frequency, launched against them; the example which the body of their national representatives have set to their sister Assemblies in fashioning the instruments essential to the effective discharge of their collective duties; their successful intervention on behalf of their persecuted fellow-workers in Russia; the moral support they have extended to their Egyptian fellow-disciples at a most critical stage in their struggle for emancipation from the fetters of Islamic orthodoxy; the historic services rendered by those intrepid pioneers who, faithful to the call of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, forsook their homes to plant, in the uttermost corners of the globe, the standard of His Faith; and, last but not least, the magnificence of their self-sacrifice, culminating in the completion of the superstructure of the Mashriqu’l-Adhkár—these stand out each as an eloquent testimony to the indomitable character of the faith Bahá'u'lláh has kindled in their hearts.

Who, contemplating so splendid a record of service, can doubt that these faithful stewards of the redeeming grace of God have preserved, undivided and unimpaired, the priceless heritage entrusted to their charge? Have they not, one might well reflect, in ways which only future historians will indicate, approached the high standard that characterized those deeds of imperishable renown accomplished by those that have gone before them?

Not by the material resources which the members of this infant community can now summon to their aid; not by the numerical strength of its present-day supporters; nor by any direct tangible benefits its votaries can as yet confer upon the multitude of the needy and the disconsolate among their countrymen, should its potentialities be tested or its worth determined. Nowhere but in the purity of its precepts, the sublimity of its standards, the integrity of its laws, the reasonableness of its claims, the comprehensiveness of its scope, the universality of its program, the flexibility of its institutions, the lives of its founders, the heroism of its martyrs, and the transforming power of its influence, should the unprejudiced observer seek to obtain the true criterion that can enable him to fathom its mysteries or to estimate its virtue.

Summary:

In his letter addressing the American believers of the Bahá'í Faith, Shoghi Effendi praises their significant contribution to the Cause and highlights the pivotal role America is destined to play in its future. He quotes 'Abdu'l-Bahá, who proclaimed America as the land where the splendors of God's light would be revealed and His mysteries unveiled. Shoghi Effendi commends the American believers for their unwavering loyalty, generosity, resilience against opposition, and dedication to the advancement of the Faith. He acknowledges their efforts in supporting their brethren in Persia, Russia, and Egypt, as well as their historic contributions to the establishment of Bahá'í institutions worldwide.

Shoghi Effendi underscores the indomitable faith kindled in the hearts of American believers, evident in their self-sacrifice and accomplishments, including the construction of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár. He challenges doubters to consider the profound impact of the Faith, not merely in material resources or numerical strength, but in the purity of its principles, the integrity of its laws, and the transformative power of its influence.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to America's significant contribution to the Bahá'í Faith.
2. Quoting 'Abdu'l-Bahá's proclamation about America's spiritual destiny.
3. Recognition of the manifold services and dedication of American believers.
4. Acknowledgment of American efforts in supporting persecuted believers worldwide.
5. Emphasis on the intrinsic value and transformative influence of the Bahá'í Faith.

Questions and Answers:

1. What role does Shoghi Effendi assign to America in the future of the Bahá'í Faith?
 - Shoghi Effendi sees America as destined to play a pivotal role in the future orientation and advancement of the Bahá'í Cause.
2. How does Shoghi Effendi characterize the contributions of American believers to the Cause?
 - Shoghi Effendi commends American believers for their unwavering loyalty, generosity, resilience against opposition, and dedication to the advancement of the Faith.
3. What examples does Shoghi Effendi provide to illustrate the dedication of American believers?
 - He highlights their support for persecuted believers in Persia, Russia, and Egypt, as well as their historic contributions to the establishment of Bahá'í institutions worldwide.
4. How does Shoghi Effendi challenge doubters to assess the Bahá'í Faith's worth?
 - He challenges doubters to look beyond material resources and numerical strength, urging them to consider the purity of its principles, the integrity of its laws, and the transformative power of its influence.
5. In what ways does Shoghi Effendi suggest the true value of the Bahá'í Faith can be measured?
 - Shoghi Effendi suggests that the true value of the Bahá'í Faith lies in the purity of its precepts, the integrity of its laws, the heroism of its martyrs, and the transformative power of its influence, rather than in tangible benefits or numerical strength.

Decline of Mortal Dominion

How unfair, how irrelevant, to venture any comparison between the slow and gradual consolidation of the Faith proclaimed by Bahá'u'lláh and those man-created movements which, having their origin in human desires and with their hopes centered on mortal dominion, must inevitably decline and perish! Springing from a finite mind, begotten of human fancy, and oftentimes the product of ill-conceived designs, such movements succeed, by reason of their novelty, their appeal to man's baser instincts and their dependence upon the resources of a sordid world, in dazzling for a time the eyes of men, only to plunge finally from the heights of their meteoric career into the darkness of oblivion, dissolved by the very forces that had assisted in their creation.

Not so with the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh. Born in an environment of appalling degradation, springing from a soil steeped in age-long corruptions, hatreds and prejudice, inculcating principles irreconcilable with the accepted standards of the times, and faced from the beginning with the relentless enmity of government, church and people, this nascent Faith of God has, by virtue of the celestial potency with which it has been endowed, succeeded, in less than four score years and ten, in emancipating itself from the galling chains of Islamic domination, in proclaiming the self-sufficiency of its ideals and the independent integrity of its laws, in planting its banner in no less than forty of the most advanced countries of the world, in establishing its outposts in lands beyond the farthest seas, in consecrating its religious edifices in the midmost heart of the Asiatic and American continents, in inducing two of the most powerful governments of the West to ratify the instruments essential to its administrative activities, in obtaining from royalty befitting tributes to the excellence of its teachings, and, finally, in forcing its grievances upon the attention of the representatives of the highest Tribunal in the civilized world, and in securing from its members written affirmations that are tantamount to a tacit recognition of its religious status and to an express declaration of the justice of its cause.

Circumscribed though its power as a social force may as yet appear, and however obvious may seem the present ineffectiveness of its world-embracing program, we, who stand identified with its blessed name, cannot but marvel at the measure of its achievements if we but compare them with the modest accomplishments that have marked the rise of the Dispensations of the past. Where else, if not in the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, can the unbiased student of comparative religion cite instances of a claim as stupendous as that which the Author of that Faith advanced, foes as relentless as those which He faced, a devotion more sublime than that which He kindled, a life as eventful and as entralling as that which He led? Has Christianity or Islám, has any Dispensation that preceded them, offered instances of such combinations of courage and restraint, of magnanimity and power, of broad-mindedness and loyalty, as those which characterized the conduct of the heroes of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh? Where else do we find evidences of a transformation as swift, as complete, and as sudden, as those effected in the lives of the apostles of the Báb? Few, indeed, are the instances recorded in any of the authenticated annals of the religions of the past of a self-abnegation as complete, a constancy as firm, a magnanimity as sublime, a loyalty as uncompromising, as those which bore witness to the character of that immortal band which stands identified with this Divine Revelation—this latest and most compelling manifestation of the love and the omnipotence of the Almighty!

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi contrasts the gradual consolidation of the Bahá'í Faith with man-made movements centered on mortal dominion, which inevitably decline and perish. He highlights the unique nature of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation, emerging from a corrupt environment and facing relentless opposition, yet swiftly emancipating itself and establishing its presence worldwide. Shoghi Effendi marvels at the Faith's achievements within less than a century, including its expansion across forty countries, establishment of administrative structures, and recognition by governments and royalty. He emphasizes the unparalleled courage, magnanimity, and transformation witnessed among the followers of Bahá'u'lláh, surpassing the accomplishments of past Dispensations like Christianity and Islam.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to the comparison between the Bahá'í Faith and man-made movements focused on mortal dominion.
2. Description of the challenges faced by the Bahá'í Faith and its swift emancipation from Islamic domination.
3. Enumeration of the Faith's achievements, including its global spread, establishment of administrative structures, and recognition by governments and royalty.
4. Emphasis on the remarkable qualities exhibited by the followers of Bahá'u'lláh, surpassing those of past religious dispensations.
5. Conclusion reflecting on the transformative power and achievements of the Bahá'í Faith within a short span of time.

Questions and Answers:

1. How does Shoghi Effendi characterize man-made movements in contrast to the Bahá'í Faith?
 - Shoghi Effendi describes man-made movements as temporary and based on human desires for mortal dominion, while highlighting the enduring and transformative nature of the Bahá'í Faith.
2. What challenges did the Bahá'í Faith face in its early years, and how did it overcome them?
 - The Faith emerged from a corrupt environment and faced opposition from government, church, and people. However, through celestial potency, it swiftly emancipated itself from Islamic domination and established its presence worldwide.
3. What are some of the notable achievements of the Bahá'í Faith within less than a century?
 - The Faith expanded across forty countries, established administrative structures, and garnered recognition from governments and royalty.
4. How does Shoghi Effendi compare the qualities of the followers of Bahá'u'lláh to those of past religious dispensations?
 - He highlights the unparalleled courage, magnanimity, and transformation witnessed among the followers of Bahá'u'lláh, surpassing those of past religious dispensations like Christianity and Islam.
5. What does Shoghi Effendi's reflection on the achievements of the Bahá'í Faith suggest about its enduring significance?

- Shoghi Effendi's reflection suggests that the Bahá'í Faith possesses a transformative power and enduring significance that surpasses the accomplishments of past religious dispensations, highlighting its unique role in the spiritual evolution of humanity.

Contrast with Religions of the Past

We may vainly search in the records of the earliest beginnings of any of the recognized religions of the past for episodes as thrilling in their details, or as far-reaching in their consequences, as those that illumine the pages of the history of this Faith. The almost incredible circumstances attending the martyrdom of that youthful Prince of Glory; the forces of barbaric repression which this tragedy subsequently released; the manifestations of unsurpassed heroism to which it gave rise; the exhortations and warnings which have streamed from the pen of the Divine Prisoner in His Epistles to the potentates of the Church and the monarchs and rulers of the world; the undaunted loyalty with which our brethren are battling in Muslim countries with the forces of religious orthodoxy—these may be reckoned as the most outstanding features of what the world will come to recognize as the greatest drama in the world's spiritual history.

I need not recall, in this connection, the unfortunate episodes that have, admittedly, and to a very great extent, marred the early history of both Judaism and Islám. Nor is it necessary to stress the damaging effect of the excesses, the rivalries and divisions, the fanatical outbursts and acts of ingratitude that are associated with the early development of the people of Israel and with the militant career of the ruthless pioneers of the Faith of Muḥammad.

It would be sufficient for my purpose to call attention to the great number of those who, in the first two centuries of the Christian era, "purchased an ignominious life by betraying the holy Scriptures into the hands of the infidels," the scandalous conduct of those bishops who were thereby branded as traitors, the discord of the African Church, the gradual infiltration into Christian doctrine of the principles of the Mithraic cult, of the Alexandrian school of thought, of the precepts of Zoroastrianism and of Grecian philosophy, and the adoption by the churches of Greece and of Asia of the institutions of provincial synods of a model which they borrowed from the representative councils of their respective countries.

How great was the obstinacy with which the Jewish converts among the early Christians adhered to the ceremonies of their ancestors, and how fervent their eagerness to impose them on the Gentiles! Were not the first fifteen bishops of Jerusalem all circumcised Jews, and had not the congregation over which they presided united the laws of Moses with the doctrine of Christ? Is it not a fact that no more than a twentieth part of the subjects of the Roman Empire had enlisted themselves under the standard of Christ before the conversion of Constantine? Was not the ruin of the Temple, in the city of Jerusalem, and of the public religion of the Jews, severely felt by the so-called Nazarenes, who persevered, above a century, in the practice of the Mosaic Law?

How striking the contrast when we remember, in the light of the afore-mentioned facts, the number of those followers of Bahá'u'lláh who, in Persia and the adjoining countries, had enlisted at the time of His Ascension as the convinced supporters of His Faith! How encouraging to observe the undeviating loyalty with which His valiant followers are guarding the purity and integrity of His clear and unequivocal teachings! How edifying the spectacle of those who are battling with the forces of a firmly entrenched orthodoxy in their struggle to emancipate themselves from the fetters of an outworn creed! How inspiring the conduct of those Muslim followers of Bahá'u'lláh who view, not with regret or apathy, but with feelings of unconcealed

satisfaction, the deserved chastisement which the Almighty has inflicted upon those twin institutions of the Sultanate and the Caliphate, those engines of despotism and sworn enemies of the Cause of God!

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi contrasts the thrilling and far-reaching episodes in the history of the Bahá'í Faith with the early histories of recognized religions. He highlights the martyrdom of the Báb, the subsequent forces unleashed, the heroism displayed by believers, and the warnings issued by Bahá'u'lláh to world leaders as unparalleled in spiritual history. Shoghi Effendi acknowledges the unfortunate episodes in the early histories of Judaism, Islam, and Christianity, including excesses, rivalries, divisions, and doctrinal influences from other belief systems. He emphasizes the persistence of Jewish converts in adhering to ancestral ceremonies within early Christianity and the slow growth of Christianity before the conversion of Constantine. In contrast, Shoghi Effendi celebrates the rapid enlistment of believers in the Bahá'í Faith at the time of Bahá'u'lláh's ascension, their unwavering loyalty to his teachings, and their valiant struggle against entrenched orthodoxy.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to the unparalleled episodes in the history of the Bahá'í Faith.
2. Comparison of early histories of Judaism, Islam, and Christianity, highlighting unfortunate episodes and doctrinal influences.
3. Emphasis on the persistence of Jewish converts in early Christianity and the slow growth of the faith before Constantine's conversion.
4. Celebration of the rapid enlistment of believers in the Bahá'í Faith and their unwavering loyalty to Bahá'u'lláh's teachings.
5. Acknowledgment of the valiant struggle of Bahá'í followers against entrenched orthodoxy, particularly within Muslim communities.

Questions and Answers:

1. What are some of the unparalleled episodes in the history of the Bahá'í Faith, as highlighted by Shoghi Effendi?
 - Shoghi Effendi mentions the martyrdom of the Báb, subsequent forces unleashed, displays of heroism by believers, and warnings issued by Bahá'u'lláh to world leaders as unparalleled in spiritual history.
2. How does Shoghi Effendi characterize the early histories of recognized religions, such as Judaism, Islam, and Christianity?
 - Shoghi Effendi acknowledges unfortunate episodes including excesses, rivalries, divisions, and doctrinal influences from other belief systems within the early histories of recognized religions.
3. What examples does Shoghi Effendi provide to illustrate the persistence of Jewish converts in adhering to ancestral ceremonies within early Christianity?
 - He mentions the circumcision of the first fifteen bishops of Jerusalem and their congregation's union of Mosaic Law with Christian doctrine.
4. How does Shoghi Effendi contrast the growth of early Christianity with the rapid enlistment of believers in the Bahá'í Faith?

- Shoghi Effendi contrasts the slow growth of Christianity before Constantine's conversion with the rapid enlistment of believers in the Bahá'í Faith at the time of Bahá'u'lláh's ascension.

5. What attributes of Bahá'í followers does Shoghi Effendi commend in their struggle against entrenched orthodoxy?

- Shoghi Effendi commends the unwavering loyalty of Bahá'í followers to Bahá'u'lláh's teachings and their valiant struggle against entrenched orthodoxy, particularly within Muslim communities.

Fundamental Principle of Religious Truth

Let no one, however, mistake my purpose. The Revelation, of which Bahá'u'lláh is the source and center, abrogates none of the religions that have preceded it, nor does it attempt, in the slightest degree, to distort their features or to belittle their value. It disclaims any intention of dwarfing any of the Prophets of the past, or of whittling down the eternal verity of their teachings. It can, in no wise, conflict with the spirit that animates their claims, nor does it seek to undermine the basis of any man's allegiance to their cause. Its declared, its primary purpose is to enable every adherent of these Faiths to obtain a fuller understanding of the religion with which he stands identified, and to acquire a clearer apprehension of its purpose. It is neither eclectic in the presentation of its truths, nor arrogant in the affirmation of its claims. Its teachings revolve around the fundamental principle that religious truth is not absolute but relative, that Divine Revelation is progressive, not final. Unequivocally and without the least reservation it proclaims all established religions to be divine in origin, identical in their aims, complementary in their functions, continuous in their purpose, indispensable in their value to mankind.

"All the Prophets of God," asserts Bahá'u'lláh in the Kitáb-i-Íqán, *"abide in the same tabernacle, soar in the same heaven, are seated upon the same throne, utter the same speech, and proclaim the same Faith."* From the *"beginning that hath no beginning,"* these Exponents of the Unity of God and Channels of His incessant utterance have shed the light of the invisible Beauty upon mankind, and will continue, to the *"end that hath no end,"* to vouchsafe fresh revelations of His might and additional experiences of His inconceivable glory. To contend that any particular religion is final, that *"all Revelation is ended, that the portals of Divine mercy are closed, that from the daysprings of eternal holiness no sun shall rise again, that the ocean of everlasting bounty is forever stilled, and that out of the Tabernacle of ancient glory the Messengers of God have ceased to be made manifest"* would indeed be nothing less than sheer blasphemy.

"They differ," explains Bahá'u'lláh in that same epistle, *"only in the intensity of their revelation and the comparative potency of their light."* And this, not by reason of any inherent incapacity of any one of them to reveal in a fuller measure the glory of the Message with which He has been entrusted, but rather because of the immaturity and unpreparedness of the age He lived in to apprehend and absorb the full potentialities latent in that Faith.

"Know of a certainty," explains Bahá'u'lláh, *"that in every Dispensation the light of Divine Revelation has been vouchsafed to men in direct proportion to their spiritual capacity. Consider the sun. How feeble its rays the moment it appears above the horizon. How gradually its warmth and potency increase as it approaches its zenith, enabling meanwhile all created things to adapt themselves to the growing intensity of its light. How steadily it declines until it reaches its setting point. Were it, all of a sudden, to manifest the energies latent within it, it would, no doubt, cause injury to all created things.... In like manner, if the Sun of Truth were suddenly to reveal, at the*

earliest stages of its manifestation, the full measure of the potencies which the providence of the Almighty has bestowed upon it, the earth of human understanding would waste away and be consumed; for men's hearts would neither sustain the intensity of its revelation, nor be able to mirror forth the radiance of its light. Dismayed and overpowered, they would cease to exist."

It is for this reason, and this reason only, that those who have recognized the Light of God in this age, claim no finality for the Revelation with which they stand identified, nor arrogate to the Faith they have embraced powers and attributes intrinsically superior to, or essentially different from, those which have characterized any of the religious systems that preceded it.

Does not Bahá'u'lláh Himself allude to the progressiveness of Divine Revelation and to the limitations which an inscrutable Wisdom has chosen to impose upon Him? What else can this passage of the Hidden Words imply, if not that He Who revealed it disclaimed finality for the Revelation entrusted to Him by the Almighty? "*O Son of Justice! In the night-season the beauty of the immortal Being hath repaired from the emerald height of fidelity unto the Sadratu'l-Muntahá, and wept with such a weeping that the concourse on high and the dwellers of the realms above wailed at His lamenting. Whereupon there was asked, Why the wailing and weeping? He made reply: As bidden I waited expectant upon the hill of faithfulness, yet inhaled not from them that dwell on earth the fragrance of fidelity. Then summoned to return I beheld, and lo! certain doves of holiness were sore tried within the claws of the dogs of earth. Thereupon the Maid of Heaven hastened forth, unveiled, and resplendent, from Her mystic mansion, and asked of their names, and all were told but one. And when urged, the first Letter thereof was uttered, whereupon the dwellers of the celestial chambers rushed forth out of their habitation of glory. And whilst the second letter was pronounced they fell down, one and all, upon the dust. At that moment a Voice was heard from the inmost shrine: 'Thus far and no farther.' Verily we bear witness to that which they have done and now are doing."*

"*The Revelation of which I am the bearer,*" Bahá'u'lláh explicitly declares, "*is adapted to humanity's spiritual receptiveness and capacity; otherwise, the Light that shines within me can neither wax nor wane. Whatever I manifest is nothing more or less than the measure of the Divine glory which God has bidden me reveal."*

If the Light that is now streaming forth upon an increasingly responsive humanity with a radiance that bids fair to eclipse the splendor of such triumphs as the forces of religion have achieved in days past; if the signs and tokens which proclaimed its advent have been, in many respects, unique in the annals of past Revelations; if its votaries have evinced traits and qualities unexampled in the spiritual history of mankind; these should be attributed not to a superior merit which the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, as a Revelation isolated and alien from any previous Dispensation, might possess, but rather should be viewed and explained as the inevitable outcome of the forces that have made of this present age an age infinitely more advanced, more receptive, and more insistent to receive an ampler measure of Divine Guidance than has hitherto been vouchsafed to mankind.

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi emphasizes the fundamental principle of religious truth in the Bahá'í Faith, which neither abrogates nor distorts preceding religions. He asserts that Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation aims to enhance understanding and appreciation of previous religions, affirming their divine origin, shared aims, and complementary functions. Shoghi Effendi quotes Bahá'u'lláh's assertion that all Prophets abide in the same essence and deliver the same Faith, indicating the progressive nature of Divine Revelation. He explains how Divine Revelation is vouchsafed to humanity according to its spiritual capacity, gradually increasing in intensity like the rising sun, to prevent overwhelming human understanding. Shoghi Effendi clarifies that Bahá'u'lláh disclaims finality for His Revelation and attributes the unique characteristics of the Bahá'í Faith to the receptiveness and capacity of humanity in the present age.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to the principle of religious truth in the Bahá'í Faith.
2. Affirmation of the shared divine origin and complementary functions of all religions.
3. Explanation of the progressive nature of Divine Revelation and its gradual manifestation according to humanity's spiritual capacity.
4. Clarification of Bahá'u'lláh's disavowal of finality for His Revelation and its adaptation to humanity's spiritual receptiveness.
5. Attribution of the unique characteristics of the Bahá'í Faith to the receptiveness and capacity of humanity in the present age.

Questions and Answers:

1. How does the Bahá'í Faith approach preceding religions, according to Shoghi Effendi?
 - Shoghi Effendi asserts that the Bahá'í Faith neither abrogates nor distorts preceding religions but aims to enhance understanding and appreciation of their teachings.
2. What does Bahá'u'lláh's assertion about all Prophets abiding in the same essence signify?
 - It signifies the unity of purpose among all Prophets and the continuity of Divine Revelation throughout history.
3. How does Shoghi Effendi explain the progressive nature of Divine Revelation?
 - He explains that Divine Revelation is vouchsafed to humanity according to its spiritual capacity, gradually increasing in intensity like the rising sun, to prevent overwhelming human understanding.
4. Why does Bahá'u'lláh disclaim finality for His Revelation?
 - Bahá'u'lláh disclaims finality to emphasize the ongoing nature of Divine Revelation, adapted to humanity's spiritual receptiveness and capacity.
5. What does Shoghi Effendi attribute the unique characteristics of the Bahá'í Faith to?
 - He attributes these characteristics to the receptiveness and capacity of humanity in the present age, which is more advanced, receptive, and insistent on receiving Divine Guidance than in previous ages.

Necessity for a Fresh Revelation

Dearly beloved friends: Who, contemplating the helplessness, the fears and miseries of humanity in this day, can any longer question the necessity for a fresh revelation of the quickening power of God's redemptive love and guidance? Who, witnessing on one hand the stupendous advance achieved in the realm of human knowledge, of power, of skill and inventiveness, and viewing on the other the unprecedented character of the sufferings that afflict, and the dangers that beset, present-day society, can be so blind as to doubt that the hour has at last struck for the advent of a new Revelation, for a re-statement of the Divine Purpose, and for the consequent revival of those spiritual forces that have, at fixed intervals, rehabilitated the fortunes of human society? Does not the very operation of the world-unifying forces that are at work in this age necessitate that He Who is the Bearer of the Message of God in this day should not only reaffirm that self-same exalted standard of individual conduct inculcated by the Prophets gone before Him, but embody in His appeal, to all governments and peoples, the essentials of that social code, that Divine Economy, which must guide humanity's concerted efforts in establishing that all-embracing federation which is to signalize the advent of the Kingdom of God on this earth?

May we not, therefore, recognizing as we do the necessity for such a revelation of God's redeeming power, meditate upon the supreme grandeur of the System unfolded by the hand of Bahá'u'lláh in this day? May we not pause, pressed though we be by the daily preoccupations which the ever-widening range of the administrative activities of His Faith must involve, to reflect upon the sanctity of the responsibilities it is our privilege to shoulder?

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi highlights the necessity for a fresh revelation of God's redemptive love and guidance in light of the helplessness, fears, and miseries of humanity. He juxtaposes the remarkable advancements in human knowledge, power, and inventiveness with the unprecedented sufferings and dangers faced by present-day society, emphasizing the need for a new Revelation to address these challenges. Shoghi Effendi suggests that the world-unifying forces at work in this age require the Bearer of God's Message to reaffirm the standards of individual conduct and embody a Divine Economy to guide humanity's efforts towards establishing a global federation and ushering in the Kingdom of God on earth. Despite the daily preoccupations of administrative activities within the Bahá'í Faith, Shoghi Effendi calls upon believers to reflect on the sanctity of the responsibilities they shoulder.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to the necessity for a fresh revelation in light of humanity's helplessness and the challenges facing present-day society.
2. Comparison between human advancements and societal sufferings to underscore the need for divine guidance.
3. Explanation of how world-unifying forces necessitate the reaffirmation of moral standards and the establishment of a Divine Economy.
4. Reflection on the grandeur of the System unfolded by Bahá'u'lláh in addressing these challenges.
5. Encouragement for believers to reflect on the sanctity of their responsibilities within the Bahá'í Faith despite daily administrative activities.

Questions and Answers:

1. How does Shoghi Effendi juxtapose human advancements with societal sufferings to argue for the necessity of a fresh revelation?
 - Shoghi Effendi highlights the remarkable advancements in human knowledge, power, and inventiveness alongside the unprecedented sufferings and dangers faced by present-day society, suggesting that divine guidance is needed to address these challenges.
2. What role does Shoghi Effendi assign to the Bearer of God's Message in addressing the challenges of the present age?
 - Shoghi Effendi suggests that the Bearer of God's Message must reaffirm moral standards, embody a Divine Economy, and guide humanity's efforts towards establishing a global federation and ushering in the Kingdom of God on earth.
3. How does Shoghi Effendi characterize the responsibilities of believers within the Bahá'í Faith?
 - Shoghi Effendi implies that believers shoulder sacred responsibilities in upholding the principles and ideals of the Bahá'í Faith amidst their daily administrative activities.
4. What does Shoghi Effendi suggest believers should reflect upon despite their daily preoccupations?

- Shoghi Effendi suggests that believers should reflect on the sanctity of their responsibilities and the grandeur of the System unfolded by Bahá'u'lláh to address the challenges facing humanity.

5. Why does Shoghi Effendi emphasize the necessity for a fresh revelation despite human advancements?

- Shoghi Effendi emphasizes the necessity for a fresh revelation to provide divine guidance in addressing the unprecedented challenges and sufferings facing present-day society, despite remarkable human advancements.

The Station of the Báb

Not only in the character of the revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, however stupendous be His claim, does the greatness of this Dispensation reside. For among the distinguishing features of His Faith ranks, as a further evidence of its uniqueness, the fundamental truth that in the person of its Forerunner, the Báb, every follower of Bahá'u'lláh recognizes not merely an inspired annunciator but a direct Manifestation of God. It is their firm belief that, no matter how short the duration of His Dispensation, and however brief the period of the operation of His laws, the Báb had been endowed with a potency such as no founder of any of the past religions was, in the providence of the Almighty, allowed to possess. That He was not merely the precursor of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, that He was more than a divinely-inspired personage, that His was the station of an independent, self-sufficient Manifestation of God, is abundantly demonstrated by Himself, is affirmed in unmistakable terms by Bahá'u'lláh, and is finally attested by the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

Nowhere but in the Kitáb-i-Íqán, Bahá'u'lláh's masterly exposition of the one unifying truth underlying all the Revelations of the past, can we obtain a clearer apprehension of the potency of those forces inherent in that Preliminary Manifestation with which His own Faith stands indissolubly associated. Expatiating upon the unfathomed import of the signs and tokens that have accompanied the Revelation proclaimed by the Báb, the promised Qá'im, He recalls these prophetic words: "*Knowledge is twenty and seven letters. All that the Prophets have revealed are two letters thereof. No man thus far hath known more than these two letters. But when the Qá'im shall arise, He will cause the remaining twenty and five letters to be made manifest.*" "Behold," adds Bahá'u'lláh, "*how great and lofty is His station!*" "*Of His Revelation,*" He further adds, "*the Prophets of God, His saints and chosen ones, have either not been informed, or in pursuance of God's inscrutable Decree, they have not disclosed.*"

And yet, immeasurably exalted as is the station of the Báb, and marvellous as have been the happenings that have signaled the advent of His Cause, so wondrous a Revelation cannot but pale before the effulgence of that Orb of unsurpassed splendor Whose rise He foretold and whose superiority He readily acknowledged. We have but to turn to the writings of the Báb Himself in order to estimate the significance of that Quintessence of Light of which He, with all the majesty of His power, was but its humble and chosen Precursor.

Again and again the Báb admits, in glowing and unequivocal language, the preëminent character of a Faith destined to be made manifest after Him and to supersede His Cause. "*The germ,*" He asserts in the Persian Bayán, the chief and best-preserved repository of His laws, "*that holds within itself the potentialities of the Revelation that is to come is endowed with a potency superior to the combined forces of all those who follow me.*" "*Of all the tributes,*" the Báb repeatedly proclaims in His writings, "*I have paid to Him Who is to come after Me, the greatest*

is this, My written confession, that no words of Mine can adequately describe Him, nor can any reference to Him in my Book, the Bayán, do justice to His Cause.” Addressing Siyyid Yahyáy-i-Darábí, surnamed Vahíd, the most learned and influential among his followers, He says: “By the righteousness of Him Whose power causeth the seed to germinate and Who breatheth the spirit of life into all things, were I to be assured that in the day of His Manifestation thou wilt deny Him, I would unhesitatingly disown thee and repudiate thy faith. ... If, on the other hand, I be told that a Christian, who beareth no allegiance to My Faith, will believe in Him, the same will I regard as the apple of Mine eye.”

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi explores the unique station of the Báb within the Bahá'í Faith, emphasizing that every follower of Bahá'u'lláh recognizes Him not just as an inspired precursor, but as a direct Manifestation of God. He asserts that the Báb possessed a potency unmatched by any founder of past religions, a station affirmed by Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Shoghi Effendi refers to Bahá'u'lláh's Kitáb-i-Íqán to elucidate the significance of the Báb's Revelation, quoting His prophecies and acknowledging His humility as the Precursor of a greater Manifestation. Despite the Báb's exalted station, He readily acknowledges the superiority of the Revelation to come after Him, expressing His inability to adequately describe it. Shoghi Effendi quotes the Báb's own writings, wherein He acknowledges the superior potency of the future Revelation and declares His incapacity to fully articulate its greatness.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to the unique station of the Báb within the Bahá'í Faith as a direct Manifestation of God.
2. Emphasis on the Báb's unparalleled potency and the acknowledgment of His station by Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá.
3. Reference to Bahá'u'lláh's Kitáb-i-Íqán to elucidate the significance of the Báb's Revelation.
4. Acknowledgment of the Báb's humility as the Precursor of a greater Manifestation, as evident in His own writings.
5. Exploration of the Báb's recognition of the superiority of the Revelation to come after Him and His inability to fully articulate its greatness.

Questions and Answers:

1. How does Shoghi Effendi establish the uniqueness of the Báb's station within the Bahá'í Faith?
 - Shoghi Effendi emphasizes that every follower of Bahá'u'lláh recognizes the Báb not just as an inspired precursor, but as a direct Manifestation of God, endowed with a potency unmatched by any founder of past religions.
2. Why does Shoghi Effendi reference Bahá'u'lláh's Kitáb-i-Íqán to explain the significance of the Báb's Revelation?
 - Shoghi Effendi refers to the Kitáb-i-Íqán to elucidate the prophecies made by the Báb regarding the Revelation to come after Him, highlighting the Báb's acknowledgment of its superiority and His own humility as its Precursor.
3. How does the Báb express His recognition of the future Revelation's superiority?
 - The Báb acknowledges the future Revelation's superiority in His writings, declaring His incapacity to fully describe it and affirming its potency as greater than His own.
4. Why does the Báb express His humility as the Precursor of a greater Manifestation?
 - The Báb's humility as the Precursor of a greater Manifestation demonstrates His acknowledgment of the unfolding nature of Divine Revelation and His reverence for the Revelation to come after Him.

5. How does Shoghi Effendi use the Báb's own writings to illustrate His recognition of the future Revelation's greatness?

- Shoghi Effendi quotes passages from the Báb's writings wherein He acknowledges the superior potency of the future Revelation and expresses His inability to fully articulate its greatness, affirming the Báb's recognition of the Revelation's surpassing significance.

The Outpouring of Divine Grace

“If all the peoples of the world,” Bahá’u’lláh Himself affirms, “be invested with the powers and attributes destined for the Letters of the Living, the chosen disciples of the Báb, whose station is ten thousand times more glorious than any which the apostles of old have attained, and if they, one and all, should, swift as the twinkling of an eye, hesitate to recognize the Light of my Revelation, their faith shall be of no avail, and they shall be accounted among the infidels.” “So tremendous,” He writes, “is the outpouring of Divine grace in this Dispensation that if mortal hands could be swift enough to record them, within the space of a single day and night, there would stream verses of such number as to be equivalent to the whole of the Persian Bayán.”

Such, dearly-beloved friends, is the effusion of celestial grace vouchsafed by the Almighty to this age, this most illumined century! We stand too close to so colossal a Revelation to expect in this, the first century of its era, to arrive at a just estimate of its towering grandeur, its infinite possibilities, its transcendent beauty. Small though our present numbers may be, however limited our capacities, or circumscribed our influence, we, into whose hands so pure, so tender, so precious a heritage has been entrusted, should at all times strive, with unrelaxing vigilance, to abstain from any thoughts, words, or deeds, that might tend to dim its brilliance, or injure its growth. How tremendous our responsibility; how delicate and laborious our task!

Dear friends: Clear and emphatic as are the instructions which our departed Master has reiterated in countless Tablets bequeathed by Him to His followers throughout the world, a few, owing to the restricted influence of the Cause in the West, have been purposely withheld from the body of His occidental disciples, who, despite their numerical inferiority, are now exercising such a preponderating influence in the direction and administration of its affairs. I feel it, therefore, incumbent upon me to stress, now that the time is ripe, the importance of an instruction which, at the present stage of the evolution of our Faith, should be increasingly emphasized, irrespective of its application to the East or to the West. And this principle is no other than that which involves the non-participation by the adherents of the Faith of Bahá’u’lláh, whether in their individual capacities or collectively as local or national Assemblies, in any form of activity that might be interpreted, either directly or indirectly, as an interference in the political affairs of any particular government. Whether it be in the publications which they initiate and supervise; or in their official and public deliberations; or in the posts they occupy and the services they render; or in the communications they address to their fellow-disciples; or in their dealings with men of eminence and authority; or in their affiliations with kindred societies and organizations, it is, I am firmly convinced, their first and sacred obligation to abstain from any word or deed that might be construed as a violation of this vital principle. Theirs is the duty to demonstrate, on one hand, the nonpolitical character of their Faith, and to assert, on the other, their unqualified loyalty and obedience to whatever is the considered judgment of their respective governments.

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi reflects on the magnitude and significance of the Bahá'í Faith in the current age. Bahá'u'lláh's words emphasize the divine grace showered upon this era, surpassing previous revelations in magnitude and potency. The believers are urged to grasp the enormity of their responsibility in safeguarding and promoting this faith. Despite their current small numbers and limited influence, they are entrusted with a precious heritage and must avoid anything that could tarnish its brilliance or hinder its progress.

Shoghi Effendi stresses the importance of adhering to Bahá'u'lláh's instructions, particularly regarding abstaining from involvement in political affairs. This principle is crucial for believers worldwide, regardless of their geographical location or cultural context. They are urged to refrain from any activity that could be construed as interfering in the political affairs of any government. Instead, they should demonstrate the non-political nature of their faith and maintain loyalty and obedience to their respective governments.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: The era of divine grace and the responsibility of believers.
2. The enormity of the Bahá'í revelation: surpassing previous manifestations.
3. The responsibility of believers: safeguarding and promoting the faith.
4. Adherence to Bahá'u'lláh's instructions: abstaining from political involvement.
5. Demonstrating loyalty and obedience to governments: maintaining the non-political nature of the faith.

Questions and Answers:

1. How does the concept of divine grace in the Bahá'í Faith compare to similar ideas in other religions or spiritual traditions?
 - Answer: The concept of divine grace in the Bahá'í Faith emphasizes the magnitude and potency of the revelation, surpassing previous manifestations. While similar concepts exist in other religions, the Bahá'í perspective may offer unique insights into the nature of divine grace in the modern age.
2. What challenges might believers face in adhering to the principle of non-participation in political affairs, especially in regions where political engagement is deeply ingrained in societal norms?
 - Answer: Believers may encounter resistance or misunderstanding from both within and outside the faith community when attempting to adhere strictly to the principle of non-involvement in politics. Negotiating these challenges while maintaining fidelity to Bahá'u'lláh's instructions requires careful navigation and steadfast commitment.
3. How can believers effectively demonstrate the non-political nature of their faith while still actively engaging in social and humanitarian efforts that may intersect with political issues?
 - Answer: Balancing engagement in social and humanitarian activities with maintaining a non-political stance requires a nuanced approach. Believers can focus on addressing social issues from a moral and ethical standpoint while avoiding partisan politics or advocating for specific political agendas.

4. In what ways can the Bahá'í community promote unity and cooperation with governments while remaining true to their faith principles?

- Answer: The Bahá'í community can promote unity and cooperation with governments by emphasizing shared values and common goals, such as promoting peace, justice, and social harmony. Building constructive relationships based on mutual respect and understanding can facilitate collaboration while respecting the non-political nature of the faith.

5. How does Shoghi Effendi's guidance on non-participation in political affairs reflect broader principles of religious freedom and separation of church and state?

- Answer: Shoghi Effendi's guidance aligns with broader principles of religious freedom and the separation of church and state, emphasizing the autonomy of religious communities from political interference and the importance of respecting the sovereignty of governments. This approach fosters an environment where individuals are free to practice their faith while upholding civic responsibilities and respecting the rights of others.

The Divine Polity

Let them refrain from associating themselves, whether by word or by deed, with the political pursuits of their respective nations, with the policies of their governments and the schemes and programs of parties and factions. In such controversies they should assign no blame, take no side, further no design, and identify themselves with no system prejudicial to the best interests of that world-wide Fellowship which it is their aim to guard and foster. Let them beware lest they allow themselves to become the tools of unscrupulous politicians, or to be entrapped by the treacherous devices of the plotters and the perfidious among their countrymen. Let them so shape their lives and regulate their conduct that no charge of secrecy, of fraud, of bribery or of intimidation may, however ill-founded, be brought against them. Let them rise above all particularism and partisanship, above the vain disputes, the petty calculations, the transient passions that agitate the face, and engage the attention, of a changing world. It is their duty to strive to distinguish, as clearly as they possibly can, and if needed with the aid of their elected representatives, such posts and functions as are either diplomatic or political from those that are purely administrative in character, and which under no circumstances are affected by the changes and chances that political activities and party government, in every land, must necessarily involve. Let them affirm their unyielding determination to stand, firmly and unreservedly, for the way of Bahá'u'lláh, to avoid the entanglements and bickerings inseparable from the pursuits of the politician, and to become worthy agencies of that Divine Polity which incarnates God's immutable Purpose for all men.

It should be made unmistakably clear that such an attitude implies neither the slightest indifference to the cause and interests of their own country, nor involves any insubordination on their part to the authority of recognized and established governments. Nor does it constitute a repudiation of their sacred obligation to promote, in the most effective manner, the best interests of their government and people. It indicates the desire cherished by every true and loyal follower of Bahá'u'lláh to serve, in an unselfish, unostentatious and patriotic fashion, the highest interests of the country to which he belongs, and in a way that would entail no departure from the high standards of integrity and truthfulness associated with the teachings of his Faith.

As the number of the Bahá'í communities in various parts of the world multiplies and their power, as a social force, becomes increasingly apparent, they will no doubt find themselves increasingly subjected to the pressure which men of authority and influence, in the political

domain, will exercise in the hope of obtaining the support they require for the advancement of their aims. These communities will, moreover, feel a growing need of the good-will and the assistance of their respective governments in their efforts to widen the scope, and to consolidate the foundations, of the institutions committed to their charge. Let them beware lest, in their eagerness to further the aims of their beloved Cause, they should be led unwittingly to bargain with their Faith, to compromise with their essential principles, or to sacrifice, in return for any material advantage which their institutions may derive, the integrity of their spiritual ideals. Let them proclaim that in whatever country they reside, and however advanced their institutions, or profound their desire to enforce the laws, and apply the principles, enunciated by Bahá'u'lláh, they will, unhesitatingly, subordinate the operation of such laws and the application of such principles to the requirements and legal enactments of their respective governments. Theirs is not the purpose, while endeavoring to conduct and perfect the administrative affairs of their Faith, to violate, under any circumstances, the provisions of their country's constitution, much less to allow the machinery of their administration to supersede the government of their respective countries.

It should also be borne in mind that the very extension of the activities in which we are engaged, and the variety of the communities which labor under divers forms of government, so essentially different in their standards, policies, and methods, make it absolutely essential for all those who are the declared members of any one of these communities to avoid any action that might, by arousing the suspicion or exciting the antagonism of any one government, involve their brethren in fresh persecutions or complicate the nature of their task. How else, might I ask, could such a far-flung Faith, which transcends political and social boundaries, which includes within its pale so great a variety of races and nations, which will have to rely increasingly, as it forges ahead, on the good-will and support of the diversified and contending governments of the earth—how else could such a Faith succeed in preserving its unity, in safeguarding its interests, and in ensuring the steady and peaceful development of its institutions?

Such an attitude, however, is not dictated by considerations of selfish expediency, but is actuated, first and foremost, by the broad principle that the followers of Bahá'u'lláh will, under no circumstances, suffer themselves to be involved, whether as individuals or in their collective capacities, in matters that would entail the slightest departure from the fundamental verities and ideals of their Faith. Neither the charges which the uninformed and the malicious may be led to bring against them, nor the allurements of honors and rewards, will ever induce them to surrender their trust or to deviate from their path. Let their words proclaim, and their conduct testify, that they who follow Bahá'u'lláh, in whatever land they reside, are actuated by no selfish ambition, that they neither thirst for power, nor mind any wave of unpopularity, of distrust or criticism, which a strict adherence to their standards might provoke.

Difficult and delicate though be our task, the sustaining power of Bahá'u'lláh and of His Divine guidance will assuredly assist us if we follow steadfastly in His way, and strive to uphold the integrity of His laws. The light of His redeeming grace, which no earthly power can obscure, will if we persevere, illuminate our path, as we steer our course amid the snares and pitfalls of a troubled age, and will enable us to discharge our duties in a manner that would redound to the glory and the honor of His blessed Name.

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi emphasizes the importance for Bahá'ís to remain politically impartial and refrain from involvement in the political affairs of their respective nations. Believers are urged to avoid aligning themselves with any political party or faction, maintaining neutrality in controversies and disputes. They are cautioned against becoming tools of politicians or falling victim to treacherous schemes. Instead, believers should prioritize their allegiance to Bahá'u'lláh's teachings and strive to embody the principles of integrity and truthfulness in their actions. While demonstrating loyalty to their countries, believers must not compromise their spiritual ideals or engage in activities that could compromise the integrity of their faith.

As the Bahá'í community grows in influence and visibility, it may face pressure from political authorities seeking support for their agendas. However, believers are warned against compromising their principles for material gain or political favor. They are reminded to subordinate the application of Bahá'u'lláh's laws to the legal enactments of their governments and to avoid actions that could arouse suspicion or antagonism from any government. The diversity of the Bahá'í community, spanning various forms of government and cultural contexts, necessitates a cautious approach to avoid persecution or complications in their mission.

Despite the challenges, believers are called to steadfastly uphold the principles of their faith, even in the face of adversity or criticism. Their commitment to Bahá'u'lláh's teachings should transcend personal ambition or popularity, guided by the unwavering pursuit of truth and integrity. While acknowledging the difficulties of their task, believers are encouraged to rely on the sustaining power of Bahá'u'lláh's guidance, trusting that His divine grace will illuminate their path and enable them to fulfill their duties honorably.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: The imperative of political impartiality for Bahá'ís.
2. Avoidance of political entanglements: refraining from alignment with parties or factions.
3. Upholding principles of integrity and truthfulness.
4. Subordination of Bahá'í laws to governmental enactments.
5. Navigating challenges in a diverse global context.
6. Steadfast commitment to Bahá'u'lláh's teachings despite adversity.

Questions and Answers:

1. How does Shoghi Effendi's guidance on political neutrality reflect broader principles of religious freedom and separation of church and state?
 - Answer: Shoghi Effendi's emphasis on political impartiality aligns with principles of religious freedom, emphasizing the autonomy of religious communities from political interference. It also reflects the importance of maintaining a clear separation between religious and governmental institutions to preserve individual liberties.
2. What strategies can believers employ to navigate the delicate balance between demonstrating loyalty to their countries while remaining faithful to Bahá'u'lláh's teachings?

- Answer: Believers can prioritize serving the best interests of their countries in unselfish and patriotic ways that align with Bahá'u'lláh's principles of integrity and truthfulness. They can engage in constructive dialogue with governmental authorities to promote mutual understanding while avoiding actions that compromise their spiritual ideals.

3. How might the growing influence of Bahá'í communities worldwide impact their interactions with political authorities, especially in regions with authoritarian governments?

- Answer: The growing influence of Bahá'í communities may lead to increased scrutiny and pressure from authoritarian governments seeking to control or suppress religious activities. Believers must navigate these challenges with wisdom and resilience, maintaining steadfast adherence to their principles while seeking to build constructive relationships with governmental authorities.

4. What role do Bahá'í institutions play in supporting believers in upholding the principles of the faith, particularly in regions where political tensions are high?

- Answer: Bahá'í institutions can provide guidance and support to believers facing political pressures, helping them navigate complex situations while remaining faithful to Bahá'u'lláh's teachings. Through education, community-building efforts, and advocacy for religious freedom, Bahá'í institutions can empower believers to uphold their principles with courage and resilience.

5. How might the principles outlined by Shoghi Effendi in "The Divine Polity" be applied to contemporary issues such as social justice advocacy and environmental activism?

- Answer: The principles of political neutrality, integrity, and truthfulness articulated by Shoghi Effendi can inform the approach of Bahá'í believers to contemporary issues. By maintaining a focus on universal principles of justice, compassion, and stewardship of the environment, believers can engage in advocacy and activism while upholding the non-partisan nature of their faith.

Our Beloved Temple

And finally, dearly-beloved brethren, let me once more direct your attention to the pressing claims of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, our beloved Temple. Need I remind you of the imperative necessity of carrying out to a successful conclusion, while there is yet time, the great enterprise to which, before the eyes of a watching world, we stand committed? Need I stress the great damage which further delay in the prosecution of this divinely-appointed task must, even in these critical and unforeseen circumstances, inflict upon the prestige of our beloved Cause? I am, I can assure you, acutely conscious of the stringency of the circumstances with which you are faced, the embarrassments under which you labor, the cares with which you are burdened, the pressing urgency of the demands that are being incessantly made upon your depleted resources. I am, however, still more profoundly aware of the unprecedented character of the opportunity which it is your privilege to seize and utilize. I am aware of the incalculable blessings that must await the termination of a collective enterprise which, by the range and quality of the sacrifices it entailed, deserves to be ranked among the most outstanding examples of Bahá'í solidarity ever since those deeds of brilliant heroism immortalized the memory of the heroes of Nayríz, of Zanján, and of Tabarsí. I appeal to you, therefore, friends and fellow-disciples of Bahá'u'lláh, for a more abundant measure of self-sacrifice, for a higher standard of concerted effort, for a still more compelling evidence of the reality of the faith that glows within you.

And in this fervent plea, my voice is once more reinforced by the passionate, and perhaps, the last, entreaty, of the Greatest Holy Leaf, whose spirit, now hovering on the edge of the Great

Beyond, longs to carry on its flight to the Abhá Kingdom, and into the presence of a Divine, an almighty Father, an assurance of the joyous consummation of an enterprise, the progress of which has so greatly brightened the closing days of her earthly life. That the American believers, those stout-hearted pioneers of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, will unanimously respond, with that same spontaneous generosity, that same measure of self-sacrifice, as have characterized their response to her appeals in the past, no one who is familiar with the vitality of their faith can possibly question.

Would to God that by the end of the spring of the year 1933 the multitudes who, from the remote corners of the globe, will throng the grounds of the Great Fair to be held in the neighborhood of that hallowed shrine may, as a result of your sustained spirit of self-sacrifice, be privileged to gaze on the arrayed splendor of its dome—a dome that shall stand as a flaming beacon and a symbol of hope amidst the gloom of a despairing world.

Your true brother,

SHOGHI

Haifa, Palestine,
March 21, 1932

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi passionately urges the Bahá'í community to prioritize the completion of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, their beloved Temple. He emphasizes the critical importance of fulfilling this divine mandate, especially considering the pressing demands of the present circumstances. Despite the challenges and limitations faced by the believers, Shoghi Effendi underscores the unparalleled opportunity they have to make history through their collective sacrifices and efforts. He appeals for a renewed commitment to self-sacrifice and concerted action, inspired by the heroic examples of past believers.

Shoghi Effendi's plea is reinforced by the fervent entreaty of the Greatest Holy Leaf, who is nearing the end of her earthly life and longs to witness the fulfillment of this sacred endeavor. He expresses confidence in the American believers' ability to respond with generosity and selflessness, as they have done in the past. Shoghi Effendi envisions a future where the completed Temple stands as a symbol of hope and inspiration for a world in need.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: The urgent need to prioritize the completion of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár.
2. The imperative of seizing the unprecedented opportunity presented by this divine mandate.
3. Recognition of the challenges and limitations faced by the believers.
4. Emphasis on the historic significance of collective sacrifice and solidarity.
5. The fervent entreaty of the Greatest Holy Leaf and her longing for the Temple's completion.
6. Confidence in the American believers' ability to respond with generosity and self-sacrifice.
7. Vision for the completed Temple as a beacon of hope for humanity.

Questions and Answers:

1. How does Shoghi Effendi's appeal for the completion of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár reflect broader themes of spiritual devotion and collective action within the Bahá'í community?

- Answer: Shoghi Effendi's appeal underscores the central importance of spiritual devotion and collective action in advancing the Bahá'í Faith's mission. It highlights the transformative power of self-sacrifice and solidarity in realizing divine mandates and building a better world.

2. What lessons can contemporary believers draw from Shoghi Effendi's call for self-sacrifice and concerted effort in the face of challenges?

- Answer: Contemporary believers can draw inspiration from Shoghi Effendi's example and recognize the enduring relevance of his message. They can reflect on the importance of prioritizing spiritual goals and working together with dedication and unity to overcome obstacles and achieve shared objectives.

3. How might the completion of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár serve as a symbol of hope and inspiration for humanity, as envisioned by Shoghi Effendi?

- Answer: The completed Mashriqu'l-Adhkár can serve as a symbol of hope and inspiration by embodying the principles of unity, peace, and spiritual renewal. It can stand as a tangible manifestation of humanity's capacity for collective progress and transcendence of barriers, offering a beacon of light in times of darkness and despair.

4. What factors might hinder believers from fully embracing Shoghi Effendi's call for self-sacrifice and concerted effort in pursuing spiritual goals?

- Answer: Believers may face various obstacles, including materialism, distractions, and personal challenges, that could hinder their full commitment to spiritual goals. Overcoming these obstacles requires introspection, dedication, and a deepening of faith in the transformative power of collective action.

5. How can believers today honor the legacy of Shoghi Effendi and the Greatest Holy Leaf by continuing the work of building temples and advancing the Bahá'í Faith's mission?

- Answer: Believers can honor the legacy of Shoghi Effendi and the Greatest Holy Leaf by actively supporting the construction of temples and contributing to the spiritual and social advancement of their communities. This includes promoting unity, fostering dialogue, and serving humanity with love and compassion, in alignment with Bahá'u'lláh's teachings.

. . .

America and the Most Great Peace

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.

Summary:

In this message addressed to the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada, Shoghi Effendi reflects on the significance of the upcoming forty-year milestone since the mention of Bahá'u'lláh's name on the American continent. He invites the believers to contemplate the profound implications of this momentous event in the spiritual history of the region. Shoghi Effendi highlights the extraordinary circumstances surrounding the first public mention of Bahá'u'lláh and acknowledges the profound impact it must have had on those present.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Address to the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada.
2. Reflection on the upcoming forty-year milestone since the mention of Bahá'u'lláh's name in America.
3. Contemplation of the significance of this event in the spiritual history of the region.
4. Acknowledgment of the extraordinary circumstances surrounding the first public mention of Bahá'u'lláh.
5. Invitation to the believers to ponder the associations and implications of this historic occasion.

Questions and Answers:

1. What historical events or circumstances led to the first public mention of Bahá'u'lláh's name on the American continent, and how did it impact the trajectory of the Bahá'í Faith in the region?

- Answer: The first public mention of Bahá'u'lláh's name in America likely occurred through the efforts of early Bahá'í pioneers or missionaries who introduced His teachings to the region. This event marked the beginning of the Bahá'í Faith's presence in America and set the stage for its subsequent growth and development.

2. How might the mention of Bahá'u'lláh's name in America be perceived differently by believers and non-believers, and what significance does it hold for each group?

- Answer: For believers, the mention of Bahá'u'lláh's name in America represents a momentous milestone in the spread of His teachings and the establishment of the Bahá'í Faith in a new territory. For non-believers, it may be viewed as a curious or significant historical event, depending on their familiarity with Bahá'í teachings and their perspective on religious pluralism.

3. What lessons can contemporary Bahá'ís draw from the early efforts to introduce Bahá'u'lláh's name to America, and how might these lessons inform their own efforts to spread His teachings today?

- Answer: Contemporary Bahá'ís can draw inspiration from the dedication and courage of early pioneers who introduced Bahá'u'lláh's name to America despite challenges and obstacles. These lessons can inform their own efforts to spread His teachings today, encouraging them to persevere in their efforts to share the message of unity, peace, and justice with others.

4. How has the mention of Bahá'u'lláh's name in America contributed to the cultural and religious landscape of the region, and what implications does it have for interfaith dialogue and understanding?

- Answer: The mention of Bahá'u'lláh's name in America has contributed to the diversity of religious expression in the region and has opened avenues for interfaith dialogue and understanding. It has fostered greater awareness of the Bahá'í Faith and its teachings, enriching the cultural and religious tapestry of America.

5. What significance does the forty-year milestone hold for the Bahá'í community in America and Canada, and how might it be commemorated or celebrated?

- Answer: The forty-year milestone since the mention of Bahá'u'lláh's name in America is a significant moment for the Bahá'í community in both America and Canada, symbolizing the growth and maturity of the Faith in the region. It may be commemorated

or celebrated through various activities, such as special gatherings, prayers, and reflections on the progress made and the challenges ahead.

2. Of pomp and circumstance, of any manifestations of public rejoicing or of popular applause, there were none to greet this first intimation¹ 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.

Summary:

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi reflects on the understated and humble beginnings of the Bahá'í Faith in America. He describes how there were no grand displays of celebration or public rejoicing when the name of Bahá'u'lláh was first mentioned to America's citizens. The chosen instrument, likely referring to the individual who conveyed this message, did not fully grasp the significance of what he was conveying nor the immense impact it would have. There were no manifestations of popular applause or pomp and circumstance to mark this historic moment. Instead, the revelation of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings to the American people was quietly and unassumingly delivered, without any fanfare or ostentation.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Reflecting on the humble beginnings of the Bahá'í Faith in America.
2. Absence of pomp and circumstance: No manifestations of public rejoicing or popular applause.
3. The chosen instrument: Likely referring to the individual who conveyed the message of Bahá'u'lláh.
4. Lack of awareness of the magnitude of the forces unleashed by the initial mention of Bahá'u'lláh's name.
5. Quiet and unassuming delivery of the revelation, without grand displays or celebrations.

Questions and Answers:

1. Why do you think there were no grand displays of celebration or public rejoicing when the name of Bahá'u'lláh was first mentioned to America's citizens?

- Answer: The absence of grand displays may reflect the humble and unassuming nature of the early efforts to introduce Bahá'u'lláh's teachings to America. It may also indicate a recognition of the profound spiritual nature of the message, which transcends outward manifestations of celebration.

2. How might the lack of awareness of the magnitude of the forces unleashed by the initial mention of Bahá'u'lláh's name have impacted the subsequent development of the Bahá'í Faith in America?

- Answer: The lack of awareness may have allowed for the organic and gradual growth of the Bahá'í Faith in America, free from the pressures of excessive expectations

or external influences. It may have fostered a sense of authenticity and sincerity among early believers, who were drawn to the teachings based on their intrinsic merit rather than any external fanfare.

3. What lessons can contemporary Bahá'ís draw from the quiet and unassuming delivery of the revelation of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings in America?

- Answer: Contemporary Bahá'ís can draw inspiration from the modest beginnings of the Bahá'í Faith in America, recognizing the power of sincerity, humility, and steadfastness in spreading the message of Bahá'u'lláh. They can reflect on the importance of focusing on the essence of the teachings rather than seeking external validation or recognition.

4. How might the absence of grand displays of celebration at the outset of the Bahá'í Faith in America reflect broader principles of humility and detachment within the Bahá'í teachings?

- Answer: The absence of grand displays of celebration reflects the Bahá'í teachings on humility, detachment, and the importance of sincerity in spiritual matters. It emphasizes the inward transformation of individuals and communities, rather than external demonstrations of faith or adherence.

5. What role do you think humility and modesty play in the spread of spiritual teachings, particularly in a diverse and secular society like America?

- Answer: Humility and modesty can serve as powerful catalysts for the spread of spiritual teachings in any society, including diverse and secular ones like America. They allow individuals to connect with others on a deeper, more authentic level, transcending barriers of culture, ideology, and background. Humility also fosters openness and receptivity to new ideas and perspectives, creating opportunities for genuine dialogue and understanding.

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.

Summary:

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi reflects on the remarkable growth and impact of the Bahá'í Faith in America despite its humble and unassuming beginnings. He acknowledges

that the Message of the Most Great Name was initially announced by an avowed supporter of narrow ecclesiasticism, which the Bahá'í Faith seeks to challenge and overcome. Despite being characterized as an obscure offshoot of a contemptible creed, the Bahá'í Message, nurtured by the trials and cared for by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, has taken root in America's fertile soil and spread to the farthest corners of the globe.

Despite lacking the advantages of talent, rank, and riches, the Bahá'í community in America has achieved remarkable success through the inspired wisdom, united will, and incorruptible loyalty of its administrators and teachers. In less than half a century, it has emerged as a leader among sister communities worldwide, contributing significantly to the advancement of Bahá'í principles and the realization of the Golden Age envisioned by Bahá'u'lláh.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Reflection on the growth and impact of the Bahá'í Faith in America.
2. Humble beginnings: Initial announcement through a supporter of narrow ecclesiasticism.
3. Overcoming challenges: Characterized as an obscure offshoot of a contemptible creed.
4. Nurturing and growth: Message nurtured by 'Abdu'l-Bahá and taking root in America's soil.
5. Global spread: Spreading to the farthest corners of the globe in less than half a century.
6. Achieving distinction: Despite lacking advantages, achieving leadership among sister communities.
7. Factors of success: Inspired wisdom, united will, and incorruptible loyalty of administrators and teachers.

Questions and Answers:

1. How does Shoghi Effendi's description of the Bahá'í Faith's growth in America challenge stereotypes and misconceptions about religious movements emerging from humble beginnings?
 - Answer: Shoghi Effendi's description challenges stereotypes by highlighting the remarkable growth and impact of the Bahá'í Faith in America despite its humble beginnings and initial characterization as obscure and contemptible. It underscores the transformative power of faith and the ability of communities to overcome challenges and achieve greatness.
2. What role do you think 'Abdu'l-Bahá's nurturing care played in the growth and spread of the Bahá'í Faith in America and beyond?
 - Answer: 'Abdu'l-Bahá's nurturing care provided spiritual guidance, encouragement, and support to early believers, helping to strengthen their resolve and deepen their understanding of Bahá'í teachings. His example of love, compassion, and service inspired believers to share the Message of Bahá'u'lláh with others, contributing to the Faith's growth and spread.
3. How did the Bahá'í community in America overcome challenges and achieve leadership among sister communities despite lacking material advantages?

- Answer: The Bahá'í community in America achieved leadership through the inspired wisdom, united will, and incorruptible loyalty of its administrators and teachers. Their dedication to the principles of the Bahá'í Faith, combined with their commitment to service and unity, enabled them to overcome challenges and earn recognition as leaders in the global Bahá'í community.

4. What lessons can contemporary Bahá'ís draw from the achievements of the early Bahá'í community in America?

- Answer: Contemporary Bahá'ís can draw inspiration from the achievements of the early Bahá'í community in America, recognizing the power of unity, dedication, and steadfastness in advancing the Bahá'í Faith's mission. They can learn from the example of their predecessors and strive to emulate their commitment to service, humility, and spiritual growth.

5. How might the success of the Bahá'í community in America serve as a model for other religious or social movements seeking to effect positive change in the world?

- Answer: The success of the Bahá'í community in America demonstrates the transformative power of faith, unity, and service in effecting positive change in the world. It serves as a model for other religious or social movements seeking to address pressing issues and promote peace, justice, and unity on a global scale.

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 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!

Summary:

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi reflects on the challenges and trials that the Bahá'í community in America has faced throughout its history. Despite being a blessed and vibrant community, it has weathered grave crises and endured a slow and painful process of emerging from obscurity to public recognition. The community has suffered from the defection of the faint-hearted, the malice of mischief-makers, and the treachery of the proud and ambitious. Its representatives have bravely faced storms of ridicule, abuse, and calumny as they staunchly supported the integrity of the Faith. Additionally, the community has experienced persistent vicissitudes and disconcerting reverses as its members, both young and old, individually and collectively, endeavored to fulfill the lofty goals set forth by their loving Master.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Reflection on the challenges faced by the Bahá'í community in America.
2. Emergence from obscurity: Gradual process of gaining public recognition.
3. Challenges faced by the community:
 - a. Defection of the faint-hearted.
 - b. Malice of mischief-makers.
 - c. Treachery of the proud and ambitious.
4. Trials endured by representatives:
 - a. Facing storms of ridicule, abuse, and calumny.
 - b. Staunch support of the integrity of the Faith.
5. Vicissitudes and reverses experienced by privileged members:
 - a. Persistent challenges and disconcerting setbacks.
 - b. Heroic endeavors to fulfill the goals set by their loving Master.

Questions and Answers:

1. How do the challenges faced by the Bahá'í community in America reflect broader themes of perseverance and resilience in the face of adversity?

- Answer: The challenges faced by the Bahá'í community in America reflect the universal human experience of facing adversity and overcoming obstacles on the path to spiritual growth and progress. They highlight the importance of perseverance, resilience, and unwavering commitment to one's beliefs and principles.

2. What factors might have contributed to the slow and painful process of gaining public recognition for the Bahá'í Faith in America?

- Answer: The slow and painful process of gaining public recognition for the Bahá'í Faith in America may have been influenced by factors such as societal prejudices, religious intolerance, and cultural barriers. Additionally, the newness and unfamiliarity of Bahá'í teachings may have contributed to skepticism and resistance among the broader population.

3. How have the challenges faced by the Bahá'í community in America shaped its identity and strengthened its resolve?

- Answer: The challenges faced by the Bahá'í community in America have helped shape its identity as a resilient and steadfast community dedicated to the principles of the Bahá'í Faith. These challenges have strengthened its resolve to uphold the integrity of the Faith and have fostered a sense of unity and solidarity among its members.

4. How might the experiences of facing ridicule, abuse, and calumny have influenced the character and spirit of the Bahá'í community in America?

- Answer: The experiences of facing ridicule, abuse, and calumny may have fostered a sense of resilience, humility, and compassion within the Bahá'í community in America. These experiences may have deepened their commitment to the principles of the Faith and strengthened their resolve to promote unity, justice, and peace in the face of adversity.

5. What lessons can contemporary Bahá'ís draw from the challenges endured by their predecessors in America?

- Answer: Contemporary Bahá'ís can draw inspiration from the resilience and perseverance demonstrated by their predecessors in America. They can learn from their experiences and strive to emulate their steadfastness, courage, and dedication to the

principles of the Bahá'í Faith. These lessons can guide contemporary Bahá'ís in navigating challenges and obstacles on their own spiritual journey.

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 ridiculed 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 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 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, vitiate its vitality, and complete its ruin.

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi reflects on the adversities and criticisms faced by the Bahá'í Faith from its enemies throughout history. Despite the growing ascendancy of its supporters, powerful enemies have hurled vile imputations and fierce wrath upon the Faith. They have sneered at its perceived lack of resources and stagnant life, ridiculed its origins, and dismissed it as an appendage of an expiring creed. Enemies have attacked the heroic person of the Forerunner of the Faith and denounced His writings as idle chatter. They have attributed base motives to the divine Founder and depicted the Center of His Covenant as a tyrant and fraudster.

Critics have denounced the Faith's world-unifying principles as defective and its program as fantastic. They have regarded its vision of the future as deceitful and its fundamental verities as mere dogma. The administrative machinery of the Faith has been refused

differentiation from its essence, and its revered mysteries have been equated with superstition. The principle of unification has been misconceived as uniformity, supernatural beliefs condemned as magic, and idealism rejected as utopia. The process of purification within the Faith has been falsely hailed as a symptom of impending ruin.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Reflection on adversities faced by the Bahá'í Faith.
2. Attacks on its resources and perceived stagnation.
3. Ridicule of its origins and dismissal as an appendage of an expiring creed.
4. Denunciation of the Forerunner and His writings.
5. Vilification of the divine Founder and the Center of His Covenant.
6. Criticism of the Faith's principles, program, and vision of the future.
7. Misrepresentation of its fundamental verities, administrative machinery, and revered mysteries.
8. Misconception of its principle of unification, supernatural beliefs, and idealism.
9. False portrayal of the purification process as a sign of impending ruin.

Questions and Answers:

1. How have the attacks and criticisms faced by the Bahá'í Faith throughout history influenced its development and resilience?
 - Answer: The attacks and criticisms have tested the resolve and faith of Bahá'ís, reinforcing their dedication to the principles of the Faith and strengthening their commitment to its teachings. They have also prompted deeper reflection and understanding of Bahá'í beliefs and values.
2. What motivations might have driven the enemies of the Bahá'í Faith to level such harsh criticisms and accusations against it?
 - Answer: The enemies of the Bahá'í Faith may have been motivated by fear, ignorance, prejudice, or a desire to maintain their own power and influence. They may have viewed the Faith as a threat to their established beliefs or authority and sought to discredit it through misinformation and slander.
3. How have Bahá'ís historically responded to such attacks and criticisms?
 - Answer: Bahá'ís have responded to attacks and criticisms with patience, forbearance, and a commitment to constructive dialogue. They have sought to address misconceptions and misunderstandings about the Faith while remaining steadfast in their beliefs and principles.
4. What lessons can be drawn from the Bahá'í Faith's history of facing adversity and criticism for individuals and communities facing similar challenges?
 - Answer: The Bahá'í Faith's history of facing adversity and criticism demonstrates the importance of resilience, steadfastness, and unity in the face of opposition. It highlights the need for patience, understanding, and constructive engagement when addressing misunderstandings and hostility.
5. How can the Bahá'í Faith's experience with adversity inform its approach to promoting unity, peace, and social justice in the world?

- Answer: The Bahá'í Faith's experience with adversity can inform its approach by emphasizing the importance of promoting unity, peace, and social justice through dialogue, education, and collaboration. It underscores the need for patience, perseverance, and a commitment to the common good in the face of opposition and challenges.

6. Dearly-beloved 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 to occupy so exalted a place among the various instruments which the Hand of Omnipotence 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.

Summary:

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi acknowledges the monumental task of tracing the history and analyzing the rise of the Bahá'í administrative center on the American continent. He recognizes the limitations of the present generation in fully understanding the impelling forces that have propelled the Faith forward and consolidated its institutions. Shoghi Effendi suggests that future historians, equipped with greater insight and perspective, will undertake the task of documenting the origins and significance of this remarkable shift in the Faith's center of administration.

These future historians will have the opportunity to provide a masterly exposition of the forces that led to the gravitation of the administrative center towards America, highlighting the individuals who played key roles in this process. They will evaluate the contributions of these "champion-builders" in ushering in the promised golden Millennium envisioned by Bahá'u'lláh. Ultimately, it will be their privilege to immortalize the memory of those who participated in this historic accomplishment and to assess the profound impact it had on the evolution of the Bahá'í Faith.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Acknowledgment of the monumental task of tracing the rise of the Bahá'í administrative center.
2. Recognition of the limitations of the present generation in understanding the impelling forces behind the Faith's advancement.
3. Future historians' role: Documenting the origins and significance of the shift in the Faith's administrative center to America.
4. Task of future historians: Providing a masterly exposition of the forces behind the shift and evaluating the contributions of key individuals.
5. Immortalizing the memory of champion-builders: Recognizing their role in ushering in the promised golden Millennium envisioned by Bahá'u'lláh.

Questions and Answers:

1. How might future historians approach the task of documenting the shift in the Bahá'í administrative center to America, considering the complexity of the forces at play?

- Answer: Future historians may utilize a variety of sources, including archival materials, personal accounts, and scholarly analysis, to trace the multifaceted factors that led to the gravitation of the administrative center towards America. They may employ interdisciplinary approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of the social, political, and cultural dynamics involved.

2. What key factors do you think contributed to America becoming the chief bulwark of the Bahá'í administrative institutions?

- Answer: Several factors may have contributed to America's emergence as the chief bulwark of Bahá'í administrative institutions, including the receptivity of American society to new ideas and religious movements, the presence of dedicated believers and influential supporters, and the strategic importance of America as a hub for global communication and collaboration.

3. How might the future evaluation of "champion-builders" within the Bahá'í Faith contribute to a deeper understanding of the Faith's evolution and impact?

- Answer: The evaluation of champion-builders within the Bahá'í Faith can provide insights into the diverse contributions and sacrifices made by individuals in advancing the Faith's mission. It can highlight the role of leadership, collaboration, and perseverance in shaping the Bahá'í community and advancing its principles in the world.

4. What challenges do you anticipate future historians may face in accurately assessing the significance of the shift in the Bahá'í administrative center to America?

- Answer: Future historians may encounter challenges such as accessing reliable historical records, navigating differing perspectives within the Bahá'í community, and interpreting the complex interplay of factors that influenced the shift in the administrative center. Additionally, they may need to contend with biases and interpretations shaped by cultural, political, and religious contexts.

5. How might the documentation of the shift in the Bahá'í administrative center to America contribute to broader discussions about the globalization of religious movements and the role of diverse communities in shaping religious identity?

- Answer: The documentation of this shift can provide valuable insights into the dynamics of globalization, religious migration, and cultural exchange. It can highlight the role of diverse communities in shaping religious identity and the ways in which religious

movements adapt and evolve in response to changing social, political, and geographical contexts.

7. Does not the history of primitive Christianity and of the rise of Islám, 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 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 Islám 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?

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi draws parallels between the beginnings of the Bahá'í Faith and the early history of Christianity and Islam. He highlights how, in each case, the divine impulse that gave birth to these religious systems led to a migration away from their land of origin to seek more propitious environments for the propagation of their cause. The Asiatic churches of Jerusalem, Antioch, and Alexandria, consisting primarily of Jewish converts, eventually yielded to the growing ascendancy of their Greek and Roman brethren, who were better equipped to spread the message of Jesus Christ. Similarly, the animating spirit of Islam was compelled to abandon its Arabian home and propagate its civilization in distant lands.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Shoghi Effendi draws parallels between the beginnings of the Bahá'í Faith, Christianity, and Islam.
2. Migration away from the land of origin: The divine impulse driving each religion to seek more propitious environments for propagation.
3. Parallel with early Christianity:
 - a. Asiatic churches in Jerusalem, Antioch, and Alexandria.
 - b. Jewish converts yielding to the ascendancy of Greek and Roman brethren.
 - c. Spread of Christianity amidst the collapse of the Roman Empire.
4. Parallel with Islam:
 - a. Abandonment of the Arabian home.

- b. Propagation of Islamic civilization in distant lands.
- 5. Reflection on the forces shaping religious movements: The influence of external factors and the quest for a more receptive audience.
- 6. Implications for the Bahá'í Faith: Understanding historical parallels to inform the evolution and propagation of the Bahá'í message.

Questions and Answers:

1. How do the parallels drawn by Shoghi Effendi between the beginnings of the Bahá'í Faith, Christianity, and Islam enhance our understanding of religious history and evolution?

- Answer: The parallels shed light on recurring patterns in the development of religious movements, highlighting the role of migration, adaptation, and propagation in response to changing circumstances and environments.

2. What factors might have influenced the decision of early religious communities to seek more propitious environments for the propagation of their cause?

- Answer: Early religious communities may have been influenced by factors such as persecution, political instability, cultural barriers, and the desire to reach a more receptive audience for their message.

3. In what ways did the migration of religious communities contribute to the spread and influence of their respective faiths?

- Answer: The migration of religious communities facilitated the spread of their faiths to new regions and cultures, leading to the establishment of diverse communities and the adaptation of religious teachings to local customs and practices.

4. How do historical parallels between religious movements inform our understanding of the globalization of religious faiths and their impact on diverse societies?

- Answer: Historical parallels highlight the universal appeal of religious faiths and their ability to transcend geographical and cultural boundaries. They also underscore the dynamic nature of religious movements and their capacity to adapt and evolve in response to changing social, political, and environmental contexts.

5. What lessons can be drawn from the migration of religious communities for contemporary religious movements seeking to propagate their message in diverse cultural and geographical settings?

- Answer: Contemporary religious movements can learn from the experiences of early religious communities by recognizing the importance of cultural sensitivity, adaptability, and perseverance in spreading their message effectively in diverse cultural and geographical settings.

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 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.”

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi, quoting ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, discusses the historical pattern of the light of Divine Revelation rising in the East and then shining brightly in the West. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá emphasizes that while various religious dispensations have originated in the East, their full potentialities often become manifest when their teachings are embraced and propagated in the West. He highlights Christianity as an example, noting that although Jesus Christ appeared in Palestine and his teachings were founded there, it was in the West where Christianity flourished and spread most extensively. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá expresses confidence that, in the future, the West will replace the East as the primary source of radiating the light of Divine Guidance, signaling a shift in the locus of spiritual influence from East to West.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Shoghi Effendi introduces ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s perspective on the historical pattern of Divine Revelation rising in the East and shining in the West.
2. Historical pattern:
 - a. The light of Divine Revelation originating in the East.
 - b. Manifestation of full potentialities in the West.
3. Example of Christianity:
 - a. Jesus Christ's appearance and teachings in Palestine.
 - b. Flourishing and extensive spread of Christianity in the West.
4. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s confidence in the future:
 - a. The West replacing the East as the primary source of Divine Guidance.
 - b. A shift in the locus of spiritual influence.
5. Reflection on the significance of this historical pattern for understanding the evolution of religious movements and spiritual influence.

Questions and Answers:

1. How do ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s insights into the historical pattern of Divine Revelation contribute to our understanding of the dynamics of religious diffusion and influence?
 - Answer: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s insights highlight the interconnectedness of different religious traditions and the ways in which spiritual teachings transcend geographical boundaries. They suggest that the propagation and flourishing of religious movements

often occur through the embrace and dissemination of their teachings in new cultural and geographical contexts.

2. What factors might have contributed to the greater embrace and propagation of Christianity in the West compared to the East?

- Answer: Various factors may have contributed to Christianity's greater embrace and propagation in the West, including cultural receptivity, socio-political conditions, missionary efforts, and the spread of literacy and communication networks.

3. How does the concept of the West replacing the East as the primary source of Divine Guidance resonate with broader discussions about cultural and spiritual shifts in global society?

- Answer: The idea of the West replacing the East as the primary source of Divine Guidance suggests a shift in cultural and spiritual influence from traditional Eastern centers to Western societies. This concept intersects with broader discussions about globalization, cultural exchange, and the evolving dynamics of religious and spiritual movements in a globalized world.

4. In what ways might the historical pattern described by 'Abdu'l-Bahá inform contemporary understandings of religious pluralism and interfaith dialogue?

- Answer: 'Abdu'l-Bahá's description of Divine Revelation rising in the East and shining in the West underscores the interconnectedness of religious traditions and the importance of mutual respect and understanding among different faith communities. It highlights the potential for constructive dialogue and cooperation in addressing shared spiritual and societal challenges.

5. How might the concept of the West replacing the East as the primary source of Divine Guidance challenge conventional narratives about religious authority and spiritual leadership?

- Answer: The concept challenges conventional narratives that associate spiritual authority and leadership primarily with Eastern traditions. It invites reevaluation of historical and contemporary understandings of religious influence and prompts reflection on the evolving dynamics of spiritual leadership in a globalized world.

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 '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.”

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi reflects on the profound significance of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's pronouncements regarding the future destiny of America. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, in Tablets and during his visit to the West, proclaimed America as the land where the splendors of God's light would be revealed, where the mysteries of His Faith would be unveiled, and where righteousness and freedom would flourish. He expressed his hope for America to establish the foundation of international agreement, proclaim the unity of mankind, and unfurl the standard of the Most Great Peace. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá envisioned America as the distributing center of spiritual enlightenment, with its people rising to spiritual heights and becoming servants of the omnipotent One. He believed that America, with its unparalleled powers and capacities, was equipped to lead all nations spiritually and become the envy of the world for the triumph of its people.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Shoghi Effendi reflects on ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's profound pronouncements regarding the future destiny of America.
2. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's vision for America:
 - a. America as the land where God's splendors will be revealed.
 - b. Unveiling of the mysteries of His Faith.
 - c. Flourishing of righteousness and freedom.
3. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's hopes for America:
 - a. Establishment of international agreement.
 - b. Proclamation of the unity of mankind.
 - c. Unfurling the standard of the Most Great Peace.
4. America as the distributing center of spiritual enlightenment:
 - a. People rising to spiritual heights.
 - b. Becoming servants of the omnipotent One.
5. America's unparalleled powers and capacities:
 - a. Equipped to lead all nations spiritually.
 - b. Envy of the world for the triumph of its people.
6. Reflection on the significance of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's vision for America and its potential impact on global spiritual advancement.

Questions and Answers:

1. How does ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s vision for America align with broader discussions about the role of nations in promoting global peace and unity?

- Answer: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s vision emphasizes America’s potential to lead the world in establishing international agreement, proclaiming the unity of mankind, and fostering the Most Great Peace. It underscores the role of nations in advancing spiritual and social progress on a global scale.

2. What specific actions and attitudes does ‘Abdu’l-Bahá envision for America in fulfilling its role as the distributing center of spiritual enlightenment?

- Answer: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá envisions America’s inhabitants becoming like angels of heaven, with faces turned continually toward God and serving as exemplars of spiritual devotion and enlightenment. He calls for a rise from material attainments to spiritual heights and for the dissemination of heavenly illumination from America to all peoples of the world.

3. How might ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s vision for America challenge conventional narratives about national identity and purpose?

- Answer: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s vision challenges conventional narratives by emphasizing America’s spiritual destiny and its potential to lead the world in promoting peace, unity, and enlightenment. It invites reflection on the broader purpose of nations beyond material achievements and geopolitical influence.

4. In what ways can America’s historical and contemporary actions be evaluated in light of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s vision for the nation?

- Answer: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s vision provides a framework for evaluating America’s actions and policies in relation to their contribution to global spiritual advancement and the promotion of peace, justice, and unity. It calls for a reevaluation of America’s role and responsibilities on the world stage.

5. How might ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s vision for America inspire individuals and communities to contribute to the realization of spiritual enlightenment and global peace?

- Answer: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s vision can inspire individuals and communities to embody spiritual values, work towards social justice, and promote unity and understanding among diverse peoples. It emphasizes the transformative power of spiritual enlightenment and the potential for positive change on a global scale.

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 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 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?

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi reflects on the significance of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s vision for the establishment of the Bahá’í Faith in North America. He emphasizes ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s special attention to America, considering it as the most outstanding among the threefold aims of His ministry. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, with unerring wisdom and boundless love, bestowed tokens of solicitude and favor upon the American believers throughout His life. He conceived the idea of inaugurating His mission in America, visited the country after His release from incarceration, and infused His followers with the sentiments and principles necessary for their task. Shoghi Effendi suggests that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá deliberately bequeathed to the American believers the essentials of their spiritual heritage, which they would safeguard and enrich through their deeds. He concludes by affirming that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, through His actions and the Divine Plan unveiled to them, invested the American believers with spiritual primacy for the fulfillment of their high destiny.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Shoghi Effendi reflects on ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s vision for establishing the Bahá’í Faith in North America.
2. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s special attention to America:
 - a. Considered the most outstanding aim of His ministry.
 - b. Conceived the idea of inaugurating His mission in America.
3. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s actions and expressions of love for the American believers:
 - a. Bestowed tokens of solicitude and favor throughout His life.
 - b. Visited America after His release from incarceration.
 - c. Infused followers with necessary sentiments and principles.
4. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s deliberate bequeathing of spiritual heritage to American believers:
 - a. Laying the corner-stone of their House of Worship.
 - b. Serving them personally at the Feast.

- c. Emphasizing the implications of His spiritual station.
5. Divine Plan for the American believers:
 - a. Investing them with spiritual primacy for their high destiny.
 6. Reflection on the significance of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s actions and vision for America’s spiritual destiny.

Questions and Answers:

1. How do ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s actions and expressions of love for the American believers reflect His confidence in their ability to fulfill their high destiny?
 - Answer: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s consistent support, personal involvement, and emphasis on spiritual principles demonstrate His confidence in the American believers’ capacity to fulfill their mission. His actions were intended to inspire and empower them to safeguard and enrich their spiritual heritage.
 2. In what ways did ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s visit to America contribute to the spiritual development of the Bahá’í community there?
 - Answer: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s visit provided a profound spiritual impetus to the American believers, reinforcing their commitment to the Faith and imbuing them with the necessary sentiments and principles for their task. His presence and teachings enriched the spiritual atmosphere and strengthened the bonds of unity among the believers.
 3. How did ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s emphasis on the implications of His spiritual station serve to empower the American believers in their mission?
 - Answer: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s emphasis on His spiritual station affirmed the believers’ faith in His guidance and authority, empowering them to fulfill their mission with confidence and steadfastness. It reminded them of the spiritual significance of their endeavors and the divine purpose behind their actions.
 4. What role does spiritual primacy play in the Bahá’í concept of leadership, particularly in the context of the American believers’ mission?
 - Answer: Spiritual primacy emphasizes the importance of spiritual qualities and divine guidance in leadership roles within the Bahá’í community. In the context of the American believers’ mission, it signifies their responsibility to uphold spiritual principles and advance the Cause of Bahá’u’lláh with integrity and dedication.
 5. How can the American believers honor ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s legacy and fulfill their high destiny in the present-day context?
 - Answer: The American believers can honor ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s legacy by continuing to uphold the principles He emphasized, fostering unity, serving humanity, and actively participating in the spiritual and social transformation of society. They can fulfill their high destiny by embodying the teachings of Bahá’u’lláh and contributing to the advancement of civilization through their actions and deeds.
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 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 plenitude of its majesty and glory, be firmly established.”

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi quotes ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s exhortations to the American believers, emphasizing their exalted station, unique favors, and destined achievements in spreading the light of Divine Guidance. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá expresses His profound love and joy at the mention of the believers, assuring them of the greatness of their future success, which remains undisclosed but will soon be witnessed by all. He encourages them not to be discouraged by their small numbers or the disbelief of the world, reminding them of the unspeakable glory of their mission. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá assures the believers of the Almighty’s grace and support, urging them to exert themselves for the establishment of the Kingdom of God in America.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Shoghi Effendi quotes ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s exhortations to the American believers.
2. Exalted station and unique favors:
 - a. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá expresses His love and sacrifice for the believers.
 - b. He highlights the portals opened by Bahá’u’lláh before them.
3. Destined achievements and future success:
 - a. The believers are destined for exalted stations and lofty achievements.
 - b. The full measure of their success is yet unrevealed but will soon be witnessed.
4. Encouragement and admonition:
 - a. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá expresses joy at the mention of the believers and urges them not to be concerned with their small numbers.
 - b. He assures them of the Almighty’s help and the sustaining power of His holy Spirit.
5. Glorious mission and establishment of the Kingdom of God:
 - a. The believers’ mission is unspeakably glorious, and success will lead to the establishment of the Kingdom of God in America.

6. Reflection on the significance of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s exhortations for the American believers.

Questions and Answers:

1. How do ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s expressions of love and sacrifice for the American believers inspire them to fulfill their mission?

- Answer: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s expressions of love and sacrifice demonstrate His deep affection and concern for the believers, motivating them to wholeheartedly dedicate themselves to their mission.

2. In what ways do ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s assurances of future success and the Almighty’s help strengthen the believers’ resolve in the face of challenges?

- Answer: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s assurances instill confidence and hope in the believers, reminding them that their efforts are supported by divine grace and power. This strengthens their resolve to overcome obstacles and fulfill their mission.

3. How might ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s admonition not to be concerned with small numbers or disbelief resonate with the American believers today?

- Answer: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s admonition encourages the believers to focus on the greatness of their mission rather than external challenges or limitations. It reminds them to remain steadfast in their faith and efforts despite opposition or discouragement.

4. What role do you think the American believers play in the broader context of the global Bahá’í community’s mission?

- Answer: The American believers have a significant role in advancing the global mission of the Bahá’í Faith, particularly in spreading its principles of unity, peace, and social transformation. Their achievements can inspire and empower believers worldwide, contributing to the realization of Bahá’u’lláh’s vision for humanity.

5. How can the American believers embody ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s vision of America evolving into a center of spiritual power and the establishment of the Kingdom of God?

- Answer: The American believers can embody ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s vision by actively engaging in community-building activities, promoting unity, and serving humanity. They can strive to create environments that reflect spiritual qualities and values, contributing to the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth.

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 Abhá 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 Yá Bahá’u’l-Abhá 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 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.”*

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi conveys ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s exhortations to the American believers, urging them to expand their efforts globally and proclaim the advent of the Kingdom of God in all continents. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá expresses His hope that the success achieved in America will be replicated worldwide, diffusing the fame of the Cause of God. He calls on the believers to increase their exertions and extend the scope of their efforts to cities, villages, mountains, deserts, and oceans. Despite His own inability to travel to these regions, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá fervently desires to promote the Divine teachings there. He solemnly affirms that the spread of the Divine Message from America to other continents will establish the Bahá’í community upon the throne of everlasting dominion, spiritually illumining and guiding humanity.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Shoghi Effendi relays ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s exhortations to the American believers regarding their global mission.
2. Expansion of efforts and proclamation of the Kingdom of God:
 - a. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá urges the believers to replicate their success in America globally.
 - b. He emphasizes the diffusion of the fame of the Cause of God in both East and West.
3. Call for increased exertions and extended scope:
 - a. The believers are encouraged to increase their efforts a thousandfold and summon people in various regions to enter the Abhá Kingdom.
 - b. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá underscores the importance of extending the scope of their efforts to diverse geographical locations.
4. Expression of longing and regret:
 - a. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá expresses His intense desire to personally promote the Divine teachings in distant regions, lamenting His inability to do so.
5. Vision of America's spiritual destiny:
 - a. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá affirms that the spread of the Divine Message from America to other continents will establish the Bahá’í community upon the throne of everlasting dominion.
 - b. The spiritual illumination and divine guidance of the Bahá’í community will be recognized globally, and the earth will resound with praises of its majesty and greatness.
6. Reflection on the significance of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s vision for America's global mission.

Questions and Answers:

1. How do ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s exhortations inspire the American believers to expand their efforts globally?

- Answer: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s exhortations convey a sense of urgency and importance, inspiring the believers to undertake greater efforts to spread the Divine Message globally and proclaim the advent of the Kingdom of God.

2. What challenges might the American believers face in extending their efforts to diverse geographical locations, and how can they overcome them?

- Answer: The American believers may face challenges such as cultural differences, language barriers, and logistical constraints. They can overcome these challenges through collaboration, cultural sensitivity, language learning, and strategic planning.

3. How does ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s expression of longing to personally promote the Divine teachings in distant regions resonate with the believers’ own desire for service and sacrifice?

- Answer: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s expression of longing highlights His deep love for humanity and His eagerness to serve. It resonates with the believers’ own desire to sacrificially serve humanity and promote the Bahá’í Faith.

4. What impact do you think the global spread of the Divine Message from America would have on the spiritual and social landscape of the world?

- Answer: The global spread of the Divine Message from America would have a transformative impact, bringing spiritual illumination, unity, and guidance to humanity. It would contribute to the establishment of peace, justice, and unity among diverse peoples and cultures.

5. How can the American believers play a leading role in realizing ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s vision of establishing the Bahá’í community upon the throne of everlasting dominion?

- Answer: The American believers can play a leading role by wholeheartedly embracing ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s vision, increasing their efforts to spread the Divine Message globally, and exemplifying the spiritual qualities and teachings of the Bahá’í Faith in their lives. They can actively collaborate with believers worldwide to advance the cause of unity and justice.

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!’”*

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi reflects on the significance of Bahá’u’lláh’s prophetic utterance regarding the manifestation of His Revelation in the East and the signs of His dominion in the West. He urges believers to ponder this statement deeply and warns against turning a deaf ear to the admonitions of Bahá’u’lláh. Shoghi Effendi emphasizes the inevitability of the spread of Bahá’u’lláh’s Revelation, even if attempts are made to conceal its light on the continent.

He suggests that if obstructed in one place, the Revelation will emerge elsewhere, asserting its claim as the life-giver of the world.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Shoghi Effendi introduces Bahá'u'lláh's prophetic utterance regarding the manifestation of His Revelation in the East and signs of His dominion in the West.
2. Pondering the significance:
 - a. Shoghi Effendi calls on believers to deeply contemplate Bahá'u'lláh's words and understand their profound implications.
 - b. He highlights the importance of not disregarding the admonitions of Bahá'u'lláh.
3. Inevitability of the spread of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation:
 - a. Shoghi Effendi emphasizes the inevitability of the spread of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation, despite attempts to conceal its light.
 - b. He suggests that if obstructed in one place, the Revelation will emerge elsewhere with even greater force.
4. Assertion of the Revelation's claim:
 - a. Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation asserts its claim as the life-giver of the world, transcending geographical boundaries.
 - b. Shoghi Effendi underscores the universal nature and transformative power of Bahá'u'lláh's Message.

Questions and Answers:

1. What do you think Bahá'u'lláh meant by stating that the signs of His dominion have appeared in the West?
 - Answer: Bahá'u'lláh's statement suggests that His Revelation has gained recognition and influence in the Western world, indicating the spread of His teachings and the emergence of believers who recognize His authority.
2. How can believers avoid turning a deaf ear to the admonitions of Bahá'u'lláh and instead deeply contemplate His words?
 - Answer: Believers can avoid turning a deaf ear by engaging in regular study and reflection on Bahá'u'lláh's writings, participating in deepening sessions, and applying His teachings in their daily lives. They can also seek guidance from knowledgeable individuals and strive to understand the spiritual truths embedded in His Revelation.
3. What are the implications of Bahá'u'lláh's warning that attempts to conceal the light of His Revelation will be futile?
 - Answer: Bahá'u'lláh's warning suggests that His Revelation cannot be suppressed or extinguished by human efforts. It will inevitably manifest itself, either in the same place or elsewhere, asserting its claim as the life-giver of the world.
4. How does Bahá'u'lláh's assertion that His Revelation is the life-giver of the world resonate with the spiritual aspirations of believers?
 - Answer: Bahá'u'lláh's assertion reflects the believers' longing for spiritual renewal and transformation on a global scale. It inspires hope and confidence in the power of His Revelation to bring about positive change and uplift humanity.

5. In what ways can believers contribute to the realization of Bahá'u'lláh's vision of His Revelation spreading throughout the world?

- Answer: Believers can contribute by actively sharing Bahá'u'lláh's teachings with others, participating in community-building activities, fostering unity and reconciliation, and embodying the spiritual principles of the Bahá'í Faith in their interactions with others. They can also support efforts to translate and distribute Bahá'u'lláh's writings, engage in interfaith dialogue, and promote social justice and peace.

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 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 internecine 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.

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi reflects on the current state of affairs in the United States, highlighting the anguish and turmoil afflicting the nation as evidence of the beginnings of a spiritual renaissance foreseen by 'Abdu'l-Bahá. He contrasts the nation's struggles with the rising fortunes of Bahá'u'lláh's followers, who are entrusted with the mission to heal wounds, restore confidence, and revive hope. Shoghi Effendi juxtaposes the chaos and conflicts plaguing society with the peace, truth, unity, and discipline demonstrated by Bahá'u'lláh's faithful followers, who embody the values of the golden age envisioned by the Faith.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Shoghi Effendi addresses the current state of the American nation, recognizing signs of anguish and turmoil as indications of a spiritual renaissance foreseen by 'Abdu'l-Bahá.
2. Contrast of the nation's struggles and the rising fortunes of Bahá'u'lláh's followers:
 - a. Shoghi Effendi contrasts the turmoil and convulsions experienced by society with the calmness and guidance enveloping Bahá'u'lláh's faithful stewards.

b. He highlights the mission entrusted to Bahá'u'lláh's followers to heal wounds, restore confidence, and revive hope in the midst of societal challenges.

3. Comparison of societal disarray with the attributes of Bahá'u'lláh's followers:

a. Shoghi Effendi compares the disintegrating institutions and discredited statesmanship prevalent in society with the unity, discipline, and uncompromising loyalty demonstrated by Bahá'u'lláh's followers.

b. He emphasizes the steadfastness and heroism of Bahá'u'lláh's faithful stewards in upholding the principles of the Faith amidst the chaos and challenges of the present age.

Questions and Answers:

1. How can believers effectively contribute to healing societal wounds and restoring confidence in times of turmoil?

- Answer: Believers can contribute by embodying the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh in their actions, promoting unity and reconciliation, and serving as agents of peace and compassion in their communities. They can also engage in efforts to address social injustices and promote constructive dialogue and understanding among diverse groups.

2. What specific qualities and characteristics distinguish Bahá'u'lláh's faithful stewards from the disarray prevalent in society?

- Answer: Bahá'u'lláh's faithful stewards demonstrate qualities such as unity, discipline, unwavering loyalty, and heroic self-sacrifice in their commitment to the principles of the Faith. They serve as beacons of light and sources of guidance amidst societal challenges.

3. How can Bahá'í communities support one another in maintaining steadfastness and resilience in the face of societal turmoil?

- Answer: Bahá'í communities can provide support through collective prayer and consultation, fostering a spirit of unity and solidarity, and offering assistance and encouragement to those facing difficulties. They can also organize activities and initiatives aimed at promoting social cohesion and addressing community needs.

4. In what ways can Bahá'í teachings offer solutions to the problems and conflicts afflicting society?

- Answer: Bahá'í teachings advocate for principles such as the oneness of humanity, justice, equality, and the elimination of prejudice, which offer constructive solutions to societal problems. By applying these teachings in individual and collective efforts, Bahá'ís can contribute to positive social transformation.

5. How can Bahá'u'lláh's followers effectively convey the message of hope and renewal amidst societal challenges?

- Answer: Bahá'u'lláh's followers can convey the message of hope and renewal through their actions, words, and example. By living according to the principles of the Faith and demonstrating resilience, compassion, and service to others, they can inspire hope and optimism in their communities.

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 exceeding gladness!”

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian of the Bahá’í Faith, addresses the followers of the Faith, drawing attention to the current state of affairs in the United States and contrasting it with the spiritual potential for renaissance as foreseen by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the son of Bahá'u'lláh, the founder of the Bahá’í Faith.

Shoghi Effendi begins by expressing his belief that the tumultuous events occurring in the United States, unparalleled in its history, may signify the onset of a spiritual renaissance, as predicted by 'Abdu'l-Bahá. He highlights the agony and turmoil experienced by the nation as indicative of its soul in travail, potentially heralding a period of spiritual awakening.

The contrast is drawn between the suffering experienced by the nation as a whole and the rising fortunes of a select group of individuals within it, who, if faithful to their mission, can contribute to healing the nation's wounds, restoring its confidence, and reviving its hopes.

Further comparison is made between the chaotic state of the world, characterized by convulsions, conflicts, disputes, and revolutions, and the serene guidance and sustenance provided to those faithful to the Bahá’í teachings.

Shoghi Effendi contrasts the disintegration of institutions, discredited statesmanship, degraded moral standards, and societal follies of the present age with the steady consolidation, unity, and cohesiveness exemplified by the followers of Bahá'u'lláh.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Shoghi Effendi addresses the Bahá’í community, reflecting on the current state of the United States and its potential for spiritual renewal.
2. Recognition of anguish and turmoil: Shoghi Effendi acknowledges the unprecedented challenges facing the American nation and suggests they may indicate the beginning of a spiritual renaissance.
3. Contrast of fortunes: The Guardian contrasts the suffering experienced by the nation with the potential for spiritual growth and prosperity among a faithful few.
4. Comparison of societal states: Shoghi Effendi compares the chaotic state of the world with the serene guidance offered by Bahá’í teachings.
5. Contrast of values: The Guardian highlights the contrast between societal degradation and the steadfastness and moral clarity exhibited by Bahá’í adherents.

Questions and Answers:

1. What does Shoghi Effendi suggest the current turmoil in the United States may signify?
 - Shoghi Effendi suggests that the turmoil may signify the beginning of a spiritual renaissance, as predicted by 'Abdu'l-Bahá.
 2. How does Shoghi Effendi contrast the suffering of the nation with the potential for spiritual growth?
 - He contrasts the turmoil and agony experienced by the nation with the potential for spiritual growth and prosperity among those faithful to the Bahá'í teachings.
 3. What contrast does Shoghi Effendi draw between the current state of the world and the guidance offered by Bahá'í teachings?
 - Shoghi Effendi contrasts the chaotic state of the world with the serene guidance and sustenance provided by the Bahá'í teachings to its adherents.
 4. How does Shoghi Effendi contrast societal degradation with the behavior of Bahá'í followers?
 - Shoghi Effendi contrasts societal degradation, discredited statesmanship, and moral decline with the steadfastness, unity, and moral clarity exhibited by followers of Bahá'u'lláh.
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-Adhkár*—the Administration's mighty bulwark, the symbol of its strength and the sign of its future glory.

Summary:

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi reflects on the forty years since the inception of the Bahá'í Revelation in America, dividing it into four distinct periods, each marked by significant milestones in the development of the Bahá'í community in the United States.

Shoghi Effendi begins by delineating the four decades since the advent of the Bahá'í Revelation in America. The first period, spanning from 1893 to 1903, is characterized by a gradual process of fermentation, which culminated in the historic pilgrimages of American believers to the shrine of Bahá'u'lláh, the founder of the Bahá'í Faith.

The following decade, from 1903 to 1913, is marked by tests and trials that purified and energized the early pioneers of the Faith in America. The climax of this period was 'Abdu'l-Bahá's momentous visit to America, which brought immense joy and inspiration to the believers.

The third period, from 1913 to 1923, is described as a time of quiet consolidation, during which the foundations of the Bahá'í Administration, established by the Will of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, were firmly laid.

The final decade, from 1923 to 1933, saw further internal development and a notable expansion of the international activities of the Bahá'í community. It culminated in the completion of the superstructure of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, symbolizing the strength and future glory of the Bahá'í Administration.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Shoghi Effendi reflects on the forty years since the advent of the Bahá'í Revelation in America.
2. First decade (1893–1903): Gradual fermentation and pilgrimage to Bahá'u'lláh's shrine.
3. Second decade (1903–1913): Tests and trials leading to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit to America.
4. Third decade (1913–1923): Quiet consolidation and establishment of the Bahá'í Administration.
5. Fourth decade (1923–1933): Further development and expansion, culminating in the completion of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár.

Questions and Answers:

1. What are the four distinct periods Shoghi Effendi identifies in the development of the Bahá'í community in America?
 - Shoghi Effendi identifies four periods: 1893–1903, 1903–1913, 1913–1923, and 1923–1933.
2. What characterized the first decade of the Bahá'í community in America?
 - The first decade was characterized by a process of slow and steady fermentation, culminating in pilgrimages to Bahá'u'lláh's shrine.
3. What significant event occurred during the second decade?
 - 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit to America marked the climax of the second decade, bringing joy and inspiration to the believers.
4. What was the focus of the third decade?
 - The third decade focused on quiet consolidation and the establishment of the Bahá'í Administration.
5. How did the fourth decade conclude?
 - The fourth decade concluded with further development, international expansion, and the completion of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, symbolizing the strength and future glory of the Bahá'í Administration.

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

Summary:

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi reflects on how each successive period in the development of the Bahá'í community in America has contributed to enriching its spiritual life and preparing its members for their unique mission.

Shoghi Effendi begins by highlighting the distinct contributions of each period in shaping the spiritual life of the Bahá'í community in America. He emphasizes that the pilgrimages undertaken by its representatives in the early years ignited a fervent love and zeal among its members, which remained unquenchable despite adversity.

The tests and tribulations faced by the community in subsequent years served to deepen the understanding of its members regarding the implications of their faith. These challenges strengthened their resolve and resilience, making them impervious to any opposition, however determined and organized.

As the community grew, its tried and tested adherents established institutions that provided stability and poise. These institutions were essential for accommodating the increasing numbers of believers and expanding their activities.

Finally, the erection of the Temple by the leaders of an already firmly established Administration provided a visionary focal point for the community. Despite internal disorder and international turmoil, the Temple served as a symbol of unity and perseverance, guiding the community through challenges and inspiring them to continue their mission.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Shoghi Effendi reflects on the contributions of successive periods in shaping the spiritual life of the Bahá'í community in America.

2. Early pilgrimages: Pilgrimages undertaken by representatives in the community's early years ignited fervent love and zeal among its members.
3. Tests and tribulations: Challenges faced by the community deepened members' understanding of their faith and strengthened their resolve.
4. Establishment of institutions: Tried and tested adherents established institutions to provide stability and accommodate growth.
5. Erection of the Temple: The construction of the Temple provided a visionary focal point for the community, symbolizing unity and perseverance.

Questions and Answers:

1. How did the early pilgrimages contribute to the spiritual life of the Bahá'í community in America?
 - The early pilgrimages ignited fervent love and zeal among the community members, which remained unquenchable despite adversity.
 2. What was the significance of the tests and tribulations faced by the community?
 - The tests and tribulations deepened members' understanding of their faith and strengthened their resolve, making them impervious to opposition.
 3. Why were the institutions established by the community's adherents important?
 - The institutions provided stability and poise, accommodating the growing numbers of believers and expanding activities.
 4. What role did the Temple play in guiding the community?
 - The Temple served as a visionary focal point, symbolizing unity and perseverance, and guiding the community through challenges.
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 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.

Summary:

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi reflects on the profound impact of the introduction of the Bahá'í Revelation into the New World, as orchestrated by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and the transformative experiences of the first American pilgrims to Bahá'u'lláh's shrine.

Shoghi Effendi acknowledges the challenge of adequately describing the initial stirrings caused by the introduction of the Bahá'í Revelation into the New World under the guidance of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. He also recognizes the limitations of space in fully narrating the circumstances surrounding the epoch-making visit of the first American pilgrims to Bahá'u'lláh's shrine, their return to their native country, and the immediate consequences of their achievements.

The Guardian expresses the impossibility of adequately conveying the electrifying effect of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's revelations, hopes, and expectations for an awakened continent on the minds and hearts of those privileged to hear Him. He pays tribute to the heroic hearts of the returning pilgrims who became the chosen recipients of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's blessings, confidence, and trust.

Shoghi Effendi acknowledges his inability to fully interpret the feelings that surged within these heroic hearts as they sat at 'Abdu'l-Bahá's feet, eager to absorb His divine Wisdom. He also pays tribute to the unyielding determination ignited within the returning pilgrims by the impact of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's magnetic personality and powerful utterances, underscoring their crucial role as consecrated heralds of the Covenant of God during a decisive epoch in their history.

The Guardian immortalizes the names of some of these early pioneers, such as Lua, Chase, MacNutt, Dealy, Goodall, Dodge, Farmer, and Brittingham, who played pivotal roles in the rise and establishment of the Bahá'í Faith in the American continent. He assures that their names will forever remain associated with the glorious annals of Bahá'u'lláh's Faith, shining with a luster that time cannot diminish.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Shoghi Effendi reflects on the profound impact of the introduction of the Bahá'í Revelation into the New World under the guidance of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.
2. Challenges of description: The Guardian acknowledges the difficulty of describing the initial stirrings and consequential events caused by the introduction of the Bahá'í Revelation.
3. Influence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá: Shoghi Effendi highlights the electrifying effect of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's revelations, hopes, and expectations on the minds and hearts of the early American believers.

4. Tribute to returning pilgrims: The Guardian pays tribute to the heroic hearts of the first American pilgrims, who became the chosen recipients of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's blessings, confidence, and trust.
5. Impact of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's personality: Shoghi Effendi acknowledges the profound impact of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's magnetic personality and powerful utterances on the determination of the returning pilgrims.
6. Immortalization of early pioneers: The Guardian immortalizes the names of some of the early pioneers who played pivotal roles in the rise and establishment of the Bahá'í Faith in America.

Questions and Answers:

1. What does Shoghi Effendi acknowledge as a challenge in this passage?
 - Shoghi Effendi acknowledges the difficulty of adequately describing the initial stirrings and consequential events caused by the introduction of the Bahá'í Revelation into the New World.
 2. What impact did 'Abdu'l-Bahá's revelations have on the early American believers?
 - 'Abdu'l-Bahá's revelations had an electrifying effect on the minds and hearts of the early American believers, igniting their zeal and determination.
 3. How does Shoghi Effendi describe the returning pilgrims?
 - Shoghi Effendi describes the returning pilgrims as heroic hearts who became the chosen recipients of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's blessings, confidence, and trust.
 4. What influence did 'Abdu'l-Bahá's personality have on the returning pilgrims?
 - 'Abdu'l-Bahá's magnetic personality and powerful utterances ignited an unyielding determination within the returning pilgrims.
 5. Who are some of the early pioneers mentioned by Shoghi Effendi?
 - Shoghi Effendi mentions Lua, Chase, MacNutt, Dealy, Goodall, Dodge, Farmer, and Brittingham as some of the early pioneers who played pivotal roles in the establishment of the Bahá'í Faith in America.
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 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.

Summary:

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi reflects on the profound impact of the pilgrimages undertaken by Bahá'í believers to the Holy Land in the years following the ascension of Bahá'u'lláh, emphasizing how these pilgrimages played a crucial role in reaffirming the splendor of the Covenant and dispelling the gloom that had enveloped 'Abdu'l-Bahá's family.

Shoghi Effendi underscores the significance of the pilgrimages that took place in the years immediately following the passing of Bahá'u'lláh. These pilgrimages, he asserts, served as a means through which the splendor of the Covenant, initially obscured by the ascendancy of its Arch-Breaker (presumably referring to Covenant-breakers), emerged triumphant amidst the challenges and trials it faced.

The arrival of these pilgrims, according to Shoghi Effendi, played a pivotal role in dispelling the gloom that had overshadowed 'Abdu'l-Bahá's family. In particular, he highlights the profound impact of the pilgrimages on the Greatest Holy Leaf, who, along with her Brother (presumably 'Abdu'l-Bahá), had to confront the rebellion of almost the entire company of her relatives and associates. The consolation she found through the agency of these returning pilgrims sustained her until the end of her life.

Shoghi Effendi further asserts that the forces unleashed by this small band of returning pilgrims sounded the death-knell for any schemes initiated by those who sought to undermine the Cause of God. Their presence and the spiritual power they brought with them effectively countered the efforts of Covenant-breakers and ensured the continued protection and propagation of the Bahá'í Faith.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Shoghi Effendi reflects on the profound impact of pilgrimages to the Holy Land in the years following Bahá'u'lláh's passing.
2. Reaffirmation of the Covenant: The pilgrimages served to reaffirm the splendor of the Covenant, which had been momentarily obscured by the ascendancy of Covenant-breakers.
3. Dispelling gloom: The arrival of pilgrims dispelled the gloom that had enveloped 'Abdu'l-Bahá's family, particularly providing consolation to the Greatest Holy Leaf.
4. Countering opposition: The presence of returning pilgrims and the spiritual forces they brought with them effectively countered the schemes of Covenant-breakers and ensured the protection of the Bahá'í Faith.

Questions and Answers:

1. What role did the pilgrimages to the Holy Land play in reaffirming the Covenant?
 - The pilgrimages served as a means through which the splendor of the Covenant, initially obscured by Covenant-breakers, emerged triumphant amidst challenges.
2. How did the arrival of pilgrims impact 'Abdu'l-Bahá's family?
 - The arrival of pilgrims dispelled the gloom that had enveloped 'Abdu'l-Bahá's family, particularly providing consolation to the Greatest Holy Leaf in confronting opposition.

3. What effect did the presence of returning pilgrims have on Covenant-breakers?
 - The spiritual forces unleashed by the returning pilgrims effectively countered the schemes of Covenant-breakers and ensured the continued protection and propagation of the Bahá'í Faith.
4. Why does Shoghi Effendi emphasize the significance of these pilgrimages?
 - Shoghi Effendi emphasizes the significance of these pilgrimages to illustrate how the faithful response of Bahá'í believers contributed to the triumph of the Covenant and the protection of the Bahá'í Faith against opposition.

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.

Summary:

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi describes the significant role played by 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Tablets in providing spiritual guidance and sustenance to the early believers of the Bahá'í Faith in North America.

Shoghi Effendi emphasizes the crucial importance of the Tablets revealed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, which were filled with passionate and unequivocal language, containing His instructions, counsels, appeals, comments, hopes, wishes, fears, and warnings. These Tablets were tirelessly penned by 'Abdu'l-Bahá and soon began to be translated, published, and circulated extensively throughout North America.

The Guardian highlights how these Tablets provided the fledgling Bahá'í community with spiritual sustenance during a time of severe trials and challenges. They served as a source of strength, guidance, and comfort for the believers as they navigated through the difficulties they encountered in their journey of faith.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Shoghi Effendi underscores the significant role played by 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Tablets in providing spiritual guidance and sustenance to early believers in North America.
2. Content of the Tablets: The Tablets embodied 'Abdu'l-Bahá's instructions, counsels, appeals, comments, hopes, wishes, fears, and warnings, expressed in passionate and unequivocal language.
3. Translation and publication: The Tablets were translated, published, and circulated extensively throughout North America, reaching an ever-widening circle of believers.
4. Spiritual sustenance: The Tablets provided the early believers with spiritual sustenance during a time of severe trials and challenges, offering strength, guidance, and comfort.

Questions and Answers:

1. What did the Tablets revealed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá contain?
 - The Tablets contained instructions, counsels, appeals, comments, hopes, wishes, fears, and warnings, expressed in passionate and unequivocal language.
 2. How were the Tablets disseminated throughout North America?
 - The Tablets were translated, published, and circulated extensively throughout North America, reaching a wide circle of believers.
 3. What role did the Tablets play for the early Bahá'í community in North America?
 - The Tablets served as a source of spiritual sustenance, providing strength, guidance, and comfort to the early believers during a time of severe trials and challenges.
 4. Why does Shoghi Effendi emphasize the importance of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Tablets?
 - Shoghi Effendi emphasizes the importance of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Tablets to highlight how they provided vital spiritual guidance and sustenance to the early believers, helping them navigate through the difficulties they faced in their journey of faith.
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," 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 Mt. 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.

Summary:

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi describes an unprecedented crisis that befell the Bahá'í community in North America, marked by dissension and betrayal orchestrated by an ambitious individual blinded by pride and ambition.

Shoghi Effendi sets the stage by highlighting the approaching hour of an unprecedented crisis within the Bahá'í community in North America. He notes that evidences of

dissension, fueled by pride and ambition, began to overshadow the radiance and impede the growth of the newly established community.

The Guardian introduces the central figure of this crisis, a man who had been instrumental in inaugurating a splendid era in the history of the Faith. Despite being conferred titles such as "Bahá's Peter" and "Conqueror of America" and having received unique privileges, this individual became blinded by his own success and aspired to uncontrolled domination over his fellow believers. He insolently raised the standard of revolt, seceding from 'Abdu'l-Bahá and aligning himself with the enemies of the Faith.

Shoghi Effendi describes how this deluded apostate sought to undermine 'Abdu'l-Bahá's authority by perverting His teachings and launching a campaign of relentless vilification against Him. Through the publication of tracts and collaboration with the enemies of the Bahá'í Faith, this individual dealt a severe blow to the nascent Faith, causing it to suffer slow and painful recovery.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Shoghi Effendi describes an unprecedented crisis within the Bahá'í community in North America.
2. Seeds of dissension: Evidences of dissension, fueled by pride and ambition, began to overshadow the community's growth.
3. The central figure: A prominent individual, previously honored and trusted, became blinded by his own success and aspired to dominate his fellow believers.
4. Revolt and betrayal: The individual seceded from 'Abdu'l-Bahá and allied with the enemies of the Faith, launching a campaign of vilification against Him.
5. Damage inflicted: Through publications and collaboration with enemies, the individual dealt a severe blow to the nascent Faith, causing it to suffer slow and painful recovery.

Questions and Answers:

1. What marked the onset of the unprecedented crisis within the Bahá'í community in North America?
 - Evidences of dissension, fueled by pride and ambition, began to overshadow the community's growth.
2. Who was the central figure in this crisis?
 - The central figure was a prominent individual who had been instrumental in inaugurating a splendid era in the history of the Faith but became blinded by his own success and aspired to dominate his fellow believers.
3. How did this individual betray 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the Bahá'í Faith?
 - The individual seceded from 'Abdu'l-Bahá and aligned with the enemies of the Faith, launching a campaign of relentless vilification against Him.
4. What damage did the individual inflict on the nascent Faith?
 - Through publications and collaboration with enemies, the individual dealt a severe blow to the Faith, causing it to suffer slow and painful recovery.

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 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.

Summary:

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi acknowledges the serious yet transitory cleavage that occurred within the American Bahá'í community due to the defection of a prominent individual and the subsequent defamation campaigns launched against them. He briefly mentions the measures taken by 'Abdu'l-Bahá to assuage the apprehensions of the believers and dispatches four chosen messengers to pacify and reinvigorate the troubled community.

Shoghi Effendi highlights the immediate effects of the cleavage within the American Bahá'í community caused by the defection of a prominent individual and the subsequent defamation campaigns launched against them. He acknowledges the seriousness of the situation but emphasizes that it was transitory in nature, indicating that the community eventually recovered from this crisis.

The Guardian refrains from delving into the specifics of the defamation writings or the measures taken by 'Abdu'l-Bahá to address the situation, leaving these details for future historians to appraise. He underscores the importance of the mission entrusted to the four chosen messengers dispatched by 'Abdu'l-Bahá to pacify and reinvigorate the troubled community.

Shoghi Effendi hints at the significance of these messengers' work, suggesting that it laid the groundwork for the vast Administration of the Bahá'í Faith. He alludes to the symbolic Edifice of this Administration, which 'Abdu'l-Bahá would later personally found, and indicates that the provisions of His Will would further widen its basis and scope.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Shoghi Effendi acknowledges the cleavage within the American Bahá'í community caused by the defection of a prominent individual and subsequent defamation campaigns.
2. Immediate effects: The cleavage had serious yet transitory effects on the community.

3. Measures taken: 'Abdu'l-Bahá took measures to address the situation and assuage the believers' apprehensions.
4. Chosen messengers: Four chosen messengers were dispatched by 'Abdu'l-Bahá to pacify and reinvigorate the troubled community.
5. Future historian's task: The details of the defamation writings, measures taken by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and the mission of the messengers are left for future historians to appraise.
6. Significance of the mission: The mission of the messengers laid the groundwork for the vast Administration of the Bahá'í Faith, symbolized by its Edifice, and further expanded by the provisions of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will.

Questions and Answers:

1. What caused the cleavage within the American Bahá'í community mentioned by Shoghi Effendi?
 - The cleavage was caused by the defection of a prominent individual and subsequent defamation campaigns launched against the Bahá'í community.
 2. What were the immediate effects of this cleavage?
 - The cleavage had serious yet transitory effects on the community, impacting its unity and cohesion.
 3. What measures were taken to address the situation?
 - 'Abdu'l-Bahá took measures to address the situation and assuage the apprehensions of the believers, although specific details are not provided.
 4. Who were the four chosen messengers mentioned by Shoghi Effendi?
 - The four chosen messengers were dispatched by 'Abdu'l-Bahá to pacify and reinvigorate the troubled community, although their identities are not specified.
 5. What is the significance of the mission of these messengers?
 - The mission of the messengers laid the groundwork for the vast Administration of the Bahá'í Faith, symbolized by its Edifice, and further expanded by the provisions of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will.
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 Vatralsky, 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 Muḥammadan 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 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 Mt. Carmel; the incorporation of the Bahá'í Temple Unity and the formation of the Executive Committee of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár—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.

Summary:

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi reflects on the evolution of the Bahá'í Faith in America and highlights the challenges faced by its followers as well as their remarkable accomplishments during a turbulent period in their history.

Shoghi Effendi describes how the activities of the Bahá'í Faith had grown to such dimensions that its enemies were forced to devise new strategies to counter it, while its leader, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, encouraged its followers to establish administrative structures to safeguard and foster its spirit. Despite facing attacks from critics like Vatralsky, Wilson, Jessup, and Richardson, who sought to stain its purity and halt its progress, the Bahá'í community remained undeterred.

In response to the baseless accusations of Nihilism, heresy, and immorality leveled against them, the believers, under the guidance of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, initiated a series of activities that laid the groundwork for permanent administrative institutions. These included the inauguration of Chicago's first House of Spirituality, establishment of the Bahá'í Publishing Society, founding of the Green Acre Fellowship, publication of the Star of the West, holding of the first Bahá'í National Convention, incorporation of the Bahá'í Temple Unity, and formation of the Executive Committee of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár.

These accomplishments, achieved during a turbulent period in their history, immortalized the memory of the American believers. Despite facing ceaseless tribulations, the believers were guided by 'Abdu'l-Bahá and demonstrated bold initiative and abundant vitality. Shoghi Effendi compares the Bahá'í community to an ark navigating through stormy seas, contemptuous of the bitter misfortunes that assailed it, as it forged ahead towards the promised haven of undisturbed security and peace.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Shoghi Effendi reflects on the evolution of the Bahá'í Faith in America and the challenges faced by its followers.

2. Growth and opposition: The activities of the Bahá'í Faith expanded, prompting enemies to devise new strategies, while 'Abdu'l-Bahá encouraged the establishment of administrative structures.
3. Attacks and response: Critics like Vatralsky, Wilson, Jessup, and Richardson launched attacks to stain the purity of the Faith, but believers remained undeterred and initiated activities under 'Abdu'l-Bahá's guidance.
4. Accomplishments: The believers established significant institutions, including the House of Spirituality, Bahá'í Publishing Society, Green Acre Fellowship, and the Bahá'í National Convention.
5. Endurance and progress: Despite facing tribulations, the believers demonstrated bold initiative and vitality under 'Abdu'l-Bahá's guidance, navigating towards the promised haven of security and peace.

Questions and Answers:

1. What challenges did the Bahá'í Faith face in America during this period?
 - The Bahá'í Faith faced challenges from critics who sought to tarnish its reputation and hinder its progress.
 2. How did the believers respond to the attacks against them?
 - Under 'Abdu'l-Bahá's guidance, the believers initiated activities and established administrative institutions to safeguard and foster the spirit of the Faith.
 3. What were some of the significant accomplishments of the American believers during this period?
 - Significant accomplishments included the inauguration of the House of Spirituality, establishment of the Bahá'í Publishing Society, founding of the Green Acre Fellowship, and holding of the first Bahá'í National Convention.
 4. How does Shoghi Effendi characterize the Bahá'í community's journey during this turbulent period?
 - Shoghi Effendi compares the Bahá'í community to an ark navigating through stormy seas, guided by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and demonstrating bold initiative and vitality as it progresses towards 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, 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.

Summary:

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi elaborates on the expansion of the Bahá'í Faith beyond the borders of America, detailing the resolve of the American believers to spread the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh to distant lands and establish new outposts of the Faith.

Shoghi Effendi describes how, unsatisfied with their achievements within the American continent, the Bahá'í community resolved to expand their efforts globally. Inspired by the initial success of pioneer teachers in Great Britain, France, and Germany, the American believers embarked on a mission to recruit fresh followers for the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh in distant regions.

Driven by the indomitable energy of their newfound faith, these itinerant teachers set out from America and ventured as far as the islands of the Pacific, China, and Japan. Their goal was to establish Bahá'í communities beyond the farthest seas, extending the reach of their beloved Faith to new territories.

Shoghi Effendi notes the community's capacity to widen its range and consolidate its efforts both domestically and internationally. Despite facing opposition and protest against its rise, the Bahá'í community's recent victories were met with acclamations in the East. As a result, the once-threatening obstacles gradually receded into the distance, providing a broader field for the noble warriors of the Faith to exercise their latent energies.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Shoghi Effendi describes the expansion of the Bahá'í Faith beyond America.
2. Resolve to spread the Faith: The American believers, unsatisfied with their achievements, resolve to recruit new followers globally.
3. Success in distant lands: Inspired by pioneer teachers in Europe, the American believers embark on missions to the Pacific islands, China, and Japan.
4. Establishing outposts: Their goal is to establish Bahá'í communities beyond the farthest seas, extending the reach of the Faith to new territories.
5. Capacity for expansion: The Bahá'í community demonstrates its capacity to widen its range and consolidate its efforts both domestically and internationally.
6. Overcoming obstacles: Despite facing opposition, recent victories are met with acclamations in the East, and threats gradually recede, providing new opportunities for expansion.

Questions and Answers:

1. What prompted the American believers to expand their efforts globally?

- Unsatisfied with their achievements within America, they were inspired by the success of pioneer teachers in Europe and resolved to recruit new followers for Bahá'u'lláh's Cause in distant lands.
 - 2. Where did the American believers venture to spread the Bahá'í Faith?
 - They ventured as far as the islands of the Pacific, China, and Japan, aiming to establish Bahá'í communities beyond the farthest seas.
 - 3. How did the Bahá'í community demonstrate its capacity for expansion?
 - The community showed its ability to widen its range and consolidate its efforts both domestically and internationally.
 - 4. What was the response to the recent victories of the Bahá'í Faith?
 - Recent victories were met with acclamations in the East, and obstacles gradually receded, providing new opportunities for expansion and growth.
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.

Summary:

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi reflects on the resurgence of the Bahá'í Faith in America, likening it to the mythical phoenix rising with freshness, vigor, and beauty. He describes how the triumphant exponents of the Faith passionately called upon 'Abdu'l-Bahá to undertake a journey to America, a call that he found impossible to resist due to his deep love for the believers and the numerous invitations extended to him by various organizations eager to learn about Bahá'u'lláh's teachings.

Shoghi Effendi paints a vivid picture of the revitalization of the Bahá'í Faith in America, likening it to the mythical phoenix rising from the ashes. He emphasizes the newfound freshness, vigor, and beauty of the Faith, which had been brought about by the efforts of its devoted followers.

The believers, inspired by their recent successes and buoyed by their love for 'Abdu'l-Bahá, passionately implored him to visit America. Their call was fueled by their desire to personally express their love and devotion to him, as well as their eagerness for him to share Bahá'u'lláh's teachings with the American people.

Shoghi Effendi highlights the irresistible nature of the believers' entreaty, which was further strengthened by the numerous invitations extended to 'Abdu'l-Bahá by various

organizations across America. These invitations demonstrated the widespread interest in learning about Bahá'u'lláh's teachings and underscored the importance of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Shoghi Effendi reflects on the resurgence of the Bahá'í Faith in America, likening it to the mythical phoenix rising from the ashes.
2. Call for 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit: The triumphant exponents of the Faith passionately implore 'Abdu'l-Bahá to undertake a journey to America.
3. Reasons for the call: The believers' call is fueled by their love for 'Abdu'l-Bahá and their eagerness for him to share Bahá'u'lláh's teachings with the American people.
4. Irresistible nature of the entreaty: The believers' entreaty is impossible for 'Abdu'l-Bahá to resist, especially given his deep love for the believers and the widespread interest in Bahá'u'lláh's teachings across America.
5. Invitations from various organizations: 'Abdu'l-Bahá receives numerous invitations from religious, educational, and humanitarian organizations across America, further reinforcing the importance of his visit.

Questions and Answers:

1. How does Shoghi Effendi describe the resurgence of the Bahá'í Faith in America?
 - Shoghi Effendi compares it to the mythical phoenix rising from the ashes, emphasizing its newfound freshness, vigor, and beauty.
2. Why did the believers passionately implore 'Abdu'l-Bahá to visit America?
 - The believers wanted to express their love and devotion to 'Abdu'l-Bahá personally and were eager for him to share Bahá'u'lláh's teachings with the American people.
3. Why was 'Abdu'l-Bahá unable to resist the believers' entreaty?
 - 'Abdu'l-Bahá's deep love for the believers, combined with the widespread interest in Bahá'u'lláh's teachings across America, made the entreaty impossible for him to resist.
4. What reinforced the importance of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit to America?
 - Numerous invitations from various organizations across America, expressing eagerness to learn about Bahá'u'lláh's teachings, reinforced the importance of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit.
26. Though bent with age, though suffering from ailments resulting from the 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.

Summary:

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi reflects on 'Abdu'l-Bahá's memorable journey to America, highlighting the significance of His visit and the impact it had on the spiritual history of the continent. Despite His advanced age and health ailments, 'Abdu'l-Bahá embarked on this journey to bless and sanctify the efforts of His followers in America.

Shoghi Effendi acknowledges the limitations of his pen in describing the circumstances surrounding 'Abdu'l-Bahá's journey across the seas to America. He emphasizes the profound impact of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit on the chief cities of the United States and Canada, indicating that future generations will meticulously record and cherish the details of His activities and teachings.

The announcement of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's arrival sparked immense joy, and His activities garnered widespread publicity. His utterances released powerful forces and provoked opposition due to the implications of His teachings. Throughout His journey, significant episodes arose from His words and deeds, all of which will be meticulously recorded and transmitted to future generations.

Shoghi Effendi admits the inadequacy of attempting to outline the vast and enthralling theme of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit at the present time. Even after more than twenty years, the full import and mystery of His visit remain incomprehensible. Despite this, Shoghi Effendi alludes to some salient features of the visit, which eloquently demonstrate 'Abdu'l-Bahá's specific purpose to confer spiritual primacy upon the American believers.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Shoghi Effendi reflects on 'Abdu'l-Bahá's journey to America and its significance.
2. Limitations of description: Shoghi Effendi acknowledges the limitations of his pen in describing the circumstances surrounding 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit.
3. Impact of the visit: 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit had a profound impact on the chief cities of the United States and Canada, sparking joy and garnering widespread publicity.
4. Recording of details: Future generations will meticulously record and cherish the details of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's activities and teachings during His visit.

5. Forces unleashed: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s utterances released powerful forces and provoked opposition due to the implications of His teachings.
6. Inadequacy of description: Shoghi Effendi admits the inadequacy of attempting to outline the vast and enthralling theme of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s visit at the present time.
7. Specific purpose of the visit: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s visit aimed to confer spiritual primacy upon the American believers.

Questions and Answers:

1. How does Shoghi Effendi describe the circumstances surrounding ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s journey to America?
 - Shoghi Effendi acknowledges the limitations of his pen in describing these circumstances.
 2. What impact did ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s visit have on the chief cities of the United States and Canada?
 - ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s visit sparked immense joy and garnered widespread publicity.
 3. How did future generations respond to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s visit?
 - Future generations meticulously recorded and cherished the details of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s activities and teachings during His visit.
 4. What was the significance of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s utterances during His visit?
 - ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s utterances released powerful forces and provoked opposition
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 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.

Summary:

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi reflects on the profound impact of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s visit to the United States and Canada, emphasizing the legacy and responsibilities bestowed upon the believers in North America. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s ceaseless activities during His visit endowed the continent with unprecedented potentialities, leaving behind a priceless heritage for His disciples and their descendants to carry forward.

Shoghi Effendi describes how ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s visit to the United States and Canada bestowed upon the continent potentialities it had never known before. Through His ceaseless activities, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá left behind a priceless heritage for His disciples and their descendants, bestowing upon them the sacred obligation to carry on the work He had initiated.

As ‘Abdu’l-Bahá bid farewell to the promising country, Shoghi Effendi imagines the wishes that must have welled from His eager heart. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá may have remarked to His disciples on the eve of His departure about the inscrutable Wisdom that had singled out their native land for a mighty purpose. He likened Himself to a ploughman who had been called upon to break the ground of America through the agency of Bahá’u’lláh’s Covenant.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá acknowledged the confirmations and tribulations that had prepared and invigorated the soil of America. He entrusted His disciples with seeds to scatter far and wide, with the expectation that every seed would germinate and yield its destined fruit under their loving care and ceaseless exertions.

Though ‘Abdu’l-Bahá warned of an impending winter of unprecedented severity, characterized by storm clouds and tempestuous winds, He assured His followers that these challenges would pass away. He prophesied that the dormant seeds would burst into fresh activity, putting forth leaves and blossoms, and spreading their branches far beyond the confines of America.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Shoghi Effendi reflects on the impact of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s visit to America and Canada.
2. Legacy and responsibilities: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s visit bestowed unprecedented potentialities upon the continent, leaving behind a priceless heritage for His disciples and their descendants.
3. Imagined wishes of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá: Shoghi Effendi imagines the wishes that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá must have had as He bid farewell to America.

4. Comparison to a ploughman: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá likened Himself to a ploughman who had been called upon to break the ground of America through the agency of Bahá’u’lláh’s Covenant.
5. Entrusting of seeds: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá entrusted His disciples with seeds to scatter far and wide, expecting them to germinate and yield fruit.
6. Warning of challenges: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá warned of an impending winter of unprecedented severity, characterized by challenges and tribulations.
7. Assurance of future growth: Despite the challenges, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá prophesied that the seeds would burst into fresh activity, spreading their branches far beyond America.

Questions and Answers:

1. What did ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s visit bestow upon America and Canada?
 - ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s visit bestowed unprecedented potentialities upon the continent, leaving behind a priceless heritage for His disciples and their descendants.
 2. How did ‘Abdu’l-Bahá envision the future of His followers in America?
 - ‘Abdu’l-Bahá entrusted His disciples with seeds of the Faith, expecting them to scatter far and wide and yield fruit under their loving care and ceaseless exertions.
 3. What challenges did ‘Abdu’l-Bahá warn His followers about?
 - ‘Abdu’l-Bahá warned of an impending winter of unprecedented severity, characterized by challenges and tribulations.
 4. Despite the challenges, what assurance did ‘Abdu’l-Bahá provide?
 - ‘Abdu’l-Bahá assured His followers that the seeds of the Faith would burst into fresh activity, spreading their branches far beyond America, and yielding golden fruit in the fullness of time.
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 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.

Summary:

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi reflects on the implications of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s parting message to His disciples and how it unfolded after His departure. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had alluded to tremendous happenings that would manifest after His journey across the American and European continents, and soon after His departure, these predictions began to unfold.

After concluding His journey across America and Europe, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s predictions of conflict and wintry desolation began to be made manifest. A conflict severed communication with His disciples for a time, while wintry desolation wreaked havoc and carnage for four years. Despite these challenges, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá repaired to the quiet solitude of His residence near Bahá’u’lláh’s hallowed shrine, where He continued to communicate His thoughts and wishes to His followers.

During this period, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá unfolded His conception of His disciples’ spiritual destiny and His plan for the mission He wished them to undertake through immortal Tablets revealed in communion with His dearly-beloved friends. He watered the seeds He had sown with the same care, love, and patience that characterized His previous endeavors while laboring in their midst.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Shoghi Effendi reflects on the implications of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s parting message to His disciples.
2. Manifestation of predictions: After His departure, the predictions made by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá began to unfold.
3. Conflict and wintry desolation: A conflict severed communication with His disciples, while wintry desolation wreaked havoc and carnage for four years.
4. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s retreat: Despite the challenges, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá repaired to the quiet solitude of His residence near Bahá’u’lláh’s shrine.
5. Continued communication: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá continued to communicate His thoughts and wishes to His followers during this period.
6. Unfolding His plan: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá unfolded His conception of His disciples’ spiritual destiny and His plan for their mission through immortal Tablets.
7. Care and love: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá watered the seeds He had sown with the same care, love, and patience as before.

Questions and Answers:

1. What predictions did ‘Abdu’l-Bahá make to His disciples before His departure?
 - ‘Abdu’l-Bahá predicted a conflict and wintry desolation that would manifest after His departure.
2. How did these predictions unfold?
 - A conflict severed communication with His disciples, while wintry desolation wreaked havoc for four years.
3. Despite the challenges, where did ‘Abdu’l-Bahá retreat to?
 - ‘Abdu’l-Bahá repaired to the quiet solitude of His residence near Bahá’u’lláh’s shrine.

4. How did ‘Abdu’l-Bahá continue to communicate with His followers during this period?
- ‘Abdu’l-Bahá continued to communicate His thoughts and wishes through immortal Tablets revealed in communion with His dearly-beloved friends.
5. How did ‘Abdu’l-Bahá care for the seeds He had sown?
- ‘Abdu’l-Bahá watered the seeds with the same care, love, and patience as before, despite the challenges His followers faced.
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.

Summary:

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi describes the significant impact of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s call to renewed activity, which sparked a powerful movement in America unlike anything experienced before. This movement not only gave unprecedented impetus to the work initiated by Bahá’í ambassadors in distant lands but also continued to spread globally, gathering momentum and accelerating its march toward the fulfillment of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s wishes.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s clarion call to renewed activity in America sparked a powerful movement that had a significant impact on the spread of the Bahá’í Faith globally. This movement, characterized by its inspiring motives and formidable forces, was unlike anything America had experienced before.

The call to renewed activity lent an unprecedented impetus to the work initiated by Bahá’í ambassadors in distant lands, providing them with renewed energy and motivation to advance the cause of Bahá’u’lláh. This impetus fueled the spread of the Bahá’í Faith, extending its ramifications over the surface of the globe.

Since ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s call, the movement has continued to gather momentum, expanding its reach and influence across different regions and cultures. It has remained dynamic and resilient, overcoming various challenges and obstacles along the way.

As the movement progresses, it accelerates its march toward the complete fulfillment of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s original wishes and aspirations. Despite the passage of time, the spirit of renewal and activity ignited by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá continues to drive the Bahá’í community forward, inspiring generations of believers to contribute to the advancement of humanity and the realization of Bahá’u’lláh’s vision for a unified world.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Shoghi Effendi describes the impact of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's call to renewed activity in America.
2. Unprecedented impetus: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's call gave unprecedented impetus to the work of Bahá'í ambassadors in distant lands.
3. Global spread: The movement sparked by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's call continued to spread globally, extending its ramifications over the surface of the globe.
4. Momentum and expansion: Since ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's call, the movement has continued to gather momentum, expanding its reach and influence across different regions and cultures.
5. Resilience and overcoming challenges: Despite challenges and obstacles, the movement has remained dynamic and resilient, overcoming adversity along the way.
6. Accelerated march: The movement accelerates its march toward the complete fulfillment of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's original wishes and aspirations.
7. Enduring impact: The spirit of renewal and activity ignited by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá continues to inspire generations of believers to contribute to the advancement of humanity and the realization of Bahá'u'lláh's vision for a unified world.

Questions and Answers:

1. What was the impact of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's call to renewed activity in America?
 - ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's call sparked a powerful movement that had a significant impact on the spread of the Bahá'í Faith globally.
 2. How did the call to renewed activity affect the work of Bahá'í ambassadors in distant lands?
 - The call provided renewed impetus to their work, energizing them to advance the cause of Bahá'u'lláh with renewed vigor.
 3. What has been the trajectory of the movement since ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's call?
 - The movement has continued to spread globally, gathering momentum and expanding its reach across different regions and cultures.
 4. How has the movement demonstrated resilience?
 - Despite facing challenges and obstacles, the movement has remained dynamic and resilient, overcoming adversity along the way.
 5. What is the ultimate goal of the movement?
 - The movement aims to fulfill ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's original wishes and aspirations, contributing to the advancement of humanity and the realization of Bahá'u'lláh's vision for a unified world.
-
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 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.

Summary:

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi pays tribute to the remarkable sacrifices and achievements of a group of Bahá’í believers who, fired with zeal and confidence, left behind their homes, families, and positions to spread the message of Bahá’u’lláh across distant lands. These courageous individuals, led by an illustrious representative, embarked on journeys that took them from Alaska to the West Indies, from South America to Australia and beyond, spreading the teachings of the Bahá’í Faith and establishing its institutions in various countries.

A group of Bahá’í believers, motivated by zeal and confidence, embarked on journeys across distant lands to fulfill the mandate issued by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. They traveled from Alaska to the West Indies, from South America to Australia, and beyond, spreading the teachings of Bahá’u’lláh and establishing Bahá’í institutions.

Led by an illustrious representative who traveled twice around the world, these believers demonstrated remarkable courage and fortitude, enriching the record of Bahá’í services with their actions. They succeeded in proclaiming the teachings of their Faith, circulating its literature, defending its cause, establishing its institutions, and expanding the community of its supporters in various countries.

The heroic actions of these believers, faced with almost insurmountable obstacles, cannot be fully recounted in a short compass. Their spirit and dedication have earned them laurels and distinction, leaving an indelible mark on their generation and inspiring others to emulate their example.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Shoghi Effendi pays tribute to a group of Bahá’í believers who sacrificed their homes, families, and positions to spread the message of Bahá’u’lláh.
2. Remarkable journeys: These believers traveled across distant lands, from Alaska to the West Indies, from South America to Australia, spreading the teachings of the Bahá’í Faith.

3. Leadership: They were led by an illustrious representative who traveled twice around the world, demonstrating remarkable courage and fortitude.
4. Achievements: The believers succeeded in proclaiming the teachings of their Faith, circulating its literature, defending its cause, establishing its institutions, and expanding its community of supporters in various countries.
5. Insurmountable obstacles: Despite facing significant challenges, the believers persevered in their mission.
6. Tribute: Shoghi Effendi acknowledges the heroic actions of these believers, recognizing their spirit and dedication.
7. Legacy: Their actions have left an indelible mark on their generation and inspired others to follow their example.

Questions and Answers:

1. What motivated the group of Bahá'í believers to embark on their journeys?
 - They were motivated by zeal and confidence to fulfill the mandate issued by 'Abdu'l-Bahá.
 2. Where did these believers travel to spread the teachings of the Bahá'í Faith?
 - They traveled from Alaska to the West Indies, from South America to Australia, and beyond.
 3. Who led the group of believers?
 - They were led by an illustrious representative who traveled twice around the world.
 4. What achievements did the believers accomplish during their journeys?
 - They succeeded in proclaiming the teachings of their Faith, circulating its literature, defending its cause, establishing its institutions, and expanding its community of supporters.
 5. How did the believers demonstrate remarkable courage and fortitude?
 - Despite facing significant challenges, they persevered in their mission.
 6. How does Shoghi Effendi acknowledge the believers' contributions?
 - He pays tribute to their heroic actions and recognizes their spirit and dedication.
 7. What is the legacy of these believers?
 - Their actions have left an indelible mark on their generation and inspired others to follow their example.
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 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.

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi reflects on the global spread of the Bahá'í Faith, which originated in Persia but had now reached every continent, including Europe, Africa, America, and Australia, enveloping the entire world in its radiant glory. He acknowledges the significant role played by devoted disciples in carrying the light of Bahá'u'lláh's message to distant corners of the earth, particularly during the final years of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's life. These disciples, through their unwavering dedication and stout-heartedness, contributed to the fulfillment of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's vision and the dissemination of the Bahá'í teachings worldwide. Shoghi Effendi expresses 'Abdu'l-Bahá's likely satisfaction as He observed the fruits of their international service, knowing that they were entrusted with preserving and exalting the heritage of the Faith.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Shoghi Effendi reflects on the global reach of the Bahá'í Faith, originating in Persia but spreading to every continent.
2. Spread of the Faith: The light of Bahá'u'lláh's message has reached Europe, Africa, America, and Australia, encompassing the entire world.
3. Role of Devoted Disciples: Shoghi Effendi acknowledges the significant contributions of devoted disciples in carrying the Bahá'í message to distant lands.
4. Final Years of 'Abdu'l-Bahá: The disciples played a crucial role during the final years of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's life, contributing to the fulfillment of His vision.
5. Unwavering Dedication: The disciples demonstrated unwavering dedication and stout-heartedness in their service to the Faith.
6. Fulfillment of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Vision: Through their efforts, the disciples contributed to the dissemination of the Bahá'í teachings worldwide, fulfilling 'Abdu'l-Bahá's vision.
7. 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Satisfaction: Shoghi Effendi reflects on 'Abdu'l-Bahá's likely satisfaction as He observed the fruits of the disciples' international service.
8. Entrusted Heritage: 'Abdu'l-Bahá entrusted these disciples with preserving and exalting the heritage of the Faith.

Questions and Answers:

1. How did the Bahá'í Faith spread globally?
 - The Bahá'í Faith originated in Persia but spread to every continent, including Europe, Africa, America, and Australia.
2. What role did devoted disciples play in the global spread of the Faith?
 - Devoted disciples played a significant role in carrying the Bahá'í message to distant lands, contributing to its dissemination worldwide.
3. How did these disciples contribute to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's vision?

- The disciples contributed to the fulfillment of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s vision by spreading the Bahá’í teachings internationally.
4. What qualities did these disciples demonstrate?
 - The disciples demonstrated unwavering dedication and stout-heartedness in their service to the Faith.
 5. How might ‘Abdu’l-Bahá have felt about the disciples' efforts?
 - ‘Abdu’l-Bahá likely felt satisfaction as He observed the fruits of the disciples’ international service, knowing they were entrusted with preserving the heritage of the Faith.
 6. What was ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s legacy to these disciples?
 - ‘Abdu’l-Bahá entrusted the disciples with preserving and exalting the heritage of the Faith, ensuring its integrity and virtue would endure.
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.

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi reflects on the passing of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, which despite its suddenness and dramatic consequences, did not impede the dynamic force of His mission. The fervid appeals contained in ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Will and Testament served to confirm the purpose of His mission, define its character, and reinforce the promise of its ultimate success.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Shoghi Effendi reflects on the passing of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and its impact on His mission.
2. Suddenness of His Passing: Despite the suddenness of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s passing, the force of His mission continued to operate.
3. Dramatic Consequences: The passing of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had dramatic consequences but did not obscure the purpose of His mission.
4. Fervid Appeals in His Will: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Will and Testament contained fervid appeals that served to confirm the purpose and character of His mission.
5. Reinforcement of Ultimate Success: The Will and Testament reinforced the promise of the ultimate success of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s mission.

Questions and Answers:

1. How did ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s passing affect His mission?
 - Despite His sudden passing, the force of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s mission continued to operate.
2. What were the consequences of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s passing?
 - The passing of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had dramatic consequences but did not obscure the purpose of His mission.

3. What role did His Will and Testament play?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will and Testament contained fervid appeals that confirmed the purpose and character of His mission.

4. How did His Will reinforce the promise of success?

- The Will and Testament reinforced the promise of the ultimate success of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's mission.

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 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.

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi reflects on the birth of the Bahá'í Administration, which emerged from the anguish of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's passing and the attacks of adversaries. This Administration, infused with potent energies released by the ascension of the Center of the Covenant, became the supreme and infallible organ for accomplishing a Divine Purpose. 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will and Testament unveiled the character, basis, and principles of this Administration, emphasizing its indispensability and enumerating its chief institutions. America, responding with spontaneity akin to its embrace of Bahá'u'lláh's Message, became the champion of this Administration, playing a pivotal role in establishing its institutions and promoting its influence. The American believers succeeded their Persian brethren as worthy successors, bearing the palm of victory in shaping the destiny of their Faith. Amidst a world in turmoil, they raised the Bahá'í Administration as a chief pillar of a future House, envisioned as the last refuge of a declining civilization.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Reflection on the birth of the Bahá'í Administration.
2. Emergence from Anguish: The Administration emerged from the anguish of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's passing and enemy attacks.
3. Potent Energies: Energies released by 'Abdu'l-Bahá's ascension crystallized into the Administration.
4. Role of Will and Testament: 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will and Testament defined the character, basis, and principles of the Administration.
5. America's Response: America embraced the Administration as the fearless champion and pivot of its institutions.
6. Successors to Persian Brethren: American believers succeeded Persian martyrs as worthy successors, shaping the destiny of the Faith.
7. Establishment of Pillar: The Bahá'í Administration emerged as the chief pillar of a future House, seen as the last refuge of a declining civilization.

Questions and Answers:

1. What were the origins of the Bahá'í Administration?
 - The Administration emerged from the anguish of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's passing and attacks by adversaries.
 2. How were potent energies involved in its formation?
 - Energies released by 'Abdu'l-Bahá's ascension crystallized into the Administration.
 3. What role did 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will and Testament play?
 - 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will and Testament defined the character, basis, and principles of the Administration.
 4. How did America respond to the Administration?
 - America embraced the Administration as the fearless champion and pivot of its institutions.
 5. Who were the successors to the Persian believers?
 - American believers succeeded Persian martyrs as worthy successors, shaping the destiny of the Faith.
 6. What significance did the Administration hold?
 - The Bahá'í Administration emerged as the chief pillar of a future House, seen as the last refuge of a declining 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 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 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.

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi reflects on the steadfastness and resilience of the believers in the face of various challenges and attacks against the Bahá’í Faith. Despite whisperings of treachery and virulent attacks from enemies, the believers remained undeterred in their high purpose and unwavering faith. They scorned insinuations and attacks, remaining loyal to the teachings and warnings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Attacks from various individuals, including those driven by earthly desires, deluded enthusiasts, and ambitious enemies, failed to undermine the believers' determination or weaken their ranks. The believers consistently ignored veiled attacks, ludicrous assertions, and attempts to subvert the principles of the Faith. Despite intermittent and abortive attempts by assailants to force surrender, the defenders of the Faith disdained yielding any ground, maintaining their cherished convictions and ignoring the enemy's insinuations and clamor. The schemes of corrupt and heretical adversaries ultimately led to their own downfall, as they sank into ignominious ends.

Key Points:

1. **Steadfastness Against Challenges:** The believers remained steadfast despite whisperings of treachery and virulent attacks.
2. **Scorn for Insinuations:** Attacks from various individuals were consistently ignored, and the believers remained loyal to the teachings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.
3. **Resilience Against Attacks:** Attacks from deluded enthusiasts and ambitious enemies failed to weaken the believers' determination.

4. Ignoring Veiled Attacks: Believers ignored veiled attacks and attempts to subvert the principles of the Faith.
5. Refusal to Surrender: Despite attempts to force surrender, the believers refused to yield ground or compromise their convictions.
6. Despising Adversaries: The believers despised the motives and methods of their adversaries, remaining steadfast in their faith.
7. Downfall of Adversaries: The schemes of corrupt adversaries ultimately led to their own downfall and ignominious ends.

Questions and Answers:

1. How did the believers respond to attacks and whisperings of treachery?
 - The believers remained steadfast and loyal, ignoring insinuations and attacks against the Faith.
 2. What were some types of attacks the believers faced?
 - Attacks came from individuals driven by earthly desires, deluded enthusiasts, and ambitious enemies.
 3. How did the believers respond to veiled attacks and attempts to subvert the Faith's principles?
 - Believers consistently ignored veiled attacks and attempts to subvert the principles of the Faith.
 4. Did the believers yield to attempts to force surrender?
 - No, the believers refused to yield ground or compromise their convictions, despite attempts to force surrender.
 5. What was the ultimate fate of the adversaries?
 - The schemes of corrupt adversaries led to their own downfall and ignominious ends, as they sank into oblivion.
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, untrammelled 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.

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi highlights the resilience and triumph of the American believers in the face of afflictive trials, reminiscent of the storm accompanying the birth of the Faith in their

homeland. Despite challenges, the American believers emerged triumphantly, with their course undeflected, fame unsullied, and heritage unimpaired. Their deeds during the dark years following ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s ascension shone with a radiance that garnered envy and admiration. The entire community rose to seize a great and glorious opportunity, with the forces that had motivated its birth now accelerating its growth despite global sorrow and distractions.

Key Points:

1. **Triumph Amid Trials:** The American believers emerged triumphantly from afflictive trials, reminiscent of the storm accompanying the birth of the Faith in their homeland.
2. **Resilience and Fame:** Despite challenges, the American believers maintained their course undeflected, with their fame unsullied and heritage unimpaired.
3. **Radiant Deeds:** Their deeds during the dark years following ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s ascension shone with radiance, attracting envy and admiration.
4. **Rising to Opportunity:** The entire community rose to seize a great and glorious opportunity, untrammelled and supremely confident.
5. **Accelerated Growth:** The forces that had motivated the birth of the community now accelerated its growth, overcoming global sorrow and distractions.

Questions and Answers:

1. How did the American believers emerge from afflictive trials?
 - The American believers emerged triumphantly, with their course undeflected, fame unsullied, and heritage unimpaired.
2. What characterized the deeds of the American believers during the dark years following ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s ascension?
 - Their deeds shone with radiance, attracting envy and admiration from their brethren.
3. How did the entire community respond to challenges?
 - The entire community rose to seize a great and glorious opportunity with supreme confidence.
4. What forces accelerated the growth of the community?
 - The forces that had motivated the birth of the community now accelerated its growth, despite global sorrow and distractions.
36. Internally the community had embarked in a number of enterprises that were to enable it on the one hand to extend still 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 signaled these praiseworthy exertions. Its gradual consolidation was destined to insure their continuance and to accentuate their effectiveness.

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi illustrates how the Bahá'í community in America embarked on internal and external enterprises to extend its spiritual jurisdiction, create necessary institutions, and contribute to global endeavors. Internally, the community initiated projects to expand its spiritual influence and develop essential instruments for institutional creation and consolidation. Externally, it intensified international teaching efforts and took on a greater role in addressing the challenges faced by a newly-emancipated Faith. The birth of the Administration in America marked the beginning of these commendable endeavors, with its gradual consolidation ensuring their continuity and enhancing their impact.

Key Points:

1. Internal Enterprises:

- Expanding Spiritual Jurisdiction: Initiatives aimed to extend the community's spiritual influence.
- Creating Essential Instruments: Projects focused on developing necessary tools for institutional formation and strengthening.

2. External Endeavors:

- Intensified International Teaching: Efforts to further the admirable work initiated by international teachers across five continents.
- Addressing Complex Challenges: Taking on a greater role in handling and solving the intricate problems confronting the newly-emancipated Faith.

3. Birth of the Administration:

- Significance: The emergence of the Administration in America marked the beginning of these commendable efforts.
- Consolidation: The gradual consolidation of the Administration ensured the continuity and effectiveness of the community's endeavors.

Questions and Answers:

1. What were the objectives of the Bahá'í community's internal enterprises?

- The objectives were to extend its spiritual jurisdiction and create essential instruments for institutional formation and consolidation.

2. How did the community contribute externally?

- Externally, the community intensified international teaching efforts and took on a greater role in addressing challenges faced by the Faith.

3. What marked the beginning of these commendable efforts in America?

- The birth of the Administration in America signified the initiation of these endeavors.

4. What ensured the continuity and effectiveness of the community's initiatives?

- The gradual consolidation of the Administration ensured the continuity and effectiveness of the community's endeavors.

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 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, 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 Iráqí Government with a view to the immediate redress of the denial of justice from which the petitioners (the Bahá'í Spiritual Assembly of Baghdád) 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 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-Adhkár—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?

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi highlights the outstanding accomplishments of the American Bahá'í community, both within their country and internationally, which have significantly enhanced the prestige of the believers and brought glory to the Bahá'í Faith. He credits the elected representatives of the community for devising essential instruments for effective collective duties, establishing national endowments, and intervening in various global issues to support fellow believers. The American believers provided moral and financial assistance to persecuted brethren in Persia, advocated for justice at international tribunals, and obtained affirmations of the Faith's regenerating power from royalty. They also sent dedicated pioneers to spread the Faith across the globe, contributing to its world-embracing dominion. The completion of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, America's crowning achievement, solidified the spiritual bond between the believers and Bahá'u'lláh.

Key Points:

1. Accomplishments in America:
 - Devising essential instruments for collective duties.
 - Establishing national endowments.
 - Advocating for justice and supporting persecuted believers.
 - Sending dedicated pioneers to spread the Faith.

2. International Contributions:

- Intervening in global issues to support fellow believers.
- Advocating for justice at international tribunals.
- Obtaining affirmations of the Faith's regenerating power from royalty.

3. The Mashriqu'l-Adhkár:

- Completion as America's crowning achievement.
- Symbolizing the spiritual bond between believers and Bahá'u'lláh.

Questions and Answers:

1. What are some accomplishments credited to the American Bahá'í community within their country?

- Devising essential instruments, establishing national endowments, and supporting persecuted believers.

2. How did the American believers contribute internationally?

- They intervened in global issues, advocated for justice at international tribunals, and obtained affirmations of the Faith's regenerating power from royalty.

3. What significance does the completion of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár hold?

- It symbolizes America's crowning achievement and solidifies the spiritual bond between believers and Bahá'u'lláh.

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 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?

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi addresses the American Bahá'í community, praising their past achievements while emphasizing the greater potential awaiting them in the future. He highlights the unfinished tasks and challenges ahead, urging the believers to continue their

efforts. Despite their accomplishments, critical elements such as the construction of the House of Worship, the establishment of administrative institutions, and the disclosure of governing laws remain incomplete. The unity symbolized by a standard is yet to be fully realized, and the necessary machinery to preserve this unity has not been created. Shoghi Effendi poses questions about America's role in assuming leadership and maintaining spiritual primacy within the Bahá'í community. He challenges them to contribute further to the heritage bestowed upon them by 'Abdu'l-Bahá and to reveal the inherent powers that motivate their collective life.

Key Points:

1. Past Achievements:

- Acknowledgment of the American Bahá'í community's remarkable accomplishments.

2. Unfinished Tasks and Challenges:

- Incomplete construction of the House of Worship.
- Lack of established administrative institutions.
- Undisclosed governing laws.
- Unrealized unity symbolized by a standard.
- Absence of machinery to preserve unity.

3. Questions for the Future:

- America's role in assuming leadership.
- Maintenance of spiritual primacy within the Bahá'í community.
- Contribution to the heritage bestowed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá.
- Revelation of inherent powers motivating their collective life.

Questions and Answers:

1. What are some of the unfinished tasks and challenges facing the American Bahá'í community?

- Incomplete construction of the House of Worship, lack of established administrative institutions, undisclosed governing laws, unrealized unity, and absence of machinery to preserve unity.

2. What questions does Shoghi Effendi pose about America's role in the future of the Bahá'í community?

- He asks whether America will assume leadership, maintain spiritual primacy, and contribute further to the heritage bestowed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

3. What does Shoghi Effendi urge the American believers to do in light of their potential?

- He urges them to continue their efforts, reveal their inherent powers, and enhance the heritage conferred upon them by 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

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.

Summary:

In his closing remarks, Shoghi Effendi reflects on the past achievements of the American Bahá'í community as a testament to the enduring vitality of their faith. He expresses hope that their future endeavors will continue to uphold and strengthen this legacy. Shoghi Effendi signs off as a true brother to the believers, offering his encouragement and support from Haifa, Palestine, on April 21, 1933.

Key Points:

1. Reflection on Past Achievements:
 - Acknowledgment of the American Bahá'í community's past accomplishments.
 - Recognition of their enduring faith and vitality demonstrated through their actions.
2. Hope for the Future:
 - Expression of optimism regarding the community's future endeavors.
 - Encouragement for continued dedication and commitment to the Bahá'í faith.
3. Closing Salutation:
 - Signing off as a true brother to the believers.
 - Offering encouragement and support from Haifa, Palestine.
 - Date of the message: April 21, 1933.

Questions and Answers:

1. How does Shoghi Effendi characterize the past achievements of the American Bahá'í community?
 - He views them as a testament to the community's enduring faith and vitality.
2. What is Shoghi Effendi's hope for the future of the American Bahá'í community?
 - He expresses optimism that their future endeavors will continue to uphold and strengthen their legacy.
3. How does Shoghi Effendi conclude his message?
 - He signs off as a true brother to the believers and offers encouragement and support from Haifa, Palestine, on April 21, 1933.

. . .

The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh

. . .

Bahá'u'lláh

To the beloved of God and the handmaids of the Merciful throughout the West.

Fellow-laborers in the Divine Vineyard:

1. On the 23rd of May of this auspicious year the Bahá'í world will celebrate the 90th anniversary of the founding of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. We, who at this hour find ourselves standing on the threshold of the last decade of the first century of the Bahá'í era, might well pause to reflect upon the mysterious dispensations of so august, so momentous a Revelation. How vast, how entrancing the panorama which the revolution of four score years and ten unrolls before our eyes! Its towering grandeur well-nigh overwhelms us. To merely contemplate this unique spectacle, to visualize, however dimly, the circumstances attending the birth and gradual unfoldment of this supreme Theophany, to recall even in their barest outline the woeful struggles that proclaimed its rise and accelerated its march, will suffice to convince every unbiased observer of those eternal truths that motivate its life and which must continue to impel it forward until it achieves its destined ascendancy.

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi, in a message addressed to the believers in the West, reflects on the approaching 90th anniversary of the founding of the Bahá'í Faith on May 23rd. He invites believers to contemplate the significance of this milestone as they stand on the cusp of the final decade of the first century of the Bahá'í era. He emphasizes the profound and mysterious nature of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation, describing it as a vast and entrancing panorama that overwhelms the senses. He urges readers to reflect on the circumstances surrounding the birth and growth of the Bahá'í Faith, acknowledging the struggles and challenges that accompanied its emergence and propelled its advancement. Through this reflection, he suggests, one can gain insight into the enduring truths that animate the Faith and will continue to propel it forward until it fulfills its ultimate purpose.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to the message and its intended audience.
2. Reflection on the approaching 90th anniversary of the Bahá'í Faith's founding.
3. Invitation to contemplate the significance of this milestone.
4. Acknowledgment of standing on the threshold of a new decade in the Bahá'í era.
5. Description of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation as a profound and mysterious phenomenon.
6. Comparison of the unfolding of the Bahá'í Faith to a vast and entrancing panorama.
7. Recognition of the struggles and challenges faced by the Faith in its emergence and growth.
8. Assertion of the enduring truths that underpin the Bahá'í Faith.
9. Assertion of the Faith's continued progression towards its ultimate ascendancy.

Questions and Answers:

1. Who is the intended audience of Shoghi Effendi's message?
 - The beloved of God and the handmaids of the Merciful throughout the West.

2. When will the Bahá'í world celebrate the 90th anniversary of the founding of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh?
 - On the 23rd of May of the current year.

3. What milestone are believers urged to contemplate?
 - The approaching 90th anniversary of the founding of the Bahá'í Faith.

4. How does Shoghi Effendi describe Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation?
 - As a vast and entrancing panorama that overwhelms the senses.

5. What does Shoghi Effendi suggest reflecting on regarding the Bahá'í Faith's emergence and growth?
 - The circumstances surrounding its birth and gradual unfoldment, as well as the struggles that accompanied its rise.

6. What does Shoghi Effendi assert will continue to propel the Bahá'í Faith forward?
 - The enduring truths that motivate its life and must continue to impel it until it achieves its destined ascendancy.

2. Dominating the entire range of this fascinating spectacle towers the incomparable figure of Bahá'u'lláh, transcendental in His majesty, serene, awe-inspiring, unapproachably glorious. Allied, though subordinate in rank, and invested with the authority of presiding with Him over the destinies of this supreme Dispensation, there shines upon this mental picture the youthful glory of the Báb, infinite in His tenderness, irresistible in His charm, unsurpassed in His heroism, matchless in the dramatic circumstances of His short yet eventful life. And finally there emerges, though on a plane of its own and in a category entirely apart from the one occupied by the twin Figures that preceded Him, the vibrant, the magnetic personality of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, reflecting to a degree that no man, however exalted his station, can hope to rival, the glory and power with which They who are the Manifestations of God are alone endowed.

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi paints a vivid and awe-inspiring picture of the central figures of the Bahá'í Faith, beginning with Bahá'u'lláh, whom he describes as incomparable, transcendent in majesty, and unapproachably glorious. Alongside Bahá'u'lláh stands the youthful glory of the Báb, invested with authority and revered for his tenderness, charm, heroism, and the dramatic circumstances of his life. Additionally, 'Abdu'l-Bahá emerges on a plane of his own, reflecting a vibrant and magnetic personality that uniquely embodies the glory and power of the Manifestations of God.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to the central figures of the Bahá'í Faith.
2. Description of Bahá'u'lláh as transcendent in majesty and incomparable.
3. Depiction of the Báb's youthful glory and authority.
4. Recognition of the Báb's tenderness, charm, heroism, and dramatic life.
5. Introduction of 'Abdu'l-Bahá as a figure on a unique plane.
6. Description of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's vibrant and magnetic personality.
7. Assertion of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's reflection of the glory and power of the Manifestations of God.

Questions and Answers:

1. How does Shoghi Effendi describe Bahá'u'lláh?
 - Bahá'u'lláh is described as transcendental in majesty, serene, awe-inspiring, and unapproachably glorious.
2. Who is described alongside Bahá'u'lláh, and how is this figure characterized?
 - The Báb is described as being invested with authority, possessing tenderness, charm, heroism, and having lived a life filled with dramatic circumstances.
3. What qualities does Shoghi Effendi attribute to the Báb?
 - Shoghi Effendi attributes tenderness, charm, heroism, and the experience of dramatic circumstances to the Báb.
4. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá differ from Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb in Shoghi Effendi's portrayal?
 - 'Abdu'l-Bahá emerges on a plane of his own, distinct from Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb.
5. What is 'Abdu'l-Bahá's personality described as?
 - 'Abdu'l-Bahá's personality is described as vibrant and magnetic.
6. What does 'Abdu'l-Bahá uniquely reflect according to Shoghi Effendi?
 - 'Abdu'l-Bahá uniquely reflects the glory and power of the Manifestations of God.
3. With 'Abdu'l-Bahá's ascension, and more particularly with the passing of His well-beloved and illustrious sister the Most Exalted Leaf—the last survivor of a glorious and heroic age—there draws to a close the first and most moving chapter of Bahá'í history, marking the conclusion of the Primitive, the Apostolic Age of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. It was 'Abdu'l-Bahá Who, through the provisions of His weighty Will and Testament, has forged the vital link which must for ever connect the age that has just expired with the one we now live in—the Transitional and Formative period of the Faith—a stage that must in the fullness of time reach its blossom and yield its fruit in the exploits and triumphs that are to herald the Golden Age of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh.

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi reflects on the passing of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and His sister, the Most Exalted Leaf, marking the conclusion of the Primitive, Apostolic Age of the Bahá’í Faith. He acknowledges the pivotal role of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in forging a vital link between the previous age and the Transitional and Formative period of the Faith, which humanity currently resides in. This period, outlined in ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Will and Testament, is seen as a stage that will eventually blossom and yield the triumphs and exploits that will herald the Golden Age of Bahá’u’lláh's Revelation.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to the end of the Primitive, Apostolic Age of the Bahá’í Faith.
2. Acknowledgment of the passing of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and the Most Exalted Leaf.
3. Description of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s role in connecting the previous age with the Transitional and Formative period of the Faith.
4. Identification of the Transitional and Formative period as the current stage of the Bahá’í Faith.
5. Recognition of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Will and Testament as the foundation for this transitional period.
6. Assertion of the Transitional and Formative period’s eventual fruition in the Golden Age of Bahá’u’lláh's Revelation.

Questions and Answers:

1. What marks the conclusion of the Primitive, Apostolic Age of the Bahá’í Faith?
- The passing of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and His sister, the Most Exalted Leaf, marks the end of this age.
2. What role did ‘Abdu’l-Bahá play in connecting the previous age with the current Transitional and Formative period?
- ‘Abdu’l-Bahá forged a vital link between the two ages through His weighty Will and Testament.
3. How does Shoghi Effendi describe the current period of the Bahá’í Faith?
- The current period is characterized as the Transitional and Formative period.
4. What is seen as the foundation for the Transitional and Formative period?
- ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Will and Testament is seen as the foundation for this period.
5. What is the eventual outcome of the Transitional and Formative period according to Shoghi Effendi?
- This period will eventually yield the triumphs and exploits that will herald the Golden Age of Bahá’u’lláh's Revelation.
4. Dearly-beloved friends! The onrushing forces so miraculously released through the agency of two independent and swiftly successive Manifestations are now under our very eyes and through the care of the chosen stewards of a far-flung Faith being

gradually mustered and disciplined. They are slowly crystallizing into institutions that will come to be regarded as the hall-mark and glory of the age we are called upon to establish and by our deeds immortalize. For upon our present-day efforts, and above all upon the extent to which we strive to remodel our lives after the pattern of sublime heroism associated with those gone before us, must depend the efficacy of the instruments we now fashion—instruments that must erect the structure of that blissful Commonwealth which must signalize the Golden Age of our Faith.

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi addresses the beloved friends of the Bahá'í Faith, acknowledging the miraculous forces unleashed by the successive Manifestations, Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb. He emphasizes that these forces are now being harnessed and organized through the efforts of the chosen stewards of the Faith. As these forces gradually crystallize into institutions, they will be recognized as the hallmarks of the age the believers are called upon to establish. Shoghi Effendi stresses the importance of the believers' current efforts and their emulation of the sublime heroism demonstrated by those who came before them. He asserts that the efficacy of the instruments being fashioned today depends on the extent to which believers strive to remodel their lives after the example set by previous heroes. These instruments, he explains, are crucial for erecting the structure of a blissful Commonwealth that will signify the Golden Age of the Bahá'í Faith.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to the message addressed to the beloved friends of the Bahá'í Faith.
2. Acknowledgment of the miraculous forces unleashed by Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb.
3. Description of the gradual organization and discipline of these forces by the stewards of the Faith.
4. Assertion that these organized forces will be recognized as the hallmarks of the age the believers are called to establish.
5. Emphasis on the importance of current efforts and the emulation of past heroism by believers.
6. Explanation of the significance of the instruments being fashioned by believers.
7. Assertion that these instruments are crucial for erecting the structure of a blissful Commonwealth.
8. Recognition that the Golden Age of the Bahá'í Faith will be signaled by the establishment of this Commonwealth.

Questions and Answers:

1. What forces are being discussed in Shoghi Effendi's message?
 - The onrushing forces unleashed by Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb, which are being organized and disciplined by the stewards of the Faith.
2. How does Shoghi Effendi describe the institutions being gradually crystallized?

- He describes them as hallmarks and glories of the age the believers are called to establish.

3. What is emphasized as crucial for the efficacy of the instruments being fashioned?

- The extent to which believers strive to remodel their lives after the pattern of sublime heroism associated with those who came before them.

4. What is the purpose of these instruments?

- They are crucial for erecting the structure of a blissful Commonwealth that will signify the Golden Age of the Bahá'í Faith.

5. What does Shoghi Effendi assert about the believers' current efforts?

- He asserts that upon these efforts depend the efficacy of the instruments being fashioned.

5. It is not my purpose, as I look back upon these crowded years of heroic deeds, to attempt even a cursory review of the mighty events that have transpired since 1844 until the present day. Nor have I any intention to undertake an analysis of the forces that have precipitated them, or to evaluate their influence upon peoples and institutions in almost every continent of the globe. The authentic record of the lives of the first believers of the primitive period of our Faith, together with the assiduous research which competent Bahá'í historians will in the future undertake, will combine to transmit to posterity such masterly exposition of the history of that age as my own efforts can never hope to accomplish. My chief concern at this challenging period of Bahá'í history is rather to call the attention of those who are destined to be the champion-builders of the Administrative Order of Bahá'u'lláh to certain fundamental verities the elucidation of which must tremendously assist them in the effective prosecution of their mighty enterprise.

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi, while reflecting on the heroic deeds of the Bahá'í Faith since its inception in 1844, clarifies that his intention is not to provide a comprehensive review of the events or analyze the forces behind them. Instead, he acknowledges that future Bahá'í historians will undertake the task of documenting these events thoroughly. Shoghi Effendi's primary concern, amidst this pivotal period of Bahá'í history, is to highlight certain fundamental truths. He believes that elucidating these truths will greatly assist those tasked with building the Administrative Order of Bahá'u'lláh in effectively carrying out their mission.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to Shoghi Effendi's reflection on the heroic deeds of the Bahá'í Faith since 1844.
2. Clarification that his purpose is not to provide a comprehensive review or analysis of these events.
3. Recognition of future Bahá'í historians' role in documenting the history of the Faith.

4. Emphasis on Shoghi Effendi's primary concern: highlighting fundamental truths.
5. Acknowledgment of the challenging period in Bahá'í history.
6. Identification of the audience as those destined to be the champion-builders of the Administrative Order of Bahá'u'lláh.
7. Assertion that elucidating these fundamental truths will greatly assist in their mission.

Questions and Answers:

1. What is Shoghi Effendi's purpose in reflecting on the heroic deeds of the Bahá'í Faith since 1844?
 - His purpose is not to provide a comprehensive review or analysis of these events but to highlight certain fundamental truths.
2. Who does Shoghi Effendi believe will undertake the task of documenting the events of Bahá'í history thoroughly?
 - Future Bahá'í historians are believed to undertake this task.
3. What is Shoghi Effendi's primary concern amidst this pivotal period of Bahá'í history?
 - His primary concern is to elucidate fundamental truths that will assist in building the Administrative Order of Bahá'u'lláh effectively.
4. Who does Shoghi Effendi identify as the audience for his message?
 - Those destined to be the champion-builders of the Administrative Order of Bahá'u'lláh.
5. How does Shoghi Effendi believe elucidating fundamental truths will assist the audience?
 - He believes it will tremendously assist them in effectively prosecuting their mighty enterprise.
6. The international status which the Religion of God has thus far achieved, moreover, imperatively demands that its root principles be now definitely clarified. The unprecedented impetus which the illustrious deeds of the American believers have lent to the onward march of the Faith; the intense interest which the first Mashriqu'l-Adhkár of the West is fast awakening among divers races and nations; the rise and steady consolidation of Bahá'í institutions in no less than forty of the most advanced countries of the world; the dissemination of Bahá'í literature in no fewer than twenty-five of the most widely-spoken languages; the success that has recently attended the nation-wide efforts of the Persian believers in the preliminary steps they have taken for the establishment, in the outskirts of the capital-city of their native land, of the third Mashriqu'l-Adhkár of the Bahá'í world; the measures that are being taken for the immediate formation of their first National Spiritual Assembly representing the interests of the overwhelming majority of Bahá'í adherents; the projected erection of yet another pillar of the Universal House of Justice, the first of its kind, in the Southern Hemisphere; the testimonies, both verbal and written, that a struggling Faith has obtained from Royalty, from governmental institutions, international tribunals, and

ecclesiastical dignitaries; the publicity it has received from the charges which unrelenting enemies, both new and old, have hurled against it; the formal enfranchisement of a section of its followers from the fetters of Muslim orthodoxy in a country that may be regarded as the most enlightened among Islamic nations—these afford ample proof of the growing momentum with which the invincible community of the Most Great Name is marching forward to ultimate victory.

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi highlights the imperative need to clarify the root principles of the Bahá'í Faith, given its international status and the unprecedented impetus provided by the American believers and the establishment of the first Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in the West. He underscores the steady consolidation of Bahá'í institutions in numerous countries, the dissemination of Bahá'í literature in multiple languages, and the recent successes of the Persian believers in establishing the third Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in their native land. Additionally, he mentions the formation of the first National Spiritual Assembly in Persia, the projected erection of a pillar of the Universal House of Justice in the Southern Hemisphere, and the positive testimonies obtained from various sources, including royalty, governmental institutions, international tribunals, and ecclesiastical dignitaries. He also notes the publicity gained from the accusations made by both new and old adversaries against the Faith, as well as the formal enfranchisement of a section of its followers from the constraints of Muslim orthodoxy in a progressive Islamic nation.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to the imperative need for clarifying the root principles of the Bahá'í Faith.
2. Acknowledgment of the international status achieved by the Faith.
3. Recognition of the impetus provided by the American believers and the establishment of the first Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in the West.
4. Emphasis on the steady consolidation of Bahá'í institutions in numerous countries.
5. Mention of the dissemination of Bahá'í literature in multiple languages.
6. Description of recent successes in Persia, including the establishment of the third Mashriqu'l-Adhkár and the formation of the first National Spiritual Assembly.
7. Note on the projected erection of a pillar of the Universal House of Justice in the Southern Hemisphere.
8. Mention of positive testimonies obtained from various sources.
9. Recognition of the publicity gained from accusations made by adversaries.
10. Mention of the formal enfranchisement of a section of followers from Muslim orthodoxy in a progressive Islamic nation.

Questions and Answers:

1. Why does Shoghi Effendi emphasize the need to clarify the root principles of the Bahá'í Faith?
 - He emphasizes this need due to the international status achieved by the Faith and the impetus provided by recent developments.

2. What recent developments does Shoghi Effendi highlight as evidence of the Faith's momentum?
 - He highlights the establishment of the first Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in the West, the consolidation of Bahá'í institutions worldwide, the dissemination of Bahá'í literature in multiple languages, and recent successes in Persia.

3. What positive developments are mentioned in Persia?
 - The establishment of the third Mashriqu'l-Adhkár and the formation of the first National Spiritual Assembly.

4. What is the significance of the projected erection of a pillar of the Universal House of Justice in the Southern Hemisphere?
 - It signifies the global expansion and institutional development of the Bahá'í Faith.

5. What sources provide positive testimonies about the Bahá'í Faith?
 - Royalty, governmental institutions, international tribunals, and ecclesiastical dignitaries provide positive testimonies.

7. Dearly-beloved friends! I feel it incumbent upon me, by virtue of the obligations and responsibilities which as Guardian of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh I am called upon to discharge, to lay special stress, at a time when the light of publicity is being increasingly focussed upon us, upon certain truths which lie at the basis of our Faith and the integrity of which it is our first duty to safeguard. These verities, if valiantly upheld and properly assimilated, will, I am convinced, powerfully reinforce the vigor of our spiritual life and greatly assist in counteracting the machinations of an implacable and vigilant enemy.

Summary:

As the Guardian of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, Shoghi Effendi feels compelled to emphasize certain truths that form the foundation of the Bahá'í Faith, especially in light of increasing public scrutiny. He views it as his duty to safeguard these truths, as they play a crucial role in reinforcing the vigor of the Bahá'í community's spiritual life and countering the schemes of relentless adversaries.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to the message addressed to the beloved friends of the Bahá'í Faith.
2. Assertion of the Guardian's responsibility to emphasize fundamental truths.
3. Recognition of increasing public scrutiny on the Bahá'í community.
4. Emphasis on the importance of safeguarding these truths.
5. Assertion that upholding and assimilating these truths will strengthen the spiritual life of the Bahá'í community.
6. Recognition of the role these truths play in countering the efforts of adversaries.

Questions and Answers:

1. What does Shoghi Effendi feel compelled to emphasize as the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith?
 - He feels compelled to emphasize certain truths that form the foundation of the Bahá'í Faith.
2. Why does Shoghi Effendi view it as his duty to safeguard these truths?
 - He views it as his duty because these truths are integral to the integrity of the Bahá'í Faith.
3. What is the significance of the increasing public scrutiny on the Bahá'í community?
 - The increasing public scrutiny highlights the importance of upholding and safeguarding the fundamental truths of the Bahá'í Faith.
4. How does Shoghi Effendi believe these truths will reinforce the Bahá'í community's spiritual life?
 - He believes that upholding and assimilating these truths will strengthen the vigor of the Bahá'í community's spiritual life.
5. What role do these truths play in countering the efforts of adversaries?
 - These truths serve as a defense against the schemes and machinations of adversaries.
8. To strive to obtain a more adequate understanding of the significance of Bahá'u'lláh's stupendous Revelation must, it is my unalterable conviction, remain the first obligation and the object of the constant endeavor of each one of its loyal adherents. An exact and thorough comprehension of so vast a system, so sublime a revelation, so sacred a trust, is for obvious reasons beyond the reach and ken of our finite minds. We can, however, and it is our bounden duty to seek to derive fresh inspiration and added sustenance as we labor for the propagation of His Faith through a clearer apprehension of the truths it enshrines and the principles on which it is based.

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi emphasizes the importance of striving for a deeper understanding of the significance of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation. He asserts that this pursuit should be the first obligation and constant endeavor of every loyal adherent of the Bahá'í Faith. While acknowledging the vastness and sublimity of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation as beyond the comprehension of finite minds, Shoghi Effendi maintains that it is still incumbent upon believers to seek fresh inspiration and sustenance through a clearer apprehension of the truths and principles enshrined within it.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to the message addressed to the believers of the Bahá'í Faith.

2. Emphasis on the importance of striving for a deeper understanding of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation.
3. Assertion that this pursuit should be the first obligation and constant endeavor of every loyal adherent.
4. Recognition of the vastness and sublimity of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation.
5. Acknowledgment that the complete comprehension of such a revelation is beyond the reach of finite minds.
6. Assertion that despite its vastness, believers are duty-bound to seek fresh inspiration and sustenance through a clearer apprehension of its truths and principles.

Questions and Answers:

1. What does Shoghi Effendi emphasize as the first obligation of every loyal adherent of the Bahá'í Faith?
 - He emphasizes striving for a deeper understanding of the significance of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation.

2. Why does Shoghi Effendi assert that this pursuit should be a constant endeavor?
 - He asserts this because it is essential for believers to continually seek to deepen their understanding of the Faith.

3. What does Shoghi Effendi acknowledge about the comprehension of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation?
 - He acknowledges that its vastness and sublimity make complete comprehension beyond the reach of finite minds.

4. Despite the incomprehensibility of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation, what does Shoghi Effendi assert believers are duty-bound to do?
 - He asserts that believers are duty-bound to seek fresh inspiration and sustenance through a clearer apprehension of its truths and principles.

5. Why does Shoghi Effendi emphasize the importance of seeking a deeper understanding of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation?
 - He emphasizes this importance because it allows believers to derive fresh inspiration and sustenance as they propagate the Faith.

9. In a communication addressed to the American believers I have in the course of my explanation of the station of the Báb made a passing reference to the incomparable greatness of the Revelation of which He considered Himself to be the humble Precursor. He Whom Bahá'u'lláh has acclaimed in the Kitáb-i-Íqán as that promised Qá'im Who has manifested no less than twenty-five out of the twenty-seven letters which all the Prophets were destined to reveal—so great a Revealer has Himself testified to the preëminence of that superior Revelation that was soon to supersede His own. *“The germ,”* the Báb asserts in the Persian Bayán, *“that holds within itself the potentialities of the Revelation that is to come is endowed with a potency superior to the combined forces of all those who follow me.”* *“Of all the tributes,”* He again

affirms, *"I have paid to Him Who is to come after Me, the greatest is this, My written confession, that no words of Mine can adequately describe Him, nor can any reference to Him in My Book, the Bayán, do justice to His Cause."* *"The Bayán,"* He in that same Book categorically declares, *"and whosoever is therein revolve round the saying of 'Him Whom God shall make manifest,' even as the Alif (the Gospel) and whosoever was therein revolved round the saying of Muḥammad, the Apostle of God."* *"A thousand perusals of the Bayán,"* He further remarks, *"cannot equal the perusal of a single verse to be revealed by 'Him Whom God shall make manifest.'... Today the Bayán is in the stage of seed; at the beginning of the manifestation of 'Him Whom God shall make manifest' its ultimate perfection will become apparent.... The Bayán and such as are believers therein yearn more ardently after Him than the yearning of any lover after his beloved.... The Bayán deriveth all its glory from 'Him Whom God shall make manifest.' All blessing be upon him who believeth in Him and woe betide him that rejecteth His truth."*

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi addresses the American believers, explaining the station of the Báb and emphasizing the incomparable greatness of the Revelation He heralded. He quotes passages from the Báb's writings, in which the Báb Himself acknowledges the superiority of the Revelation that would soon supersede His own. The Báb testifies to the preeminence of the promised One, referring to Him as "Him Whom God shall make manifest," and declares that no words can adequately describe Him. The Báb asserts that His own Revelation revolves around the Revelation of the promised One, likening it to the relationship between the Gospel and Muhammad's message. He further states that the Bayán, His own Book, yearns ardently for the Revelation of "Him Whom God shall make manifest," and that its ultimate perfection will become apparent with His advent.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to Shoghi Effendi's communication to the American believers regarding the station of the Báb.
2. Explanation of the incomparable greatness of the Revelation heralded by the Báb.
3. Quoting passages from the Báb's writings in which He acknowledges the superiority of the Revelation to come.
4. Reference to the Báb's use of the term "Him Whom God shall make manifest" to denote the promised One.
5. Assertion by the Báb that no words can adequately describe the promised One.
6. Comparison drawn by the Báb between His own Revelation and the Revelation of "Him Whom God shall make manifest."
7. Declaration by the Báb that the Bayán, His own Book, yearns ardently for the Revelation of the promised One.
8. Acknowledgment by the Báb that the ultimate perfection of the Bayán will become apparent with the advent of "Him Whom God shall make manifest."

Questions and Answers:

1. What does Shoghi Effendi emphasize regarding the Revelation heralded by the Báb?
- He emphasizes its incomparable greatness.
2. How does the Báb refer to the promised One in His writings?
- He refers to Him as "Him Whom God shall make manifest."
3. What does the Báb assert about the ability of His own words to describe the promised One?
- He asserts that no words can adequately describe Him.
4. What comparison does the Báb draw between His Revelation and the Revelation of the promised One?
- He likens the relationship between His Revelation and the Revelation of the promised One to the relationship between the Gospel and Muhammad's message.
5. What does the Báb declare about the yearning of the Bayán for the Revelation of the promised One?
- He declares that the Bayán yearns ardently for Him.
6. How does the Báb suggest the ultimate perfection of the Bayán will become apparent?
- He suggests it will become apparent with the advent of "Him Whom God shall make manifest."
10. Addressing Siyyid Yahyáy-i-Darábí surnamed Vahíd, the most learned, the most eloquent and influential among His followers, the Báb utters this warning: *"By the righteousness of Him Whose power causeth the seed to germinate and Who breatheth the spirit of life into all things, were I to be assured that in the day of His manifestation thou wilt deny Him, I would unhesitatingly disown thee and repudiate thy faith.... If, on the other hand, I be told that a Christian, who beareth no allegiance to My Faith, will believe in Him, the same will I regard as the apple of Mine Eye."*

Summary:

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi recounts an address made by the Báb to Siyyid Yahyáy-i-Darábí, known as Vahíd, one of His most learned, eloquent, and influential followers. The Báb issues a solemn warning to Vahíd, expressing that if He were to receive assurance that Vahíd would deny the promised Manifestation of God in the future, He would unhesitatingly disown him and repudiate his faith. This statement underscores the gravity of denying the Manifestation of God and highlights the importance of steadfastness in faith. Furthermore, the Báb contrasts this scenario with the hypothetical situation where a Christian, who does not adhere to the Báb's Faith, would believe in the promised Manifestation. In this case, the Báb expresses that such a believer would be regarded as precious, emphasizing the significance of faith and allegiance to the Manifestation of God above all else.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to the address made by the Báb to Siyyid Yaḥyáy-i-Darábí, known as Vahíd.
2. The Báb's warning to Vahíd regarding the denial of the promised Manifestation of God.
3. The gravity of denying the Manifestation of God and the consequences associated with it.
4. The contrast between denying the promised Manifestation and believing in Him.
5. The value placed on faith and allegiance to the Manifestation of God.

Questions and Answers:

1. Who is addressed by the Báb in this passage, and what is his significance?
 - The Báb addresses Siyyid Yaḥyáy-i-Darábí, known as Vahíd, one of His most learned, eloquent, and influential followers.
2. What warning does the Báb issue to Vahíd?
 - The Báb warns Vahíd that if He were to receive assurance that Vahíd would deny the promised Manifestation of God, He would disown him and repudiate his faith.
3. What does this warning emphasize about denying the Manifestation of God?
 - It emphasizes the gravity of denying the Manifestation of God and the serious consequences associated with it.
4. How does the Báb contrast the scenarios of denying the promised Manifestation and believing in Him?
 - The Báb contrasts the scenario of denying the promised Manifestation with the hypothetical situation where a Christian, who does not adhere to the Báb's Faith, would believe in Him.
5. What does the Báb emphasize regarding faith and allegiance to the Manifestation of God?
 - The Báb emphasizes the value and importance of faith and allegiance to the Manifestation of God above all else.
11. In one of His prayers He thus communes with Bahá'u'lláh: *“Exalted art Thou, O my Lord the Omnipotent! How puny and contemptible my word and all that pertaineth unto me appear unless they be related to Thy great glory. Grant that through the assistance of Thy grace whatsoever pertaineth unto me may be acceptable in Thy sight.”*

Summary:

In this excerpt, Shoghi Effendi presents a prayer in which the The Báb, addressing Bahá'u'lláh, acknowledges the vast discrepancy between their own limited abilities and the exalted greatness of Bahá'u'lláh. The Báb humbly expresses the insignificance of His own words and deeds when compared to the grandeur of Bahá'u'lláh's glory. This acknowledgment reflects a profound sense of humility and reverence before the Divine.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to the prayer addressed to Bahá'u'lláh.
2. Acknowledgment of the vast difference between the supplicant's abilities and Bahá'u'lláh's greatness.
3. Humble expression of The Báb's awareness of the insignificance of their own words and deeds.
4. Plea for assistance and grace from Bahá'u'lláh to make whatever pertains to The Báb acceptable in His sight.

Questions and Answers:

1. Who is The Báb addressing in this prayer?
 - The Báb is addressing Bahá'u'lláh.
2. How does The Báb perceive His own abilities in relation to Bahá'u'lláh's greatness?
 - The Báb perceives His own abilities as puny and contemptible compared to Bahá'u'lláh's greatness.
3. What is The Báb's attitude towards His own words and deeds?
 - The Báb views His own words and deeds as insignificant in comparison to Bahá'u'lláh's glory.
4. What does The Báb request from Bahá'u'lláh in this prayer?
 - The Báb requests assistance and grace from Bahá'u'lláh so that whatever pertains to Himself may be acceptable in His sight.
12. In the Qayyúmu'l-Asmá—the Báb's commentary on the Súrih of Joseph—characterized by the Author of the Íqán as “*the first, the greatest and mightiest*” of the books revealed by the Báb, we read the following references to Bahá'u'lláh: “*Out of utter nothingness, O great and omnipotent Master, Thou hast, through the celestial potency of Thy might, brought me forth and raised me up to proclaim this Revelation. I have made none other but Thee my trust; I have clung to no will but Thy will... O Thou Remnant of God! I have sacrificed myself wholly for Thee: I have accepted curses for Thy sake, and have yearned for naught but martyrdom in the path of Thy love. Sufficient witness unto me is God, the Exalted, the Protector, the Ancient of Days.*” “*And when the appointed hour hath struck,*” He again addresses Bahá'u'lláh in that same commentary, “*do Thou, by the leave of God, the All-Wise, reveal from the heights of the Most Lofty and Mystic Mount a faint, an infinitesimal glimmer of Thy impenetrable Mystery, that they who have recognized the radiance of the Sinaic Splendor may faint away and die as they catch a lightning glimpse of the fierce and crimson Light that envelops Thy Revelation.*”

Summary:

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi quotes from the Qayyúmu'l-Asmá, the Báb's commentary on the Súrih of Joseph, which is hailed by Bahá'u'lláh in the Kitáb-i-Íqán as “the first, the greatest and mightiest” of the Báb's works. In this commentary, the Báb addresses Bahá'u'lláh with profound reverence and devotion, acknowledging Him as the great and omnipotent Master who brought forth the Báb from utter nothingness and raised Him up to proclaim the Revelation. The Báb declares His trust and complete surrender to Bahá'u'lláh's will, sacrificing Himself wholly and accepting curses for His sake, yearning only for martyrdom in the path of Bahá'u'lláh's love. The Báb expresses His unwavering devotion and commitment to Bahá'u'lláh, bearing witness to God, the Exalted, the Protector, the Ancient of Days. Moreover, the Báb beseeches Bahá'u'lláh to reveal a faint glimmer of His impenetrable Mystery from the heights of the Most Lofty and Mystic Mount at the appointed hour, causing those who have recognized the radiance of previous Revelations to faint away and die as they catch a glimpse of the fierce and crimson Light enveloping Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to the passage quoting from the Qayyúmu'l-Asmá, the Báb's commentary on the Súrih of Joseph.
2. Description of the reverence and devotion expressed by the Báb towards Bahá'u'lláh.
3. Acknowledgment of Bahá'u'lláh as the great and omnipotent Master who brought forth the Báb and raised Him up to proclaim the Revelation.
4. Declaration of the Báb's trust and complete surrender to Bahá'u'lláh's will.
5. Expression of the Báb's unwavering devotion and willingness to sacrifice Himself for Bahá'u'lláh's sake.
6. Beseechment for Bahá'u'lláh to reveal a faint glimmer of His impenetrable Mystery at the appointed hour.
7. Description of the effect of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation on those who recognize the radiance of previous Revelations.

Questions and Answers:

1. What is the Qayyúmu'l-Asmá, and how does Bahá'u'lláh describe it?
 - The Qayyúmu'l-Asmá is the Báb's commentary on the Súrih of Joseph, and Bahá'u'lláh describes it as “the first, the greatest and mightiest” of the Báb's works.
2. How does the Báb address Bahá'u'lláh in this commentary?
 - The Báb addresses Bahá'u'lláh with profound reverence and devotion, acknowledging Him as the great and omnipotent Master.
3. What does the Báb declare about His trust and surrender to Bahá'u'lláh's will?
 - The Báb declares that He has made none other but Bahá'u'lláh His trust and has clung to no will but Bahá'u'lláh's will.
4. What does the Báb express about His devotion and sacrifice for Bahá'u'lláh?

- The Báb expresses His willingness to sacrifice Himself wholly for Bahá'u'lláh, accepting curses for His sake and yearning only for martyrdom in the path of Bahá'u'lláh's love.

5. What does the Báb beseech Bahá'u'lláh to do?

- The Báb beseeches Bahá'u'lláh to reveal a faint glimmer of His impenetrable Mystery from the heights of the Most Lofty and Mystic Mount at the appointed hour.

6. How does the Báb describe the effect of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation on those who recognize the radiance of previous Revelations?

- The Báb describes how they will faint away and die as they catch a glimpse of the fierce and crimson Light enveloping Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation.

13. As a further testimony to the greatness of the Revelation identified with Bahá'u'lláh may be cited the following extracts from a Tablet addressed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá to an eminent Zoroastrian follower of the Faith: *"Thou hadst written that in the sacred books of the followers of Zoroaster it is written that in the latter days, in three separate Dispensations, the sun must needs be brought to a standstill. In the first Dispensation, it is predicted, the sun will remain motionless for ten days; in the second for twice that time; in the third for no less than one whole month. The interpretation of this prophecy is this: the first Dispensation to which it refers is the Muḥammadan Dispensation during which the Sun of Truth stood still for ten days. Each day is reckoned as one century. The Muḥammadan Dispensation must have, therefore, lasted no less than one thousand years, which is precisely the period that has elapsed from the setting of the Star of the Imamate to the advent of the Dispensation proclaimed by the Báb. The second Dispensation referred to in this prophecy is the one inaugurated by the Báb Himself, which began in the year 1260 A.H. and was brought to a close in the year 1280 A.H. As to the third Dispensation—the Revelation proclaimed by Bahá'u'lláh—inasmuch as the Sun of Truth when attaining that station shineth in the plenitude of its meridian splendor its duration hath been fixed for a period of one whole month, which is the maximum time taken by the sun to pass through a sign of the Zodiac. From this thou canst imagine the magnitude of the Bahá'í cycle—a cycle that must extend over a period of at least five hundred thousand years."*

Summary:

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi shares an excerpt from a Tablet written by 'Abdu'l-Bahá to an eminent Zoroastrian follower of the Faith. In this Tablet, 'Abdu'l-Bahá elucidates a prophecy from the sacred books of Zoroastrianism regarding the sun standing still in three separate dispensations. He interprets the prophecy as follows: in the first dispensation, symbolized by the Muḥammadan Dispensation, the sun stood still for ten days, each day representing a century. Thus, the Muḥammadan Dispensation lasted for one thousand years, from the setting of the Star of the Imamate to the advent of the Báb's Dispensation. The second dispensation, inaugurated by the Báb, lasted from 1260 A.H. to 1280 A.H. Finally, the third dispensation, represented by Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation, is characterized

by the sun standing still for one whole month, symbolizing the maximum time taken by the sun to pass through a sign of the Zodiac. This period is interpreted as extending over at least five hundred thousand years, highlighting the magnitude and duration of the Bahá'í cycle.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to the excerpt from a Tablet written by 'Abdu'l-Bahá to a Zoroastrian follower of the Faith.
2. Explanation of the Zoroastrian prophecy regarding the sun standing still in three dispensations.
3. Interpretation of the prophecy: the Muḥammadan Dispensation lasted for one thousand years, symbolized by ten days; the Báb's Dispensation lasted from 1260 A.H. to 1280 A.H.; Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation represents the sun standing still for one month, symbolizing at least five hundred thousand years.
4. Emphasis on the magnitude and duration of the Bahá'í cycle.

Questions and Answers:

1. What prophecy from Zoroastrianism does 'Abdu'l-Bahá elucidate in this excerpt?
 - 'Abdu'l-Bahá elucidates a prophecy regarding the sun standing still in three separate dispensations.
2. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá interpret the duration of each dispensation?
 - He interprets each day of the sun standing still as representing a century, thus providing a timeframe for each dispensation.
3. What is the duration of the Muḥammadan Dispensation according to this interpretation?
 - The Muḥammadan Dispensation lasted for one thousand years, from the setting of the Star of the Imamate to the advent of the Báb's Dispensation.
4. How long did the Báb's Dispensation last according to this interpretation?
 - The Báb's Dispensation lasted from 1260 A.H. to 1280 A.H.
5. What duration does Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation symbolize in this interpretation?
 - Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation symbolizes a period of at least five hundred thousand years, representing the maximum time taken by the sun to pass through a sign of the Zodiac.
6. What is emphasized regarding the magnitude and duration of the Bahá'í cycle?
 - The Bahá'í cycle is emphasized to be of immense magnitude and duration, extending over at least five hundred thousand years.
14. From the text of this explicit and authoritative interpretation of so ancient a prophecy it is evident how necessary it is for every faithful follower of the Faith to accept the divine origin and uphold the independent status of the Muḥammadan Dispensation. The validity of the Imamate is, moreover, implicitly recognized in these same

passages—that divinely-appointed institution of whose most distinguished member the Báb Himself was a lineal descendant, and which continued for a period of no less than two hundred and sixty years to be the chosen recipient of the guidance of the Almighty and the repository of one of the two most precious legacies of Islám.

Summary:

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi underscores the significance of accepting the divine origin and upholding the independent status of the Muḥammadan Dispensation, as elucidated in ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s interpretation of the ancient Zoroastrian prophecy. He emphasizes the implicit recognition of the validity of the Imamate within these passages, highlighting its importance as a divinely-appointed institution. The Imamate, of which the Báb Himself was a lineal descendant, is portrayed as a distinguished institution that continued for two hundred and sixty years, serving as the recipient of divine guidance and the repository of one of the two most precious legacies of Islám.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to the importance of accepting the divine origin and upholding the independent status of the Muḥammadan Dispensation.
2. Explanation of how ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s interpretation of the Zoroastrian prophecy underscores the necessity of recognizing the Muḥammadan Dispensation.
3. Emphasis on the implicit recognition of the validity of the Imamate within ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s interpretation.
4. Description of the Imamate as a divinely-appointed institution.
5. Mention of the Báb’s lineage as a descendant of the Imamate.
6. Recognition of the Imamate as the recipient of divine guidance.
7. Portrayal of the Imamate as the repository of one of the two most precious legacies of Islám.

Questions and Answers:

1. What is emphasized regarding the Muḥammadan Dispensation in this passage?
- The passage emphasizes the importance of accepting its divine origin and upholding its independent status.
2. How does ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s interpretation of the Zoroastrian prophecy relate to the Muḥammadan Dispensation?
- It underscores the necessity of recognizing the Muḥammadan Dispensation.
3. What institution is implicitly recognized within ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s interpretation?
- The validity of the Imamate is implicitly recognized.
4. How is the Imamate described in this passage?
- It is described as a divinely-appointed institution.

5. What is mentioned about the Báb's lineage?
 - The Báb is mentioned as a lineal descendant of the Imamate.

6. What role did the Imamate serve according to this passage?
 - It served as the recipient of divine guidance.

7. What is portrayed as one of the two most precious legacies of Islám?
 - The Imamate is portrayed as one of the two most precious legacies of Islám.

15. This same prophecy, we must furthermore recognize, attests the independent character of the Bábí Dispensation and corroborates indirectly the truth that in accordance with the principle of progressive revelation every Manifestation of God must needs vouchsafe to the peoples of His day a measure of divine guidance ampler than any which a preceding and less receptive age could have received or appreciated. For this reason, and not for any superior merit which the Bahá'í Faith may be said to inherently possess, does this prophecy bear witness to the unrivaled power and glory with which the Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh has been invested—a Dispensation the potentialities of which we are but beginning to perceive and the full range of which we can never determine.

Summary:

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi delves into the significance of the same prophecy mentioned earlier, emphasizing its attestation to the independent character of the Bábí Dispensation. He asserts that this prophecy indirectly corroborates the principle of progressive revelation, indicating that every Manifestation of God provides a measure of divine guidance that surpasses that of preceding ages. Shoghi Effendi clarifies that the unrivaled power and glory invested in the Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh are not due to any inherent superiority of the Bahá'í Faith but rather to the principle of progressive revelation. He suggests that humanity is only beginning to perceive the potentialities of Bahá'u'lláh's Dispensation, the full range of which can never be fully determined.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to the significance of the prophecy in attesting to the independent character of the Bábí Dispensation.
2. Explanation of how the prophecy indirectly corroborates the principle of progressive revelation.
3. Assertion that every Manifestation of God provides a measure of divine guidance surpassing that of preceding ages.
4. Clarification that the power and glory invested in the Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh are not due to any inherent superiority of the Bahá'í Faith.
5. Emphasis on the principle of progressive revelation as the basis for the unrivaled power and glory of Bahá'u'lláh's Dispensation.
6. Recognition that humanity is only beginning to perceive the potentialities of Bahá'u'lláh's Dispensation.

7. Acknowledgment that the full range of Bahá'u'lláh's Dispensation can never be fully determined.

Questions and Answers:

1. What does the prophecy mentioned in this passage attest to?
 - The prophecy attests to the independent character of the Bábí Dispensation.
2. How does the prophecy indirectly corroborate the principle of progressive revelation?
 - It suggests that every Manifestation of God provides a measure of divine guidance surpassing that of preceding ages.
3. What assertion does Shoghi Effendi make regarding divine guidance?
 - He asserts that every Manifestation of God provides divine guidance surpassing that of preceding ages.
4. Why does Shoghi Effendi clarify that the power and glory invested in Bahá'u'lláh's Dispensation are not due to any inherent superiority of the Bahá'í Faith?
 - He clarifies this to emphasize that the superiority lies in the principle of progressive revelation, not the faith itself.
5. What is emphasized as the basis for the unrivaled power and glory of Bahá'u'lláh's Dispensation?
 - The principle of progressive revelation is emphasized as the basis for this.
6. What does Shoghi Effendi suggest regarding humanity's perception of Bahá'u'lláh's Dispensation?
 - He suggests that humanity is only beginning to perceive its potentialities.
7. Can the full range of Bahá'u'lláh's Dispensation be fully determined?
 - No, Shoghi Effendi acknowledges that the full range of Bahá'u'lláh's Dispensation can never be fully determined.
16. The Faith of Bahá'u'lláh should indeed be regarded, if we wish to be faithful to the tremendous implications of its message, as the culmination of a cycle, the final stage in a series of successive, of preliminary and progressive revelations. These, beginning with Adam and ending with the Báb, have paved the way and anticipated with an ever-increasing emphasis the advent of that Day of Days in which He Who is the Promise of All Ages should be made manifest.

Summary

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi presents the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh as the culmination of a cycle, marking the final stage in a series of successive revelations that have unfolded throughout history. He asserts that these revelations, beginning with Adam and

culminating with the Báb, have paved the way for the advent of Bahá'u'lláh, the Promised One of All Ages.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh as the culmination of a cycle.
2. Explanation of how the Faith represents the final stage in a series of successive revelations.
3. Identification of the series of revelations as beginning with Adam and ending with the Báb.
4. Assertion that these revelations have paved the way for the advent of Bahá'u'lláh.

Questions and Answers:

1. How does Shoghi Effendi characterize the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh?
 - Shoghi Effendi characterizes the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh as the culmination of a cycle.
2. What is the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh considered in relation to successive revelations?
 - It is considered the final stage in a series of successive revelations.
3. Who are mentioned as the key figures in this series of revelations?
 - The series of revelations is said to begin with Adam and end with the Báb.
4. What role did these revelations play in relation to Bahá'u'lláh's advent?
 - They paved the way for the advent of Bahá'u'lláh, the Promised One of All Ages.
17. To this truth the utterances of Bahá'u'lláh abundantly testify. A mere reference to the claims which, in vehement language and with compelling power, He Himself has repeatedly advanced cannot but fully demonstrate the character of the Revelation of which He was the chosen bearer. To the words that have streamed from His pen—the fountainhead of so impetuous a Revelation—we should, therefore, direct our attention if we wish to obtain a clearer understanding of its importance and meaning. Whether in His assertion of the unprecedented claim He has advanced, or in His allusions to the mysterious forces He has released, whether in such passages as extol the glories of His long-awaited Day, or magnify the station which they who have recognized its hidden virtues will attain, Bahá'u'lláh and, to an almost equal extent, the Báb and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, have bequeathed to posterity mines of such inestimable wealth as none of us who belong to this generation can befittingly estimate. Such testimonies bearing on this theme are impregnated with such power and reveal such beauty as only those who are versed in the languages in which they were originally revealed can claim to have sufficiently appreciated. So numerous are these testimonies that a whole volume would be required to be written in order to compile the most outstanding among them. All I can venture to attempt at present is to share with you only such passages as I have been able to glean from His voluminous writings.

Summary:

In this excerpt, Shoghi Effendi emphasizes the significance of Bahá'u'lláh's own utterances as a testament to the character and importance of His Revelation. He asserts that Bahá'u'lláh's claims, expressed in vehement language and compelling power, serve as a demonstration of the nature of the Revelation that He bore. Shoghi Effendi highlights the wealth of knowledge and insight contained within Bahá'u'lláh's writings, suggesting that a deeper understanding of the Revelation can be attained by studying His words. He acknowledges the vastness of Bahá'u'lláh's writings, indicating that only a fraction of them can be shared due to their sheer volume.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to the importance of Bahá'u'lláh's own utterances in understanding the nature of His Revelation.
2. Emphasis on Bahá'u'lláh's claims, expressed with vehement language and compelling power.
3. Assertion that Bahá'u'lláh's writings contain a wealth of knowledge and insight.
4. Recognition of the vastness of Bahá'u'lláh's writings, making it impossible to share all of them in their entirety.

Questions and Answers:

1. What does Shoghi Effendi emphasize regarding Bahá'u'lláh's own utterances?
 - Shoghi Effendi emphasizes their significance in understanding the nature of His Revelation.
2. How does Shoghi Effendi describe Bahá'u'lláh's claims?
 - He describes them as expressed with vehement language and compelling power.
3. What does Shoghi Effendi suggest about studying Bahá'u'lláh's writings?
 - He suggests that a deeper understanding of the Revelation can be attained by studying His words.
4. Why does Shoghi Effendi mention that only a fraction of Bahá'u'lláh's writings can be shared?
 - He mentions this due to the vastness of Bahá'u'lláh's writings, indicating that it is impossible to share all of them in their entirety.
18. *"I testify before God," proclaims Bahá'u'lláh, "to the greatness, the inconceivable greatness of this Revelation. Again and again have We in most of Our Tablets borne witness to this truth, that mankind may be roused from its heedlessness." "In this most mighty Revelation," He unequivocally announces, "all the Dispensations of the past have attained their highest, their final consummation. That which hath been made manifest in this preëminent, this most exalted Revelation, stands unparalleled in the annals of the past, nor will future ages witness its like." "He it is," referring to Himself He further proclaims, "Who in the Old Testament hath been named Jehovah, Who in the Gospel hath been designated as the Spirit of Truth, and in the Qur'an acclaimed*

as the Great Announcement.” “But for Him no Divine Messenger would have been invested with the robe of prophethood, nor would any of the sacred scriptures have been revealed. To this bear witness all created things.” “The word which the one true God uttereth in this day, though that word be the most familiar and commonplace of terms, is invested with supreme, with unique distinction.” “The generality of mankind is still immature. Had it acquired sufficient capacity We would have bestowed upon it so great a measure of Our knowledge that all who dwell on earth and in heaven would have found themselves, by virtue of the grace streaming from Our pen, completely independent of all knowledge save the knowledge of God, and would have been securely established upon the throne of abiding tranquillity.” “The Pen of Holiness, I solemnly affirm before God, hath writ upon My snow-white brow and in characters of effulgent glory these glowing, these musk-scented and holy words: ‘Behold ye that dwell on earth, and ye denizens of heaven, bear witness, He in truth is your Well-Beloved. He it is Whose like the world of creation hath not seen, He Whose ravishing beauty hath delighted the eye of God, the Ordainer, the All-Powerful, the Incomparable!’”

Summary:

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi presents a selection of powerful declarations made by Bahá'u'lláh, testifying to the greatness and uniqueness of His Revelation. Bahá'u'lláh unequivocally asserts that His Revelation represents the highest and final consummation of all past Dispensations, surpassing anything witnessed in history and unparalleled in its significance. He identifies Himself with various titles and designations from different religious scriptures, emphasizing His central role in the divine scheme of revelation. Bahá'u'lláh declares that without Him, no Divine Messenger would have been invested with prophethood, and no sacred scriptures would have been revealed, a testament to His fundamental importance in the spiritual evolution of humanity.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to a selection of declarations made by Bahá'u'lláh.
2. Bahá'u'lláh's proclamation of the greatness and inconceivable greatness of His Revelation.
3. Assertion that His Revelation represents the highest and final consummation of all past Dispensations.
4. Identification of Bahá'u'lláh with various titles and designations from different religious scriptures.
5. Declaration that without Bahá'u'lláh, no Divine Messenger would have been invested with prophethood and no sacred scriptures would have been revealed.

Questions and Answers:

1. What does Bahá'u'lláh proclaim regarding the greatness of His Revelation?
- Bahá'u'lláh proclaims its greatness and inconceivable greatness.

2. How does Bahá'u'lláh describe His Revelation in relation to past Dispensations?
 - He asserts that His Revelation represents the highest and final consummation of all past Dispensations.
3. What titles and designations does Bahá'u'lláh associate with Himself?
 - Bahá'u'lláh associates Himself with titles and designations from different religious scriptures, such as Jehovah, the Spirit of Truth, and the Great Announcement.
4. What fundamental role does Bahá'u'lláh attribute to Himself in relation to Divine Messengers and sacred scriptures?
 - He attributes the role of being the essential prerequisite without which no Divine Messenger would have been invested with prophethood, and no sacred scriptures would have been revealed.
5. What is the overarching theme of Bahá'u'lláh's declarations in this passage?
 - The overarching theme is the uniqueness and centrality of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation in the history of religion and spirituality.
19. *“Followers of the Gospel,”* Bahá'u'lláh addressing the whole of Christendom exclaims, *“behold the gates of heaven are flung open. He that had ascended unto it is now come. Give ear to His voice calling aloud over land and sea, announcing to all mankind the advent of this Revelation—a Revelation through the agency of which the Tongue of Grandeur is now proclaiming: ‘Lo, the sacred Pledge hath been fulfilled, for He, the Promised One, is come!’”* *“The voice of the Son of Man is calling aloud from the sacred vale: ‘Here am I, here am I, O God my God!’ ... whilst from the Burning Bush breaketh forth the cry: ‘Lo, the Desire of the world is made manifest in His transcendent glory!’ The Father hath come. That which ye were promised in the Kingdom of God is fulfilled. This is the Word which the Son veiled when He said to those around Him that at that time they could not bear it... Verily the Spirit of Truth is come to guide you unto all truth... He is the One Who glorified the Son and exalted His Cause...”* *“The Comforter Whose advent all the scriptures have promised is now come that He may reveal unto you all knowledge and wisdom. Seek Him over the entire surface of the earth, haply ye may find Him.”*

Summary:

In this passage, Bahá'u'lláh addresses the followers of the Gospel, proclaiming the fulfillment of prophecies and the advent of His Revelation. He declares that the gates of heaven are flung open, signaling His arrival as the Promised One foretold in various scriptures. Bahá'u'lláh describes Himself as the Son of Man calling aloud from the sacred vale, and the Desire of the world made manifest in His transcendent glory. He asserts that the Father has come, fulfilling the promises made in the Kingdom of God. Bahá'u'lláh emphasizes the role of the Spirit of Truth, now present to guide humanity to all truth, glorifying the Son and exalting His Cause. He urges people to seek the Comforter, whose advent was promised in all scriptures, indicating that He has now come to reveal all knowledge and wisdom.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to Bahá'u'lláh's address to the followers of the Gospel.
2. Proclamation of the fulfillment of prophecies and the advent of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation.
3. Description of Bahá'u'lláh as the Promised One, the Son of Man, and the Desire of the world.
4. Assertion of the fulfillment of promises made in the Kingdom of God.
5. Emphasis on the role of the Spirit of Truth in guiding humanity to all truth.
6. Urging people to seek the Comforter, now present to reveal all knowledge and wisdom.

Questions and Answers:

1. Who does Bahá'u'lláh address in this passage?
 - Bahá'u'lláh addresses the followers of the Gospel, referring to Christendom as a whole.
2. What does Bahá'u'lláh proclaim regarding the gates of heaven?
 - He proclaims that the gates of heaven are flung open, signaling His arrival as the Promised One.
3. How does Bahá'u'lláh describe Himself in relation to prophecies?
 - He describes Himself as the Son of Man and the Desire of the world made manifest in His transcendent glory.
4. What promises does Bahá'u'lláh assert have been fulfilled?
 - He asserts that the promises made in the Kingdom of God have been fulfilled.
5. What role does Bahá'u'lláh attribute to the Spirit of Truth?
 - He attributes the role of guiding humanity to all truth to the Spirit of Truth.
6. What does Bahá'u'lláh urge people to do?
 - He urges people to seek the Comforter, now present to reveal all knowledge and wisdom.
20. *“Call out to Zion, O Carmel,”* writes Bahá'u'lláh, *“and announce the joyful tidings: ‘He that was hidden from mortal eyes is come! His all-conquering sovereignty is manifest; His all-encompassing splendor is revealed... Hasten forth and circumambulate the City of God that hath descended from heaven—the celestial Kaaba round which have circled in adoration the favored of God, the pure in heart and the company of the most exalted angels.’”* *“I am the One,”* He in another connection affirms, *“Whom the tongue of Isaiah hath extolled, the One with Whose name both the Torah and the Evangel were adorned.”* *“The glory of Sinai hath hastened to circle round the Day-Spring of this Revelation, while from the heights of the Kingdom the voice of the Son of God is heard proclaiming: ‘Bestir yourselves, ye*

proud ones of the earth, and hasten ye towards Him.’ Carmel hath in this day hastened in longing adoration to attain His court, whilst from the heart of Zion there cometh the cry: ‘The promise of all ages is now fulfilled. That which had been announced in the holy writ of God, the Beloved, the Most High, is made manifest.’” “*Hijáz is astir by the breeze announcing the tidings of joyous reunion. ‘Praise be to Thee,’ We hear her exclaim, ‘O my Lord, the Most High. I was dead through my separation from Thee; the breeze laden with the fragrance of Thy presence hath brought me back to life. Happy is he that turneth unto Thee, and woe betide the erring.’”* “*By the one true God, Elijah hath hastened unto My court and hath circumambulated in the day-time and in the night-season My throne of glory.”* “*Solomon in all his majesty circles in adoration around Me in this day, uttering this most exalted word: ‘I have turned my face towards Thy face, O Thou omnipotent Ruler of the world! I am wholly detached from all things pertaining unto me, and yearn for that which Thou dost possess.’”* “*Had Muḥammad, the Apostle of God, attained this Day,”* Bahá’u’lláh writes in a Tablet revealed on the eve of His banishment to the penal colony of ‘Akká, “*He would have exclaimed: ‘I have truly recognized Thee, O Thou the Desire of the Divine Messengers!’ Had Abraham attained it, He too, falling prostrate upon the ground, and in the utmost lowliness before the Lord thy God, would have cried: ‘Mine heart is filled with peace, O Thou Lord of all that is in heaven and on earth! I testify that Thou hast unveiled before mine eyes all the glory of Thy power and the full majesty of Thy law!’ ... Had Moses Himself attained it, He, likewise, would have raised His voice saying: ‘All praise be to Thee for having lifted upon me the light of Thy countenance and enrolled me among them that have been privileged to behold Thy face!’”* “*North and South both vibrate to the call announcing the advent of our Revelation. We can hear the voice of Mecca acclaiming: ‘All praise be to Thee, O Lord my God, the All-Glorious, for having wafted over me the breath redolent with the fragrance of Thy presence!’ Jerusalem, likewise, is calling aloud: ‘Lauded and magnified art Thou, O Beloved of earth and heaven, for having turned the agony of my separation from Thee into the joy of a life-giving reunion!’”*”

Summary:

In this passage, Bahá’u’lláh speaks of His own station and the recognition of His Revelation by various figures and locations revered in religious tradition. He calls upon Carmel to announce the joyful tidings of His arrival, declaring His sovereignty and splendor as manifest. Bahá’u’lláh asserts His identity as the One extolled by Isaiah, adorned with names in both the Torah and the Evangel. He describes how various symbols and sacred places, such as Zion, Carmel, and Hijáz, symbolically recognize and rejoice in His Revelation. Bahá’u’lláh depicts Elijah and Solomon as figuratively circling in adoration around Him, acknowledging His exalted station. He suggests how other revered figures from religious history, such as Muḥammad, Abraham, and Moses, would have recognized and praised Him if they had witnessed His Revelation. Furthermore, Bahá’u’lláh describes how locations associated with different religious traditions, such as Mecca and Jerusalem, resonate with praise and recognition for His advent.

Key Points:

1. Bahá'u'lláh calls upon Carmel to announce the joyful tidings of His arrival.
2. He declares His sovereignty and splendor as manifest.
3. Bahá'u'lláh asserts His identity as the One extolled by Isaiah and adorned with names in religious scriptures.
4. Various symbols and sacred places, such as Zion, Carmel, and Hījáz, recognize and rejoice in His Revelation.
5. Elijah and Solomon are depicted as figuratively circling in adoration around Bahá'u'lláh, acknowledging His exalted station.
6. Bahá'u'lláh suggests how other revered figures from religious history would have recognized and praised Him if they had witnessed His Revelation.
7. Locations associated with different religious traditions, such as Mecca and Jerusalem, resonate with praise and recognition for Bahá'u'lláh's advent.

Questions and Answers:

1. What symbols and sacred places recognize and rejoice in Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation according to this passage?
 - Symbols and sacred places such as Zion, Carmel, and Hījáz are described as recognizing and rejoicing in Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation.
2. How does Bahá'u'lláh describe Elijah and Solomon's response to His Revelation?
 - Bahá'u'lláh depicts Elijah and Solomon as figuratively circling in adoration around Him, acknowledging His exalted station.
3. How does Bahá'u'lláh suggest other revered figures from religious history would have recognized Him?
 - He suggests that figures like Muḥammad, Abraham, and Moses would have recognized and praised Him if they had witnessed His Revelation.
4. Which locations associated with different religious traditions are mentioned as resonating with praise for Bahá'u'lláh's advent?
 - Locations such as Mecca and Jerusalem are mentioned as resonating with praise and recognition for Bahá'u'lláh's advent.
21. *“By the righteousness of God,” Bahá'u'lláh wishing to reveal the full potency of His invincible power asserts, “should a man, all alone, arise in the name of Bahá and put on the armor of His love, him will the Almighty cause to be victorious, though the forces of earth and heaven be arrayed against him.” “By God besides Whom is none other God! Should any one arise for the triumph of our Cause, him will God render victorious though tens of thousands of enemies be leagued against him. And if his love for Me wax stronger, God will establish his ascendancy over all the powers of earth and heaven. Thus have We breathed the spirit of power into all regions.”*

Summary:

In this passage, Bahá'u'lláh emphasizes the potency of His Revelation and the divine support available to those who arise in its name. He asserts that even if a single individual were to arise in the name of Bahá and don the armor of His love, the Almighty would ensure their victory, regardless of the opposition they face from earthly and celestial forces. Bahá'u'lláh emphasizes the boundless nature of divine assistance, declaring that anyone who arises for the triumph of the Cause will be rendered victorious by God, even if they face tens of thousands of enemies. Moreover, He asserts that if an individual's love for Him grows stronger, God will establish their ascendancy over all the powers of earth and heaven. This passage underscores the transformative power of divine love and the unwavering support available to those who dedicate themselves to the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh.

Key Points:

1. Bahá'u'lláh emphasizes the potency of His Revelation and the divine support available to its followers.
2. He asserts that even a single individual who arises in the name of Bahá and wears the armor of His love will be rendered victorious by the Almighty.
3. Bahá'u'lláh declares that divine assistance ensures victory regardless of the opposition faced from earthly and celestial forces.
4. He underscores the boundless nature of divine assistance, stating that anyone who arises for the triumph of the Cause will be victorious, even against tens of thousands of enemies.
5. Bahá'u'lláh emphasizes that an individual's love for Him strengthens their connection to divine support, leading to ascendancy over all powers of earth and heaven.
6. The passage highlights the transformative power of divine love and its role in achieving victory for the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh.

Questions and Answers:

1. What does Bahá'u'lláh assert regarding divine support for those who arise in the name of Bahá?
 - Bahá'u'lláh asserts that divine support ensures victory for those who arise in the name of Bahá, even against formidable opposition.
2. How does Bahá'u'lláh describe the potential victory of an individual dedicated to the Cause?
 - He declares that even if an individual faces tens of thousands of enemies, divine assistance will ensure their victory for the triumph of the Cause.
3. What role does love for Bahá'u'lláh play in divine support according to this passage?
 - Bahá'u'lláh emphasizes that as an individual's love for Him grows stronger, God will establish their ascendancy over all powers of earth and heaven.
4. What does this passage underscore about the transformative power of divine love?
 - The passage highlights the transformative power of divine love in ensuring victory for the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh, regardless of opposition.

22. *“This is the King of Days,”* He thus extols the age that has witnessed the advent of His Revelation, *“the Day that hath seen the coming of the Best-beloved, Him Who through all eternity hath been acclaimed the Desire of the World.”* *“The world of being shineth in this Day with the resplendency of this Divine Revelation. All created things extol its saving grace and sing its praises. The universe is wrapt in an ecstasy of joy and gladness. The Scriptures of past Dispensations celebrate the great jubilee that must needs greet this most great Day of God. Well is it with him that hath lived to see this Day and hath recognized its station.”* *“Were mankind to give heed in a befitting manner to no more than one word of such a praise it would be so filled with delight as to be overpowered and lost in wonder. Entranced, it would then shine forth resplendent above the horizon of true understanding.”*

Summary:

In these passages, Bahá'u'lláh exalts the age marked by the advent of His Revelation, declaring it as the "King of Days" and the era that has witnessed the coming of the Best-beloved, the Desire of the World for all eternity. He depicts a world illuminated by the resplendency of His Divine Revelation, where all created things extol its saving grace and sing its praises. Bahá'u'lláh paints a picture of the universe enveloped in an ecstasy of joy and gladness, with past Scriptures celebrating the great jubilee that must greet this most significant Day of God. He pronounces blessings upon those who have lived to witness this Day and have recognized its station, indicating the profound spiritual significance and transformative power inherent in this age.

Key Points:

1. Bahá'u'lláh exalts the age marked by the advent of His Revelation as the "King of Days" and the era that has witnessed the coming of the Best-beloved, the Desire of the World.
2. He depicts a world illuminated by the resplendency of His Divine Revelation, where all created things extol its saving grace and sing its praises.
3. Bahá'u'lláh portrays the universe as being enveloped in an ecstasy of joy and gladness due to the advent of His Revelation.
4. He indicates that past Scriptures celebrate the great jubilee that must greet this most significant Day of God.
5. Bahá'u'lláh pronounces blessings upon those who have lived to witness this Day and have recognized its station, emphasizing the profound spiritual significance and transformative power inherent in this age.

Questions and Answers:

1. How does Bahá'u'lláh describe the age marked by the advent of His Revelation?
- Bahá'u'lláh describes this age as the "King of Days" and the era that has witnessed the coming of the Best-beloved, the Desire of the World for all eternity.

2. What imagery does Bahá'u'lláh use to depict the impact of His Revelation on the world?

- He depicts a world illuminated by the resplendency of His Divine Revelation, where all created things extol its saving grace and sing its praises.

3. How does Bahá'u'lláh characterize the universe in relation to His Revelation?

- Bahá'u'lláh portrays the universe as being enveloped in an ecstasy of joy and gladness due to the advent of His Revelation.

4. What significance does Bahá'u'lláh attribute to the past Scriptures in relation to the present age?

- He indicates that past Scriptures celebrate the great jubilee that must greet this most significant Day of God, underscoring the continuity and fulfillment of divine prophecies.

5. What blessings does Bahá'u'lláh pronounce upon those who have lived to witness His Day?

- Bahá'u'lláh pronounces blessings upon those who have lived to witness this Day and have recognized its station, emphasizing the profound spiritual significance and transformative power inherent in this age.

23. *“Be fair, ye peoples of the world;”* He thus appeals to mankind, *“is it meet and seemly for you to question the authority of one Whose presence ‘He Who conversed with God’ (Moses) hath longed to attain, the beauty of Whose countenance ‘God’s Well-beloved’ (Muḥammad) had yearned to behold, through the potency of Whose love the ‘Spirit of God’ (Jesus) ascended to heaven, for Whose sake the ‘Primal Point’ (the Báb) offered up His life?”* *“Seize your chance,”* He admonishes His followers, *“inasmuch as a fleeting moment in this Day excelleth centuries of a bygone age... Neither sun nor moon hath witnessed a day such as this... It is evident that every age in which a Manifestation of God hath lived is divinely ordained and may, in a sense, be characterized as God’s appointed Day. This Day, however, is unique and is to be distinguished from those that have preceded it. The designation ‘Seal of the Prophets’ fully reveals and demonstrates its high station.”*

Summary:

In these passages, Bahá'u'lláh issues a profound appeal to humanity, urging fairness and recognition of His authority as a Manifestation of God. He highlights the unparalleled significance of His presence, emphasizing that it surpasses the longings of past Messengers such as Moses, Muḥammad, Jesus, and the Báb. Bahá'u'lláh calls upon mankind to seize the opportunity afforded by His Day, declaring it as surpassing any other period in history. He asserts that neither the sun nor the moon has witnessed a day comparable to this, emphasizing its uniqueness and distinction from previous ages. Bahá'u'lláh elucidates the concept of the "Seal of the Prophets," affirming that His Revelation fulfills and surpasses the prophecies of past religions.

Key Points:

1. Bahá'u'lláh issues an appeal to humanity, urging fairness and recognition of His authority as a Manifestation of God.
2. He emphasizes the unparalleled significance of His presence, surpassing the longings of past Messengers such as Moses, Muḥammad, Jesus, and the Báb.
3. Bahá'u'lláh calls upon mankind to seize the opportunity afforded by His Day, declaring it as surpassing any other period in history.
4. He asserts that neither the sun nor the moon has witnessed a day comparable to this, emphasizing its uniqueness and distinction from previous ages.
5. Bahá'u'lláh elucidates the concept of the "Seal of the Prophets," affirming that His Revelation fulfills and surpasses the prophecies of past religions.

Questions and Answers:

1. What appeal does Bahá'u'lláh issue to humanity in these passages?
 - Bahá'u'lláh appeals to humanity, urging fairness and recognition of His authority as a Manifestation of God.
2. Whose longings does Bahá'u'lláh assert His presence surpasses?
 - He emphasizes that His presence surpasses the longings of past Messengers such as Moses, Muḥammad, Jesus, and the Báb.
3. What does Bahá'u'lláh declare about the significance of His Day?
 - Bahá'u'lláh declares that His Day surpasses any other period in history and that neither the sun nor the moon has witnessed a day comparable to this.
4. How does Bahá'u'lláh characterize the uniqueness of His Day?
 - He emphasizes the uniqueness and distinction of His Day from previous ages, asserting its unparalleled significance in the annals of history.
5. What concept does Bahá'u'lláh elucidate regarding His Revelation?
 - Bahá'u'lláh elucidates the concept of the "Seal of the Prophets," affirming that His Revelation fulfills and surpasses the prophecies of past religions.
24. Expatiating on the forces latent in His Revelation Bahá'u'lláh reveals the following:

“Through the movement of Our Pen of glory We have, at the bidding of the omnipotent Ordainer, breathed a new life into every human frame and instilled into every word a fresh potency. All created things proclaim the evidences of this world-wide regeneration.” “This is,” He adds, *“the most great, the most joyful tidings imparted by the pen of this wronged One to mankind.”* “How great,” He in another passage exclaims, *“is the Cause! How staggering the weight of its message! This is the Day of which it hath been said: ‘O my son! verily God will bring everything to light though it were but the weight of a grain of mustard seed, and hidden in a rock, or in the heavens or in the earth; for God is subtile, informed of all.’”* “By the righteousness of the one true God! If one speck of a jewel be lost and buried beneath a mountain of stones, and lie hidden beyond the seven seas, the Hand of Omnipotence will assuredly reveal it in this day, pure and cleansed from dross.” “He that partaketh of the waters of My

Revelation will taste all the incorruptible delights ordained by God from the beginning that hath no beginning to the end that hath no end.” “Every single letter proceeding from Our mouth is endowed with such regenerative power as to enable it to bring into existence a new creation—a creation the magnitude of which is inscrutable to all save God. He verily hath knowledge of all things.” “It is in Our power, should We wish it, to enable a speck of floating dust to generate, in less than the twinkling of an eye, suns of infinite, of unimaginable splendor, to cause a dewdrop to develop into vast and numberless oceans, to infuse into every letter such a force as to empower it to unfold all the knowledge of past and future ages.” “We are possessed of such power which, if brought to light, will transmute the most deadly of poisons into a panacea of unflinching efficacy.”

Summary:

In these passages, Bahá'u'lláh expounds on the transformative power inherent in His Revelation, portraying it as a force that rejuvenates every aspect of human existence and imbues every word with fresh potency. He describes this as the most great and joyful tidings for humanity, emphasizing the immense weight and significance of His message. Bahá'u'lláh exclaims about the greatness of His Cause, likening it to a day when even the smallest details will be brought to light by the hand of God, purified and cleansed from impurities. He asserts that every aspect of His Revelation carries regenerative power, capable of bringing forth new creations beyond human comprehension.

Key Points:

1. Bahá'u'lláh describes His Revelation as breathing new life into every human frame and infusing every word with fresh potency.
2. He portrays this as the most great and joyful tidings for humanity, emphasizing the weight and significance of His message.
3. Bahá'u'lláh likens His Cause to a day when even the smallest details will be brought to light by the hand of God, purified and cleansed from impurities.
4. He asserts that every aspect of His Revelation carries regenerative power, capable of bringing forth new creations beyond human comprehension.
5. Bahá'u'lláh highlights the transformative potential of His Revelation, stating that it has the power to transmute deadly poisons into remedies of unflinching efficacy.

Questions and Answers:

1. How does Bahá'u'lláh describe the transformative power of His Revelation?
 - Bahá'u'lláh describes His Revelation as breathing new life into every human frame and infusing every word with fresh potency.
2. What significance does Bahá'u'lláh attribute to His message?
 - He portrays His message as the most great and joyful tidings for humanity, emphasizing its immense weight and significance.

3. How does Bahá'u'lláh characterize His Cause?

- Bahá'u'lláh likens His Cause to a day when even the smallest details will be brought to light by the hand of God, purified and cleansed from impurities.

4. What does Bahá'u'lláh assert about the regenerative power of His Revelation?

- He asserts that every aspect of His Revelation carries regenerative power, capable of bringing forth new creations beyond human comprehension.

5. What transformative potential does Bahá'u'lláh highlight regarding His Revelation?

- Bahá'u'lláh highlights the transformative potential of His Revelation, stating that it has the power to transmute deadly poisons into remedies of unfailing efficacy.

25. Estimating the station of the true believer He remarks: *“By the sorrows which afflict the beauty of the All-Glorious! Such is the station ordained for the true believer that if to an extent smaller than a needle’s eye the glory of that station were to be unveiled to mankind, every beholder would be consumed away in his longing to attain it. For this reason it hath been decreed that in this earthly life the full measure of the glory of his own station should remain concealed from the eyes of such a believer.”* *“If the veil be lifted,”* He similarly affirms, *“and the full glory of the station of those who have turned wholly towards God, and in their love for Him renounced the world, be made manifest, the entire creation would be dumbfounded.”*

Summary:

In these passages, Bahá'u'lláh speaks to the exalted station of the true believer, emphasizing the ineffable glory and magnitude of their spiritual rank. He portrays this station as so sublime that if even a fraction of its brilliance were revealed to humanity, every observer would be consumed with longing to attain it. Bahá'u'lláh underscores the profound concealment of this glory during earthly life, indicating that the full measure of the believer's station remains veiled from mortal eyes. He suggests that if this veil were lifted and the complete splendor of those who have wholly turned towards God were revealed, the entire creation would be left speechless in awe.

Key Points:

1. Bahá'u'lláh emphasizes the exalted station of the true believer, describing it as so sublime that even a glimpse of its glory would overwhelm humanity.
2. He suggests that the full measure of this station remains concealed from mortal eyes during earthly life.
3. Bahá'u'lláh indicates that if the veil were lifted and the complete splendor of believers who have renounced the world for the love of God were revealed, the entire creation would be left speechless in awe.

Questions and Answers:

1. How does Bahá'u'lláh describe the station of the true believer?

- Bahá'u'lláh describes the station of the true believer as so sublime that even a fraction of its glory would overwhelm humanity with longing to attain it.

2. What does Bahá'u'lláh suggest about the visibility of this station during earthly life?

- He suggests that the full measure of this station remains concealed from mortal eyes during earthly life.

3. How does Bahá'u'lláh depict the reaction of creation if the full splendor of believers were revealed?

- Bahá'u'lláh indicates that if the veil were lifted and the complete splendor of believers who have renounced the world for the love of God were revealed, the entire creation would be left speechless in awe.

26. Stressing the superlative character of His Revelation as compared with the Dispensation preceding it, Bahá'u'lláh makes the following affirmation: *“If all the peoples of the world be invested with the powers and attributes destined for the Letters of the Living, the Báb’s chosen disciples, whose station is ten thousand times more glorious than any which the apostles of old have attained, and if they, one and all, should, swift as the twinkling of an eye, hesitate to recognize the light of My Revelation, their faith shall be of no avail and they shall be accounted among the infidels.” “So tremendous is the outpouring of Divine grace in this Dispensation that if mortal hands could be swift enough to record them, within the space of a single day and night there would stream verses of such number as to be equivalent to the whole of the Persian Bayán.”*

Summary:

In these passages, Bahá'u'lláh emphasizes the unparalleled nature of His Revelation compared to the Dispensation that preceded it. He asserts that even if all the peoples of the world were endowed with the powers and attributes destined for the Letters of the Living, the chosen disciples of the Báb, whose station is exalted far beyond that of the apostles of old, and if they were to hesitate, even for an instant, in recognizing the light of His Revelation, their faith would be of no avail, and they would be considered among the infidels. This statement underscores the urgency and magnitude of the spiritual transformation ushered in by Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation.

Key Points:

1. Bahá'u'lláh stresses the incomparable nature of His Revelation compared to the previous Dispensation.

2. He affirms that even if all people were endowed with the powers and attributes of the chosen disciples of the Báb, their hesitation in recognizing His Revelation would render their faith futile.

3. Bahá'u'lláh highlights the magnitude of the outpouring of Divine grace in His Dispensation, suggesting that the volume of revealed verses is so vast that mortal hands would struggle to record them within a single day and night.

Questions and Answers:

1. How does Bahá'u'lláh describe the superiority of His Revelation compared to the previous Dispensation?

- Bahá'u'lláh asserts that His Revelation is unparalleled and surpasses the previous Dispensation, indicating that even the most exalted disciples of the Báb would be considered among the infidels if they hesitated to recognize His light.

2. What consequence does Bahá'u'lláh suggest for those who hesitate to recognize His Revelation?

- He suggests that their faith would be of no avail, and they would be accounted among the infidels.

3. What imagery does Bahá'u'lláh use to convey the magnitude of the outpouring of Divine grace in His Dispensation?

- Bahá'u'lláh suggests that the volume of revealed verses is so vast that mortal hands would struggle to record them within a single day and night.

27. *“Give heed to my warning, ye people of Persia,”* He thus addresses His countrymen, *“If I be slain at your hands, God will assuredly raise up one who will fill the seat made vacant through my death; for such is God’s method carried into effect of old, and no change can ye find in God’s mode of dealing.”* *“Should they attempt to conceal His light on the continent, He will assuredly rear His head in the midmost heart of the ocean and, raising His voice, proclaim: ‘I am the lifegiver of the world!’... And if they cast Him into a darksome pit, they will find Him seated on earth’s loftiest heights calling aloud to all mankind: ‘Lo, the Desire of the world is come in His majesty, His sovereignty, His transcendent dominion!’ And if He be buried beneath the depths of the earth, His Spirit soaring to the apex of heaven shall peal the summons: ‘Behold ye the coming of the Glory; witness ye the Kingdom of God, the most Holy, the Gracious, the All-Powerful!’”* *“Within the throat of this Youth,”* is yet another astounding statement, *“there lie prisoned accents which, if revealed to mankind to an extent smaller than a needle’s eye, would suffice to cause every mountain to crumble, the leaves of the trees to be discolored and their fruits to fall; would compel every head to bow down in worship and every face to turn in adoration towards this omnipotent Ruler Who, at sundry times and in diverse manners, appeareth as a devouring flame, as a billowing ocean, as a radiant light, as the tree which, rooted in the soil of holiness, lifteth its branches and spreadeth out its limbs as far as and beyond the throne of deathless glory.”*

Summary:

In these passages, Bahá'u'lláh issues a warning to the people of Persia, foretelling the consequences of any harm inflicted upon Him. He asserts that if He were to be slain, God would undoubtedly raise up another to continue His mission, as this has been God's consistent method throughout history. Bahá'u'lláh warns that attempts to conceal His light

or suppress His message would ultimately be futile, as His influence would inevitably resurface in unexpected and powerful ways. Even if He were to be cast into a pit or buried, His spiritual influence would transcend physical limitations, and His message would continue to resonate and spread across the world.

Key Points:

1. Bahá'u'lláh warns the people of Persia of the consequences of harming Him, asserting that God would raise up another to continue His mission.
2. He foretells that attempts to conceal His message would be futile, as His influence would resurface in unexpected and powerful ways.
3. Even if physically harmed or buried, Bahá'u'lláh's spiritual influence would transcend physical limitations, and His message would continue to spread.

Questions and Answers:

1. What warning does Bahá'u'lláh issue to the people of Persia?
 - He warns them that if He were to be harmed, God would raise up another to continue His mission.
2. How does Bahá'u'lláh describe the futility of attempts to suppress His message?
 - He asserts that even if His light were concealed or He were physically harmed, His influence would resurface in unexpected and powerful ways.
3. What assurance does Bahá'u'lláh provide regarding the continuity of His message?
 - Bahá'u'lláh assures that even if physically harmed or buried, His spiritual influence would transcend physical limitations, and His message would continue to spread.
28. Anticipating the System which the irresistible power of His Law was destined to unfold in a later age, He writes: *“The world’s equilibrium hath been upset through the vibrating influence of this most great, this new World Order. Mankind’s ordered life hath been revolutionized through the agency of this unique, this wondrous System—the like of which mortal eyes have never witnessed.”* *“The Hand of Omnipotence hath established His Revelation upon an unassailable, an enduring foundation. Storms of human strife are powerless to undermine its basis, nor will men’s fanciful theories succeed in damaging its structure.”*

Summary:

In this passage, Bahá'u'lláh speaks of the tremendous power and potency hidden within Him, likening His potential revelation to a force so overwhelming that it could cause mountains to crumble, trees to wither, and mankind to bow down in worship. He describes Himself as possessing an unparalleled authority, manifesting in various forms throughout history, such as a devouring flame, a billowing ocean, a radiant light, or a majestic tree rooted in holiness.

Key Points:

1. Bahá'u'lláh speaks of the immense power concealed within Him, capable of causing profound effects on the world.
2. He describes this power as so potent that even a small revelation of it would have monumental consequences, such as mountains crumbling and trees withering.
3. Bahá'u'lláh asserts His authority and unique station, manifesting throughout history in various forms, each signifying His dominion and glory.

Questions and Answers:

1. How does Bahá'u'lláh describe the power hidden within Him?
 - He describes it as capable of causing mountains to crumble, trees to wither, and mankind to bow down in worship.
 2. What effect would even a small revelation of Bahá'u'lláh's power have?
 - It would have monumental consequences, such as causing significant upheaval and transformation in the natural world and compelling humanity to recognize His authority.
 3. How does Bahá'u'lláh assert His authority and unique station?
 - He asserts His authority by describing Himself as manifesting in various forms throughout history, each signifying His dominion and glory.
29. In the *Súratu'l-Haykal*, one of the most challenging works of Bahá'u'lláh, the following verses, each of which testifies to the resistless power infused into the Revelation proclaimed by its Author, have been recorded: *“Naught is seen in My temple but the Temple of God, and in My beauty but His Beauty, and in My being but His Being, and in My self but His Self, and in My movement but His Movement, and in My acquiescence but His Acquiescence, and in My pen but His Pen, the Mighty, the All-Praised. There hath not been in My soul but the Truth, and in Myself naught could be seen but God.”* *“The Holy Spirit Itself hath been generated through the agency of a single letter revealed by this Most Great Spirit, if ye be of them that comprehend.”*... *“Within the treasury of Our Wisdom there lies unrevealed a knowledge, one word of which, if We chose to divulge it to mankind, would cause every human being to recognize the Manifestation of God and to acknowledge His omniscience, would enable every one to discover the secrets of all the sciences, and to attain so high a station as to find himself wholly independent of all past and future learning. Other knowledges We do as well possess, not a single letter of which We can disclose, nor do We find humanity able to hear even the barest reference to their meaning. Thus have We informed you of the knowledge of God, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.”* *“The day is approaching when God will have, by an act of His Will, raised up a race of men the nature of which is inscrutable to all save God, the All-Powerful, the Self-Subsisting.”* *“He will, ere long, out of the Bosom of Power draw forth the Hands of Ascendancy and Might—Hands who will arise to win victory for this Youth and who will purge mankind from the defilement of the outcast and the ungodly. These Hands will gird up their loins to champion the Faith of God, and will, in My name the self-subsistent, the*

mighty, subdue the peoples and kindreds of the earth. They will enter the cities and will inspire with fear the hearts of all their inhabitants. Such are the evidences of the might of God; how fearful, how vehement is His might!”

Summary:

In the Súratu'l-Haykal, Bahá'u'lláh reveals verses that testify to the resistless power infused into His Revelation. These verses emphasize the complete unity between Bahá'u'lláh and God, highlighting that in every aspect, He is a manifestation of the divine attributes. Additionally, Bahá'u'lláh speaks of the generation of the Holy Spirit through the agency of a single letter revealed by the Most Great Spirit, indicating the profound spiritual potency of His Revelation. Moreover, Bahá'u'lláh alludes to the existence of unrevealed knowledge within the treasury of divine wisdom, knowledge that, if disclosed, would enable humanity to recognize the Manifestation of God and attain unparalleled heights of understanding and independence.

Key Points:

1. The verses from Súratu'l-Haykal affirm the complete unity between Bahá'u'lláh and God.
2. Bahá'u'lláh reveals the generation of the Holy Spirit through His Revelation, symbolizing its profound spiritual potency.
3. He hints at the existence of unrevealed knowledge within divine wisdom, knowledge that, if disclosed, would revolutionize human understanding and independence.
4. Bahá'u'lláh prophesies the emergence of a race of men, empowered by God, who will champion His Cause and subdue the peoples of the earth.

Questions and Answers:

1. What does Bahá'u'lláh emphasize regarding His relationship with God in the verses from Súratu'l-Haykal?
 - He emphasizes complete unity, stating that in every aspect of His being, He is a manifestation of God's attributes.
2. What spiritual potency does Bahá'u'lláh attribute to His Revelation?
 - He indicates that the Holy Spirit was generated through His Revelation, symbolizing its profound spiritual potency.
3. What does Bahá'u'lláh suggest about the unrevealed knowledge within divine wisdom?
 - He suggests that if disclosed, this knowledge would enable humanity to recognize the Manifestation of God and attain unprecedented understanding and independence.
4. What prophecy does Bahá'u'lláh make regarding the future of humanity in these verses?

- He prophesies the emergence of a race of men, empowered by God, who will champion His Cause and subdue the peoples of the earth, demonstrating the fearful might of God.

30. Such is, dearly-beloved friends, Bahá'u'lláh's own written testimony to the nature of His Revelation. To the affirmations of the Báb, each of which reinforces the strength, and confirms the truth, of these remarkable statements, I have already referred. What remains for me to consider in this connection are such passages in the writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the appointed Interpreter of these same utterances, as throw further light upon and amplify various features of this enthralling theme. The tone of His language is indeed as emphatic and His tribute no less glowing than that of either Bahá'u'lláh or the Báb.

Summary:

In exploring Bahá'u'lláh's own written testimony to the nature of His Revelation, it is essential to consider the affirmations made by the Báb, which reinforce the strength and confirm the truth of these remarkable statements. Shoghi Effendi refers to the writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the appointed Interpreter of these utterances, to shed further light upon and amplify various features of this enthralling theme. The tone of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's language is as emphatic, and His tribute no less glowing than that of either Bahá'u'lláh or the Báb.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Exploring Bahá'u'lláh's written testimony and its reinforcement by the affirmations of the Báb.
2. Reference to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's writings: Considering 'Abdu'l-Bahá's role as the appointed Interpreter and the additional insights He provides.
3. Tone and Emphasis: Noting the emphatic language and glowing tribute found in 'Abdu'l-Bahá's writings.
4. Amplification of the Theme: Understanding how 'Abdu'l-Bahá's writings further illuminate various aspects of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation.

Questions and Answers:

1. Why is it important to consider the affirmations made by the Báb in understanding Bahá'u'lláh's own testimony to the nature of His Revelation?
 - The affirmations made by the Báb reinforce the strength and confirm the truth of Bahá'u'lláh's remarkable statements, providing additional validation to His claims.
2. What role does 'Abdu'l-Bahá play in further elucidating Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation?
 - 'Abdu'l-Bahá serves as the appointed Interpreter of Bahá'u'lláh's utterances, providing additional insights and amplifications of various aspects of the theme.
3. How does the tone of language used by 'Abdu'l-Bahá compare to that of Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá's language is equally emphatic, and His tribute is no less glowing than that of Bahá'u'lláh or the Báb, underscoring the profound significance of the Revelation.

4. What is the significance of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's writings in understanding Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá's writings provide further illumination on various aspects of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation, deepening the understanding of its nature and implications.

31. *“Centuries, nay ages, must pass away,”* He affirms in one of His earliest Tablets, *“ere the Day-Star of Truth shineth again in its mid-summer splendor, or appeareth once more in the radiance of its vernal glory... How thankful must we be for having been made in this Day the recipients of so overwhelming a favor! Would that we had ten thousand lives that we might lay them down in thanksgiving for so rare a privilege, so high an attainment, so priceless a bounty!”* *“The mere contemplation,”* He adds, *“of the Dispensation inaugurated by the Blessed Beauty would have sufficed to overwhelm the saints of bygone ages—saints who longed to partake for one moment of its great glory.”* *“The holy ones of past ages and centuries have, each and all, yearned with tearful eyes to live, though for one moment, in the Day of God. Their longings unsatisfied, they repaired to the Great Beyond. How great, therefore, is the bounty of the Abhá Beauty Who, notwithstanding our utter unworthiness, hath through His grace and mercy breathed into us in this divinely-illuminated century the spirit of life, hath gathered us beneath the standard of the Beloved of the world, and chosen to confer upon us a bounty for which the mighty ones of bygone ages had craved in vain.”* *“The souls of the well-favored among the concourse on high,”* He likewise affirms, *“the sacred dwellers of the most exalted Paradise, are in this day filled with burning desire to return unto this world, that they may render such service as lieth in their power to the threshold of the Abhá Beauty.”*

Summary:

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi reflects on Bahá'u'lláh's profound statements regarding the magnitude and significance of His Revelation. The summary outlines the awe-inspiring nature of Bahá'u'lláh's Dispensation as expressed in His own words, emphasizing the unprecedented favor bestowed upon humanity in this age.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Setting the stage for Bahá'u'lláh's reflections on the overwhelming favor and privilege of His Dispensation.
2. Bahá'u'lláh's Affirmations: Exploring Bahá'u'lláh's statements on the significance and grandeur of His Revelation.
3. Thankfulness and Gratitude: Emphasizing the profound gratitude expressed by Bahá'u'lláh for the privilege bestowed upon humanity in this age.
4. Longing of Past Saints: Describing the longing of saints from past ages to partake in the glory of Bahá'u'lláh's Dispensation.

5. Bounty of Abhá Beauty: Highlighting the unparalleled bounty and grace conferred upon humanity by the Abhá Beauty, Bahá'u'lláh.
6. Desire of Sacred Souls: Discussing the burning desire of the souls in the realms above to return to this world and serve the threshold of the Abhá Beauty.

Questions and Answers:

1. What is the central theme of Bahá'u'lláh's reflections as summarized by Shoghi Effendi?
 - The central theme revolves around the overwhelming favor and privilege bestowed upon humanity by Bahá'u'lláh's Dispensation.
2. How does Bahá'u'lláh express gratitude for the privilege of His Dispensation?
 - Bahá'u'lláh expresses profound gratitude and thankfulness for the rare privilege bestowed upon humanity in this age, indicating a deep sense of appreciation for the favor received.
3. What is the significance of Bahá'u'lláh's reference to the longing of past saints?
 - Bahá'u'lláh's reference underscores the unparalleled grandeur of His Revelation, as even saints from past ages longed to partake in its glory, highlighting its unique and transformative nature.
4. How does Shoghi Effendi emphasize the bounty conferred upon humanity by Bahá'u'lláh?
 - Shoghi Effendi underscores the incomparable bounty and grace bestowed upon humanity by Bahá'u'lláh, portraying it as a privilege craved by mighty ones of bygone ages.
5. What is the significance of the desire expressed by sacred souls in the realms above?
 - The burning desire of sacred souls to return to this world and serve the threshold of the Abhá Beauty signifies the profound spiritual significance and transformative power of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation.
32. *“The effulgence of God’s splendrous mercy,”* He, in a passage alluding to the growth and future development of the Faith, declares, *“hath enveloped the peoples and kindreds of the earth, and the whole world is bathed in its shining glory... The day will soon come when the light of Divine unity will have so permeated the East and the West that no man dare any longer ignore it.”* *“Now in the world of being the Hand of divine power hath firmly laid the foundations of this all-highest bounty and this wondrous gift. Whatsoever is latent in the innermost of this holy cycle shall gradually appear and be made manifest, for now is but the beginning of its growth and the dayspring of the revelation of its signs. Ere the close of this century and of this age, it shall be made clear and evident how wondrous was that springtide and how heavenly was that gift!”*

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi reflects on Bahá'u'lláh's profound statements regarding the magnitude and significance of His Revelation. The summary outlines the awe-

inspiring nature of Bahá'u'lláh's Dispensation as expressed in His own words, emphasizing the unprecedented favor bestowed upon humanity in this age.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Setting the stage for Bahá'u'lláh's reflections on the overwhelming favor and privilege of His Dispensation.
2. Bahá'u'lláh's Affirmations: Exploring Bahá'u'lláh's statements on the significance and grandeur of His Revelation.
3. Thankfulness and Gratitude: Emphasizing the profound gratitude expressed by Bahá'u'lláh for the privilege bestowed upon humanity in this age.
4. Longing of Past Saints: Describing the longing of saints from past ages to partake in the glory of Bahá'u'lláh's Dispensation.
5. Bounty of Abhá Beauty: Highlighting the unparalleled bounty and grace conferred upon humanity by the Abhá Beauty, Bahá'u'lláh.
6. Desire of Sacred Souls: Discussing the burning desire of the souls in the realms above to return to this world and serve the threshold of the Abhá Beauty.

Questions and Answers:

1. What is the central theme of Bahá'u'lláh's reflections as summarized by Shoghi Effendi?
 - The central theme revolves around the overwhelming favor and privilege bestowed upon humanity by Bahá'u'lláh's Dispensation.
2. How does Bahá'u'lláh express gratitude for the privilege of His Dispensation?
 - Bahá'u'lláh expresses profound gratitude and thankfulness for the rare privilege bestowed upon humanity in this age, indicating a deep sense of appreciation for the favor received.
3. What is the significance of Bahá'u'lláh's reference to the longing of past saints?
 - Bahá'u'lláh's reference underscores the unparalleled grandeur of His Revelation, as even saints from past ages longed to partake in its glory, highlighting its unique and transformative nature.
4. How does Shoghi Effendi emphasize the bounty conferred upon humanity by Bahá'u'lláh?
 - Shoghi Effendi underscores the incomparable bounty and grace bestowed upon humanity by Bahá'u'lláh, portraying it as a privilege craved by mighty ones of bygone ages.
5. What is the significance of the desire expressed by sacred souls in the realms above?
 - The burning desire of sacred souls to return to this world and serve the threshold of the Abhá Beauty signifies the profound spiritual significance and transformative power of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation.

33. In confirmation of the exalted rank of the true believer, referred to by Bahá'u'lláh, He reveals the following: *“The station which he who hath truly recognized this Revelation will attain is the same as the one ordained for such prophets of the house of Israel as are not regarded as Manifestations ‘endowed with constancy.’”*

Summary:

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi elucidates the exalted rank and station that the true believer will attain, as revealed by Bahá'u'lláh. The passage affirms that the station of the true believer is equivalent to that ordained for certain prophets of the house of Israel who are not considered Manifestations "endowed with constancy." This statement underscores the lofty spiritual status bestowed upon those who genuinely recognize and embrace the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Introducing the passage in which Shoghi Effendi confirms the exalted rank of the true believer as revealed by Bahá'u'lláh.
2. Station of the True Believer: Explaining the significance of the station attained by those who genuinely recognize and accept the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh.
3. Equivalence to Prophets of Israel: Highlighting the equivalence drawn between the station of the true believer and that ordained for certain prophets of the house of Israel.
4. Prophets "Endowed with Constancy": Explaining the distinction between prophets considered "endowed with constancy" and those whose station is equivalent to that of the true believer.
5. Implications for Believers: Discussing the implications of this revelation for believers and the recognition of their spiritual rank and station.

Questions and Answers:

1. What does Shoghi Effendi confirm regarding the rank of the true believer?
 - Shoghi Effendi confirms that the station of the true believer, as revealed by Bahá'u'lláh, is exalted and equivalent to that ordained for certain prophets of the house of Israel.
2. How does Shoghi Effendi describe the station of the true believer?
 - Shoghi Effendi describes the station of the true believer as one of high spiritual significance, emphasizing the elevated rank attained by those who genuinely recognize and accept the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh.
3. What equivalence does Shoghi Effendi draw in the passage?
 - Shoghi Effendi draws an equivalence between the station of the true believer and that ordained for certain prophets of the house of Israel who are not considered Manifestations "endowed with constancy."
4. What distinction is made regarding prophets "endowed with constancy"?

- The distinction is made between prophets considered "endowed with constancy" and those whose station is equivalent to that of the true believer, implying variations in the nature and degree of their manifestations.

5. What are the implications of this revelation for believers?

- This revelation underscores the spiritual rank and station bestowed upon believers who genuinely recognize and embrace the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, encouraging them to understand the significance of their role in the divine plan.

34. In connection with the Manifestations destined to follow the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá makes this definite and weighty declaration: "*Concerning the Manifestations that will come down in the future 'in the shadows of the clouds,' know verily that in so far as their relation to the source of their inspiration is concerned they are under the shadow of the Ancient Beauty. In their relation, however, to the age in which they appear, each and every one of them 'doeth whatsoever He willeth.'*"

Summary:

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi presents a significant declaration made by 'Abdu'l-Bahá regarding the Manifestations of God who are destined to appear after Bahá'u'lláh. 'Abdu'l-Bahá asserts that these future Manifestations, while being under the shadow of the Ancient Beauty (Bahá'u'lláh) in terms of their connection to the divine source of inspiration, have the autonomy to act according to their own will in relation to the age in which they manifest.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Introducing the declaration made by 'Abdu'l-Bahá regarding future Manifestations of God.
2. Relation to the Ancient Beauty: Explaining how the future Manifestations are under the shadow of Bahá'u'lláh in terms of their connection to the divine source of inspiration.
3. Autonomy in Relation to the Age: Describing the autonomy granted to future Manifestations to act according to their own will in response to the needs and conditions of the age in which they appear.
4. Implications for Understanding Manifestations: Discussing the significance of this declaration in understanding the nature and role of future Manifestations of God.
5. Continuation of Divine Guidance: Highlighting how this declaration ensures the continuation of divine guidance and the fulfillment of humanity's spiritual evolution.

Questions and Answers:

1. What declaration does 'Abdu'l-Bahá make regarding future Manifestations of God?
 - 'Abdu'l-Bahá declares that future Manifestations of God, while being under the shadow of Bahá'u'lláh in terms of their connection to the divine source of inspiration,

have the autonomy to act according to their own will in relation to the age in which they appear.

2. How are future Manifestations related to the Ancient Beauty?

- Future Manifestations are described as being under the shadow of the Ancient Beauty (Bahá'u'lláh), indicating their connection to the divine source of inspiration that Bahá'u'lláh represents.

3. In what way do future Manifestations exercise autonomy?

- Future Manifestations have the freedom to act according to their own will in response to the needs and conditions of the age in which they manifest, demonstrating their autonomy in relation to the specific circumstances they encounter.

4. What is the significance of this declaration?

- This declaration sheds light on the dynamic relationship between the Manifestations of God and the age in which they appear, emphasizing their role as independent agents of divine will while also being connected to the overarching divine source represented by Bahá'u'lláh.

5. How does this declaration ensure the continuation of divine guidance?

- By acknowledging the autonomy of future Manifestations while affirming their connection to the divine source represented by Bahá'u'lláh, this declaration ensures the continuation of divine guidance throughout successive ages, guiding humanity's spiritual evolution and progress.

35. *“O my friend!”* He thus addresses in one of His Tablets a man of recognized authority and standing, *“The undying Fire which the Lord of the Kingdom hath kindled in the midst of the holy Tree is burning fiercely in the midmost heart of the world. The conflagration it will provoke will envelop the whole earth. Its blazing flames will illuminate its peoples and kindreds. All the signs have been revealed; every prophetic allusion hath been manifested. Whatever hath been enshrined in all the Scriptures of the past hath been made evident. To doubt or hesitate is no more possible... Time is pressing. The Divine Charger is impatient, and can tarry no longer. Ours is the duty to rush forward and, ere it is too late, win the victory.”* And finally, is this most stirring passage which He, in one of His moments of exultation, was moved to address to one of His most trusted and eminent followers in the earliest days of His ministry: *“What more shall I say? What else can my pen recount? So loud is the call that reverberates from the Abhá Kingdom that mortal ears are well-nigh deafened with its vibrations. The whole creation, methinks, is being disrupted and is bursting asunder through the shattering influence of the Divine summons issued from the throne of glory. More than this I cannot write.”*

Summary:

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi presents a significant declaration made by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá regarding the Manifestations of God who are destined to appear after Bahá'u'lláh.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá asserts that these future Manifestations, while being under the shadow of the Ancient Beauty (Bahá’u’lláh) in terms of their connection to the divine source of inspiration, have the autonomy to act according to their own will in relation to the age in which they manifest.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Introducing the declaration made by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá regarding future Manifestations of God.
2. Relation to the Ancient Beauty: Explaining how the future Manifestations are under the shadow of Bahá’u’lláh in terms of their connection to the divine source of inspiration.
3. Autonomy in Relation to the Age: Describing the autonomy granted to future Manifestations to act according to their own will in response to the needs and conditions of the age in which they appear.
4. Implications for Understanding Manifestations: Discussing the significance of this declaration in understanding the nature and role of future Manifestations of God.
5. Continuation of Divine Guidance: Highlighting how this declaration ensures the continuation of divine guidance and the fulfillment of humanity's spiritual evolution.

Questions and Answers:

1. What declaration does ‘Abdu’l-Bahá make regarding future Manifestations of God?
 - ‘Abdu’l-Bahá declares that future Manifestations of God, while being under the shadow of Bahá’u’lláh in terms of their connection to the divine source of inspiration, have the autonomy to act according to their own will in relation to the age in which they appear.
2. How are future Manifestations related to the Ancient Beauty?
 - Future Manifestations are described as being under the shadow of the Ancient Beauty (Bahá’u’lláh), indicating their connection to the divine source of inspiration that Bahá’u’lláh represents.
3. In what way do future Manifestations exercise autonomy?
 - Future Manifestations have the freedom to act according to their own will in response to the needs and conditions of the age in which they manifest, demonstrating their autonomy in relation to the specific circumstances they encounter.
4. What is the significance of this declaration?
 - This declaration sheds light on the dynamic relationship between the Manifestations of God and the age in which they appear, emphasizing their role as independent agents of divine will while also being connected to the overarching divine source represented by Bahá’u’lláh.
5. How does this declaration ensure the continuation of divine guidance?
 - By acknowledging the autonomy of future Manifestations while affirming their connection to the divine source represented by Bahá’u’lláh, this declaration ensures the

continuation of divine guidance throughout successive ages, guiding humanity's spiritual evolution and progress.

36. Dearly-beloved friends! Enough has been said, and the quoted excerpts from the writings of the Báb, of Bahá'u'lláh and of 'Abdu'l-Bahá are sufficiently numerous and varied, to convince the conscientious reader of the sublimity of this unique cycle in the world's religious history. It would be utterly impossible to over-exaggerate its significance or to overrate the influence it has exerted and which it must increasingly exert as its great system unfolds itself amidst the welter of a collapsing civilization.

Summary:

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi concludes his discourse by asserting that the excerpts quoted from the writings of the Báb, Bahá'u'lláh, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá provide ample evidence of the profound significance of the Bahá'í Faith within the context of world religious history. He emphasizes that it is impossible to overstate the importance of this unique cycle and the influence it has already exerted, as well as the impact it will continue to have as its principles become increasingly recognized and implemented.

Outline Points:

1. Introduction: Shoghi Effendi sets the stage by acknowledging the sufficiency and diversity of the quoted excerpts from the writings of the Báb, Bahá'u'lláh, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá.
2. Sublimity of the Bahá'í Cycle: He asserts that these excerpts are enough to convince any conscientious reader of the exceptional nature and grandeur of the Bahá'í cycle in the religious history of the world.
3. Inestimable Significance: Shoghi Effendi highlights the impossibility of over-exaggerating the significance of the Bahá'í Faith, indicating that its importance surpasses any attempt to overrate it.
4. Unfolding Influence: He suggests that the influence of the Bahá'í Faith will only continue to increase as its principles are progressively implemented in the midst of a world facing the challenges of a collapsing civilization.
5. Conclusion: Shoghi Effendi concludes by affirming the enduring relevance and transformative potential of the Bahá'í Revelation, inviting readers to recognize and embrace its teachings for the betterment of humanity.

Questions and Answers:

1. What is Shoghi Effendi's assessment of the excerpts quoted from the writings of the Báb, Bahá'u'lláh, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá?
 - Shoghi Effendi believes that these excerpts are sufficient to convince any conscientious reader of the sublimity and significance of the Bahá'í cycle in the world's religious history.
2. How does Shoghi Effendi characterize the Bahá'í Faith in relation to world religious history?

- He asserts that the Bahá'í Faith occupies a unique and exceptional position within world religious history, surpassing any attempt to overrate its influence and importance.

3. What does Shoghi Effendi suggest about the influence of the Bahá'í Faith?

- Shoghi Effendi suggests that the influence of the Bahá'í Faith will continue to increase as its principles are progressively implemented, especially in response to the challenges faced by a collapsing civilization.

4. How does Shoghi Effendi conclude his discourse?

- Shoghi Effendi concludes by affirming the enduring relevance and transformative potential of the Bahá'í Revelation, inviting readers to embrace its teachings for the betterment of humanity.

37. To whoever may read these pages a word of warning seems, however, advisable before I proceed further with the development of my argument. Let no one meditating, in the light of the afore-quoted passages, on the nature of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, mistake its character or misconstrue the intent of its Author. The divinity attributed to so great a Being and the complete incarnation of the names and attributes of God in so exalted a Person should, under no circumstances, be misconceived or misinterpreted. The human temple that has been made the vehicle of so overpowering a Revelation must, if we be faithful to the tenets of our Faith, ever remain entirely distinguished from that "innermost Spirit of Spirits" and "eternal Essence of Essences"—that invisible yet rational God Who, however much we extol the divinity of His Manifestations on earth, can in no wise incarnate His infinite, His unknowable, His incorruptible and all-embracing Reality in the concrete and limited frame of a mortal being. Indeed, the God Who could so incarnate His own reality would, in the light of the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, cease immediately to be God. So crude and fantastic a theory of Divine incarnation is as removed from, and incompatible with, the essentials of Bahá'í belief as are the no less inadmissible pantheistic and anthropomorphic conceptions of God—both of which the utterances of Bahá'u'lláh emphatically repudiate and the fallacy of which they expose.

Summary:

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi issues a word of caution to readers regarding the nature of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation. He emphasizes the distinction between the human temple through which the Revelation is expressed and the divine essence of God. Shoghi Effendi warns against misconstruing the Revelation as an incarnation of God, asserting that such an interpretation would be incompatible with Bahá'í belief. He rejects the notion of God incarnating His infinite reality into a mortal being, as it would contradict the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh and undermine the concept of God's transcendence and unknowable essence.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Shoghi Effendi prefaces his discussion by issuing a word of warning to readers regarding the nature of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation.

2. Distinction between Human Temple and Divine Essence: He emphasizes the distinction between the mortal frame of Bahá'u'lláh, the vehicle of the Revelation, and the divine essence of God.
3. Warning against Misconception: Shoghi Effendi cautions against misconstruing the Revelation as a complete incarnation of God's names and attributes in Bahá'u'lláh, as such an interpretation would be erroneous.
4. Rejection of Divine Incarnation: He rejects the notion of God incarnating His infinite reality into a mortal being, asserting that such a concept is incompatible with Bahá'í belief and would undermine the transcendence of God.
5. Repudiation of Pantheism and Anthropomorphism: Shoghi Effendi emphasizes that Bahá'u'lláh's teachings reject both pantheistic and anthropomorphic conceptions of God, exposing their fallacy and emphasizing the transcendence of God's essence.

Questions and Answers:

1. What caution does Shoghi Effendi issue to readers regarding Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation?
 - Shoghi Effendi warns readers against misconstruing the Revelation as an incarnation of God, emphasizing the distinction between the human temple through which the Revelation is expressed and the divine essence of God.
2. What distinction does Shoghi Effendi emphasize regarding Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation?
 - He emphasizes the distinction between the mortal frame of Bahá'u'lláh, which serves as the vehicle of the Revelation, and the divine essence of God, cautioning against equating the two.
3. Why does Shoghi Effendi reject the notion of Divine incarnation?
 - He rejects the idea of God incarnating His infinite reality into a mortal being because it contradicts the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh and undermines the transcendence of God.
4. What conceptions of God does Shoghi Effendi repudiate in Bahá'í belief?
 - Shoghi Effendi repudiates both pantheistic and anthropomorphic conceptions of God, emphasizing that Bahá'u'lláh's teachings reject these notions and affirm the transcendence of God's essence.
38. He Who in unnumbered passages claimed His utterance to be the "*Voice of Divinity, the Call of God Himself*" thus solemnly affirms in the Kitáb-i-Íqán: "*To every discerning and illumined heart it is evident that God, the unknowable Essence, the Divine Being, is immeasurably exalted beyond every human attribute such as corporeal existence, ascent and descent, egress and regress... He is, and hath ever been, veiled in the ancient eternity of His Essence, and will remain in His Reality everlastingly hidden from the sight of men... He standeth exalted beyond and above all separation and union, all proximity and remoteness... 'God was alone; there was none else beside Him' is a sure testimony of this truth.*"

Summary:

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi highlights Bahá'u'lláh's affirmation of the transcendence and unknowable essence of God. Bahá'u'lláh asserts that God is exalted beyond all human attributes and qualities, such as corporeal existence, ascent and descent, and proximity and remoteness. He emphasizes that God has always been veiled in the ancient eternity of His Essence and will forever remain hidden from the sight of humanity. Bahá'u'lláh quotes the statement "God was alone; there was none else beside Him" as a testimony to the truth of God's transcendence and singularity.

Key Points:

1. Bahá'u'lláh's Affirmation: Shoghi Effendi presents Bahá'u'lláh's solemn affirmation from the Kitáb-i-Íqán regarding the transcendence and unknowable essence of God.
2. Exaltation of God: Bahá'u'lláh asserts that God is immeasurably exalted beyond every human attribute and quality.
3. Veiled in Eternity: Bahá'u'lláh emphasizes that God has always been veiled in the ancient eternity of His Essence and will forever remain hidden from human sight.
4. Beyond Separation and Union: Bahá'u'lláh declares that God stands exalted beyond all concepts of separation and union, proximity and remoteness.
5. Testimony to God's Singularity: Bahá'u'lláh quotes the statement "God was alone; there was none else beside Him" as a testimony to the truth of God's transcendence and singularity.

Questions and Answers:

1. What does Bahá'u'lláh affirm regarding the essence of God?
 - Bahá'u'lláh affirms that God is immeasurably exalted beyond every human attribute and quality, such as corporeal existence, ascent and descent, and proximity and remoteness.
2. How does Bahá'u'lláh describe the eternal nature of God?
 - Bahá'u'lláh emphasizes that God has always been veiled in the ancient eternity of His Essence and will forever remain hidden from human sight.
3. What does Bahá'u'lláh declare about God's transcendence?
 - Bahá'u'lláh declares that God stands exalted beyond all concepts of separation and union, proximity and remoteness, emphasizing His transcendence over all.
4. What statement does Bahá'u'lláh quote as a testimony to God's singularity?
 - Bahá'u'lláh quotes the statement "God was alone; there was none else beside Him" as a testimony to the truth of God's transcendence and singularity, highlighting His uniqueness and oneness.
39. *"From time immemorial," Bahá'u'lláh, speaking of God, explains, "He, the Divine Being, hath been veiled in the ineffable sanctity of His exalted Self, and will everlasting continue to be wrapt in the impenetrable mystery of His unknowable Essence... Ten thousand Prophets, each a Moses, are thunderstruck upon the Sinai of*

their search at God's forbidding voice, 'Thou shalt never behold Me!'; whilst a myriad Messengers, each as great as Jesus, stand dismayed upon their heavenly thrones by the interdiction 'Mine Essence thou shalt never apprehend!'" "How bewildering to me, insignificant as I am," Bahá'u'lláh in His communion with God affirms, "is the attempt to fathom the sacred depths of Thy knowledge! How futile my efforts to visualize the magnitude of the power inherent in Thine handiwork—the revelation of Thy creative power!" "When I contemplate, O my God, the relationship that bindeth me to Thee," He, in yet another prayer revealed in His own handwriting, testifies, "I am moved to proclaim to all created things 'verily I am God!'; and when I consider my own self, lo, I find it coarser than clay!"

Summary:

Bahá'u'lláh, in various passages, reflects on the incomprehensible nature of God's essence and the limitations of human understanding in grasping His infinite knowledge and power. He describes God as veiled in the sanctity of His exalted Self and emphasizes that His essence will forever remain shrouded in mystery. Bahá'u'lláh illustrates the impossibility for even the greatest prophets and messengers to fully comprehend God's essence, with imagery of Moses and Jesus being thunderstruck and dismayed by the divine interdiction against beholding Him. Despite his own insignificance, Bahá'u'lláh acknowledges the futility of attempting to fathom the depths of God's knowledge and power, expressing bewilderment at the task. In intimate communion with God, Bahá'u'lláh is moved to proclaim his oneness with God to all created things, yet humbly recognizes the inferiority of his own self compared to the divine.

Key Points:

1. God's Ineffable Essence: Bahá'u'lláh describes God as veiled in the ineffable sanctity of His exalted Self, emphasizing the eternal mystery surrounding His unknowable Essence.
2. Limitations of Human Understanding: Bahá'u'lláh reflects on the inability of human beings, even the greatest prophets and messengers, to fully comprehend God's essence, using imagery of Moses and Jesus being thunderstruck and dismayed by the divine interdiction.
3. Futility of Human Efforts: Bahá'u'lláh acknowledges the futility of attempting to fathom the depths of God's knowledge and power, expressing bewilderment at the task.
4. Proclamation of Oneness: In communion with God, Bahá'u'lláh is moved to proclaim his oneness with God to all created things, recognizing his divine nature.
5. Humility and Self-Awareness: Despite his proclamation of oneness with God, Bahá'u'lláh humbly acknowledges the inferiority of his own self compared to the divine, describing himself as coarser than clay.

Questions and Answers:

1. How does Bahá'u'lláh describe the nature of God's essence?

- Bahá'u'lláh describes God as veiled in the ineffable sanctity of His exalted Self, with His essence forever remaining shrouded in mystery.

2. What imagery does Bahá'u'lláh use to illustrate the limitations of human understanding of God's essence?

- Bahá'u'lláh uses imagery of Moses and Jesus being thunderstruck and dismayed by the divine interdiction against beholding God's essence to illustrate the limitations of human understanding.

3. How does Bahá'u'lláh express his humility in relation to God's knowledge and power?

- Bahá'u'lláh expresses bewilderment and acknowledges the futility of attempting to fathom the depths of God's knowledge and power, recognizing the limitations of human efforts.

4. What does Bahá'u'lláh proclaim in communion with God?

- In communion with God, Bahá'u'lláh is moved to proclaim his oneness with God to all created things, declaring "verily I am God!"

5. How does Bahá'u'lláh express his self-awareness and humility?

- Despite proclaiming his oneness with God, Bahá'u'lláh humbly acknowledges the inferiority of his own self compared to the divine, describing himself as coarser than clay.

40. *"The door of the knowledge of the Ancient of Days," Bahá'u'lláh further states in the Kitáb-i-Íqán, "being thus closed in the face of all beings, He, the Source of infinite grace ... hath caused those luminous Gems of Holiness to appear out of the realm of the spirit, in the noble form of the human temple, and be made manifest unto all men, that they may impart unto the world the mysteries of the unchangeable Being and tell of the subtleties of His imperishable Essence... All the Prophets of God, His well-favored, His holy and chosen Messengers are, without exception, the bearers of His names and the embodiments of His attributes... These Tabernacles of Holiness, these primal Mirrors which reflect the Light of unfading glory, are but expressions of Him Who is the Invisible of the Invisibles."*

Summary:

In the Kitáb-i-Íqán, Bahá'u'lláh asserts that the door to understanding the essence of God, the Ancient of Days, is closed to all beings. However, out of His infinite grace, God manifests Himself through the noble form of the human temple, revealing luminous Gems of Holiness who are His chosen Messengers. These Manifestations of God, including all the Prophets, are bearers of God's names and embodiments of His attributes. They serve as Tabernacles of Holiness and primal Mirrors reflecting the unfading glory of God, despite being expressions of the Invisible of the Invisibles.

Key Points:

1. Door to the Knowledge of the Ancient of Days: Bahá'u'lláh declares that the door to understanding the essence of God, the Ancient of Days, is closed to all beings.
2. Manifestation of God: Out of His infinite grace, God manifests Himself through the noble form of the human temple, revealing luminous Gems of Holiness who are His chosen Messengers.
3. Bearers of God's Names and Attributes: All the Prophets, as Manifestations of God, are bearers of His names and embodiments of His attributes.
4. Tabernacles of Holiness: The Manifestations of God serve as Tabernacles of Holiness, expressing the divine attributes and reflecting the Light of unfading glory.
5. Expressions of the Invisible of the Invisibles: Despite being manifestations of God, the Manifestations are considered expressions of the Invisible of the Invisibles, representing the unknowable essence of God.

Questions and Answers:

1. What does Bahá'u'lláh assert about the door to understanding the essence of God?
 - Bahá'u'lláh declares that the door to understanding the essence of God, the Ancient of Days, is closed to all beings.
2. How does God manifest Himself according to Bahá'u'lláh?
 - God manifests Himself through the noble form of the human temple, revealing luminous Gems of Holiness who are His chosen Messengers.
3. What role do the Prophets play as bearers of God's names and attributes?
 - The Prophets, as Manifestations of God, serve as bearers of His names and embodiments of His attributes.
4. How are the Manifestations of God described in relation to holiness?
 - The Manifestations of God are described as Tabernacles of Holiness, expressing divine attributes and reflecting the unfading glory of God.
5. What term does Bahá'u'lláh use to describe the Manifestations' relationship to the essence of God?
 - Bahá'u'lláh describes the Manifestations of God as expressions of the Invisible of the Invisibles, representing the unknowable essence of God.
41. That Bahá'u'lláh should, notwithstanding the overwhelming intensity of His Revelation, be regarded as essentially one of these Manifestations of God, never to be identified with that invisible Reality, the Essence of Divinity itself, is one of the major beliefs of our Faith—a belief which should never be obscured and the integrity of which no one of its followers should allow to be compromised.

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi emphasizes a fundamental belief of the Bahá'í Faith that Bahá'u'lláh, despite the intensity and magnitude of His Revelation, should not be equated with the

Essence of Divinity itself. Instead, He is considered one of the Manifestations of God, distinct from the unknowable Essence of God. This belief is integral to the Bahá'í Faith and should be upheld by its followers without compromise.

Key Points:

1. Bahá'u'lláh as a Manifestation of God: Shoghi Effendi underscores that Bahá'u'lláh is considered a Manifestation of God within the Bahá'í Faith.
2. Distinction from the Essence of Divinity: Despite the greatness of His Revelation, Bahá'u'lláh is not to be identified with the Essence of Divinity itself.
3. Major Belief of the Bahá'í Faith: The belief in the distinction between Bahá'u'lláh as a Manifestation of God and the Essence of Divinity is a foundational tenet of the Bahá'í Faith.
4. Importance of Upholding the Belief: Shoghi Effendi emphasizes that followers of the Bahá'í Faith should never allow this belief to be obscured or compromised.
5. Integrity of the Belief: Maintaining the integrity of the belief regarding Bahá'u'lláh's station as a Manifestation of God, distinct from the Essence of Divinity, is crucial for Bahá'ís.

Questions and Answers:

1. How does the Bahá'í Faith regard Bahá'u'lláh in relation to the Essence of Divinity?
 - In the Bahá'í Faith, Bahá'u'lláh is considered a Manifestation of God, distinct from the Essence of Divinity itself.
2. Why is it important to maintain the distinction between Bahá'u'lláh and the Essence of Divinity?
 - Upholding this distinction is essential because it is a foundational belief of the Bahá'í Faith, emphasizing the unique station of Bahá'u'lláh as a Manifestation of God.
3. What term does Shoghi Effendi use to describe Bahá'u'lláh's relationship to the Essence of Divinity?
 - Shoghi Effendi describes Bahá'u'lláh as one of the Manifestations of God, distinct from the invisible Reality of the Essence of Divinity itself.
4. How should followers of the Bahá'í Faith approach the belief regarding Bahá'u'lláh's station?
 - Followers of the Bahá'í Faith should uphold the belief in Bahá'u'lláh as a Manifestation of God without allowing it to be obscured or compromised.
5. Why does Shoghi Effendi emphasize the importance of maintaining the integrity of this belief?
 - Shoghi Effendi stresses the significance of preserving the integrity of this belief to safeguard the core teachings and principles of the Bahá'í Faith.

42. Nor does the Bahá'í Revelation, claiming as it does to be the culmination of a prophetic cycle and the fulfillment of the promise of all ages, attempt, under any circumstances, to invalidate those first and everlasting principles that animate and underlie the religions that have preceded it. The God-given authority, vested in each one of them, it admits and establishes as its firmest and ultimate basis. It regards them in no other light except as different stages in the eternal history and constant evolution of one religion, Divine and indivisible, of which it itself forms but an integral part. It neither seeks to obscure their Divine origin, nor to dwarf the admitted magnitude of their colossal achievements. It can countenance no attempt that seeks to distort their features or to stultify the truths which they instill. Its teachings do not deviate a hairbreadth from the verities they enshrine, nor does the weight of its message detract one jot or one tittle from the influence they exert or the loyalty they inspire. Far from aiming at the overthrow of the spiritual foundation of the world's religious systems, its avowed, its unalterable purpose is to widen their basis, to restate their fundamentals, to reconcile their aims, to reinvigorate their life, to demonstrate their oneness, to restore the pristine purity of their teachings, to coördinate their functions and to assist in the realization of their highest aspirations. These divinely-revealed religions, as a close observer has graphically expressed it, "are doomed not to die, but to be reborn... 'Does not the child succumb in the youth and the youth in the man; yet neither child nor youth perishes?'"

Summary:

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi elucidates the inclusive and reconciliatory nature of the Bahá'í Revelation towards previous religious traditions. The essence of this message revolves around the belief that the Bahá'í Faith represents the culmination of a prophetic cycle and the fulfillment of the promise of all ages. However, crucially, the Bahá'í Faith does not seek to invalidate the foundational principles of preceding religions; rather, it acknowledges and upholds them as integral components of the divine tapestry.

Key Points:

1. **Recognition of Divine Authority in Previous Religions:** The Bahá'í Faith recognizes and establishes the authority vested in preceding religions as the firm and ultimate basis of its own teachings. Each religion is acknowledged as a stage in the eternal history and constant evolution of a single, indivisible divine religion.
2. **Respect for Preceding Religions:** There is a profound respect for the origins, achievements, and teachings of previous religions within the Bahá'í Faith. It does not seek to obscure their divine origins or diminish the significance of their contributions to human spirituality.
3. **Widening the Basis of Religion:** Contrary to seeking the overthrow of the spiritual foundation of other religious systems, the Bahá'í Faith's purpose is to broaden their basis. It aims to restate their fundamentals, reconcile their aims, and demonstrate their underlying unity.

4. Restoration and Revitalization: The Bahá'í Faith seeks to restore the purity of teachings, revitalize the spiritual life within religious communities, and coordinate the functions of various religious traditions towards the realization of their highest aspirations.

5. Metaphor of Rebirth: Shoghi Effendi employs the metaphor of rebirth to describe the perpetual nature of divine religions. Just as a child becomes a youth and then an adult, religions undergo transformations but continue to evolve and fulfill their spiritual purpose.

Questions and Answers:

Q: What is the Bahá'í Faith's stance on previous religions?

A: The Bahá'í Faith acknowledges and upholds the authority, origins, and teachings of previous religions as integral components of the divine tapestry.

Q: How does the Bahá'í Faith view the spiritual foundation of other religious systems?

A: The Bahá'í Faith does not seek to overthrow the spiritual foundation of other religious systems but rather aims to broaden their basis, restate their fundamentals, and demonstrate their underlying unity.

Q: What is the metaphor used to describe the perpetual nature of divine religions?

A: Shoghi Effendi employs the metaphor of rebirth, likening the evolution of religions to the growth and development of an individual from childhood to adulthood.

43. *“They Who are the Luminaries of Truth and the Mirrors reflecting the light of Divine Unity,”* Bahá'u'lláh explains in the Kitáb-i-Íqán, *“in whatever age and cycle they are sent down from their invisible habitations of ancient glory unto this world to educate the souls of men and endue with grace all created things, are invariably endowed with an all-compelling power and invested with invincible sovereignty... These sanctified Mirrors, these Day-Springs of ancient glory are one and all the exponents on earth of Him Who is the central Orb of the universe, its essence and ultimate purpose. From Him proceed their knowledge and power; from Him is derived their sovereignty. The beauty of their countenance is but a reflection of His image, and their revelation a sign of His deathless glory... Through them is transmitted a grace that is infinite, and by them is revealed the light that can never fade... Human tongue can never befittingly sing their praise, and human speech can never unfold their mystery.”* *“Inasmuch as these Birds of the celestial Throne,”* He adds, *“are all sent down from the heaven of the Will of God, and as they all arise to proclaim His irresistible Faith, they therefore are regarded as one soul and the same person... They all abide in the same tabernacle, soar in the same heaven, are seated upon the same throne, utter the same speech, and proclaim the same Faith... They only differ in the intensity of their revelation and the comparative potency of their light... That a certain attribute of God hath not been outwardly manifested by these Essences of Detachment doth in no wise imply that they Who are the Day-Springs of God’s attributes and the Treasuries of His holy names did not actually possess it.”*

Summary:

In this passage from Shoghi Effendi, he draws upon the writings of Bahá'u'lláh to elaborate on the nature and role of divine messengers throughout history. Bahá'u'lláh describes these messengers as "Luminaries of Truth" and "Mirrors reflecting the light of Divine Unity," sent to educate humanity and bestow grace upon all creation. These messengers possess an inherent power and sovereignty derived from the central Orb of the universe, which is the essence and ultimate purpose of creation.

Key Points:

1. Nature of Divine Messengers: Bahá'u'lláh explains that divine messengers, regardless of the age or cycle in which they appear, are endowed with compelling power and invincible sovereignty. They are the exponents of the central Orb of the universe, reflecting His image and revealing His glory to humanity.

2. Unity of Divine Messengers: These messengers, also referred to as "Birds of the celestial Throne," are considered as one and the same person, despite appearing in different times and places. They all arise to proclaim the same irresistible Faith and are united in purpose and mission.

3. Equality and Distinction: While divine messengers are equal in essence and purpose, they may differ in the intensity of their revelation and the potency of their light. However, these differences do not diminish the unity of their message or the power of their mission.

4. Attributes of Divine Messengers: Bahá'u'lláh emphasizes that the outward manifestation of certain attributes of God by these messengers does not imply that they lack those attributes. They are the embodiments of God's attributes and the repositories of His holy names, even if some attributes are not visibly demonstrated.

Questions and Answers:

Q: What is the nature of divine messengers according to Bahá'u'lláh?

A: Bahá'u'lláh describes divine messengers as Luminaries of Truth and Mirrors reflecting the light of Divine Unity, endowed with compelling power and invincible sovereignty.

Q: How does Bahá'u'lláh emphasize the unity of divine messengers?

A: Bahá'u'lláh states that despite appearing in different ages and cycles, divine messengers are regarded as one soul and the same person, united in purpose and mission.

Q: What is the significance of the distinction in the intensity of revelation among divine messengers?

A: While divine messengers may differ in the intensity of their revelation and the potency of their light, their unity of purpose and mission remains unchanged.

Q: How does Bahá'u'lláh address the attributes of divine messengers?

A: Bahá'u'lláh clarifies that the outward manifestation of certain attributes of God by divine messengers does not imply that they lack those attributes, as they are the embodiments of God's attributes and the repositories of His holy names.

44. It should also be borne in mind that, great as is the power manifested by this Revelation and however vast the range of the Dispensation its Author has inaugurated, it emphatically repudiates the claim to be regarded as the final revelation of God's will and purpose for mankind. To hold such a conception of its character and functions would be tantamount to a betrayal of its cause and a denial of its truth. It must necessarily conflict with the fundamental principle which constitutes the bedrock of Bahá'í belief, the principle that religious truth is not absolute but relative, that Divine Revelation is orderly, continuous and progressive and not spasmodic or final. Indeed, the categorical rejection by the followers of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh of the claim to finality which any religious system inaugurated by the Prophets of the past may advance is as clear and emphatic as their own refusal to claim that same finality for the Revelation with which they stand identified. *“To believe that all revelation is ended, that the portals of Divine mercy are closed, that from the daysprings of eternal holiness no sun shall rise again, that the ocean of everlasting bounty is forever stilled, and that out of the tabernacle of ancient glory the Messengers of God have ceased to be made manifest”* must constitute in the eyes of every follower of the Faith a grave, an inexcusable departure from one of its most cherished and fundamental principles.

Summary:

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi emphasizes a fundamental principle of the Bahá'í Revelation: its rejection of the claim to be the final revelation of God's will for humanity. He clarifies that to regard the Bahá'í Revelation as the ultimate and final truth would contradict the essence of the Bahá'í Faith and betray its cause. The Bahá'í Faith staunchly upholds the belief that religious truth is relative, not absolute, and that Divine Revelation is continuous and progressive.

Key Points:

1. **Rejection of Finality:** The Bahá'í Revelation, despite its immense power and expansive scope, categorically rejects the notion of being the final revelation of God's will and purpose for humanity. This rejection is fundamental to the Bahá'í belief system and is rooted in the principle of the continuous and progressive nature of Divine Revelation.
2. **Relativity of Religious Truth:** Bahá'í teachings assert that religious truth is not absolute but relative. This means that while each revelation is valid for its time and context, it is not the ultimate or final truth. The Bahá'í Faith acknowledges the validity of previous religious systems while affirming the need for ongoing spiritual guidance and revelation.
3. **Continuous and Progressive Revelation:** Shoghi Effendi underscores the orderly, continuous, and progressive nature of Divine Revelation within the Bahá'í Faith. Unlike

sporadic or final revelations, the Bahá'í Revelation represents an ongoing process of spiritual evolution and enlightenment for humanity.

4. Refusal of Claim to Finality: Followers of the Bahá'í Faith firmly reject the claim to finality made by any religious system inaugurated by past prophets. Just as they do not claim finality for the Bahá'í Revelation, they also do not accept it for previous revelations.

Questions and Answers:

Q: What fundamental principle does Shoghi Effendi emphasize regarding the Bahá'í Revelation?

A: Shoghi Effendi emphasizes the rejection of the claim to finality of the Bahá'í Revelation, asserting that it contradicts the essence of the Bahá'í Faith.

Q: How does the Bahá'í Faith view religious truth?

A: The Bahá'í Faith holds that religious truth is relative, not absolute, and that Divine Revelation is continuous and progressive, rather than final or sporadic.

Q: What is the Bahá'í stance on claims of finality made by religious systems?

A: The Bahá'í Faith refuses to accept claims of finality made by any religious system, including its own, recognizing the need for ongoing spiritual guidance and revelation.

Q: What does Shoghi Effendi suggest would be a departure from a cherished principle of the Bahá'í Faith?

A: Shoghi Effendi suggests that to believe in the finality of any religious revelation, including the Bahá'í Revelation, would constitute a grave departure from one of the Bahá'í Faith's most cherished and fundamental principles.

45. A reference to some of the already quoted utterances of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá will surely suffice to establish, beyond the shadow of a doubt, the truth of this cardinal principle. Might not the following passage of the Hidden Words be, likewise, construed as an allegorical allusion to the progressiveness of Divine Revelation and an admission by its Author that the Message with which He has been entrusted is not the final and ultimate expression of the will and guidance of the Almighty? *“O Son of Justice! In the night-season the beauty of the immortal Being hath repaired from the emerald height of fidelity unto the Sadratu'l-Muntahá, and wept with such a weeping that the concourse on high and the dwellers of the realms above wailed at His lamenting. Whereupon there was asked, Why the wailing and weeping? He made reply: As bidden I waited expectant upon the hill of faithfulness, yet inhaled not from them that dwell on earth the fragrance of fidelity. Then summoned to return I beheld, and lo! certain doves of holiness were sore tried within the claws of the dogs of earth. Thereupon the Maid of heaven hastened forth unveiled and resplendent from Her mystic mansion, and asked of their names, and all were told but one. And when urged, the first letter thereof was uttered, whereupon the dwellers of the celestial chambers rushed forth out of their habitation of glory. And whilst the second letter was pronounced they fell down, one and all, upon the dust. At that moment a voice was*

heard from the inmost shrine: 'Thus far and no farther.' Verily We bear witness to that which they have done and now are doing."

Summary:

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi explores a passage from Bahá'u'lláh's Hidden Words to further illustrate the principle of the progressive nature of Divine Revelation within the Bahá'í Faith. He suggests that this passage serves as an allegorical allusion to the ongoing nature of divine guidance and implies that the message entrusted to Bahá'u'lláh is not the final expression of God's will and guidance.

Key Points:

1. **Allegorical Interpretation:** Shoghi Effendi presents an allegorical interpretation of a passage from Bahá'u'lláh's Hidden Words. He suggests that the imagery and symbolism used in the passage convey deeper meanings about the nature of divine revelation and the ongoing progression of spiritual guidance.
2. **Description of the Scene:** The passage describes a scene where the beauty of the immortal Being, symbolizing divine revelation, repairs from the heights of fidelity to a specific location, the Sadratu'l-Muntahá. This movement is accompanied by weeping and lamenting, which causes distress among celestial beings.
3. **Trial and Test:** Within the earthly realm, certain "doves of holiness" are depicted as being sorely tried within the grasp of the "dogs of earth." This imagery suggests a trial or test of faith and fidelity experienced by individuals within the earthly realm.
4. **Intervention of the Maid of Heaven:** The passage describes the intervention of the Maid of heaven, who emerges unveiled and resplendent from her mystic mansion. She inquires about the names of those undergoing trials, and all names are revealed except for one.
5. **Divine Pronouncement:** As the name is about to be uttered, celestial beings rush forth in glory, but when the second letter is pronounced, they fall down upon the dust. A voice from the inmost shrine then proclaims, "Thus far and no farther," indicating a limit to the revelation or intervention.

Questions and Answers:

Q: How does Shoghi Effendi interpret the passage from Bahá'u'lláh's Hidden Words?

A: Shoghi Effendi interprets the passage allegorically, suggesting that it symbolizes the ongoing nature of divine revelation and implies that Bahá'u'lláh's message is not the final expression of God's will and guidance.

Q: What imagery is used in the passage to depict the scene described?

A: The passage uses imagery such as the "beauty of the immortal Being," "doves of holiness," and the "dogs of earth" to symbolize different aspects of divine revelation and human experience.

Q: What is the significance of the intervention of the Maid of Heaven in the passage?

A: The intervention of the Maid of Heaven represents divine intervention or guidance in response to the trials and tests faced by individuals within the earthly realm.

Q: What does the pronouncement from the inmost shrine signify in the passage?

A: The pronouncement "Thus far and no farther" indicates a limit to the revelation or intervention, suggesting that there are boundaries to the extent of divine guidance or revelation at any given time.

46. In a more explicit language Bahá'u'lláh testifies to this truth in one of His Tablets revealed in Adrianople: *"Know verily that the veil hiding Our countenance hath not been completely lifted. We have revealed Our Self to a degree corresponding to the capacity of the people of Our age. Should the Ancient Beauty be unveiled in the fullness of His glory mortal eyes would be blinded by the dazzling intensity of His revelation."*

Summary:

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi quotes a Tablet revealed by Bahá'u'lláh in Adrianople to underscore the concept that the divine revelation received by humanity is proportional to its capacity to receive it. Bahá'u'lláh explains that while a portion of His truth has been revealed, the full extent of His glory remains veiled because mortal eyes cannot bear the dazzling intensity of His revelation.

Key Points:

1. **Partial Revelation:** Bahá'u'lláh affirms that only a portion of His truth has been revealed to humanity. This partial revelation is due to the limitations of human capacity to comprehend and absorb the fullness of divine truth.
2. **Adaptation to Human Capacity:** The degree of revelation corresponds to the capacity of the people of Bahá'u'lláh's age to receive it. This adaptive approach ensures that divine guidance is accessible and comprehensible to its recipients.
3. **Veiled Countenance:** Bahá'u'lláh metaphorically refers to His countenance as veiled, indicating that the full extent of His glory and revelation remains hidden from mortal eyes. This veil serves to protect humanity from being overwhelmed by the intensity of divine revelation.
4. **Blinding Intensity:** Bahá'u'lláh warns that if the Ancient Beauty were to be unveiled in the fullness of His glory, mortal eyes would be blinded by the dazzling intensity of His

revelation. This imagery underscores the incomprehensible magnitude of divine truth and the need for gradual revelation.

Questions and Answers:

Q: What does Bahá'u'lláh's Tablet from Adrianople reveal about the nature of divine revelation?

A: Bahá'u'lláh's Tablet emphasizes that only a portion of His truth has been revealed to humanity, adapted to the capacity of the people of His age to receive it.

Q: How does Bahá'u'lláh describe the degree of revelation received by humanity?

A: Bahá'u'lláh suggests that the degree of revelation corresponds to the capacity of humanity to receive it, implying an adaptive approach to divine guidance.

Q: What metaphor does Bahá'u'lláh use to describe His revelation?

A: Bahá'u'lláh metaphorically refers to His countenance as veiled, indicating that the full extent of His glory and revelation remains hidden from mortal eyes.

Q: What warning does Bahá'u'lláh give about the intensity of His revelation?

A: Bahá'u'lláh warns that if the Ancient Beauty were to be unveiled in the fullness of His glory, mortal eyes would be blinded by the dazzling intensity of His revelation, highlighting the incomprehensible magnitude of divine truth.

47. In the Súriy-i-Şabr, revealed as far back as the year 1863, on the very first day of His arrival in the garden of Riḍván, He thus affirms: *“God hath sent down His Messengers to succeed to Moses and Jesus, and He will continue to do so till ‘the end that hath no end’; so that His grace may, from the heaven of Divine bounty, be continually vouchsafed to mankind.”*

Summary:

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi references a statement from Bahá'u'lláh's Súriy-i-Şabr, revealed in 1863, during His arrival in the garden of Riḍván. Bahá'u'lláh affirms the continuity of divine guidance through successive Messengers sent by God to humanity. He asserts that God will continue to send Messengers after Moses and Jesus until an end that has no end, ensuring that divine grace and bounty are continually bestowed upon mankind.

Key Points:

1. Continuity of Divine Guidance: Bahá'u'lláh declares that God has sent down Messengers to succeed Moses and Jesus, indicating the continuity of divine guidance throughout history. This statement emphasizes the ongoing nature of divine revelation and the perpetuity of God's grace towards humanity.

2. Succession of Messengers: The statement implies that the succession of Messengers sent by God will continue beyond the time of Moses and Jesus. This succession ensures that divine guidance is continually provided to humanity, adapting to its evolving needs and circumstances.

3. Unending Endowment of Grace: Bahá'u'lláh asserts that God's grace will be continually vouchsafed to mankind from the heaven of Divine bounty. This divine grace is portrayed as an everlasting gift bestowed upon humanity, underscoring the boundless compassion and mercy of God.

4. Eternal Nature of Divine Revelation: The phrase "the end that hath no end" suggests the eternal nature of divine revelation and the perpetuity of God's plan for humanity. This concept aligns with Bahá'í teachings on the progressive nature of religious truth and the ongoing unfoldment of God's purpose throughout history.

Questions and Answers:

Q: What does Bahá'u'lláh affirm in the Súriy-i-Şabr regarding the succession of Messengers?

A: Bahá'u'lláh affirms that God has sent Messengers to succeed Moses and Jesus, indicating the continuity of divine guidance throughout history.

Q: What is the significance of the phrase "the end that hath no end" in Bahá'u'lláh's statement?

A: The phrase implies the eternal nature of divine revelation and the perpetuity of God's plan for humanity, emphasizing the ongoing unfoldment of divine guidance throughout history.

Q: How does Bahá'u'lláh characterize the bestowal of divine grace upon mankind?

A: Bahá'u'lláh portrays divine grace as continually vouchsafed to mankind from the heaven of Divine bounty, emphasizing the boundless compassion and mercy of God towards humanity.

Q: What does Bahá'u'lláh's statement suggest about the nature of divine guidance?

A: Bahá'u'lláh's statement suggests that divine guidance is adaptable and responsive to the evolving needs and circumstances of humanity, ensuring that it continues to be provided through successive Messengers sent by God.

48. *"I am not apprehensive for My own self,"* Bahá'u'lláh still more explicitly declares, *"My fears are for Him Who will be sent down unto you after Me—Him Who will be invested with great sovereignty and mighty dominion."* And again He writes in the Súratu'l-Haykal: *"By those words which I have revealed, Myself is not intended, but rather He Who will come after Me. To it is witness God, the All-Knowing."* *"Deal not with Him,"* He adds, *"as ye have dealt with Me."*

Summary:

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi quotes Bahá'u'lláh expressing His concerns not for Himself but for the Messenger who would come after Him. Bahá'u'lláh emphasizes that His own safety is not His primary concern, but rather the well-being and reception of the future Manifestation of God, who will be invested with great sovereignty and dominion. This statement underscores Bahá'u'lláh's profound selflessness and concern for the welfare of future divine Messengers.

Key Points:

1. Concern for the Successor: Bahá'u'lláh expresses His apprehension not for His own safety or well-being but for the safety and reception of the future Manifestation of God who would come after Him. This demonstrates Bahá'u'lláh's selflessness and concern for the welfare of future divine Messengers.
2. Investment with Great Sovereignty: Bahá'u'lláh indicates that the future Messenger will be invested with great sovereignty and mighty dominion, suggesting the significant role and authority that this Messenger will possess.
3. Clarification in the Súratu'l-Haykal: In the Súratu'l-Haykal, Bahá'u'lláh clarifies that when He refers to Himself in His revelations, He is not speaking about His own person but rather about the future Messenger who will come after Him. This distinction is important for understanding the context of Bahá'u'lláh's writings and teachings.
4. Divine Witness: Bahá'u'lláh asserts that God, the All-Knowing, bears witness to the truth of His words regarding the future Manifestation. This emphasizes the divine authority and validation of Bahá'u'lláh's statements about the succession of Messengers.
5. Warning against Mistreatment: Bahá'u'lláh warns against mistreating the future Manifestation, instructing His followers not to deal with Him as they have dealt with Bahá'u'lláh Himself. This admonition highlights the importance of recognizing and honoring the divine station of successive Messengers.

Questions and Answers:

Q: Whom does Bahá'u'lláh express concern for in the quoted passage?

A: Bahá'u'lláh expresses His concern for the Messenger who would come after Him, emphasizing His selflessness and concern for the welfare of future divine Messengers.

Q: What attributes does Bahá'u'lláh mention regarding the future Manifestation?

A: Bahá'u'lláh indicates that the future Messenger will be invested with great sovereignty and mighty dominion, suggesting the significant role and authority that this Messenger will possess.

Q: How does Bahá'u'lláh clarify His references to Himself in His writings?

A: Bahá'u'lláh clarifies in the *Súratu'l-Haykal* that when He refers to Himself in His revelations, He is actually speaking about the future Messenger who will come after Him, providing important context for understanding His teachings.

Q: What warning does Bahá'u'lláh give regarding the treatment of the future Manifestation?

A: Bahá'u'lláh warns against mistreating the future Manifestation and instructs His followers not to deal with Him as they have dealt with Bahá'u'lláh Himself, emphasizing the importance of recognizing and honoring the divine station of successive Messengers.

49. In a more circumstantial passage the Báb upholds the same truth in His writings. *“It is clear and evident,”* He writes in the Persian Bayán, *“that the object of all preceding Dispensations hath been to pave the way for the advent of Muḥammad, the Apostle of God. These, including the Muḥammadan Dispensation, have had, in their turn, as their objective the Revelation proclaimed by the Qá'im. The purpose underlying this Revelation, as well as those that preceded it, has, in like manner, been to announce the advent of the Faith of Him Whom God will make manifest. And this Faith—the Faith of Him Whom God will make manifest—in its turn, together with all the Revelations gone before it, have as their object the Manifestation destined to succeed it. And the latter, no less than all the Revelations preceding it, prepare the way for the Revelation which is yet to follow. The process of the rise and setting of the Sun of Truth will thus indefinitely continue—a process that hath had no beginning and will have no end.”*

Summary:

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi quotes the Báb from the Persian Bayán, where the Báb affirms the progressive nature of divine revelation and the continuity of successive Manifestations of God. The Báb elucidates that each religious Dispensation, including those preceding Islam and the Muhammadan Dispensation itself, has paved the way for the advent of the next Manifestation. Furthermore, the purpose of each revelation, including that of the Báb Himself, is to herald the coming of the next Manifestation of God. This cyclical process of successive revelations preparing the way for the next is depicted as an eternal and unending phenomenon.

Key Points:

1. Purpose of Previous Dispensations: The Báb explains that the objective of all preceding religious Dispensations has been to prepare humanity for the advent of the subsequent Manifestations of God. Each Dispensation, including those before Islam, has played a role in laying the foundation for the next stage of divine revelation.

2. Role of the Muhammadan Dispensation: The Báb asserts that even the Muhammadan Dispensation, which culminated in the revelation of the Qur'an and the teachings of Islam, had the purpose of preparing the way for the appearance of the Qá'im, a figure anticipated in Islamic eschatology.

3. Purpose of the Bábí Faith: The Báb declares that His own revelation, the Bábí Faith, serves the purpose of heralding the advent of the next Manifestation of God, whom He refers to as "Him Whom God will make manifest." This indicates the Báb's recognition of His own station as a precursor to Bahá'u'lláh, the Founder of the Bahá'í Faith.

4. Continuity of the Divine Plan: The Báb describes the process of successive revelations preparing the way for the next as an eternal and unending phenomenon. He portrays this process as a continuous cycle with no beginning or end, emphasizing the perpetual unfoldment of God's divine plan throughout history.

Questions and Answers:

Q: What does the Báb affirm regarding the purpose of previous Dispensations in the Persian Bayán?

A: The Báb asserts that the purpose of all preceding religious Dispensations has been to prepare humanity for the advent of the subsequent Manifestations of God.

Q: How does the Báb characterize the role of the Muhammadan Dispensation in preparing for future revelations?

A: The Báb explains that even the Muhammadan Dispensation, including the revelation of Islam, had the purpose of preparing the way for the appearance of the Qá'im, a figure anticipated in Islamic eschatology.

Q: What is the significance of the Báb's statement regarding the Bábí Faith in relation to future revelations?

A: The Báb declares that His own revelation, the Bábí Faith, serves the purpose of heralding the advent of the next Manifestation of God, indicating His recognition of His own station as a precursor to Bahá'u'lláh.

Q: How does the Báb portray the continuity of divine revelation in the Persian Bayán?

A: The Báb describes the process of successive revelations preparing the way for the next as an eternal and unending phenomenon, emphasizing the perpetual unfoldment of God's divine plan throughout history.

50. *"Know of a certainty," Bahá'u'lláh explains in this connection, "that in every Dispensation the light of Divine Revelation hath been vouchsafed to men in direct proportion to their spiritual capacity. Consider the sun. How feeble its rays the moment it appeareth above the horizon. How gradually its warmth and potency increase as it approacheth its zenith, enabling meanwhile all created things to adapt themselves to the growing intensity of its light. How steadily it declineth until it reacheth its setting point. Were it all of a sudden to manifest the energies latent within it, it would no doubt cause injury to all created things... In like manner, if the Sun of Truth were suddenly to reveal, at the earliest stages of its manifestation, the full measure of the potencies which the providence of the Almighty hath bestowed upon it, the earth of human understanding would waste away and be consumed; for men's*

hearts would neither sustain the intensity of its revelation, nor be able to mirror forth the radiance of its light. Dismayed and overpowered, they would cease to exist.”

Summary:

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi quotes Bahá'u'lláh to illustrate the gradual and progressive nature of divine revelation. Bahá'u'lláh uses the analogy of the sun to explain how the light of Divine Revelation is bestowed upon humanity in direct proportion to its spiritual capacity. He compares the gradual increase in the intensity of sunlight from sunrise to noon, and its gradual decline until sunset, to the gradual unfoldment of divine guidance throughout the ages.

Key Points:

1. **Gradual Revelation:** Bahá'u'lláh asserts that in every Dispensation, the light of Divine Revelation is given to humanity gradually, in accordance with its spiritual capacity. This gradual bestowal ensures that humanity can adapt to and absorb the increasing intensity of divine guidance over time.
2. **Analogy of the Sun:** Bahá'u'lláh uses the analogy of the sun to illustrate the process of gradual revelation. He describes how the sun's rays are feeble at sunrise, gradually increasing in warmth and potency as it approaches noon, and then declining until sunset. This gradual progression mirrors the gradual unfoldment of divine revelation.
3. **Risk of Sudden Revelation:** Bahá'u'lláh warns that if the full measure of divine potency were suddenly revealed at the earliest stages of its manifestation, it would overwhelm and consume humanity. Just as the earth would be unable to sustain the sudden intensity of the sun's rays, humanity's understanding and capacity to receive divine revelation would be insufficient to bear the full potency of divine light.
4. **Effect on Human Hearts:** Bahá'u'lláh suggests that if the Sun of Truth were to suddenly reveal its full energies, human hearts would be dismayed and overpowered, leading to their cessation. This highlights the importance of gradual revelation in nurturing the spiritual growth and development of humanity.

Questions and Answers:

Q: How does Bahá'u'lláh describe the bestowal of Divine Revelation?

A: Bahá'u'lláh describes the bestowal of Divine Revelation as gradual, given to humanity in direct proportion to its spiritual capacity.

Q: What analogy does Bahá'u'lláh use to explain the process of gradual revelation?

A: Bahá'u'lláh uses the analogy of the sun, describing how its rays gradually increase in intensity from sunrise to noon, and then decline until sunset, to illustrate the gradual unfoldment of divine guidance throughout the ages.

Q: What risk does Bahá'u'lláh identify with sudden revelation?

A: Bahá'u'lláh warns that sudden revelation of the full measure of divine potency would overwhelm and consume humanity, as human hearts would be unable to sustain the intensity of divine light.

Q: Why does Bahá'u'lláh emphasize the importance of gradual revelation?

A: Bahá'u'lláh emphasizes the importance of gradual revelation to ensure that humanity can gradually adapt to and absorb the increasing intensity of divine guidance, nurturing spiritual growth and development over time.

51. In the light of these clear and conclusive statements it is our clear duty to make it indubitably evident to every seeker after truth that from “the beginning that hath no beginning” the Prophets of the one, the unknowable God, including Bahá'u'lláh Himself, have all, as the channels of God's grace, as the exponents of His unity, as the mirrors of His light and the revealers of His purpose, been commissioned to unfold to mankind an ever-increasing measure of His truth, of His inscrutable will and Divine guidance, and will continue to “the end that hath no end” to vouchsafe still fuller and mightier revelations of His limitless power and glory.

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi, in the passage provided, emphasizes the duty to convey the truth about the divine mission of prophets, particularly Bahá'u'lláh, the founder of the Bahá'í Faith. He asserts that it is incumbent upon believers to make it unmistakably clear to all truth-seekers that throughout history, from the inception of time itself, the prophets have served as conduits of God's grace, revealing His unity, reflecting His light, and elucidating His purpose to humanity. Moreover, Shoghi Effendi underscores the perpetual nature of divine revelation, indicating that from the eternal past to the infinite future, prophets will continue to unveil progressively greater truths and manifestations of God's power and glory.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to the duty of believers in elucidating the divine mission of prophets.
2. Assertion of the role of prophets as channels of God's grace and unity.
3. Highlighting the ongoing revelation of divine truth throughout history.
4. Emphasis on Bahá'u'lláh's significance as a revealer of divine guidance.
5. Affirmation of the perpetuity of divine revelation and the continuous unfolding of God's glory.

Questions and Answers:

1. What is the primary duty emphasized by Shoghi Effendi in the passage?
 - Shoghi Effendi emphasizes the duty to clearly convey the truth about the divine mission of prophets, especially Bahá'u'lláh.

2. How does Shoghi Effendi characterize the role of prophets?
 - He characterizes prophets as conduits of God's grace, reflecting His unity, and elucidating His purpose to humanity.

3. According to Shoghi Effendi, what is the nature of divine revelation throughout history?
 - Divine revelation is depicted as a continual process of unveiling greater truths and manifestations of God's power and glory.

4. What significance does Shoghi Effendi attribute to Bahá'u'lláh?
 - Shoghi Effendi attributes immense significance to Bahá'u'lláh as a revealer of divine guidance and a manifestation of God's will.

5. How does Shoghi Effendi describe the perpetuity of divine revelation?
 - Shoghi Effendi asserts that from the eternal past to the infinite future, prophets will continue to reveal progressively greater truths and manifestations of God's glory.

52. We might well ponder in our hearts the following passages from a prayer revealed by Bahá'u'lláh which strikingly affirm, and are a further evidence of, the reality of the great and essential truth lying at the very core of His Message to mankind: *“Praise be to Thee, O Lord my God, for the wondrous revelations of Thine inscrutable decree and the manifold woes and trials Thou hast destined for myself. At one time Thou didst deliver me into the hands of Nimrod; at another Thou hast allowed Pharaoh's rod to persecute me. Thou alone canst estimate, through Thine all-encompassing knowledge and the operation of Thy Will, the incalculable afflictions I have suffered at their hands. Again Thou didst cast me into the prison-cell of the ungodly for no reason except that I was moved to whisper into the ears of the well-favored denizens of Thy kingdom an intimation of the vision with which Thou hadst, through Thy knowledge, inspired me and revealed to me its meaning through the potency of Thy might. And again Thou didst decree that I be beheaded by the sword of the infidel. Again I was crucified for having unveiled to men's eyes the hidden gems of Thy glorious unity, for having revealed to them the wondrous signs of Thy sovereign and everlasting power. How bitter the humiliations heaped upon me, in a subsequent age, on the plain of Karbilá! How lonely did I feel amidst Thy people; to what state of helplessness I was reduced in that land! Unsatisfied with such indignities, my persecutors decapitated me and carrying aloft my head from land to land paraded it before the gaze of the unbelieving multitude and deposited it on the seats of the perverse and faithless. In a later age I was suspended and my breast was made a target to the darts of the malicious cruelty of my foes. My limbs were riddled with bullets and my body was torn asunder. Finally, behold how in this day my treacherous enemies have leagued themselves against me, and are continually plotting to instill the venom of hate and malice into the souls of Thy servants. With all their might they are scheming to accomplish their purpose... Grievous as is my plight, O God, my Well-beloved, I render thanks unto Thee, and my spirit is grateful for whatsoever hath befallen me in the path of Thy good-pleasure. I am well pleased with that which Thou didst ordain*

for me, and welcome, however calamitous, the pains and sorrows I am made to suffer.”

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi, in this passage, reflects on a prayer revealed by Bahá'u'lláh, the founder of the Bahá'í Faith, which highlights the profound suffering and persecution endured by the Manifestation of God throughout history. The prayer eloquently portrays the trials and tribulations faced by Bahá'u'lláh, ranging from persecution by historical figures like Nimrod and Pharaoh to crucifixion, beheading, and other forms of brutal persecution. Despite the intense suffering and humiliation described, Bahá'u'lláh expresses gratitude and acceptance of God's will, acknowledging the purpose behind the afflictions endured in the path of divine service.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to the prayer revealed by Bahá'u'lláh, emphasizing its portrayal of suffering and persecution.
2. Description of the various trials endured by Bahá'u'lláh, including persecution by historical figures and brutal forms of execution.
3. Bahá'u'lláh's expression of gratitude and acceptance of God's will despite the severity of the suffering.
4. Reflection on the enduring significance of Bahá'u'lláh's message and the opposition it continues to face.

Questions and Answers:

1. What is the central theme of the prayer revealed by Bahá'u'lláh, as highlighted by Shoghi Effendi?
 - The central theme is the profound suffering and persecution endured by Bahá'u'lláh throughout history.
2. What are some examples of the trials faced by Bahá'u'lláh, as described in the prayer?
 - Bahá'u'lláh endured persecution by historical figures such as Nimrod and Pharaoh, as well as crucifixion, beheading, and other forms of brutal execution.
3. How does Bahá'u'lláh respond to the suffering and persecution described in the prayer?
 - Bahá'u'lláh expresses gratitude and acceptance of God's will, welcoming the pains and sorrows endured in the path of divine service.
4. What is the significance of Bahá'u'lláh's message despite the opposition described in the prayer?
 - Despite the opposition and persecution, Bahá'u'lláh's message remains enduring and continues to inspire believers, demonstrating the resilience of faith in the face of adversity.

• • •

The Báb

53. Dearly-beloved friends! That the Báb, the inaugurator of the Bábí Dispensation, is fully entitled to rank as one of the self-sufficient Manifestations of God, that He has been invested with sovereign power and authority, and exercises all the rights and prerogatives of independent Prophethood, is yet another fundamental verity which the Message of Bahá'u'lláh insistently proclaims and which its followers must uncompromisingly uphold. That He is not to be regarded merely as an inspired Precursor of the Bahá'í Revelation, that in His person, as He Himself bears witness in the Persian Bayán, the object of all the Prophets gone before Him has been fulfilled, is a truth which I feel it my duty to demonstrate and emphasize. We would assuredly be failing in our duty to the Faith we profess and would be violating one of its basic and sacred principles if in our words or by our conduct we hesitate to recognize the implications of this root principle of Bahá'í belief, or refuse to uphold unreservedly its integrity and demonstrate its truth. Indeed the chief motive actuating me to undertake the task of editing and translating Nabíl's immortal Narrative has been to enable every follower of the Faith in the West to better understand and more readily grasp the tremendous implications of His exalted station and to more ardently admire and love Him.

Summary:

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi underscores the fundamental truth regarding the exalted station of the Báb, the forerunner of Bahá'u'lláh, within the Bahá'í Faith. He asserts that the Báb is not merely an inspired precursor but is fully entitled to rank as one of the self-sufficient Manifestations of God, invested with sovereign power and authority. Shoghi Effendi emphasizes the importance of recognizing the Báb's independent prophethood and fulfilling the implications of this belief without hesitation or compromise. He expresses his motivation for editing and translating Nabíl's Narrative as a means to deepen the understanding and appreciation of the Báb's exalted station among Bahá'ís in the West.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to the assertion of the Báb's exalted station within the Bahá'í Faith.
2. Affirmation that the Báb is not merely a precursor but a self-sufficient Manifestation of God.
3. Emphasis on the Báb's sovereign power, authority, and independent prophethood.
4. Importance of upholding the integrity of Bahá'í belief regarding the Báb's station without compromise.
5. Shoghi Effendi's motivation for editing and translating Nabíl's Narrative to deepen understanding and appreciation of the Báb's station.

Questions and Answers:

1. How does Shoghi Effendi characterize the station of the Báb within the Bahá'í Faith?
 - Shoghi Effendi characterizes the Báb as fully entitled to rank as one of the self-sufficient Manifestations of God, invested with sovereign power and authority.
 2. What distinction does Shoghi Effendi make regarding the Báb's role as a precursor?
 - Shoghi Effendi emphasizes that the Báb is not merely an inspired precursor but holds an independent prophethood fulfilling the objectives of all previous prophets.
 3. Why does Shoghi Effendi stress the importance of recognizing the Báb's exalted station?
 - He stresses its importance to uphold the integrity of Bahá'í belief and to demonstrate unwavering commitment to the truth of the Báb's independent prophethood.
 4. What is Shoghi Effendi's motivation for editing and translating Nabil's Narrative?
 - His motivation is to enable Bahá'ís in the West to better understand, grasp, admire, and love the Báb by comprehending the tremendous implications of His exalted station.
 5. What fundamental principle of the Bahá'í Faith does Shoghi Effendi emphasize regarding the Báb's station?
 - Shoghi Effendi emphasizes the duty of followers to uphold uncompromisingly the truth of the Báb's independent prophethood as a fundamental and sacred principle of the Bahá'í Faith.
54. There can be no doubt that the claim to the twofold station ordained for the Báb by the Almighty, a claim which He Himself has so boldly advanced, which Bahá'u'lláh has repeatedly affirmed, and to which the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá has finally given the sanction of its testimony, constitutes the most distinctive feature of the Bahá'í Dispensation. It is a further evidence of its uniqueness, a tremendous accession to the strength, to the mysterious power and authority with which this holy cycle has been invested. Indeed the greatness of the Báb consists primarily, not in His being the divinely-appointed Forerunner of so transcendent a Revelation, but rather in His having been invested with the powers inherent in the inaugurator of a separate religious Dispensation, and in His wielding, to a degree unrivaled by the Messengers gone before Him, the scepter of independent Prophethood.

Summary:

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi discusses the twofold station ordained for the Báb within the Bahá'í Dispensation. He asserts that this claim, boldly advanced by the Báb Himself and affirmed by Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, is the most distinctive feature of the Bahá'í Faith. Shoghi Effendi highlights the uniqueness of this claim as evidence of the Dispensation's strength and mysterious power. He emphasizes that the greatness of the Báb lies not only in His role as the divinely-appointed forerunner of Bahá'u'lláh but also

in His wielding of the scepter of independent Prophethood, surpassing the powers of previous Messengers.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to the discussion on the twofold station ordained for the Báb within the Bahá'í Dispensation.
2. Assertion of the bold claim advanced by the Báb Himself and affirmed by Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá.
3. Emphasis on the twofold station as the most distinctive feature of the Bahá'í Faith.
4. Recognition of the claim's significance as evidence of the Dispensation's strength and mysterious power.
5. Explanation of the greatness of the Báb, focusing on His wielding of independent Prophethood.

Questions and Answers:

1. What is the twofold station ordained for the Báb within the Bahá'í Dispensation?
 - The twofold station refers to the Báb's role as the divinely-appointed forerunner of Bahá'u'lláh and His wielding of independent Prophethood.
2. Who affirms the claim to the twofold station of the Báb?
 - The claim is boldly advanced by the Báb Himself and affirmed by Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá.
3. Why does Shoghi Effendi consider the twofold station as the most distinctive feature of the Bahá'í Faith?
 - He considers it as such because it is a bold claim with significant implications for the Dispensation, distinguishing it from other religious movements.
4. How does Shoghi Effendi characterize the significance of the claim to the twofold station?
 - He characterizes it as evidence of the Dispensation's strength and mysterious power, enhancing its uniqueness and authority.
5. What aspect of the Báb's greatness does Shoghi Effendi emphasize in this passage?
 - Shoghi Effendi emphasizes the Báb's wielding of independent Prophethood to a degree unrivaled by previous Messengers as a key aspect of His greatness within the Bahá'í Dispensation.
55. The short duration of His Dispensation, the restricted range within which His laws and ordinances have been made to operate, supply no criterion whatever wherewith to judge its Divine origin and to evaluate the potency of its message. *“That so brief a span,”* Bahá'u'lláh Himself explains, *“should have separated this most mighty and wondrous Revelation from Mine own previous Manifestation, is a secret that no man can unravel and a mystery such as no mind can fathom. Its duration had been*

foreordained, and no man shall ever discover its reason unless and until he be informed of the contents of My Hidden Book.” “Behold,” Bahá’u’lláh further explains in the Kitáb-i-Badí’, one of His works refuting the arguments of the people of the Bayán, “behold, how immediately upon the completion of the ninth year of this wondrous, this most holy and merciful Dispensation, the requisite number of pure, of wholly consecrated and sanctified souls had been most secretly consummated.”

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi delves into the significance of the Báb's Dispensation, emphasizing that its short duration and limited scope do not diminish its divine origin or the potency of its message. He quotes Bahá’u’lláh, who acknowledges the mysterious separation between His own revelation and that of the Báb, attributing it to a secret predetermined by God. Bahá’u’lláh further elucidates in the Kitáb-i-Badí’ that the completion of the ninth year of the Báb's Dispensation marked the consummation of a requisite number of pure and consecrated souls, a significant milestone in the unfolding of divine purpose.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to the discussion on the significance of the Báb's Dispensation.
2. Explanation of the short duration and restricted range of the Báb's laws and ordinances.
3. Assertion that these factors do not diminish the divine origin or potency of the Báb's message.
4. Quotation from Bahá’u’lláh regarding the mysterious separation between His revelation and that of the Báb.
5. Excerpt from the Kitáb-i-Badí’ highlighting the completion of a significant milestone in the Báb's Dispensation.

Questions and Answers:

1. How does Shoghi Effendi address the short duration and limited scope of the Báb's Dispensation?
 - Shoghi Effendi asserts that these factors do not detract from the divine origin or potency of the Báb's message.
2. What does Bahá’u’lláh say regarding the mysterious separation between His revelation and that of the Báb?
 - Bahá’u’lláh acknowledges the enigmatic nature of this separation, attributing it to a secret predetermined by God that cannot be unraveled by human understanding.
3. What does the completion of the ninth year of the Báb's Dispensation signify, according to Bahá’u’lláh?
 - It marks the consummation of a requisite number of pure and consecrated souls, as explained in the Kitáb-i-Badí’, indicating a significant milestone in the unfolding of divine purpose.

4. How does Shoghi Effendi use Bahá'u'lláh's words to underscore the significance of the Báb's Dispensation?

- He quotes Bahá'u'lláh to emphasize that the mysterious aspects of the Báb's Dispensation are part of a divine plan beyond human comprehension, reinforcing its significance and legitimacy.

5. What overarching message does Shoghi Effendi convey regarding the Báb's Dispensation?

- Shoghi Effendi conveys that despite its brevity and limited reach, the Báb's Dispensation is deeply significant and part of a divine plan that transcends human understanding.

56. The marvelous happenings that have heralded the advent of the Founder of the Bábí Dispensation, the dramatic circumstances of His own eventful life, the miraculous tragedy of His martyrdom, the magic of His influence exerted on the most eminent and powerful among His countrymen, to all of which every chapter of Nabíl's stirring narrative testifies, should in themselves be regarded as sufficient evidence of the validity of His claim to so exalted a station among the Prophets.

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi reflects on the extraordinary events surrounding the advent, life, and martyrdom of the Báb, the founder of the Bábí Dispensation. He highlights the dramatic circumstances and miraculous influence of the Báb's life, as detailed in Nabíl's narrative. Shoghi Effendi suggests that these remarkable occurrences serve as compelling evidence of the Báb's claim to an exalted station among the prophets.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to the discussion on the validity of the Báb's claim to an exalted station among the prophets.
2. Description of the marvelous happenings heralding the Báb's advent.
3. Emphasis on the dramatic circumstances of the Báb's eventful life.
4. Recognition of the miraculous tragedy of the Báb's martyrdom.
5. Acknowledgment of the powerful influence exerted by the Báb on eminent individuals, as depicted in Nabíl's narrative.

Questions and Answers:

1. What does Shoghi Effendi consider as sufficient evidence of the Báb's claim to an exalted station among the prophets?

- Shoghi Effendi considers the marvelous happenings surrounding the Báb's advent, His eventful life, miraculous martyrdom, and influential impact as sufficient evidence.

2. What are some examples of the marvelous happenings surrounding the Báb's advent?

- Examples include the circumstances of His birth, the divine signs and prophecies preceding His arrival, and the spiritual fervor generated among His followers.

3. How does Shoghi Effendi characterize the circumstances of the Báb's life?

- He characterizes them as dramatic, indicating the challenges, triumphs, and transformative events that marked the Báb's journey as a religious leader.

4. What is the significance of the Báb's martyrdom, according to Shoghi Effendi?

- Shoghi Effendi sees the Báb's martyrdom as a tragic yet miraculous event that further validates His claim to a divine station among the prophets.

5. How does Shoghi Effendi portray the influence of the Báb on His contemporaries?

- He depicts the Báb as exerting a powerful influence on prominent individuals, including influential figures and leaders, as evidenced by their interactions and reactions detailed in Nabíl's narrative.

6. What role does Nabíl's narrative play in Shoghi Effendi's argument?

- Nabíl's narrative serves as a source of detailed accounts and testimonies that support Shoghi Effendi's assertion regarding the validity of the Báb's claim to an exalted station among the prophets.

57. However graphic the record which the eminent chronicler of His life has transmitted to posterity, so luminous a narrative must pale before the glowing tribute paid to the Báb by the pen of Bahá'u'lláh. This tribute the Báb Himself has, by the clear assertion of His claim, abundantly supported, while the written testimonies of 'Abdu'l-Bahá have powerfully reinforced its character and elucidated its meaning.

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi acknowledges the remarkable account of the Báb's life chronicled by Nabíl, emphasizing its luminosity in portraying the events surrounding the Báb's mission and martyrdom. However, Shoghi Effendi suggests that even Nabíl's vivid narrative pales in comparison to the glowing tribute paid to the Báb by Bahá'u'lláh Himself. He asserts that the Báb's own clear assertion of His divine claim, along with the written testimonies of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, serve to abundantly support and reinforce the exalted character of the Báb's station.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to the discussion on the tribute paid to the Báb by Bahá'u'lláh.
2. Recognition of the luminosity of Nabíl's narrative in chronicling the Báb's life.
3. Assertion that the tribute from Bahá'u'lláh surpasses even Nabíl's account.
4. Emphasis on the Báb's clear assertion of His divine claim.
5. Acknowledgment of the powerfully reinforcing testimonies of 'Abdu'l-Bahá regarding the Báb's station.

Questions and Answers:

1. How does Shoghi Effendi characterize Nabíl's account of the Báb's life?
 - Shoghi Effendi characterizes Nabíl's narrative as luminous, indicating its vivid portrayal of the events surrounding the Báb's mission and martyrdom.
2. What does Shoghi Effendi suggest about the tribute paid to the Báb by Bahá'u'lláh?
 - Shoghi Effendi suggests that the tribute from Bahá'u'lláh surpasses even Nabíl's account in its glowing depiction of the Báb's station and significance.
3. How does the Báb himself support His claim to a divine station?
 - The Báb supports His claim through His own clear assertion of His divine mission and station.
4. What role do the written testimonies of 'Abdu'l-Bahá play in reinforcing the character of the Báb's station?
 - The written testimonies of 'Abdu'l-Bahá powerfully reinforce the exalted character of the Báb's station, providing further elucidation and affirmation of His divine claim.
5. Why does Shoghi Effendi emphasize the tribute paid to the Báb by Bahá'u'lláh?
 - Shoghi Effendi emphasizes it to underscore the unparalleled significance and validity of the Báb's station, as affirmed by the Founder of the Bahá'í Faith Himself.
58. Where else if not in the Kitáb-i-Íqán can the student of the Bábí Dispensation seek to find those affirmations that unmistakably attest the power and spirit which no man, except he be a Manifestation of God, can manifest? *“Could such a thing,”* exclaims Bahá'u'lláh, *“be made manifest except through the power of a Divine Revelation and the potency of God's invincible Will? By the righteousness of God! Were any one to entertain so great a Revelation in his heart the thought of such a declaration would alone confound him! Were the hearts of all men to be crowded into his heart, he would still hesitate to venture upon so awful an enterprise.”* *“No eye,”* He in another passage affirms, *“hath beheld so great an outpouring of bounty, nor hath any ear heard of such a Revelation of loving-kindness... The Prophets 'endowed with constancy,' whose loftiness and glory shine as the sun, were each honored with a Book which all have seen, and the verses of which have been duly ascertained. Whereas the verses which have rained from this Cloud of divine mercy have been so abundant that none hath yet been able to estimate their number... How can they belittle this Revelation? Hath any age witnessed such momentous happenings?”*

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi directs attention to the Kitáb-i-Íqán as a primary source for understanding the power and spirit inherent in the Bábí Dispensation. He highlights passages from Bahá'u'lláh's writings within the Kitáb-i-Íqán that affirm the extraordinary nature of the Báb's Revelation. Bahá'u'lláh emphasizes that such a Revelation could only be manifested through the power of a Divine Revelation and the invincible Will of God. He asserts that

even contemplating such a declaration would confound anyone, highlighting the magnitude of the Báb's mission. Furthermore, Bahá'u'lláh underscores the unparalleled outpouring of bounty and loving-kindness inherent in the Báb's Revelation, comparing it to previous prophetic dispensations. He challenges skeptics to recognize the magnitude of the Báb's Revelation, stating that no age has witnessed such momentous happenings.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to the significance of the Kitáb-i-Íqán in understanding the Bábí Dispensation.
2. Examination of passages from the Kitáb-i-Íqán affirming the extraordinary nature of the Báb's Revelation.
3. Emphasis on the requirement of Divine Revelation and the invincible Will of God for such a Revelation to manifest.
4. Assertion of the confounding magnitude of the Báb's declaration.
5. Comparison between the Báb's Revelation and previous prophetic dispensations, highlighting its unprecedented abundance and impact.

Questions and Answers:

1. Why does Shoghi Effendi direct attention to the Kitáb-i-Íqán in understanding the Bábí Dispensation?
 - Shoghi Effendi directs attention to the Kitáb-i-Íqán because it contains passages that affirm the extraordinary nature and power of the Báb's Revelation.
 2. What does Bahá'u'lláh emphasize regarding the manifestation of the Báb's Revelation?
 - Bahá'u'lláh emphasizes that the manifestation of the Báb's Revelation could only occur through the power of a Divine Revelation and the invincible Will of God.
 3. How does Bahá'u'lláh describe the magnitude of contemplating such a declaration?
 - Bahá'u'lláh describes contemplating such a declaration as confounding, indicating the awe-inspiring nature of the Báb's mission.
 4. What comparison does Bahá'u'lláh draw between the Báb's Revelation and previous prophetic dispensations?
 - Bahá'u'lláh compares the abundance and impact of the Báb's Revelation to those of previous prophetic dispensations, highlighting its unprecedented nature.
 5. What challenge does Bahá'u'lláh pose to skeptics regarding the Báb's Revelation?
 - Bahá'u'lláh challenges skeptics to recognize the magnitude and significance of the Báb's Revelation, asserting that no age has witnessed such momentous happenings.
59. Commenting on the character and influence of those heroes and martyrs whom the spirit of the Báb had so magically transformed Bahá'u'lláh reveals the following: *“If these companions be not the true strivers after God, who else could be called by this name?... If these companions, with all their marvelous testimonies and wondrous*

works, be false, who then is worthy to claim for himself the truth?... Has the world since the days of Adam witnessed such tumult, such violent commotion?... Methinks, patience was revealed only by virtue of their fortitude, and faithfulness itself was begotten only by their deeds."

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi quotes Bahá'u'lláh's reflections on the character and influence of the companions and martyrs of the Báb, whom the spirit of the Báb had magically transformed. Bahá'u'lláh poses rhetorical questions, affirming the authenticity of these companions as true strivers after God. He challenges skeptics to find anyone else worthy of claiming the truth if these companions, with their marvelous testimonies and wondrous works, are deemed false. Bahá'u'lláh reflects on the tumultuous events witnessed since the days of Adam, suggesting that the fortitude and deeds of these companions have begotten patience and faithfulness.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to Bahá'u'lláh's reflections on the companions and martyrs of the Báb.
2. Affirmation of the authenticity of these companions as true strivers after God.
3. Rhetorical questions posed by Bahá'u'lláh challenging skeptics to find anyone else worthy of claiming the truth.
4. Reflection on the tumultuous events witnessed since the days of Adam.
5. Assertion that the fortitude and deeds of these companions have begotten patience and faithfulness.

Questions and Answers:

1. What is the focus of Bahá'u'lláh's reflections quoted by Shoghi Effendi?
 - Bahá'u'lláh reflects on the character and influence of the companions and martyrs of the Báb, highlighting their transformative power.
2. How does Bahá'u'lláh characterize these companions?
 - Bahá'u'lláh characterizes these companions as true strivers after God, emphasizing their authenticity and devotion.
3. What challenge does Bahá'u'lláh pose to skeptics regarding these companions?
 - Bahá'u'lláh challenges skeptics to find anyone else worthy of claiming the truth if these companions, with their remarkable testimonies and works, are considered false.
4. What does Bahá'u'lláh reflect on regarding the tumultuous events witnessed since the days of Adam?
 - Bahá'u'lláh reflects on the tumultuous events, suggesting that the fortitude and deeds of these companions have played a significant role in shaping history and fostering patience and faithfulness.

5. What is the overarching message conveyed by Bahá'u'lláh's reflections?
- Bahá'u'lláh's reflections affirm the authenticity and significance of the companions and martyrs of the Báb, highlighting their transformative influence and the enduring impact of their faith and deeds.
60. Wishing to stress the sublimity of the Báb's exalted station as compared with that of the Prophets of the past, Bahá'u'lláh in that same epistle asserts: "*No understanding can grasp the nature of His Revelation, nor can any knowledge comprehend the full measure of His Faith.*" He then quotes, in confirmation of His argument, these prophetic words: "*Knowledge is twenty and seven letters. All that the Prophets have revealed are two letters thereof. No man thus far hath known more than these two letters. But when the Qá'im shall arise, He will cause the remaining twenty and five letters to be made manifest.*" "Behold," He adds, "*how great and lofty is His station! His rank excelleth that of all the Prophets and His Revelation transcendeth the comprehension and understanding of all their chosen ones.*" "Of His Revelation," He further adds, "*the Prophets of God, His saints and chosen ones, have either not been informed, or, in pursuance of God's inscrutable decree, they have not disclosed.*"

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi discusses Bahá'u'lláh's efforts to emphasize the exalted station of the Báb in comparison to the Prophets of the past. Bahá'u'lláh asserts that no understanding can fully grasp the nature of the Báb's Revelation or comprehend the full measure of His Faith. To support His argument, Bahá'u'lláh quotes prophetic words indicating that the knowledge revealed by the Prophets of the past represents only a fraction of the complete knowledge, symbolized by twenty-seven letters, with the Báb's Revelation revealing the remaining twenty-five letters. Bahá'u'lláh highlights the greatness and loftiness of the Báb's station, asserting that His rank surpasses that of all the Prophets and that His Revelation transcends the comprehension of even the chosen ones among them. Furthermore, Bahá'u'lláh suggests that the full extent of the Báb's Revelation has not been disclosed to the Prophets, saints, and chosen ones of the past.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to Bahá'u'lláh's efforts to emphasize the exalted station of the Báb.
2. Assertion that no understanding can fully grasp the nature of the Báb's Revelation.
3. Quotation of prophetic words indicating the partial knowledge revealed by previous Prophets and the completion of knowledge with the Báb's Revelation.
4. Emphasis on the greatness and loftiness of the Báb's station compared to all previous Prophets.
5. Suggestion that the full extent of the Báb's Revelation has not been disclosed to previous Prophets, saints, and chosen ones.

Questions and Answers:

1. How does Bahá'u'lláh emphasize the exalted station of the Báb compared to previous Prophets?

- Bahá'u'lláh emphasizes the exalted station of the Báb by asserting that no understanding can fully grasp the nature of His Revelation, and His Revelation transcends the comprehension of even the chosen ones among previous Prophets.

2. What metaphor does Bahá'u'lláh use to illustrate the completeness of the Báb's Revelation?

- Bahá'u'lláh uses the metaphor of twenty-seven letters to symbolize the knowledge revealed by previous Prophets, with the Báb's Revelation revealing the remaining twenty-five letters, indicating the completion of knowledge.

3. How does Bahá'u'lláh describe the greatness and loftiness of the Báb's station?

- Bahá'u'lláh describes the Báb's station as surpassing that of all previous Prophets and asserts that His Revelation transcends the comprehension of even the chosen ones among them.

4. What implication does Bahá'u'lláh suggest regarding the disclosure of the Báb's Revelation?

- Bahá'u'lláh suggests that the full extent of the Báb's Revelation has not been disclosed to previous Prophets, saints, and chosen ones, indicating the profundity and uniqueness of His Revelation.

5. How does Bahá'u'lláh's argument contribute to understanding the significance of the Báb's station?

- Bahá'u'lláh's argument underscores the incomparable greatness of the Báb's station and the unique nature of His Revelation, highlighting its transcendence beyond previous religious dispensations.

61. Of all the tributes which Bahá'u'lláh's unerring pen has chosen to pay to the memory of the Báb, His "Best-Beloved," the most memorable and touching is this brief, yet eloquent passage which so greatly enhances the value of the concluding passages of that same epistle. "*Amidst them all,*" He writes, referring to the afflictive trials and dangers besetting Him in the city of Baghdád, "*We stand life in hand wholly resigned to His Will, that perchance through God's loving kindness and grace, this revealed and manifest Letter (Bahá'u'lláh) may lay down His life as a sacrifice in the path of the Primal Point, the most exalted Word (the Báb). By Him, at Whose bidding the Spirit hath spoken, but for this yearning of Our soul, We would not, for one moment, have tarried any longer in this city.*"

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi highlights a poignant tribute that Bahá'u'lláh pays to the memory of the Báb, whom He refers to as His "Best-Beloved." In this tribute, Bahá'u'lláh expresses His readiness to sacrifice His own life in the path of the Báb, despite the afflictive trials and dangers He faced in Baghdád. He reveals His complete resignation to God's Will,

expressing a profound yearning to offer His life as a sacrifice for the Báb. This passage greatly enhances the value of the concluding passages of the epistle, serving as a testament to Bahá'u'lláh's deep love and devotion to the Báb.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to Bahá'u'lláh's tribute to the memory of the Báb.
2. Description of the Báb as Bahá'u'lláh's "Best-Beloved."
3. Expression of Bahá'u'lláh's readiness to sacrifice His life in the path of the Báb.
4. Acknowledgment of the afflictive trials and dangers faced by Bahá'u'lláh in Baghdád.
5. Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh's complete resignation to God's Will and profound yearning to offer His life as a sacrifice for the Báb.

Questions and Answers:

1. How does Bahá'u'lláh refer to the Báb in this tribute?
 - Bahá'u'lláh refers to the Báb as His "Best-Beloved," indicating the deep affection and reverence He holds for Him.
2. What does Bahá'u'lláh express readiness to do in the path of the Báb?
 - Bahá'u'lláh expresses readiness to sacrifice His life in the path of the Báb, demonstrating His profound devotion and commitment to the Báb's cause.
3. What challenges did Bahá'u'lláh face in Baghdád?
 - Bahá'u'lláh faced afflictive trials and dangers in Baghdád, indicating the sacrifices He endured for the sake of His faith and the Báb's teachings.
4. How does Bahá'u'lláh express His resignation to God's Will?
 - Bahá'u'lláh expresses complete resignation to God's Will, indicating His acceptance of whatever trials or sacrifices may come His way in His service to the Báb's cause.
5. What does this tribute reveal about Bahá'u'lláh's relationship with the Báb?
 - This tribute reveals the depth of Bahá'u'lláh's love and devotion to the Báb, highlighting His willingness to offer His life as a sacrifice in service to the Báb's mission and teachings.
62. Dearly-beloved friends! So resounding a praise, so bold an assertion issued by the pen of Bahá'u'lláh in so weighty a work, are fully re-echoed in the language in which the Source of the Bábí Revelation has chosen to clothe the claims He Himself has advanced. "*I am the Mystic Fane,*" the Báb thus proclaims His station in the Qayyúmu'l-Asmá, "*which the Hand of Omnipotence hath reared. I am the Lamp which the Finger of God hath lit within its niche and caused to shine with deathless splendor. I am the Flame of that supernal Light that glowed upon Sinai in the gladsome Spot, and lay concealed in the midst of the Burning Bush.*" "*O Qurratu'l-'Ayn!*" He, addressing Himself in that same commentary, exclaims, "*I recognize in Thee none other except the 'Great Announcement'—the Announcement voiced by the*

Concourse on high. By this name, I bear witness, they that circle the Throne of Glory have ever known Thee.” “With each and every Prophet, Whom We have sent down in the past,” He further adds, “We have established a separate Covenant concerning the ‘Remembrance of God’ and His Day. Manifest, in the realm of glory and through the power of truth, are the ‘Remembrance of God’ and His Day before the eyes of the angels that circle His mercy-seat.” “Should it be Our wish,” He again affirms, “it is in Our power to compel, through the agency of but one letter of Our Revelation, the world and all that is therein to recognize, in less than the twinkling of an eye, the truth of Our Cause.”

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi elaborates on the bold assertions made by both Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb regarding the exalted station of the Báb. Bahá'u'lláh's resounding praise, as reflected in His weighty works, is echoed by the Báb in His own writings. The Báb proclaims Himself as the Mystic Fane, the Lamp lit by the Finger of God, and the Flame of supernal Light. He addresses Himself as the "Great Announcement" recognized by the Concourse on high. Furthermore, the Báb asserts that with each Prophet sent down in the past, a separate Covenant concerning the "Remembrance of God" and His Day has been established. He affirms the manifestation of the "Remembrance of God" and His Day before the eyes of the angels in the realm of glory. Additionally, the Báb states His power to compel the recognition of the truth of His Cause through the agency of but one letter of His Revelation.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to the bold assertions made by Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb regarding the exalted station of the Báb.
2. Description of the Báb's proclamation of His station as the Mystic Fane, the Lamp lit by God, and the Flame of supernal Light.
3. Recognition of the Báb as the "Great Announcement" by the Concourse on high.
4. Assertion of separate Covenants concerning the "Remembrance of God" and His Day with each Prophet sent in the past.
5. Affirmation of the manifestation of the "Remembrance of God" and His Day before the eyes of the angels.
6. Statement of the Báb's power to compel recognition of the truth of His Cause through the agency of His Revelation.

Questions and Answers:

1. What bold assertions do both Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb make regarding the exalted station of the Báb?
 - Both Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb make bold assertions regarding the exalted station of the Báb, affirming His divine status and unique role in the spiritual realm.
2. How does the Báb describe His station in His own writings?

- The Báb describes Himself as the Mystic Fane, the Lamp lit by the Finger of God, and the Flame of supernal Light, emphasizing His divine origin and spiritual illumination.

3. What title does the Báb address Himself as, according to His writings?

- The Báb addresses Himself as the "Great Announcement," recognized by the Concourse on high, signifying His pivotal role in heralding a new era in human history.

4. What does the Báb assert regarding the establishment of Covenants with past Prophets?

- The Báb asserts the establishment of separate Covenants concerning the "Remembrance of God" and His Day with each Prophet sent in the past, highlighting the continuity and progressive nature of divine revelation.

5. How does the Báb describe the manifestation of the "Remembrance of God" and His Day?

- The Báb describes the manifestation of the "Remembrance of God" and His Day before the eyes of the angels in the realm of glory, emphasizing the spiritual significance of His Revelation.

6. What power does the Báb claim to possess regarding the recognition of the truth of His Cause?

- The Báb claims the power to compel recognition of the truth of His Cause through the agency of His Revelation, underscoring His authority and potency as a Manifestation of God.

63. *"I am the Primal Point,"* the Báb thus addresses Muḥammad Sháh from the prison-fortress of Máh-Kú, *"from which have been generated all created things... I am the Countenance of God Whose splendor can never be obscured, the light of God whose radiance can never fade... All the keys of heaven God hath chosen to place on My right hand, and all the keys of hell on My left... I am one of the sustaining pillars of the Primal Word of God. Whosoever hath recognized Me, hath known all that is true and right, and hath attained all that is good and seemly... The substance wherewith God hath created Me is not the clay out of which others have been formed. He hath conferred upon Me that which the worldly-wise can never comprehend, nor the faithful discover."* *"Should a tiny ant,"* the Báb, wishing to stress the limitless potentialities latent in His Dispensation, characteristically affirms, *"desire in this day to be possessed of such power as to be able to unravel the abstrusest and most bewildering passages of the Qur'án, its wish will no doubt be fulfilled, inasmuch as the mystery of eternal might vibrates within the innermost being of all created things."* *"If so helpless a creature,"* is 'Abdu'l-Bahá's comment on so startling an affirmation, *"can be endowed with so subtle a capacity, how much more efficacious must be the power released through the liberal effusions of the grace of Bahá'u'lláh!"*

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi presents declarations made by the Báb, emphasizing His exalted station and the limitless potentialities of His Dispensation. From the prison-fortress of Máh-Kú,

the Báb addresses Muḥammad Sháh, proclaiming Himself as the Primal Point from which all created things have been generated. He asserts His identity as the Countenance of God, whose splendor and radiance can never fade, and claims authority over the keys of heaven and hell. The Báb describes Himself as one of the sustaining pillars of the Primal Word of God, asserting that whoever recognizes Him has attained all that is true, right, and good. He emphasizes that the substance of His creation is beyond human comprehension and that God has conferred upon Him capabilities that surpass human understanding. Additionally, the Báb illustrates the limitless potentialities of His Dispensation by stating that even a tiny ant, desiring to unravel the most abstruse passages of the Qur'an, would have its wish fulfilled, as the mystery of eternal might vibrates within all created things. 'Abdu'l-Bahá comments on this affirmation, highlighting the profound efficacy of the power released through the grace of Bahá'u'lláh.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to declarations made by the Báb regarding His exalted station and the potentialities of His Dispensation.
2. The Báb's proclamation of Himself as the Primal Point and the Countenance of God.
3. Assertion of authority over the keys of heaven and hell.
4. Description of the Báb as one of the sustaining pillars of the Primal Word of God.
5. Emphasis on the incomprehensible nature of the substance of the Báb's creation.
6. Illustration of the limitless potentialities of the Báb's Dispensation through a metaphor involving a tiny ant and the Qur'an.
7. 'Abdu'l-Bahá's commentary on the efficacy of the power released through the grace of Bahá'u'lláh.

Questions and Answers:

1. How does the Báb describe His station and authority?
 - The Báb describes Himself as the Primal Point, the Countenance of God, and asserts authority over the keys of heaven and hell.
2. What attributes does the Báb claim to possess?
 - The Báb claims to be one of the sustaining pillars of the Primal Word of God and asserts that whoever recognizes Him has attained all that is true, right, and good.
3. What does the Báb emphasize regarding the substance of His creation?
 - The Báb emphasizes that the substance of His creation is beyond human comprehension and that God has conferred upon Him capabilities that surpass human understanding.
4. How does the Báb illustrate the potentialities of His Dispensation?
 - The Báb illustrates the potentialities of His Dispensation by stating that even a tiny ant, desiring to unravel the most abstruse passages of the Qur'an, would have its wish fulfilled, as the mystery of eternal might vibrates within all created things.

5. What is 'Abdu'l-Bahá's commentary on the potentialities of the Báb's Dispensation?
- 'Abdu'l-Bahá highlights the profound efficacy of the power released through the grace of Bahá'u'lláh, suggesting that it surpasses even the potentialities illustrated by the Báb's metaphor involving the tiny ant.

64. To these authoritative assertions and solemn declarations made by Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb must be added 'Abdu'l-Bahá's own incontrovertible testimony. He, the appointed interpreter of the utterances of both Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb, corroborates, not by implication but in clear and categorical language, both in His Tablets and in His Testament, the truth of the statements to which I have already referred.

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi underscores the weight of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's testimony as the appointed interpreter of the utterances of both Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb. 'Abdu'l-Bahá's clear and categorical language in His Tablets and Testament corroborates the authoritative assertions and solemn declarations made by Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb. Through His role as interpreter, 'Abdu'l-Bahá affirms the truth of the statements regarding the exalted station and divine mission of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to the weight of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's testimony as the appointed interpreter.
2. Emphasis on the clarity and categorical nature of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's language in His Tablets and Testament.
3. Corroboration of the authoritative assertions and solemn declarations made by Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb.
4. 'Abdu'l-Bahá's affirmation of the truth regarding the exalted station and divine mission of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh.

Questions and Answers:

1. What role does 'Abdu'l-Bahá play in relation to the utterances of Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb?
- 'Abdu'l-Bahá serves as the appointed interpreter of the utterances of both Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb, ensuring clarity and understanding of their teachings.
2. How does Shoghi Effendi characterize 'Abdu'l-Bahá's language in His Tablets and Testament?
- Shoghi Effendi describes 'Abdu'l-Bahá's language as clear and categorical, emphasizing the directness and certainty with which He affirms the truth of the statements made by Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb.
3. What is the significance of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's testimony?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá's testimony corroborates the authoritative assertions and solemn declarations made by Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb, lending further credibility and weight to their claims regarding the exalted station and divine mission.

4. What specific aspects of Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb's teachings does 'Abdu'l-Bahá affirm?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá affirms the truth regarding the exalted station and divine mission of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh, ensuring the continuity and coherence of their teachings within the Bahá'í Faith.

65. In a Tablet addressed to a Bahá'í in Mázindarán, in which He unfolds the meaning of a misinterpreted statement attributed to Him regarding the rise of the Sun of Truth in this century, He sets forth, briefly but conclusively, what should remain for all time our true conception of the relationship between the two Manifestations associated with the Bahá'í Dispensation. *“In making such a statement,”* He explains, *“I had in mind no one else except the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh, the character of whose Revelations it had been my purpose to elucidate. The Revelation of the Báb may be likened to the sun, its station corresponding to the first sign of the Zodiac—the sign Aries—which the sun enters at the Vernal Equinox. The station of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation, on the other hand, is represented by the sign Leo, the sun's mid-summer and highest station. By this is meant that this holy Dispensation is illumined with the light of the Sun of Truth shining from its most exalted station, and in the plenitude of its resplendency, its heat and glory.”*

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi elucidates the true conception of the relationship between the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh, the twin Manifestations associated with the Bahá'í Dispensation. In a Tablet addressed to a Bahá'í in Mázindarán, 'Abdu'l-Bahá clarifies a misinterpreted statement attributed to Him regarding the rise of the Sun of Truth in this century. He explains that the statement refers specifically to the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh, whose Revelations He aims to elucidate. 'Abdu'l-Bahá employs a metaphor to illustrate the relationship between the two Manifestations: likening the Revelation of the Báb to the sun at the Vernal Equinox, corresponding to the sign Aries, and representing Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation as the sun at its mid-summer and highest station, symbolized by the sign Leo. Thus, the Báb's Revelation is compared to the dawning sun, while Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation shines from its most exalted station, radiating with the fullness of its splendor, heat, and glory.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Tablet addressing a Bahá'í in Mázindarán.
2. Clarification of a misinterpreted statement regarding the rise of the Sun of Truth in this century.
3. Explanation of the true conception of the relationship between the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh.
4. Use of metaphor to illustrate the relationship: Revelation of the Báb compared to the sun at the Vernal Equinox, representing the sign Aries.

5. Representation of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation as the sun at its mid-summer and highest station, symbolized by the sign Leo.
6. Implication of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation as illuminating the Bahá'í Dispensation with the fullness of its splendor, heat, and glory.

Questions and Answers:

1. What clarification does 'Abdu'l-Bahá provide regarding a misinterpreted statement?
 - 'Abdu'l-Bahá clarifies a misinterpreted statement regarding the rise of the Sun of Truth in this century, specifying that it refers specifically to the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh.
2. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá explain the relationship between the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh?
 - 'Abdu'l-Bahá employs a metaphor, likening the Revelation of the Báb to the dawning sun and representing Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation as the sun at its mid-summer and highest station.
3. What metaphor does 'Abdu'l-Bahá use to illustrate this relationship?
 - 'Abdu'l-Bahá uses the metaphor of the sun at different points in the zodiac, with the Revelation of the Báb corresponding to the Vernal Equinox (Aries) and Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation symbolized by the sun at its mid-summer and highest station (Leo).
4. What implication does this metaphor carry regarding Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation?
 - This metaphor implies that Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation illuminates the Bahá'í Dispensation with the fullness of its splendor, heat, and glory, representing the culmination and apex of divine revelation in this era.
66. *“The Báb, the Exalted One,”* ‘Abdu'l-Bahá more specifically affirms in another Tablet, *“is the Morn of Truth, the splendor of Whose light shineth throughout all regions. He is also the Harbinger of the Most Great Light, the Abhá Luminary. The Blessed Beauty is the One promised by the sacred books of the past, the revelation of the Source of light that shone upon Mount Sinai, Whose fire glowed in the midst of the Burning Bush. We are, one and all, servants of their threshold, and stand each as a lowly keeper at their door.”* *“Every proof and prophecy,”* is His still more emphatic warning, *“every manner of evidence, whether based on reason or on the text of the scriptures and traditions, are to be regarded as centered in the persons of Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb. In them is to be found their complete fulfillment.”*

Summary:

In a Tablet, 'Abdu'l-Bahá unequivocally affirms the exalted stations of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh, emphasizing their significance in the unfolding of divine revelation. He describes the Báb as the Morn of Truth, whose light shines throughout all regions, and as the Harbinger of the Most Great Light, the Abhá Luminary. Bahá'u'lláh, on the other hand, is identified as the One promised by sacred books of the past, the revelation of the Source of light that shone upon Mount Sinai and glowed in the midst of the Burning Bush. 'Abdu'l-Bahá underscores the servitude of all believers at the threshold of these

Manifestations, likening them to lowly keepers at their door. Moreover, 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphatically warns that every proof, prophecy, and evidence, whether derived from reason, scriptures, or traditions, finds its fulfillment in the persons of Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's affirmation of the exalted stations of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh.
2. Description of the Báb as the Morn of Truth and the Harbinger of the Most Great Light, the Abhá Luminary.
3. Identification of Bahá'u'lláh as the One promised by sacred books of the past and the revelation of the Source of light.
4. Portrayal of believers as servants at the threshold of the Manifestations.
5. Emphatic warning regarding the complete fulfillment of every proof, prophecy, and evidence in Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb.

Questions and Answers:

1. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá characterize the stations of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh?
- 'Abdu'l-Bahá characterizes the Báb as the Morn of Truth and the Harbinger of the Most Great Light, while identifying Bahá'u'lláh as the One promised by sacred books and the revelation of the Source of light.
 2. What metaphor does 'Abdu'l-Bahá use to describe the Báb's significance?
- 'Abdu'l-Bahá uses the metaphor of the Báb as the Morn of Truth, whose light shines throughout all regions, and as the Harbinger of the Most Great Light, the Abhá Luminary.
 3. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá depict the relationship between believers and the Manifestations?
- 'Abdu'l-Bahá depicts believers as servants at the threshold of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh, underscoring their humble role in relation to the exalted stations of the Manifestations.
 4. What warning does 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasize regarding proofs and prophecies?
- 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphatically warns that every proof, prophecy, and evidence, whether derived from reason, scriptures, or traditions, finds its complete fulfillment in Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb, highlighting the centrality of their stations in the Bahá'í Faith.
67. And finally, in His Will and Testament, the repository of His last wishes and parting instructions, He in the following passage, specifically designed to set forth the guiding principles of Bahá'í belief, sets the seal of His testimony on the Báb's dual and exalted station: *“The foundation of the belief of the people of Bahá (may my life be offered up for them) is this: His holiness the exalted One (the Báb) is the Manifestation of the unity and oneness of God and the Forerunner of the Ancient Beauty (Bahá'u'lláh). His holiness, the Abhá Beauty (Bahá'u'lláh) (may my life be offered up as a sacrifice for His steadfast friends) is the supreme Manifestation of God and the Day-Spring of His*

most divine Essence.” “*All others,*” He significantly adds, “*are servants unto Him and do His bidding.*”

Summary:

In His Will and Testament, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the appointed interpreter of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings, unequivocally affirms the dual and exalted station of the Báb. He sets forth guiding principles of Bahá'í belief, emphasizing the Báb's role as the Manifestation of the unity and oneness of God and the Forerunner of Bahá'u'lláh. Bahá'u'lláh, in turn, is identified as the supreme Manifestation of God and the Day-Spring of His most divine Essence. 'Abdu'l-Bahá declares that all others are servants unto Bahá'u'lláh and do His bidding, thus establishing the hierarchy and primacy of Bahá'u'lláh's station.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to the passage from 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will and Testament, setting forth guiding principles of Bahá'í belief.
2. Affirmation of the Báb's dual and exalted station as the Manifestation of the unity and oneness of God and the Forerunner of Bahá'u'lláh.
3. Identification of Bahá'u'lláh as the supreme Manifestation of God and the Day-Spring of His most divine Essence.
4. Declaration of the hierarchy and primacy of Bahá'u'lláh's station, with all others being servants unto Him and doing His bidding.

Questions and Answers:

1. What passage from 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will and Testament affirms the dual station of the Báb?
 - In His Will and Testament, 'Abdu'l-Bahá declares, "His holiness the exalted One (the Báb) is the Manifestation of the unity and oneness of God and the Forerunner of the Ancient Beauty (Bahá'u'lláh)."
2. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá characterize Bahá'u'lláh's station?
 - 'Abdu'l-Bahá identifies Bahá'u'lláh as the supreme Manifestation of God and the Day-Spring of His most divine Essence.
3. What hierarchy does 'Abdu'l-Bahá establish regarding the Manifestations?
 - 'Abdu'l-Bahá declares that all others are servants unto Bahá'u'lláh and do His bidding, establishing the primacy of Bahá'u'lláh's station over all others.
4. What guiding principles of Bahá'í belief does 'Abdu'l-Bahá set forth in this passage?
 - 'Abdu'l-Bahá sets forth the principles that the Báb is the Forerunner of Bahá'u'lláh and Bahá'u'lláh is the supreme Manifestation of God, establishing the foundation of Bahá'í belief in the dual station of these Manifestations.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá

68. Dearly-beloved friends! I have in the foregoing pages ventured to attempt an exposition of such truths as I firmly believe are implicit in the claim of Him Who is the Fountain-Head of the Bahá’í Revelation. I have moreover endeavored to dissipate such misapprehensions as may naturally arise in the mind of any one contemplating so superhuman a manifestation of the glory of God. I have striven to explain the meaning of the divinity with which He Who is the vehicle of so mysterious an energy must needs be invested. That the Message which so great a Being has, in this age, been commissioned by God to deliver to mankind recognizes the divine origin and upholds the first principles of every Dispensation inaugurated by the prophets of the past, and stands inextricably interwoven with each one of them, I have also to the best of my ability undertaken to demonstrate. That the Author of such a Faith, Who repudiates the claim to finality which leaders of various denominations uphold has, despite the vastness of His Revelation, disclaimed it for Himself I have, likewise, felt it necessary to prove and emphasize. That the Báb, notwithstanding the duration of His Dispensation, should be regarded primarily, not as the chosen Precursor of the Bahá’í Faith, but as One invested with the undivided authority assumed by each of the independent Prophets of the past, seemed to me yet another basic principle the elucidation of which would be extremely desirable at the present stage of the evolution of our Cause.

Summary:

In his exposition, Shoghi Effendi endeavors to elucidate the truths implicit in the claim of Bahá’u’lláh, the Fountain-Head of the Bahá’í Revelation. He aims to dispel misapprehensions that may arise when contemplating such a superhuman manifestation of the glory of God and explains the divinity with which Bahá’u’lláh, as the vehicle of a mysterious energy, must be invested. Shoghi Effendi demonstrates that Bahá’u’lláh’s Message recognizes the divine origin and upholds the first principles of every Dispensation inaugurated by the prophets of the past, intricately interwoven with each one of them. Furthermore, he emphasizes that despite the vastness of Bahá’u’lláh’s Revelation, He disclaims any claim to finality for Himself, repudiating the notion upheld by leaders of various denominations. Additionally, Shoghi Effendi underscores the significance of recognizing the Báb, not merely as the Precursor of the Bahá’í Faith, but as One invested with the undivided authority assumed by each of the independent Prophets of the past, elucidating this principle as essential in the evolution of the Bahá’í Cause.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to Shoghi Effendi's exposition of the truths implicit in Bahá’u’lláh's claim.
2. Dispelling misapprehensions regarding Bahá’u’lláh's superhuman manifestation of the glory of God.

3. Explanation of the divinity with which Bahá'u'lláh must be invested as the vehicle of a mysterious energy.
4. Demonstration of Bahá'u'lláh's Message recognizing the divine origin and upholding the first principles of every Dispensation.
5. Emphasis on Bahá'u'lláh's repudiation of any claim to finality for Himself, despite the vastness of His Revelation.
6. Underscoring the significance of recognizing the Báb as One invested with undivided authority akin to independent Prophets of the past.

Questions and Answers:

1. What is the aim of Shoghi Effendi's exposition?
 - Shoghi Effendi aims to elucidate the truths implicit in Bahá'u'lláh's claim as the Fountain-Head of the Bahá'í Revelation and to dispel misapprehensions that may arise regarding His superhuman manifestation.

2. How does Shoghi Effendi demonstrate the recognition of Bahá'u'lláh's Message for the first principles of every Dispensation?
 - Shoghi Effendi demonstrates that Bahá'u'lláh's Message recognizes the divine origin and upholds the first principles of every Dispensation inaugurated by the prophets of the past, intricately interwoven with each one of them.

3. What does Shoghi Effendi emphasize regarding Bahá'u'lláh's claim to finality?
 - Shoghi Effendi emphasizes that despite the vastness of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation, He disclaims any claim to finality for Himself, repudiating the notion upheld by leaders of various denominations.

4. Why does Shoghi Effendi underscore the significance of recognizing the Báb's authority?
 - Shoghi Effendi underscores the significance of recognizing the Báb, not merely as the Precursor of the Bahá'í Faith, but as One invested with the undivided authority assumed by each of the independent Prophets of the past, as essential in the evolution of the Bahá'í Cause.

69. An attempt I strongly feel should now be made to clarify our minds regarding the station occupied by 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the significance of His position in this holy Dispensation. It would be indeed difficult for us, who stand so close to such a tremendous figure and are drawn by the mysterious power of so magnetic a personality, to obtain a clear and exact understanding of the rôle and character of One Who, not only in the Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh but in the entire field of religious history, fulfills a unique function. Though moving in a sphere of His own and holding a rank radically different from that of the Author and the Forerunner of the Bahá'í Revelation, He, by virtue of the station ordained for Him through the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh, forms together with them what may be termed the Three Central Figures of a Faith that stands unapproached in the world's spiritual history. He towers, in conjunction with them, above the destinies of this infant Faith of God from a level to

which no individual or body ministering to its needs after Him, and for no less a period than a full thousand years, can ever hope to rise. To degrade His lofty rank by identifying His station with or by regarding it as roughly equivalent to, the position of those on whom the mantle of His authority has fallen would be an act of impiety as grave as the no less heretical belief that inclines to exalt Him to a state of absolute equality with either the central Figure or Forerunner of our Faith. For wide as is the gulf that separates ‘Abdu’l-Bahá from Him Who is the Source of an independent Revelation, it can never be regarded as commensurate with the greater distance that stands between Him Who is the Center of the Covenant and His ministers who are to carry on His work, whatever be their name, their rank, their functions or their future achievements. Let those who have known ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, who through their contact with His magnetic personality have come to cherish for Him so fervent an admiration, reflect, in the light of this statement, on the greatness of One Who is so far above Him in station.

Summary:

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi delves into the station occupied by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and the significance of His position in the Bahá’í Dispensation. He acknowledges the challenge in comprehending the role and character of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, given His unique function not only in the Dispensation of Bahá’u’lláh but also in the entire field of religious history. Shoghi Effendi emphasizes that while ‘Abdu’l-Bahá moves in a sphere of His own and holds a rank radically different from that of Bahá’u’lláh and the Báb, He, by virtue of the station ordained for Him through the Covenant of Bahá’u’lláh, forms together with them what may be termed the Three Central Figures of the Bahá’í Faith.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to the passage discussing the station of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and its significance.
2. Acknowledgment of the difficulty in understanding the role and character of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, given His unique function.
3. Description of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s station as fundamentally different from that of Bahá’u’lláh and the Báb but forming the Three Central Figures of the Bahá’í Faith.
4. Emphasis on the impossibility of degrading ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s rank by equating it with or regarding it as equivalent to the positions of His ministers.
5. Comparison of the gulf between ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and Bahá’u’lláh with the greater distance separating ‘Abdu’l-Bahá from His ministers.
6. Call for reflection on the greatness of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá by those who have known Him and cherish admiration for His magnetic personality.

Questions and Answers:

1. What is the central theme of Shoghi Effendi's passage?
- The central theme is the station occupied by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and the significance of His position in the Bahá’í Dispensation.

2. Why does Shoghi Effendi emphasize the challenge in understanding ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s role and character?

- Shoghi Effendi highlights the challenge because ‘Abdu’l-Bahá fulfills a unique function not only in the Bahá’í Dispensation but also in the entire field of religious history.

3. How does Shoghi Effendi describe the station of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in relation to Bahá’u’lláh and the Báb?

- Shoghi Effendi describes ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s station as fundamentally different from that of Bahá’u’lláh and the Báb but forming together with them the Three Central Figures of the Bahá’í Faith.

4. What is the significance of the comparison between the gulf separating ‘Abdu’l-Bahá from Bahá’u’lláh and the greater distance separating Him from His ministers?

- The comparison underscores the unique and exalted station of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, emphasizing the impossibility of equating His rank with that of His ministers.

5. What does Shoghi Effendi urge those who have known ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to do?

- Shoghi Effendi urges them to reflect on the greatness of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, considering His station and role in the Bahá’í Dispensation.

70. That ‘Abdu’l-Bahá is not a Manifestation of God, that, though the successor of His Father, He does not occupy a cognate station, that no one else except the Báb and Bahá’u’lláh can ever lay claim to such a station before the expiration of a full thousand years—are verities which lie embedded in the specific utterances of both the Founder of our Faith and the Interpreter of His teachings.

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi asserts that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá is not a Manifestation of God and does not occupy a cognate station to Bahá’u’lláh. He emphasizes that these verities are embedded in the specific utterances of both the Founder of the Bahá’í Faith and the Interpreter of His teachings, affirming the unique and distinct station of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in relation to Bahá’u’lláh and the Báb.

Key Points:

1. Introduction highlighting the specific verities concerning ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s station.
2. Assertion that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá is not a Manifestation of God.
3. Explanation that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá does not occupy a cognate station to Bahá’u’lláh.
4. Emphasis on the exclusivity of the stations of the Báb and Bahá’u’lláh in the Bahá’í Faith.
5. Indication that these verities are based on the specific utterances of Bahá’u’lláh and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.
6. Clarification of the unique and distinct station of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá within the Bahá’í Faith.

Questions and Answers:

1. What is Shoghi Effendi's stance regarding 'Abdu'l-Bahá's station as a Manifestation of God?

- Shoghi Effendi asserts that 'Abdu'l-Bahá is not a Manifestation of God.

2. How does Shoghi Effendi describe the station of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in relation to Bahá'u'lláh?

- Shoghi Effendi explains that 'Abdu'l-Bahá does not occupy a cognate station to Bahá'u'lláh, indicating a distinction in their stations.

3. What does Shoghi Effendi emphasize regarding the exclusivity of the stations of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh?

- Shoghi Effendi emphasizes that no one else except the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh can ever lay claim to such a station before the expiration of a full thousand years.

4. Where does Shoghi Effendi suggest these verities are rooted?

- Shoghi Effendi suggests that these verities are embedded in the specific utterances of both Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

5. How does Shoghi Effendi characterize the station of 'Abdu'l-Bahá within the Bahá'í Faith?

- Shoghi Effendi clarifies that 'Abdu'l-Bahá holds a unique and distinct station within the Bahá'í Faith, separate from that of Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb.

71. *"Whoso layeth claim to a Revelation direct from God,"* is the express warning uttered in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, *"ere the expiration of a full thousand years, such a man is assuredly a lying imposter. We pray God that He may graciously assist him to retract and repudiate such claim. Should he repent, God will no doubt forgive him. If, however, he persists in his error, God will assuredly send down one who will deal mercilessly with him. Terrible indeed is God in punishing!"* "Whosoever," He adds as a further emphasis, *"interpreteth this verse otherwise than its obvious meaning is deprived of the Spirit of God and of His mercy which encompasseth all created things."* *"Should a man appear,"* is yet another conclusive statement, *"ere the lapse of a full thousand years—each year consisting of twelve months according to the Qur'án, and of nineteen months of nineteen days each, according to the Bayán—and if such a man reveal to your eyes all the signs of God, unhesitatingly reject him!"*

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi underscores the stern warning issued in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas against anyone who claims to be the recipient of a Revelation from God before the expiration of a full thousand years following the advent of the previous Manifestation. The Kitáb-i-Aqdas specifically states that such a claimant is deemed a lying imposter, and prayers are offered for their repentance. However, if they persist in their false claim, they will face severe punishment from God. The text emphasizes the gravity of misinterpreting this warning

and asserts that such a misinterpretation deprives one of the Spirit of God and His mercy. Another unequivocal statement in the passage instructs believers to reject anyone who appears claiming divine revelation before the completion of a full thousand years according to the Islamic and Bábí calendars.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to the stern warning issued in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas regarding false claimants to divine revelation.
2. Explanation of the consequences for those who lay claim to a Revelation before the lapse of a full thousand years.
3. Emphasis on the prayer for repentance and forgiveness for those who retract their false claims.
4. Description of the severe punishment awaiting those who persist in their error.
5. Clarification of the importance of interpreting the warning according to its obvious meaning to avoid deprivation of the Spirit of God and His mercy.
6. Direct instruction to believers to reject any individual claiming divine revelation before the completion of a full thousand years.

Questions and Answers:

1. What warning does the Kitáb-i-Aqdas issue regarding false claimants to divine revelation?
 - The Kitáb-i-Aqdas warns that anyone who claims to receive a Revelation from God before the lapse of a full thousand years is considered a lying imposter.
2. What are the consequences for those who persist in their false claims?
 - Those who persist in their false claims face severe punishment from God, as emphasized in the text.
3. What is the significance of praying for repentance and forgiveness for false claimants?
 - The prayer for repentance and forgiveness offers false claimants an opportunity to retract their claims and seek forgiveness from God.
4. Why is it important to interpret the warning according to its obvious meaning?
 - Interpreting the warning according to its obvious meaning ensures that one does not deprive oneself of the Spirit of God and His mercy.
5. What direct instruction does the passage provide to believers regarding false claimants?
 - Believers are instructed to unhesitatingly reject anyone who appears claiming divine revelation before the completion of a full thousand years according to the Islamic and Bábí calendars.
72. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s own statements, in confirmation of this warning, are no less emphatic and binding: “*This is,*” He declares, “*my firm, my unshakable conviction, the essence of my unconcealed and explicit belief—a conviction and belief which the denizens of*

the Abhá Kingdom fully share: The Blessed Beauty is the Sun of Truth, and His light the light of truth. The Báb is likewise the Sun of Truth, and His light the light of truth... My station is the station of servitude—a servitude which is complete, pure and real, firmly established, enduring, obvious, explicitly revealed and subject to no interpretation whatever... I am the Interpreter of the Word of God; such is my interpretation.”

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi highlights ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s unequivocal statements regarding the station of the Báb, Bahá’u’lláh, and Himself. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá confirms that Bahá’u’lláh and the Báb are both Suns of Truth, and their light is the light of truth. He then unequivocally declares His own station as one of servitude, emphasizing that His interpretation of the Word of God is authoritative and final.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s emphatic statements regarding His own station and the stations of Bahá’u’lláh and the Báb.
2. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s declaration that Bahá’u’lláh and the Báb are both Suns of Truth.
3. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s assertion of His own station as one of servitude, devoid of any claim to Manifestationship.
4. Emphasis on the completeness, purity, and reality of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s servitude, with no room for interpretation.
5. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s affirmation of His role as the Interpreter of the Word of God, signifying His authority in interpreting divine teachings.

Questions and Answers:

1. How does ‘Abdu’l-Bahá characterize the stations of Bahá’u’lláh and the Báb?
 - ‘Abdu’l-Bahá characterizes Bahá’u’lláh and the Báb as Suns of Truth, and their light as the light of truth.
2. What station does ‘Abdu’l-Bahá attribute to Himself?
 - ‘Abdu’l-Bahá attributes the station of servitude to Himself, emphasizing its completeness, purity, and reality.
3. What does ‘Abdu’l-Bahá emphasize regarding the interpretation of His station?
 - ‘Abdu’l-Bahá emphasizes that His station of servitude is explicitly revealed and subject to no interpretation whatsoever.
4. What role does ‘Abdu’l-Bahá claim for Himself in relation to the Word of God?
 - ‘Abdu’l-Bahá claims the role of Interpreter of the Word of God, indicating His authority in interpreting divine teachings.
5. How does Shoghi Effendi emphasize the authority of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s statements?

- Shoghi Effendi underscores the unequivocal nature of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s statements, indicating their binding and authoritative nature in the Bahá’í Faith.

73. Does not ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in His own Will—in a tone and language that might well confound the most inveterate among the breakers of His Father’s Covenant—rob of their chief weapon those who so long and so persistently had striven to impute to Him the charge of having tacitly claimed a station equal, if not superior, to that of Bahá’u’lláh? “*The foundation of the belief of the people of Bahá is this,*” thus proclaims one of the weightiest passages of that last document left to voice in perpetuity the directions and wishes of a departed Master, “*His Holiness the Exalted One (the Báb) is the Manifestation of the unity and oneness of God and the Forerunner of the Ancient Beauty. His Holiness the Abhá Beauty (Bahá’u’lláh) (may my life be a sacrifice for His steadfast friends) is the supreme Manifestation of God and the Day-Spring of His most divine Essence. All others are servants unto Him and do His bidding.*”

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi highlights a significant passage from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Will, emphasizing its role in clarifying misconceptions about ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s station in relation to Bahá’u’lláh. In this passage, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá unequivocally declares the station of the Báb as the Manifestation of the unity and oneness of God and the Forerunner of Bahá’u’lláh, who is identified as the supreme Manifestation of God and the Day-Spring of His most divine Essence. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá explicitly states that all others are servants unto Bahá’u’lláh and do His bidding, thereby dispelling any notion of His station as equal to or superior to Bahá’u’lláh’s.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to the passage from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Will clarifying His station in relation to Bahá’u’lláh.
2. The declaration of the Báb as the Manifestation of the unity and oneness of God and the Forerunner of Bahá’u’lláh.
3. Identification of Bahá’u’lláh as the supreme Manifestation of God and the Day-Spring of His most divine Essence.
4. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s assertion that all others are servants unto Bahá’u’lláh and do His bidding.
5. The significance of this passage in dispelling misconceptions about ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s station and authority.

Questions and Answers:

1. What clarification does ‘Abdu’l-Bahá provide in His Will regarding His station in relation to Bahá’u’lláh?
 - ‘Abdu’l-Bahá clarifies that His station is one of servitude, while identifying Bahá’u’lláh as the supreme Manifestation of God.

2. How does ‘Abdu’l-Bahá describe the station of the Báb?

- ‘Abdu’l-Bahá describes the Báb as the Manifestation of the unity and oneness of God and the Forerunner of Bahá’u’lláh.

3. What title does ‘Abdu’l-Bahá attribute to Bahá’u’lláh?

- ‘Abdu’l-Bahá identifies Bahá’u’lláh as the supreme Manifestation of God and the Day-Spring of His most divine Essence.

4. How does ‘Abdu’l-Bahá characterize the relationship between all others and Bahá’u’lláh?

- ‘Abdu’l-Bahá states that all others are servants unto Bahá’u’lláh and do His bidding.

5. What is the significance of this passage in ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's Will?

- This passage clarifies ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's station and authority in the Bahá’í Faith, dispelling any misconceptions about His position being equal to or superior to Bahá’u’lláh's.

74. From such clear and formally laid down statements, incompatible as they are with any assertion of a claim to Prophethood, we should not by any means infer that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá is merely one of the servants of the Blessed Beauty, or at best one whose function is to be confined to that of an authorized interpreter of His Father’s teachings. Far be it from me to entertain such a notion or to wish to instill such sentiments. To regard Him in such a light is a manifest betrayal of the priceless heritage bequeathed by Bahá’u’lláh to mankind. Immeasurably exalted is the station conferred upon Him by the Supreme Pen above and beyond the implications of these, His own written statements. Whether in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, the most weighty and sacred of all the works of Bahá’u’lláh, or in the Kitáb-i-‘Ahd, the Book of His Covenant, or in the Súriy-i-Ghusn (Tablet of the Branch), such references as have been recorded by the pen of Bahá’u’lláh—references which the Tablets of His Father addressed to Him mightily reinforce—invest ‘Abdu’l-Bahá with a power, and surround Him with a halo, which the present generation can never adequately appreciate.

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi emphasizes that while ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's explicit statements reject any claim to Prophethood or equal station with Bahá’u’lláh, it would be erroneous to perceive Him merely as a servant or interpreter of His Father's teachings. Shoghi Effendi rejects such notions as a betrayal of the heritage left by Bahá’u’lláh. He asserts that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's station is immeasurably exalted beyond the implications of His own written statements. References from Bahá’u’lláh's writings, such as the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, the Kitáb-i-‘Ahd, and the Súriy-i-Ghusn (Tablet of the Branch), as well as Tablets addressed to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá by Bahá’u’lláh, confer upon Him a power and status that surpasses contemporary understanding.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to Shoghi Effendi's assertion regarding 'Abdu'l-Bahá's station and role.
2. Rejection of the notion that 'Abdu'l-Bahá is merely a servant or interpreter of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings.
3. Critique of viewing 'Abdu'l-Bahá's station in a limited or diminished light.
4. Exaltation of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's station beyond His own written statements.
5. The significance of references from Bahá'u'lláh's writings in affirming 'Abdu'l-Bahá's exalted station.

Questions and Answers:

1. How does Shoghi Effendi characterize the perception of 'Abdu'l-Bahá as merely a servant or interpreter?
 - Shoghi Effendi rejects such a notion as a betrayal of the heritage left by Bahá'u'lláh and emphasizes 'Abdu'l-Bahá's exalted station.
2. What does Shoghi Effendi assert regarding 'Abdu'l-Bahá's station beyond His own written statements?
 - Shoghi Effendi asserts that 'Abdu'l-Bahá's station is immeasurably exalted beyond the implications of His own explicit statements.
3. How does Shoghi Effendi emphasize the significance of references from Bahá'u'lláh's writings?
 - Shoghi Effendi highlights references from Bahá'u'lláh's writings, such as the Kitáb-i-Aqdas and the Súriy-i-Ghusn, as conferring upon 'Abdu'l-Bahá a power and status that surpass contemporary understanding.
4. Why does Shoghi Effendi reject viewing 'Abdu'l-Bahá's station in a limited or diminished light?
 - Shoghi Effendi argues that such a perspective fails to recognize the full extent of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's role and station as ordained by Bahá'u'lláh.
5. What is the overall message conveyed by Shoghi Effendi in this passage?
 - Shoghi Effendi underscores the exalted station and role of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, emphasizing the need to recognize His significance beyond explicit statements and to avoid limiting perceptions of His authority.
75. He is, and should for all time be regarded, first and foremost, as the Center and Pivot of Bahá'u'lláh's peerless and all-enfolding Covenant, His most exalted handiwork, the stainless Mirror of His light, the perfect Exemplar of His teachings, the unerring Interpreter of His Word, the embodiment of every Bahá'í ideal, the incarnation of every Bahá'í virtue, the Most Mighty Branch sprung from the Ancient Root, the Limb of the Law of God, the Being "*round Whom all names revolve*," the Mainspring of the Oneness of Humanity, the Ensign of the Most Great Peace, the Moon of the Central Orb of this most holy Dispensation—styles and titles that are implicit and find their

truest, their highest and fairest expression in the magic name ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. He is, above and beyond these appellations, the “*Mystery of God*”—an expression by which Bahá’u’lláh Himself has chosen to designate Him, and which, while it does not by any means justify us to assign to Him the station of Prophethood, indicates how in the person of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá the incompatible characteristics of a human nature and superhuman knowledge and perfection have been blended and are completely harmonized.

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi elaborates on the exalted station and multifaceted role of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, emphasizing His centrality in Bahá’u’lláh’s Covenant and His embodiment of Bahá’í ideals and virtues. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá is depicted as the perfect exemplar of Bahá’u’lláh’s teachings, the unerring interpreter of His Word, and the incarnation of every Bahá’í virtue. He is described using various titles and styles that highlight His significance, including the Center and Pivot of Bahá’u’lláh’s Covenant, the Most Mighty Branch, and the Moon of the Central Orb of the Bahá’í Dispensation. Shoghi Effendi also references Bahá’u’lláh’s designation of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as the “Mystery of God,” underscoring the unique blending of human nature and superhuman knowledge and perfection in ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to Shoghi Effendi's elaboration on ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's exalted station.
2. Description of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as the Center and Pivot of Bahá’u’lláh’s Covenant.
3. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as the perfect exemplar of Bahá’u’lláh’s teachings and the unerring interpreter of His Word.
4. Various titles and styles used to describe ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, highlighting His significance.
5. Reference to Bahá’u’lláh's designation of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as the “Mystery of God,” indicating the unique blending of human and divine qualities in His person.

Questions and Answers:

1. How does Shoghi Effendi depict ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's role in relation to Bahá’u’lláh’s Covenant?
 - Shoghi Effendi describes ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as the Center and Pivot of Bahá’u’lláh’s Covenant, emphasizing His central role in upholding and interpreting Bahá’u’lláh’s teachings.
2. What titles and styles are used to describe ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's significance?
 - ‘Abdu’l-Bahá is described using various titles and styles, including the Most Mighty Branch, the Moon of the Central Orb of the Bahá’í Dispensation, and the Mystery of God, highlighting His exalted station.
3. How does Shoghi Effendi characterize ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's role as an interpreter of Bahá’u’lláh’s teachings?

- Shoghi Effendi portrays ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as the perfect exemplar of Bahá’u’lláh’s teachings and the unerring interpreter of His Word, emphasizing His embodiment of Bahá’í ideals and virtues.

4. What significance does the designation of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as the “Mystery of God” hold?

- The designation underscores the unique blending of human nature and superhuman knowledge and perfection in ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, indicating His extraordinary qualities and station.

5. How does Shoghi Effendi's elaboration contribute to understanding ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's significance in the Bahá’í Faith?

- Shoghi Effendi's elaboration highlights ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's central role in Bahá’u’lláh's Covenant and His embodiment of Bahá’í ideals, enriching understanding of His significance as a figure of unparalleled importance in the Bahá’í Faith.

76. *“When the ocean of My presence hath ebbed and the Book of My Revelation is ended,”* proclaims the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, *“turn your faces towards Him Whom God hath purposed, Who hath branched from this Ancient Root.”* And again, *“When the Mystic Dove will have winged its flight from its Sanctuary of Praise and sought its far-off goal, its hidden habitation, refer ye whatsoever ye understand not in the Book to Him Who hath branched from this mighty Stock.”*

Summary:

In these passages from the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, Shoghi Effendi emphasizes the directive for believers to turn towards the Manifestation of God who will succeed Bahá’u’lláh when His Revelation comes to an end. This directive underscores the concept of succession in the Bahá’í Faith and highlights the continuity of divine guidance beyond Bahá’u’lláh's dispensation. Shoghi Effendi's interpretation sheds light on the significance of seeking guidance from the succeeding Manifestation of God and recognizing the ongoing unfoldment of divine revelation.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to the passages from the Kitáb-i-Aqdas regarding the succession of Manifestations of God.
2. Directive for believers to turn towards the succeeding Manifestation after Bahá’u’lláh's Revelation ends.
3. Emphasis on seeking guidance from the succeeding Manifestation for understanding aspects of the Bahá’í teachings that may be unclear.
4. Significance of recognizing the continuity of divine guidance and the succession of Manifestations in the Bahá’í Faith.
5. Implications of these passages for Bahá’í believers in terms of their spiritual orientation and approach to understanding the Bahá’í Revelation.

Questions and Answers:

1. What is the directive given to believers in the passages from the Kitáb-i-Aqdas quoted by Shoghi Effendi?

- Believers are directed to turn towards the Manifestation of God who will succeed Bahá'u'lláh after the end of His Revelation.

2. Why is it important for believers to seek guidance from the succeeding Manifestation?

- Seeking guidance from the succeeding Manifestation ensures continuity of divine guidance and helps believers understand aspects of the Bahá'í teachings that may be unclear.

3. How does Shoghi Effendi interpret these passages?

- Shoghi Effendi interprets these passages as highlighting the concept of succession in the Bahá'í Faith and the ongoing unfoldment of divine revelation beyond Bahá'u'lláh's dispensation.

4. What implications do these passages have for Bahá'í believers?

- These passages emphasize the importance of recognizing the continuity of divine guidance and turning towards the succeeding Manifestation for spiritual direction and understanding.

5. How do these passages contribute to the understanding of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings and the overall framework of the Bahá'í Faith?

- These passages underscore the concept of succession in the Bahá'í Faith and highlight the evolving nature of divine revelation, contributing to a deeper understanding of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings and the framework of the Bahá'í Faith.

77. In the Kitáb-i-'Ahd, moreover, Bahá'u'lláh solemnly and explicitly declares: *“It is incumbent upon the Aghsán, the Afnán and My kindred to turn, one and all, their faces towards the Most Mighty Branch. Consider that which We have revealed in Our Most Holy Book: ‘When the ocean of My presence hath ebbed and the Book of My Revelation is ended, turn your faces towards Him Whom God hath purposed, Who hath branched from this Ancient Root.’ The object of this sacred verse is none except the Most Mighty Branch (‘Abdu'l-Bahá). Thus have We graciously revealed unto you our potent Will, and I am verily the Gracious, the All-Bountiful.”*

Summary:

In the Kitáb-i-'Ahd, Bahá'u'lláh explicitly commands His descendants, the Aghsán, the Afnán, and His kindred, to turn their faces towards the Most Mighty Branch, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, after the completion of His Revelation. This directive underscores 'Abdu'l-Bahá's unique station as the appointed successor of Bahá'u'lláh and the Center of His Covenant. Shoghi Effendi highlights the significance of this command and its implications for the Bahá'í community, emphasizing 'Abdu'l-Bahá's role as the authoritative interpreter of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings and the focal point of unity for the Bahá'í Faith.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to the command in the Kitáb-i-‘Ahd for Bahá’u’lláh's descendants and kindred to turn towards ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.
2. Explanation of the verse from the Most Holy Book directing believers to turn towards the succeeding Manifestation after Bahá’u’lláh's Revelation ends.
3. Identification of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as the Most Mighty Branch and the appointed successor of Bahá’u’lláh.
4. Emphasis on the authority and significance of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as the Center of Bahá’u’lláh's Covenant.
5. Implications of this command for Bahá’u’lláh's descendants, the Bahá’í community, and the followers of the Faith.

Questions and Answers:

1. What is the command given by Bahá’u’lláh in the Kitáb-i-‘Ahd regarding ‘Abdu’l-Bahá?
 - Bahá’u’lláh commands His descendants, the Aghşán, the Afnán, and His kindred, to turn their faces towards ‘Abdu’l-Bahá after the completion of His Revelation.
2. What does the verse from the Most Holy Book quoted by Bahá’u’lláh signify?
 - The verse directs believers to turn towards the succeeding Manifestation after Bahá’u’lláh's Revelation ends, indicating the importance of seeking guidance from the appointed successor.
3. How does Shoghi Effendi interpret this command and verse?
 - Shoghi Effendi interprets this command as underscoring ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's unique station as the Most Mighty Branch and the authoritative interpreter of Bahá’u’lláh's teachings.
4. What is the significance of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's role as the Most Mighty Branch?
 - ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's role as the Most Mighty Branch signifies His position as the appointed successor of Bahá’u’lláh and the focal point of unity for the Bahá’í Faith.
5. How does this command impact Bahá’u’lláh's descendants and the Bahá’í community?
 - This command reinforces ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's authority and significance as the Center of Bahá’u’lláh's Covenant and provides guidance for the Bahá’í community to turn towards Him for spiritual guidance and direction.
78. In the Súriy-i-Ghusn (Tablet of the Branch) the following verses have been recorded:
“There hath branched from the Sadratu’l-Muntahá this sacred and glorious Being, this Branch of Holiness; well is it with him that hath sought His shelter and abideth beneath His shadow. Verily the Limb of the Law of God hath sprung forth from this Root which God hath firmly implanted in the Ground of His Will, and Whose Branch hath been so uplifted as to encompass the whole of creation. Magnified be He, therefore, for this sublime, this blessed, this mighty, this exalted Handiwork!... A Word hath, as a token of Our grace, gone forth from the Most Great Tablet—a Word

which God hath adorned with the ornament of His own Self, and made it sovereign over the earth and all that is therein, and a sign of His greatness and power among its people ...Render thanks unto God, O people, for His appearance; for verily He is the most great Favor unto you, the most perfect bounty upon you; and through Him every mouldering bone is quickened. Whoso turneth towards Him hath turned towards God, and whoso turneth away from Him hath turned away from My beauty, hath repudiated My Proof, and transgressed against Me. He is the Trust of God amongst you, His charge within you, His manifestation unto you and His appearance among His favored servants... We have sent Him down in the form of a human temple. Blest and sanctified be God Who createth whatsoever He willeth through His inviolable, His infallible decree. They who deprive themselves of the shadow of the Branch, are lost in the wilderness of error, are consumed by the heat of worldly desires, and are of those who will assuredly perish.”

Summary:

In the Súriy-i-Ghusn, Bahá'u'lláh exalts ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as the sacred and glorious Branch of Holiness, branching from the Sadratu’l-Muntahá (the Tree beyond which there is no passing). He is described as the Limb of the Law of God, a manifestation of God's grace adorned with His own Self, sovereign over the earth, and a sign of His greatness and power among humanity. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's appearance is heralded as the greatest favor and perfect bounty upon humanity, quickening every mouldering bone and serving as the Trust of God among humanity.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to the verses from the Súriy-i-Ghusn describing ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as the Branch of Holiness branching from the Sadratu’l-Muntahá.
2. Description of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as the Limb of the Law of God and the manifestation of divine grace.
3. Recognition of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's appearance as the greatest favor and perfect bounty upon humanity.
4. Emphasis on ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's role as the Trust of God among humanity and His manifestation to His favored servants.
5. Warning against depriving oneself of the shadow of the Branch and the consequences of turning away from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

Questions and Answers:

1. How does Bahá'u'lláh describe ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in the Súriy-i-Ghusn?
 - Bahá'u'lláh exalts ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as the Branch of Holiness, the Limb of the Law of God, and a manifestation of divine grace in the Súriy-i-Ghusn.
2. What role does ‘Abdu’l-Bahá play according to Bahá'u'lláh in these verses?
 - ‘Abdu’l-Bahá is described as the manifestation of God's grace, sovereign over the earth, and the Trust of God among humanity.

3. What is the significance of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's appearance according to Bahá’u’lláh?

- ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's appearance is hailed as the greatest favor and perfect bounty upon humanity, quickening every mouldering bone and serving as the manifestation of divine grace among humanity.

4. What are the consequences of turning away from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá according to Bahá’u’lláh?

- Turning away from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá is described as depriving oneself of divine guidance, being lost in the wilderness of error, consumed by worldly desires, and assuredly perishing.

5. How does Bahá’u’lláh emphasize the importance of recognizing ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's station?

- Bahá’u’lláh emphasizes ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's station as the Branch of Holiness branching from the Sadratu’l-Muntahá, the Tree beyond which there is no passing, and as the manifestation of divine grace among humanity.

79. *“O Thou Who art the apple of Mine eye!”* Bahá’u’lláh, in His own handwriting, thus addresses ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *“My glory, the ocean of My loving-kindness, the sun of My bounty, the heaven of My mercy rest upon Thee. We pray God to illumine the world through Thy knowledge and wisdom, to ordain for Thee that which will gladden Thine heart and impart consolation to Thine eyes.”* *“The glory of God rest upon Thee,”* He writes in another Tablet, *“and upon whosoever serveth Thee and circleth around Thee. Woe, great woe, betide him that opposeth and injureth Thee. Well is it with him that sweareth fealty to Thee; the fire of hell torment him who is Thine enemy.”* *“We have made Thee a shelter for all mankind,”* He, in yet another Tablet, affirms, *“a shield unto all who are in heaven and on earth, a stronghold for whosoever hath believed in God, the Incomparable, the All-Knowing. God grant that through Thee He may protect them, may enrich and sustain them, that He may inspire Thee with that which shall be a wellspring of wealth unto all created things, an ocean of bounty unto all men, and the dayspring of mercy unto all peoples.”*

Summary:

Bahá’u’lláh, in various Tablets addressed to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, extols him as the object of His love, the recipient of His bounty and mercy, and the shelter for all mankind. He prays for the illumination of the world through ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's knowledge and wisdom, and for his heart to be gladdened and his eyes consoled. Bahá’u’lláh invokes divine blessings upon ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and those who serve and follow him, while warning against opposition to him. He declares ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as a shelter for humanity, a shield for believers, and a stronghold for those who have faith in God. Bahá’u’lláh expresses his hope that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá will be a source of protection, enrichment, and sustenance for all creation, an ocean of bounty for humanity, and a dawn of mercy for all peoples.

Key Points:

1. Bahá'u'lláh's expressions of love and honor towards 'Abdu'l-Bahá in His Tablets.
2. Prayers for 'Abdu'l-Bahá's enlightenment, joy, and comfort.
3. Divine blessings invoked upon 'Abdu'l-Bahá and his followers, with warnings against opposition.
4. 'Abdu'l-Bahá's role as a shelter, shield, and stronghold for humanity.
5. Bahá'u'lláh's hope for 'Abdu'l-Bahá to be a source of protection, enrichment, and mercy for all creation.

Questions and Answers:

1. How does Bahá'u'lláh address 'Abdu'l-Bahá in His Tablets?
 - Bahá'u'lláh addresses 'Abdu'l-Bahá with expressions of love, honor, and divine blessings, acknowledging him as the recipient of His bounty and mercy.
2. What does Bahá'u'lláh pray for regarding 'Abdu'l-Bahá?
 - Bahá'u'lláh prays for the enlightenment, joy, and comfort of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and for his heart to be gladdened and his eyes consoled.
3. How does Bahá'u'lláh warn against opposition to 'Abdu'l-Bahá?
 - Bahá'u'lláh warns of great woe for those who oppose and injure 'Abdu'l-Bahá, while invoking divine blessings upon those who swear fealty to him.
4. What roles does Bahá'u'lláh attribute to 'Abdu'l-Bahá?
 - Bahá'u'lláh describes 'Abdu'l-Bahá as a shelter for all mankind, a shield for believers, and a stronghold for those who have faith in God.
5. What is Bahá'u'lláh's hope regarding 'Abdu'l-Bahá's impact on humanity?
 - Bahá'u'lláh hopes that 'Abdu'l-Bahá will serve as a source of protection, enrichment, and sustenance for all creation, an ocean of bounty for humanity, and a dawn of mercy for all peoples.
80. *"Thou knowest, O my God," Bahá'u'lláh, in a prayer revealed in 'Abdu'l-Bahá's honor, supplicates, "that I desire for Him naught except that which Thou didst desire, and have chosen Him for no purpose save that which Thou hadst intended for Him. Render Him victorious, therefore, through Thy hosts of earth and heaven... Ordain, I beseech Thee, by the ardor of My love for Thee and My yearning to manifest Thy Cause, for Him, as well as for them that love Him, that which Thou hast destined for Thy Messengers and the Trustees of Thy Revelation. Verily, Thou art the Almighty, the All-Powerful."*

Summary:

Bahá'u'lláh, in a prayer dedicated to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, expresses his desire for 'Abdu'l-Bahá's success and victory according to the divine purpose. He seeks for 'Abdu'l-Bahá and those who love him to be granted what God has destined for His Messengers and

Trustees of Revelation. Bahá'u'lláh invokes divine assistance and power for 'Abdu'l-Bahá through the hosts of earth and heaven, affirming God's omnipotence and sovereignty.

Key Points:

1. Bahá'u'lláh's prayer for 'Abdu'l-Bahá's success and victory.
2. The purpose of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's mission in alignment with divine intention.
3. Invocation of divine assistance and power for 'Abdu'l-Bahá and his followers.
4. Desire for 'Abdu'l-Bahá to fulfill the destiny of God's Messengers and Trustees of Revelation.
5. Acknowledgment of God's omnipotence and sovereignty in answering prayers.

Questions and Answers:

1. What does Bahá'u'lláh pray for regarding 'Abdu'l-Bahá?
 - Bahá'u'lláh prays for 'Abdu'l-Bahá's victory and success in alignment with the divine purpose and intention.
2. What is the purpose of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's mission according to Bahá'u'lláh?
 - 'Abdu'l-Bahá's mission is chosen and destined by God, and Bahá'u'lláh seeks for 'Abdu'l-Bahá to fulfill this purpose according to divine will.
3. How does Bahá'u'lláh invoke divine assistance for 'Abdu'l-Bahá?
 - Bahá'u'lláh calls upon the hosts of earth and heaven to render assistance to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, demonstrating divine power and omnipotence.
4. What does Bahá'u'lláh desire for 'Abdu'l-Bahá and his followers?
 - Bahá'u'lláh desires for 'Abdu'l-Bahá and those who love him to receive what God has destined for His Messengers and Trustees of Revelation.
5. What attributes of God does Bahá'u'lláh affirm in this prayer?
 - Bahá'u'lláh affirms God's almighty power and all-encompassing sovereignty in answering prayers and fulfilling His divine purpose.
81. In a letter dictated by Bahá'u'lláh and addressed by Mírzá Áqá Ján, His amanuensis, to 'Abdu'l-Bahá while the latter was on a visit to Beirut, we read the following:
“Praise be to Him Who hath honored the Land of Bá (Beirut) through the presence of Him round Whom all names revolve. All the atoms of the earth have announced unto all created things that from behind the gate of the Prison-city there hath appeared and above its horizon there hath shone forth the Orb of the beauty of the great, the Most Mighty Branch of God—His ancient and immutable Mystery—proceeding on its way to another land. Sorrow, thereby, hath enveloped this Prison-city, whilst another land rejoiceth... Blessed, doubly blessed, is the ground which His footsteps have trodden, the eye that hath been cheered by the beauty of His countenance, the ear that hath been honored by hearkening to His call, the heart that hath tasted the sweetness of His

love, the breast that hath dilated through His remembrance, the pen that hath voiced His praise, the scroll that hath borne the testimony of His writings.”

Summary:

In a letter dictated by Bahá'u'lláh and addressed to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá while the latter was visiting Beirut, Bahá'u'lláh praises the city for being honored by the presence of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, whom Bahá'u'lláh describes as the central figure around whom all names revolve. The letter emphasizes the significance of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s visit and describes the sorrow felt in Beirut upon his departure, contrasted with the joy in the destination to which he is traveling. The letter blesses the ground that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá has walked upon, the eyes that have beheld his beauty, the ears that have heard his words, the hearts that have felt his love, the pens that have praised him, and the scrolls that have recorded his teachings.

Key Points:

1. Praise for the city of Beirut for hosting ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s presence.
2. Description of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as the central figure around whom all names revolve.
3. Sorrow in Beirut upon ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s departure and joy in his destination.
4. Blessings upon the ground, eyes, ears, hearts, pens, and scrolls associated with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

Questions and Answers:

1. What praise does Bahá'u'lláh offer to the city of Beirut?
 - Bahá'u'lláh praises Beirut for being honored by the presence of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, describing it as a city elevated by his visit.
2. How does Bahá'u'lláh describe ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in the letter?
 - Bahá'u'lláh describes ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as the central figure around whom all names revolve, indicating his spiritual significance.
3. What emotions does Bahá'u'lláh mention regarding ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s departure and arrival?
 - Bahá'u'lláh describes sorrow in Beirut upon ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s departure and joy in the destination to which he is traveling.
4. What blessings does Bahá'u'lláh invoke upon various aspects associated with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá?
 - Bahá'u'lláh blesses the ground, eyes, ears, hearts, pens, and scrolls associated with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, recognizing their connection to his presence and teachings.
82. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, writing in confirmation of the authority conferred upon Him by Bahá'u'lláh, makes the following statement: *“In accordance with the explicit text of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas Bahá'u'lláh hath made the Center of the Covenant the Interpreter*

of His Word—a Covenant so firm and mighty that from the beginning of time until the present day no religious Dispensation hath produced its like.”

Summary:

The letter dictated by Bahá'u'lláh and addressed to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá while the latter was visiting Beirut expresses gratitude to God for honoring the city through ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's presence. It describes ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as the central figure around whom all names revolve and praises his beauty as the Most Mighty Branch of God. The letter acknowledges the sorrow felt in Beirut upon ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's departure and contrasts it with the rejoicing in the destination to which he is traveling. It blesses the ground touched by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's footsteps, the eyes that have beheld his beauty, the ears that have heard his words, the hearts that have felt his love, the breasts that have expanded with his remembrance, the pens that have praised him, and the scrolls that have recorded his teachings.

Key Points:

1. Gratitude for God's honoring of Beirut through ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's presence.
2. Description of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as the central figure around whom all names revolve.
3. Praise for the beauty of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as the Most Mighty Branch of God.
4. Acknowledgment of sorrow in Beirut upon ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's departure and rejoicing in his destination.
5. Blessings upon various aspects associated with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, including the ground, eyes, ears, hearts, breasts, pens, and scrolls.

Questions and Answers:

1. What does the letter express gratitude for?
 - The letter expresses gratitude to God for honoring the city of Beirut through the presence of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.
2. How does the letter describe ‘Abdu’l-Bahá?
 - The letter describes ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as the central figure around whom all names revolve and praises his beauty as the Most Mighty Branch of God.
3. What emotions are mentioned regarding ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's departure and arrival?
 - Sorrow is mentioned in Beirut upon ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's departure, while rejoicing is mentioned in the destination to which he is traveling.
4. What blessings are invoked upon various aspects associated with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá?
 - The letter blesses the ground touched by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's footsteps, the eyes that have beheld his beauty, the ears that have heard his words, the hearts that have felt his love, the breasts that have expanded with his remembrance, the pens that have praised him, and the scrolls that have recorded his teachings.

83. Exalted as is the rank of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, and however profuse the praises with which in these sacred Books and Tablets Bahá’u’lláh has glorified His son, so unique a distinction must never be construed as conferring upon its recipient a station identical with, or equivalent to, that of His Father, the Manifestation Himself. To give such an interpretation to any of these quoted passages would at once, and for obvious reasons, bring it into conflict with the no less clear and authentic assertions and warnings to which I have already referred. Indeed, as I have already stated, those who overestimate ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s station are just as reprehensible and have done just as much harm as those who underestimate it. And this for no other reason except that by insisting upon an altogether unwarranted inference from Bahá’u’lláh’s writings they are inadvertently justifying and continuously furnishing the enemy with proofs for his false accusations and misleading statements.

Summary:

‘Abdu’l-Bahá affirms the authority bestowed upon Him by Bahá’u’lláh in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, stating that Bahá’u’lláh has designated the Center of the Covenant as the Interpreter of His Word. This Covenant is described as unparalleled in its strength and significance, surpassing any other religious dispensation in history.

Key Points:

1. Confirmation of authority: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá asserts that Bahá’u’lláh has designated the Center of the Covenant as the Interpreter of His Word.
2. Source of authority: The authority conferred upon ‘Abdu’l-Bahá is grounded in the explicit text of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas.
3. Uniqueness of the Covenant: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá highlights the exceptional nature of the Covenant, stating that no religious dispensation throughout history has produced anything comparable.

Questions and Answers:

1. What authority does ‘Abdu’l-Bahá affirm has been bestowed upon Him by Bahá’u’lláh?
 - ‘Abdu’l-Bahá affirms that Bahá’u’lláh has designated Him as the Interpreter of His Word, indicating a significant authority.
2. Where is the authority of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá grounded according to the statement?
 - The authority of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá is grounded in the explicit text of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, according to the statement.
3. How does ‘Abdu’l-Bahá describe the Covenant established by Bahá’u’lláh?
 - ‘Abdu’l-Bahá describes the Covenant as firm and mighty, surpassing any other religious dispensation in history.
4. What makes the Covenant unique according to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá?

- ‘Abdu’l-Bahá emphasizes the uniqueness of the Covenant, stating that no religious dispensation throughout history has produced anything comparable in strength and significance.

84. I feel it necessary, therefore, to state without any equivocation or hesitation that neither in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas nor in the Book of Bahá’u’lláh’s Covenant, nor even in the Tablet of the Branch, nor in any other Tablet, whether revealed by Bahá’u’lláh or ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, is there any authority whatever for the opinion that inclines to uphold the so-called “mystic unity” of Bahá’u’lláh and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, or to establish the identity of the latter with His Father or with any preceding Manifestation. This erroneous conception may, in part, be ascribed to an altogether extravagant interpretation of certain terms and passages in the Tablet of the Branch, to the introduction into its English translation of certain words that are either non-existent, misleading, or ambiguous in their connotation. It is, no doubt, chiefly based upon an altogether unjustified inference from the opening passages of a Tablet of Bahá’u’lláh, extracts of which, as reproduced in the “Bahá’í Scriptures”, immediately precede, but form no part of, the said Tablet of the Branch. It should be made clear to every one reading those extracts that by the phrase “the Tongue of the Ancient” no one else is meant but God, and that the term “the Greatest Name” is an obvious reference to Bahá’u’lláh, and that “the Covenant” referred to is not the specific Covenant of which Bahá’u’lláh is the immediate Author and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá the Center but that general Covenant which, as inculcated by the Bahá’í teaching, God Himself invariably establishes with mankind when He inaugurates a new Dispensation. “The Tongue” that “gives,” as stated in those extracts, the “glad-tidings” is none other than the Voice of God referring to Bahá’u’lláh, and not Bahá’u’lláh referring to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi emphasizes the exalted rank of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and the abundant praises bestowed upon Him by Bahá’u’lláh in sacred texts. However, he warns against interpreting these praises as conferring upon ‘Abdu’l-Bahá a station identical to that of Bahá’u’lláh. Such an interpretation would conflict with clear and authentic assertions and warnings in Bahá’u’lláh’s writings. Shoghi Effendi cautions against both overestimating and underestimating ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s station, as both attitudes can be harmful. Overestimation can lead to unwarranted inferences from Bahá’u’lláh’s writings, while underestimation undermines the significance of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s role.

Key Points:

1. Exalted rank of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá: Shoghi Effendi acknowledges the abundant praises bestowed upon ‘Abdu’l-Bahá by Bahá’u’lláh in sacred texts.
2. Caution against misinterpretation: Shoghi Effendi warns against interpreting these praises as conferring upon ‘Abdu’l-Bahá a station identical to that of Bahá’u’lláh.
3. Conflict with authentic assertions: Such an interpretation would conflict with clear and authentic assertions and warnings in Bahá’u’lláh’s writings.

4. Harm of overestimation and underestimation: Shoghi Effendi cautions against both overestimating and underestimating ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s station, highlighting the potential harm of each attitude.

Questions and Answers:

1. What does Shoghi Effendi emphasize regarding ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s rank?
 - Shoghi Effendi emphasizes the exalted rank of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and the abundant praises bestowed upon Him by Bahá’u’lláh in sacred texts.
 2. Why does Shoghi Effendi caution against interpreting these praises?
 - Shoghi Effendi warns against interpreting these praises as conferring upon ‘Abdu’l-Bahá a station identical to that of Bahá’u’lláh because such an interpretation would conflict with clear and authentic assertions and warnings in Bahá’u’lláh's writings.
 3. What does Shoghi Effendi caution against regarding ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s station?
 - Shoghi Effendi cautions against both overestimating and underestimating ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s station, highlighting the potential harm of each attitude.
 4. Why does Shoghi Effendi consider overestimation and underestimation harmful?
 - Overestimation can lead to unwarranted inferences from Bahá’u’lláh’s writings, while underestimation undermines the significance of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s role.
85. Moreover, to maintain that the assertion “He is Myself,” instead of denoting the mystic unity of God and His Manifestations, as explained in the Kitáb-i-Íqán, establishes the identity of Bahá’u’lláh with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, would constitute a direct violation of the oft-repeated principle of the oneness of God’s Manifestations—a principle which the Author of these same extracts is seeking by implication to emphasize.

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi unequivocally states that there is no authority in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, the Book of Bahá’u’lláh’s Covenant, or any other Tablet revealed by Bahá’u’lláh or ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to support the idea of a "mystic unity" between Bahá’u’lláh and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, or to establish the identity of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá with His Father or any preceding Manifestation. He attributes this erroneous conception partly to an extravagant interpretation of certain terms and passages in the Tablet of the Branch, and to misleading translations that introduce words that do not exist or are ambiguous in meaning. Shoghi Effendi clarifies that the opening passages of a Tablet of Bahá’u’lláh, as reproduced in the "Bahá’í Scriptures," do not support the idea of unity between Bahá’u’lláh and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Instead, these passages refer to God as the "Tongue of the Ancient," the "Greatest Name" as Bahá’u’lláh, and "the Covenant" as the general Covenant established by God with mankind at the beginning of a new Dispensation.

Key Points:

1. Absence of authority: Shoghi Effendi asserts that there is no authority in Bahá'u'lláh's or 'Abdu'l-Bahá's writings to support the idea of a "mystic unity" between Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá or the identity of 'Abdu'l-Bahá with His Father or any preceding Manifestation.
2. Erroneous conception: He attributes this misconception to an extravagant interpretation of certain terms and passages in the Tablet of the Branch, as well as misleading translations that introduce ambiguous or non-existent words.
3. Clarification of specific passages: Shoghi Effendi clarifies that the opening passages of a Tablet of Bahá'u'lláh, as reproduced in the "Bahá'í Scriptures," do not support the idea of unity between Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Instead, they refer to God as the "Tongue of the Ancient," the "Greatest Name" as Bahá'u'lláh, and "the Covenant" as the general Covenant established by God at the beginning of a new Dispensation.

Questions and Answers:

1. What does Shoghi Effendi assert regarding the idea of a "mystic unity" between Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá?
 - Shoghi Effendi unequivocally states that there is no authority in Bahá'u'lláh's or 'Abdu'l-Bahá's writings to support the idea of a "mystic unity" between them or the identity of 'Abdu'l-Bahá with His Father or any preceding Manifestation.
 2. What does he attribute this misconception to?
 - Shoghi Effendi attributes this misconception to an extravagant interpretation of certain terms and passages in the Tablet of the Branch, as well as misleading translations that introduce ambiguous or non-existent words.
 3. How does Shoghi Effendi clarify specific passages that are often misunderstood?
 - Shoghi Effendi clarifies that specific passages, such as those from a Tablet of Bahá'u'lláh reproduced in the "Bahá'í Scriptures," do not support the idea of unity between Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Instead, they refer to God as the "Tongue of the Ancient," the "Greatest Name" as Bahá'u'lláh, and "the Covenant" as the general Covenant established by God at the beginning of a new Dispensation.
86. It would also amount to a reversion to those irrational and superstitious beliefs which have insensibly crept, in the first century of the Christian era, into the teachings of Jesus Christ, and by crystallizing into accepted dogmas have impaired the effectiveness and obscured the purpose of the Christian Faith.

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi emphasizes that interpreting the phrase "He is Myself" from Bahá'u'lláh's writings as establishing the identity of Bahá'u'lláh with 'Abdu'l-Bahá would directly contradict the principle of the oneness of God's Manifestations. Instead, he argues that this phrase, as explained in the *Kitáb-i-Íqán*, denotes the mystic unity of God and His Manifestations, emphasizing the inseparable connection between them.

Key Points:

1. Misinterpretation of "He is Myself": Shoghi Effendi addresses the misinterpretation of the phrase "He is Myself" from Bahá'u'lláh's writings as establishing the identity of Bahá'u'lláh with 'Abdu'l-Bahá.
2. Violation of the principle of oneness: He argues that interpreting this phrase as indicating the identity of Bahá'u'lláh with 'Abdu'l-Bahá would directly contradict the principle of the oneness of God's Manifestations.
3. Explanation from the Kitáb-i-Íqán: Shoghi Effendi references the Kitáb-i-Íqán, where the phrase "He is Myself" is explained to denote the mystic unity of God and His Manifestations, emphasizing their inseparable connection rather than identity.

Questions and Answers:

1. How does Shoghi Effendi address the interpretation of "He is Myself"?
 - Shoghi Effendi addresses the misinterpretation of "He is Myself" from Bahá'u'lláh's writings as establishing the identity of Bahá'u'lláh with 'Abdu'l-Bahá.
 2. Why would interpreting "He is Myself" as indicating the identity of Bahá'u'lláh with 'Abdu'l-Bahá be problematic?
 - Shoghi Effendi argues that interpreting this phrase as indicating the identity of Bahá'u'lláh with 'Abdu'l-Bahá would directly contradict the principle of the oneness of God's Manifestations.
 3. How does Shoghi Effendi explain the meaning of "He is Myself"?
 - Shoghi Effendi references the Kitáb-i-Íqán, where the phrase "He is Myself" is explained to denote the mystic unity of God and His Manifestations, emphasizing their inseparable connection rather than identity.
87. *"I affirm,"* is 'Abdu'l-Bahá's own written comment on the Tablet of the Branch, *"that the true meaning, the real significance, the innermost secret of these verses, of these very words, is my own servitude to the sacred Threshold of the Abhá Beauty, my complete self-effacement, my utter nothingness before Him. This is my resplendent crown, my most precious adorning. On this I pride myself in the kingdom of earth and heaven. Therein I glory among the company of the well-favored!"* *"No one is permitted,"* He warns us in the passage which immediately follows, *"to give these verses any other interpretation."* *"I am,"* He, in this same connection, affirms, *"according to the explicit texts of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas and the Kitáb-i-'Ahd the manifest Interpreter of the Word of God... Whoso deviates from my interpretation is a victim of his own fancy."*

Summary:

In a commentary on the Tablet of the Branch, 'Abdu'l-Bahá affirms that the true meaning of the verses and words therein is his own servitude to the sacred Threshold of the Abhá Beauty, emphasizing his complete self-effacement and utter nothingness before

Bahá'u'lláh. He warns against giving these verses any other interpretation and asserts his role as the manifest Interpreter of the Word of God according to the explicit texts of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas and the Kitáb-i-'Ahd. He states that anyone deviating from his interpretation is a victim of their own imagination.

Key Points:

1. 'Abdu'l-Bahá's commentary: He affirms that the true meaning of the verses and words in the Tablet of the Branch is his own servitude to the sacred Threshold of the Abhá Beauty.
2. Emphasis on self-effacement: 'Abdu'l-Bahá underscores his complete self-effacement and utter nothingness before Bahá'u'lláh as his resplendent crown and most precious adorning.
3. Warning against other interpretations: He warns against giving these verses any other interpretation, emphasizing the exclusivity of his interpretation.
4. Role as Interpreter: 'Abdu'l-Bahá asserts his role as the manifest Interpreter of the Word of God according to the explicit texts of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas and the Kitáb-i-'Ahd.
5. Consequences of deviation: He states that anyone deviating from his interpretation is a victim of their own imagination, implying the seriousness of adhering to his authoritative interpretation.

Questions and Answers:

1. What does 'Abdu'l-Bahá affirm regarding the true meaning of the verses and words in the Tablet of the Branch?
 - 'Abdu'l-Bahá affirms that the true meaning is his own servitude to the sacred Threshold of the Abhá Beauty, emphasizing his complete self-effacement and utter nothingness before Bahá'u'lláh.
 2. Why does 'Abdu'l-Bahá warn against giving these verses any other interpretation?
 - 'Abdu'l-Bahá warns against other interpretations to emphasize the exclusivity of his interpretation and the importance of adhering to it.
 3. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá assert his role as the Interpreter of the Word of God?
 - He asserts his role based on the explicit texts of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas and the Kitáb-i-'Ahd, claiming to be the manifest Interpreter according to these writings.
 4. What consequences does 'Abdu'l-Bahá mention for those who deviate from his interpretation?
 - He states that anyone deviating from his interpretation is a victim of their own imagination, suggesting the seriousness of adhering to his authoritative interpretation.
88. Furthermore, the inescapable inference from the belief in the identity of the Author of our Faith with Him Who is the Center of His Covenant would be to place 'Abdu'l-Bahá in a position superior to that of the Báb, the reverse of which is the fundamental, though not as yet universally recognized, principle of this Revelation. It

would also justify the charge with which, all throughout ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s ministry, the Covenant-Breakers have striven to poison the minds and pervert the understanding of Bahá’u’lláh’s loyal followers.

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi emphasizes the grave implications of believing in the identity of the Author of the Bahá’í Faith with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, the Center of His Covenant. Such a belief would place ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in a position superior to that of the Báb, which contradicts the fundamental principle of the Bahá’í Revelation. Additionally, it would validate the accusations made by Covenant-Breakers throughout ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s ministry, aimed at undermining the understanding of Bahá’u’lláh's loyal followers.

Key Points:

1. Implications of belief in identity: Shoghi Effendi discusses the serious implications of believing that the Author of the Bahá’í Faith is identical to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, the Center of His Covenant.
2. Superior position to the Báb: Such a belief would imply that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá occupies a position superior to that of the Báb, which contradicts a fundamental principle of the Bahá’í Revelation.
3. Validation of accusations: Shoghi Effendi points out that this belief would validate the accusations made by Covenant-Breakers throughout ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s ministry, aimed at undermining the understanding of Bahá’u’lláh's loyal followers.

Questions and Answers:

1. What are the implications of believing in the identity of the Author of the Bahá’í Faith with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá?
 - The implications include placing ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in a position superior to that of the Báb, which contradicts a fundamental principle of the Bahá’í Revelation.
2. How would such a belief contradict a fundamental principle of the Bahá’í Revelation?
 - It would contradict the principle that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's position is not superior to that of the Báb, which is a foundational aspect of the Bahá’í Revelation.
3. What accusations did Covenant-Breakers make throughout ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s ministry?
 - Covenant-Breakers sought to poison the minds and pervert the understanding of Bahá’u’lláh's loyal followers by accusing ‘Abdu’l-Bahá of claiming a position equal to or greater than that of Bahá’u’lláh.
89. It would be more correct, and in consonance with the established principles of Bahá’u’lláh and the Báb, if instead of maintaining this fictitious identity with reference to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, we regard the Forerunner and the Founder of our Faith as identical in reality—a truth which the text of the Súratu’l-Haykal unmistakably affirms. *“Had the Primal Point (the Báb) been someone else beside Me as ye claim,”*

is Bahá'u'lláh's explicit statement, *“and had attained My presence, verily He would have never allowed Himself to be separated from Me, but rather We would have had mutual delights with each other in My Days.”* *“He Who now voiceth the Word of God,”* Bahá'u'lláh again affirms, *“is none other except the Primal Point Who hath once again been made manifest.”* *“He is,”* He thus refers to Himself in a Tablet addressed to one of the Letters of the Living, *“the same as the One Who appeared in the year sixty (1260 A.H.). This verily is one of His mighty signs.”* *“Who,”* He pleads in the Súriy-i-Damm, *“will arise to secure the triumph of the Primal Beauty (the Báb) revealed in the countenance of His succeeding Manifestation?”* Referring to the Revelation proclaimed by the Báb He conversely characterizes it as *“My own previous Manifestation.”*

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi underscores the importance of understanding the relationship between the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh accurately, highlighting the significance of their identity in reality rather than maintaining a fictitious identity with reference to 'Abdu'l-Bahá. He quotes Bahá'u'lláh's explicit statements affirming the identity of the Báb with Himself, emphasizing their inseparable connection and mutual delight. By presenting Bahá'u'lláh's declarations from various Tablets, Shoghi Effendi establishes the concept of their identity in reality as a truth affirmed by Bahá'u'lláh Himself, emphasizing the continuity of the Revelation and the succession of Manifestations.

Key Points:

1. Identity in reality: Shoghi Effendi stresses the importance of understanding the true relationship between the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh, advocating for the recognition of their identity in reality.
2. Bahá'u'lláh's explicit statements: He presents Bahá'u'lláh's explicit statements affirming the identity of the Báb with Himself, emphasizing their inseparable connection and mutual delight.
3. Continuity of Revelation: By quoting Bahá'u'lláh's declarations from various Tablets, Shoghi Effendi establishes the concept of their identity in reality as a truth affirmed by Bahá'u'lláh Himself, highlighting the continuity of the Revelation and the succession of Manifestations.

Questions and Answers:

1. Why does Shoghi Effendi advocate for understanding the true relationship between the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh?
 - Shoghi Effendi emphasizes the importance of understanding their true relationship to uphold the principles established by Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb.
2. What does Bahá'u'lláh's explicit statement affirm about the identity of the Báb with Himself?

- Bahá'u'lláh's explicit statement affirms the identity of the Báb with Himself, indicating their inseparable connection and mutual delight.

3. How does Shoghi Effendi establish the concept of their identity in reality?

- Shoghi Effendi presents declarations from various Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, highlighting His affirmations of the identity of the Báb with Himself, thus establishing the concept of their identity in reality as a truth affirmed by Bahá'u'lláh Himself.

90. That 'Abdu'l-Bahá is not a Manifestation of God, that He gets His light, His inspiration and sustenance direct from the Fountain-head of the Bahá'í Revelation; that He reflects even as a clear and perfect Mirror the rays of Bahá'u'lláh's glory, and does not inherently possess that undefinable yet all-pervading reality the exclusive possession of which is the hallmark of Prophethood; that His words are not equal in rank, though they possess an equal validity with the utterances of Bahá'u'lláh; that He is not to be acclaimed as the return of Jesus Christ, the Son Who will come "in the glory of the Father"—these truths find added justification, and are further reinforced, by the following statement of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, addressed to some believers in America, with which I may well conclude this section: "*You have written that there is a difference among the believers concerning the 'Second Coming of Christ.' Gracious God! Time and again this question hath arisen, and its answer hath emanated in a clear and irrefutable statement from the pen of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, 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). My name is 'Abdu'l-Bahá. My qualification is 'Abdu'l-Bahá. My reality is 'Abdu'l-Bahá. My praise is 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Thralldom to the Blessed Perfection is my glorious and refulgent diadem, and servitude to all the human race my perpetual religion... No name, no title, no mention, no commendation have I, nor will ever have, except 'Abdu'l-Bahá. This is my longing. This is my greatest yearning. This is my eternal life. This is my everlasting glory.*"

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi reiterates that 'Abdu'l-Bahá is not a Manifestation of God but receives His light, inspiration, and sustenance directly from the Fountain-head of the Bahá'í Revelation. He emphasizes that 'Abdu'l-Bahá reflects the glory of Bahá'u'lláh as a clear and perfect Mirror, without inherently possessing the reality exclusive to Prophethood. Shoghi Effendi clarifies that while the words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá possess equal validity with those of Bahá'u'lláh, they are not equal in rank. Additionally, he refutes the notion that 'Abdu'l-Bahá should be acclaimed as the return of Jesus Christ, emphasizing that such interpretations are contrary to the teachings of the Bahá'í Faith. He concludes this section with a statement from 'Abdu'l-Bahá, addressed to believers in America, affirming that the prophecies concerning the "Second Coming of Christ" refer to Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb, and that his own identity, qualification, reality, and praise are solely 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

Key Points:

1. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s station: Shoghi Effendi emphasizes that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá is not a Manifestation of God but receives His light and inspiration from Bahá’u’lláh.
2. Reflection of Bahá’u’lláh’s glory: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá is likened to a clear and perfect Mirror reflecting the glory of Bahá’u’lláh.
3. Equality of words: While ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s words possess equal validity with those of Bahá’u’lláh, they are not equal in rank.
4. Rejection of Messianic claims: Shoghi Effendi refutes the idea that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá should be considered the return of Jesus Christ.
5. Statement from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá: A quote from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá affirms his identity, qualification, reality, and praise as solely ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

Questions and Answers:

1. How does Shoghi Effendi clarify ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s station in relation to Prophethood?
 - Shoghi Effendi clarifies that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá is not a Manifestation of God but rather receives His light and inspiration from Bahá’u’lláh.
2. What analogy does Shoghi Effendi use to describe ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s relationship with Bahá’u’lláh?
 - Shoghi Effendi likens ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to a clear and perfect Mirror reflecting the glory of Bahá’u’lláh.
3. Are ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s words considered equal to those of Bahá’u’lláh?
 - While ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s words possess equal validity with those of Bahá’u’lláh, they are not considered equal in rank.
4. What does ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s statement affirm regarding his identity?
 - ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s statement affirms that his identity, qualification, reality, and praise are solely ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, rejecting any Messianic claims.
5. How does Shoghi Effendi refute the idea of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá being the return of Jesus Christ?
 - Shoghi Effendi refutes this idea by affirming that the prophecies concerning the “Second Coming of Christ” refer to Bahá’u’lláh and the Báb, not ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

. . .

The Administrative Order

91. Dearly-beloved brethren in ‘Abdu’l-Bahá! With the ascension of Bahá’u’lláh the Day-Star of Divine guidance which, as foretold by Shaykh Ahmad and Siyyid Kázim, had risen in Shíráz, and, while pursuing its westward course, had mounted its zenith in Adrianople, had finally sunk below the horizon of ‘Akká, never to rise again ere the complete revolution of one thousand years. The setting of so effulgent an Orb brought to a definite termination the period of Divine Revelation—the initial and most

vitalizing stage in the Bahá'í era. Inaugurated by the Báb, culminating in Bahá'u'lláh, anticipated and extolled by the entire company of the Prophets of this great prophetic cycle, this period has, except for the short interval between the Báb's martyrdom and Bahá'u'lláh's shaking experiences in the Síyáh-Chál of Tíhrán, been characterized by almost fifty years of continuous and progressive Revelation—a period which by its duration and fecundity must be regarded as unparalleled in the entire field of the world's spiritual history.

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi addresses the dearly-beloved brethren in 'Abdu'l-Bahá, reflecting on the significance of Bahá'u'lláh's ascension. He describes how Bahá'u'lláh's passing marked the end of the period of Divine Revelation, which began with the appearance of the Báb in Shíráz and reached its zenith in Adrianople before concluding in 'Akká. This period of Divine Revelation, inaugurated by the Báb and culminating in Bahá'u'lláh, was anticipated and extolled by the Prophets of previous religious cycles. Shoghi Effendi highlights that this era was characterized by nearly fifty years of continuous and progressive Revelation, which he considers unparalleled in the spiritual history of the world.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Shoghi Effendi addresses the believers in 'Abdu'l-Bahá.
2. End of the period of Divine Revelation: Bahá'u'lláh's ascension marked the conclusion of the period of Divine Revelation that began with the appearance of the Báb.
3. Progression of Divine Revelation: The period saw a continuous and progressive Revelation spanning nearly fifty years.
4. Culmination in Bahá'u'lláh: Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation reached its zenith during this period, fulfilling the prophecies of previous Prophets.
5. Unparalleled in spiritual history: Shoghi Effendi emphasizes the uniqueness and significance of this period in the spiritual history of humanity.

Questions and Answers:

1. What event marked the end of the period of Divine Revelation according to Shoghi Effendi?
 - Bahá'u'lláh's ascension marked the end of the period of Divine Revelation.
2. How does Shoghi Effendi characterize the period of Divine Revelation?
 - Shoghi Effendi describes it as nearly fifty years of continuous and progressive Revelation, beginning with the appearance of the Báb and culminating in Bahá'u'lláh.
3. What is emphasized about Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation during this period?
 - Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation reached its zenith during this period, fulfilling the prophecies of previous Prophets.

4. How does Shoghi Effendi compare this period to others in spiritual history?
 - Shoghi Effendi considers this period unparalleled in the spiritual history of humanity due to its duration, fecundity, and continuous Revelation.
5. What significance does Shoghi Effendi attribute to the period of Divine Revelation?
 - Shoghi Effendi emphasizes the uniqueness and vitalizing influence of this period in shaping the Bahá'í era and its impact on the spiritual history of humanity.
92. The passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, on the other hand, marks the closing of the Heroic and Apostolic Age of this same Dispensation—that primitive period of our Faith the splendors of which can never be rivaled, much less be eclipsed, by the magnificence that must needs distinguish the future victories of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation. For neither the achievements of the champion-builders of the present-day institutions of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, nor the tumultuous triumphs which the heroes of its Golden Age will in the coming days succeed in winning, can measure with, or be included within the same category as, the wondrous works associated with the names of those who have generated its very life and laid its pristine foundations. That first and creative age of the Bahá'í era must, by its very nature, stand above and apart from the formative period into which we have entered and the golden age destined to succeed it.

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi reflects on the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, which he considers as marking the end of the Heroic and Apostolic Age of the Bahá'í Dispensation. He asserts that this era, characterized by the foundational works and monumental achievements of the early believers, cannot be surpassed by the future victories or accomplishments of subsequent generations. Shoghi Effendi emphasizes the incomparable splendor and significance of this primitive period of the Bahá'í Faith, asserting that its wonders and achievements will forever remain unmatched and distinguished from the formative and golden ages that follow.

Key Points:

1. Closing of the Heroic and Apostolic Age: 'Abdu'l-Bahá's passing signifies the conclusion of the primitive period of the Bahá'í Faith, known as the Heroic and Apostolic Age.
2. Unrivaled splendor: Shoghi Effendi asserts that the achievements and splendors of this age cannot be rivaled or eclipsed by future victories or magnificence.
3. Champions of the Faith: The early believers, including 'Abdu'l-Bahá, are described as the champion-builders who laid the pristine foundations of the Bahá'í Faith.
4. Distinction from future ages: The Heroic and Apostolic Age is distinguished from the formative period and the golden age that follow, standing above and apart from them in significance and achievement.

Questions and Answers:

1. What does Shoghi Effendi consider the passing of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to signify?
 - Shoghi Effendi sees it as marking the end of the Heroic and Apostolic Age of the Bahá’í Dispensation.
 2. How does Shoghi Effendi describe the achievements of the early believers?
 - He describes them as monumental and foundational, asserting that they cannot be surpassed by future victories or accomplishments.
 3. What term does Shoghi Effendi use to refer to the early believers?
 - He refers to them as the champion-builders of the Faith of Bahá’u’lláh.
 4. How does Shoghi Effendi differentiate between the Heroic and Apostolic Age and future ages of the Bahá’í Dispensation?
 - He asserts that the Heroic and Apostolic Age stands above and apart from the formative period and the golden age that follow, both in significance and achievement.
 5. What is emphasized about the primitive period of the Bahá’í era?
 - Shoghi Effendi emphasizes its incomparable splendor and the foundational works associated with its champions, suggesting that its significance will forever remain unmatched.
93. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Who incarnates an institution for which we can find no parallel whatsoever in any of the world’s recognized religious systems, may be said to have closed the Age to which He Himself belonged and opened the one in which we are now laboring. His Will and Testament should thus be regarded as the perpetual, the indissoluble link which the mind of Him Who is the Mystery of God has conceived in order to insure the continuity of the three ages that constitute the component parts of the Bahá’í Dispensation. The period in which the seed of the Faith had been slowly germinating is thus intertwined both with the one which must witness its efflorescence and the subsequent age in which that seed will have finally yielded its golden fruit.

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi reflects on the unique institution incarnated by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, describing it as unparalleled in any recognized religious system. He suggests that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, by his actions and teachings, closed the Age to which he belonged and opened the current one in which Bahá’ís are laboring. Shoghi Effendi emphasizes the significance of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Will and Testament as the perpetual and indissoluble link conceived by the mind of the Mystery of God to ensure the continuity of the three ages of the Bahá’í Dispensation. These ages include the period of the seed’s slow germination, the era of efflorescence, and the subsequent age when the seed will have yielded its golden fruit.

Key Points:

1. Unique institution: Shoghi Effendi highlights ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s incarnation of an institution unprecedented in any recognized religious system.

2. Closing and opening of ages: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá is seen as closing the Age to which he belonged and opening the current one in which Bahá’ís are laboring.
3. Perpetual link: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Will and Testament is described as the perpetual and indissoluble link conceived to ensure the continuity of the Bahá’í Dispensation.
4. Interconnection of ages: The period of the seed's slow germination is intertwined with the era of efflorescence and the subsequent age when the seed will yield its golden fruit.

Questions and Answers:

1. How does Shoghi Effendi characterize the institution incarnated by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá?
 - Shoghi Effendi describes it as unparalleled in any recognized religious system.
2. What role does Shoghi Effendi attribute to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in the context of the ages of the Bahá’í Dispensation?
 - He suggests that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá closed the Age to which he belonged and opened the current one in which Bahá’ís are laboring.
3. What significance does Shoghi Effendi attribute to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Will and Testament?
 - He describes it as the perpetual and indissoluble link conceived to ensure the continuity of the Bahá’í Dispensation.
4. How does Shoghi Effendi describe the interconnection of the ages within the Bahá’í Dispensation?
 - He suggests that the period of the seed's slow germination is intertwined with the era of efflorescence and the subsequent age when the seed will yield its golden fruit.
5. What term does Shoghi Effendi use to describe the period of the seed's slow germination?
 - He refers to it as the age in which the seed of the Faith had been slowly germinating.
94. The creative energies released by the Law of Bahá’u’lláh, permeating and evolving within the mind of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, have, by their very impact and close interaction, given birth to an Instrument which may be viewed as the Charter of the New World Order which is at once the glory and the promise of this most great Dispensation. The Will may thus be acclaimed as the inevitable offspring resulting from that mystic intercourse between Him Who communicated the generating influence of His divine Purpose and the One Who was its vehicle and chosen recipient. Being the Child of the Covenant—the Heir of both the Originator and the Interpreter of the Law of God—the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá can no more be divorced from Him Who supplied the original and motivating impulse than from the One Who ultimately conceived it. Bahá’u’lláh’s inscrutable purpose, we must ever bear in mind, has been so thoroughly infused into the conduct of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, and their motives have been so closely wedded together, that the mere attempt to dissociate the teachings of the former from any system which the ideal Exemplar of those same teachings has established would amount to a repudiation of one of the most sacred and basic truths of the Faith.

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi discusses the profound impact of Bahá'u'lláh's Law on 'Abdu'l-Bahá's mind, which led to the creation of the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. He describes this document as the Charter of the New World Order, embodying both the glory and the promise of the Bahá'í Dispensation. Shoghi Effendi suggests that the Will is the inevitable result of the mystical interaction between Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, with the latter being the chosen recipient and vehicle of Bahá'u'lláh's divine Purpose. He emphasizes that the Will is inseparable from the Covenant, being the Child of the Covenant and the Heir of both Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Attempting to dissociate the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh from the system established by 'Abdu'l-Bahá would, according to Shoghi Effendi, amount to a repudiation of one of the most sacred and basic truths of the Faith.

Key Points:

1. Creative energies of Bahá'u'lláh's Law: Shoghi Effendi discusses how the Law of Bahá'u'lláh permeated and evolved within the mind of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.
2. Birth of the Will and Testament: He describes the Will as the inevitable offspring of the mystical interaction between Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá.
3. Charter of the New World Order: Shoghi Effendi views the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá as the embodiment of the New World Order promised by the Bahá'í Dispensation.
4. Inseparability from the Covenant: He emphasizes that the Will is inseparable from the Covenant, being the Child of the Covenant and the Heir of both Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá.
5. Repudiation of truth: Shoghi Effendi warns against attempting to dissociate the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh from the system established by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, as it would repudiate a sacred and basic truth of the Faith.

Questions and Answers:

1. What does Shoghi Effendi attribute to the impact of Bahá'u'lláh's Law on 'Abdu'l-Bahá's mind?
 - He suggests that it led to the creation of the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.
2. How does Shoghi Effendi characterize the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá?
 - He describes it as the Charter of the New World Order, embodying both the glory and the promise of the Bahá'í Dispensation.
3. What does Shoghi Effendi suggest about the relationship between the Will and Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant?
 - He emphasizes that the Will is inseparable from the Covenant, being the Child of the Covenant and the Heir of both Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

4. Why does Shoghi Effendi caution against dissociating the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh from the system established by 'Abdu'l-Bahá?

- He warns that it would amount to a repudiation of one of the most sacred and basic truths of the Faith.

5. What term does Shoghi Effendi use to describe the interaction between Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá that led to the creation of the Will?

- He describes it as a mystical intercourse between Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

95. The Administrative Order, which ever since 'Abdu'l-Bahá's ascension has evolved and is taking shape under our very eyes in no fewer than forty countries of the world, may be considered as the framework of the Will itself, the inviolable stronghold wherein this new-born child is being nurtured and developed. This Administrative Order, as it expands and consolidates itself, will no doubt manifest the potentialities and reveal the full implications of this momentous Document—this most remarkable expression of the Will of One of the most remarkable Figures of the Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh. It will, as its component parts, its organic institutions, begin to function with efficiency and vigor, assert its claim and demonstrate its capacity to be regarded not only as the nucleus but the very pattern of the New World Order destined to embrace in the fullness of time the whole of mankind.

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi discusses the evolution of the Administrative Order following 'Abdu'l-Bahá's ascension, which is taking shape in numerous countries around the world. He views this Administrative Order as the framework of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will, serving as the inviolable stronghold where the principles outlined in the Will are nurtured and developed. Shoghi Effendi anticipates that as the Administrative Order expands and consolidates itself, it will reveal the full potentialities and implications of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will. He describes the Will as a remarkable expression of the divine purpose of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, a central figure in the Bahá'í Dispensation. Furthermore, Shoghi Effendi envisions the Administrative Order as not only the nucleus but also the model of the New World Order, which is destined to encompass all of humanity.

Key Points:

1. Evolution of the Administrative Order: Shoghi Effendi discusses how the Administrative Order has evolved and is taking shape in various countries worldwide.
2. Framework of the Will: He views the Administrative Order as the framework within which 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will is nurtured and developed.
3. Manifestation of potentialities: Shoghi Effendi anticipates that as the Administrative Order expands, it will reveal the full potentialities and implications of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will.
4. Remarkable expression: He describes the Will as a remarkable expression of the divine purpose of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, a significant figure in the Bahá'í Dispensation.

5. Nucleus of the New World Order: Shoghi Effendi envisions the Administrative Order as not only the nucleus but also the model of the New World Order that will eventually encompass all of humanity.

Questions and Answers:

1. How does Shoghi Effendi characterize the evolution of the Administrative Order?

- He describes it as taking shape in numerous countries around the world since 'Abdu'l-Bahá's ascension.

2. What role does Shoghi Effendi assign to the Administrative Order in relation to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will?

- He views the Administrative Order as the framework within which 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will is nurtured and developed.

3. What does Shoghi Effendi anticipate about the future of the Administrative Order?

- He anticipates that as the Administrative Order expands, it will reveal the full potentialities and implications of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will.

4. How does Shoghi Effendi characterize 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will?

- He describes it as a remarkable expression of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's divine purpose, emphasizing his significance in the Bahá'í Dispensation.

5. What role does Shoghi Effendi envision for the Administrative Order in the future?

- He envisions it not only as the nucleus but also as the model of the New World Order that will eventually encompass all of humanity.

96. It should be noted in this connection that this Administrative Order is fundamentally different from anything that any Prophet has previously established, inasmuch as Bahá'u'lláh has Himself revealed its principles, established its institutions, appointed the person to interpret His Word and conferred the necessary authority on the body designed to supplement and apply His legislative ordinances. Therein lies the secret of its strength, its fundamental distinction, and the guarantee against disintegration and schism. Nowhere in the sacred scriptures of any of the world's religious systems, nor even in the writings of the Inaugurator of the Bábí Dispensation, do we find any provisions establishing a covenant or providing for an administrative order that can compare in scope and authority with those that lie at the very basis of the Bahá'í Dispensation. Has either Christianity or Islám, to take as an instance two of the most widely diffused and outstanding among the world's recognized religions, anything to offer that can measure with, or be regarded as equivalent to, either the Book of Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant or to the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá? Does the text of either the Gospel or the Qur'án confer sufficient authority upon those leaders and councils that have claimed the right and assumed the function of interpreting the provisions of their sacred scriptures and of administering the affairs of their respective communities? Could Peter, the admitted chief of the Apostles, or the Imám 'Alí, the cousin and legitimate successor of the Prophet, produce in support of the primacy with

which both had been invested with written and explicit affirmations from Christ and Muḥammad that could have silenced those who either among their contemporaries or in a later age have repudiated their authority and, by their action, precipitated the schisms that persist until the present day? Where, we may confidently ask, in the recorded sayings of Jesus Christ, whether in the matter of succession or in the provision of a set of specific laws and clearly defined administrative ordinances, as distinguished from purely spiritual principles, can we find anything approaching the detailed injunctions, laws and warnings that abound in the authenticated utterances of both Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá? Can any passage of the Qur'án, which in respect to its legal code, its administrative and devotional ordinances marks already a notable advance over previous and more corrupted Revelations, be construed as placing upon an unassailable basis the undoubted authority with which Muḥammad had, verbally and on several occasions, invested His successor? Can the Author of the Bábí Dispensation however much He may have succeeded through the provisions of the Persian Bayán in averting a schism as permanent and catastrophic as those that afflicted Christianity and Islám—can He be said to have produced instruments for the safeguarding of His Faith as definite and efficacious as those which must for all time preserve the unity of the organized followers of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh?

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi emphasizes the unique and fundamental nature of the Bahá'í Administrative Order, highlighting its distinction from previous religious systems. He points out that Bahá'u'lláh Himself revealed the principles of the Administrative Order, appointed the Interpreter of His Word, and conferred authority upon the institutions established to supplement and apply His legislative ordinances. This, Shoghi Effendi asserts, is the secret of the Administrative Order's strength, distinction, and safeguard against disintegration and schism. He contrasts the Bahá'í Administrative Order with the administrative structures of Christianity, Islam, and the Bábí Dispensation, asserting that none of these religions offer provisions comparable in scope and authority to those of the Bahá'í Dispensation.

Key Points:

1. Uniqueness of the Bahá'í Administrative Order: Shoghi Effendi underscores the distinctiveness of the Bahá'í Administrative Order, which is fundamentally different from previous religious systems.
2. Divine Revelation of Principles: He notes that Bahá'u'lláh Himself revealed the principles of the Administrative Order, establishing its foundations.
3. Appointment of Interpreter: Bahá'u'lláh appointed the Interpreter of His Word, conferring authority on the individual designated to interpret His teachings.
4. Authority of Institutions: The institutions of the Bahá'í Administrative Order were endowed with authority to supplement and apply Bahá'u'lláh's legislative ordinances.
5. Comparison with Other Religions: Shoghi Effendi contrasts the Bahá'í Administrative Order with the administrative structures of Christianity, Islam, and the Bábí Dispensation.

6. Lack of Equivalent Provisions: He asserts that previous religions do not offer provisions comparable to the Book of Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant or the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

7. Absence of Detailed Injunctions: Shoghi Effendi questions whether the recorded sayings of Jesus Christ or passages from the Qur'án contain detailed injunctions and administrative ordinances similar to those found in Bahá'í scriptures.

Questions and Answers:

1. What distinguishes the Bahá'í Administrative Order from previous religious systems?
- Shoghi Effendi emphasizes that Bahá'u'lláh Himself revealed its principles and conferred authority on its institutions, which is distinct from previous religious systems.

2. What role did Bahá'u'lláh play in establishing the Bahá'í Administrative Order?
- He appointed the Interpreter of His Word and endowed the institutions of the Administrative Order with authority to apply His legislative ordinances.

3. How does Shoghi Effendi compare the Bahá'í Administrative Order with administrative structures in Christianity, Islam, and the Bábí Dispensation?
- He asserts that the Administrative Order surpasses them in scope and authority, offering provisions for safeguarding unity that are absent in previous religions.

4. What specific provisions of the Bahá'í Administrative Order does Shoghi Effendi highlight?
- He emphasizes the Book of Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant and the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá as unique and essential components of the Administrative Order.

5. What aspects of previous religious scriptures does Shoghi Effendi question in comparison to Bahá'í scriptures?
- He questions whether the recorded sayings of Jesus Christ or passages from the Qur'án contain detailed injunctions and administrative ordinances similar to those found in Bahá'í scriptures.

97. Alone of all the Revelations gone before it this Faith has, through the explicit directions, the repeated warnings, the authenticated safeguards incorporated and elaborated in its teachings, succeeded in raising a structure which the bewildered followers of bankrupt and broken creeds might well approach and critically examine, and seek, ere it is too late, the invulnerable security of its world-embracing shelter.

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi highlights the unique nature of the Bahá'í Faith in providing explicit directions, repeated warnings, and authenticated safeguards within its teachings. He emphasizes that these elements have enabled the Bahá'í Faith to construct a structure that welcomes scrutiny and critical examination by those disillusioned with previous religious

systems. The Bahá'í Faith offers a world-embracing shelter characterized by invulnerable security, inviting individuals to seek refuge within its framework before it is too late.

Key Points:

1. Unique Nature of the Bahá'í Faith: Shoghi Effendi emphasizes the singular characteristics of the Bahá'í Faith compared to previous religious revelations.
2. Explicit Directions: He notes that the Bahá'í teachings provide clear and explicit directions for its followers, guiding them in their spiritual journey.
3. Repeated Warnings: The Bahá'í Faith issues repeated warnings to its adherents, cautioning them against pitfalls and dangers on their path.
4. Authenticated Safeguards: Within its teachings, the Bahá'í Faith incorporates authenticated safeguards designed to protect its followers and preserve the integrity of its principles.
5. Constructed Structure: These elements have enabled the Bahá'í Faith to construct a comprehensive structure that can withstand critical examination and scrutiny.
6. Invitation to Seek Refuge: The Bahá'í Faith extends an invitation to individuals disillusioned with other religious systems to seek refuge within its world-embracing shelter.
7. Timely Action: Shoghi Effendi underscores the urgency for individuals to seek refuge within the Bahá'í Faith before it is too late, highlighting its invulnerable security.

Questions and Answers:

1. What sets the Bahá'í Faith apart from previous religious revelations?
 - Shoghi Effendi emphasizes that the Bahá'í Faith provides explicit directions, repeated warnings, and authenticated safeguards within its teachings, distinguishing it from previous religious systems.
2. How does the Bahá'í Faith guide its followers?
 - The Bahá'í teachings offer clear and explicit directions to its adherents, guiding them in their spiritual journey and moral conduct.
3. What role do warnings play in the Bahá'í Faith?
 - The Bahá'í Faith issues repeated warnings to its followers, alerting them to potential pitfalls and dangers they may encounter on their spiritual path.
4. How does the Bahá'í Faith safeguard its principles?
 - Within its teachings, the Bahá'í Faith incorporates authenticated safeguards to protect its followers and preserve the integrity of its principles.
5. What is the outcome of these elements within the Bahá'í Faith?
 - These elements enable the Bahá'í Faith to construct a comprehensive structure that welcomes critical examination and scrutiny by individuals seeking spiritual refuge.
6. Who is invited to seek refuge within the Bahá'í Faith?

- Individuals disillusioned with other religious systems are invited to seek refuge within the world-embracing shelter of the Bahá'í Faith.

7. Why is there urgency in seeking refuge within the Bahá'í Faith?

- Shoghi Effendi underscores the importance of seeking refuge within the Bahá'í Faith before it is too late, highlighting its invulnerable security in contrast to other religious systems.

98. No wonder that He Who through the operation of His Will has inaugurated so vast and unique an Order and Who is the Center of so mighty a Covenant should have written these words: *“So firm and mighty is this Covenant that from the beginning of time until the present day no religious Dispensation hath produced its like.”* *“Whatsoever is latent in the innermost of this holy cycle,”* He wrote during the darkest and most dangerous days of His ministry, *“shall gradually appear and be made manifest, for now is but the beginning of its growth and the dayspring of the revelation of its signs.”* *“Fear not,”* are His reassuring words foreshadowing the rise of the Administrative Order established by His Will, *“fear not if this Branch be severed from this material world and cast aside its leaves; nay, the leaves thereof shall flourish, for this Branch will grow after it is cut off from this world below, it shall reach the loftiest pinnacles of glory, and it shall bear such fruits as will perfume the world with their fragrance.”*

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi underscores the magnitude and significance of the Covenant established by Bahá'u'lláh, emphasizing its unparalleled nature in the history of religious dispensations. He quotes Bahá'u'lláh's words, highlighting the strength and endurance of this Covenant, which surpasses anything witnessed in previous religious eras. Despite the challenges faced during Bahá'u'lláh's ministry, the Covenant remains steadfast and ensures the gradual unfolding and manifestation of its latent potential. Shoghi Effendi also alludes to the establishment of the Administrative Order envisioned by Bahá'u'lláh's Will, which will thrive and flourish even if severed from worldly attachments, bearing fruits that will permeate the world with their fragrance.

Key Points:

1. Unparalleled Covenant: Shoghi Effendi emphasizes the extraordinary nature of the Covenant established by Bahá'u'lláh, asserting its superiority over all previous religious dispensations.

2. Strength and Endurance: Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant is described as firm and mighty, capable of withstanding the tests of time and adversity.

3. Gradual Manifestation: Despite challenges and obstacles, Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant ensures the gradual appearance and manifestation of its inherent potential, signaling the beginning of a new era of growth and revelation.

4. Reassurance and Confidence: Bahá'u'lláh provides reassurance to His followers, encouraging them not to fear, even in the face of apparent setbacks or challenges.

5. Growth Beyond Material Realms: The Covenant foresees a growth and flourishing beyond the confines of the material world, symbolized by the metaphor of a branch severed from its roots but still thriving and bearing fruits of glory and fragrance.

Questions and Answers:

1. What is the significance of Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant?

- Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant is described as unparalleled in the history of religious dispensations, signifying a unique bond and agreement between the Creator and humanity.

2. How does Shoghi Effendi characterize the strength of the Covenant?

- Shoghi Effendi emphasizes the firmness and mightiness of Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant, highlighting its resilience and endurance in the face of challenges.

3. What does Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant ensure?

- Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant ensures the gradual manifestation and realization of its latent potential, ushering in a new era of growth and revelation.

4. How does Bahá'u'lláh reassure His followers?

- Bahá'u'lláh provides reassurance to His followers, urging them not to fear, as the Covenant guarantees the eventual fulfillment of its promises.

5. What metaphor does Bahá'u'lláh use to illustrate the growth of His Covenant?

- Bahá'u'lláh uses the metaphor of a branch severed from its roots but still flourishing to illustrate the growth and flourishing of His Covenant beyond the material realms.

99. To what else if not to the power and majesty which this Administrative Order—the rudiments of the future all-enfolding Bahá'í Commonwealth—is destined to manifest, can these utterances of Bahá'u'lláh allude: “*The world's equilibrium hath been upset through the vibrating influence of this most great, this new World Order. Mankind's ordered life hath been revolutionized through the agency of this unique, this wondrous System—the like of which mortal eyes have never witnessed.*”

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith, reflects on the transformative power and potential of the Administrative Order established by Bahá'u'lláh, the founder of the Bahá'í Faith. He draws attention to Bahá'u'lláh's prophecies regarding the establishment of a new world order and the revolutionary impact it will have on humanity. Shoghi Effendi emphasizes that the Administrative Order is not merely a system of governance, but the foundation of a future global civilization, which he describes as the "Bahá'í Commonwealth."

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi begins by invoking Bahá'u'lláh's words, which herald the onset of a new era characterized by the emergence of a global order. He interprets Bahá'u'lláh's references to the upset equilibrium of the world and the revolutionized life of mankind as indicative of the profound changes brought about by the Administrative Order.

The Guardian underscores the unprecedented nature of this system, asserting that it surpasses any previous form of governance known to humanity. He suggests that mortal eyes have never before witnessed a system with such transformative potential and far-reaching implications for society.

Shoghi Effendi then elaborates on the significance of the Administrative Order within the framework of Bahá'í teachings. He explains that it serves as the foundation for the realization of Bahá'u'lláh's vision for humanity, providing the organizational structure necessary for the establishment of a just and unified world civilization.

Moreover, the Guardian emphasizes that the Administrative Order is not a static entity but a dynamic process that will continue to evolve and unfold over time. He highlights the role of individuals and institutions within the Bahá'í community in advancing this process through their collective efforts and adherence to Bahá'í principles.

In conclusion, Shoghi Effendi reaffirms the transformative power of the Administrative Order and its central role in shaping the future of humanity. He invites readers to contemplate the significance of Bahá'u'lláh's prophecies and to actively participate in the realization of his vision for a united and harmonious world.

Outline Points:

1. Introduction: Invocation of Bahá'u'lláh's prophecies regarding the establishment of a new world order.
2. Interpretation: Analysis of Bahá'u'lláh's references to the upset equilibrium of the world and the revolutionized life of mankind.
3. Unprecedented Nature: Assertion of the unique and unparalleled qualities of the Administrative Order.
4. Significance within Bahá'í Teachings: Explanation of the Administrative Order's role as the foundation for the realization of Bahá'u'lláh's vision for humanity.
5. Dynamic Process: Emphasis on the ongoing evolution and unfolding of the Administrative Order.
6. Role of Individuals and Institutions: Highlighting the importance of collective efforts within the Bahá'í community in advancing the Administrative Order.
7. Conclusion: Reaffirmation of the transformative power of the Administrative Order and invitation to participate in its realization.

Questions and Answers:

1. What are the key elements of Bahá'u'lláh's prophecies regarding the new world order?
- Bahá'u'lláh's prophecies describe the upset equilibrium of the world and the revolutionized life of mankind through the establishment of a new global order.
2. How does Shoghi Effendi characterize the Administrative Order?

- Shoghi Effendi characterizes the Administrative Order as the foundation of the future Bahá'í Commonwealth, possessing unparalleled transformative potential.

3. What role does the Administrative Order play within Bahá'í teachings?

- The Administrative Order serves as the organizational structure necessary for the realization of Bahá'u'lláh's vision for a just and unified world civilization.

4. How does Shoghi Effendi describe the ongoing evolution of the Administrative Order?

- Shoghi Effendi emphasizes that the Administrative Order is a dynamic process that will continue to evolve over time.

5. What is the importance of collective efforts within the Bahá'í community?

- Collective efforts within the Bahá'í community are crucial for advancing the Administrative Order and realizing Bahá'u'lláh's vision for humanity.

6. What invitation does Shoghi Effendi extend to readers in conclusion?

- Shoghi Effendi invites readers to contemplate the significance of Bahá'u'lláh's prophecies and to actively participate in the realization of his vision for a united and harmonious world.

100. The Báb Himself, in the course of His references to "Him Whom God will make manifest" anticipates the System and glorifies the World Order which the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh is destined to unfold. "*Well is it with him,*" is His remarkable statement in the third chapter of the Persian Bayán, "*who fixeth his gaze upon the Order of Bahá'u'lláh and rendereth thanks unto his Lord! For He will assuredly be made manifest. God hath indeed irrevocably ordained it in the Bayán.*"

Summary:

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith, reflects on the writings of the Báb, the forerunner of Bahá'u'lláh, and their anticipation of the revelation of Bahá'u'lláh and the unfoldment of His World Order. He highlights a particular passage from the Báb's Persian Bayán, where the Báb extols the Order of Bahá'u'lláh and assures its manifestation. Shoghi Effendi emphasizes the significance of this anticipation in understanding the continuity and fulfillment of divine revelation within the Bahá'í Faith.

Shoghi Effendi begins by drawing attention to the Báb's references to "Him Whom God will make manifest," a central figure in the Bahá'í Faith later identified as Bahá'u'lláh. He points out that the Báb's writings contain anticipations of the System and glorifications of the World Order destined to be unfolded by Bahá'u'lláh's revelation.

The Guardian quotes a remarkable statement from the Báb found in the third chapter of the Persian Bayán, wherein the Báb praises those who fix their gaze upon the Order of Bahá'u'lláh and express gratitude to God. The Báb asserts the certainty of the manifestation of Bahá'u'lláh, stating that God has irrevocably ordained it in the Bayán.

Shoghi Effendi underscores the significance of the Báb's anticipation of Bahá'u'lláh's revelation and the World Order it would establish. He suggests that this anticipation serves as a testament to the continuity of divine revelation and the interconnectedness of the missions of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh within the Bahá'í Faith.

Furthermore, the Guardian highlights the role of the Báb as the Herald of the Bahá'í Faith, who prepared the way for the coming of Bahá'u'lláh and laid the groundwork for the establishment of His World Order. He emphasizes the inseparable connection between the teachings of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh, portraying them as successive stages in the progressive unfoldment of divine guidance for humanity.

In conclusion, Shoghi Effendi underscores the importance of recognizing the Báb's anticipation of Bahá'u'lláh's revelation and the World Order it would inaugurate. He encourages Bahá'ís to study the writings of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh to deepen their understanding of the interconnectedness of these two central figures and the divine plan they unfolded for the spiritual evolution of humanity.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Introduction to the Báb and His anticipation of "Him Whom God will make manifest."
2. Glorification of Bahá'u'lláh's Order: Examination of the Báb's praise for the Order of Bahá'u'lláh in the Persian Bayán.
3. Assurance of Manifestation: Highlighting the Báb's certainty regarding the manifestation of Bahá'u'lláh.
4. Significance: Analysis of the importance of the Báb's anticipation in understanding the continuity of divine revelation within the Bahá'í Faith.
5. Role of the Báb: Emphasis on the Báb's role as the Herald of the Bahá'í Faith and preparer of the way for Bahá'u'lláh.
6. Connection between the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh: Exploration of the interconnectedness of the teachings of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh.
7. Conclusion: Encouragement for Bahá'ís to study the writings of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh to deepen their understanding of the divine plan for humanity.

Questions and Answers:

1. Who is "Him Whom God will make manifest" referred to by the Báb?
 - "Him Whom God will make manifest" is a central figure in the Bahá'í Faith later identified as Bahá'u'lláh.
2. What does the Báb praise in the passage quoted by Shoghi Effendi?
 - The Báb praises those who fix their gaze upon the Order of Bahá'u'lláh and express gratitude to God.
3. How does Shoghi Effendi characterize the certainty of Bahá'u'lláh's manifestation according to the Báb's writings?

- Shoghi Effendi emphasizes that the Báb asserts the irrevocable ordainment of Bahá'u'lláh's manifestation in the Bayán.

4. What is the significance of the Báb's anticipation of Bahá'u'lláh's revelation?

- The Báb's anticipation demonstrates the continuity of divine revelation and the interconnectedness of the missions of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh within the Bahá'í Faith.

5. What role did the Báb play in the Bahá'í Faith?

- The Báb is regarded as the Herald of the Bahá'í Faith, who prepared the way for the coming of Bahá'u'lláh.

6. How does Shoghi Effendi characterize the teachings of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh?

- Shoghi Effendi portrays the teachings of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh as successive stages in the progressive unfoldment of divine guidance for humanity.

7. What does Shoghi Effendi encourage Bahá'ís to do in conclusion?

- Shoghi Effendi encourages Bahá'ís to study the writings of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh to deepen their understanding of the divine plan for humanity.

101. In the Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh where the institutions of the International and Local Houses of Justice are specifically designated and formally established; in the institution of the Hands of the Cause of God which first Bahá'u'lláh and then 'Abdu'l-Bahá brought into being; in the institution of both local and national Assemblies which in their embryonic stage were already functioning in the days preceding 'Abdu'l-Bahá's ascension; in the authority with which the Author of our Faith and the Center of His Covenant have in their Tablets chosen to confer upon them; in the institution of the Local Fund which operated according to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's specific injunctions addressed to certain Assemblies in Persia; in the verses of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas the implications of which clearly anticipate the institution of the Guardianship; in the explanation which 'Abdu'l-Bahá, in one of His Tablets, has given to, and the emphasis He has placed upon, the hereditary principle and the law of primogeniture as having been upheld by the Prophets of the past—in these we can discern the faint glimmerings and discover the earliest intimation of the nature and working of the Administrative Order which the Will of 'Abdu'l-Bahá was at a later time destined to proclaim and formally establish.

Summary:

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi elucidates the gradual emergence and formal establishment of the Administrative Order within the Bahá'í Faith. He outlines various elements and institutions within Bahá'í teachings and writings that foreshadowed the development of the Administrative Order, ultimately leading to its explicit proclamation and establishment by 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

Shoghi Effendi begins by highlighting several key elements within Bahá'í teachings and writings that hint at the nature and functioning of the Administrative Order. These

elements include specific designations and formal establishment of institutions such as the International and Local Houses of Justice, the Hands of the Cause of God, local and national Assemblies, and the Local Fund.

He underscores the authority conferred upon these institutions by Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá in their respective Tablets, demonstrating their essential roles within the Bahá'í community.

Furthermore, Shoghi Effendi points to verses in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, Bahá'u'lláh's most holy book, which anticipate the institution of the Guardianship, a central feature of the Administrative Order. He also references explanations given by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in His Tablets regarding the hereditary principle and the law of primogeniture, emphasizing their continuity with past Prophets and their relevance to the unfolding Administrative Order.

Through these various elements and institutions, Shoghi Effendi suggests that the early intimation of the Administrative Order can be discerned, paving the way for its eventual proclamation and formal establishment by 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Introduction to the gradual emergence and formal establishment of the Administrative Order within the Bahá'í Faith.
2. Key Elements and Institutions:
 - Designation and establishment of institutions such as International and Local Houses of Justice, Hands of the Cause of God, and local and national Assemblies.
 - Operation of the Local Fund according to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's specific injunctions.
3. Authority Conferred: Emphasis on the authority conferred upon these institutions by Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá in their respective Tablets.
4. Anticipation in Bahá'í Writings:
 - Verses in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas anticipating the institution of the Guardianship.
 - Explanations by 'Abdu'l-Bahá regarding the hereditary principle and the law of primogeniture.
5. Early Intimation:
 - Recognition of these elements as early intimation of the nature and working of the Administrative Order.
6. Proclamation and Formal Establishment: Leading to the eventual proclamation and formal establishment of the Administrative Order by 'Abdu'l-Bahá.
7. Conclusion: Recognition of the significance of these elements in laying the groundwork for the Administrative Order within the Bahá'í Faith.

Questions and Answers:

1. What are some key institutions within the Bahá'í Faith that foreshadow the Administrative Order?
 - Key institutions include the International and Local Houses of Justice, the Hands of the Cause of God, local and national Assemblies, and the Local Fund.

2. How is authority conferred upon these institutions according to Shoghi Effendi?
 - Authority is conferred upon these institutions by Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá in their respective Tablets.

3. What anticipation of the Administrative Order can be found in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas?
 - Verses in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas anticipate the institution of the Guardianship, a central feature of the Administrative Order.

4. What explanations regarding the Administrative Order did 'Abdu'l-Bahá provide in His Tablets?
 - 'Abdu'l-Bahá provided explanations regarding the hereditary principle and the law of primogeniture, emphasizing their continuity with past Prophets and their relevance to the unfolding Administrative Order.

5. How does Shoghi Effendi characterize these elements within Bahá'í teachings and writings?
 - Shoghi Effendi suggests that these elements serve as early intimation of the nature and working of the Administrative Order within the Bahá'í Faith.

6. Who formally established the Administrative Order within the Bahá'í Faith?
 - The Administrative Order was formally established by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the appointed Center of Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant, following Bahá'u'lláh's passing.

7. What is the significance of these early intimations within Bahá'í teachings?
 - These early intimations laid the groundwork for the eventual proclamation and formal establishment of the Administrative Order, playing a crucial role in shaping the administrative structure of the Bahá'í Faith.

102. An attempt, I feel, should at the present juncture be made to explain the character and functions of the twin pillars that support this mighty Administrative Structure—the institutions of the Guardianship and of the Universal House of Justice. To describe in their entirety the diverse elements that function in conjunction with these institutions is beyond the scope and purpose of this general exposition of the fundamental verities of the Faith. To define with accuracy and minuteness the features, and to analyze exhaustively the nature of the relationships which, on the one hand, bind together these two fundamental organs of the Will of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and connect, on the other, each of them to the Author of the Faith and the Center of His Covenant is a task which future generations will no doubt adequately fulfill. My present intention is to elaborate certain salient features of this scheme which, however close we may stand to its colossal structure, are already so clearly defined that we find it inexcusable to either misconceive or ignore.

Summary:

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi addresses the need to explain the character and functions of the twin pillars that uphold the Administrative Structure of the Bahá'í Faith—the institutions of the Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice. He acknowledges the complexity of these institutions and the relationships that bind them, recognizing that a comprehensive analysis of their nature and functioning is a task for future generations. However, he emphasizes the importance of elucidating certain salient features of this scheme that are already clearly defined, to prevent misconceptions or ignorance among believers.

Shoghi Effendi begins by underscoring the significance of understanding the character and functions of the Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice within the Bahá'í Administrative Structure. He acknowledges the complexity of these institutions and the interconnected relationships that exist between them, as well as their connection to the Author of the Faith and the Center of His Covenant, 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

While recognizing that a comprehensive analysis of these institutions is beyond the scope of his current exposition, Shoghi Effendi expresses his intention to elaborate on certain salient features that are already clearly defined. He emphasizes the importance of avoiding misconceptions or ignorance regarding these fundamental aspects of the Bahá'í Faith.

The Guardian suggests that future generations will adequately fulfill the task of defining the diverse elements that function in conjunction with the Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice, and analyzing the nature of their relationships. However, he asserts the necessity of addressing certain key aspects of these institutions to ensure a proper understanding among believers.

Shoghi Effendi's intention is to provide clarity on essential features of the Administrative Structure that are already well-defined, despite the monumental nature of the task. By doing so, he aims to prevent misunderstandings and to facilitate a deeper appreciation of the framework established by 'Abdu'l-Bahá for the governance of the Bahá'í community.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Introduction to the need to explain the character and functions of the Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice within the Bahá'í Administrative Structure.
2. Complexity of Institutions: Acknowledgment of the complexity of these institutions and the relationships that bind them.
3. Task for Future Generations: Recognition that a comprehensive analysis of the nature and functioning of these institutions is a task for future generations.
4. Elaboration on Salient Features: Intent to elaborate on certain well-defined features of the Administrative Structure.
5. Importance of Clarity: Emphasis on the importance of preventing misconceptions or ignorance regarding these fundamental aspects of the Bahá'í Faith.
6. Facilitating Understanding: Aim to provide clarity on essential features to facilitate a deeper understanding among believers.

7. Conclusion: Recognition of the monumental nature of the task, despite the intention to address certain key aspects of the Administrative Structure.

Questions and Answers:

1. What is the purpose of Shoghi Effendi's address in this passage?

- Shoghi Effendi aims to explain the character and functions of the Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice within the Bahá'í Administrative Structure.

2. What does Shoghi Effendi acknowledge regarding the complexity of these institutions?

- Shoghi Effendi acknowledges the complexity of the Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice, as well as the interconnected relationships that exist between them.

3. Who does Shoghi Effendi suggest will fulfill the task of defining the diverse elements of these institutions in the future?

- Shoghi Effendi suggests that future generations will adequately fulfill the task of defining the diverse elements of the Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice.

4. Why does Shoghi Effendi emphasize the importance of addressing certain key aspects of these institutions?

- Shoghi Effendi emphasizes the importance of preventing misconceptions or ignorance regarding these fundamental aspects of the Bahá'í Faith.

5. What is the aim of Shoghi Effendi in providing clarity on essential features of the Administrative Structure?

- Shoghi Effendi aims to facilitate a deeper understanding among believers and prevent misunderstandings regarding the governance of the Bahá'í community.

6. How does Shoghi Effendi conclude his address in this passage?

- Shoghi Effendi recognizes the monumental nature of the task of defining the diverse elements of the Administrative Structure but asserts the intention to address certain key aspects.

103. It should be stated, at the very outset, in clear and unambiguous language, that these twin institutions of the Administrative Order of Bahá'u'lláh should be regarded as divine in origin, essential in their functions and complementary in their aim and purpose. Their common, their fundamental object is to insure the continuity of that divinely-appointed authority which flows from the Source of our Faith, to safeguard the unity of its followers and to maintain the integrity and flexibility of its teachings. Acting in conjunction with each other these two inseparable institutions administer its affairs, coördinate its activities, promote its interests, execute its laws and defend its subsidiary institutions. Severally, each operates within a clearly defined sphere of jurisdiction; each is equipped with its own attendant institutions—instruments designed for the effective discharge of its particular responsibilities and duties. Each exercises, within the limitations imposed upon it, its powers, its authority, its rights and prerogatives. These are neither contradictory, nor detract in the slightest degree

from the position which each of these institutions occupies. Far from being incompatible or mutually destructive, they supplement each other's authority and functions, and are permanently and fundamentally united in their aims.

Summary:

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi provides a clear and unambiguous statement regarding the twin institutions of the Administrative Order—namely, the Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice. He emphasizes that these institutions are divine in origin, essential in their functions, and complementary in their aim and purpose. Their primary objective is to ensure the continuity of the divinely-appointed authority flowing from the Source of the Faith, to safeguard unity among believers, and to maintain the integrity and flexibility of Bahá'í teachings.

Shoghi Effendi begins by stating unequivocally that the Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice are of divine origin and are essential components of the Bahá'í Administrative Order. He highlights their complementary nature, emphasizing that they work in conjunction with each other to administer the affairs of the Faith, coordinate activities, promote interests, execute laws, and defend subsidiary institutions.

Each institution operates within its own clearly defined sphere of jurisdiction and is equipped with attendant institutions designed to facilitate the effective discharge of its responsibilities. Despite their separate spheres, each institution possesses its own powers, authority, rights, and prerogatives, which are not contradictory but rather complement each other.

Shoghi Effendi clarifies that these institutions are not incompatible or mutually destructive; instead, they supplement each other's authority and functions, working together in harmony to achieve their common aims. He asserts that they are permanently and fundamentally united in their purpose, despite their distinct roles within the Administrative Order.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Introduction to the twin institutions of the Administrative Order—Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice.
2. Divine Origin: Emphasis on the divine origin of these institutions.
3. Essential Functions: Recognition of the essential functions of the Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice.
4. Complementary Nature: Explanation of the complementary nature of these institutions.
5. Primary Objectives: Identification of the primary objectives of the Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice.
6. Sphere of Jurisdiction: Discussion of the clearly defined spheres of jurisdiction for each institution.
7. Attendant Institutions: Recognition of the attendant institutions that support the functioning of the Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice.

8. Powers and Authority: Explanation of the powers, authority, rights, and prerogatives of each institution.
9. Harmonious Relationship: Assertion that despite their distinct roles, the Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice work together in harmony.
10. Permanently United: Confirmation that these institutions are permanently and fundamentally united in their aims.

Questions and Answers:

1. How does Shoghi Effendi characterize the twin institutions of the Bahá'í Administrative Order?
 - Shoghi Effendi characterizes the Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice as divine in origin, essential in their functions, and complementary in their aim and purpose.
2. What is the primary objective of these institutions according to Shoghi Effendi?
 - The primary objective of the Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice is to ensure the continuity of the divinely-appointed authority of the Bahá'í Faith, safeguard unity among believers, and maintain the integrity and flexibility of Bahá'í teachings.
3. How does Shoghi Effendi describe the relationship between the Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice?
 - Shoghi Effendi describes the relationship between the Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice as harmonious, with each institution working together to achieve their common aims.
4. What is the significance of the spheres of jurisdiction for each institution?
 - The spheres of jurisdiction for each institution define the areas in which they operate and exercise their respective powers and authority.
5. Are the powers and authority of the Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice contradictory?
 - No, the powers and authority of these institutions are not contradictory; they complement each other's functions and are permanently united in their aims.
6. How does Shoghi Effendi assert the unity of these institutions?
 - Shoghi Effendi asserts that despite their distinct roles, the Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice are permanently and fundamentally united in their purpose within the Bahá'í Administrative Order.
104. Divorced from the institution of the Guardianship the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh would be mutilated and permanently deprived of that hereditary principle which, as 'Abdu'l-Bahá has written, has been invariably upheld by the Law of God. *"In all the Divine Dispensations,"* He states, in a Tablet addressed to a follower of the Faith in Persia, *"the eldest son hath been given extraordinary distinctions. Even the station of prophethood hath been his birthright."* Without such an institution the integrity of the Faith would be imperiled, and the stability of the entire fabric would be gravely

endangered. Its prestige would suffer, the means required to enable it to take a long, an uninterrupted view over a series of generations would be completely lacking, and the necessary guidance to define the sphere of the legislative action of its elected representatives would be totally withdrawn.

Summary:

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi underscores the indispensable role of the institution of the Guardianship within the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh. He emphasizes that without the Guardianship, the Bahá'í Faith would be incomplete and deprived of an essential principle upheld by the Law of God—the hereditary principle. Shoghi Effendi quotes 'Abdu'l-Bahá to illustrate the importance of the eldest son in Divine Dispensations, stating that even the station of prophethood has historically been the birthright of the eldest son. He asserts that the absence of the institution of the Guardianship would imperil the integrity and stability of the Faith, undermine its prestige, and deprive it of necessary guidance.

Shoghi Effendi begins by highlighting the critical role of the institution of the Guardianship within the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh. He emphasizes that the Guardianship is essential for maintaining the integrity and continuity of the Faith, as it embodies the hereditary principle upheld by the Law of God. This principle, articulated by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, has historically bestowed extraordinary distinctions upon the eldest son in Divine Dispensations, including the station of prophethood.

Without the institution of the Guardianship, Shoghi Effendi warns that the Bahá'í Faith would be incomplete and vulnerable. Its integrity would be compromised, and its stability would be gravely endangered. The absence of the Guardianship would diminish the Faith's prestige and hinder its ability to provide long-term guidance over successive generations. Furthermore, the lack of the Guardianship would deprive the Bahá'í community of the necessary guidance to define the legislative sphere of its elected representatives.

Shoghi Effendi's assertion underscores the significance of the Guardianship as a cornerstone of the Bahá'í Administrative Order. It serves as a safeguard for the Faith, ensuring its continuity and providing essential guidance for its governance and development over time.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Introduction to the indispensable role of the institution of the Guardianship within the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh.
2. Hereditary Principle: Explanation of the hereditary principle upheld by the Law of God, as articulated by 'Abdu'l-Bahá.
3. Historical Precedent: Illustration of the historical precedence of the eldest son's extraordinary distinctions in Divine Dispensations.
4. Importance of the Guardianship:
 - Maintaining integrity and continuity of the Faith.
 - Safeguarding stability of the Bahá'í community.

- Upholding prestige of the Faith.
 - Providing long-term guidance over successive generations.
 - Defining legislative sphere of elected representatives.
5. Consequences of Absence: Discussion of the consequences of the absence of the institution of the Guardianship.
 6. Essential Guidance: Recognition of the Guardianship as providing essential guidance for the governance and development of the Bahá'í Faith.
 7. Conclusion: Emphasis on the significance of the Guardianship as a cornerstone of the Bahá'í Administrative Order.

Questions and Answers:

1. What role does the institution of the Guardianship play within the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh?
 - The institution of the Guardianship plays an indispensable role in maintaining the integrity and continuity of the Bahá'í Faith, embodying the hereditary principle upheld by the Law of God.

2. How does Shoghi Effendi describe the historical precedence of the eldest son in Divine Dispensations?
 - Shoghi Effendi quotes 'Abdu'l-Bahá, who states that in Divine Dispensations, the eldest son has historically been given extraordinary distinctions, including the station of prophethood.

3. What consequences does Shoghi Effendi warn of in the absence of the institution of the Guardianship?
 - Shoghi Effendi warns that the absence of the Guardianship would imperil the integrity and stability of the Bahá'í Faith, diminish its prestige, and deprive it of necessary guidance for governance and development.

4. Why does Shoghi Effendi emphasize the importance of the Guardianship for providing long-term guidance over successive generations?
 - Shoghi Effendi emphasizes this importance to highlight the enduring nature of the guidance provided by the institution of the Guardianship, ensuring the Faith's continuity and development over time.

5. How does Shoghi Effendi conclude his assertion regarding the institution of the Guardianship?
 - Shoghi Effendi concludes by emphasizing the Guardianship's significance as a cornerstone of the Bahá'í Administrative Order, essential for safeguarding the Faith's integrity and providing essential guidance for its governance.

105. Severed from the no less essential institution of the Universal House of Justice this same System of the Will of 'Abdu'l-Bahá would be paralyzed in its action and would be powerless to fill in those gaps which the Author of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas has deliberately left in the body of His legislative and administrative ordinances.

Summary:

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi underscores the critical role of the Universal House of Justice within the framework of the Bahá'í Administrative Order. He emphasizes that without the Universal House of Justice, the System established by 'Abdu'l-Bahá would be incomplete and unable to fulfill its intended purpose. Shoghi Effendi asserts that the Universal House of Justice is essential for the effective functioning of the Bahá'í community and for addressing gaps left by Bahá'u'lláh in His legislative and administrative ordinances.

Shoghi Effendi begins by stating that the Universal House of Justice is an equally essential institution within the Bahá'í Administrative Order. He highlights that without the Universal House of Justice, the System established by 'Abdu'l-Bahá would be paralyzed and incapable of addressing certain gaps deliberately left by Bahá'u'lláh in His laws and ordinances.

The Guardian emphasizes that the Universal House of Justice plays a crucial role in interpreting and applying Bahá'u'lláh's laws, filling in legislative gaps, and providing guidance to the Bahá'í community. It serves as the supreme governing body of the Faith, responsible for legislating on matters not explicitly addressed in the Bahá'í scriptures and for adapting the Faith's teachings to changing circumstances.

Shoghi Effendi asserts that the absence of the Universal House of Justice would hinder the Bahá'í community's ability to fully implement Bahá'u'lláh's vision for humanity and to realize the potential of the Bahá'í Administrative Order. He stresses the importance of recognizing the indispensable role of the Universal House of Justice in ensuring the coherence and effectiveness of the Bahá'í community's endeavors.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Introduction to the critical role of the Universal House of Justice within the Bahá'í Administrative Order.
2. Essential Institution: Emphasis on the Universal House of Justice as an equally essential institution alongside the Guardianship.
3. Paralysis Without the Universal House of Justice: Assertion that without the Universal House of Justice, the System established by 'Abdu'l-Bahá would be paralyzed and incapable of fulfilling its purpose.
4. Filling Legislative Gaps: Recognition of the Universal House of Justice's role in interpreting Bahá'u'lláh's laws and ordinances and filling in legislative gaps.
5. Supreme Governing Body: Description of the Universal House of Justice as the supreme governing body of the Bahá'í Faith.
6. Adaptation to Changing Circumstances: Explanation of the Universal House of Justice's responsibility for adapting the Faith's teachings to changing circumstances.
7. Importance for the Bahá'í Community: Stress on the importance of the Universal House of Justice for the coherence and effectiveness of the Bahá'í community's endeavors.

8. Conclusion: Emphasis on recognizing the indispensable role of the Universal House of Justice in realizing Bahá'u'lláh's vision for humanity.

Questions and Answers:

1. What role does Shoghi Effendi attribute to the Universal House of Justice within the Bahá'í Administrative Order?

- Shoghi Effendi attributes a critical role to the Universal House of Justice, emphasizing its importance for the effective functioning of the Bahá'í community and for addressing gaps left by Bahá'u'lláh in His laws and ordinances.

2. How does Shoghi Effendi characterize the absence of the Universal House of Justice?

- Shoghi Effendi characterizes the absence of the Universal House of Justice as resulting in the paralysis of the System established by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, rendering it incapable of fulfilling its intended purpose.

3. What responsibilities does Shoghi Effendi attribute to the Universal House of Justice?

- Shoghi Effendi attributes responsibilities to the Universal House of Justice such as interpreting Bahá'u'lláh's laws, filling legislative gaps, providing guidance to the Bahá'í community, and adapting the Faith's teachings to changing circumstances.

4. Why does Shoghi Effendi stress the importance of the Universal House of Justice for the Bahá'í community?

- Shoghi Effendi stresses the importance of the Universal House of Justice for ensuring the coherence and effectiveness of the Bahá'í community's endeavors in realizing Bahá'u'lláh's vision for humanity.

5. How does Shoghi Effendi conclude his assertion regarding the Universal House of Justice?

- Shoghi Effendi concludes by emphasizing the indispensable role of the Universal House of Justice within the Bahá'í Administrative Order and the necessity of recognizing its significance for the Bahá'í community's development and progress.

106. *“He is the Interpreter of the Word of God,”* ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, referring to the functions of the Guardian of the Faith, asserts, using in His Will the very term which He Himself had chosen when refuting the argument of the Covenant-breakers who had challenged His right to interpret the utterances of Bahá'u'lláh. *“After him,”* He adds, *“will succeed the first-born of his lineal descendants.”* *“The mighty stronghold,”* He further explains, *“shall remain impregnable and safe through obedience to him who is the Guardian of the Cause of God.”* *“It is incumbent upon the members of the House of Justice, upon all the Aghsán, the Afján, the Hands of the Cause of God, to show their obedience, submissiveness and subordination unto the Guardian of the Cause of God.”*

Summary:

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi elucidates the authority and functions of the Guardian of the Faith within the Bahá'í Administrative Order, as outlined by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in His Will and Testament. He quotes 'Abdu'l-Bahá, who refers to the Guardian as the Interpreter of the Word of God, a title that affirms the Guardian's role in interpreting Bahá'u'lláh's teachings and guiding the Bahá'í community. Additionally, 'Abdu'l-Bahá specifies that the Guardian's lineal descendants will succeed him after his passing, ensuring the continuity of the Guardianship. He emphasizes the importance of obedience and subordination to the Guardian among all Bahá'ís, including members of the Universal House of Justice, the Aghşán (descendants of Bahá'u'lláh), the Afnán (relatives of the Báb), and the Hands of the Cause of God.

Shoghi Effendi begins by quoting 'Abdu'l-Bahá, who affirms the authority and functions of the Guardian of the Faith as the Interpreter of the Word of God. This title underscores the Guardian's role in interpreting Bahá'u'lláh's writings and guiding the Bahá'í community in understanding and applying His teachings.

'Abdu'l-Bahá further specifies in His Will and Testament that the lineal descendants of the Guardian will succeed him after his passing, ensuring the continuity of the Guardianship within the Bahá'í Administrative Order. This provision ensures the ongoing guidance and protection of the Faith through successive generations.

Additionally, 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasizes the importance of obedience, submissiveness, and subordination to the Guardian among all Bahá'ís, including members of the Universal House of Justice, the Aghşán, the Afnán, and the Hands of the Cause of God. This injunction underscores the Guardian's central role in the Bahá'í community and the necessity of unity and cohesion under his leadership.

Shoghi Effendi's exposition highlights the significance of the Guardian within the Bahá'í Administrative Order, emphasizing his authority as the Interpreter of the Word of God and the importance of obedience and subordination to him among all Bahá'ís.

.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Introduction to the authority and functions of the Guardian of the Faith within the Bahá'í Administrative Order.
2. Interpreter of the Word of God: Explanation of the Guardian's role as the Interpreter of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings.
3. Succession of the Guardian: Recognition of the provision for the lineal descendants of the Guardian to succeed him after his passing.
4. Continuity of the Guardianship: Emphasis on the continuity of the Guardianship through successive generations.
5. Importance of Obedience: Assertion of the importance of obedience, submissiveness, and subordination to the Guardian among all Bahá'ís.
6. Unity and Cohesion: Recognition of the Guardian's central role in fostering unity and cohesion within the Bahá'í community.

7. Conclusion: Emphasis on the significance of the Guardian's authority and the necessity of obedience to him within the Bahá'í Administrative Order.

Questions and Answers:

1. What title does 'Abdu'l-Bahá give to the Guardian of the Faith?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá refers to the Guardian as the Interpreter of the Word of God, emphasizing his role in interpreting Bahá'u'lláh's teachings.

2. What provision does 'Abdu'l-Bahá make for the succession of the Guardian?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá specifies that the lineal descendants of the Guardian will succeed him after his passing, ensuring the continuity of the Guardianship within the Bahá'í Administrative Order.

3. Who is instructed to show obedience and subordination to the Guardian according to 'Abdu'l-Bahá?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá instructs all members of the Bahá'í community, including the Universal House of Justice, the Aghşán, the Afnán, and the Hands of the Cause of God, to show obedience, submissiveness, and subordination to the Guardian.

4. What does Shoghi Effendi emphasize regarding the importance of obedience to the Guardian?

- Shoghi Effendi emphasizes the importance of obedience to the Guardian among all Bahá'ís, highlighting its significance for unity and cohesion within the Bahá'í community.

5. How does Shoghi Effendi conclude his exposition regarding the authority and functions of the Guardian?

- Shoghi Effendi concludes by emphasizing the significance of the Guardian's authority as the Interpreter of the Word of God and the necessity of obedience to him within the Bahá'í Administrative Order for the Faith's unity and coherence.

107. *“It is incumbent upon the members of the House of Justice,”* Bahá'u'lláh, on the other hand, declares in the Eighth Leaf of the Exalted Paradise, *“to take counsel together regarding those things which have not outwardly been revealed in the Book, and to enforce that which is agreeable to them. God will verily inspire them with whatsoever He willeth, and He verily is the Provider, the Omniscient.”* *“Unto the Most Holy Book”* (the Kitáb-i-Aqdas), ‘Abdu'l-Bahá states in His Will, *“every one must turn, and all that is not expressly recorded therein must be referred to the Universal House of Justice. That which this body, whether unanimously or by a majority doth carry, that is verily the truth and the purpose of God Himself. Whoso doth deviate therefrom is verily of them that love discord, hath shown forth malice, and turned away from the Lord of the Covenant.”*

Summary:

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi elucidates the authority and functions of the Universal House of Justice within the Bahá'í Administrative Order, as outlined by Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá. He quotes Bahá'u'lláh, who instructs the members of the House of Justice to consult together regarding matters not outwardly revealed in the Bahá'í scriptures and to enforce decisions agreeable to them, with the assurance that God will inspire them with His will. Additionally, 'Abdu'l-Bahá specifies in His Will that all matters not expressly recorded in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas must be referred to the Universal House of Justice for resolution. He asserts that decisions made by the Universal House of Justice, whether unanimously or by a majority, represent the truth and the purpose of God, and deviation from its decisions signifies discord and disobedience to the Covenant.

Shoghi Effendi begins by quoting Bahá'u'lláh, who instructs the members of the Universal House of Justice to consult together regarding matters not explicitly addressed in the Bahá'í scriptures. He emphasizes that the House of Justice has the authority to enforce decisions agreeable to its members, with the assurance that God will inspire them with His will in their deliberations.

Furthermore, 'Abdu'l-Bahá specifies in His Will that all matters not expressly recorded in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, the Most Holy Book of the Bahá'í Faith, must be referred to the Universal House of Justice for resolution. He underscores the authority of the Universal House of Justice, stating that decisions made by this body, whether unanimously or by a majority, represent the truth and the purpose of God Himself.

Shoghi Effendi emphasizes that deviation from the decisions of the Universal House of Justice signifies discord and disobedience to the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh. He underscores the importance of obedience to the Universal House of Justice as the supreme legislative body of the Bahá'í Faith, entrusted with the authority to guide the Bahá'í community and safeguard its unity.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Introduction to the authority and functions of the Universal House of Justice within the Bahá'í Administrative Order.
2. Consultation and Decision-Making: Explanation of Bahá'u'lláh's instructions for the members of the Universal House of Justice to consult together and enforce decisions agreeable to them.
3. Divine Inspiration: Assurance that God will inspire the members of the Universal House of Justice with His will in their deliberations.
4. Referral of Matters: 'Abdu'l-Bahá's specification that matters not explicitly recorded in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas must be referred to the Universal House of Justice for resolution.
5. Authority of the Universal House of Justice: Assertion of the authority of the Universal House of Justice as the supreme legislative body of the Bahá'í Faith.
6. Divine Guidance: Recognition of decisions made by the Universal House of Justice as representing the truth and the purpose of God Himself.

7. Deviation Signifies Discord: Emphasis on the significance of deviation from the decisions of the Universal House of Justice as signifying discord and disobedience to the Covenant.
8. Importance of Obedience: Stress on the importance of obedience to the Universal House of Justice for the unity and coherence of the Bahá'í community.
9. Conclusion: Emphasis on the authority and guidance of the Universal House of Justice in guiding the Bahá'í community and safeguarding its unity.

Questions and Answers:

1. What instructions does Bahá'u'lláh give to the members of the Universal House of Justice regarding decision-making?
 - Bahá'u'lláh instructs the members of the Universal House of Justice to consult together regarding matters not explicitly addressed in the Bahá'í scriptures and to enforce decisions agreeable to them.

2. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá specify the referral of matters not recorded in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas?
 - 'Abdu'l-Bahá specifies that matters not explicitly recorded in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas must be referred to the Universal House of Justice for resolution.

3. What authority does 'Abdu'l-Bahá attribute to decisions made by the Universal House of Justice?
 - 'Abdu'l-Bahá attributes the authority of representing the truth and the purpose of God Himself to decisions made by the Universal House of Justice, whether unanimously or by a majority.

4. What significance does Shoghi Effendi attribute to deviation from the decisions of the Universal House of Justice?
 - Shoghi Effendi attributes the significance of signifying discord and disobedience to the Covenant to deviation from the decisions of the Universal House of Justice.

5. Why does Shoghi Effendi stress the importance of obedience to the Universal House of Justice?
 - Shoghi Effendi stresses the importance of obedience to the Universal House of Justice for the unity and coherence of the Bahá'í community, highlighting its role in guiding the community and safeguarding its unity.

108. Not only does 'Abdu'l-Bahá confirm in His Will Bahá'u'lláh's above-quoted statement, but invests this body with the additional right and power to abrogate, according to the exigencies of time, its own enactments, as well as those of a preceding House of Justice. *"Inasmuch as the House of Justice,"* is His explicit statement in His Will, *"hath power to enact laws that are not expressly recorded in the Book and bear upon daily transactions, so also it hath power to repeal the same... This it can do because these laws form no part of the divine explicit text."*

Summary:

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi elaborates on the authority and powers vested in the Universal House of Justice by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in His Will and Testament. He emphasizes that the Universal House of Justice not only has the authority to enact laws that are not explicitly recorded in the Bahá'í scriptures but also possesses the power to repeal its own enactments, as well as those of preceding Houses of Justice, in accordance with the exigencies of time. 'Abdu'l-Bahá explicitly states in His Will that the Universal House of Justice has the authority to enact and repeal laws that address daily transactions, as these laws do not form part of the divine explicit text.

Shoghi Effendi begins by highlighting 'Abdu'l-Bahá's affirmation of Bahá'u'lláh's statement regarding the authority of the Universal House of Justice to enact laws not expressly recorded in the Bahá'í scriptures. He underscores 'Abdu'l-Bahá's additional assertion that the Universal House of Justice has the power to repeal its own enactments, as well as those of preceding Houses of Justice, when necessary due to the changing needs and circumstances of the Bahá'í community.

According to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's explicit statement in His Will and Testament, the Universal House of Justice possesses the authority to enact laws that pertain to daily transactions, which are not explicitly addressed in the divine texts. Similarly, it has the power to repeal these laws as circumstances evolve, as they do not constitute part of the divine explicit text and are subject to adaptation according to the needs of the time.

Shoghi Effendi emphasizes that this provision demonstrates the flexibility and adaptability of the Bahá'í Administrative Order, allowing the Universal House of Justice to respond effectively to the changing needs and exigencies of the Bahá'í community over time.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Introduction to the authority and powers of the Universal House of Justice.
2. Confirmation of Bahá'u'lláh's Statement: Affirmation of Bahá'u'lláh's statement regarding the authority of the Universal House of Justice to enact laws not explicitly recorded in the Bahá'í scriptures.
3. Power to Repeal Enactments: Emphasis on 'Abdu'l-Bahá's assertion that the Universal House of Justice has the power to repeal its own enactments, as well as those of preceding Houses of Justice.
4. Addressing Daily Transactions: Recognition of the Universal House of Justice's authority to enact laws pertaining to daily transactions not explicitly addressed in the divine texts.
5. Repeal of Laws: Acknowledgment of the Universal House of Justice's power to repeal laws as circumstances evolve.
6. Flexibility and Adaptability: Demonstration of the flexibility and adaptability of the Bahá'í Administrative Order in responding to changing needs and circumstances.

7. Conclusion: Emphasis on the significance of this provision in ensuring the effectiveness and relevance of the Bahá'í Administrative Order.

Questions and Answers:

1. What additional authority does 'Abdu'l-Bahá confer upon the Universal House of Justice in His Will and Testament?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá confers upon the Universal House of Justice the authority to repeal its own enactments, as well as those of preceding Houses of Justice, in accordance with the exigencies of time.

2. In what context does 'Abdu'l-Bahá specify the Universal House of Justice's authority to enact laws?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá specifies that the Universal House of Justice has the authority to enact laws pertaining to daily transactions that are not explicitly addressed in the Bahá'í scriptures.

3. Why does Shoghi Effendi emphasize the importance of this provision in 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will and Testament?

- Shoghi Effendi emphasizes the importance of this provision as it demonstrates the flexibility and adaptability of the Bahá'í Administrative Order, allowing the Universal House of Justice to respond effectively to the changing needs and exigencies of the Bahá'í community over time.

4. How does the provision in 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will and Testament contribute to the effectiveness and relevance of the Bahá'í Administrative Order?

- The provision allows the Universal House of Justice to enact and repeal laws as needed, ensuring that the Bahá'í Administrative Order remains relevant and responsive to the evolving needs of the Bahá'í community.

109. Referring to both the Guardian and the Universal House of Justice we read these emphatic words: *“The sacred and youthful Branch, the Guardian of the Cause of God, as well as the Universal House of Justice to be universally elected and established, are both under the care and protection of the Abhá Beauty, under the shelter and unerring guidance of the Exalted One (the Báb) (may my life be offered up for them both). Whatsoever they decide is of God.”*

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi emphasizes the divine authority and protection bestowed upon both the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith and the Universal House of Justice. He quotes Bahá'u'lláh, who refers to the Guardian as the "sacred and youthful Branch" and the Universal House of Justice as the institution to be universally elected and established. Both of these institutions, Bahá'u'lláh asserts, are under the care and protection of the Abhá Beauty (Bahá'u'lláh Himself) and the unerring guidance of the Báb. Bahá'u'lláh further emphasizes that whatever decisions the Guardian and the Universal House of Justice make are of God, signifying their authority and infallibility in matters pertaining to the Bahá'í Faith.

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi begins by quoting Bahá'u'lláh, who bestows divine authority and protection upon both the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith and the Universal House of Justice. He refers to the Guardian as the "sacred and youthful Branch" and emphasizes that the Universal House of Justice is to be universally elected and established. Both institutions, Bahá'u'lláh asserts, are under the care and protection of the Abhá Beauty (Bahá'u'lláh Himself) and the unerring guidance of the Báb.

Bahá'u'lláh's statement underscores the spiritual significance and authority vested in the Guardian and the Universal House of Justice within the Bahá'í Faith. Their decisions are considered to be divinely inspired and guided, as they are under the shelter of Bahá'u'lláh and the guidance of the Báb. This proclamation highlights the importance of obedience and submission to the decisions made by these institutions, as they are considered to be of God.

Shoghi Effendi emphasizes the significance of Bahá'u'lláh's proclamation, affirming the authority and infallibility of the Guardian and the Universal House of Justice in matters pertaining to the Bahá'í Faith. This proclamation serves to reinforce the unity and cohesion of the Bahá'í community under the guidance of these institutions, ensuring the continued progress and development of the Faith.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Introduction to the divine authority and protection bestowed upon the Guardian and the Universal House of Justice.
2. Description of the Guardian: Bahá'u'lláh's reference to the Guardian as the "sacred and youthful Branch."
3. Establishment of the Universal House of Justice: Bahá'u'lláh's instruction for the Universal House of Justice to be universally elected and established.
4. Divine Care and Protection: Assertion that both the Guardian and the Universal House of Justice are under the care and protection of Bahá'u'lláh and the guidance of the Báb.
5. Authority of Decisions: Emphasis on Bahá'u'lláh's statement that whatever decisions the Guardian and the Universal House of Justice make are of God.
6. Significance of the Proclamation: Explanation of the significance of Bahá'u'lláh's proclamation regarding the authority and infallibility of these institutions.
7. Importance of Obedience: Stress on the importance of obedience and submission to the decisions made by the Guardian and the Universal House of Justice.
8. Unity and Cohesion: Recognition of Bahá'u'lláh's proclamation as reinforcing the unity and cohesion of the Bahá'í community.
9. Conclusion: Emphasis on the spiritual significance and guidance provided by the Guardian and the Universal House of Justice within the Bahá'í Faith.

Questions and Answers:

1. How does Bahá'u'lláh describe the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith?
 - Bahá'u'lláh describes the Guardian as the "sacred and youthful Branch."

2. What instruction does Bahá'u'lláh give regarding the Universal House of Justice?
 - Bahá'u'lláh instructs for the Universal House of Justice to be universally elected and established.

3. Under whose care and protection are both the Guardian and the Universal House of Justice placed?
 - Both the Guardian and the Universal House of Justice are placed under the care and protection of Bahá'u'lláh and the guidance of the Báb.

4. According to Bahá'u'lláh, what is the nature of the decisions made by the Guardian and the Universal House of Justice?
 - Bahá'u'lláh asserts that whatever decisions the Guardian and the Universal House of Justice make are of God.

5. What is the significance of Bahá'u'lláh's proclamation regarding the authority and infallibility of these institutions?
 - Bahá'u'lláh's proclamation underscores the spiritual significance and guidance provided by the Guardian and the Universal House of Justice within the Bahá'í Faith.

6. How does Shoghi Effendi emphasize the importance of obedience to the decisions made by these institutions?
 - Shoghi Effendi stresses the importance of obedience and submission to the decisions made by the Guardian and the Universal House of Justice, as they are considered to be of God.

110. From these statements it is made indubitably clear and evident that the Guardian of the Faith has been made the Interpreter of the Word and that the Universal House of Justice has been invested with the function of legislating on matters not expressly revealed in the teachings. The interpretation of the Guardian, functioning within his own sphere, is as authoritative and binding as the enactments of the International House of Justice, whose exclusive right and prerogative is to pronounce upon and deliver the final judgment on such laws and ordinances as Bahá'u'lláh has not expressly revealed. Neither can, nor will ever, infringe upon the sacred and prescribed domain of the other. Neither will seek to curtail the specific and undoubted authority with which both have been divinely invested.

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi clarifies the distinct roles and functions of the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith and the Universal House of Justice within the Bahá'í Administrative Order. He explains that the Guardian has been appointed as the Interpreter of the Word of God, while the Universal House of Justice has been entrusted with the authority to legislate on matters not explicitly addressed in the Bahá'í teachings. Shoghi Effendi emphasizes that the interpretations provided by the Guardian, within his designated sphere of authority, carry the same weight and authority as the enactments made by the Universal

House of Justice. However, the final judgment on laws and ordinances not expressly revealed by Bahá'u'lláh rests solely with the Universal House of Justice.

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi clarifies that the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith has been appointed as the Interpreter of the Word of God, while the Universal House of Justice has been entrusted with the authority to legislate on matters not expressly revealed in the Bahá'í teachings. He emphasizes that both institutions operate within their own prescribed spheres of authority and neither infringes upon the domain of the other. The interpretations provided by the Guardian are as authoritative and binding as the enactments made by the Universal House of Justice.

According to Shoghi Effendi, the interpretations provided by the Guardian and the enactments made by the Universal House of Justice are complementary and serve distinct purposes within the Bahá'í Administrative Order. While the Guardian provides authoritative interpretations of the Bahá'í teachings, the Universal House of Justice legislates on matters not explicitly addressed in the scriptures. Both institutions are invested with specific and undoubted authority by divine decree, and neither seeks to diminish the authority of the other.

Shoghi Effendi underscores the harmonious relationship between the Guardian and the Universal House of Justice, emphasizing that they operate within their own spheres of authority without infringing upon each other's domains. Their respective roles and functions contribute to the effective governance and guidance of the Bahá'í community, ensuring its unity and coherence.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Introduction to the distinct roles and functions of the Guardian and the Universal House of Justice within the Bahá'í Administrative Order.
2. Interpreter of the Word of God: Explanation of the Guardian's role as the Interpreter of the Word of God.
3. Legislative Authority: Description of the Universal House of Justice's authority to legislate on matters not expressly revealed in the Bahá'í teachings.
4. Authority and Binding Nature: Assertion that the interpretations provided by the Guardian carry the same authority as the enactments made by the Universal House of Justice.
5. Final Judgment: Emphasis on the Universal House of Justice's prerogative to deliver the final judgment on laws and ordinances not expressly revealed by Bahá'u'lláh.
6. Complementary Roles: Recognition of the complementary roles and functions of the Guardian and the Universal House of Justice within the Bahá'í Administrative Order.
7. Respect for Each Other's Authority: Stress on the mutual respect and non-interference between the Guardian and the Universal House of Justice in their respective spheres of authority.

8. Harmonious Relationship: Acknowledgment of the harmonious relationship between the Guardian and the Universal House of Justice in governing and guiding the Bahá'í community.
9. Conclusion: Emphasis on the significance of the Guardian and the Universal House of Justice in ensuring the unity and coherence of the Bahá'í community.

Questions and Answers:

1. What role has the Guardian been appointed to within the Bahá'í Administrative Order?
 - The Guardian has been appointed as the Interpreter of the Word of God within the Bahá'í Administrative Order.
2. What authority has the Universal House of Justice been entrusted with?
 - The Universal House of Justice has been entrusted with the authority to legislate on matters not explicitly revealed in the Bahá'í teachings.
3. How does Shoghi Effendi characterize the interpretations provided by the Guardian and the enactments made by the Universal House of Justice?
 - Shoghi Effendi asserts that the interpretations provided by the Guardian carry the same authority as the enactments made by the Universal House of Justice.
4. Who delivers the final judgment on laws and ordinances not expressly revealed by Bahá'u'lláh?
 - The Universal House of Justice delivers the final judgment on laws and ordinances not expressly revealed by Bahá'u'lláh.
5. How does Shoghi Effendi describe the relationship between the Guardian and the Universal House of Justice?
 - Shoghi Effendi describes the relationship between the Guardian and the Universal House of Justice as harmonious, with each institution operating within its own sphere of authority without infringing upon the domain of the other.
111. Though the Guardian of the Faith has been made the permanent head of so august a body he can never, even temporarily, assume the right of exclusive legislation. He cannot override the decision of the majority of his fellow-members, but is bound to insist upon a reconsideration by them of any enactment he conscientiously believes to conflict with the meaning and to depart from the spirit of Bahá'u'lláh's revealed utterances. He interprets what has been specifically revealed, and cannot legislate except in his capacity as member of the Universal House of Justice. He is debarred from laying down independently the constitution that must govern the organized activities of his fellow-members, and from exercising his influence in a manner that would encroach upon the liberty of those whose sacred right is to elect the body of his collaborators.

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi delineates the limitations and responsibilities of the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith within the framework of the Universal House of Justice.

While the Guardian is designated as the permanent head of this esteemed institution, he is not granted the exclusive right of legislation. Shoghi Effendi emphasizes that the Guardian cannot unilaterally override the decisions made by the majority of his fellow-members in the Universal House of Justice. Instead, he is obligated to request a reconsideration of any enactment that he believes conflicts with the true meaning and spirit of Bahá'u'lláh's revealed teachings. The Guardian's role primarily involves interpreting what has been specifically revealed, and he may only participate in legislation as a member of the Universal House of Justice.

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi elucidates the role and responsibilities of the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith within the context of the Universal House of Justice. While the Guardian serves as the permanent head of this distinguished body, he is not vested with the exclusive right to legislate. Instead, the Guardian is bound by the decisions made collectively by the majority of his fellow-members in the Universal House of Justice. Should the Guardian perceive any enactment to deviate from the true meaning and spirit of Bahá'u'lláh's revealed teachings, he is duty-bound to request a reconsideration by the body.

Furthermore, Shoghi Effendi underscores that the Guardian's authority is limited to interpreting what has been specifically revealed, and he is prohibited from independently laying down the constitution governing the organized activities of the Universal House of Justice. Additionally, the Guardian is barred from exerting influence in a manner that would impinge upon the freedom of those who have the sacred right to elect the members of the Universal House of Justice.

Shoghi Effendi's elucidation emphasizes the checks and balances within the Bahá'í Administrative Order, ensuring that the authority of the Guardian is exercised in harmony with the collective decisions of the Universal House of Justice. This framework safeguards the integrity and autonomy of both institutions while fostering unity and coherence within the Bahá'í community.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Introduction to the limitations and responsibilities of the Guardian within the Universal House of Justice.
2. Role of the Guardian: Explanation of the Guardian's position as the permanent head of the Universal House of Justice.
3. Limitations on Legislation: Emphasis on the Guardian's lack of exclusive right to legislate independently.
4. Requirement for Reconsideration: Description of the Guardian's obligation to request a reconsideration of enactments he believes conflict with Bahá'u'lláh's teachings.
5. Interpretative Role: Recognition of the Guardian's authority to interpret what has been specifically revealed.

6. Prohibition on Independent Constitution: Assertion that the Guardian cannot independently lay down the constitution governing the activities of the Universal House of Justice.
7. Respect for Electoral Process: Stress on the Guardian's obligation to respect the freedom of those who elect members of the Universal House of Justice.
8. Checks and Balances: Explanation of the mechanisms in place to ensure the harmonious functioning of the Guardian and the Universal House of Justice.
9. Conclusion: Emphasis on the importance of maintaining unity and coherence within the Bahá'í community through the balanced exercise of authority by both institutions.

Questions and Answers:

1. What limitations does Shoghi Effendi outline regarding the Guardian's authority within the Universal House of Justice?
 - Shoghi Effendi outlines that the Guardian cannot unilaterally legislate or override the decisions made by the majority of his fellow-members in the Universal House of Justice.

2. What is the Guardian's responsibility if he believes an enactment conflicts with Bahá'u'lláh's teachings?
 - The Guardian is obligated to request a reconsideration of any enactment he believes conflicts with Bahá'u'lláh's teachings.

3. What role does the Guardian play in legislation within the Universal House of Justice?
 - The Guardian primarily interprets what has been specifically revealed and may only participate in legislation as a member of the Universal House of Justice.

4. What is the Guardian prohibited from doing regarding the constitution of the Universal House of Justice?
 - The Guardian is prohibited from independently laying down the constitution governing the activities of the Universal House of Justice.

5. How does Shoghi Effendi characterize the Guardian's relationship with the electoral process of the Universal House of Justice?
 - Shoghi Effendi emphasizes that the Guardian must respect the freedom of those who have the sacred right to elect the members of the Universal House of Justice.

112. It should be borne in mind that the institution of the Guardianship has been anticipated by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in an allusion He made in a Tablet addressed, long before His own ascension, to three of His friends in Persia. To their question as to whether there would be any person to whom all the Bahá'ís would be called upon to turn after His ascension He made the following reply: *“As to the question ye have asked me, know verily that this is a well-guarded secret. It is even as a gem concealed within its shell. That it will be revealed is predestined. The time will come when its light will appear, when its evidences will be made manifest, and its secrets unraveled.”*

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi discusses 'Abdu'l-Bahá's anticipation of the institution of the Guardianship in a Tablet addressed to three of His friends in Persia. When asked if there would be a person to whom all Bahá'ís would be called upon to turn after His ascension, 'Abdu'l-Bahá responds cryptically, describing the matter as a "well-guarded secret" and likening it to a hidden gem within its shell. He assures them that the time will come when this secret will be revealed, its light will shine forth, its evidences will be made manifest, and its secrets will be unraveled.

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi explains 'Abdu'l-Bahá's anticipation of the institution of the Guardianship in a Tablet addressed to three of His friends in Persia. When queried about the successorship after His ascension, 'Abdu'l-Bahá responds enigmatically, likening the matter to a hidden gem within its shell. He assures them that the time will come when this secret will be revealed, its light will shine forth, and its secrets will be unraveled.

This passage underscores the prophetic nature of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's response, as it foreshadows the emergence of the institution of the Guardianship following His own ascension. It highlights the significance of the Guardianship within the Bahá'í Faith and emphasizes the gradual unfolding of divine truths over time.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Introduction to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's anticipation of the institution of the Guardianship.
2. Cryptic Response: Description of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's cryptic response to the question about successorship after His ascension.
3. Hidden Gem Analogy: Explanation of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's analogy likening the matter to a hidden gem within its shell.
4. Assurance of Revelation: Assurance by 'Abdu'l-Bahá that the time will come when this secret will be revealed and its secrets unraveled.
5. Prophetic Nature: Recognition of the prophetic nature of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's response, foreshadowing the emergence of the institution of the Guardianship.
6. Significance of the Guardianship: Emphasis on the significance of the Guardianship within the Bahá'í Faith.
7. Unfolding Divine Truths: Highlighting the gradual unfolding of divine truths over time within the Bahá'í Faith.
8. Conclusion: Emphasis on the anticipation and eventual revelation of the institution of the Guardianship as foretold by 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

Questions and Answers:

1. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá respond to the question about successorship after His ascension?
 - 'Abdu'l-Bahá responds cryptically, describing the matter as a "well-guarded secret" and likening it to a hidden gem within its shell.

2. What assurance does 'Abdu'l-Bahá provide regarding the revelation of this secret?
 - 'Abdu'l-Bahá assures that the time will come when this secret will be revealed, its light will shine forth, and its secrets will be unraveled.

3. How does Shoghi Effendi characterize 'Abdu'l-Bahá's response?
 - Shoghi Effendi characterizes 'Abdu'l-Bahá's response as prophetic, foreshadowing the emergence of the institution of the Guardianship within the Bahá'í Faith.

4. What significance does the anticipation of the Guardianship hold within the Bahá'í Faith?
 - The anticipation of the Guardianship underscores the importance of this institution within the Bahá'í Faith and highlights the gradual unfolding of divine truths over time.

5. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá's response reflect the concept of divine revelation?
 - 'Abdu'l-Bahá's response reflects the concept of divine revelation by assuring that the hidden truth will eventually be revealed in accordance with divine timing.

113. Dearly-beloved friends! Exalted as is the position and vital as is the function of the institution of the Guardianship in the Administrative Order of Bahá'u'lláh, and staggering as must be the weight of responsibility which it carries, its importance must, whatever be the language of the Will, be in no wise over-emphasized. The Guardian of the Faith must not under any circumstances, and whatever his merits or his achievements, be exalted to the rank that will make him a co-sharer with 'Abdu'l-Bahá in the unique position which the Center of the Covenant occupies—much less to the station exclusively ordained for the Manifestation of God. So grave a departure from the established tenets of our Faith is nothing short of open blasphemy. As I have already stated, in the course of my references to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's station, however great the gulf that separates Him from the Author of a Divine Revelation it can never measure with the distance that stands between Him Who is the Center of Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant and the Guardians who are its chosen ministers. There is a far, far greater distance separating the Guardian from the Center of the Covenant than there is between the Center of the Covenant and its Author.

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi addresses the importance and significance of the institution of the Guardianship within the Bahá'í Administrative Order. He emphasizes that while the position of the Guardian is exalted and carries immense responsibility, it must not be overemphasized or elevated to a level that equates it with the station of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, who occupies a unique position as the Center of the Covenant. Shoghi Effendi warns against exalting the Guardian to a rank that would place him on par with 'Abdu'l-Bahá or even elevate him to the station exclusively ordained for the Manifestation of God, as such a departure from the established tenets of the Faith would constitute open blasphemy.

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi cautions against overemphasizing the importance of the institution of the Guardianship within the Bahá'í Administrative Order. While acknowledging the exalted position and weighty responsibilities of the Guardian, he underscores the need to maintain the distinction between the Guardian and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the Center of the Covenant. Shoghi Effendi asserts that there is a far greater distance separating the Guardian from the Center of the Covenant than there is between the Center of the Covenant and its Author, Bahá'u'lláh.

This passage highlights the reverence and respect due to 'Abdu'l-Bahá as the Center of the Covenant and cautions against elevating any individual, including the Guardian, to a position that compromises the integrity of the Bahá'í Faith. Shoghi Effendi reaffirms the hierarchical structure of authority within the Bahá'í Faith, with 'Abdu'l-Bahá occupying a unique and unassailable position as the appointed successor of Bahá'u'lláh.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Introduction to the importance and significance of the institution of the Guardianship within the Bahá'í Administrative Order.
2. Warning against Overemphasis: Caution against overemphasizing the position of the Guardian and elevating it to a level that equates with 'Abdu'l-Bahá.
3. Distinction from 'Abdu'l-Bahá: Emphasis on maintaining the distinction between the Guardian and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the Center of the Covenant.
4. Consequences of Blasphemy: Warning against open blasphemy resulting from the elevation of the Guardian to a station exclusively ordained for the Manifestation of God.
5. Greater Distance: Assertion of a far greater distance separating the Guardian from the Center of the Covenant than between the Center of the Covenant and Bahá'u'lláh.
6. Reverence for 'Abdu'l-Bahá: Affirmation of the reverence and respect due to 'Abdu'l-Bahá as the appointed successor of Bahá'u'lláh.
7. Integrity of the Faith: Emphasis on maintaining the integrity of the Bahá'í Faith and its hierarchical structure of authority.
8. Conclusion: Conclusion emphasizing the hierarchical structure of authority within the Bahá'í Faith and the reverence due to 'Abdu'l-Bahá as the Center of the Covenant.

Questions and Answers:

1. What caution does Shoghi Effendi provide regarding the importance of the institution of the Guardianship?
 - Shoghi Effendi cautions against overemphasizing the position of the Guardian and elevating it to a level that equates with 'Abdu'l-Bahá.
2. What warning does Shoghi Effendi give regarding the consequences of elevating the Guardian to a station exclusively ordained for the Manifestation of God?
 - Shoghi Effendi warns against open blasphemy resulting from the elevation of the Guardian to a station exclusively ordained for the Manifestation of God.

3. How does Shoghi Effendi describe the relationship between the Guardian and 'Abdu'l-Bahá?

- Shoghi Effendi asserts that there is a far greater distance separating the Guardian from 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the Center of the Covenant, than between the Center of the Covenant and Bahá'u'lláh.

4. What emphasis does Shoghi Effendi place on maintaining the integrity of the Bahá'í Faith?

- Shoghi Effendi emphasizes the importance of maintaining the integrity of the Bahá'í Faith and its hierarchical structure of authority.

5. Why is reverence and respect due to 'Abdu'l-Bahá?

- Reverence and respect are due to 'Abdu'l-Bahá as the appointed successor of Bahá'u'lláh and the Center of the Covenant within the Bahá'í Faith.

114. No Guardian of the Faith, I feel it my solemn duty to place on record, can ever claim to be the perfect exemplar of the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh or the stainless mirror that reflects His light. Though overshadowed by the unfailing, the unerring protection of Bahá'u'lláh and of the Báb, and however much he may share with 'Abdu'l-Bahá the right and obligation to interpret the Bahá'í teachings, he remains essentially human and cannot, if he wishes to remain faithful to his trust, arrogate to himself, under any pretense whatsoever, the rights, the privileges and prerogatives which Bahá'u'lláh has chosen to confer upon His Son. In the light of this truth to pray to the Guardian of the Faith, to address him as lord and master, to designate him as his holiness, to seek his benediction, to celebrate his birthday, or to commemorate any event associated with his life would be tantamount to a departure from those established truths that are enshrined within our beloved Faith. The fact that the Guardian has been specifically endowed with such power as he may need to reveal the purport and disclose the implications of the utterances of Bahá'u'lláh and of 'Abdu'l-Bahá does not necessarily confer upon him a station co-equal with those Whose words he is called upon to interpret. He can exercise that right and discharge this obligation and yet remain infinitely inferior to both of them in rank and different in nature.

Summary:

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi emphasizes the human limitations of the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith and underscores the distinction between the Guardian and the Manifestations of God, Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb, as well as 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the Center of the Covenant. He asserts that no Guardian can claim to be the perfect exemplar of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings or a flawless mirror reflecting His light. Despite the unfailing protection of Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb, and sharing the right and obligation to interpret the Bahá'í teachings with 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the Guardian remains fundamentally human.

Shoghi Effendi highlights the human limitations of the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith and emphasizes the distinction between the Guardian and the Manifestations of God, Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb, as well as 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the Center of the Covenant. He asserts

that while the Guardian is endowed with the power to interpret the utterances of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, this does not elevate him to a station co-equal with them. Despite his role in interpreting Bahá'í teachings, the Guardian remains infinitely inferior in rank and different in nature from the Manifestations.

This passage serves to clarify the role and station of the Guardian within the Bahá'í Faith, ensuring that reverence is directed solely towards the Manifestations of God and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, as the authorized interpreter of Bahá'í teachings. It underscores the importance of maintaining the integrity of Bahá'í principles and avoiding any deviation from established truths within the Faith.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Introduction to the human limitations of the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith.
2. Distinction from Manifestations: Emphasis on the distinction between the Guardian and the Manifestations of God, Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb.
3. Role in Interpretation: Recognition of the Guardian's role in interpreting Bahá'í teachings alongside 'Abdu'l-Bahá.
4. Human Nature: Assertion of the Guardian's fundamentally human nature despite divine protection.
5. Inferiority in Rank: Affirmation that the Guardian remains infinitely inferior in rank to the Manifestations.
6. Different in Nature: Explanation that the Guardian is different in nature from the Manifestations despite his interpretative role.
7. Reverence for the Manifestations: Emphasis on directing reverence towards Bahá'u'lláh, the Báb, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá as the Manifestations of God.
8. Integrity of Bahá'í Faith: Importance of maintaining the integrity of Bahá'í principles and avoiding deviation from established truths.
9. Conclusion: Conclusion emphasizing the importance of understanding the role and station of the Guardian within the Bahá'í Faith.

Questions and Answers:

1. How does Shoghi Effendi characterize the limitations of the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith?
 - Shoghi Effendi emphasizes the human limitations of the Guardian, asserting that no Guardian can claim to be the perfect exemplar of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings or a flawless mirror reflecting His light.
2. What distinction does Shoghi Effendi make between the Guardian and the Manifestations of God?
 - Shoghi Effendi emphasizes that the Guardian remains infinitely inferior in rank and different in nature from the Manifestations of God, Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb.
3. What role does the Guardian play in interpreting Bahá'í teachings?

- The Guardian shares the right and obligation to interpret Bahá'í teachings with 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the Center of the Covenant.

4. Why is it important to direct reverence towards the Manifestations of God?

- It is important to direct reverence towards Bahá'u'lláh, the Báb, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá as the Manifestations of God, as they are the central figures of the Bahá'í Faith.

5. What does Shoghi Effendi emphasize regarding the integrity of Bahá'í principles?

- Shoghi Effendi emphasizes the importance of maintaining the integrity of Bahá'í principles and avoiding deviation from established truths within the Faith.

115. To the integrity of this cardinal principle of our Faith the words, the deeds of its present and future Guardians must abundantly testify. By their conduct and example they must needs establish its truth upon an unassailable foundation and transmit to future generations unimpeachable evidences of its reality.

Summary:

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi underscores the critical importance of maintaining the integrity of the cardinal principle of the Bahá'í Faith, particularly as it pertains to the station and role of the Guardians. He emphasizes that the present and future Guardians must actively demonstrate through their words and deeds the veracity of this principle. Their conduct and example serve to establish this truth upon an unassailable foundation and provide irrefutable evidence of its reality for future generations.

Shoghi Effendi emphasizes the crucial role of the Guardians in upholding the cardinal principle of the Bahá'í Faith. They are tasked with demonstrating through their actions and words the truth of this principle and ensuring its transmission to future generations.

This passage highlights the responsibility placed upon the Guardians to serve as exemplars of the Faith and to uphold its core principles. Their conduct and example serve as a testament to the truth of the Bahá'í teachings and play a vital role in ensuring the continuity and integrity of the Faith for generations to come.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Introduction to the critical importance of maintaining the integrity of the cardinal principle of the Bahá'í Faith.
2. Role of the Guardians: Explanation of the role of the Guardians in upholding this principle and serving as exemplars of the Faith.
3. Demonstrating through Conduct: Emphasis on the Guardians' responsibility to demonstrate the truth of this principle through their actions and behavior.
4. Establishing an Unassailable Foundation: Recognition that the Guardians must establish this truth upon an unassailable foundation for future generations.
5. Transmitting to Future Generations: Importance of ensuring that future generations receive unimpeachable evidence of the reality of this principle.

6. Conclusion: Conclusion emphasizing the pivotal role of the Guardians in maintaining the integrity of the Bahá'í Faith and transmitting its core principles to future generations.

Questions and Answers:

1. What is the role of the Guardians in relation to the cardinal principle of the Bahá'í Faith?

- The Guardians are tasked with upholding this principle and serving as exemplars of the Faith, demonstrating its truth through their actions and words.

2. How do the Guardians establish the truth of this principle upon an unassailable foundation?

- The Guardians establish the truth of this principle by ensuring that their conduct and example serve as a testament to the Bahá'í teachings and provide evidence of its reality for future generations.

3. Why is it important for the Guardians to transmit this principle to future generations?

- It is important for the Guardians to transmit this principle to future generations to ensure the continuity and integrity of the Bahá'í Faith and to provide future believers with unimpeachable evidence of its reality.

4. What responsibility do the Guardians have towards future generations?

- The Guardians have the responsibility to ensure that future generations receive unimpeachable evidence of the reality of this principle and to establish it upon an unassailable foundation.

5. How does Shoghi Effendi characterize the conduct and example of the Guardians?

- Shoghi Effendi characterizes the conduct and example of the Guardians as critical in establishing the truth of this principle and ensuring its transmission to future generations.

116. For my own part to hesitate in recognizing so vital a truth or to vacillate in proclaiming so firm a conviction must constitute a shameless betrayal of the confidence reposed in me by 'Abdu'l-Bahá and an unpardonable usurpation of the authority with which He Himself has been invested.

Summary:

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi expresses his unwavering commitment to recognizing and proclaiming the vital truth regarding the station and authority of the Guardians within the Bahá'í Faith. He asserts that any hesitation or vacillation in acknowledging this truth would amount to a betrayal of the confidence entrusted to him by 'Abdu'l-Bahá and a usurpation of the authority with which 'Abdu'l-Bahá himself has been invested.

Shoghi Effendi declares his firm conviction in recognizing and proclaiming the truth regarding the station and authority of the Guardians within the Bahá'í Faith. He

emphasizes that failure to do so would not only betray the confidence placed in him by 'Abdu'l-Bahá but also constitute an unpardonable usurpation of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's authority.

This passage underscores Shoghi Effendi's unwavering dedication to upholding the principles and teachings of the Bahá'í Faith as entrusted to him by 'Abdu'l-Bahá. It highlights his sense of responsibility in ensuring the faithful transmission of Bahá'í beliefs and principles to future generations.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Introduction to Shoghi Effendi's commitment to recognizing and proclaiming the truth regarding the station and authority of the Guardians within the Bahá'í Faith.
2. Unwavering Conviction: Declaration of Shoghi Effendi's unwavering conviction in upholding this vital truth.
3. Betrayal of Confidence: Assertion that any hesitation or vacillation in acknowledging this truth would constitute a betrayal of the confidence reposed in Shoghi Effendi by 'Abdu'l-Bahá.
4. Usurpation of Authority: Recognition that failure to uphold this truth would amount to an unpardonable usurpation of the authority with which 'Abdu'l-Bahá has been invested.
5. Responsibility to the Faith: Emphasis on Shoghi Effendi's sense of responsibility in faithfully transmitting Bahá'í beliefs and principles to future generations.
6. Conclusion: Conclusion underscoring Shoghi Effendi's unwavering dedication to upholding the principles and teachings of the Bahá'í Faith entrusted to him by 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

Questions and Answers:

1. What does Shoghi Effendi consider to be an unpardonable betrayal?
 - Shoghi Effendi considers any hesitation or vacillation in recognizing and proclaiming the truth regarding the station and authority of the Guardians within the Bahá'í Faith to be an unpardonable betrayal of the confidence entrusted to him by 'Abdu'l-Bahá.
2. What consequences does Shoghi Effendi associate with failure to uphold this truth?
 - Shoghi Effendi asserts that failure to recognize and proclaim this truth would amount to an unpardonable usurpation of the authority with which 'Abdu'l-Bahá has been invested.
3. What responsibility does Shoghi Effendi feel towards the Bahá'í Faith?
 - Shoghi Effendi feels a deep sense of responsibility in faithfully transmitting Bahá'í beliefs and principles to future generations as entrusted to him by 'Abdu'l-Bahá.
4. How does Shoghi Effendi describe his conviction in upholding this truth?
 - Shoghi Effendi expresses his unwavering conviction in recognizing and proclaiming the truth regarding the station and authority of the Guardians within the Bahá'í Faith.

5. What does this passage reveal about Shoghi Effendi's dedication to the Bahá'í Faith?
- This passage underscores Shoghi Effendi's unwavering dedication to upholding the principles and teachings of the Bahá'í Faith entrusted to him by 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

117. A word should now be said regarding the theory on which this Administrative Order is based and the principle that must govern the operation of its chief institutions. It would be utterly misleading to attempt a comparison between this unique, this divinely-conceived Order and any of the diverse systems which the minds of men, at various periods of their history, have contrived for the government of human institutions. Such an attempt would in itself betray a lack of complete appreciation of the excellence of the handiwork of its great Author. How could it be otherwise when we remember that this Order constitutes the very pattern of that divine civilization which the almighty Law of Bahá'u'lláh is designed to establish upon earth? The divers and ever-shifting systems of human polity, whether past or present, whether originating in the East or in the West, offer no adequate criterion wherewith to estimate the potency of its hidden virtues or to appraise the solidity of its foundations.

Summary:

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi underscores the uniqueness and divine origin of the Bahá'í Administrative Order, cautioning against any attempt to compare it with human-made systems of governance. He emphasizes that such a comparison would be misleading and would fail to fully appreciate the excellence of the Order's design, which serves as the pattern for the divine civilization envisioned by Bahá'u'lláh. Shoghi Effendi asserts that the ever-changing systems of human polity, whether historical or contemporary, Eastern or Western in origin, are inadequate for assessing the potency and solidity of the Bahá'í Administrative Order's foundations.

Shoghi Effendi highlights the uniqueness and divine origin of the Bahá'í Administrative Order, cautioning against comparing it with human-made systems of governance. He asserts that such comparisons would be misleading and fail to recognize the excellence of the Order's design, which serves as the pattern for the divine civilization envisioned by Bahá'u'lláh. Shoghi Effendi emphasizes that the fluctuating systems of human polity, whether historical or contemporary, are inadequate for assessing the potency and solidity of the Bahá'í Administrative Order's foundations.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Introduction to the unique nature and divine origin of the Bahá'í Administrative Order.
2. Caution Against Comparison: Shoghi Effendi cautions against attempting to compare the Bahá'í Administrative Order with human-made systems of governance.
3. Misleading Comparisons: Explanation of why such comparisons would be misleading and fail to appreciate the excellence of the Order's design.

4. Pattern for Divine Civilization: Emphasis on the Bahá'í Administrative Order serving as the pattern for the divine civilization envisioned by Bahá'u'lláh.
5. Inadequacy of Human Systems: Shoghi Effendi asserts that the ever-changing systems of human polity are inadequate for assessing the potency and solidity of the Bahá'í Administrative Order's foundations.
6. Conclusion: Conclusion highlighting the uniqueness and divine origin of the Bahá'í Administrative Order and the limitations of human-made systems for understanding its excellence.

Questions and Answers:

1. Why does Shoghi Effendi caution against comparing the Bahá'í Administrative Order with human-made systems of governance?
 - Shoghi Effendi cautions against such comparisons because they would be misleading and fail to fully appreciate the excellence of the Order's design, which serves as the pattern for the divine civilization envisioned by Bahá'u'lláh.
 2. What does Shoghi Effendi emphasize about the Bahá'í Administrative Order's design?
 - Shoghi Effendi emphasizes that the design of the Bahá'í Administrative Order is excellent and serves as the pattern for the divine civilization envisioned by Bahá'u'lláh.
 3. How does Shoghi Effendi describe human-made systems of governance?
 - Shoghi Effendi describes human-made systems of governance as ever-changing and inadequate for assessing the potency and solidity of the Bahá'í Administrative Order's foundations.
 4. What limitations does Shoghi Effendi identify in human-made systems of governance?
 - Shoghi Effendi identifies the limitations of human-made systems in their inability to fully comprehend the excellence of the Bahá'í Administrative Order's design and its divine origin.
 5. What is the significance of recognizing the uniqueness and divine origin of the Bahá'í Administrative Order?
 - Recognizing the uniqueness and divine origin of the Bahá'í Administrative Order emphasizes its superiority over human-made systems of governance and underscores its potential to establish the divine civilization envisioned by Bahá'u'lláh.
118. The Bahá'í Commonwealth of the future, of which this vast Administrative Order is the sole framework, is, both in theory and practice, not only unique in the entire history of political institutions, but can find no parallel in the annals of any of the world's recognized religious systems. No form of democratic government; no system of autocracy or of dictatorship, whether monarchical or republican; no intermediary scheme of a purely aristocratic order; nor even any of the recognized types of theocracy, whether it be the Hebrew Commonwealth, or the various Christian ecclesiastical organizations, or the Imamate or the Caliphate in Islám—none of these

can be identified or be said to conform with the Administrative Order which the master-hand of its perfect Architect has fashioned.

Summary:

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi delineates the distinctiveness of the Bahá'í Commonwealth, which is governed by the vast Administrative Order. He asserts that both in theory and practice, the Bahá'í Commonwealth stands unparalleled in the history of political institutions and finds no parallel in the annals of recognized religious systems. Shoghi Effendi proceeds to assert that no existing form of governance, whether democratic, autocratic, aristocratic, or theocratic, aligns with the Administrative Order crafted by the Bahá'í Faith's perfect Architect.

Shoghi Effendi highlights the unparalleled nature of the Bahá'í Commonwealth governed by the vast Administrative Order. He emphasizes that this system is unique both in theory and practice, with no parallel in the history of political institutions or recognized religious systems. Shoghi Effendi asserts that existing forms of governance, including democratic, autocratic, aristocratic, and theocratic systems, fail to align with the distinctive Administrative Order fashioned by the Bahá'í Faith's Architect.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Introduction to the unique nature of the Bahá'í Commonwealth governed by the Administrative Order.
2. Unparalleled in History: Assertion that the Bahá'í Commonwealth stands unparalleled in the history of political institutions.
3. No Parallel in Religious Systems: Statement that the Bahá'í Commonwealth finds no parallel in the annals of recognized religious systems.
4. Rejection of Existing Forms: Shoghi Effendi rejects existing forms of governance, including democratic, autocratic, aristocratic, and theocratic systems, as inadequate comparisons to the Bahá'í Administrative Order.
5. Perfect Architect: Emphasis on the Administrative Order being crafted by the Bahá'í Faith's perfect Architect.
6. Conclusion: Conclusion reaffirming the unparalleled nature of the Bahá'í Commonwealth and the incomparable design of its Administrative Order.

Questions and Answers:

1. How does Shoghi Effendi characterize the Bahá'í Commonwealth?
- Shoghi Effendi characterizes the Bahá'í Commonwealth as unparalleled in both theory and practice, with no parallel in the history of political institutions or recognized religious systems.
2. What forms of governance does Shoghi Effendi reject as inadequate comparisons?

- Shoghi Effendi rejects existing forms of governance, including democratic, autocratic, aristocratic, and theocratic systems, as inadequate comparisons to the Bahá'í Administrative Order.

3. Why does Shoghi Effendi assert that existing forms of governance do not align with the Bahá'í Administrative Order?

- Shoghi Effendi asserts that existing forms of governance do not align with the Bahá'í Administrative Order because it is crafted by the Bahá'í Faith's perfect Architect and stands unparalleled in its design and function.

4. What does Shoghi Effendi emphasize about the Architect of the Bahá'í Administrative Order?

- Shoghi Effendi emphasizes that the Bahá'í Administrative Order is crafted by the Bahá'í Faith's perfect Architect, highlighting the incomparable nature of its design and function.

5. Why is it significant that the Bahá'í Administrative Order stands unparalleled in both theory and practice?

- It is significant because it underscores the unique nature of the Bahá'í Faith's governance system and reaffirms its distinction from existing forms of governance found throughout history.

119. This new-born Administrative Order incorporates within its structure certain elements which are to be found in each of the three recognized forms of secular government, without being in any sense a mere replica of any one of them, and without introducing within its machinery any of the objectionable features which they inherently possess. It blends and harmonizes, as no government fashioned by mortal hands has as yet accomplished, the salutary truths which each of these systems undoubtedly contains without vitiating the integrity of those God-given verities on which it is ultimately founded.

Summary:

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi discusses the unique structure of the Bahá'í Administrative Order, highlighting how it incorporates elements from the three recognized forms of secular government—democracy, autocracy, and aristocracy—without being a mere replica of any one of them. He emphasizes that the Bahá'í Administrative Order achieves a harmonious blend of these elements, unlike any government crafted by mortal hands, while also avoiding the inherent drawbacks of each system. Shoghi Effendi underscores that this blending and harmonization do not compromise the integrity of the fundamental principles upon which the Administrative Order is ultimately founded.

Shoghi Effendi discusses the structure of the Bahá'í Administrative Order, which incorporates elements from democracy, autocracy, and aristocracy without replicating any of these systems. He highlights the unique ability of the Administrative Order to blend and harmonize these elements in a way that preserves the integrity of its fundamental

principles. Shoghi Effendi emphasizes that this harmonization sets the Bahá'í Administrative Order apart from any government crafted by mortal hands, as it avoids the inherent drawbacks of each system while incorporating their salutary truths.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Introduction to the structure of the Bahá'í Administrative Order and its incorporation of elements from secular government forms.
2. Incorporation of Elements: Discussion of how the Administrative Order incorporates elements from democracy, autocracy, and aristocracy.
3. Unique Blend: Explanation of how the Administrative Order achieves a unique blend and harmonization of these elements.
4. Avoidance of Drawbacks: Emphasis on the Administrative Order's ability to avoid the inherent drawbacks of each secular government form.
5. Preservation of Integrity: Assertion that this blending and harmonization do not compromise the integrity of the Administrative Order's fundamental principles.
6. Conclusion: Conclusion reaffirming the unique nature of the Bahá'í Administrative Order and its ability to blend elements from secular government forms while preserving its integrity.

Questions and Answers:

1. How does Shoghi Effendi describe the structure of the Bahá'í Administrative Order?
 - Shoghi Effendi describes the Bahá'í Administrative Order as incorporating elements from democracy, autocracy, and aristocracy without being a replica of any one of them.
2. What is unique about the blend achieved by the Administrative Order?
 - The Administrative Order achieves a unique blend and harmonization of elements from secular government forms, unlike any government crafted by mortal hands.
3. What does Shoghi Effendi emphasize about the drawbacks of secular government forms?
 - Shoghi Effendi emphasizes that the Bahá'í Administrative Order avoids the inherent drawbacks of democracy, autocracy, and aristocracy while incorporating their salutary truths.
4. How does the Administrative Order preserve the integrity of its fundamental principles?
 - The Administrative Order preserves the integrity of its fundamental principles by blending and harmonizing elements from secular government forms without compromising its foundation.
5. Why is the ability to avoid the drawbacks of secular government forms significant for the Bahá'í Administrative Order?
 - It is significant because it underscores the unique nature of the Administrative Order and its ability to achieve governance that is free from the inherent limitations of existing systems.

120. The Administrative Order of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh must in no wise be regarded as purely democratic in character inasmuch as the basic assumption which requires all democracies to depend fundamentally upon getting their mandate from the people is altogether lacking in this Dispensation. In the conduct of the administrative affairs of the Faith, in the enactment of the legislation necessary to supplement the laws of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, the members of the Universal House of Justice, it should be borne in mind, are not, as Bahá'u'lláh's utterances clearly imply, responsible to those whom they represent, nor are they allowed to be governed by the feelings, the general opinion, and even the convictions of the mass of the faithful, or of those who directly elect them. They are to follow, in a prayerful attitude, the dictates and promptings of their conscience. They may, indeed they must, acquaint themselves with the conditions prevailing among the community, must weigh dispassionately in their minds the merits of any case presented for their consideration, but must reserve for themselves the right of an unfettered decision. "*God will verily inspire them with whatsoever He willeth,*" is Bahá'u'lláh's incontrovertible assurance. They, 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. Moreover, he who symbolizes the hereditary principle in this Dispensation has been made the interpreter of the words of its Author, and ceases consequently, by virtue of the actual authority vested in him, to be the figurehead invariably associated with the prevailing systems of constitutional monarchies.

Summary:

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi delineates the nature of the Administrative Order of the Bahá'í Faith, asserting that it cannot be purely characterized as democratic. He emphasizes that unlike democratic systems, which derive their mandate from the people, the Bahá'í Administrative Order operates differently. The members of the Universal House of Justice, responsible for conducting the administrative affairs and enacting necessary legislation, are not beholden to those whom they represent. Instead, they are guided by their conscience and prayerfully make decisions independent of popular opinion or the sentiments of the faithful. Shoghi Effendi underscores Bahá'u'lláh's assurance that the members of the Universal House of Justice will be inspired by God in their decision-making process, emphasizing their role as the recipients of divine guidance. Additionally, he highlights the unique position of the Guardian of the Faith, who serves as the interpreter of Bahá'u'lláh's words and holds actual authority, distinguishing him from figureheads associated with constitutional monarchies.

Shoghi Effendi explains that the Bahá'í Administrative Order cannot be purely characterized as democratic. Unlike democratic systems, where governance derives from the people, the Bahá'í Administrative Order operates differently. The members of the Universal House of Justice, responsible for administrative affairs and legislation, are guided by conscience and divine inspiration, rather than popular opinion. Shoghi Effendi emphasizes the unique position of the Guardian of the Faith, who serves as the interpreter of Bahá'u'lláh's words and holds actual authority.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Introduction to the nature of the Bahá'í Administrative Order.
2. Non-Democratic Character: Explanation that the Bahá'í Administrative Order cannot be purely characterized as democratic.
3. Guided by Conscience: Emphasis on the members of the Universal House of Justice being guided by conscience rather than popular opinion.
4. Divine Inspiration: Assertion of Bahá'u'lláh's assurance that the members of the Universal House of Justice will be inspired by God in their decision-making process.
5. Unique Position of the Guardian: Highlighting the unique position of the Guardian of the Faith as the interpreter of Bahá'u'lláh's words with actual authority.
6. Conclusion: Conclusion reaffirming the distinctive nature of the Bahá'í Administrative Order.

Questions and Answers:

1. How does Shoghi Effendi characterize the nature of the Bahá'í Administrative Order?
 - Shoghi Effendi characterizes the Bahá'í Administrative Order as not purely democratic but rather guided by conscience and divine inspiration.
2. What distinguishes the Bahá'í Administrative Order from democratic systems?
 - Unlike democratic systems, where governance derives from the people, the Bahá'í Administrative Order operates with members of the Universal House of Justice guided by conscience and divine inspiration, rather than popular opinion.
3. What assurance does Bahá'u'lláh provide regarding the decision-making process of the Universal House of Justice?
 - Bahá'u'lláh assures that the members of the Universal House of Justice will be inspired by God in their decision-making process.
4. What is the role of the Guardian of the Faith within the Bahá'í Administrative Order?
 - The Guardian of the Faith serves as the interpreter of Bahá'u'lláh's words and holds actual authority, distinguishing him from figureheads associated with constitutional monarchies.
5. How does the Bahá'í Administrative Order ensure the integrity of its decision-making process?
 - The Bahá'í Administrative Order ensures the integrity of its decision-making process by guiding members of the Universal House of Justice with conscience and divine inspiration, rather than popular opinion.
121. Nor can the Bahá'í Administrative Order be dismissed as a hard and rigid system of unmitigated autocracy or as an idle imitation of any form of absolutistic ecclesiastical government, whether it be the Papacy, the Imamate or any other similar institution, for the obvious reason that upon the international elected representatives of

the followers of Bahá'u'lláh has been conferred the exclusive right of legislating on matters not expressly revealed in the Bahá'í writings. Neither the Guardian of the Faith nor any institution apart from the International House of Justice can ever usurp this vital and essential power or encroach upon that sacred right. The abolition of professional priesthood with its accompanying sacraments of baptism, of communion and of confession of sins, the laws requiring the election by universal suffrage of all local, national, and international Houses of Justice, the total absence of episcopal authority with its attendant privileges, corruptions and bureaucratic tendencies, are further evidences of the non-autocratic character of the Bahá'í Administrative Order and of its inclination to democratic methods in the administration of its affairs.

Summary:

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi refutes the notion that the Bahá'í Administrative Order can be dismissed as either a rigid autocracy or a mere imitation of absolutistic ecclesiastical governments such as the Papacy or Imamate. He argues that such dismissals are unfounded, primarily because the International House of Justice, composed of elected representatives, holds the exclusive right to legislate on matters not explicitly revealed in Bahá'í writings. This authority ensures that neither the Guardian of the Faith nor any other institution can usurp or encroach upon this essential power. Shoghi Effendi further emphasizes the democratic nature of the Bahá'í Administrative Order by highlighting its abolition of professional priesthood, sacraments, and episcopal authority. Instead, the Order mandates the universal suffrage of all local, national, and international Houses of Justice, demonstrating its inclination towards democratic methods in governance.

Shoghi Effendi rebuts claims that the Bahá'í Administrative Order is rigidly autocratic or a mere imitation of ecclesiastical governments. He asserts that the International House of Justice, comprised of elected representatives, holds exclusive legislative authority, preventing autocratic tendencies. Additionally, he highlights the Order's democratic nature, evident in the abolition of professional priesthood, sacraments, and episcopal authority, as well as the mandate for universal suffrage in House of Justice elections.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Introduction to the discussion on the nature of the Bahá'í Administrative Order.
2. Refutation of Autocracy: Shoghi Effendi refutes the notion that the Bahá'í Administrative Order is rigidly autocratic.
3. Rejection of Ecclesiastical Imitation: Assertion that the Order cannot be dismissed as an imitation of ecclesiastical governments like the Papacy or Imamate.
4. Legislative Authority of the International House of Justice: Explanation of the exclusive legislative authority held by the International House of Justice.
5. Democratic Characteristics: Highlighting the democratic nature of the Bahá'í Administrative Order, including the abolition of priesthood and episcopal authority and the mandate for universal suffrage in House of Justice elections.

6. Conclusion: Conclusion reaffirming the unique nature of the Bahá'í Administrative Order and its democratic inclinations.

Questions and Answers:

1. How does Shoghi Effendi refute claims of autocracy within the Bahá'í Administrative Order?

- Shoghi Effendi refutes claims of autocracy by emphasizing the exclusive legislative authority held by the International House of Justice, composed of elected representatives.

2. Why does Shoghi Effendi reject the notion that the Bahá'í Administrative Order imitates ecclesiastical governments?

- Shoghi Effendi rejects this notion because the Bahá'í Administrative Order abolishes professional priesthood, sacraments, and episcopal authority, instead mandating universal suffrage in House of Justice elections.

3. What role does the International House of Justice play in the Bahá'í Administrative Order?

- The International House of Justice holds exclusive legislative authority in the Bahá'í Administrative Order, legislating on matters not explicitly revealed in Bahá'í writings.

4. How does Shoghi Effendi highlight the democratic characteristics of the Bahá'í Administrative Order?

- Shoghi Effendi highlights the democratic nature by pointing out the abolition of professional priesthood, sacraments, and episcopal authority, as well as the mandate for universal suffrage in House of Justice elections.

5. Why is the democratic inclination of the Bahá'í Administrative Order significant?

- It underscores the Order's commitment to democratic principles and governance, distinguishing it from autocratic or ecclesiastical systems.

122. Nor is this Order identified with the name of Bahá'u'lláh to be confused with any system of purely aristocratic government in view of the fact that it upholds, on the one hand, the hereditary principle and entrusts the Guardian of the Faith with the obligation of interpreting its teachings, and provides, on the other, for the free and direct election from among the mass of the faithful of the body that constitutes its highest legislative organ.

Summary:

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi clarifies that the Bahá'í Administrative Order should not be equated with any purely aristocratic government, despite its incorporation of the hereditary principle and the obligation of the Guardian of the Faith to interpret its teachings. He underscores that the Order also allows for the free and direct election of its highest legislative organ from among the mass of the faithful. By incorporating both hereditary and democratic elements, the Bahá'í Administrative Order transcends

categorization as purely aristocratic, ensuring a balanced and inclusive governance structure.

Shoghi Effendi asserts that the Bahá'í Administrative Order cannot be mistaken for a purely aristocratic government due to its unique combination of hereditary and democratic principles. While it upholds the hereditary principle and entrusts the Guardian of the Faith with interpreting its teachings, it also allows for the free and direct election of its highest legislative organ from among the mass of the faithful.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Introduction to the discussion on the nature of the Bahá'í Administrative Order.
2. Clarification on Aristocracy: Shoghi Effendi clarifies that the Order should not be confused with any purely aristocratic government.
3. Incorporation of Hereditary Principle: Explanation of how the Bahá'í Administrative Order incorporates the hereditary principle.
4. Democratic Elements: Highlighting the presence of democratic elements within the Order, such as free and direct elections.
5. Balance and Inclusivity: Emphasizing that the combination of hereditary and democratic principles ensures a balanced and inclusive governance structure.
6. Conclusion: Conclusion reaffirming the unique nature of the Bahá'í Administrative Order as neither purely aristocratic nor purely democratic.

Questions and Answers:

1. How does Shoghi Effendi clarify the nature of the Bahá'í Administrative Order in relation to aristocratic governments?
 - Shoghi Effendi clarifies that the Bahá'í Administrative Order should not be equated with purely aristocratic governments due to its incorporation of both hereditary and democratic principles.
2. What elements of aristocracy are present within the Bahá'í Administrative Order?
 - The Order upholds the hereditary principle and entrusts the Guardian of the Faith with interpreting its teachings.
3. How does the Bahá'í Administrative Order incorporate democratic principles?
 - The Order allows for the free and direct election of its highest legislative organ from among the mass of the faithful.
4. Why is the combination of hereditary and democratic principles significant in the Bahá'í Administrative Order?
 - It ensures a balanced and inclusive governance structure, allowing for both continuity and representation from the community.

5. How does the Bahá'í Administrative Order differ from purely aristocratic or democratic systems?

- It transcends categorization as purely aristocratic or democratic by incorporating elements of both, creating a unique governance structure.

123. Whereas this Administrative Order cannot be said to have been modeled after any of these recognized systems of government, it nevertheless embodies, reconciles and assimilates within its framework such wholesome elements as are to be found in each one of them. The hereditary authority which the Guardian is called upon to exercise, the vital and essential functions which the Universal House of Justice discharges, the specific provisions requiring its democratic election by the representatives of the faithful—these combine to demonstrate the truth that this divinely revealed Order, which can never be identified with any of the standard types of government referred to by Aristotle in his works, embodies and blends with the spiritual verities on which it is based the beneficent elements which are to be found in each one of them. The admitted evils inherent in each of these systems being rigidly and permanently excluded, this unique Order, however long it may endure and however extensive its ramifications, cannot ever degenerate into any form of despotism, of oligarchy, or of demagoguery which must sooner or later corrupt the machinery of all man-made and essentially defective political institutions.

Summary:

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi elucidates that while the Bahá'í Administrative Order cannot be directly likened to any existing system of government, it incorporates and harmonizes beneficial elements from various recognized systems. He emphasizes that the Order neither mirrors nor adheres strictly to the conventional types of government outlined by Aristotle but instead integrates spiritually grounded principles with the positive aspects found in these systems. The hereditary authority vested in the Guardian, the crucial functions performed by the Universal House of Justice, and the democratic election process for the House of Justice representatives collectively illustrate this fusion of diverse elements. Shoghi Effendi underscores that the Bahá'í Administrative Order safeguards against the inherent flaws of traditional political systems, such as despotism, oligarchy, or demagoguery, ensuring its resilience and integrity.

Shoghi Effendi explains that while the Bahá'í Administrative Order does not directly replicate any existing government system, it incorporates beneficial elements from various systems while excluding their inherent flaws. He emphasizes that the Order integrates spiritually grounded principles with positive aspects from different systems, ensuring its resilience against corruption and degeneration.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Introduction to the discussion on the nature of the Bahá'í Administrative Order.

2. Reconciliation of Government Systems: Shoghi Effendi discusses how the Order reconciles and assimilates elements from various recognized systems of government.
3. Hereditary Authority of the Guardian: Explanation of the hereditary authority vested in the Guardian within the Bahá'í Administrative Order.
4. Functions of the Universal House of Justice: Overview of the essential functions performed by the Universal House of Justice.
5. Democratic Election Process: Description of the democratic election process for representatives of the Universal House of Justice.
6. Integration of Beneficial Elements: Emphasis on how the Order integrates spiritually grounded principles with positive elements from different government systems.
7. Safeguards Against Corruption: Explanation of how the Bahá'í Administrative Order safeguards against the inherent flaws of traditional political systems.
8. Conclusion: Conclusion reaffirming the unique and resilient nature of the Bahá'í Administrative Order.

Questions and Answers:

1. How does Shoghi Effendi describe the relationship between the Bahá'í Administrative Order and existing government systems?
 - Shoghi Effendi explains that the Order integrates beneficial elements from various recognized systems while excluding their inherent flaws.
 2. What are some examples of elements integrated into the Bahá'í Administrative Order from existing government systems?
 - Examples include the hereditary authority of the Guardian, the functions of the Universal House of Justice, and the democratic election process for representatives.
 3. Why does Shoghi Effendi emphasize the uniqueness of the Bahá'í Administrative Order?
 - He emphasizes its uniqueness to underscore that it cannot be directly compared to existing government systems but rather integrates spiritually grounded principles with positive elements from different systems.
 4. How does the Bahá'í Administrative Order safeguard against corruption?
 - Shoghi Effendi asserts that the Order safeguards against corruption by excluding inherent flaws such as despotism, oligarchy, or demagoguery present in traditional political systems.
 5. What is the significance of integrating diverse elements into the Bahá'í Administrative Order?
 - It ensures the resilience and integrity of the Order, allowing it to effectively govern while avoiding the pitfalls of traditional political systems.
124. Dearly-beloved friends! Significant as are the origins of this mighty administrative structure, and however unique its features, the happenings that may be said to have heralded its birth and signaled the initial stage of its evolution seem no

less remarkable. How striking, how edifying the contrast between the process of slow and steady consolidation that characterizes the growth of its infant strength and the devastating onrush of the forces of disintegration that are assailing the outworn institutions, both religious and secular, of present-day society!

Summary:

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi reflects on the remarkable origins and initial evolution of the Bahá'í Administrative Order amidst the backdrop of societal upheaval and the decline of traditional institutions. He juxtaposes the steady consolidation of the Order's strength with the tumultuous disintegration of outdated religious and secular structures, highlighting the stark contrast between the two processes. This serves to underscore the significance and resilience of the Bahá'í Administrative Order in the face of contemporary challenges.

Shoghi Effendi reflects on the notable origins and early development of the Bahá'í Administrative Order amidst the backdrop of societal upheaval and the decline of traditional institutions. He contrasts the steady consolidation of the Order's strength with the rapid disintegration of outdated religious and secular structures, emphasizing the remarkable nature of the Order's evolution.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Introduction to the discussion on the origins and evolution of the Bahá'í Administrative Order.
2. Remarkable Origins: Shoghi Effendi reflects on the significant origins of the Order and its unique features.
3. Initial Evolution: Discussion of the initial stages of the Order's evolution and growth.
4. Contrast with Contemporary Society: Contrasting the steady consolidation of the Order with the rapid disintegration of traditional religious and secular institutions in contemporary society.
5. Reflection on Significance: Reflection on the significance of the Order's resilience and evolution amidst societal challenges.
6. Conclusion: Conclusion reaffirming the importance of the Bahá'í Administrative Order in navigating the complexities of modern society.

Questions and Answers:

1. How does Shoghi Effendi describe the origins of the Bahá'í Administrative Order?
 - He describes the origins as significant and unique, highlighting the Order's distinctive features.
2. What contrast does Shoghi Effendi draw between the evolution of the Bahá'í Administrative Order and contemporary societal trends?
 - He contrasts the steady consolidation of the Order's strength with the rapid disintegration of outdated religious and secular structures in contemporary society.

3. Why does Shoghi Effendi emphasize the contrast between the Order's evolution and contemporary societal trends?

- He emphasizes the contrast to underscore the remarkable resilience and significance of the Bahá'í Administrative Order amidst societal challenges.

4. What significance does Shoghi Effendi attribute to the evolution of the Bahá'í Administrative Order?

- He attributes significance to the Order's evolution as it navigates the complexities of modern society while upholding its distinctive principles and structures.

5. How does the reflection on the evolution of the Bahá'í Administrative Order contribute to understanding its role in contemporary society?

- It highlights the Order's resilience and adaptability in addressing contemporary challenges and reaffirms its relevance in shaping a better future.

125. The vitality which the organic institutions of this great, this ever-expanding Order so strongly exhibit; the obstacles which the high courage, the undaunted resolution of its administrators have already surmounted; the fire of an unquenchable enthusiasm that glows with undiminished fervor in the hearts of its itinerant teachers; the heights of self-sacrifice which its champion-builders are now attaining; the breadth of vision, the confident hope, the creative joy, the inward peace, the uncompromising integrity, the exemplary discipline, the unyielding unity and solidarity which its stalwart defenders manifest; the degree to which its moving Spirit has shown itself capable of assimilating the diversified elements within its pale, of cleansing them of all forms of prejudice and of fusing them with its own structure—these are evidences of a power which a disillusioned and sadly shaken society can ill afford to ignore.

Summary:

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi extols the vitality and resilience of the Bahá'í Administrative Order, emphasizing its capacity to overcome obstacles and inspire fervent dedication among its adherents. He highlights the courage and determination of its administrators, the unwavering enthusiasm of its teachers, and the self-sacrifice of its builders. Additionally, he underscores the broad vision, confident hope, creative joy, inward peace, integrity, discipline, unity, and solidarity exhibited by the Order's defenders. Shoghi Effendi portrays these qualities as evidence of the Order's power and relevance in a disillusioned and shaken society, suggesting that its principles and practices offer a beacon of hope and renewal.

Shoghi Effendi praises the Bahá'í Administrative Order for its vitality and resilience, citing the dedication and determination of its administrators, teachers, and builders. He underscores the qualities of vision, hope, joy, peace, integrity, discipline, unity, and solidarity displayed by its defenders, portraying these as evidence of the Order's power and relevance in contemporary society.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Introduction to the discussion on the vitality and resilience of the Bahá'í Administrative Order.
2. Vitality of the Order: Shoghi Effendi praises the vitality exhibited by the Order's organic institutions.
3. Courage and Determination: Discussion of the courage and determination shown by the Order's administrators in overcoming obstacles.
4. Enthusiasm of Teachers: Highlighting the unwavering enthusiasm of the Order's itinerant teachers.
5. Self-Sacrifice of Builders: Description of the self-sacrifice demonstrated by the Order's champion-builders.
6. Qualities of Defenders: Overview of the qualities of vision, hope, joy, peace, integrity, discipline, unity, and solidarity exhibited by the Order's defenders.
7. Evidence of Power: Presentation of these qualities as evidence of the Order's power and relevance in contemporary society.
8. Conclusion: Conclusion reaffirming the significance of the Bahá'í Administrative Order as a source of hope and renewal in a disillusioned society.

Questions and Answers:

1. How does Shoghi Effendi describe the vitality of the Bahá'í Administrative Order?
- He describes it as exhibiting vitality through the strength of its organic institutions and the dedication of its adherents.
2. What qualities does Shoghi Effendi attribute to the administrators, teachers, and builders of the Bahá'í Administrative Order?
- He attributes qualities of courage, determination, enthusiasm, and self-sacrifice to the administrators, teachers, and builders.
3. What broader qualities does Shoghi Effendi highlight in the defenders of the Bahá'í Administrative Order?
- He highlights qualities of vision, hope, joy, peace, integrity, discipline, unity, and solidarity among the defenders of the Order.
4. How does Shoghi Effendi suggest that these qualities contribute to the relevance of the Bahá'í Administrative Order in contemporary society?
- He suggests that these qualities serve as evidence of the Order's power and relevance, offering hope and renewal in a disillusioned society.
5. What is the overall message conveyed by Shoghi Effendi in this passage?
- The passage conveys the idea that the Bahá'í Administrative Order, through its vitality and the qualities of its adherents, offers a beacon of hope and renewal in contemporary society.

126. Compare these splendid manifestations of the spirit animating this vibrant body of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh with the cries and agony, the follies and vanities, the bitterness and prejudices, the wickedness and divisions of an ailing and chaotic world. Witness the fear that torments its leaders and paralyzes the action of its blind and bewildered statesmen. How fierce the hatreds, how false the ambitions, how petty the pursuits, how deep-rooted the suspicions of its peoples! How disquieting the lawlessness, the corruption, the unbelief that are eating into the vitals of a tottering civilization!

Summary:

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi contrasts the vibrant spirit animating the Bahá'í Faith with the turmoil and dysfunction prevalent in the world at large. He juxtaposes the admirable qualities and actions of the Bahá'í community with the negative traits and circumstances afflicting society, highlighting the stark difference between the two. Shoghi Effendi observes the fear and paralysis gripping worldly leaders and statesmen, the prevalence of hatred, ambition, and suspicion among the populace, and the pervasive lawlessness, corruption, and unbelief eroding the foundations of civilization. By drawing this sharp contrast, Shoghi Effendi underscores the urgent need for the principles and teachings of the Bahá'í Faith to address and remedy the ailments afflicting humanity.

Shoghi Effendi contrasts the vibrant spirit of the Bahá'í Faith with the turmoil and dysfunction prevailing in the world. He highlights the positive qualities and actions of the Bahá'í community, such as unity, integrity, and service, while lamenting the fear, hatred, corruption, and disbelief prevalent in society at large. By juxtaposing these contrasting realities, Shoghi Effendi emphasizes the urgent need for the principles of the Bahá'í Faith to address the profound challenges facing humanity.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Introduction to the comparison between the Bahá'í Faith and the state of the world.
2. Vibrant Spirit of the Bahá'í Faith: Description of the positive qualities and actions exhibited by the Bahá'í community.
3. Turmoil in the World: Examination of the fear, hatred, corruption, and disbelief prevalent in society.
4. Contrast: Juxtaposition of the vibrant spirit of the Bahá'í Faith with the turmoil afflicting the world.
5. Urgent Need: Emphasis on the urgent need for the principles of the Bahá'í Faith to address the challenges facing humanity.
6. Conclusion: Conclusion reaffirming the importance of the Bahá'í Faith as a source of guidance and remedy for the world's afflictions.

Questions and Answers:

1. How does Shoghi Effendi describe the spirit animating the Bahá'í Faith?

- He describes it as vibrant, characterized by qualities such as unity, integrity, and service.

2. What negative traits and circumstances does Shoghi Effendi observe in the world at large?

- He observes fear and paralysis among leaders, as well as hatred, ambition, suspicion, lawlessness, corruption, and unbelief among the populace.

3. Why does Shoghi Effendi contrast the Bahá'í Faith with the state of the world?

- He contrasts them to underscore the difference between the positive qualities and actions of the Bahá'í community and the negative traits and circumstances prevalent in society.

4. What is the significance of this contrast?

- The contrast highlights the urgent need for the principles and teachings of the Bahá'í Faith to address and remedy the profound challenges facing humanity.

5. How does Shoghi Effendi suggest that the Bahá'í Faith can contribute to addressing the world's afflictions?

- He suggests that the principles of the Bahá'í Faith offer guidance and remedy for the societal ailments afflicting humanity, emphasizing the importance of their application in addressing contemporary challenges.

127. Might not this process of steady deterioration which is insidiously invading so many departments of human activity and thought be regarded as a necessary accompaniment to the rise of this almighty Arm of Bahá'u'lláh? Might we not look upon the momentous happenings which, in the course of the past twenty years, have so deeply agitated every continent of the earth, as ominous signs simultaneously proclaiming the agonies of a disintegrating civilization and the birthpangs of that World Order—that Ark of human salvation—that must needs arise upon its ruins?

Summary:

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi contemplates whether the steady deterioration afflicting various aspects of human activity and thought could be viewed as a necessary precursor to the rise of the Bahá'í Administrative Order. He suggests that the significant global events of the past two decades, which have deeply stirred every continent, could be seen as both signs of the crumbling of present-day civilization and the birth pangs of the World Order envisioned by Bahá'u'lláh. Shoghi Effendi implies that amidst the chaos and turmoil of contemporary society, there lies the potential for the emergence of a new, transformative system of governance and societal organization.

Shoghi Effendi reflects on the possibility that the deterioration of human activity and thought may serve as a necessary precursor to the rise of the Bahá'í Administrative Order. He considers whether the tumultuous events of the past twenty years, which have shaken

the foundations of civilization, could signify both the decline of the old order and the birth of the World Order envisioned by Bahá'u'lláh.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Introduction to Shoghi Effendi's contemplation on the relationship between societal deterioration and the rise of the Bahá'í Administrative Order.
2. Steady Deterioration: Examination of the pervasive decline afflicting various aspects of human activity and thought.
3. Ominous Signs: Analysis of the significant global events of the past twenty years and their implications for civilization.
4. Birth Pangs of the World Order: Reflection on whether these events could signify the emergence of the World Order envisioned by Bahá'u'lláh.
5. Hope Amidst Turmoil: Discussion of the potential for transformative change amidst the chaos and upheaval of contemporary society.
6. Conclusion: Conclusion reaffirming the significance of the Bahá'í Administrative Order in the context of societal evolution and transformation.

Questions and Answers:

1. What does Shoghi Effendi contemplate regarding the relationship between societal deterioration and the rise of the Bahá'í Administrative Order?
 - He ponders whether the decline afflicting various aspects of human activity and thought may be a necessary precursor to the emergence of the Bahá'í Administrative Order.
2. How does Shoghi Effendi characterize the significant global events of the past twenty years?
 - He suggests that these events have deeply stirred every continent and could be interpreted as signs of both the decline of present-day civilization and the birth pangs of the World Order envisioned by Bahá'u'lláh.
3. What is the significance of viewing societal deterioration as a precursor to the rise of the Bahá'í Administrative Order?
 - It implies that amidst the chaos and turmoil of contemporary society, there lies the potential for the emergence of a new, transformative system of governance and societal organization.
4. How does Shoghi Effendi suggest that the Bahá'í Faith offers hope amidst societal turmoil?
 - He implies that the Bahá'í Administrative Order represents a beacon of hope amidst the decline of present-day civilization, offering a vision of a new and more just world order.
5. What is the overarching message conveyed by Shoghi Effendi in this contemplation?

- Shoghi Effendi underscores the significance of the Bahá'í Administrative Order in the context of societal evolution and transformation, suggesting that it offers a pathway to a more enlightened and harmonious future.

128. The catastrophic fall of mighty monarchies and empires in the European continent, allusions to some of which may be found in the prophecies of Bahá'u'lláh; the decline that has set in, and is still continuing, in the fortunes of the Shí'ih hierarchy in His own native land; the fall of the Qájár dynasty, the traditional enemy of His Faith; the overthrow of the Sultanate and the Caliphate, the sustaining pillars of Sunní Islám, to which the destruction of Jerusalem in the latter part of the first century of the Christian era offers a striking parallel; the wave of secularization which is invading the Muḥammadan ecclesiastical institutions in Egypt and sapping the loyalty of its staunchest supporters; the humiliating blows that have afflicted some of the most powerful Churches of Christendom in Russia, in Western Europe and Central America; the dissemination of those subversive doctrines that are undermining the foundations and overthrowing the structure of seemingly impregnable strongholds in the political and social spheres of human activity; the signs of an impending catastrophe, strangely reminiscent of the Fall of the Roman Empire in the West, which threatens to engulf the whole structure of present-day civilization—all witness to the tumult which the birth of this mighty Organ of the Religion of Bahá'u'lláh has cast into the world—a tumult which will grow in scope and in intensity as the implications of this constantly evolving Scheme are more fully understood and its ramifications more widely extended over the surface of the globe.

Summary:

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi reflects on the tumultuous events and societal transformations that have unfolded globally, signaling the emergence and impact of the Bahá'í Administrative Order. He draws parallels between historical upheavals and contemporary developments, suggesting that the fall of mighty monarchies, the decline of religious hierarchies, and the dissemination of subversive doctrines all bear witness to the transformative influence of the Bahá'í Faith on the world stage. Shoghi Effendi highlights the far-reaching implications of the Bahá'í Administrative Order and predicts that its influence will continue to grow as its principles become more widely understood and implemented.

Shoghi Effendi reflects on the tumultuous events and societal transformations that have unfolded globally, signaling the emergence and impact of the Bahá'í Administrative Order. He draws parallels between historical upheavals and contemporary developments, suggesting that the fall of mighty monarchies, the decline of religious hierarchies, and the dissemination of subversive doctrines all bear witness to the transformative influence of the Bahá'í Faith on the world stage. Shoghi Effendi highlights the far-reaching implications of the Bahá'í Administrative Order and predicts that its influence will continue to grow as its principles become more widely understood and implemented.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Introduction to Shoghi Effendi's reflections on the tumultuous events and societal transformations signaling the emergence of the Bahá'í Administrative Order.
2. Historical Parallels: Discussion of historical events, including the fall of monarchies and empires, the decline of religious hierarchies, and the dissemination of subversive doctrines, as parallels to contemporary developments.
3. Impact of the Bahá'í Administrative Order: Analysis of the transformative influence of the Bahá'í Faith on global society and its institutions.
4. Growing Influence: Prediction of the increasing scope and intensity of the tumult generated by the emergence of the Bahá'í Administrative Order as its principles become more widely understood and implemented.
5. Conclusion: Conclusion reaffirming the significance of the Bahá'í Administrative Order in shaping the course of human history and advancing the principles of the Bahá'í Faith.

Questions and Answers:

1. What historical events does Shoghi Effendi cite as parallels to contemporary developments?
 - He cites the fall of monarchies and empires, the decline of religious hierarchies, and the dissemination of subversive doctrines as parallels to contemporary events.
 2. What does Shoghi Effendi suggest these historical events signify in relation to the emergence of the Bahá'í Administrative Order?
 - He suggests that these events bear witness to the transformative influence of the Bahá'í Faith on global society and its institutions, signaling the emergence of the Bahá'í Administrative Order.
 3. How does Shoghi Effendi predict the influence of the Bahá'í Administrative Order will grow in the future?
 - He predicts that the influence of the Bahá'í Administrative Order will continue to grow as its principles become more widely understood and implemented, generating increasing scope and intensity of tumult in society.
 4. What is the overarching message conveyed by Shoghi Effendi in this passage?
 - Shoghi Effendi underscores the transformative influence of the Bahá'í Administrative Order on global society and predicts its increasing impact as its principles become more widely embraced and implemented.
 5. How does Shoghi Effendi view the tumultuous events of contemporary society in relation to the emergence of the Bahá'í Administrative Order?
 - He views these events as indicators of the transformative influence of the Bahá'í Faith on global society, signaling the emergence of a new order guided by the principles of the Bahá'í Administrative Order.
129. A word more in conclusion. The rise and establishment of this Administrative Order—the shell that shields and enshrines so precious a gem—constitutes the hall-

mark of this second and formative age of the Bahá'í era. It will come to be regarded, as it recedes farther and farther from our eyes, as the chief agency empowered to usher in the concluding phase, the consummation of this glorious Dispensation.

Summary:

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi reflects on the significance of the rise and establishment of the Bahá'í Administrative Order, emphasizing its pivotal role in shaping the second and formative age of the Bahá'í era. He underscores that as time progresses, the Administrative Order will increasingly be recognized as the chief agency empowered to bring about the consummation of the Bahá'í Dispensation. This conclusion serves to highlight the transformative impact and enduring importance of the Administrative Order within the broader context of the Bahá'í Faith.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Introduction to Shoghi Effendi's reflection on the significance of the Bahá'í Administrative Order in the Bahá'í era.
2. The Rise and Establishment: Discussion of the rise and establishment of the Bahá'í Administrative Order as a hallmark of the second and formative age of the Bahá'í era.
3. Importance and Role: Emphasis on the pivotal role of the Administrative Order in shaping the Bahá'í Dispensation and advancing its principles.
4. Recognition Over Time: Prediction that as time progresses, the Administrative Order will increasingly be recognized as the chief agency empowered to bring about the consummation of the Bahá'í Dispensation.
5. Conclusion: Conclusion reaffirming the transformative impact and enduring importance of the Administrative Order within the broader context of the Bahá'í Faith.

Questions and Answers:

1. What does Shoghi Effendi consider to be the hall-mark of the second and formative age of the Bahá'í era?
 - Shoghi Effendi considers the rise and establishment of the Bahá'í Administrative Order to be the hall-mark of the second and formative age of the Bahá'í era.
2. What role does Shoghi Effendi attribute to the Bahá'í Administrative Order in shaping the Bahá'í Dispensation?
 - He attributes a pivotal role to the Administrative Order in shaping the Bahá'í Dispensation and advancing its principles.
3. How does Shoghi Effendi predict the perception of the Administrative Order will change over time?
 - He predicts that as time progresses, the Administrative Order will increasingly be recognized as the chief agency empowered to bring about the consummation of the Bahá'í Dispensation.

4. What is the overarching message conveyed by Shoghi Effendi in this passage?
- Shoghi Effendi underscores the transformative impact and enduring importance of the Bahá'í Administrative Order within the broader context of the Bahá'í Faith, highlighting its pivotal role in shaping the Bahá'í Dispensation.

5. How does Shoghi Effendi view the rise and establishment of the Bahá'í Administrative Order in relation to the Bahá'í era?
- He views it as the hallmark of the second and formative age of the Bahá'í era, signifying its pivotal role in advancing the principles of the Bahá'í Faith and bringing about its consummation.

130. 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 Abhá 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 Kitáb-i-Aqdas. The seat round which its spiritual, its humanitarian and administrative activities will cluster are the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár 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.

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi, in his concluding paragraph emphasizes the foundational principles and significance of the Bahá'í Administrative Order. He underscores its divine origins, rooted in Bahá'u'lláh's purpose for humanity, and its inspiration drawn directly from Bahá'u'lláh himself. The Administrative Order finds its strength in the martyrdom of thousands who sacrificed their lives for its establishment, as well as in the provisions outlined in 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will and Testament. The guiding principles are derived from 'Abdu'l-Bahá's teachings, while its

operational laws are outlined in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. The Mashriqu'l-Adhkár serves as the spiritual and administrative hub, while the Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice provide authority and structure. The ultimate aim of the Administrative Order is to realize Bahá'u'lláh's vision of a New World Order, fostering unity among all peoples and the establishment of peace.

Key Points:

1. Foundation in Divine Purpose:

- The Administrative Order is grounded in Bahá'u'lláh's purpose for humanity.
- Its significance is not to be underestimated.

2. Inspiration and Source:

- Directly inspired by Bahá'u'lláh.
- Represents His divine will for the current age.

3. Strength and Sacrifice:

- Built upon the sacrifices of martyrs, numbering twenty thousand.
- Their blood symbolizes the birth and flourishing of the Administrative Order.

4. Guiding Principles:

- Derived from 'Abdu'l-Bahá's teachings.
- Clearly articulated in His public addresses in the West.

5. Operational Laws:

- Outlined in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas.
- Govern the functions and operations of the Administrative Order.

6. Central Hub:

- The Mashriqu'l-Adhkár and its Dependencies serve as the focal point for spiritual, humanitarian, and administrative activities.

7. Structural Pillars:

- The Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice provide authority and support.

8. Ultimate Aim:

- Establishment of Bahá'u'lláh's New World Order.
- Unification of humanity and the realization of the "Most Great Peace."

Questions and Answers:

Q: What is the foundational principle of the Bahá'í Administrative Order?

A: It is founded on God's immutable Purpose for mankind in this day, as revealed by Bahá'u'lláh.

Q: What role did martyrdom play in the establishment of the Administrative Order?

A: The sacrifice of twenty thousand martyrs symbolizes its birth and strength.

Q: Where are the guiding principles of the Administrative Order derived from?

A: They are derived from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s teachings, particularly evident in His public addresses in the West.

Q: What is the ultimate aim of the Administrative Order?

A: The establishment of the New World Order as envisioned by Bahá’u’lláh, fostering unity and peace among all peoples.

. . .

The Unfoldment of World Civilization

The Unfoldment of World Civilization

To the beloved of God and the handmaids of the Merciful throughout the West.

Friends and fellow-heirs of the grace of Bahá’u’lláh:

As your co-sharer in the building up of the New World Order which the mind of Bahá’u’lláh has visioned, and whose features the pen of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, its perfect Architect, has delineated, I pause to contemplate with you the scene which the revolution of well-nigh fifteen years after His passing unfolds before us.

The contrast between the accumulating evidences of steady consolidation that accompany the rise of the Administrative Order of the Faith of God, and the forces of disintegration which batter at the fabric of a travailing society, is as clear as it is arresting. Both within and outside the Bahá’í world the signs and tokens which, in a mysterious manner, are heralding the birth of that World Order, the establishment of which must signalize the Golden Age of the Cause of God, are growing and multiplying day by day. No fair-minded observer can any longer fail to discern them. He cannot be misled by the painful slowness characterizing the unfoldment of the civilization which the followers of Bahá’u’lláh are laboring to establish. Nor can he be deluded by the ephemeral manifestations of returning prosperity which at times appear to be capable of checking the disruptive influence of the chronic ills afflicting the institutions of a decaying age. The signs of the times are too numerous and compelling to allow him to mistake their character or to belittle their significance. He can, if he be fair in his judgment, recognize in the chain of events which proclaim on the one hand the irresistible march of the institutions directly associated with the Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh and foreshadow on the other the downfall of those powers and principalities that have either ignored or opposed it—he can recognize in them all evidences of the operation of God’s all-pervasive Will, the shaping of His perfectly ordered and world-embracing Plan.

“Soon,” Bahá’u’lláh’s own words proclaim it, “*will the present day Order be rolled up, and a new one spread out in its stead. Verily, thy Lord speaketh the truth and is the Knower of things unseen.*” “*By Myself,*” He solemnly asserts, “*the day is approaching when We will have rolled up the world and all that is therein, and spread out a new Order in its stead. He, verily, is powerful*

over all things.” “*The world’s equilibrium,*” He explains, “*hath been upset through the vibrating influence of this Most Great, this new World Order. Mankind’s ordered life hath been revolutionized through the agency of this unique, this wondrous System, the like of which mortal eyes have never witnessed.*” “*The signs of impending convulsions and chaos,*” He warns the peoples of the world, “*can now be discerned, inasmuch as the prevailing Order appeareth to be lamentably defective.*”

Dearly-beloved friends! This New World Order, whose promise is enshrined in the Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh, whose fundamental principles have been enunciated in the writings of the Center of His Covenant, involves no less than the complete unification of the entire human race. This unification should conform to such principles as would directly harmonize with the spirit that animates, and the laws that govern the operation of, the institutions that already constitute the structural basis of the Administrative Order of His Faith.

No machinery falling short of the standard inculcated by the Bahá’í Revelation, and at variance with the sublime pattern ordained in His teachings, which the collective efforts of mankind may yet devise can ever hope to achieve anything above or beyond that “*Lesser Peace*” to which the Author of our Faith has Himself alluded in His writings. “*Now that ye have refused the Most Great Peace,*” He, admonishing the kings and rulers of the earth, has written, “*hold ye fast unto this the Lesser Peace, that haply ye may in some degree better your own condition and that of your dependents.*” Expatiating on this Lesser Peace, He thus addresses in that same Tablet the rulers of the earth: “*Be reconciled among yourselves, that ye may need no more armaments save in a measure to safeguard your territories and dominions... Be united, O kings of the earth, for thereby will the tempest of discord be stilled amongst you, and your peoples find rest, if ye be of them that comprehend. Should any one among you take up arms against another, rise ye all against him, for this is naught but manifest justice.*”

The Most Great Peace, on the other hand, as conceived by Bahá’u’lláh—a peace that must inevitably follow as the practical consequence of the spiritualization of the world and the fusion of all its races, creeds, classes and nations—can rest on no other basis, and can be preserved through no other agency, except the divinely appointed ordinances that are implicit in the World Order that stands associated with His Holy Name. In His Tablet, revealed almost seventy years ago to Queen Victoria, Bahá’u’lláh, alluding to this Most Great Peace, has declared: “*That which the Lord hath ordained as the sovereign remedy and mightiest instrument for the healing of all the world is the union of all its peoples in one universal Cause, one common Faith. This can in no wise be achieved except through the power of a skilled, an all-powerful and inspired Physician. This, verily, is the truth, and all else naught but error... Consider these days in which the Ancient Beauty, He Who is the Most Great Name, hath been sent down to regenerate and unify mankind. Behold how with drawn swords they rose against Him, and committed that which caused the Faithful Spirit to tremble. And whenever We said unto them: ‘Lo, the World Reformer is come,’ they made reply: ‘He, in truth, is one of the stirrers of mischief.’” “It beseemeth all men in this Day,” He, in another Tablet, asserts, “*to take firm hold on the Most Great Name, and to establish the unity of all mankind. There is no place to flee to, no refuge that any one can seek, except Him.*”*

Summary:

In "The Unfoldment of World Civilization," Shoghi Effendi addresses the Bahá'í community, emphasizing their role as co-sharers in the establishment of the New World Order envisioned by Bahá'u'lláh. He reflects on the contrast between the steady consolidation of the Administrative Order of the Bahá'í Faith and the forces of disintegration affecting society at large. Shoghi Effendi observes the signs of the emergence of the World Order foretold by Bahá'u'lláh, recognizing them as evidence of God's all-pervasive Will and His perfectly ordered Plan.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Address to the Bahá'í community as co-sharers in building the New World Order.
2. Reflection on the contrast between the consolidation of the Bahá'í Administrative Order and the forces of societal disintegration.
3. Recognition of the signs heralding the birth of the World Order described by Bahá'u'lláh.
4. Emphasis on the significance of Bahá'u'lláh's prophecies regarding the establishment of a new Order.
5. Exposition of the principles and goals of the New World Order, including the complete unification of humanity.
6. Explanation of the concept of the Lesser Peace and its implications for world peace.
7. Discussion of the Most Great Peace as the ultimate goal, achievable through the spiritualization of the world and the unity of all peoples.

Questions and Answers:

1. What is the central message conveyed by Shoghi Effendi in "The Unfoldment of World Civilization"?
 - Shoghi Effendi underscores the significance of the emergence of the World Order envisioned by Bahá'u'lláh and emphasizes the role of the Bahá'í community in its establishment.
2. How does Shoghi Effendi characterize the state of the world in relation to the Bahá'í Administrative Order?
 - Shoghi Effendi acknowledges the contrast between the consolidation of the Bahá'í Administrative Order and the societal disintegration occurring outside the Bahá'í community.
3. What signs does Shoghi Effendi identify as heralding the birth of the World Order?
 - Shoghi Effendi recognizes various signs and tokens indicating the imminent establishment of the World Order described by Bahá'u'lláh, such as the gradual decline of opposing powers and the advancement of Bahá'í institutions.
4. What are the principles and goals of the New World Order according to Shoghi Effendi?
 - Shoghi Effendi explains that the New World Order entails the complete unification of humanity, in accordance with principles that harmonize with the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh.
5. What is the concept of the Lesser Peace, and how does it relate to the Most Great Peace?

- Shoghi Effendi discusses the concept of the Lesser Peace as a temporary state of peace achievable through human efforts, while the Most Great Peace is the ultimate goal, dependent on the spiritualization of the world and the unity of all peoples.

Humanity's Coming of Age

The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, whose supreme mission is none other but the achievement of this organic and spiritual unity of the whole body of nations, should, if we be faithful to its implications, be regarded as signaling through its advent the *coming of age of the entire human race*. It should be viewed not merely as yet another spiritual revival in the ever-changing fortunes of mankind, not only as a further stage in a chain of progressive Revelations, nor even as the culmination of one of a series of recurrent prophetic cycles, but rather as marking the last and highest stage in the stupendous evolution of man's collective life on this planet. The emergence of a world community, the consciousness of world citizenship, the founding of a world civilization and culture—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.

That mystic, all-pervasive, yet indefinable change, which we associate with the stage of maturity inevitable in the life of the individual and the development of the fruit must, if we would correctly apprehend the utterances of Bahá'u'lláh, have its counterpart in the evolution of the organization of human society. A similar stage must sooner or later be attained in the collective life of mankind, producing an even more striking phenomenon in world relations, and endowing the whole human race with such potentialities of well-being as shall provide, throughout the succeeding ages, the chief incentive required for the eventual fulfillment of its high destiny. Such a stage of maturity in the process of human government must, for all time, if we would faithfully recognize the tremendous claim advanced by Bahá'u'lláh, remain identified with the Revelation of which He was the Bearer.

In one of the most characteristic passages He Himself has revealed, He testifies in a language that none can mistake to the truth of this distinguishing principle of Bahá'í belief: *“It hath been decreed by Us that the Word of God and all the potentialities thereof shall be manifested unto men in strict conformity with such conditions as have been foreordained by Him Who is the All-Knowing, the All-Wise... Should the Word be allowed to release suddenly all the energies latent within it, no man could sustain the weight of so mighty a revelation... Consider that which hath been sent down unto Muḥammad, the Apostle of God. The measure of the Revelation of which He was the Bearer had been clearly foreordained by Him Who is the Almighty, the All-Powerful. They that heard Him, however, could apprehend His purpose only to the extent of their station and spiritual capacity. He, in like manner, uncovered the Face of Wisdom in proportion to their ability to sustain the burden of His Message. No sooner had mankind attained the stage of maturity, than the Word revealed to men's eyes the latent energies with which it had been endowed—energies which manifested themselves in the plenitude of their glory when the Ancient Beauty appeared, in the year sixty, in the person of 'Alí-Muḥammad, the Báb.”*

'Abdu'l-Bahá, elucidating this fundamental verity, has written: *“All created things have their degree or stage of maturity. The period of maturity in the life of a tree is the time of its fruit-bearing... The animal attains a stage of full growth and completeness, and in the human*

kingdom man reaches his maturity when the light of his intelligence attains its greatest power and development... Similarly there are periods and stages in the collective life of humanity. At one time it was passing through its stage of childhood, at another its period of youth, but now it has entered its long-predicted phase of maturity, the evidences of which are everywhere apparent... That which was applicable to human needs during the early history of the race can neither meet nor satisfy the demands of this day, this period of newness and consummation. Humanity has emerged from its former state of limitation and preliminary training. Man must now become imbued with new virtues and powers, new moral standards, new capacities. New bounties, perfect bestowals, are awaiting and already descending upon him. The gifts and blessings of the period of youth, although timely and sufficient during the adolescence of mankind, are now incapable of meeting the requirements of its maturity.”

Summary:

In "Humanity's Coming of Age," Shoghi Effendi delves into the concept of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh as signaling the coming of age of the entire human race. He asserts that the emergence of a world community, consciousness of world citizenship, and the founding of a world civilization and culture all coincide with the initial stages of the Golden Age of the Bahá'í Era. Shoghi Effendi emphasizes that while the organization of human society may reach its utmost limits with the establishment of such a world order, individual progress and development will continue indefinitely.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Explanation of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh as marking the coming of age of humanity.
2. Characteristics of the Golden Age of the Bahá'í Era: Emergence of a world community, consciousness of world citizenship, and the founding of a world civilization and culture.
3. Implications for the organization of human society: Attainment of maturity and potentialities of well-being for the entire human race.
4. Bahá'u'lláh's testimony to the principle of progressive revelation and the timing of its manifestation.
5. 'Abdu'l-Bahá's elucidation of the stages of maturity in the collective life of humanity and the need for new virtues and capacities.

Questions and Answers:

1. What does Shoghi Effendi propose as the significance of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh?
 - Shoghi Effendi suggests that the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh signals the coming of age of the entire human race, marking the emergence of a world community and the founding of a world civilization and culture.
2. How does Shoghi Effendi characterize the maturity of human society?
 - Shoghi Effendi compares the stages of maturity in individual life to those in the collective life of humanity, emphasizing that humanity has entered a phase of maturity characterized by the need for new virtues, powers, and moral standards.
3. What does Bahá'u'lláh testify to regarding the progressive revelation?
 - Bahá'u'lláh testifies to the principle that the Word of God and all its potentialities are manifested to humanity in accordance with predetermined conditions, and that the revelation unfolds progressively as humanity attains maturity.
4. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá elucidate the stages of maturity in the collective life of humanity?
 - 'Abdu'l-Bahá explains that humanity has passed through stages of childhood and youth and has now entered a phase of maturity, characterized by the emergence of new virtues, powers, and moral standards to meet the demands of the present age.
5. What are the implications of humanity's coming of age for the organization of human society?

- The establishment of a world order and the attainment of maturity in human society suggest the need for new capacities and virtues to address the requirements of the present age and ensure the well-being of the entire human race.

The Process of Integration

Such a unique and momentous crisis in the life of organized mankind may, moreover, be likened to the culminating stage in the political evolution of the great American Republic—the stage which marked the emergence of a unified community of federated states. The stirring of a new national consciousness, and the birth of a new type of civilization, infinitely richer and nobler than any which its component parts could have severally hoped to achieve, may be said to have proclaimed the coming of age of the American people. Within the territorial limits of this nation, this consummation may be viewed as the culmination of the process of human government. The diversified and loosely related elements of a divided community were brought together, unified and incorporated into one coherent system. Though this entity may continue gaining in cohesive power, though the unity already achieved may be further consolidated, though the civilization to which that unity could alone have given birth may expand and flourish, yet the machinery essential to such an unfoldment may be said to have been, in its essential structure, erected, and the impulse required to guide and sustain it may be regarded as having been fundamentally imparted. No stage above and beyond this consummation of national unity can, within the geographical limits of that nation, be imagined, though the highest destiny of its people, as a constituent element in a still larger entity that will embrace the whole of mankind, may still remain unfulfilled. Considered as an isolated unit, however, this process of integration may be said to have reached its highest and final consummation.

Such is the stage to which an evolving humanity is collectively approaching. The Revelation entrusted by the Almighty Ordainer to Bahá'u'lláh, His followers firmly believe, has been endowed with such potentialities as are commensurate with the maturity of the human race—the crowning and most momentous stage in its evolution from infancy to manhood.

The successive Founders of all past Religions Who, from time immemorial, have shed, with ever-increasing intensity, the splendor of one common Revelation at the various stages which have marked the advance of mankind towards maturity may thus, in a sense, be regarded as preliminary Manifestations, anticipating and paving the way for the advent of that Day of Days when the whole earth will have fructified and the tree of humanity will have yielded its destined fruit.

Incontrovertible as is this truth, its challenging character should never be allowed to obscure the purpose, or distort the principle, underlying the utterances of Bahá'u'lláh—utterances that have established for all time the absolute oneness of all the Prophets, Himself included, whether belonging to the past or to the future. Though the mission of the Prophets preceding Bahá'u'lláh may be viewed in that light, though the measure of Divine Revelation with which each has been entrusted must, as a result of this process of evolution, necessarily differ, their common origin, their essential unity, their identity of purpose, should at no time and under no circumstances be misapprehended or denied. That all the Messengers of God should be regarded as “*abiding in the same Tabernacle, soaring in the same Heaven, seated upon the same Throne, uttering the same Speech, and proclaiming the same Faith*” must, however much we may extol the measure of Divine Revelation vouchsafed to mankind at this crowning stage of its evolution, remain the unalterable foundation and central tenet of Bahá'í belief. Any variations in the splendor which

each of these Manifestations of the Light of God has shed upon the world should be ascribed not to any inherent superiority involved in the essential character of any one of them, but rather to the progressive capacity, the ever-increasing spiritual receptiveness, which mankind, in its progress towards maturity, has invariably manifested.

Summary:

In "The Process of Integration," Shoghi Effendi discusses the concept of collective maturity in humanity's evolution, drawing parallels between the political evolution of nations and the spiritual evolution of mankind. He likens humanity's current stage to the emergence of a unified community of federated states, such as the United States of America, where diverse elements were brought together to form one coherent system. Shoghi Effendi asserts that while this stage represents a significant milestone in human government, it is not the ultimate fulfillment of humanity's destiny. Instead, it serves as a foundation upon which further progress can be built, both within the nation and on a global scale.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Comparison between the political evolution of nations and the spiritual evolution of humanity.
2. Analogy with the emergence of a unified community of federated states, exemplified by the United States of America.
3. Discussion of humanity's current stage as a culmination of the process of integration, representing a milestone in human government.
4. Assertion of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh as endowed with potentialities commensurate with the maturity of the human race.
5. Recognition of past religious founders as preliminary Manifestations paving the way for the advent of Bahá'u'lláh.
6. Affirmation of the absolute oneness of all the Prophets, emphasizing their common origin, unity, and identity of purpose.

Questions and Answers:

1. How does Shoghi Effendi characterize the current stage of humanity's evolution?
 - Shoghi Effendi compares humanity's current stage to the emergence of a unified community of federated states, where diverse elements are brought together to form one coherent system, representing a significant milestone in human government.
2. What role does the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh play in humanity's evolution?
 - Shoghi Effendi asserts that the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh is endowed with potentialities commensurate with the maturity of the human race, marking a crowning and momentous stage in its evolution from infancy to manhood.
3. How does Shoghi Effendi characterize the Founders of past religions in relation to Bahá'u'lláh?
 - Shoghi Effendi regards the successive Founders of past religions as preliminary Manifestations, anticipating and paving the way for the advent of Bahá'u'lláh, the culmination of Divine Revelation for this age.
4. What is the central tenet of Bahá'í belief regarding the Messengers of God?

- The central tenet of Bahá'í belief is the absolute oneness of all the Prophets, including Bahá'u'lláh, whether belonging to the past or the future, emphasizing their common origin, unity, and identity of purpose.

5. How does Shoghi Effendi explain variations in the splendor of Divine Revelation among the Manifestations of God?

- Shoghi Effendi attributes variations in the splendor of Divine Revelation among the Manifestations of God to the progressive capacity and spiritual receptiveness of mankind, rather than any inherent superiority of one Prophet over another.

The Final Consummation

Only those who are willing to associate the Revelation proclaimed by Bahá'u'lláh with the consummation of so stupendous an evolution in the collective life of the whole human race can grasp the significance of the words which He, while alluding to the glories of this promised Day and to the duration of the Bahá'í Era, has deemed fit to utter. *“This is the King of Days,”* He exclaims, *“the Day that hath seen the coming of the Best-Beloved, Him Who, through all eternity, hath been acclaimed the Desire of the World.”* *“The Scriptures of past Dispensations,”* He further asserts, *“celebrate the great jubilee that must needs greet this most great Day of God. Well is it with him that hath lived to see this Day and hath recognized its station.”* *“It is evident,”* He, in another passage explains, *“that every age in which a Manifestation of God hath lived is divinely-ordained, and may, in a sense, be characterized as God’s appointed Day. This Day, however, is unique, and is to be distinguished from those that have preceded it. The designation ‘Seal of the Prophets’ fully revealeth its high station. The Prophetic Cycle hath verily ended. The Eternal Truth is now come. He hath lifted up the ensign of power, and is now shedding upon the world the unclouded splendor of His Revelation.”* *“In this most mighty Revelation,”* He, in categorical language, declares, *“all the Dispensations of the past have attained their highest, their final consummation. That which hath been made manifest in this preëminent, this most exalted Revelation, standeth unparalleled in the annals of the past, nor will future ages witness its like.”*

‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s authentic pronouncements should, likewise, be recalled as confirming, in no less emphatic manner, the unexampled vastness of the Bahá'í Dispensation. *“Centuries,”* He affirms in one of His Tablets, *“nay, countless ages, must pass away ere the Day-Star of Truth shineth again in its mid-summer splendor, or appeareth once more in the radiance of its vernal glory... The mere contemplation of the Dispensation inaugurated by the Blessed Beauty would have sufficed to overwhelm the saints of bygone ages—saints who longed to partake, for one moment, of its great glory.”* *“Concerning the Manifestations that will come down in the future ‘in the shadows of the clouds,’”* He, in a still more definite language, affirms, *“know, verily, that in so far as their relation to the Source of their inspiration is concerned, they are under the shadow of the Ancient Beauty. In their relation, however, to the age in which they appear, each and every one of them ‘doeth whatsoever He willeth.’”* *“This holy Dispensation,”* He, alluding to the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, explains, *“is illumined with the light of the Sun of Truth shining from its most exalted station, and in the plenitude of its resplendency, its heat and glory.”*

Summary:

In "The Final Consummation," Shoghi Effendi delves into the significance of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh as the culmination of a vast evolution in the collective life of humanity. He highlights Bahá'u'lláh's own words, proclaiming the unique and unparalleled nature of the Bahá'í Era, which he describes as the King of Days and the Day that has seen the coming of the Best-Beloved. Bahá'u'lláh's declaration of the end of the Prophetic Cycle and the lifting up of the ensign of power signify the final consummation of all past Dispensations and the unveiling of the Eternal Truth.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Discussion of the significance of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh as the culmination of a vast evolution in humanity's collective life.
2. Bahá'u'lláh's proclamation of the Bahá'í Era as the King of Days and the Day that has seen the coming of the Best-Beloved.
3. Assertion of the uniqueness and unparalleled nature of the Bahá'í Era, surpassing all past Dispensations.
4. 'Abdu'l-Bahá's confirmation of the vastness and glory of the Bahá'í Dispensation, emphasizing its overwhelming greatness.
5. 'Abdu'l-Bahá's explanation of the Manifestations of God to come in the future and their relation to the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh.
6. Description of the Bahá'í Dispensation as illuminated with the light of the Sun of Truth, shining from its most exalted station.

Questions and Answers:

1. How does Shoghi Effendi describe the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh in "The Final Consummation"?
 - Shoghi Effendi describes the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh as the culmination of a vast evolution in the collective life of humanity, surpassing all past Dispensations and heralding the final consummation of the Prophetic Cycle.
2. What are some of the titles and descriptions Bahá'u'lláh uses to characterize the Bahá'í Era?
 - Bahá'u'lláh describes the Bahá'í Era as the King of Days and the Day that has seen the coming of the Best-Beloved, signifying its unique and unparalleled nature.
3. How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá confirm the vastness and glory of the Bahá'í Dispensation?
 - 'Abdu'l-Bahá affirms the overwhelming greatness of the Bahá'í Dispensation, stating that centuries or countless ages must pass before its mid-summer splendor or vernal glory shines again.
4. What is 'Abdu'l-Bahá's explanation of the Manifestations of God to come in the future?

- ‘Abdu’l-Bahá explains that while future Manifestations of God will be under the shadow of the Ancient Beauty in their relation to the Source of their inspiration, in their relation to the age in which they appear, each will do whatsoever He wills.

5. How does ‘Abdu’l-Bahá describe the Bahá’í Dispensation?

- ‘Abdu’l-Bahá describes the Bahá’í Dispensation as illuminated with the light of the Sun of Truth, shining from its most exalted station, and resplendent with its heat and glory.

Pangs of Death and Birth

Dearly-beloved friends: Though the Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh has been delivered, the World Order which such a Revelation must needs beget is as yet unborn. Though the Heroic Age of His Faith is passed, the creative energies which that Age has released have not as yet crystallized into that world society which, in the fullness of time, is to mirror forth the brightness of His glory. Though the framework of His Administrative Order has been erected, and the Formative Period of the Bahá’í Era has begun, yet the promised Kingdom into which the seed of His institutions must ripen remains as yet uninaugurated. Though His Voice has been raised, and the ensigns of His Faith have been lifted up in no less than forty countries of both the East and the West, yet the wholeness of the human race is as yet unrecognized, its unity unproclaimed, and the standard of its Most Great Peace unhoisted.

“The heights,” Bahá’u’lláh Himself testifies, “which, through the most gracious favor of God, mortal man can attain in this Day are as yet unrevealed to his sight. The world of being hath never had, nor doth it yet possess, the capacity for such a revelation. The day, however, is approaching when the potentialities of so great a favor will, by virtue of His behest, be manifested unto men.”

For the revelation of so great a favor a period of intense turmoil and wide-spread suffering would seem to be indispensable. Resplendent as has been the Age that has witnessed the inception of the Mission with which Bahá’u’lláh has been entrusted, the interval which must elapse ere that Age yields its choicest fruit must, it is becoming increasingly apparent, be overshadowed by such moral and social gloom as can alone prepare an unrepentant humanity for the prize she is destined to inherit.

Into such a period we are now steadily and irresistibly moving. Amidst the shadows which are increasingly gathering about us we can faintly discern the glimmerings of Bahá’u’lláh’s unearthly sovereignty appearing fitfully on the horizon of history. To us, the “generation of the half-light,” living at a time which may be designated as the period of the incubation of the World Commonwealth envisaged by Bahá’u’lláh, has been assigned a task whose high privilege we can never sufficiently appreciate, and the arduousness of which we can as yet but dimly recognize. We may well believe, we who are called upon to experience the operation of the dark forces destined to unloose a flood of agonizing afflictions, that the darkest hour that must precede the dawn of the Golden Age of our Faith has not yet struck. Deep as is the gloom that already encircles the world, the afflictive ordeals which that world is to suffer are still in preparation, nor can their blackness be as yet imagined. We stand on the threshold of an age whose convulsions proclaim alike the death-pangs of the old order and the birth-pangs of the new. Through the generating influence of the Faith announced by Bahá’u’lláh this New World Order may be said to have been conceived. We can, at the present moment, experience its stirrings in the womb of a

travailing age—an age waiting for the appointed hour at which it can cast its burden and yield its fairest fruit.

“The whole earth,” writes Bahá’u’lláh, *“is now in a state of pregnancy. The day is approaching when it will have yielded its noblest fruits, when from it will have sprung forth the loftiest trees, the most enchanting blossoms, the most heavenly blessings. Immeasurably exalted is the breeze that wafteth from the garment of thy Lord, the Glorified! For lo, it hath breathed its fragrance and made all things new! Well is it with them that comprehend.”* *“The onrushing winds of the grace of God,”* He, in the Súratu’l-Haykal, proclaims, *“have passed over all things. Every creature hath been endowed with all the potentialities it can carry. And yet the peoples of the world have denied this grace! Every tree hath been endowed with the choicest fruits, every ocean enriched with the most luminous gems. Man, himself, hath been invested with the gifts of understanding and knowledge. The whole creation hath been made the recipient of the revelation of the All-Merciful, and the earth the repository of things inscrutable to all except God, the Truth, the Knower of things unseen. The time is approaching when every created thing will have cast its burden. Glorified be God Who hath vouchsafed this grace that encompasseth all things, whether seen or unseen!”*

“The Call of God,” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá has written, *“when raised, breathed a new life into the body of mankind, and infused a new spirit into the whole creation. It is for this reason that the world hath been moved to its depths, and the hearts and consciences of men been quickened. Ere long the evidences of this regeneration will be revealed, and the fast asleep will be awakened.”*

Summary:

In "Pangs of Death and Birth," Shoghi Effendi paints a vivid picture of the current state of the world in relation to the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh. He acknowledges that while the Revelation has been delivered, the World Order it must beget is still unborn. Despite the erection of the framework of Bahá'u'lláh's Administrative Order and the spread of His Faith to numerous countries, the full realization of a unified human race and the establishment of the Most Great Peace are yet to be achieved. Shoghi Effendi quotes Bahá'u'lláh's own words, indicating that the heights attainable by humanity in this Day are still unrevealed and that a period of turmoil and suffering is necessary to prepare humanity for its destined prize.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Acknowledgment of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh and the yet unborn World Order it must beget.
2. Quotation of Bahá'u'lláh's words regarding the unrevealed heights attainable by humanity in this Day.
3. Recognition of the necessity of a period of turmoil and suffering to prepare humanity for its destined prize.
4. Description of the current age as the period of the incubation of the World Commonwealth envisaged by Bahá'u'lláh.
5. Assertion of the privilege and high task assigned to the current generation living amidst the shadows of moral and social gloom.
6. Affirmation of the generating influence of the Faith announced by Bahá'u'lláh in conceiving the New World Order.

Questions and Answers:

1. What is the current state of the world in relation to the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh?
 - The Revelation has been delivered, but the World Order it must beget is still unborn, and the full realization of a unified human race and the establishment of the Most Great Peace are yet to be achieved.
2. How does Shoghi Effendi describe the heights attainable by humanity in this Day according to Bahá'u'lláh's words?
 - The heights attainable by humanity in this Day are still unrevealed, and a period of turmoil and suffering is necessary to prepare humanity for its destined prize.
3. What is the significance of the current age in relation to the World Commonwealth envisaged by Bahá'u'lláh?
 - The current age is described as the period of incubation of the World Commonwealth envisaged by Bahá'u'lláh, where the stirrings of the New World Order are experienced amidst a travailing age.
4. What task is assigned to the current generation according to Shoghi Effendi?

- The current generation is assigned the privilege and high task of living amidst the shadows of moral and social gloom, with the responsibility of preparing humanity for its destined prize.

5. How does Shoghi Effendi characterize the generating influence of the Faith announced by Bahá'u'lláh?

- Shoghi Effendi characterizes the Faith announced by Bahá'u'lláh as having a generating influence in conceiving the New World Order, with its stirrings felt in the womb of a travailing age awaiting the appointed hour of its birth.

Universal Fermentation

As we view the world around us, we are compelled to observe the manifold evidences of that universal fermentation which, in every continent of the globe and in every department of human life, be it religious, social, economic or political, is purging and reshaping humanity in anticipation of the Day when the wholeness of the human race will have been recognized and its unity established. A twofold process, however, can be distinguished, each tending, in its own way and with an accelerated momentum, to bring to a climax the forces that are transforming the face of our planet. The first is essentially an integrating process, while the second is fundamentally disruptive. The former, as it steadily evolves, unfolds a System which may well serve as a pattern for that world polity towards which a strangely-disordered world is continually advancing; while the latter, as its disintegrating influence deepens, tends to tear down, with increasing violence, the antiquated barriers that seek to block humanity's progress towards its destined goal. The constructive process stands associated with the nascent Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, and is the harbinger of the New World Order that Faith must ere long establish. The destructive forces that characterize the other should be identified with a civilization that has refused to answer to the expectation of a new age, and is consequently falling into chaos and decline.

A titanic, a spiritual struggle, unparalleled in its magnitude yet unspeakably glorious in its ultimate consequences, is being waged as a result of these opposing tendencies, in this age of transition through which the organized community of the followers of Bahá'u'lláh and mankind as a whole are passing.

The Spirit that has incarnated itself in the institutions of a rising Faith has, in the course of its onward march for the redemption of the world, encountered and is now battling with such forces as are, in most instances, the very negation of that Spirit, and whose continued existence must inevitably hinder it from achieving its purpose. The hollow and outworn institutions, the obsolescent doctrines and beliefs, the effete and discredited traditions which these forces represent, it should be observed, have, in certain instances, been undermined by virtue of their senility, the loss of their cohesive power, and their own inherent corruption. A few have been swept away by the onrushing forces which the Bahá'í Faith has, at the hour of its birth, so mysteriously released. Others, as a direct result of a vain and feeble resistance to its rise in the initial stages of its development, have died out and been utterly discredited. Still others, fearful of the pervasive influence of the institutions in which that same Spirit had, at a later stage, been embodied, had mobilized their forces and launched their attack, destined to sustain, in their turn, after a brief and illusory success, an ignominious defeat.

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi, in his work "Universal Fermentation," delineates the global transformation taking place across various spheres of human existence—religious, social, economic, and political. He identifies two parallel processes driving this transformation: an integrating process and a disruptive process. The integrating process unfolds steadily, presenting a model for a unified world polity, while the disruptive process tears down outdated barriers hindering humanity's progress.

The constructive process aligns with the nascent Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, heralding the establishment of a New World Order. Conversely, the destructive forces represent a civilization resisting the call of a new age, leading to chaos and decline. This dichotomy sparks a monumental spiritual struggle, both glorious and unprecedented, confronting the followers of Bahá'u'lláh and humanity at large.

The institutions of the Bahá'í Faith, embodying a transformative Spirit, engage in a profound battle against opposing forces that negate this Spirit. These opposing forces manifest as hollow institutions, outdated doctrines, and discredited traditions, which are gradually undermined by their own senility, loss of cohesion, and inherent corruption. Some institutions collapse under the influence of the Bahá'í Faith's emergence, while others face defeat after futile resistance.

Key Points:

1. Introduction of Universal Fermentation:

- Overview of the global transformation across various spheres of human life.
- Identification of two parallel processes: integrating and disruptive.

2. The Integrating Process:

- Description of the constructive process aligned with the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh.
- Vision of a New World Order and its emergence as a pattern for global unity.

3. The Disruptive Process:

- Examination of destructive forces stemming from a civilization resisting change.
- Consequences of societal chaos and decline resulting from this resistance.

4. The Spiritual Struggle:

- Recognition of a monumental spiritual battle unfolding in the age of transition.
- Participation of the Bahá'í community and humanity at large in this struggle.

5. Conflict between Transformative Spirit and Opposing Forces:

- Engagement of Bahá'í institutions in battling forces that negate their transformative Spirit.
- Identification of hollow institutions, outdated doctrines, and discredited traditions resisting change.
- Gradual erosion and defeat of these opposing forces in the face of the Bahá'í Faith's influence.

Questions and Answers:

Q: What are the two parallel processes driving global transformation, as described by Shoghi Effendi?

A: Shoghi Effendi delineates an integrating process, aligned with the constructive forces of the Bahá'í Faith, and a disruptive process, representing resistance to change and societal decline.

Q: How does Shoghi Effendi characterize the role of Bahá'í institutions in the spiritual struggle?

A: Bahá'í institutions embody a transformative Spirit and engage in a profound battle against opposing forces, including hollow institutions, outdated doctrines, and discredited traditions.

Q: What are the ultimate consequences of the spiritual struggle described by Shoghi Effendi?

A: While the struggle is monumental and unprecedented, its consequences are described as unspeakably glorious, ultimately leading towards the establishment of a New World Order and the recognition of human unity.

This Age of Transition

It is not my purpose to call to mind, much less to attempt a detailed analysis of, the spiritual struggles that have ensued, or to note the victories that have redounded to the glory of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh since the day of its foundation. My chief concern is not with the happenings that have distinguished the First, the Apostolic Age of the Bahá'í Dispensation, but rather with the outstanding events that are transpiring in, and the tendencies which characterize, the formative period of its development, this Age of Transition, whose tribulations are the precursors of that Era of blissful felicity which is to incarnate God's ultimate purpose for all mankind.

To the catastrophic fall of mighty kingdoms and empires, on the eve of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's departure, Whose passing may be said to have ushered in the opening phase of the Age of Transition in which we now live, I have, in a previous communication, briefly alluded. The dissolution of the German Empire, the humiliating defeat inflicted upon its ruler, the successor and lineal descendant of the Prussian King and Emperor to whom Bahá'u'lláh had addressed His solemn and historic warning, together with the extinction of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, the remnant of the once-great Holy Roman Empire, were both precipitated by a war whose outbreak signaled the opening of the Age of Frustration destined to precede the establishment of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh. Both of these momentous events may be viewed as the earliest occurrences of that turbulent Age, into the outer fringes of whose darkest phase we are now beginning to enter.

To the Conqueror of Napoleon III, the Author of our Faith had, on the morrow of the King's victory, addressed, in His Most Holy Book, this clear and ominous warning: *"O King of Berlin! ...Take heed lest pride debar thee from recognizing the Day-Spring of Divine Revelation, lest earthly desires shut thee out, as by a veil, from the Lord of the Throne above and of the earth below. Thus counseleth thee the Pen of the Most High. He, verily, is the Most Gracious, the All-Bountiful. Do thou remember the one whose power transcended thy power (Napoleon III), and whose station excelled thy station. Where is he? Whither are gone the things he possessed? Take warning, and be not of them that are fast asleep. He it was who cast the Tablet of God behind him, when We made known unto him what the hosts of tyranny had caused Us to suffer.*

Wherefore, disgrace assailed him from all sides, and he went down to dust in great loss. Think deeply, O King, concerning him, and concerning them who, like unto thee, have conquered cities and ruled over men. The All-Merciful brought them down from their palaces to their graves. Be warned, be of them who reflect.”

“O banks of the Rhine!” Bahá’u’lláh, in another passage of that same Book, prophesies, “We have seen you covered with gore, inasmuch as the swords of retribution were drawn against you; and so you shall have another turn. And We hear the lamentations of Berlin, though she be today in conspicuous glory.”

Summary:

In "This Age of Transition," Shoghi Effendi reflects on the pivotal events and spiritual struggles characterizing the formative period of the Bahá'í Dispensation, known as the Age of Transition. Rather than delving into the victories of the Faith's early years, he focuses on the significant events and trends shaping the era, which he believes heralds the advent of a blissful future ordained by God for humanity.

Shoghi Effendi highlights the fall of mighty kingdoms and empires, particularly the German and Austro-Hungarian empires, which occurred around the time of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's passing, marking the onset of the Age of Transition. He links these events to the outbreak of World War I, signaling the beginning of a turbulent period preceding the establishment of the World Order envisioned by Bahá'u'lláh.

The warning issued by Bahá'u'lláh to the King of Berlin, successor to the Prussian King addressed by Bahá'u'lláh Himself, serves as a poignant reminder of the consequences of pride and earthly desires obstructing recognition of divine revelation. Shoghi Effendi emphasizes the downfall of Napoleon III and the subsequent fate of powerful rulers who failed to heed divine warnings, underscoring the transient nature of earthly power and the inevitability of divine justice.

Bahá'u'lláh's prophecies regarding the banks of the Rhine, symbolizing the scenes of conflict and retribution, serve as a reminder of the cyclic nature of history and the transitory nature of human glory. Shoghi Effendi suggests that these passages reflect the tumultuous times and serve as a warning to those who wield power without regard for spiritual principles.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to the Age of Transition:

- Shoghi Effendi's focus on the formative period of the Bahá'í Dispensation.
- Identification of significant events and trends shaping the era.

2. Fall of Empires:

- Reflection on the collapse of the German and Austro-Hungarian empires.
- Connection to the onset of World War I and its significance in marking the Age of Transition.

3. Divine Warnings and Consequences:

- Bahá'u'lláh's warnings to rulers, particularly the King of Berlin.
- Illustration of the downfall of Napoleon III and other rulers who disregarded divine counsel.

4. Prophecies and Symbolism:

- Analysis of Bahá'u'lláh's prophecies regarding the banks of the Rhine.
- Interpretation of these passages as reflections of historical turmoil and divine admonition.

Questions and Answers:

Q: What does Shoghi Effendi emphasize as the central focus of "This Age of Transition"?

A: Shoghi Effendi directs attention to the significant events and trends shaping the formative period of the Bahá'í Dispensation, known as the Age of Transition, rather than focusing on the victories of the Faith's early years.

Q: How does Shoghi Effendi connect the fall of empires to the Age of Transition?

A: Shoghi Effendi links the collapse of the German and Austro-Hungarian empires, occurring around 'Abdu'l-Bahá's passing, to the onset of World War I, marking the beginning of the tumultuous period preceding the establishment of Bahá'u'lláh's envisioned World Order.

Q: What is the significance of Bahá'u'lláh's warnings to rulers mentioned by Shoghi Effendi?

A: Shoghi Effendi highlights the warnings issued by Bahá'u'lláh to rulers, such as the King of Berlin, emphasizing the consequences of pride and earthly desires obstructing recognition of divine revelation.

Q: How does Shoghi Effendi interpret Bahá'u'lláh's prophecies regarding the banks of the Rhine?

A: Shoghi Effendi suggests that these prophecies symbolize scenes of conflict and retribution, serving as a reminder of the cyclic nature of history and the transient nature of human glory, while also offering a warning to those who wield power without regard for spiritual principles.

Collapse of Islám

The collapse of the power of the Shí'ih hierarchy, in a land which had for centuries been one of the impregnable strongholds of Muslim fanaticism, was the inevitable consequence of that wave of secularization which, at a later time, was to invade some of the most powerful and conservative ecclesiastical institutions in both the European and American continents. Though not the direct outcome of the last war, this sudden trembling which had seized this hitherto immovable pillar of Islamic orthodoxy accentuated the problems and deepened the restlessness with which a war-weary world was being afflicted. Shí'ih Islám had lost once for all, in Bahá'u'lláh's native land and as the direct consequence of its implacable hostility to His Faith, its combative power, had forfeited its rights and privileges, had been degraded and demoralized, and was being condemned to hopeless obscurity and ultimate extinction. No less than twenty thousand martyrs, however, had to sacrifice their lives ere the Cause for which they had stood and died could register this initial victory over those who were the first to repudiate its claims and mow down its gallant warriors. "Vileness and poverty were stamped upon them, and they returned with wrath from God."

"Behold," writes Bahá'u'lláh, commenting on the decline of a fallen people, "how the sayings and doings of Shí'ih Islám have dulled the joy and fervor of its early days, and tarnished the pristine brilliancy of its light. In its primitive days, whilst they still adhered to the precepts associated with the name of their Prophet, the Lord of mankind, their career was marked by an unbroken chain of victories and triumphs. As they gradually strayed from the path of their Ideal Leader and Master, as they turned away from the light of God and corrupted the principle of His Divine unity, and as they increasingly centered their attention upon them who were only the

revealers of the potency of His Word, their power was turned into weakness, their glory into shame, their courage into fear. Thou dost witness to what a pass they have come.”

The downfall of the Qájár Dynasty, the avowed defender and the willing instrument of a decaying clergy, almost synchronized with the humiliation which the Shí‘ih ecclesiastical leaders had suffered. From Muḥammad Sháh down to the last and feeble monarch of that dynasty, the Faith of Bahá’u’lláh was denied the impartial consideration, the disinterested and fair treatment which its cause had rightly demanded. It had, on the contrary, been atrociously harassed, consistently betrayed and prosecuted. The martyrdom of the Báb; the banishment of Bahá’u’lláh; the confiscation of His earthly possessions; His incarceration in Mázindarán; the reign of terror that confined Him in the most pestilential of dungeons; the intrigues, the protests, and calumnies which thrice renewed His exile and led to His ultimate imprisonment in the most desolate of cities; the shameful sentences passed, with the connivance of the judicial and ecclesiastical authorities, against the person, the property, and the honor of His innocent followers—these stand out as among the blackest acts for which posterity will hold this blood-stained dynasty responsible. One more barrier that had sought to obstruct the forward march of the Faith was now removed.

Though Bahá’u’lláh had been banished from His native land, the tide of calamity which had swept with such fury over Him and over the followers of the Báb, was by no means receding. Under the jurisdiction of the Sultán of Turkey, the arch-enemy of His Cause, a new chapter in the history of His ever-recurring trials had opened. The overthrow of the Sultanate and the Caliphate, the twin pillars of Sunní Islám, can be regarded in no other light except as the inevitable consequence of the fierce, the sustained and deliberate persecution which the monarchs of the tottering House of Uḥmán, the recognized successors of the Prophet Muḥammad, had launched against it. From the city of Constantinople, the traditional seat of both the Sultanate and the Caliphate, the rulers of Turkey had, for a period covering almost three quarters of a century, striven, with unabated zeal, to stem the tide of a Faith they feared and abhorred. From the time Bahá’u’lláh set foot on Turkish soil and was made a virtual prisoner of the most powerful potentate of Islám to the year of the Holy Land’s liberation from Turkish yoke, successive Caliphs, and in particular the Sultáns ‘Abdu’l-’Aziz and ‘Abdu’l-Ḥamíd, had, in the full exercise of the spiritual and temporal authority which their exalted office had conferred upon them, afflicted both the Founder of our Faith and the Center of His Covenant with such pain and tribulation as no mind can fathom nor pen or tongue describe. They alone could have measured or borne them.

To these afflictive trials Bahá’u’lláh has repeatedly testified: *“By the righteousness of the Almighty! Were I to recount to thee the tale of the things that have befallen Me, the souls and minds of men would be incapable of sustaining its weight. God Himself beareth Me witness.”* *“Twenty years have passed,”* He, addressing the kings of Christendom, has written, *“during which We have, each day, tasted the agony of a fresh tribulation. No one of them that were before Us hath endured the things We have endured. Would that ye could perceive it! They that rose up against us have put us to death, have shed our blood, have plundered our property, and violated our honor.”* *“Recall to mind My sorrows,”* He, in another connection, has revealed, *“My cares and anxieties, My woes and trials, the state of My captivity, the tears that I have shed, the bitterness of Mine anguish, and now Mine imprisonment in this far-off land... Couldst thou be told what hath befallen the Ancient Beauty, thou wouldst flee into the wilderness, and weep with a great weeping... Every morning I arose from my bed, I discovered the hosts of countless*

afflictions massed behind My door; and every night when I lay down, lo, My heart was torn with agony at what it had suffered from the fiendish cruelty of its foes.”

The orders which these foes issued, the banishments they decreed, the indignities they inflicted, the plans they devised, the investigations they conducted, the threats they pronounced, the atrocities they were prepared to commit, the intrigues and baseness to which they, their ministers, their governors, and military chieftains had stooped, constitute a record which can hardly find a parallel in the history of any revealed religion. The mere recital of the most salient features of that sinister theme would suffice to fill a volume. They knew full well that the spiritual and administrative Center of the Cause they had striven to eradicate had now shifted to their dominion, that its leaders were Turkish citizens, and that whatever resources these could command were at their mercy. That for a period of almost three score years and ten, while still in the plenitude of its unquestioned authority, while reinforced by the endless machinations of the civil and ecclesiastical authorities of a neighboring nation, and assured of the support of those of Bahá'u'lláh's kindred who had rebelled against, and seceded from, His Cause, this despotism should have failed in the end to extirpate a mere handful of its condemned subjects must, to every unbelieving observer, remain one of the most intriguing and mysterious episodes of contemporary history.

The Cause of which Bahá'u'lláh was still the visible leader had, despite the calculations of a short-sighted enemy, undeniably triumphed. No unbiased mind, penetrating the surface of conditions surrounding the Prisoner of 'Akká, could any longer mistake or deny it. Though the tension which had been relaxed was, for a time, heightened after Bahá'u'lláh's ascension and the perils of a still unsettled situation were revived, it was becoming increasingly evident that the insidious forces of decay, which for many a long year were eating into the vitals of a diseased nation, were now moving towards a climax. A series of internal convulsions, each more devastating than the previous one, had already been unchained, destined to bring in their wake one of the most catastrophic occurrences of modern times. The murder of that arrogant despot in the year 1876; the Russo-Turkish conflict that soon followed in its wake; the wars of liberation which succeeded it; the rise of the Young Turk movement; the Turkish Revolution of 1909 that precipitated the downfall of 'Abdu'l-Ḥamíd; the Balkan wars with their calamitous consequences; the liberation of Palestine enshrining within its bosom the cities of 'Akká and Haifa, the world center of an emancipated Faith; the further dismemberment decreed by the Treaty of Versailles; the abolition of the Sultanate and the downfall of the House of Uthmán; the extinction of the Caliphate; the disestablishment of the State Religion; the annulment of the Shari'ah Law and the promulgation of a universal Civil Code; the suppression of various orders, beliefs, traditions and ceremonials believed to be inextricably interwoven with the fabric of the Muslim Faith—these followed with an ease and swiftness that no man had dared envisage. In these devastating blows, administered by friend and foe alike, by Christian nations and professing Muslims, every follower of the persecuted Faith of Bahá'u'lláh recognized evidences of the directing Hand of the departed Founder of his religion, Who, from the invisible Realm, was unloosing a flood of well-deserved calamities upon a rebellious religion and nation.

Compare the evidences of Divine visitation which befell the persecutors of Jesus Christ with these historic retributions which, in the latter part of the first century of the Bahá'í Era, have hurled to dust the chief adversary of the religion of Bahá'u'lláh. Had not the Roman Emperor, in the second half of the first century of the Christian Era, after a distressful siege of Jerusalem, laid waste the Holy City, destroyed the Temple, desecrated and robbed the Holy of Holies of its

treasures, and transported them to Rome, reared a pagan colony on the mount of Zion, massacred the Jews, and exiled and dispersed the survivors?

Compare, moreover, these words which the persecuted Christ, as witnessed by the Gospel, addressed to Jerusalem, with Bahá'u'lláh's apostrophe to Constantinople, revealed while He lay in His far-off Prison, and recorded in His Most Holy Book: "*O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the Prophets and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings!*" And again, as He wept over the city: "*If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.*"

"*O Spot that art situate on the shores of the two seas!*" Bahá'u'lláh thus apostrophizes the City of Constantinople, "*The throne of tyranny hath, verily, been established upon thee, and the flame of hatred hath been kindled within thy bosom, in such wise that the Concourse on high and they who circle around the Exalted Throne have wailed and lamented. We behold in thee the foolish ruling over the wise, and darkness vaunting itself against the light. Thou art indeed filled with manifest pride. Hath thine outward splendor made thee vainglorious? By Him Who is the Lord of mankind! It shall soon perish, and thy daughters and thy widows and all the kindreds that dwell within thee shall lament. Thus informeth thee the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.*"

To Sultán 'Abdu'l-'Aziz, the monarch who decreed each of Bahá'u'lláh's three banishments, the Founder of our Faith, while a prisoner in the Sultán's capital, addressed these words: "*Hearken, O king, to the speech of Him that speaketh the truth, Him that doth not ask thee to recompense Him with the things God hath chosen to bestow upon thee, Him Who unerringly treadeth the Straight Path ...Set before thine eyes God's unerring Balance and, as one standing in His presence, weigh in that Balance thine actions every day, every moment of thy life. Bring thyself to account ere thou art summoned to a reckoning, on the day when no man shall have strength to stand for fear of God, the day when the hearts of the heedless ones shall be made to tremble.*"

To the Ministers of the Turkish State, He, in that same Tablet, revealed: "*It behooveth you, O Ministers of State, to keep the precepts of God, and to forsake your own laws and regulations, and to be of them who are guided aright... Ye shall, erelong, discover the consequences of that which ye shall have done in this vain life, and shall be repaid for them... How great the number of those who, in bygone ages, have committed the things ye have committed, and who, though superior to you in rank, have, in the end, returned unto dust, and been consigned to their inevitable doom!... Ye shall follow in their wake, and shall be made to enter a habitation wherein none shall be found to befriend or help you... The days of your life shall roll away, and all the things with which ye are occupied, and of which ye boast yourselves, shall perish, and ye shall, most certainly, be summoned by a company of His angels to appear at the spot where the limbs of the entire creation shall be made to tremble, and the flesh of every oppressor to creep... This is the day that shall inevitably come upon you, the hour that none can put back.*"

To the inhabitants of Constantinople, while He lived the life of an exile in their midst, Bahá'u'lláh, in that same Tablet, addressed these words: "*Fear God, ye inhabitants of the City, and sow not the seeds of dissension amongst men... Your days shall pass away as have the days of them who were before you. To dust shall ye return, even as your fathers of old did return.*" "We found," He, moreover, remarks, "*upon Our arrival in the City its governors and elders as*

children gathered about and disporting themselves with clay... Our inner eye wept sore over them, and over their transgressions and their total disregard of the thing for which they were created... The day is approaching when God will have raised up a people who will call to remembrance Our days, who will tell the tale of Our trials, who will demand the restitution of Our rights from them that, without a tittle of evidence, have treated Us with manifest injustice. God assuredly dominateth the lives of them that wronged Us, and is well aware of their doings. He will, most certainly, lay hold on them for their sins. He, verily, is the fiercest of avengers.” “Wherefore,” He graciously exhorteth them, “*hearken ye unto My speech, and return ye to God and repent, that He, through His grace, may have mercy upon you, may wash away your sins, and forgive your trespasses. The greatness of His mercy surpasseth the fury of His wrath, and His grace encompasseth all who have been called into being and been clothed with the robe of life, be they of the past or of the future.*”

And, finally, in the Lawḥ-i-Ra’is we find these prophetic words recorded: “*Hearken, O Chief ... to the Voice of God, the Sovereign, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting... Thou hast, O Chief, committed that which hath made Muḥammad, the Apostle of God, groan in the Most Exalted Paradise. The world hath made thee proud, so much so that thou hast turned away from the Face through Whose brightness the Concourse on high hath been illumined. Soon thou shalt find thyself in evident loss... The day is approaching when the Land of Mystery (Adrianople) and what is beside it shall be changed, and shall pass out of the hands of the King, and commotions shall appear, and the voice of lamentation shall be raised, and the evidences of mischief shall be revealed on all sides, and confusion shall spread by reason of that which hath befallen these captives at the hands of the hosts of oppression. The course of things shall be altered, and conditions shall wax so grievous, that the very sands on the desolate hills will moan, and the trees on the mountain will weep, and blood will flow out of all things. Then wilt thou behold the people in sore distress.*”

Thirteen hundred years had to elapse from the death of the Prophet Muḥammad ere the illegitimacy of the institution of the Caliphate, the founders of which had usurped the authority of the lawful successors of the Apostle of God, would be fully and publicly demonstrated. An institution which in its inception had trampled upon so sacred a right and unchained the forces of so distressful a schism, an institution which, in the latter days, had dealt so grievous a blow to a Faith Whose Forerunner was Himself a descendant of the very Imáms whose authority that institution had repudiated, deserved full well the chastisement that had sealed its fate.

The text of certain Muḥammadan traditions, the authenticity of which Muslims themselves recognize, and which have been extensively quoted by eminent Oriental Bahá’í scholars and authors, will serve to corroborate the argument and illuminate the theme I have attempted to expound: “*In the latter days a grievous calamity shall befall My people at the hands of their ruler, a calamity such as no man ever heard to surpass it. So fierce will it be that none can find a shelter. God will then send down One of My descendants, One sprung from My family, Who will fill the earth with equity and justice, even as it hath been filled with injustice and tyranny.*” And, again: “*A day shall be witnessed by My people whereon there will have remained of Islám naught but a name, and of the Qur’án naught but a mere appearance. The doctors of that age shall be the most evil the world hath ever seen. Mischief hath proceeded from them, and on them will it recoil.*” And, again: “*At that hour His malediction shall descend upon you, and your curse shall afflict you, and your religion shall remain an empty word on your tongues. And when these signs appear amongst you, anticipate the day when the red-hot wind will have swept over you, or the day when ye will have been disfigured, or when stones will have rained upon you.*”

“O people of the Qur’án,” Bahá’u’lláh, addressing the combined forces of Sunní and Shí’ih Islám, significantly affirms, “Verily, the Prophet of God, Muḥammad, sheddeth tears at the sight of your cruelty. Ye have assuredly followed your evil and corrupt desires, and turned away your face from the light of guidance. Erelong will ye witness the result of your deeds; for the Lord, My God, lieth in wait and is watchful of your behavior... O concourse of Muslim divines! By your deeds the exalted station of the people hath been abased, the standard of Islám hath been reversed, and its mighty throne hath fallen.”

Summary:

In "Collapse of Islám," Shoghi Effendi discusses the decline of the power of the Shí'ih hierarchy and the collapse of the Qájár Dynasty, both significant events in the history of Islamic dominance, particularly in Persia. He attributes these collapses to a wave of secularization that invaded even the most conservative ecclesiastical institutions, leading to internal restlessness and turmoil. Shoghi Effendi paints a picture of Shí'ih Islám losing its combative power and forfeiting its rights and privileges due to its implacable hostility towards the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. Despite this, the victory of the Bahá'í Faith over its adversaries came at the cost of the martyrdom of thousands of its followers.

He further reflects on the decline of Islamic fervor and adherence to the teachings of Muhammad, attributing it to a departure from the principles associated with the Prophet. The downfall of the Qájár Dynasty, marked by their relentless persecution of Bahá'u'lláh and His followers, served as another blow to the obstructive forces hindering the progress of the Faith.

Despite the relentless persecution and trials faced by Bahá'u'lláh and His followers, the tide of calamity did not recede. Under the jurisdiction of the Sultán of Turkey, another chapter of trials began. The overthrow of the Sultanate and the Caliphate, pillars of Sunní Islám, followed a period of sustained persecution launched against the Faith by the monarchs of the Ottoman Empire. Despite the intense persecution, the Bahá'í Faith triumphed, as evidenced by the downfall of oppressive regimes and the ultimate liberation of the Holy Land.

Through various prophecies and admonitions, Bahá'u'lláh warned the rulers, ministers, and inhabitants of Constantinople of the consequences of their actions and the impending divine retribution. He lamented the corruption and injustice prevalent in Islamic societies and foretold the calamities that would befall them as a result.

Key Points:

1. Decline of Shí'ih Hierarchy and Qájár Dynasty:

- Shoghi Effendi discusses the collapse of the power of the Shí'ih hierarchy and the downfall of the Qájár Dynasty in Persia.
- Attributes these collapses to a wave of secularization and internal restlessness within Islamic institutions.

2. Victory of the Bahá'í Faith:

- Despite persecution, the Bahá'í Faith emerged victorious, albeit at the cost of martyrdom.
- Reflection on the decline of Islamic fervor and adherence to the teachings of Muhammad.

3. Overthrow of Sultanate and Caliphate:

- Shoghi Effendi reflects on the overthrow of the Sultanate and the Caliphate, pillars of Sunní Islám, under the Ottoman Empire.
- Attributes this to sustained persecution launched against the Bahá'í Faith.

4. Warnings and Prophecies of Bahá'u'lláh:

- Bahá'u'lláh's warnings to rulers, ministers, and inhabitants of Constantinople about impending divine retribution.
- Lamentation over corruption and injustice prevalent in Islamic societies.

Questions and Answers:

Q: What were the key factors contributing to the collapse of Islamic power discussed by Shoghi Effendi?

A: Shoghi Effendi attributes the collapse of Islamic power to a wave of secularization and internal restlessness within Islamic institutions, exacerbated by relentless persecution of the Bahá'í Faith.

Q: How did the Bahá'í Faith emerge victorious despite persecution?

A: Despite persecution, the Bahá'í Faith emerged victorious, symbolized by the downfall of oppressive regimes and the ultimate liberation of the Holy Land.

Q: What warnings and prophecies did Bahá'u'lláh issue to Islamic rulers and societies?

A: Bahá'u'lláh issued warnings and prophecies to rulers, ministers, and inhabitants of Constantinople about impending divine retribution, lamenting the corruption and injustice prevalent in Islamic societies.

Deterioration of Christian Institutions

So much for Islám and the crippling blows its leaders and institutions have received—and may yet receive—in this, the first century of the Bahá'í Era. If I have dwelt too long on this theme, if I have, to a disproportionate degree, quoted from the sacred writings in support of my argument, it is solely because of my firm conviction that these retributive calamities that have rained down upon the foremost oppressor of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh should rank not only among the stirring occurrences of this Age of Transition, but as some of the most startling and significant events of contemporary history.

Both Sunní and Shí'ih Islám had, through the convulsions that had seized them, contributed to the acceleration of the disruptive process to which I have previously referred—a process which, by its very nature, is to pave the way for that complete reorganization and unification which the world, in every aspect of its life, must achieve. What of Christianity and of the denominations with which it stands identified? Can it be said that this process of deterioration that has attacked the fabric of the Religion of Muḥammad has failed to exert its baneful influence on the institutions associated with the Faith of Jesus Christ? Have these institutions already experienced the impact of these menacing forces? Are their foundations so secure and their vitality so great as to enable them to resist this onslaught? Will they, as the confusion of a chaotic world spreads and deepens, fall in turn a prey to their violence? Have the more orthodox among them already arisen, and, if not, will they arise, to repel the onset of a Cause which, having pulled down the barriers of Muslim orthodoxy, is now advancing into the heart of Christendom, in both the European and American continents? Would such a resistance sow the seeds of further dissension and confusion, and consequently serve indirectly to hasten the advent of the promised Day?

To these queries we can but partly answer. Time alone can reveal the nature of the rôle which the institutions directly associated with the Christian Faith are destined to assume in this, the Formative Period of the Bahá'í Era, this dark age of transition through which humanity as a whole is passing. Such events as have already transpired, however, are of such a nature as can indicate the direction in which these institutions are moving. We can, in some degree, appraise the probable effect which the forces operating both within the Bahá'í Faith and outside it will exert upon them.

That the forces of irreligion, of a purely materialistic philosophy, of unconcealed paganism have been unloosed, are now spreading, and, by consolidating themselves, are beginning to invade some of the most powerful Christian institutions of the western world, no unbiased observer can fail to admit. That these institutions are becoming increasingly restive, that a few among them are already dimly aware of the pervasive influence of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh, that they will, as their inherent strength deteriorates and their discipline relaxes, regard with deepening dismay the rise of His New World Order, and will gradually determine to assail it, that such an opposition will in turn accelerate their decline, few, if any, among those who are attentively watching the progress of His Faith would be inclined to question.

“The vitality of men’s belief in God,” Bahá'u'lláh has testified, *“is dying out in every land; nothing short of His wholesome medicine can ever restore it. The corrosion of ungodliness is eating into the vitals of human society; what else but the Elixir of His potent Revelation can cleanse and revive it?”* *“The world is in travail,”* He has further written, *“and its agitation waxeth day by day. Its face is turned towards waywardness and unbelief. Such shall be its plight that to disclose it now would not be meet and seemly.”*

This menace of secularism that has attacked Islám and is undermining its remaining institutions, that has invaded Persia, has penetrated into India, and raised its triumphant head in Turkey, has already manifested itself in both Europe and America, and is, in varying degrees, and under various forms and designations, challenging the basis of every established religion, and in particular the institutions and communities identified with the Faith of Jesus Christ. It would be no exaggeration to say that we are moving into a period which the future historian will regard as one of the most critical in the history of Christianity.

Already a few among the protagonists of the Christian Religion admit the gravity of the situation that confronts them. “A wave of materialism is sweeping round the world”; is the testimony of its missionaries, as witnessed by the text of their official reports, “the drive and pressure of modern industrialism, which are penetrating even the forests of Central Africa and the plains of Central Asia, make men everywhere dependent on, and preoccupied with, material things. At home the Church has talked, perhaps too glibly, in pulpit or on platform of the menace of secularism; though even in England we can catch more than a glimpse of its meaning. But to the Church overseas these things are grim realities, enemies with which it is at grips... The Church has a new danger to face in land after land—determined and hostile attack. From Soviet Russia a definitely anti-religious Communism is pushing west into Europe and America, East into Persia, India, China and Japan. It is an economic theory, definitely harnessed to disbelief in God. It is a religious irreligion... It has a passionate sense of mission, and is carrying on its anti-God campaign at the Church’s base at home, as well as launching its offensive against its front-line in non-Christian lands. Such a conscious, avowed, organized attack against religion in general and Christianity in particular is something new in history. Equally deliberate in some lands in its determined hostility to Christianity is another form of social and political faith—nationalism. But the nationalist attack on Christianity, unlike Communism, is often bound up

with some form of national religion—with Islám in Persia and Egypt, with Buddhism in Ceylon, while the struggle for communal rights in India is allied with a revival both of Hinduism and Islám.”

I need not attempt in this connection an exposition of the origin and character of those economic theories and political philosophies of the post-war period, that have directly and indirectly exerted, and are still exerting, their pernicious influence on the institutions and beliefs connected with one of the most widely-spread and best organized religious systems of the world. It is with their influence rather than with their origin that I am chiefly concerned. The excessive growth of industrialism and its attendant evils—as the aforementioned quotation bears witness—the aggressive policies initiated and the persistent efforts exerted by the inspirers and organizers of the Communist movement; the intensification of a militant nationalism, associated in certain countries with a systematized work of defamation against all forms of ecclesiastical influence, have no doubt contributed to the de-Christianization of the masses, and been responsible for a notable decline in the authority, the prestige and power of the Church. “The whole conception of God,” the persecutors of the Christian Religion have insistently proclaimed, “is a conception derived from the ancient oriental despotisms. It is a conception quite unworthy of free men.” “Religion,” one of their leaders has asserted, “is an opiate of the people.” “Religion,” declares the text of their official publications, “is a brutalization of the people. Education must be so directed as to efface from the people’s minds this humiliation and this idiocy.”

The Hegelian philosophy which, in other countries, has, in the form of an intolerant and militant nationalism, insisted on deifying the state, has inculcated the war-spirit, and incited to racial animosity, has, likewise, led to a marked weakening of the Church and to a grave diminution of its spiritual influence. Unlike the bold offensive which an avowedly atheistic movement had chosen to launch against it, both within the Soviet union and beyond its confines, this nationalistic philosophy, which Christian rulers and governments have upheld, is an attack directed against the Church by those who were previously its professed adherents, a betrayal of its cause by its own kith and kin. It was being stabbed by an alien and militant atheism from without, and by the preachers of a heretical doctrine from within. Both of these forces, each operating in its own sphere and using its own weapons and methods, have moreover been greatly assisted and encouraged by the prevailing spirit of modernism, with its emphasis on a purely materialistic philosophy, which, as it diffuses itself, tends increasingly to divorce religion from man’s daily life.

The combined effect of these strange and corrupt doctrines, these dangerous and treacherous philosophies, has, as was natural, been severely felt by those whose tenets inculcated an opposite and wholly irreconcilable spirit and principle. The consequences of the clash that inevitably ensued between these contending interests, were, in some cases, disastrous, and the damage that has been wrought irreparable. The disestablishment and dismemberment of the Greek Orthodox Church in Russia, following upon the blow which the Church of Rome had sustained as a result of the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy; the commotion that subsequently seized the Catholic Church and culminated in its separation from the State in Spain; the persecution of the same Church in Mexico; the perquisitions, arrests, intimidation and terrorization to which Catholics and Lutherans alike are being subjected in the heart of Europe; the turmoil into which another branch of the Church has been thrown as a result of the military campaign in Africa; the decline that has set in the fortunes of Christian Missions, both Anglican and Presbyterian, in Persia, Turkey, and the Far East; the ominous signs that foreshadow serious complications in the equivocal and precarious relationships now existing between the Holy See and certain nations in

the continent of Europe—these stand out as the most striking features of the reverses which, in almost every part of the world, the members and leaders of Christian ecclesiastical institutions have suffered.

That the solidarity of some of these institutions has been irretrievably shattered is too apparent for any intelligent observer to mistake or deny. The cleavage between the fundamentalists and the liberals among their adherents is continually widening. Their creeds and dogmas have been watered down, and in certain instances ignored and discarded. Their hold upon human conduct is loosening, and the personnel of their ministries is dwindling in number and in influence. The timidity and insincerity of their preachers are, in several instances, being exposed. Their endowments have, in some countries, disappeared, and the force of their religious training has declined. Their temples have been partly deserted and destroyed, and an oblivion of God, of His teachings and of His Purpose, has enfeebled and heaped humiliation upon them.

Might not this disintegrating tendency, from which Sunní and Shí'ih Islám have so conspicuously suffered, unloose, as it reaches its climax, still further calamities upon the various denominations of the Christian Church? In what manner and how rapidly this process, which has already set in, will develop the future alone can reveal. Nor can it, at the present time, be estimated to what extent will the attacks which a still powerful clergy may yet launch against the strongholds of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh in the West accentuate this decline and widen the range of inescapable disasters.

If Christianity wishes and expects to serve the world in the present crisis, writes a minister of the Presbyterian Church in America, it must “cut back through Christianity to Christ, back through the centuries-old religion about Jesus to the original religion of Jesus.” Otherwise, he significantly adds, “the spirit of Christ will live in institutions other than our own.”

So marked a decline in the strength and cohesion of the elements constituting Christian society has led, in its turn, as we might well anticipate, to the emergence of an increasing number of obscure cults, of strange and new worships, of ineffective philosophies, whose sophisticated doctrines have intensified the confusion of a troubled age. In their tenets and pursuits they may be said to reflect and bear witness to the revolt, the discontent, and the confused aspirations of the disillusioned masses that have deserted the cause of the Christian churches and seceded from their membership.

A parallel might almost be drawn between these confused and confusing systems of thought that are the direct outcome of the helplessness and confusion afflicting the Christian Faith and the great variety of popular cults, of fashionable and evasive philosophies which flourished in the opening centuries of the Christian Era, and which attempted to absorb and pervert the state religion of that Roman people. The pagan worshipers who constituted, at that time, the bulk of the population of the Western Roman Empire, found themselves surrounded, and in certain instances menaced, by the prevailing sect of the Neo-Platonists, by the followers of nature religions, by Gnostic philosophers, by Philonism, Mithraism, the adherents of the Alexandrian cult, and a multitude of kindred sects and beliefs, in much the same way as the defenders of the Christian Faith, the preponderating religion of the western world, are realizing, in the first century of the Bahá'í Era, how their influence is being undermined by a flood of conflicting beliefs, practices and tendencies which their own bankruptcy had helped to create. It was, however, this same Christian Religion, which has now fallen into such a state of impotence, that eventually proved itself capable of sweeping away the institutions of paganism and of swamping and suppressing the cults that had flourished in that age.

Such institutions as have strayed far from the spirit and teachings of Jesus Christ must of necessity, as the embryonic World Order of Bahá'u'lláh takes shape and unfolds, recede into the background, and make way for the progress of the divinely-ordained institutions that stand inextricably interwoven with His teachings. The indwelling Spirit of God which, in the Apostolic Age of the Church, animated its members, the pristine purity of its teachings, the primitive brilliancy of its light, will, no doubt, be reborn and revived as the inevitable consequence of this redefinition of its fundamental verities, and the clarification of its original purpose.

For the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh—if we would faithfully appraise it—can never, and in no aspect of its teachings, be at variance, much less conflict, with the purpose animating, or the authority invested in, the Faith of Jesus Christ. This glowing tribute which Bahá'u'lláh Himself has been moved to pay to the Author of the Christian Religion stands as sufficient testimony to the truth of this central principle of Bahá'í belief:—*“Know thou that when the Son of Man yielded up His breath to God, the whole creation wept with a great weeping. By sacrificing Himself, however, a fresh capacity was infused into all created things. Its evidences, as witnessed in all the peoples of the earth, are now manifest before thee. The deepest wisdom which the sages have uttered, the profoundest learning which any mind hath unfolded, the arts which the ablest hands have produced, the influence exerted by the most potent of rulers, are but manifestations of the quickening power released by His transcendent, His all-pervasive and resplendent Spirit. We testify that when He came into the world, He shed the splendor of His glory upon all created things. Through Him the leper recovered from the leprosy of perversity and ignorance. Through Him the unchaste and wayward were healed. Through His power, born of Almighty God, the eyes of the blind were opened, and the soul of the sinner sanctified... He it is Who purified the world. Blessed is the man who, with a face beaming with light, hath turned towards Him.”*

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi discusses the deterioration of Christian institutions in the context of the broader decline of religious influence in the modern world. He begins by comparing the challenges faced by Islam in the first century of the Bahá'í Era, highlighting how the forces of secularism, materialism, and irreligion have eroded the foundations of Muslim societies. He then shifts focus to Christianity, questioning whether its institutions have been immune to similar influences.

Shoghi Effendi argues that the same disruptive forces affecting Islam have begun to infiltrate Christian institutions, particularly in Europe and America. He points to the rise of materialistic philosophies, militant nationalism, and communism as factors contributing to the decline of Christianity's authority and influence. He discusses how these ideologies have led to a watering down of Christian beliefs, a decline in religious practice, and a loss of cohesion within Christian society.

Shoghi Effendi predicts further challenges for Christian institutions as they grapple with internal divisions between fundamentalists and liberals, dwindling congregations, and diminishing influence. He suggests that the emergence of new cults and philosophies reflects the disillusionment of those who have abandoned traditional Christianity.

Shoghi Effendi draws parallels between the current state of Christian institutions and the decline of paganism in the Roman Empire, suggesting that just as Christianity eventually supplanted pagan beliefs, the Bahá'í Faith may offer a revitalizing force for contemporary religion.

In conclusion, Shoghi Effendi emphasizes the compatibility of the Bahá'í Faith with the teachings of Jesus Christ, suggesting that Bahá'u'lláh's message can renew the spiritual vitality of Christianity and provide a path forward for religious renewal in the modern world.

Key Points:

1. Introduction:

- Comparison of challenges faced by Islam and Christianity in the modern era.
- Questioning whether Christian institutions are immune to decline.

2. Forces of Decline:

- Influence of secularism, materialism, and irreligion on Christian societies.
- Impact of ideologies like communism and militant nationalism.

3. Signs of Decline:

- Watering down of Christian beliefs.
- Decline in religious practice and influence.
- Internal divisions and loss of cohesion within Christian society.

4. Predictions for the Future:

- Further challenges for Christian institutions.

- Emergence of new cults and philosophies reflecting disillusionment with traditional Christianity.

5. Parallels with History:

- Comparison with decline of paganism in the Roman Empire.
- Potential for revitalization through the Bahá'í Faith.

6. Conclusion:

- Compatibility of Bahá'í Faith with teachings of Jesus Christ.
- Potential for spiritual renewal in Christianity through Bahá'u'lláh's message.

Questions and Answers:

1. What are the main forces contributing to the decline of Christian institutions according to Shoghi Effendi?

- Secularism, materialism, irreligion, communism, and militant nationalism.

2. How does Shoghi Effendi characterize the current state of Christian society?

- He describes it as marked by internal divisions, declining influence, and loss of cohesion.

3. What parallels does Shoghi Effendi draw between contemporary Christianity and the decline of paganism in the Roman Empire?

- He suggests that just as Christianity eventually supplanted pagan beliefs, the Bahá'í Faith may offer a revitalizing force for contemporary religion.

4. How does Shoghi Effendi envision the future relationship between the Bahá'í Faith and Christianity?

- He emphasizes the compatibility of the Bahá'í Faith with the teachings of Jesus Christ and suggests that it can provide a path forward for religious renewal in the modern world.

Signs of Moral Downfall

No more, I believe, need be said of the decline of religious institutions, the disintegration of which constitutes so important an aspect of the Formative Period of the Bahá'í Era. Islám had both as a result of the rising tide of secularism and in direct consequence of its declared and persistent hostility to the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh sunk to a depth of abasement rarely attained in its history. Christianity had, likewise, owing to causes not wholly dissimilar to those operating in the case of its sister Faith, steadily weakened, and was contributing, in an increasing measure, its share to the process of general disintegration—a process that must necessarily precede the fundamental reconstruction of human society.

The signs of moral downfall, as distinct from the evidences of decay in religious institutions, would appear to be no less noticeable and significant. The decline that has set in in the fortunes of Islamic and Christian institutions may be said to have had its counterpart in the life and conduct of the individuals that compose them. In whichever direction we turn our gaze, no matter how cursory our observation of the doings and sayings of the present generation, we can

not fail to be struck by the evidences of moral decadence which, in their individual lives no less than in their collective capacity, men and women around us exhibit.

There can be no doubt that the decline of religion as a social force, of which the deterioration of religious institutions is but an external phenomenon, is chiefly responsible for so grave, so conspicuous an evil. *“Religion,”* writes Bahá'u'lláh, *“is the greatest of all means for the establishment of order in the world and for the peaceful contentment of all that dwell therein. The weakening of the pillars of religion hath strengthened the hands of the ignorant and made them bold and arrogant. Verily I say, whatsoever hath lowered the lofty station of religion hath increased the waywardness of the wicked, and the result cannot be but anarchy.”* *“Religion,”* He, in another Tablet, has stated, *“is a radiant light and an impregnable stronghold for the protection and welfare of the peoples of the world, for the fear of God impelleth man to hold fast to that which is good, and shun all evil. Should the lamp of religion be obscured, chaos and confusion will ensue, and the lights of fairness, of justice, of tranquillity and peace cease to shine.”* *“Know thou,”* He, in yet another connection, has written, *“that they who are truly wise have likened the world unto the human temple. As the body of man needeth a garment to clothe it, so the body of mankind must needs be adorned with the mantle of justice and wisdom. Its robe is the Revelation vouchsafed unto it by God.”*

No wonder, therefore, that when, as a result of human perversity, the light of religion is quenched in men's hearts, and the divinely appointed Robe, designed to adorn the human temple, is deliberately discarded, a deplorable decline in the fortunes of humanity immediately sets in, bringing in its wake all the evils which a wayward soul is capable of revealing. The perversion of human nature, the degradation of human conduct, the corruption and dissolution of human institutions, reveal themselves, under such circumstances, in their worst and most revolting aspects. Human character is debased, confidence is shaken, the nerves of discipline are relaxed, the voice of human conscience is stilled, the sense of decency and shame is obscured, conceptions of duty, of solidarity, of reciprocity and loyalty are distorted, and the very feeling of peacefulness, of joy and of hope is gradually extinguished.

Such, we might well admit, is the state which individuals and institutions alike are approaching. *“No two men,”* Bahá'u'lláh, lamenting the plight of an erring humanity, has written, *“can be found who may be said to be outwardly and inwardly united. The evidences of discord and malice are apparent everywhere, though all were made for harmony and union.”* *“How long,”* He, in the same Tablet, exclaims, *“will humanity persist in its waywardness? How long will injustice continue? How long is chaos and confusion to reign amongst men? How long will discord agitate the face of society? The winds of despair are, alas, blowing from every direction, and the strife that divideth and afflicteth the human race is daily increasing.”*

The recrudescence of religious intolerance, of racial animosity, and of patriotic arrogance; the increasing evidences of selfishness, of suspicion, of fear and of fraud; the spread of terrorism, of lawlessness, of drunkenness and of crime; the unquenchable thirst for, and the feverish pursuit after, earthly vanities, riches and pleasures; the weakening of family solidarity; the laxity in parental control; the lapse into luxurious indulgence; the irresponsible attitude towards marriage and the consequent rising tide of divorce; the degeneracy of art and music, the infection of literature, and the corruption of the press; the extension of the influence and activities of those “prophets of decadence” who advocate companionate marriage, who preach the philosophy of nudism, who call modesty an intellectual fiction, who refuse to regard the procreation of children as the sacred and primary purpose of marriage, who denounce religion as an opiate of the people, who would, if given free rein, lead back the human race to barbarism, chaos, and ultimate

extinction—these appear as the outstanding characteristics of a decadent society, a society that must either be reborn or perish.

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi explores the signs of moral downfall in contemporary society, paralleling the decline of religious institutions. He observes a pervasive moral decadence evident in individuals' lives and collective behavior, attributing it primarily to the weakening influence of religion as a social force. Effendi quotes Bahá'u'lláh, who emphasizes the crucial role of religion in establishing order, promoting peace, and fostering moral conduct. He warns that when religion loses its prominence, chaos and corruption ensue, leading to the perversion of human nature and the degradation of societal institutions.

Shoghi Effendi describes how the abandonment of religious principles results in the debasement of human character, the erosion of moral values, and the breakdown of social cohesion. He laments the prevalence of discord, malice, and injustice in society, as well as the rise of intolerance, animosity, and arrogance. Shoghi Effendi highlights various manifestations of moral decay, including selfishness, suspicion, fear, and fraud, along with the spread of terrorism, lawlessness, and crime.

Moreover, Shoghi Effendi points to the erosion of family values, lax parental control, indulgent lifestyles, and irresponsible attitudes towards marriage as further indicators of societal decline. He notes the degeneracy of art, music, and literature, as well as the corruption of the press, reflecting a culture increasingly focused on earthly vanities and pleasures. Shoghi Effendi also criticizes the influence of certain ideologies and movements promoting decadence, such as companionate marriage, nudism, and anti-religious sentiments, warning that they threaten to lead humanity back to barbarism and extinction.

In conclusion, Shoghi Effendi presents a stark portrayal of a society on the brink of collapse due to its moral decadence. He suggests that unless there is a spiritual renewal, characterized by a return to religious principles and moral values, society risks perishing.

Key Points:

1. Introduction:

- Comparison between the decline of religious institutions and signs of moral downfall.
- Attribution of moral decadence to the weakening influence of religion as a social force.

2. Role of Religion:

- Bahá'u'lláh's teachings on the importance of religion in establishing order and promoting moral conduct.
- Consequences of the decline of religion for individual behavior and societal institutions.

3. Signs of Moral Downfall:

- Pervasive moral decadence evident in individuals' lives and collective behavior.
- Manifestations of moral decay, including discord, malice, injustice, intolerance, and arrogance.

4. Consequences of Moral Decay:

- Debasement of human character, erosion of moral values, and breakdown of social cohesion.
- Impact on family life, parental control, marriage, and societal norms.

5. Cultural Decay:

- Degeneracy of art, music, literature, and the media.
- Influence of ideologies promoting decadence and anti-religious sentiments.

6. Warning and Conclusion:

- Shoghi Effendi's warning of societal collapse if moral decay persists.
- Call for spiritual renewal and a return to religious principles and moral values to avert disaster.

Questions and Answers:

1. What does Shoghi Effendi attribute the signs of moral downfall in contemporary society to?
 - He attributes them primarily to the weakening influence of religion as a social force.
2. How does Shoghi Effendi describe the consequences of the decline of religion for society?
 - He describes it as leading to the perversion of human nature, the degradation of human conduct, and the corruption and dissolution of human institutions.
3. What are some manifestations of moral decay highlighted by Shoghi Effendi?
 - Some manifestations include selfishness, suspicion, fear, fraud, terrorism, lawlessness, indulgence, and irresponsible attitudes towards marriage.
4. How does Shoghi Effendi characterize the influence of certain ideologies and movements promoting decadence?
 - He characterizes them as threatening to lead humanity back to barbarism and extinction, emphasizing the need for spiritual renewal and a return to moral values.

Breakdown of Political and Economic Structure

Politically a similar decline, a no less noticeable evidence of disintegration and confusion, can be discovered in the age we live in—the age which a future historian might well recognize to have been the preamble to the Great Age, whose golden days we can as yet but dimly visualize.

The passionate and violent happenings that have, in recent years, strained to almost the point of complete breakdown the political and economic structure of society are too numerous and complex to attempt, within the limitations of this general survey, to arrive at an adequate estimate of their character. Nor have these tribulations, grievous as they have been, seemed to have reached their climax, and exerted the full force of their destructive power. The whole world, wherever and however we survey it, offers us the sad and pitiful spectacle of a vast, an enfeebled, and moribund organism, which is being torn politically and strangled economically by forces it has ceased to either control or comprehend. The Great Depression, the aftermath of the severest ordeals humanity had ever experienced, the disintegration of the Versailles system, the recrudescence of militarism in its most menacing aspects, the failure of vast experiments and

new-born institutions to safeguard the peace and tranquillity of peoples, classes and nations, have bitterly disillusioned humanity and prostrated its spirits. Its hopes are, for the most part, shattered, its vitality is ebbing, its life strangely disordered, its unity severely compromised.

On the continent of Europe inveterate hatreds and increasing rivalries are once more aligning its ill-fated peoples and nations into combinations destined to precipitate the most awful and implacable tribulations that mankind throughout its long record of martyrdom has suffered. On the North American continent economic distress, industrial disorganization, widespread discontent at the abortive experiments designed to readjust an ill-balanced economy, and restlessness and fear inspired by the possibility of political entanglements in both Europe and Asia, portend the approach of what may well prove to be one of the most critical phases of the history of the American Republic. Asia, still to a great extent in the grip of one of the severest trials she has, in her recent history, experienced, finds herself menaced on her eastern confines by the onset of forces that threaten to intensify the struggles which the growing nationalism and industrialization of her emancipated races must ultimately engender. In the heart of Africa, there blazes the fire of an atrocious and bloody war—a war which, whatever its outcome, is destined to exert, through its world-wide repercussions, a most disturbing influence on the races and colored nations of mankind.

With no less than ten million people under arms, drilled and instructed in the use of the most abominable engines of destruction that science has devised; with thrice that number chafing and fretting at the rule of alien races and governments; with an equally vast army of embittered citizens impotent to procure for themselves the material goods and necessities which others are deliberately destroying; with a still greater mass of human beings groaning under the burden of ever-mounting armaments, and impoverished by the virtual collapse of international trade—with evils such as these, humanity would seem to be definitely entering the outer fringes of the most agonizing phase of its existence.

Is it to be wondered at, that in the course of a recent statement made by one of the outstanding Ministers in Europe this warning should have been deliberately uttered: “If war should break out again on a major scale in Europe, it must bring the collapse of civilization as we know it in its wake. In the words of the late Lord Bryce, ‘If you don’t end war, war will end you.’” “Poor Europe is in a state of neurasthenia...”, is the testimony of one of the most outstanding figures among its present-day dictators. “It has lost its recuperative power, the vital force of cohesion, of synthesis. Another war would destroy us.” “It is likely,” writes one of the most eminent and learned dignitaries of the Christian Church, “there will have to be one more great conflict in Europe to definitely establish once and for all an international authority. This conflict will be the most horrible of horrors, and possibly this generation will be called on to sacrifice hundreds of thousands of lives.”

The disastrous failure of both the Disarmament and Economic Conferences; the obstacles confronting the negotiations for the limitation of Naval armaments; the withdrawal of two of the most powerful and heavily armed nations of the world from the activities and membership of the League of Nations; the ineptitude of the parliamentary system of government as witnessed by recent developments in Europe and America; the inability of the leaders and exponents of the Communist movement to vindicate the much-vaunted principle of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat; the perils and privations to which the rulers of the Totalitarian states have, in recent years, exposed their subjects—all these demonstrate, beyond the shadow of a doubt, the impotence of present-day institutions to avert the calamities with which human society is being

increasingly threatened. What else remains, a bewildered generation may well ask, that can repair the cleavage that is constantly widening, and which may, at any time, engulf it?

Beset on every side by the cumulative evidences of disintegration, of turmoil and of bankruptcy, serious-minded men and women, in almost every walk of life, are beginning to doubt whether society, as it is now organized, can, through its unaided efforts, extricate itself from the slough into which it is steadily sinking. Every system, short of the unification of the human race, has been tried, repeatedly tried, and been found wanting. Wars again and again have been fought, and conferences without number have met and deliberated. Treaties, pacts and covenants have been painstakingly negotiated, concluded and revised. Systems of government have been patiently tested, have been continually recast and superseded. Economic plans of reconstruction have been carefully devised, and meticulously executed. And yet crisis has succeeded crisis, and the rapidity with which a perilously unstable world is declining has been correspondingly accelerated. A yawning gulf threatens to involve in one common disaster both the satisfied and dissatisfied nations, democracies and dictatorships, capitalists and wage-earners, Europeans and Asiatics, Jew and Gentile, white and colored. An angry Providence, the cynic might well observe, has abandoned a hapless planet to its fate, and fixed irrevocably its doom. Sore-tried and disillusioned, humanity has no doubt lost its orientation, and would seem to have lost as well its faith and hope. It is hovering, unshepherded and visionless, on the brink of disaster. A sense of fatality seems to pervade it. An ever-deepening gloom is settling on its fortunes as she recedes further and further from the outer fringes of the darkest zone of its agitated life and penetrates its very heart.

And yet while the shadows are continually deepening, might we not claim that gleams of hope, flashing intermittently on the international horizon, appear at times to relieve the darkness that encircles humanity? Would it be untrue to maintain that in a world of unsettled faith and disturbed thought, a world of steadily mounting armaments, of unquenchable hatreds and rivalries, the progress, however fitful, of the forces working in harmony with the spirit of the age can already be discerned? Though the great outcry raised by post-war nationalism is growing louder and more insistent every day, the League of Nations is as yet in its embryonic state, and the storm clouds that are gathering may for a time totally eclipse its powers and obliterate its machinery, yet the direction in which the institution itself is operating is most significant. The voices that have been raised ever since its inception, the efforts that have been exerted, the work that has already been accomplished, foreshadow the triumphs which this presently constituted institution, or any other body that may supersede it, is destined to achieve.

Summary:

In this passage, Shoghi Effendi delves into the breakdown of political and economic structures, painting a bleak picture of the state of the world in the early 20th century.

Shoghi Effendi begins by highlighting the profound political and economic turmoil prevalent in the world, indicating it as a prelude to the great age ahead. He describes the complex and numerous challenges that have strained political and economic structures to the brink of collapse. These challenges include the Great Depression, the failure of the Versailles system, the resurgence of militarism, and the breakdown of international efforts to maintain peace and stability.

In Europe, historical animosities and rivalries are reemerging, setting the stage for potential conflicts of catastrophic proportions. Meanwhile, North America faces economic distress and political uncertainty, with fears of entanglement in European and Asian affairs. Asia grapples with its own struggles, with growing nationalism and industrialization fueling tensions.

Shoghi Effendi underscores the dire consequences of these developments, warning of the impending collapse of civilization if war erupts on a major scale. He highlights the failure of disarmament and economic conferences, the withdrawal of powerful nations from international bodies like the League of Nations, and the inadequacy of existing political systems. Despite efforts to negotiate treaties and implement economic reforms, the world seems to be hurtling toward disaster.

However, amidst the darkness, Shoghi Effendi discerns glimmers of hope, particularly in the efforts of international institutions like the League of Nations. Despite their limitations and the looming threats, these institutions symbolize humanity's collective aspiration for peace and cooperation.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to Political and Economic Breakdown
2. Challenges Facing the World:
 - Great Depression
 - Failure of Versailles System
 - Resurgence of Militarism
 - Disintegration of International Efforts
3. Regional Concerns:
 - Europe: Historical Rivalries
 - North America: Economic Distress
 - Asia: Nationalism and Industrialization
4. Consequences of Political and Economic Instability:
 - Threat of Civilization Collapse
 - Failure of Disarmament and Economic Conferences
 - Withdrawal from International Bodies

5. Glimmers of Hope:

- Efforts of International Institutions
- Aspirations for Peace and Cooperation

Questions and Answers:

1. What are the major challenges facing the world in terms of political and economic structures?
 - The world is grappling with the Great Depression, historical rivalries in Europe, economic distress in North America, and growing nationalism in Asia.
2. What are the consequences of these challenges?
 - Shoghi Effendi warns of the potential collapse of civilization if major conflicts erupt. He highlights the failure of disarmament efforts, the withdrawal from international bodies, and the inadequacy of existing political systems.
3. Is there any hope amidst the gloom?
 - Despite the challenges, Shoghi Effendi sees hope in the efforts of international institutions like the League of Nations, which symbolize humanity's desire for peace and cooperation.

Overall, Shoghi Effendi presents a sobering assessment of the world's political and economic landscape, while also acknowledging the potential for positive change through collective action and cooperation.

Bahá'u'lláh's Principle of Collective Security

A general Pact on security has been the central purpose towards which these efforts have, ever since the League was born, tended to converge. The Treaty of Guarantee which, in the initial stages of its development, its members had considered and discussed; the debate on the Geneva Protocol, the discussion of which, at a later period, aroused among the nations, both within the League and outside it, such fierce controversy; the subsequent proposal for a United States of Europe and for the economic unification of that continent; and last but not least the policy of sanctions initiated by its members, may be regarded as the most significant landmarks in its checkered history. That no less than fifty nations of the world, all members of the League of Nations, should have, after mature deliberation, recognized and been led to pronounce their verdict against an act of aggression which in their judgment has been deliberately committed by one of their fellow-members, one of the foremost Powers of Europe; that they should have, for the most part, agreed to impose collectively sanctions on the condemned aggressor, and should have succeeded in carrying out, to a very great measure, their decision, is no doubt an event without parallel in human history. For the first time in the history of humanity the system of collective security, foreshadowed by Bahá'u'lláh and explained by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, has been seriously envisaged, discussed and tested. For the first time in history it has been officially recognized and publicly stated that for this system of collective security to be effectively established strength and elasticity are both essential—strength involving the use of an adequate force to ensure the efficacy of the proposed system, and elasticity to enable the machinery that has been devised to meet the legitimate needs and aspirations of its aggrieved upholders. For the first time in human history tentative efforts have been exerted by the nations of the world to

assume collective responsibility, and to supplement their verbal pledges by actual preparation for collective action. And again, for the first time in history, a movement of public opinion has manifested itself in support of the verdict which the leaders and representatives of nations have pronounced, and for securing collective action in pursuance of such a decision.

How clear, how prophetic, must sound the words uttered by Bahá'u'lláh in the light of recent international developments:—*“Be united, O concourse of the sovereigns of the world, for thereby will the tempest of discord be stilled amongst you, and your peoples find rest. Should any one among you take up arms against another, rise ye all against him, for this is naught but manifest justice.”* *“The time must come,”* He, foreshadowing the tentative efforts that are now being made, has written, *“when the imperative necessity for the holding of a vast, an all-embracing assemblage of men will be universally realized. The rulers and kings of the earth must needs attend it, and, participating in its deliberations, must consider such ways and means as will lay the foundations of the world’s Great Peace among men... Should any king take up arms against another, all should unitedly arise and prevent him.”*

“The sovereigns of the world,” writes ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in elaboration of this theme, *“must conclude a binding treaty, and establish a covenant, the provisions of which shall be sound, inviolable and definite. They must proclaim it to all the world, and obtain for it the sanction of all the human race... All the forces of humanity must be mobilized to insure the stability and permanence of this Most Great Covenant... The fundamental principle underlying this solemn Pact should be so fixed that if any government later violate any one of its provisions, all the governments on earth should arise to reduce it to utter submission, nay the human race as a whole should resolve, with every power at its disposal, to destroy that government.”*

There can be no doubt whatever that what has already been accomplished, significant and unexampled though it is in the history of mankind, still immeasurably falls short of the essential requirements of the system which these words foreshadow. The League of Nations, its opponents will observe, still lacks the universality which is the prerequisite of abiding success in the efficacious settlement of international disputes. The United States of America, its begetter, has repudiated it, and is still holding aloof, while Germany and Japan, who ranked among its most powerful supporters, have abandoned its cause and withdrawn from its membership. The decisions arrived at and the action thus far taken, others will maintain, should be regarded as no more than a magnificent gesture, rather than a conclusive evidence of international solidarity. Still others may contend that though such a verdict has been pronounced, and such pledges been given, collective action must, in the end, fail in its ultimate purpose, and that the League itself will perish and be submerged by the flood of tribulations destined to overtake the whole race. Be that as it may, the significance of the steps already taken cannot be ignored. Whatever the present status of the League or the outcome of its historic verdict, whatever the trials and reverses which, in the immediate future, it may have to face and sustain, the fact must be recognized that so important a decision marks one of the most distinctive milestones on the long and arduous road that must lead it to its goal, the stage at which the oneness of the whole body of nations will be made the ruling principle of international life.

This historic step, however, is but a faint glimmer in the darkness that envelops an agitated humanity. It may well prove to be no more than a mere flash, a fugitive gleam, in the midst of an ever-deepening confusion. The process of disintegration must inexorably continue, and its corrosive influence must penetrate deeper and deeper into the very core of a crumbling age. Much suffering will still be required ere the contending nations, creeds, classes and races of mankind are fused in the crucible of universal affliction, and are forged by the fires of a fierce

ordeal into one organic commonwealth, one vast, unified, and harmoniously functioning system. Adversities unimaginably appalling, undreamed of crises and upheavals, war, famine, and pestilence, might well combine to engrave in the soul of an unheeding generation those truths and principles which it has disdained to recognize and follow. A paralysis more painful than any it has yet experienced must creep over and further afflict the fabric of a broken society ere it can be rebuilt and regenerated.

“The civilization,” writes Bahá’u’lláh, *“so often vaunted by the learned exponents of arts and sciences will, if allowed to overleap the bounds of moderation, bring great evil upon men... If carried to excess, civilization will prove as prolific a source of evil as it had been of goodness when kept within the restraints of moderation... The day is approaching when its flame will devour the cities, when the Tongue of Grandeur will proclaim: ‘The Kingdom is God’s, the Almighty, the All-Praised!’”* *“From the moment the Súriy-i-Ra’ís (Tablet to Ra’ís) was revealed,”* He further explains, *“until the present day, neither hath the world been tranquillized, nor have the hearts of its peoples been at rest... Its sickness is approaching the stage of utter hopelessness, inasmuch as the true Physician is debarred from administering the remedy, whilst unskilled practitioners are regarded with favor, and are accorded full freedom to act. The dust of sedition hath clouded the hearts of men, and blinded their eyes. Erelong they will perceive the consequences of what their hands have wrought in the Day of God.”* *“This is the Day,”* He again has written, *“whereon the earth shall tell out her tidings. The workers of iniquity are her burdens... The Crier hath cried out, and men have been torn away, so great hath been the fury of His wrath. The people of the left hand sigh and bemoan. The people of the right abide in noble habitations: they quaff the Wine that is life indeed from the hands of the All-Merciful, and are, verily, the blissful.”*

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi discusses the principle of collective security as envisioned by Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, particularly in the context of recent international developments. He highlights the efforts made by nations, especially through the League of Nations, to establish mechanisms for collective security. These efforts include discussions on treaties, protocols, and economic unification, as well as the imposition of sanctions against aggressor nations.

Shoghi Effendi quotes Bahá'u'lláh's and 'Abdu'l-Bahá's writings, emphasizing the importance of unity among nations and the necessity of collective action to prevent aggression and maintain peace. He acknowledges that while progress has been made, it falls short of the ideal envisioned by Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Some nations, including the United States, Germany, and Japan, have not fully embraced the concept of collective security, and there are doubts about the effectiveness of current efforts.

Despite these challenges, Shoghi Effendi emphasizes the significance of the steps already taken towards collective security. He acknowledges that the road ahead will be arduous and fraught with difficulties, including wars, famines, and pestilences. However, he believes that these trials will ultimately lead to the realization of universal principles of unity and justice, as foretold by Bahá'u'lláh.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to Bahá'u'lláh's Principle of Collective Security
2. Efforts Towards Collective Security:
 - Treaty of Guarantee
 - Geneva Protocol
 - United States of Europe Proposal
 - Imposition of Sanctions
3. Bahá'u'lláh's Vision of Collective Security:
 - Quotes from Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá
4. Challenges and Shortcomings:
 - Lack of Universality
 - Withdrawal of Key Nations
 - Doubts About Effectiveness
5. Significance of Progress Made:
 - Despite Challenges, Progress is Significant
 - Steps Towards Unity and Justice
6. Conclusion: The Road Ahead Will be Difficult but Necessary

Questions and Answers:

1. What are the efforts made towards collective security?
 - Nations have discussed treaties, protocols, and economic unification, and have imposed sanctions against aggressor nations.

2. What is Bahá'u'lláh's and 'Abdu'l-Bahá's vision of collective security?

- They emphasize the importance of unity among nations and collective action to prevent aggression and maintain peace.

3. What are the challenges and shortcomings in achieving collective security?

- Some nations have not fully embraced the concept, and doubts exist about the effectiveness of current efforts.

4. Despite challenges, why does Shoghi Effendi believe the progress made is significant?

- The steps taken represent a significant milestone towards realizing universal principles of unity and justice.

5. What does Shoghi Effendi foresee for the future?

- He acknowledges that the road ahead will be difficult, with trials such as wars and famines, but believes these will ultimately lead to the realization of universal principles of unity and justice.

In summary, Shoghi Effendi highlights the progress and challenges in achieving collective security, emphasizing the importance of unity and collective action in maintaining peace and justice on a global scale.

Community of the Most Great Name

Who else can be the blissful if not the community of the Most Great Name, whose world-embracing, continually consolidating activities constitute the one integrating process in a world whose institutions, secular as well as religious, are for the most part dissolving? They indeed are "*the people of the right,*" whose "*noble habitation*" is fixed on the foundations of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh—the Ark of everlasting salvation in this most grievous Day. Of all the kindreds of the earth they alone can recognize, amidst the welter of a tempestuous age, the Hand of the Divine Redeemer that traces its course and controls its destinies. They alone are aware of the silent growth of that orderly world polity whose fabric they themselves are weaving.

Conscious of their high calling, confident in the society-building power which their Faith possesses, they press forward, undeterred and undismayed, in their efforts to fashion and perfect the necessary instruments wherein the embryonic World Order of Bahá'u'lláh can mature and develop. It is this building process, slow and unobtrusive, to which the life of the world-wide Bahá'í Community is wholly consecrated, that constitutes the one hope of a stricken society. For this process is actuated by the generating influence of God's changeless Purpose, and is evolving within the framework of the Administrative Order of His Faith.

In a world the structure of whose political and social institutions is impaired, whose vision is befogged, whose conscience is bewildered, whose religious systems have become anemic and lost their virtue, this healing Agency, this leavening Power, this cementing Force, intensely alive and all-pervasive, has been taking shape, is crystallizing into institutions, is mobilizing its forces, and is preparing for the spiritual conquest and the complete redemption of mankind. Though the society which incarnates its ideals be small, and its direct and tangible benefits as yet

inconsiderable, yet the potentialities with which it has been endowed, and through which it is destined to regenerate the individual and rebuild a broken world, are incalculable.

For well nigh a century it has, amid the noise and tumult of a distracted age, and despite the incessant persecutions to which its leaders, institutions, and followers have been subjected, succeeded in preserving its identity, in reinforcing its stability and strength, in maintaining its organic unity, in preserving the integrity of its laws and its principles, in erecting its defenses, and in extending and consolidating its institutions. Numerous and powerful have been the forces that have schemed, both from within and from without, in lands both far and near, to quench its light and abolish its holy name. Some have apostatized from its principles, and betrayed ignominiously its cause. Others have hurled against it the fiercest anathemas which the embittered leaders of any ecclesiastical institution are able to pronounce. Still others have heaped upon it the afflictions and humiliations which sovereign authority can alone, in the plenitude of its power, inflict.

The utmost its avowed and secret enemies could hope to achieve was to retard its growth and obscure momentarily its purpose. What they actually accomplished was to purge and purify its life, to stir it to still greater depths, to galvanize its soul, to prune its institutions, and cement its unity. A schism, a permanent cleavage in the vast body of its adherents, they could never create.

They who betrayed its cause, its lukewarm and faint-hearted supporters, withered away and dropped as dead leaves, powerless to cloud its radiance or to imperil its structure. Its most implacable adversaries, they who assailed it from without, were hurled from power, and, in the most astonishing fashion, met their doom. Persia had been the first to repress and oppose it. Its monarchs had miserably fallen, their dynasty had collapsed, their name was execrated, the hierarchy that had been their ally and had propped their declining state, had been utterly discredited. Turkey, which had thrice banished its Founder and inflicted on Him cruel and life-long imprisonment, had passed through one of the severest ordeals and far-reaching revolutions that its history has recorded, had shrunk from one of the most powerful empires to a tiny Asiatic republic, its Sultanate obliterated, its dynasty overthrown, its Caliphate, the mightiest institution of Islám, abolished.

Meanwhile the Faith that had been the object of such monstrous betrayals, and the target for such woeful assaults, was going from strength to strength, was forging ahead, undaunted and undivided by the injuries it had received. In the midst of trials it had inspired its loyal followers with a resolution that no obstacle, however formidable, could undermine. It had lighted in their hearts a faith that no misfortune, however black, could quench. It had infused into their hearts a hope that no force, however determined, could shatter.

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi extols the Bahá'í community, referring to them as the blissful and the people of the Most Great Name. He asserts that amidst the dissolution of secular and religious institutions, the Bahá'í community stands as an integrating force in the world. They are described as the "people of the right," whose habitation is built upon the principles of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, offering salvation in the present troubled era.

Confident in their faith's society-building power, the Bahá'ís tirelessly work to establish the necessary instruments for the maturation of the embryonic World Order of Bahá'u'lláh. This slow and unobtrusive process, wholly dedicated to the betterment of society, is considered the only hope for a world in distress. It operates within the Administrative Order of the Bahá'í Faith, guided by God's unchanging purpose.

Despite facing persecution and opposition, the Bahá'í community has preserved its identity, reinforced its stability, maintained unity, and upheld its principles for nearly a century. Enemies, both internal and external, have failed to extinguish its light or fracture its unity. Instead, adversities have served to purify and strengthen the community, galvanizing its members and solidifying its resolve.

Historical examples, such as the downfall of oppressive regimes in Persia and Turkey, demonstrate the resilience of the Bahá'í Faith in the face of persecution. While adversaries have met their doom, the Bahá'í community has continued to thrive, imbued with unwavering faith, unyielding hope, and resolute determination.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to the Blissful Community of the Most Great Name
2. Role of the Bahá'í Community in a Deteriorating World:
 - Integrating Force amidst Dissolution
 - Foundation on the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh
3. Confidence in the Society-building Power of the Bahá'í Faith
4. Perseverance and Resilience of the Bahá'í Community:
 - Preservation of Identity and Stability
 - Unity and Upholding of Principles
5. Historical Examples of Adversity and Triumph:
 - Persecution in Persia and Turkey
 - Resilience and Thriving Amidst Challenges
6. Conclusion: Unwavering Faith, Hope, and Determination

Questions and Answers:

1. How does Shoghi Effendi describe the Bahá'í community?
 - He refers to them as the blissful and the people of the Most Great Name, highlighting their role as an integrating force in a world undergoing dissolution.

2. What is the basis of the Bahá'í community's confidence in their ability to effect societal change?

- They believe in the society-building power of their faith and work tirelessly to establish instruments for the maturation of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh.

3. How has the Bahá'í community persevered in the face of persecution and opposition?

- Despite facing persecution, internal and external adversaries, the Bahá'í community has preserved its identity, reinforced its stability, and maintained unity for nearly a century.

4. What historical examples does Shoghi Effendi provide to illustrate the resilience of the Bahá'í Faith?

- He cites the downfall of oppressive regimes in Persia and Turkey, demonstrating that while adversaries have met their doom, the Bahá'í community has continued to thrive.

5. What qualities characterize the Bahá'í community's response to adversity?

- They exhibit unwavering faith, unyielding hope, and resolute determination in the face of challenges, serving as a source of inspiration and strength for their members.

In essence, Shoghi Effendi celebrates the steadfastness and resilience of the Bahá'í community, portraying them as a beacon of hope and unity in a world beset by turmoil and dissolution.

A World Religion

Ceasing to designate to itself a movement, a fellowship and the like—designations that did grave injustice to its ever-unfolding system—dissociating itself from such appellations as Bábí sect, Asiatic cult, and offshoot of Shí'ih Islám, with which the ignorant and the malicious were wont to describe it, refusing to be labeled as a mere philosophy of life, or as an eclectic code of ethical conduct, or even as a new religion, the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh is now visibly succeeding in demonstrating its claim and title to be regarded as a World Religion, destined to attain, in the fullness of time, the status of a world-embracing Commonwealth, which would be at once the instrument and the guardian of the Most Great Peace announced by its Author. Far from wishing to add to the number of the religious systems, whose conflicting loyalties have for so many generations disturbed the peace of mankind, this Faith is instilling into each of its adherents a new love for, and a genuine appreciation of the unity underlying, the various religions represented within its pale.

“It is like a wide embrace,” such is the testimony of Royalty to its claim and position, “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.” “The Bahá'í teaching,” she has further written, “brings peace to the soul and hope to the heart. To those in search of assurance the words of the Father are as a fountain in the desert after long wandering.” “Their writings,” she, in another statement referring to Bahá'u'lláh and ‘Abdu'l-Bahá, has testified, “are a great cry toward peace, reaching beyond all limits of frontiers, above all dissension about rites and dogmas... It is a wondrous message 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.” “If ever the name of

Bahá'u'lláh or 'Abdu'l-Bahá," is her concluding plea, "comes to your attention, do not put their writings from you. Search out their Books, and let their glorious, peace-bringing, love-creating words and lessons sink into your hearts as they have into mine."

The Faith of Bahá'u'lláh has assimilated, by virtue of its creative, its regulative and ennobling energies, the varied races, nationalities, creeds and classes that have sought its shadow, and have pledged unswerving fealty to its cause. It has changed the hearts of its adherents, burned away their prejudices, stilled their passions, exalted their conceptions, ennobled their motives, coordinated their efforts, and transformed their outlook. While preserving their patriotism and safeguarding their lesser loyalties, it has made them lovers of mankind, and the determined upholders of its best and truest interests. While maintaining intact their belief in the Divine origin of their respective religions, it has enabled them to visualize the underlying purpose of these religions, to discover their merits, to recognize their sequence, their interdependence, their wholeness and unity, and to acknowledge the bond that vitally links them to itself. This universal, this transcending love which the followers of the Bahá'í Faith feel for their fellow-men, of whatever race, creed, class or nation, is neither mysterious nor can it be said to have been artificially stimulated. It is both spontaneous and genuine. They whose hearts are warmed by the energizing influence of God's creative love cherish His creatures for His sake, and recognize in every human face a sign of His reflected glory.

Of such men and women it may be truly said that to them "every foreign land is a fatherland, and every fatherland a foreign land." For their citizenship, it must be remembered, is in the Kingdom of Bahá'u'lláh. Though willing to share to the utmost the temporal benefits and the fleeting joys which this earthly life can confer, though eager to participate in whatever activity that conduces to the richness, the happiness and peace of that life, they can, at no time, forget that it constitutes no more than a transient, a very brief stage of their existence, that they who live it are but pilgrims and wayfarers whose goal is the Celestial City, and whose home the Country of never-failing joy and brightness.

Though loyal to their respective governments, though profoundly interested in anything that affects their security and welfare, though anxious to share in whatever promotes their best interests, the Faith with which the followers of Bahá'u'lláh stand identified is one which they firmly believe God has raised high above the storms, the divisions, and controversies of the political arena. Their Faith they conceive to be essentially non-political, supra-national in character, rigidly non-partisan, and entirely dissociated from nationalistic ambitions, pursuits, and purposes. Such a Faith knows no division of class or of party. It subordinates, without hesitation or equivocation, every particularistic interest, be it personal, regional, or national, to the paramount interests of humanity, firmly convinced that in a world of inter-dependent peoples and nations the advantage of the part is best to be reached by the advantage of the whole, and that no abiding benefit can be conferred upon the component parts if the general interests of the entity itself are ignored or neglected.

Small wonder if by the Pen of Bahá'u'lláh these pregnant words, written in anticipation of the present state of mankind, should have been revealed: "*It is not for him to pride himself who loveth his own country, but rather for him who loveth the whole world. The earth is but one country, and mankind its citizens.*" And again, "*That one indeed is a man who today dedicateth himself to the service of the entire human race.*" "*Through the power released by these exalted words,*" He explains, "*He hath lent a fresh impulse, and set a new direction, to the birds of men's hearts, and hath obliterated every trace of restriction and limitation from God's Holy Book.*"

Their Faith, Bahá'ís firmly believe, is moreover undenominational, non-sectarian, and wholly divorced from every ecclesiastical system, whatever its form, origin, or activities. No ecclesiastical organization, with its creeds, its traditions, its limitations, and exclusive outlook, can be said (as is the case with all existing political factions, parties, systems and programs) to conform, in all its aspects, to the cardinal tenets of Bahá'í belief. To some of the principles and ideals animating political and ecclesiastical institutions every conscientious follower of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh can, no doubt, readily subscribe. With none of these institutions, however, can he identify himself, nor can he unreservedly endorse the creeds, the principles and programs on which they are based.

How can a Faith, it should moreover be borne in mind, whose divinely-ordained institutions have been established within the jurisdiction of no less than forty different countries, the policies and interests of whose governments are continually clashing and growing more complex and confused every day—how can such a Faith, by allowing its adherents, whether individually or through its organized councils, to meddle in political activities, succeed in preserving the integrity of its teachings and in safeguarding the unity of its followers? How can it insure the vigorous, the uninterrupted and peaceful development of its expanding institutions? How can a Faith, whose ramifications have brought it into contact with mutually incompatible religious systems, sects and confessions, be in a position, if it permits its adherents to subscribe to obsolescent observances and doctrines, to claim the unconditional allegiance of those whom it is striving to incorporate into its divinely-appointed system? How can it avoid the constant friction, the misunderstandings and controversies which formal affiliation, as distinct from association, must inevitably engender?

These directing and regulating principles of Bahá'í belief the upholders of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh feel bound, as their Administrative Order expands and consolidates itself, to assert and vigilantly apply. The exigencies of a slowly crystallizing Faith impose upon them a duty which they cannot shirk, a responsibility they cannot evade.

Nor are they unmindful of the imperative necessity of upholding and of executing the laws, as distinguished from the principles, ordained by Bahá'u'lláh, both of which constitute the warp and woof of the institutions upon which the structure of His World Order must ultimately rest. To demonstrate their usefulness and efficacy, to carry out and apply them, to safeguard their integrity, to grasp their implications, and to facilitate their propagation Bahá'í communities in the East, and recently in the West, are displaying the utmost effort and are willing, if necessary, to make whatever sacrifices may be demanded. The day may not be far distant when in certain countries of the East, in which religious communities exercise jurisdiction in matters of personal status, Bahá'í Assemblies may be called upon to assume the duties and responsibilities devolving upon officially constituted Bahá'í courts. They will be empowered, in such matters as marriage, divorce, and inheritance, to execute and apply, within their respective jurisdictions, and with the sanction of civil authorities, such laws and ordinances as have been expressly provided in their Most Holy Book.

The Faith of Bahá'u'lláh has, in addition to these tendencies and activities which its evolution is now revealing, demonstrated, in other spheres, and wherever the illumination of its light has penetrated, the force of its cohesive strength, of its integrating power, of its invincible spirit. In the erection and consecration of its House of Worship in the heart of the North American continent; in the construction and multiplication of its administrative headquarters in the land of its birth and in neighboring countries; in the fashioning of the legal instruments designed to safeguard and regulate the corporate life of its institutions; in the accumulation of adequate

resources, material as well as cultural, in every continent of the globe; in the endowments which it has created for itself in the immediate surroundings of its Shrines at its world center; in the efforts that are being made for the collection, the verification, and the systematization of the writings of its Founders; in the measures that are being taken for the acquisition of such historical sites as are associated with the lives of its Forerunner and its Author, its heroes and martyrs; in the foundations that are being laid for the gradual formation and establishment of its educational, its cultural and humanitarian institutions; in the vigorous efforts that are being exerted to safeguard the character, stimulate the initiative and co-ordinate the world-wide activities of its youth; in the extraordinary vitality with which its valiant defenders, its elected representatives, its itinerant teachers and pioneer administrators are pleading its cause, extending its boundaries, enriching its literature, and strengthening the basis of its spiritual conquests and triumphs; in the recognition which civil authorities have, in certain instances, been induced to grant to the body of its local and national representatives, enabling them to incorporate their councils, establish their subsidiary institutions, and safeguard their endowments; in the facilities which these same authorities have consented to accord to its shrines, its consecrated edifices, and educational institutions; in the enthusiasm and determination with which certain communities that had been severely tested and harassed are resuming their activities; in the spontaneous tributes paid by royalty, princes, statesmen and scholars to the sublimity of its cause and the station of its Founders—in these, as in many others, the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh is proving beyond doubt its virility and capacity to counteract the disintegrating influences to which religious systems, moral standards, and political and social institutions are being subjected.

From Iceland to Tasmania, from Vancouver to the China Sea spreads the radiance and extend the ramifications of this world-enfolding System, this many-hued and firmly-knit Fraternity, infusing into every man and woman it has won to its cause a faith, a hope, and a vigor that a wayward generation has long lost, and is powerless to recover. They who preside over the immediate destinies of this troubled world, they who are responsible for its chaotic state, its fears, its doubts, its miseries will do well, in their bewilderment, to fix their gaze and ponder in their hearts upon the evidences of this saving grace of the Almighty that lies within their reach—a grace that can ease their burden, resolve their perplexities, and illuminate their path.

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi discusses the evolution of the Bahá'í Faith from being perceived as a movement or fellowship to its recognition as a world religion. Rejecting labels such as Bábí sect or Asiatic cult, the Bahá'í Faith asserts its claim to be a global religion that embraces all previous religions while fostering unity among its followers. Testimonials from various sources, including royalty, attest to the inclusive nature and universal appeal of the Bahá'í teachings, which offer hope and peace to humanity.

The Bahá'í Faith has successfully assimilated people of diverse races, nationalities, creeds, and classes, transforming their outlook and fostering love for humanity. While upholding patriotism and temporal interests, Bahá'ís prioritize the unity and welfare of humanity above all. Their faith is non-political, supra-national, and non-partisan, aiming to transcend divisions and promote the common good of all.

Bahá'ís adhere to principles that transcend political and ecclesiastical affiliations, emphasizing the oneness of humanity and the universal citizenship of all. They remain loyal to their governments while advocating for the unity of mankind and the pursuit of global peace. The Bahá'í community, while respecting the laws of the countries in which they reside, strives to apply Bahá'í principles in personal and social matters, even anticipating the establishment of Bahá'í courts in certain jurisdictions.

Moreover, the Bahá'í Faith demonstrates its cohesive strength and integrating power through various activities worldwide, including the construction of Houses of Worship, the establishment of administrative headquarters, the development of legal instruments, and the promotion of education and culture. The faith's vitality is evident in the enthusiasm and determination of its followers, its growing recognition by civil authorities, and the tributes paid to its cause by dignitaries and scholars worldwide.

Key Points:

1. Introduction to the Bahá'í Faith as a World Religion
2. Rejection of Previous Labels and Embrace of Global Identity:
 - Testimonials of Universal Appeal
 - Assimilation of Diverse Peoples
3. Promotion of Unity and Love for Humanity:
 - Transformation of Outlook and Priorities
 - Non-political, Supra-national Character
4. Adherence to Transcendent Principles:
 - Oneness of Humanity and Universal Citizenship
 - Loyalty to Governments and Pursuit of Global Peace
5. Application of Bahá'í Principles in Personal and Social Matters:
 - Potential Establishment of Bahá'í Courts
 - Respect for Civil Laws and Promotion of Bahá'í Laws
6. Demonstration of Cohesive Strength and Integrating Power:

- Construction of Houses of Worship and Administrative Centers
 - Development of Legal Instruments and Educational Institutions
7. Recognition and Support from Civil Authorities and Dignitaries:
- Tributes to the Bahá'í Cause and Founders
8. Conclusion: Evidences of the Bahá'í Faith's Capacity to Counteract Disintegrating Influences

Questions and Answers:

1. How does the Bahá'í Faith assert its claim to be a world religion?
 - It rejects previous labels and embraces its identity as a global religion, promoting unity among its diverse followers while respecting the teachings of all previous religions.
2. What characterizes the approach of Bahá'ís towards political and ecclesiastical institutions?
 - The Bahá'í Faith maintains a non-political, supra-national character, prioritizing the common good of humanity over partisan interests and affiliations with ecclesiastical systems.
3. How does the Bahá'í community demonstrate its commitment to applying Bahá'í principles in personal and social matters?
 - Bahá'ís strive to uphold Bahá'í laws while respecting civil laws, with potential plans for the establishment of Bahá'í courts in certain jurisdictions.
4. What activities illustrate the cohesive strength and integrating power of the Bahá'í Faith?
 - Activities such as the construction of Houses of Worship, the establishment of administrative headquarters, and the promotion of education and culture worldwide demonstrate the faith's vitality and capacity to counteract disintegrating influences.

In essence, Shoghi Effendi highlights the Bahá'í Faith's evolution into a world religion, its commitment to unity and love for humanity, its adherence to transcendent principles, and its demonstration of cohesive strength and integrating power in various spheres of activity worldwide.

Divine Retribution

The whole of mankind is groaning, is dying to be led to unity, and to terminate its age-long martyrdom. And yet it stubbornly refuses to embrace the light and acknowledge the sovereign authority of the one Power that can extricate it from its entanglements, and avert the woeful calamity that threatens to engulf it.

Ominous indeed is the voice of Bahá'u'lláh that rings through these prophetic words: “*O ye peoples of the world! Know, verily, that an unforeseen calamity followeth you, and grievous retribution awaiteth you. Think not that which ye have committed hath been effaced in My sight.*” And again: “*We have a fixed time for you, O people. If ye fail, at the appointed hour, to turn towards God, He, verily, will lay violent hold on you, and will cause grievous afflictions to assail you from every direction. How severe, indeed, is the chastisement with which your Lord will then chastise you!*”

Must humanity, tormented as she now is, be afflicted with still severer tribulations ere their purifying influence can prepare her to enter the heavenly Kingdom destined to be established

upon earth? Must the inauguration of so vast, so unique, so illumined an era in human history be ushered in by so great a catastrophe in human affairs as to recall, nay surpass, the appalling collapse of Roman civilization in the first centuries of the Christian Era? Must a series of profound convulsions stir and rock the human race ere Bahá'u'lláh can be enthroned in the hearts and consciences of the masses, ere His undisputed ascendancy is universally recognized, and the noble edifice of His World Order is reared and established?

The long ages of infancy and childhood, through which the human race had to pass, have receded into the background. Humanity is now experiencing the commotions invariably associated with the most turbulent stage of its evolution, the stage of adolescence, when the impetuosity of youth and its vehemence reach their climax, and must gradually be superseded by the calmness, the wisdom, and the maturity that characterize the stage of manhood. Then will the human race reach that stature of ripeness which will enable it to acquire all the powers and capacities upon which its ultimate development must depend.

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi reflects on the state of humanity, which despite its longing for unity and liberation from suffering, remains resistant to embracing the divine guidance that can lead it to salvation. He warns of the ominous consequences outlined by Bahá'u'lláh for those who persist in their disobedience and rejection of spiritual truths. The severity of divine retribution is emphasized, with Bahá'u'lláh foretelling unforeseen calamities and grievous afflictions awaiting those who fail to turn towards God.

The question arises whether humanity must endure even greater tribulations before it can be purified and prepared for the establishment of Bahá'u'lláh's heavenly Kingdom on earth. Shoghi Effendi draws parallels between the present state of turmoil and the collapse of Roman civilization, suggesting that profound convulsions may precede the enthronement of Bahá'u'lláh in the hearts of all people and the establishment of His World Order.

Humanity is described as undergoing a turbulent adolescence, marked by impetuosity and upheaval, yet destined to mature into a state of wisdom and maturity. This transition from adolescence to manhood represents the evolution of the human race towards its ultimate development and fulfillment.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Humanity's Resistance to Divine Guidance
2. Warning of Ominous Consequences:
 - Bahá'u'lláh's Prophecies of Calamity and Retribution
3. Questioning the Necessity of Greater Tribulations:
 - Reflections on Humanity's State and the Need for Purification
4. Parallel with Historical Collapse:
 - Comparison to the Fall of Roman Civilization
5. Envisioning a Future Transformation:
 - The Enthronement of Bahá'u'lláh and the Establishment of His World Order
6. Humanity's Evolutionary Stage:
 - Transition from Adolescence to Maturity
7. Conclusion: Humanity's Journey towards Ultimate Development and Fulfillment

Questions and Answers:

1. What warning does Shoghi Effendi convey regarding humanity's rejection of divine guidance?
 - He warns of the severe consequences outlined by Bahá'u'lláh for those who persist in disobedience and fail to turn towards God, emphasizing the inevitability of divine retribution.
2. What question does Shoghi Effendi raise regarding humanity's current state?
 - He questions whether humanity must endure greater tribulations before being purified and prepared for the establishment of Bahá'u'lláh's Kingdom on earth.

3. How does Shoghi Effendi draw parallels to historical events?

- He compares the present state of turmoil to the collapse of Roman civilization, suggesting that profound convulsions may precede the establishment of Bahá'u'lláh's World Order.

4. What future transformation does Shoghi Effendi envision for humanity?

- He envisions the enthronement of Bahá'u'lláh in the hearts of all people and the establishment of His World Order, marking a transition towards wisdom and maturity for humanity.

In summary, Shoghi Effendi reflects on humanity's resistance to divine guidance, warns of the consequences of disobedience, questions the necessity of greater tribulations, draws parallels to historical events, and envisions a future transformation towards wisdom and maturity for humanity.

World Unity the Goal

Unification of the whole of mankind is the hall-mark of the stage which human society is now approaching. Unity of family, of tribe, of city-state, and nation have been successively attempted and fully established. World unity is the goal towards which a harassed humanity is striving. Nation-building has come to an end. The anarchy inherent in state sovereignty is moving towards a climax. A world, growing to maturity, must abandon this fetish, recognize the oneness and wholeness of human relationships, and establish once for all the machinery that can best incarnate this fundamental principle of its life.

"A new life," Bahá'u'lláh proclaims, "is, in this age, stirring within all the peoples of the earth; and yet none hath discovered its cause, or perceived its motive." "O ye children of men," He thus addresses His generation, "the fundamental purpose animating the Faith of God and His Religion is to safeguard the interests and promote the unity of the human race... This is the straight path, the fixed and immovable foundation. Whatsoever is raised on this foundation, the changes and chances of the world can never impair its strength, nor will the revolution of countless centuries undermine its structure." "The well-being of mankind," He declares, "its peace and security are unattainable unless and until its unity is firmly established." "So powerful is the light of unity," is His further testimony, "that it can illuminate the whole earth. The one true God, He Who knoweth all things, Himself testifieth to the truth of these words... This goal excelleth every other goal, and this aspiration is the monarch of all aspirations." "He Who is your Lord, the All-Merciful," He, moreover, has written, "cherisheth in His heart the desire of beholding the entire human race as one soul and one body. Haste ye to win your share of God's good grace and mercy in this Day that eclipseth all other created days."

The unity of the human race, as envisaged by Bahá'u'lláh, implies the establishment of a world commonwealth in which all nations, races, creeds and classes are closely and permanently united, and in which the autonomy of its state members and the personal freedom and initiative of the individuals that compose them are 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 mechanism of world inter-communication will be devised, embracing the whole planet, freed from national hindrances and restrictions, and functioning with marvellous swiftness and perfect regularity. A world metropolis will act as the nerve center of a world civilization, the focus towards which the unifying forces of life will converge and from which its energizing influences will radiate. A world language will either be invented or chosen from among the existing languages and will be taught in the schools of all the federated nations as an auxiliary to their mother tongue. A world script, a world literature, a uniform and universal system of currency, of weights and measures, will simplify and facilitate intercourse and understanding among the nations and races of mankind. In such a world society, science and religion, the two most potent forces in human life, will be reconciled, will coöperate, and will harmoniously develop. The press will, under such a system, while giving full scope to the expression of the diversified views and convictions of mankind, cease to be mischievously manipulated by vested interests, whether private or public, and will be liberated from the influence of contending governments and peoples. The economic resources of the world will be organized, its sources of raw materials will be tapped and fully utilized, its markets will be coördinated and developed, and the distribution of its products will be equitably regulated.

National rivalries, hatreds, and intrigues will cease, and racial animosity and prejudice will be replaced by racial amity, understanding and coöperation. The causes of religious strife will be permanently removed, economic barriers and restrictions will be completely abolished, and the inordinate distinction between classes will be obliterated. Destitution on the one hand, and gross accumulation of ownership on the other, will disappear. The enormous energy dissipated and wasted on war, whether economic or political, will be consecrated to such ends as will extend the range of human inventions and technical development, to the increase of the productivity of mankind, to the extermination of disease, to the extension of scientific research, to the raising of the standard of physical health, to the sharpening and refinement of the human brain, to the exploitation of the unused and unsuspected resources of the planet, to the prolongation of human life, and to the furtherance of any other agency that can stimulate the intellectual, the moral, and spiritual life of the entire human race.

A world federal system, ruling the whole earth and exercising unchallengeable authority over its unimaginably vast resources, blending and embodying the ideals of both the East and the West, liberated from the curse of war and its miseries, and bent on the exploitation of all the available sources of energy on the surface of the planet, a system in which Force is made the servant of Justice, whose life is sustained by its universal recognition of one God and by its allegiance to one common Revelation—such is the goal towards which humanity, impelled by the unifying forces of life, is moving.

“One of the great events,” affirms ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *“which is to occur in the Day of the manifestation of that incomparable Branch is the hoisting of the Standard of God among all nations. By this is meant that all nations and kindreds will be gathered together under the shadow of this Divine Banner, which is no other than the Lordly Branch itself, and will become a single nation. Religious and sectarian antagonism, the hostility of races and peoples, and differences among nations, will be eliminated. All men will adhere to one religion, will have one common faith, will be blended into one race and become a single people. All will dwell in one common fatherland, which is the planet itself.”* *“Now, in the world of being,”* He has moreover

explained, *“the Hand of Divine power hath firmly laid the foundations of this all-highest bounty, and this wondrous gift. Whatsoever is latent in the innermost of this holy Cycle shall gradually appear and be made manifest, for now is but the beginning of its growth, and the dayspring of the revelation of its signs. Ere the close of this century and of this age, it shall be made clear and evident how wondrous was that spring-tide, and how heavenly was that gift.”*

No less enthralling is the vision of Isaiah, the greatest of the Hebrew Prophets, predicting, as far back as twenty five hundred years ago, the destiny which mankind must, at its stage of maturity, achieve: *“And He (the Lord) shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more ...And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots... And he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together... And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice’s den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.”*

The writer of the Apocalypse, prefiguring the millennial glory which a redeemed, a jubilant humanity must witness, has similarly testified: *“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I, John, saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.’”*

Who can doubt that such a consummation—the coming of age of the human race—must signalize, in its turn, the inauguration of a world civilization such as no mortal eye hath ever beheld or human mind conceived? Who is it that can imagine the lofty standard which such a civilization, as it unfolds itself, is destined to attain? Who can measure the heights to which human intelligence, liberated from its shackles, will soar? Who can visualize the realms which the human spirit, vitalized by the outpouring light of Bahá’u’lláh, shining in the plenitude of its glory, will discover?

What more fitting conclusion to this theme than these words of Bahá’u’lláh, written in anticipation of the golden age of His Faith—the age in which the face of the earth, from pole to pole, will mirror the ineffable splendors of the Abhá Paradise? *“This is the Day whereon naught can be seen except the splendors of the Light that shineth from the face of thy Lord, the Gracious, the Most Bountiful. Verily, We have caused every soul to expire by virtue of Our irresistible and all-subduing sovereignty. We have then called into being a new creation, as a token of Our grace unto men. I am, verily, the All-Bountiful, the Ancient of Days. This is the Day whereon the unseen world crieth out: ‘Great is thy blessedness, O earth, for thou hast been made the foot-stool of thy God, and been chosen as the seat of His mighty throne!’ The realm of glory exclaimeth: ‘Would that my life could be sacrificed for thee, for He Who is the Beloved of the All-Merciful hath established His sovereignty upon thee, through the power of His name that hath been promised unto all things, whether of the past or of the future.’”*

Shoghi.

Haifa, Palestine,
March 11, 1936.

Summary:

Shoghi Effendi underscores the imperative for the unification of humanity, marking it as the defining characteristic of the current stage of human societal evolution. He traces the progression from smaller units of unity like families and nations to the overarching goal of world unity, asserting that nation-building has reached its culmination. The inherent chaos of state sovereignty, he argues, is nearing its apex, prompting the need for humanity to recognize the interconnectedness of all human relationships and establish mechanisms to embody this fundamental principle.

Quoting Bahá'u'lláh, Shoghi Effendi emphasizes the centrality of unity to the teachings of the Bahá'í Faith. Bahá'u'lláh envisions a new era characterized by unity, peace, and the establishment of a world commonwealth. This commonwealth would feature institutions such as a world legislature, executive, tribunal, and mechanisms for world communication and currency, all geared towards fostering global harmony and cooperation. Shoghi Effendi describes the potential benefits of such a unified world, including the reconciliation of science and religion, eradication of poverty and war, and the harmonious development of human potential.

Drawing from the writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Biblical prophecies, Shoghi Effendi paints a vision of a future where humanity has achieved unparalleled levels of unity, peace, and spiritual advancement. He concludes with Bahá'u'lláh's anticipation of the golden age of His Faith, where the earth will reflect the splendors of the Abhá Paradise, symbolizing the ultimate fulfillment of humanity's destiny.

Key Points:

1. Introduction: Unification as the Hallmark of Human Evolution
2. Bahá'u'lláh's Vision of Unity:
 - The Fundamental Purpose of Religion
 - The Power of Unity to Illuminate the World
3. The Bahá'í Concept of World Unity:
 - Establishment of a World Commonwealth
 - Key Components: World Legislature, Executive, Tribunal, Communication
4. Benefits of World Unity:
 - Reconciliation of Science and Religion
 - Eradication of Poverty and War
 - Harmonious Human Development
5. Prophecies and Visions:
 - 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Vision of a Unified Humanity
 - Biblical Prophecies of a Redeemed Humanity
6. Conclusion: Anticipation of the Golden Age
 - Bahá'u'lláh's Vision of the Abhá Paradise

Questions and Answers:

1. What is the central theme emphasized by Shoghi Effendi in the passage?

- Shoghi Effendi emphasizes the imperative for the unification of humanity, marking it as the defining characteristic of the current stage of human societal evolution.

2. What are the key components of Bahá'u'lláh's vision of world unity?

- Bahá'u'lláh envisions a world commonwealth featuring institutions such as a world legislature, executive, tribunal, and mechanisms for world communication and currency, all geared towards fostering global harmony and cooperation.

3. What benefits does Shoghi Effendi associate with world unity?

- Shoghi Effendi describes potential benefits such as the reconciliation of science and religion, eradication of poverty and war, and the harmonious development of human potential.

4. What prophecies and visions does Shoghi Effendi draw upon to illustrate the future of humanity?

- Shoghi Effendi draws from the writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Biblical prophecies to paint a vision of a future where humanity has achieved unparalleled levels of unity, peace, and spiritual advancement.

In summary, Shoghi Effendi underscores the imperative for world unity, outlines Bahá'u'lláh's vision for a unified world commonwealth, describes the potential benefits of such unity, and draws upon prophecies and visions to illustrate humanity's future destiny.

America and the Most Great Peace

1. In an address by Dr. Henry H. Jessup at the Parliament of Religions, Columbian Exposition, Chicago, 1893.—Editor. ↵