

A New Race of Men
Selected Extracts from the Letters of Shoghi Effendi and
the Universal House of Justice

From Letters Written by and on behalf of Shoghi Effendi

The glowing tributes, so repeatedly and deservedly paid to the capacity, the spirit, the conduct, and the high rank, of the American believers, both individually and as an organic community, must, under no circumstances, be confounded with the characteristics and nature of the people from which God has raised them up. A sharp distinction between that community and that people must be made, and resolutely and fearlessly upheld, if we wish to give due recognition to the transmuting power of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, in its impact on the lives and standards of those who have chosen to enlist under His banner. Otherwise, the supreme and distinguishing function of His Revelation, which is none other than the calling into being of a new race of men, will remain wholly unrecognized and completely obscured... (p. 16)

“A race of men,” is His [Bahá'u'lláh's] written promise, “incomparable in character, shall be raised up which, with the feet of detachment, will tread under all who are in heaven and on earth, and will cast the sleeve of holiness over all that hath been created from water and clay.” (p. 31)

(25 December 1938, published as *The Advent of Divine Justice* (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1984), p. 16 and p. 31)

[1]

“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!”

(Bahá'u'lláh cited in *The Advent of Divine Justice*, p. 85)

[2]

The Guardian was delighted to hear of your youth group. The children who are trained in the world-embracing teachings of Bahá'u'lláh cannot but grow up to be a truly new race of men. He hopes these young people will prepare themselves for the great task which will face them in the future, that of helping to rebuild the world with the aid and inspiration of the Bahá'í teachings.

(From a letter dated 25 December 1941 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the Bahá'ís of Hobart, Australia)

[3]

It is very easy indeed for him to understand how you, with your training, are often tested and irritated by your contact with some of the believers. But then you must remember that your advantages of a reasonable mind and a scientific education have not been given to all, and you cannot expect acceptance of Bahá'u'lláh's Teachings to endow people with these things automatically! But think of the kind of human beings, if brought up in the society He

envisages, and taught in homes, schools and universities which were the mirror and product of His teachings, which would be produced! There you would really have a new race of men.

(5 July 1947, written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer) [4]

From Letters Written by and on behalf of the Universal House of Justice

We thank you for your letter of March 19th and warmly appreciate your hopes for the future of the Faith in.... Undoubtedly when the Word of God penetrates the hearts of the people there it will transform them into the new race of men which is promised in our teachings. The function of the Bahá'í communities at the present time is to act as the leaven which will gradually bring this great transformation about.

(19 April 1973 from the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer) [5]

The House of Justice has, over the past several years, observed the grave disunities within the Bahá'í community of ... which have so impaired the functions of the National Spiritual Assembly and local Assemblies alike, and which has seriously obstructed the growth and health of the Faith in that land. ...each must, in his actions, words and demeanor, represent the transforming influence of the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, such personal transformations being the key to the creation of that new race of men and women promised by the Teachings; indeed, it is only when our "inner lives and private character" are imbued with the standards of the Faith and are reflected in our actions that we may truly represent the Cause in the noble purposes for which it was sent by God through the Blessed Beauty.

(26 November 1985, written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to a Bahá'í couple) [6]

Shoghi Effendi, in various statements, celebrated the remarkable achievements and potential glories of that specially blessed community, but was moved to issue, in "The Advent of Divine Justice", a profound warning which is essential to a proper understanding of the relation of that Bahá'í community to the nation from which it has sprung. "The glowing tributes," he solemnly wrote, "so repeatedly and deservedly paid to the capacity, the spirit, the conduct, and the high rank, of the American believers, both individually and as an organic community, must, under no circumstances, be confounded with the characteristics and nature of the people from which God has raised them up. A sharp distinction between that community and that people must be made, and resolutely and fearlessly upheld, if we wish to give due recognition to the transmuting power of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, in its impact on the lives and standards of those who have chosen to enlist under His banner. Otherwise, the supreme and distinguishing function of His Revelation, which is none other than the calling into being of a new race of men, will remain wholly unrecognized and completely obscured." It is the far-reaching, transformative implications of this distinction which we especially invite you to contemplate.

(29 December 1988 from the Universal House of Justice to the Bahá'ís of the United States) [7]

As to the second question that you cite, the necessity of weaning ourselves away from old order thinking and practices and being aware of where the line should be drawn in continuing on with old ways, is one that has profound implications for the Bahá'í community. In one form or another, what you have observed is sufficiently widespread so that we can see that the process of recreating ourselves to be part of a new race of men will be an ongoing struggle for years to come....

Having recognized a historic process of the past, we should not despair. A genius of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh is that it provides the motive force through the power of the Holy Spirit for bringing about a change in our way of life, and the institutions to guide and direct this change. Although this process may be slow, as is character development, it will be ongoing because we have the Revelation as the standard by which to judge our accomplishments in this area of life.

(20 January 1993, written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to a Bahá'í couple) [8]

Mr. ... passed to us ... the request of the United States Bahá'í Publishing Trust for the source of the expression “new race of men”.... The passage in question, which is from our message for Ridván 1967, reads:

What is Bahá'u'lláh's purpose for the human race? For what ends did He submit to the appalling cruelties and indignities heaped upon Him? What does He mean by “a new race of men”? . . .

It is an allusion to the statement of the Guardian which appears on page 16 of “The Advent of Divine Justice”: “the supreme and distinguishing function of His Revelation, which is none other than the calling into being of a new race of men”.

These exact words may not appear in any of the English translations of Bahá'u'lláh's Writings, but they are an alternative translation of the Persian “khalq-i-jadíd” which the Guardian has elsewhere rendered as “a new creation”.

(28 July 1993 from a memorandum from the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer) [9]