

# **A WORLD IN TRAVAIL**

**UNDERSTANDING AND RESPONDING  
TO THE EVENTS OF OUR TIMES**

COMPILED BY

**KAMRAN SEDIG**

EDITED BY

**JAN DUCHAC**

**HAMED EHSANI**

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# COMPILATION ON MALADIES OF THE WORLD

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# PRESENT CONDITION

## WORLD CRISIS

**1.1** 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.

*Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, LXI, pp. 118-119*

**1.2** Witness how the world is being afflicted with a fresh calamity every day. Its tribulation is continually deepening. From the moment the Suriy-i-Ra'is (Tablet to Ra'is) was revealed until the present day, neither hath the world been tranquillized, nor have the hearts of its peoples been at rest. At one time it hath been agitated by contentions and disputes, at another it hath been convulsed by wars, and fallen a victim to inveterate diseases. 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. Thus warneth you He Who is the All-Informed, as bidden by One Who is the Most Powerful, the Almighty.

*Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, XVI, pp. 39-40*

**1.3** 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.

*Shoghi Effendi, The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 188*

**1.4** It would be perhaps impossible to find a nation or people not in a state of crisis today. The materialism, the lack of true religion and the consequent baser forces in human nature which are being released, have brought the whole world to the brink of probably the greatest crisis it has ever faced or will have to face.

*From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, Lights of Guidance, p. 131*

**1.5** The plight of mankind, the condition and circumstances under which we live and labor are truly disheartening, and the darkness of prejudice and ill-will enough to chill the stoutest heart. Disillusion and dismay are invading the hearts of peoples and nations, and the hope and vision of a united and regenerated humanity is growing dimmer and dimmer every day. Time-honored institutions, cherished ideals, and sacred traditions are suffering in these days of bewildering change, from the effects of the gravest onslaught, and the precious fruit of centuries of patient and earnest labor is faced with peril. Passions, supposed to have been curbed and subdued, are now burning fiercer than ever before, and the voice of peace and good-will seems drowned amid unceasing convulsions and turmoil. What, let us ask ourselves, should be our attitude as we stand under the all-seeing eye of our vigilant Master, gazing at a sad spectacle so

utterly remote from the spirit which He breathed into the world? Are we to follow in the wake of the wayward and the despairing? Are we to allow our vision of so unique, so enduring, so precious a Cause to be clouded by the stain and dust of worldly happenings, which, no matter how glittering and far-reaching in their immediate effects, are but the fleeting shadows of an imperfect world?

*Shoghi Effendi, Bahá'í Administration, p. 61*

**1.6** The violent derangement of the world's equilibrium; the trembling that will seize the limbs of mankind; the radical transformation of human society; the rolling up of the present-day Order; the fundamental changes affecting the structure of government; the weakening of the pillars of religion; the rise of dictatorships; the spread of tyranny; the fall of monarchies; the decline of ecclesiastical institutions; the increase of anarchy and chaos; the extension and consolidation of the Movement of the Left; the fanning into flame of the smoldering fire of racial strife; the development of infernal engines of war; the burning of cities; the contamination of the atmosphere of the earth — these stand out as the signs and portents that must either herald or accompany the retributive calamity which, as decreed by Him Who is the Judge and Redeemer of mankind, must, sooner or later, afflict a society which, for the most part, and for over a century, has turned a deaf ear to the Voice of God's Messenger in this day — a calamity which must purge the human race of the dross of its age-long corruptions, and weld its component parts into a firmly-knit world-embracing Fellowship — a Fellowship destined, in the fullness of time, to be incorporated in the framework, and to be galvanized by the spiritualizing influences, of a mysteriously expanding, divinely appointed Order, and to flower, in the course of future Dispensations, into a Civilization, the like of which mankind has, at no stage in its evolution, witnessed.

*Shoghi Effendi, Messages to the Bahá'í World 1950-1957, p. 103*

**1.7** . . . 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.

*Shoghi Effendi, The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 156*

**1.8** 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 coloured. 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.

*Shoghi Effendi, The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 190*

**1.9** 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.

*Shoghi Effendi, The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 201*

## SIGNS OF CRISIS

### WORLD IS SICK

**2.1** The world is like the body of man—it hath become sick, feeble and infirm. Its eye is devoid of sight, its ear hath become destitute of hearing and its faculties of sense are entirely dissolved. The friends of God must become as wise physicians and care for and heal this sick person, in accord with the divine teachings, in order that—God willing—it may perchance gain health, find eternal healing and that its lost powers may be restored; and that the person of the world may find such health, freshness and purity that it will appear in the utmost beauty and charm.

*'Abdu'l-Bahá, Bahá'í World Faith, p. 356*

### BLINDNESS OF HUMAN HEART

**2.2** So blind hath become the human heart that neither the disruption of the city, nor the reduction of the mountain in dust, nor even the cleaving of the earth, can shake off its torpor. The allusions made in the Scriptures have been unfolded, and the signs recorded therein have been revealed, and the prophetic cry is continually being raised. And yet all, except such as God was pleased to guide, are bewildered in the drunkenness of their heedlessness!

*Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, XVI, p. 39*

## ECONOMIC ANARCHY & STRIFE

**2.3** A world, dimmed by the steadily dying-out light of religion, heaving with the explosive forces of a blind and triumphant nationalism; scorched with the fires of pitiless persecution, whether racial or religious; deluded by the false theories and doctrines that threaten to supplant the worship of God and the sanctification of His laws; enervated by a rampant and brutal materialism; disintegrating through the corrosive influence of moral and spiritual decadence; and enmeshed in the coils of economic anarchy and strife—such is the spectacle presented to men’s eyes, as a result of the sweeping changes which this revolutionizing Force, as yet in the initial stage of its operation, is now producing in the life of the entire planet.

*Shoghi Effendi, The Advent of Divine Justice, pp. 39-40*

## WAYWARDNESS & UNBELIEF

**2.4** He (Bahá’u’lláh), moreover, laments that “the vitality of men’s belief in God is dying out in every land,” that the “face of the world” is turned towards “waywardness and unbelief” . . . .

*Shoghi Effendi, God Passes By, p. 217*

## LAWLESSNESS

**2.5** How disquieting the lawlessness, the corruption, the unbelief that are eating into the vitals of a tottering civilization!

*Shoghi Effendi, The World Order of Bahá’u’lláh, p. 155*

## RELIANCE ON MATERIAL CONDITIONS

**2.6** We are living in a day of reliance upon material conditions. Men imagine that the great size and strength of a ship, the perfection of machinery or the skill of a navigator will ensure safety, but these disasters sometimes take place that men may know that God is the real Protector. If it be the will of God to protect man, a little ship may escape destruction, whereas the greatest and most perfectly constructed vessel with the best and most skillful navigator may not survive a danger such as was present on the ocean. The purpose is that the people of the world may turn to God, the One Protector; that human souls may rely upon His preservation and know that He is the real safety. These events happen in order that man's faith may be increased and strengthened. Therefore, although we feel sad and disheartened, we must supplicate God to turn our hearts to the Kingdom and pray for these departed souls with faith in His infinite mercy so that, although they have been deprived of this earthly life, they may enjoy a new existence in the supreme mansions of the Heavenly Father.

Let no one imagine that these words imply that man should not be thorough and careful in his undertakings. God has endowed man with intelligence so that he may safeguard and protect himself. Therefore, he must provide and surround himself with all that scientific skill can produce. He must be deliberate, thoughtful and thorough in his purposes, build the best ship and provide the most experienced captain; yet, withal, let him rely upon God and consider God as the one Keeper. If God protects, nothing can imperil man's safety; and if it be not His will to safeguard, no amount of preparation and precaution will avail.

*'Abdu'l-Bahá, The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 48*

## SEDITION

**2.7** The purpose of this is to explain that the darkness of imitations encompasses the world. Every nation is holding to its traditional religious forms. The light of reality is obscured.

*'Abdu'l-Bahá, The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 221*

## WRETCHEDNESS OF HUMANITY

**2.8** Not ours, puny mortals that we are, to attempt, at so critical a stage in the long and checkered history of mankind, to arrive at a precise and satisfactory understanding of the steps which must successively lead a bleeding humanity, wretchedly oblivious of its God, and careless of Bahá'u'lláh, from its calvary to its ultimate resurrection. Not ours, the living witnesses of the all-subduing potency of His Faith, to question, for a moment, and however dark the misery that enshrouds the world, the ability of Bahá'u'lláh to forge, with the hammer of His Will, and through the fire of tribulation, upon the anvil of this travailing age, and in the particular shape His mind has envisioned, these scattered and mutually destructive fragments into which a perverse world has fallen, into one single unit, solid and indivisible, able to execute His design for the children of men.

Ours rather the duty, however confused the scene, however dismal the present outlook, however circumscribed the resources we dispose of, to labor serenely, confidently, and unremittingly to lend our share of assistance, in whichever way circumstances may enable us, to the operation of the forces which, as marshaled and directed by Bahá'u'lláh, are leading humanity out of the valley of misery and shame to the loftiest summits of power and glory.

*Shoghi Effendi, The Promised Day is Come, p. 129*

## HEEDLESSNESS

**2.9** O ye friends! Dense and gloomy clouds have covered the horizon of the world, and the darkness of hatred, malignity, persecution, tyranny, and the greatest cruelty is spreading. All the people are drunk with the wine of heedlessness; and blood-thirstiness and rapaciousness are considered the noblest excellencies of the world of men.

*'Abdu'l-Bahá, Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, v3, pp. 567-568*

## 3

# CAUSES OF CRISIS

## SICK WORLD

**3.1** Regard the world as the human body which, though at its creation whole and perfect, hath been afflicted, through various causes, with grave disorders and maladies. Not for one day did it gain ease, nay its sickness waxed more severe, as it fell under the treatment of ignorant physicians, who gave full rein to their personal 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.

*Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, CXX, pp. 254-255*

**3.2** The All-Knowing Physician hath His finger on the pulse of mankind. He perceiveth the disease, and prescribeth, in His unerring wisdom, the remedy. Every age hath its own problem, and every soul its particular aspiration. The remedy the world needeth in its present day afflictions can never be the same as that which a subsequent age may require. Be anxiously concerned with the needs of the age ye live in, and center your deliberations on its exigencies and requirements.

We can well perceive how the whole human race is encompassed with great, with incalculable afflictions. We see it languishing on its bed of sickness, sore-tried and disillusioned. They that are intoxicated by self-conceit have interposed themselves between it and the Divine and infallible Physician. Witness how they have entangled all men, themselves included, in the mesh of their devices. They can neither discover the cause of the disease, nor have they any knowledge of the

remedy. They have conceived the straight to be crooked, and have imagined their friend an enemy.

Incline your ears to the sweet melody of this Prisoner. Arise, and lift up your voices, that haply they that are fast asleep may be awakened. Say: O ye who are as dead! The Hand of Divine bounty proffereth unto you the Water of Life. Hasten and drink your fill. Whoso hath been reborn in this Day, shall never die; whoso remaineth dead, shall never live.

*Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, CVI, p. 213*

## DYING LIGHT OF RELIGION

**3.3** Alas! that humanity is completely submerged in imitations and unrealities notwithstanding the truth of divine religion has ever remained the same. Superstitions have obscured the fundamental reality, the world is darkened and the light of religion is not apparent. This darkness is conducive to differences and dissensions; rites and dogmas are many and various; therefore discord has arisen among the religious systems whereas religion is for the unification of mankind. True religion is the source of love and agreement amongst men, the cause of the development of praiseworthy qualities; but the people are holding to the counterfeit and imitation, negligent of the reality which unifies; so they are bereft and deprived of the radiance of religion. They follow superstitions inherited from their fathers and ancestors. To such an extent has this prevailed that they have taken away the heavenly light of divine truth and sit in the darkness of imitations and imaginations. That which was meant to be conducive to life has become the cause of death; that which should have been an evidence of knowledge is now a proof of ignorance; that which was a factor in the sublimity of human nature has proved to be its degradation. Therefore the realm of the religionist has gradually narrowed and darkened and the sphere of the materialist has widened and advanced; for the religionist has held to imitation

and counterfeit, neglecting and discarding holiness and the sacred reality of religion. When the sun sets it is the time for bats to fly. They come forth because they are creatures of the night. When the lights of religion become darkened the materialists appear. They are the bats of night. The decline of religion is their time of activity; they seek the shadows when the world is darkened and clouds have spread over it.

*'Abdu'l-Bahá, Bahá'í World Faith, pp. 237–238*

**3.4** . . . we need but recall the writings and sayings of Bahá'u'lláh, who, . . . declared in terms prophetic the prime cause of the ills and sufferings of mankind, and set forth their true and divine remedy. “Should the Lamp of Religion be hidden,” He declares, “Chaos and confusion will ensue.” How admirably fitting and applicable are these words to the present state of mankind!

*Shoghi Effendi, Bahá'í Administration, p. 50*

**3.5** Religion as in the past, is still the world's sole hope, but not that form of religion which our ecclesiastical leaders strive vainly to preach. Divorced from true religion, morals lose their effectiveness and cease to guide and control man's individual and social life. But when true religion is combined with true ethics, then moral progress becomes a possibility and not a mere ideal.

*Shoghi Effendi, Directives from the Guardian, p. 227*

**3.6** The weakening of the pillars of religion hath strengthened the foolish, and emboldened them, and made them more arrogant. Verily I say: The greater the decline of religion, the more grievous the waywardness of the ungodly. This cannot but lead in the end to chaos and confusion. Hear Me, O men of insight, and be warned, ye who are endued with discernment!”

*Bahá'u'lláh, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, p. 28*

**3.7** The universal crisis affecting mankind is, therefore, essentially spiritual in its causes. The spirit of the age, taken on the whole, is irreligious. Man's outlook on life is too crude and materialistic to enable him to elevate himself into the higher realms of the spirit.

*Shoghi Effendi, Directives from the Guardian, p. 229*

**3.8** Bahá'u'lláh has said, "If religion and faith are the causes of enmity and sedition, it is far better to be nonreligious, and the absence of religion would be preferable; for we desire religion to be the cause of amity and fellowship. If enmity and hatred exist, irreligion is preferable." Therefore, the removal of this dissension has been specialized in Bahá'u'lláh, for religion is the divine remedy for human antagonism and discord. But when we make the remedy the cause of the disease, it would be better to do without the remedy.

*'Abdu'l-Bahá, The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 232*

## PREJUDICE

**3.9** And the breeding-ground of all these tragedies is prejudice: prejudice of race and nation, of religion, of political opinion; and the root cause of prejudice is blind imitation of the past—imitation in religion, in racial attitudes, in national bias, in politics. So long as this aping of the past persisteth, just so long will the foundations of the social order be blown to the four winds, just so long will humanity be continually exposed to direst peril.

*'Abdu'l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, p. 247*

**3.10** When we review history from the beginning of human existence to the present age in which we live, it is evident all war and conflict, bloodshed and battle, every form of sedition has been due

to some form of prejudice—whether religious, racial or national—to partisan bias and selfish prejudice of some sort. Even today we witness an upheaval in the Balkans, a war of religious prejudice. Some years ago when I was living in Rumelia, war broke out among the religious peoples. There was no attitude of justice or equity whatever amongst them. They pillaged the properties of each other, burning each others' homes and houses, slaughtering men, women and children, imagining that such warfare and bloodshed was the means of drawing near to God. This clearly proved that prejudice is a destroyer of the foundations of the world of humanity, whereas religion was meant to be the cause of fellowship and agreement.

*'Abdu'l-Bahá, The Promulgation of Universal Peace, pp. 343-344*

## LACK OF SPIRITUALITY

**3.11** . . . the chief reason for the evils now rampant in society is the lack of spirituality. The materialistic civilization of our age has so much absorbed the energy and interest of mankind that people in general do no longer feel the necessity of raising themselves above the forces and conditions of their daily material existence. There is not sufficient demand for things that we call spiritual to differentiate them from the needs and requirements of our physical existence.

*Shoghi Effendi, Directives from the Guardian, p. 229*

## MATERIALISM

**3.12** . . . pervading all departments of life—an evil which the nation, and indeed all those within the capitalist system, though to a lesser degree, share with that state and its satellites regarded as the sworn enemies of that system—is the crass materialism, which lays excessive and ever-increasing emphasis on material well-being,

forgetful of those things of the spirit on which alone a sure and stable foundation can be laid for human society. It is this same cancerous materialism, born originally in Europe, carried to excess in the North American continent, contaminating the Asiatic peoples and nations, spreading its ominous tentacles to the borders of Africa, and now invading its very heart, which Bahá'u'lláh in unequivocal and emphatic language denounced in His Writings, comparing it to a devouring flame and regarding it as the chief factor in precipitating the dire ordeals and world-shaking crises that must necessarily involve the burning of cities and the spread of terror and consternation in the hearts of men. Indeed a foretaste of the devastation which this consuming fire will wreak upon the world, and with which it will lay waste the cities of the nations participating in this tragic world-engulfing contest, has been afforded by the last World War, marking the second stage in the global havoc which humanity, forgetful of its God and heedless of the clear warnings uttered by His appointed Messenger for this day, must, alas, inevitably experience. It is this same all-pervasive, pernicious materialism against which the voice of the Center of Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant was raised, with pathetic persistence, from platform and pulpit, in His addresses to the heedless multitudes, which, on the morrow of His fateful visit to both Europe and America, found themselves suddenly swept into the vortex of a tempest which in its range and severity was unsurpassed in the world's history.

*Shoghi Effendi, Citadel of Faith, pp. 124–125*

**3.13** The gross materialism that engulfs the entire nation at the present hour; the attachment to worldly things that enshrouds the souls of men; the fear and anxieties that distract their minds; the pleasure and dissipations that fill their time, the prejudices and animosities that darken their outlook, the apathy and lethargy that paralyze their spiritual faculties—these are among the formidable obstacles that stand in the path of every would-be warrior in the service of Bahá'u'lláh, obstacles which he must battle against and surmount in his crusade for the redemption of his own countrymen.

*Shoghi Effendi, Citadel of Faith, p. 149*

## THE OUTCOME

**4.1** Adversity, prolonged, world-wide, afflictive, allied to chaos and universal destruction, must needs convulse the nations, stir the conscience of the world, disillusion the masses, precipitate a radical change in the very conception of society, and coalesce ultimately the disjointed, the bleeding limbs of mankind into one body, single, organically united, and indivisible.

*Shoghi Effendi, The Promised Day is Come, p. 127*

**4.2** . . . proclaims (Bahá'u'lláh), religion to be “a radiant light and an impregnable stronghold for the protection and welfare of the peoples of the world” and “the chief instrument for the establishment of order in the world”; affirms its fundamental purpose to be the promotion of union and concord amongst men; warns lest it be made “a source of dissension, of discord and hatred”; commands that its principles be taught to children in the schools of the world, in a manner that would not be productive of either prejudice or fanaticism; attributes “the waywardness of the ungodly” to the “decline of religion”; and predicts “convulsions” of such severity as to “cause the limbs of mankind to quake.”

*Shoghi Effendi, God Passes By, p. 217*

### MATERIAL-SPIRITUAL RELATIONSHIPS

**4.3** Although outwardly cataclysms are hard to understand and to endure, yet there lies a great wisdom behind them which appears later. All the visible material events are inter-related with

invisible spiritual forces. The infinite phenomena of creation are as interdependent as the links of a chain.

When certain links become rusty, they are broken by unseen forces, to be replaced by newer and better ones. There are certain colossal events which transpire in the world of humanity which are required by the nature of the times.

*'Abdu'l-Bahá, 'Abdu'l-Bahá on Divine Philosophy, p. 116*

**4.4** And among the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh is that although material civilization is one of the means for the progress of the world of mankind, yet until it becomes combined with Divine civilization, the desired result, which is the felicity of mankind, will not be attained. . . . Material civilization is like the body. No matter how infinitely graceful, elegant and beautiful it may be, it is dead. Divine civilization is like the spirit, and the body gets its life from the spirit, otherwise it becomes a corpse. It has thus been made evident that the world of mankind is in need of the breaths of the Holy Spirit.

*'Abdu'l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, p. 303*

**4.5** Bahá'u'lláh taught that hearts must receive the Bounty of the Holy Spirit, so that Spiritual civilization may be established. For material civilization is not adequate for the needs of mankind and cannot be the cause of its happiness. Material civilization is like the body and spiritual civilization is like the soul. Body without soul cannot live.

*'Abdu'l-Bahá, 'Abdu'l-Bahá in London, p. 30*

## THE VISION

**5.1** “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.”

*Shoghi Effendi, The World Order of Bahá’u’lláh, pp. 161-162*

**5.2** “To build anew the whole world” is the claim and challenge of His Message, and the Kitáb-i-Aqdas is the Charter of the future world civilization that Bahá’u’lláh has come to raise up. Its provisions rest squarely on the foundation established by past religions, for, in the words of Bahá’u’lláh, “This is the changeless Faith of God, eternal in the past, eternal in the future.” In this Revelation the concepts of the past are brought to a new level of understanding, and the social laws, changed to suit the age now dawning, are designed to carry humanity forward into a world civilization the splendours of which can as yet be scarcely imagined.

*Introduction by the Universal House of Justice, The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, pp. 1-2,*

**5.3** The Formative Period, the Iron Age, of that Dispensation was now beginning, the Age in which the institutions, local, national and international, of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh were to take shape, develop and become fully consolidated, in anticipation of the third, the last, the Golden Age destined to witness the emergence of a world-embracing Order enshrining the ultimate fruit of God's latest Revelation to mankind, a fruit whose maturity must signalize the establishment of a world civilization and the formal inauguration of the Kingdom of the Father upon earth as promised by Jesus Christ Himself.

*Shoghi Effendi, God Passes By, p. 324*

## DEPRESSING & APPREHENSIVE SITUATION

**5.4** It is quite natural for anyone, observing the present state of the world, to feel very depressed and apprehensive of the future. Any intelligent person must be wondering what you are wondering. It is indeed hard to see what lies ahead of us in the near future—but we, as Bahá'ís, unlike most people, have absolute assurance that the distant future is serene and bright. We do not know if there will be another Great War; what we do know is this: that unless people become spiritually awakened in time, great suffering, maybe in the form of war, will come upon them, for humanity must be unified, must be redeemed. If men refuse absolutely to take the easier road of faith, of seeking out God's Manifestation for this age and accepting Him, then they will bring upon themselves a fresh crisis in human affairs and very great affliction.

*Shoghi Effendi, The Unfolding Destiny of the British Bahá'í Community, p. 451*

**5.5** . . . the Master proclaimed the coming of age of humankind and the emergence of a global civilization in which the development of the whole range of human potentialities will be the fruit of the interaction between universal spiritual values, on the one hand, and, on the other, material advances that were even then still undreamed of.

The means to achieve the goal, He said, had already come into existence. What was needed was the will to act and the faith to persist: . . .

*Commissioned by the Universal House of Justice, Century of Light, p. 22*

**5.6** National rivalries, hatreds and intrigues will cease, and racial animosity and prejudice will be replaced by racial amity, understanding and co-operation. 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.

*Introduction, The Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh, pp. xii-xiii*

**5.7** The welfare of the part means the welfare of the whole, and the distress of the part brings distress to the whole.

*Shoghi Effendi, The Promised Day is Come, p. 127*

## WORLD AGITATION

**5.8** . . . as the horizons of the world grow darker, as its agitation becomes more severe and the prevailing chaos and confusion more widespread, the dawn of the Promised Day will correspondingly draw nearer, and the means for the splendours of His light to be shed abroad will be more readily provided.

*Shoghi Effendi, Fire and Light, p. 32*

**5.9** 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.

*Shoghi Effendi, The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, pp. 46-47*

**5.10** 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.

*Shoghi Effendi, The World Order of Bahá'u'llah, p. 46*

## 6

# PROCESSES AT WORK

## TWOFOLD PROCESS OF INTEGRATION & DISINTEGRATION

**6.1** 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.

*Shoghi Effendi, The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 170*

## UNIVERSAL FERMENTATION

**6.2** 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.

*Shoghi Effendi, The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 170*

**6.3** This judgment of God, as viewed by those who have recognized Bahá'u'lláh as His Mouthpiece and His greatest Messenger on earth, is both a retributory calamity and an act of holy and supreme discipline. It is at once a visitation from God and a cleansing process for all mankind. Its fires punish the perversity of the human race, and weld its component parts into one organic, indivisible, world-embracing community. Mankind, in these fateful years, which at once signalize the passing of the first century of the Bahá'í Era and proclaim the opening of a new one, is, as ordained by Him Who is both the Judge and the Redeemer of the human race, being simultaneously called upon to give account of its past actions, and is being purged and prepared for its future mission. It can neither escape the responsibilities of the past, nor shirk those of the future. God, the Vigilant, the Just, the Loving, the All-Wise Ordainer, can, in this supreme Dispensation, neither allow the sins of an unregenerate humanity, whether of omission or of commission, to go unpunished, nor will He be willing to abandon His children to their fate, and refuse them that culminating and blissful stage in their long, their slow and painful evolution throughout the ages, which is at once their inalienable right and their true destiny.

*Shoghi Effendi, The Promised Day is Come, pp. 2-3*

## FROM ADOLESCENCE TO MATURITY

**6.4** 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.

*Shoghi Effendi, The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 202*

**6.5** “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.” “In every Dispensation,” He [‘Abdu’l-Bahá] moreover has written, “the light of Divine Guidance has been focused 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.”

*Shoghi Effendi, The Promised Day is Come, pp. 123–124*

## LAMENTABLY DEFECTIVE ORDER

**6.6** What we witness at the present time, during “this gravest crisis in the history of civilization,” recalling such times in which “religions have perished and are born,” is the adolescent stage in the slow and painful evolution of humanity, preparatory to the attainment of the stage of manhood, the stage of maturity, the promise of which is embedded in the teachings, and enshrined in the prophecies, of Bahá’u’lláh. The tumult of this age of transition is characteristic of the impetuosity and irrational instincts of youth, its follies, its prodigality, its pride, its self-assurance, its rebelliousness, and contempt of discipline.

*Shoghi Effendi, The Promised Day is Come, p. 121*

## PEACE BUILDING PROCESS

**6.7** The Great Being, wishing to reveal the prerequisites of the peace and tranquillity of the world and the advancement of its peoples, hath written: The time must come 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 amongst men. Such a peace demandeth that the Great Powers should resolve, for the sake of the tranquillity of the peoples of the earth, to be fully reconciled among themselves. Should any king take up arms against another, all should unitedly arise and prevent him. If this be done, the nations of the world will no longer require any armaments, except for the purpose of preserving the security of their realms and of maintaining internal order within their territories. This will ensure the peace and composure of every people, government and nation. We fain would hope that the kings and rulers of the earth, the mirrors of the gracious and almighty

name of God, may attain unto this station, and shield mankind from the onslaught of tyranny. . . .The day is approaching when all the peoples of the world will have adopted one universal language and one common script. When this is achieved, to whatsoever city a man may journey, it shall be as if he were entering his own home. These things are obligatory and absolutely essential. It is incumbent upon every man of insight and understanding to strive to translate that which hath been written into reality and action. . . . That one indeed is a man who, today, dedicateth himself to the service of the entire human race. The Great Being saith: Blessed and happy is he that ariseth to promote the best interests of the peoples and kindreds of the earth. In another passage He hath proclaimed: 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.

*Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Báha'u'lláh, CXVII, pp. 249–250*

## EVOLUTIONARY PROCESS

**6.8** 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.

*Shoghi Effendi, The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 43*

## CORROSIVE INFLUENCES

**6.9** . . . each of the successive crises in the fortunes of a decadent age exposes more convincingly than the one preceding it the corrosive influences that are fast sapping the vitality and undermining the basis of its declining institutions

*Shoghi Effendi, The Advent of Divine Justice, pp. 1–2*

## PROCESS OF PURGATION

**6.10** In the spiritual development of man a stage of purgation is indispensable, for it is while passing through it that the over-rated material needs are made to appear in their proper light. Unless society learns to attribute more importance to spiritual matters, it would never be fit to enter the golden era foretold by Bahá'u'lláh. The present calamities are parts of this process of purgation, through them alone will man learn his lesson. They are to teach the nations, that they have to view things internationally, they are to make the individual attribute more importance to his moral, than his material welfare.

*From a letter on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, Lights of Guidance, pp. 133–134*

## RISE & FALL

**6.11** . . . events of unimaginable magnitude, with ordeals more severe than any that humanity has as yet experienced, with conflicts more devastating than any which have preceded them. Dangers, however sinister, must, at no time, dim the radiance of their new-born faith. Strife and confusion, however bewildering, must never befog their vision. Tribulations, however afflictive, must

never shatter their resolve. Denunciations, however clamorous, must never sap their loyalty. Upheavals, however cataclysmic, must never deflect their course. The present Plan, embodying the budding hopes of a departed Master, must be pursued, relentlessly pursued, whatever may befall them in the future, however distracting the crises that may agitate their country or the world. Far from yielding in their resolve, far from growing oblivious of their task, they should, at no time, however much buffeted by circumstances, forget that the synchronization of such world-shaking crises with the progressive unfoldment and fruition of their divinely appointed task is itself the work of Providence, the design of an inscrutable Wisdom, and the purpose of an all-compelling Will, a Will that directs and controls, in its own mysterious way, both the fortunes of the Faith and the destinies of men. Such simultaneous processes of rise and of fall, of integration and of disintegration, of order and chaos, with their continuous and reciprocal reactions on each other, are but aspects of a greater Plan, one and indivisible, whose Source is God, whose author is Bahá'u'lláh, the theater of whose operations is the entire planet, and whose ultimate objectives are the unity of the human race and the peace of all mankind.

Reflections such as these should steel the resolve of the entire Bahá'í community, should dissipate their forebodings, and arouse them to rededicate themselves to every single provision of that Divine Charter whose outline has been delineated for them by the pen of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

*Shoghi Effendi, The Advent of Divine Justice, pp. 60–61*

**6.12** 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?

*Shoghi Effendi, The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 155*

## MOVEMENT TOWARDS DESTINY

**6.13** The world is, in truth, moving on towards its destiny. The interdependence of the peoples and nations of the earth, whatever the leaders of the divisive forces of the world may say or do, is already an accomplished fact. Its unity in the economic sphere is now understood and recognized. The welfare of the part means the welfare of the whole, and the distress of the part brings distress to the whole. The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh has, in His own words, “lent a fresh impulse and set a new direction” to this vast process now operating in the world. The fires lit by this great ordeal are the consequences of men’s failure to recognize it. They are, moreover, hastening its consummation. Adversity, prolonged, worldwide, afflictive, allied to chaos and universal destruction, must needs convulse the nations, stir the conscience of the world, disillusion the masses, precipitate a radical change in the very conception of society, and coalesce ultimately the disjointed, the bleeding limbs of mankind into one body, single, organically united, and indivisible.

*Shoghi Effendi, The Promised Day is Come, p. 127*

## GENERATIVE & PURIFYING PROCESS

**6.14** To what else can the observant eye or the unprejudiced mind, acquainted with the signs and portents heralding the birth, and accompanying the rise, of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh ascribe this dire, this planetary upheaval, with its attendant destruction, misery and fear, if not to the emergence of His embryonic World Order, which, as He Himself has unequivocally proclaimed, has “deranged the equilibrium of the world and revolutionized mankind’s ordered life”? To what agency, if not to the irresistible diffusion of that world-shaking, world-energizing, world-redeeming spirit, which the Báb has affirmed is “vibrating in the innermost realities of all created things” can the origins of this portentous crisis, incomprehensible

to man, and admittedly unprecedented in the annals of the human race, be attributed? In the convulsions of contemporary society, in the frenzied, world-wide ebullitions of men's thoughts, in the fierce antagonisms inflaming races, creeds and classes, in the shipwreck of nations, in the downfall of kings, in the dismemberment of empires, in the extinction of dynasties, in the collapse of ecclesiastical hierarchies, in the deterioration of time-honored institutions, in the dissolution of ties, secular as well as religious, that had for so long held together the members of the human race—all manifesting themselves with ever-increasing gravity since the outbreak of the first World War that immediately preceded the opening years of the Formative Age of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh—in these we can readily recognize the evidences of the travail of an age that has sustained the impact of His Revelation, that has ignored His summons, and is now laboring to be delivered of its burden, as a direct consequence of the impulse communicated to it by the generative, the purifying, the transmuting influence of His Spirit.

*Shoghi Effendi, God Passes By, pp. xi-xii*

## MYSTERIOUS PROCESSES

**6.15** The powerful operations of this titanic upheaval are comprehensible to none except such as have recognized the claims of both Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb. Their followers know full well whence it comes, and what it will ultimately lead to. Though ignorant of how far it will reach, they clearly recognize its genesis, are aware of its direction, acknowledge its necessity, observe confidently its mysterious processes, ardently pray for the mitigation of its severity, intelligently labor to assuage its fury, and anticipate, with undimmed vision, the consummation of the fears and the hopes it must necessarily engender.

*Shoghi Effendi, Promised Day is Come, p. 2*

## FORCES AT WORK

### UNSEEN FORCES

**7.1** *(Although this is the same as 4.3, it is worth contemplating in view of the unseen forces at work.)*

Although outwardly cataclysms are hard to understand and to endure, yet there lies a great wisdom behind them which appears later. All the visible material events are inter-related with invisible spiritual forces. The infinite phenomena of creation are as interdependent as the links of a chain.

When certain links become rusty, they are broken by unseen forces, to be replaced by newer and better ones. There are certain colossal events which transpire in the world of humanity which are required by the nature of the times.

*'Abdu'l-Bahá, 'Abdu'l-Bahá on Divine Philosophy, p. 116*

### SPIRITUAL FORCES OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH'S REVELATION

**7.2** After Bahá'u'lláh many Prophets will, no doubt, appear but they will be under His Shadow. Although they may abrogate the laws of this Dispensation in accordance with the needs and requirements of the age in which they appear, they nevertheless draw their spiritual force from this mighty Revelation. The Faith of Bahá'u'lláh constitutes, indeed, the stage of maturity in the development of mankind. His appearance has released such spiritual forces which will continue to animate, for many long years to come, the world in its development.

Whatever progress may be achieved, in later ages, after the unification of the whole human race is achieved, will be but improvement in the machinery of the world. For the machinery itself has been already created by Bahá'u'lláh. The task of continually improving and perfecting this machinery is one which later Prophets will be called upon to achieve.

*Shoghi Effendi, Directives from the Guardian, no. 164, pp. 62–63*

**7.3** 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.

*Shoghi Effendi, World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 24*

## FORCES OF REVELATION

**7.4** *(Although this is the same as 2.8, it is worth contemplating in view of the Forces of Revelation at work.)*

Not ours, puny mortals that we are, to attempt, at so critical a stage in the long and checkered history of mankind, to arrive at a precise and satisfactory understanding of the steps which must successively lead a bleeding humanity, wretchedly oblivious of its God, and careless of Bahá'u'lláh, from its calvary to its ultimate resurrection. Not ours, the living witnesses of the all-subduing potency of His Faith, to question, for a moment, and however dark the misery that enshrouds the world, the ability of Bahá'u'lláh to forge, with the hammer of His Will, and through the fire of tribulation, upon the anvil of this travailing age, and in the particular shape His mind has envisioned, these scattered and mutually destructive fragments into

which a perverse world has fallen, into one single unit, solid and indivisible, able to execute His design for the children of men.

Ours rather the duty, however confused the scene, however dismal the present outlook, however circumscribed the resources we dispose of, to labor serenely, confidently, and unremittingly to lend our share of assistance, in whichever way circumstances may enable us, to the operation of the forces which, as marshaled and directed by Bahá'u'lláh, are leading humanity out of the valley of misery and shame to the loftiest summits of power and glory.

*Shoghi Effendi, The Promised Day is Come, p. 129*

## GOD-BORN FORCE

**7.5** That God-born Force, irresistible in its sweeping power, incalculable in its potency, unpredictable in its course, mysterious in its workings, and awe-inspiring in its manifestations—a Force which, as the Báb has written, “vibrates within the innermost being of all created things,” and which, according to Bahá'u'lláh, has through its “vibrating influence,” “upset the equilibrium of the world and revolutionized its ordered life,”—such a Force, acting even as a two-edged sword, is, under our very eyes, sundering, on the one hand, the age-old ties which for centuries have held together the fabric of civilized society, and is unloosing, on the other, the bonds that still fetter the infant and as yet unemancipated Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. The undreamt-of opportunities offered through the operation of this Force—the American believers must now rise, and fully and courageously exploit them. “The holy realities of the Concourse on high,” writes ‘Abdu'l-Bahá, “yearn, in this day, in the Most Exalted Paradise, to return unto this world, so that they may be aided to render some service to the threshold of the Abhá Beauty, and arise to demonstrate their servitude to His sacred Threshold.”

*(Although the following paragraph is also in 2.2 and 3.3, it is worth contemplating in view of the God born forces at work.)*

A world, dimmed by the steadily dying-out light of religion, heaving with the explosive forces of a blind and triumphant nationalism; scorched with the fires of pitiless persecution, whether racial or religious; deluded by the false theories and doctrines that threaten to supplant the worship of God and the sanctification of His laws; enervated by a rampant and brutal materialism; disintegrating through the corrosive influence of moral and spiritual decadence; and enmeshed in the coils of economic anarchy and strife—such is the spectacle presented to men’s eyes, as a result of the sweeping changes which this revolutionizing Force, as yet in the initial stage of its operation, is now producing in the life of the entire planet.

So sad and moving a spectacle, bewildering as it must be to every observer unaware of the purposes, the prophecies, and promises of Bahá’u’lláh, far from casting dismay into the hearts of His followers, or paralyzing their efforts, cannot but deepen their faith, and excite their enthusiastic eagerness to arise and display, in the vast field traced for them by the pen of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, their capacity to play their part in the work of universal redemption proclaimed by Bahá’u’lláh.

*Shoghi Effendi, The Advent of Divine Justice, pp. 39–40*

## POWER OF THY NAME

**7.6** Armed with the power of Thy name nothing can ever hurt me, and with Thy love in my heart all the world’s afflictions can in no wise alarm me.

*Bahá’u’lláh, Bahá’í Prayers*

## CELESTIAL POTENCY

**7.7** 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.

*Shoghi Effendi, The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 47*

### GENERATIVE, PURIFYING, TRANSMUTING SPIRIT

**7.8** *(Although the paragraph below is the same as 6.12, it is worth contemplating in view of the generating, purifying and transmuting spirit.)*

To what else can the observant eye or the unprejudiced mind, acquainted with the signs and portents heralding the birth, and accompanying the rise, of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh ascribe this dire, this planetary upheaval, with its attendant destruction, misery and fear, if not to the emergence of His embryonic World Order, which, as He Himself has unequivocally proclaimed, has “deranged the equilibrium of the world and revolutionized mankind’s ordered life”? To what agency, if not to the irresistible diffusion of that world-shaking, world-energizing, world-redeeming spirit, which the Báb has affirmed is “vibrating in the innermost realities of all created things” can the origins of this portentous crisis, incomprehensible to man, and admittedly unprecedented in the annals of the human race, be attributed? In the convulsions of contemporary society, in the frenzied, world-wide ebullitions of men’s thoughts, in the fierce antagonisms inflaming races, creeds and classes, in the shipwreck of nations, in the downfall of kings, in the dismemberment of empires, in the extinction of dynasties, in the collapse of ecclesiastical hierarchies, in the deterioration of time-honored institutions, in

the dissolution of ties, secular as well as religious, that had for so long held together the members of the human race — all manifesting themselves with ever-increasing gravity since the outbreak of the first World War that immediately preceded the opening years of the Formative Age of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh— in these we can readily recognize the evidences of the travail of an age that has sustained the impact of His Revelation, that has ignored His summons, and is now laboring to be delivered of its burden, as a direct consequence of the impulse communicated to it by the generative, the purifying, the transmuting influence of His Spirit.

*Shoghi Effendi, God Passes By, pp. xi-xii*

**7.9** So sad and moving a spectacle, bewildering as it must be to every observer unaware of the purposes, the prophecies, and promises of Bahá'u'lláh, far from casting dismay into the hearts of His followers, or paralyzing their efforts, cannot but deepen their faith, and excite their enthusiastic eagerness to arise and display, in the vast field traced for them by the pen of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, their capacity to play their part in the work of universal redemption proclaimed by Bahá'u'lláh.

*Shoghi Effendi, The Advent of Divine Justice, p. 40*

**7.10** The question has been asked: Will the spiritual progress of the world equal and keep pace with material progress in the future? In a living organism the full measure of its development is not known or realized at the time of its inception or birth. Development and progression imply gradual stages or degrees. For example, spiritual advancement may be likened to the light of the early dawn. Although this dawn light is dim and pale, a wise man who views the march of the sunrise at its very beginning can foretell the ascendancy of the sun in its full glory and effulgence. He knows for a certainty that it is the beginning of its manifestation and that later it will assume great power and potency. Again, for example, if he takes a seed and observes that it is sprouting, he will know assuredly that it will

ultimately become a tree. Now is the beginning of the manifestation of the spiritual power, and inevitably the potency of its life forces will assume greater and greater proportions. Therefore, this twentieth century is the dawn, or beginning, of spiritual illumination, and it is evident that day by day it will advance. It will reach such a degree that spiritual effulgences will overcome the physical, so that divine susceptibilities will overpower material intelligence and the heavenly light dispel and banish earthly darkness. Divine healing shall purify all ills, and the cloud of mercy will pour down its rain. The Sun of Reality will shine, and all the earth shall put on its beautiful green carpet. Among the results of the manifestation of spiritual forces will be that the human world will adapt itself to a new social form, the justice of God will become manifest throughout human affairs, and human equality will be universally established.

*'Abdu'l-Bahá, The Promulgation of Universal Peace, pp. 131–132*

## RESISTLESS FORCE

**7.11** . . . undismayed by the prospect of spasmodic convulsions that must sooner or later fatally affect those who have refused to embrace its light, they, and those who will labor after them, must press forward until the processes now set in motion will have each spent its force and contributed its share towards the birth of the Order now stirring in the womb of a travailing age.

These recurrent crises which, with ominous frequency and resistless force, are afflicting an ever-increasing portion of the human race must of necessity continue, however impermanently, to exercise, in a certain measure, their baleful influence upon a world community which has spread its ramifications to the uttermost ends of the earth.

*Shoghi Effendi, The Advent of Divine Justice, p. 2*

## ROLE OF THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH

**8.1** We desire but the good of the world and the happiness of the nations; yet they deem Us a stirrer up of strife and sedition worthy of bondage and banishment. . . . That all nations should become one in faith and all men as brothers; that the bonds of affection and unity between the sons of men should be strengthened; that diversity of religion should cease, and differences of race be annulled—what harm is there in this? . . . Yet so it shall be; these fruitless strifes, these ruinous wars shall pass away, and the ‘Most Great Peace’ shall come. . . . Yet do We see your kings and rulers lavishing their treasures more freely on means for the destruction of the human race than on that which would conduce to the happiness of mankind. . . . These strifes and this bloodshed and discord must cease, and all men be as one kindred and one family. . . . Let not a man glory in this, that he loves his country; let him rather glory in this, that he loves his kind.

*Bahá'u'lláh, The Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh, p. ix*

**8.2** 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.

*Shoghi Effendi, The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 195*

**8.3** 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?

*Shoghi Effendi, The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 155*

**8.4** 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.

*Shoghi Effendi, The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 163*

**8.5** 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?

*Shoghi Effendi, The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 33*

**8.6** 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?

*Shoghi Effendi, The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, pp. 201–202*

**8.7** 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?

*Shoghi Effendi, The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 47*

**8.8** 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!

*Shoghi Effendi, The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 155*

**8.9** As the days roll by, as the perturbations of an imperiled civilization are more alarmingly manifested, the potentialities of God's creative Plan correspondingly unfold, and the valor and heroism of its intrepid supporters are more widely and convincingly demonstrated. With every successful effort to muster its young and scattered forces, to perfect its methods, to extend the range of its operations, to deepen its spiritual life and to scale loftier heights of individual heroism. . . .

*Shoghi Effendi, This Decisive Hour, no. 47, p. 26*

**8.10** The Order brought by Bahá'u'lláh is intended to guide the progress and resolve the problems of society.

*The Universal House of Justice, A Wider Horizon, Selected Letters 1983-1992, p. 80*

## OUR ROLE AS BAHÁ'IS

**9.1** 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.

*Shoghi Effendi, The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, pp. 16–17*

**9.2** Bahá'u'lláh urges those who believe in Him to “see with thine own eyes and not through the eyes of others”, to “know of thine own knowledge and not through the knowledge of thy neighbour”. Tragically, what Bahá'ís see in present-day society is unbridled exploitation of the masses of humanity by greed that excuses itself as the operation of “impersonal market forces”. What meets their eyes everywhere is the destruction of moral foundations vital to humanity's future, through gross self-indulgence masquerading as “freedom of speech”. What they find themselves struggling against daily is the pressure of a dogmatic materialism, claiming to be the voice of “science”, that seeks systematically to exclude from intellectual life all impulses arising from the spiritual level of human consciousness.

*Commissioned by the Universal House of Justice, Century of Light, pp. 135–136*

**9.3** Humanity, torn with dissension and burning with hate, is crying at this hour for a fuller measure of that love which is born of God, that love which in the last resort will prove the one solvent of its incalculable difficulties and problems. Is it not incumbent upon us, whose hearts are aglow with love for Him, to make still greater effort, to manifest that love in all its purity and power in our dealings with our fellow-men?

*Shoghi Effendi, Bahá'í Administration, p. 62*

## TEACHING & PERFECTING THE ADMINISTRATION

**9.4** He is constantly pointing out to the Bahá'ís that their direct Bahá'í work—teaching, perfecting the administration, propagating the Cause of God is their job and of immediate importance because, it is, so to speak, spiritually organic. What they are doing will release forces which will combat the terrible disintegration of society which we witness today in every field, political, economic or otherwise.

*From letter dated 5 July 1947, on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer*

**9.5** Say: O friends! Drink your fill from this crystal stream that floweth through the heavenly grace of Him Who is the Lord of Names. Let others partake of its waters in My name, that the leaders of men in every land may fully recognize the purpose for which the Eternal Truth hath been revealed, and the reason for which they themselves have been created.

*Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Báha'u'lláh, CIX, p. 215*

**9.6** Bahá'u'lláh has given to the world institutions to operate in an Order designed to canalize the forces of a new civilization. Progress towards that glorious realization requires a great and continuous expansion of the Bahá'í community, so that adequate

scope is provided for the maturation of these institutions. This is a matter of immediate importance to Bahá'u'lláh's avowed supporters in all lands.

*The Universal House of Justice, Ridvan Message 153, 1996*

**9.7** What we, as Bahá'ís, must do is our duty; we cannot do other people's duty for them, alas, but we can fulfil our own sacred responsibilities by serving our fellow-men, living a Bahá'í life, teaching the Faith, and strengthening its budding world order.

*Shoghi Effendi, The Unfolding Destiny of the British Bahá'í Community, p. 452*

## ROLE OF YOUTH

**9.8** The transformation which is to occur in the functioning of society will certainly depend to a great extent on the effectiveness of the preparations the youth make for the world they will inherit.

*The Universal House of Justice, A Wider Horizon, Selected Letters 1983-1992, p. 39*

**9.9** Laws and institutions, as viewed by Bahá'u'lláh, can become really effective only when our inner spiritual life has been perfected and transformed. Otherwise religion will degenerate into a mere organization, and becomes a dead thing. The believers, particularly the young ones, should therefore fully realize the necessity of praying. For prayer is absolutely indispensable to their inner spiritual development, and this, as already stated, is the very foundation and purpose of the religion of God.

*Shoghi Effendi, Directives from the Guardian, p. 87*

**9.10** If we could perceive the true reality of things we would see that the greatest of all battles raging in the world today is the spiritual battle. If the believers like yourself, young and eager and full of life, desire to win laurels for true and undying heroism, then let them join in the spiritual battle—whatever their physical occupation may be—which involves the very soul of man. The hardest and the noblest task in the world today is to be a true Bahá'í; this requires that we defeat not only the current evils prevailing all over the world, but the weaknesses, attachments to the past, prejudices, and selfishnesses that may be inherited and acquired within our own characters; that we give forth a shining and incorruptible example to our fellow-men.

*From letters written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi,  
The Compilation of Compilations, vol. 1, p. 381*

**9.11** In such a process of purgation, when all humanity is in the throes of dire suffering, the Bahá'ís should not hope to remain unaffected. Should we consider the beam that is in our own eye, we would immediately find that these sufferings are also meant for ourselves, who claimed to have attained. Such world crisis is necessary to awaken us to the importance of our duty and the carrying on of our task. Suffering will increase our energy in setting before humanity the road to salvation, it will move us from our repose for we are far from doing our best in teaching the Cause and conveying the Message with which we have been entrusted.

*From a letter on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, Lights of Guidance, p. 134*

**9.12** The world with the various calamities that have befallen it, will be completely ravaged and its civilization demolished, if the Bahá'ís do not come to its help and imbue it with the spirit that Bahá'u'lláh has brought to the world. The economic factions, political parties, national hatreds, racial prejudices, and religious antagonisms, will continue to bring about devastating wars until the spirit of the Cause permeates the heart of man, and its universal teachings pull down the existing barriers. Let us be reminded of our

duty by the misery we see around us, and arise for the prosecution of our noble duty.”

*From letter dated 24 November 1931 on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the American National Spiritual Assembly*

**9.13** All religions teach that we should love one another; that we should seek out our own shortcomings before we presume to condemn the faults of others, that we must not consider ourselves superior to our neighbours! We must be careful not to exalt ourselves lest we be humiliated.

Who are we that we should judge? How shall we know who, in the sight of God, is the most upright man? God’s thoughts are not like our thoughts! How many men who have seemed saint-like to their friends have fallen into the greatest humiliation. Think of Judas Iscariot; he began well, but remember his end! On the other hand, Paul, the Apostle, was in his early life an enemy of Christ, whilst later he became His most faithful servant. How then can we flatter ourselves and despise others?

Let us therefore be humble, without prejudices, preferring others’ good to our own! Let us never say, “I am a believer but he is an infidel”, “I am near to God, whilst he is an outcast.” We can never know what will be the final judgment! Therefore let us help all who are in need of any kind of assistance.

Let us teach the ignorant, and take care of the young child until he grows to maturity. When we find a person fallen into the depths of misery or sin we must be kind to him, take him by the hand, help him to regain his footing, his strength; we must guide him with love and tenderness, treat him as a friend not as an enemy. We have no right to look upon any of our fellow-mortals as evil.

*‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Paris Talks, pp. 147–148*

**9.14** Purge thou thy heart that We may cause fountains of wisdom and utterance to gush out therefrom, thus enabling thee to

raise thy voice among all mankind. Unloose thy tongue and proclaim the truth for the sake of the remembrance of thy merciful Lord. Be not afraid of anyone, place thy whole trust in God, the Almighty, the All-Knowing.

*Bahá'u'lláh, Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, pp. 189–190*

**9.15** Arise, O people, and, by the power of God's might, resolve to gain the victory over your own selves, that haply the whole earth may be freed and sanctified from its servitude to the gods of its idle fancies—gods that have inflicted such loss upon, and are responsible for the misery of, their wretched worshipers. These idols form the obstacle that impedeth man in his efforts to advance in the path of perfection. We cherish the hope that the Hand of Divine power may lend its assistance to mankind, and deliver it from its state of grievous abasement.

In one of the Tablets these words have been revealed: O people of God! Do not busy yourselves in your own concerns; let your thoughts be fixed upon that which will rehabilitate the fortunes of mankind and sanctify the hearts and souls of men. This can best be achieved through pure and holy deeds, through a virtuous life and a goodly behavior. Valiant acts will ensure the triumph of this Cause, and a saintly character will reinforce its power. Cleave unto righteousness, O people of Bahá! This, verily, is the commandment which this wronged One hath given unto you, and the first choice of His unrestrained Will for every one of you.

*Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, XLIII, pp. 93–94*

**9.16** In such an afflicted time, when mankind is bewildered and the wisest of men are perplexed as to the remedy, the people of Bahá, who have confidence in His unfailing grace and divine guidance, are assured that each of these tormenting trials has a cause, a purpose, and a definite result, and all are essential instruments for the establishment of the immutable Will of God on earth. In other

words, on the one hand humanity is struck by the scourge of His chastisement which will inevitably bring together the scattered and vanquished tribes of the earth; and on the other, the weak few whom He has nurtured under the protection of His loving guidance are, in this formative age and period of transition, continuing to build amidst these tumultuous waves an impregnable stronghold which will be the sole remaining refuge for those lost multitudes. Therefore, the dear friends of God who have such a broad and clear vision before them are not perturbed by such events, nor are they panic-stricken by such thundering sounds, nor will they face such convulsions with fear and trepidation, nor will they be deterred, even for a moment, from fulfilling their sacred responsibilities.

“One of their sacred responsibilities is to exemplify in their lives those attributes which are acceptable at His Sacred Threshold.”

*From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to the Iranian believers resident in various countries throughout the world, February 10, 1980*

**9.17** O friends! It behooveth you to refresh and revive your souls through the gracious favors which in this Divine, this soul-stirring Springtime are being showered upon you. The Day Star of His great glory hath shed its radiance upon you, and the clouds of His limitless grace have overshadowed you. How high the reward of him that hath not deprived himself of so great a bounty, nor failed to recognize the beauty of his Best-Beloved in this, His new attire. . . . Let your vision be world-embracing, rather than confined to your own self.

*Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, XLIII, p. 94*

**9.18** O people of Justice! Be as brilliant as the light, and as splendid as the fire that blazed in the Burning Bush. The brightness of the fire of your love will no doubt fuse and unify the contending peoples and kindreds of the earth, whilst the fierceness of the flame of enmity and hatred cannot but result in strife and ruin. We beseech God that He may shield His creatures from the evil designs of His enemies. He verily hath power over all things.

*Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, XLIII, p. 96*

**9.19** It is incumbent upon every man, in this Day, to hold fast unto whatsoever will promote the interests, and exalt the station, of all nations and just governments. Through each and every one of the verses which the Pen of the Most High hath revealed, the doors of love and unity have been unlocked and flung open to the face of men. We have erewhile declared—and Our Word is the truth—: “Consort with the followers of all religions in a spirit of friendliness and fellowship.” Whatsoever hath led the children of men to shun one another, and hath caused dissensions and divisions amongst them, hath, through the revelation of these words, been nullified and abolished. From the heaven of God’s Will, and for the purpose of ennobling the world of being and of elevating the minds and souls of men, hath been sent down that which is the most effective instrument for the education of the whole human race. The highest essence and most perfect expression of whatsoever the peoples of old have either said or written hath, through this most potent Revelation, been sent down from the heaven of the Will of the All-Possessing, the Ever-Abiding God. Of old it hath been revealed: “Love of one’s country is an element of the Faith of God.” The Tongue of Grandeur hath, however, in the day of His manifestation proclaimed: “It is not his to boast who loveth his country, but it is his who loveth the world.” Through the power released by these exalted words 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.

*Bahá’u’lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh, XLIII, pp. 94–96*

**9.20** Whosoever ariseth to aid our Cause God will render him victorious over ten times ten thousand souls, and, should he wax in his love for Me, him will We Cause to triumph over all that is in heaven and all that is on earth.

*Shoghi Effendi, quoting Bahá’u’lláh, Messages to the Bahá’i World, p. 101*

## TRUST & CONFIDENCE IN GOD

**10.1** Put your whole trust and confidence in God, Who hath created you, and seek ye His help in all your affairs. Succor cometh from Him alone. He succoreth whom He will with the hosts of the heavens and of the earth.

*Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, CXVIII, p. 251*

**10.2** Place not thy reliance on thy treasures. Put thy whole confidence in the grace of God, thy Lord. Let Him be thy trust in whatever thou doest, and be of them that have submitted themselves to His Will. Let Him be thy helper and enrich thyself with His treasures, for with Him are the treasures of the heavens and of the earth.

*Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, CXIV, pp. 234–235*

**10.3** Never lose thy trust in God. Be thou ever hopeful, for the bounties of God never cease to flow upon man. If viewed from one perspective they seem to decrease, but from another they are full and complete. Man is under all conditions immersed in a sea of God's blessings. Therefore, be thou not hopeless under any circumstances, but rather be firm in thy hope.

*'Abdu'l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, p. 205*

**10.4** This loving God desires peace for all His creatures—why, then, do they spend their time in war?

He loves and protects all His children—why do they forget Him?

He bestows His Fatherly care on us all—why do we neglect our brothers?

Surely, when we realize how God loves and cares for us, we should so order our lives that we may become more like Him.

*'Abdu'l-Bahá, Paris Talks, p. 120*

**10.5** Are we to be carried away by the flood of hollow and conflicting ideas, or are we to stand, unsubdued and unblemished, upon the everlasting rock of God's Divine Instructions? Shall we not equip ourselves with a clear and full understanding of their purpose and implications for the age we live in, and with an unconquerable resolve arise to utilize them, intelligently and with scrupulous fidelity, for the enlightenment and the promotion of the good of all mankind?

*Shoghi Effendi, Bahá'í Administration, pp. 61–62*

**10.6** Whatsoever occurreth in the world of being is light for His loved ones and fire for the people of sedition and strife. Even if all the losses of the world were to be sustained by one of the friends of God, he would still profit thereby, whereas true loss would be born by such as are wayward, ignorant and contemptuous. . . . The friends of God shall win and profit under all conditions, and shall attain true wealth. In fire they remain cold, and from water they emerge dry. Their affairs are at variance with the affairs of men. Gain is their lot, whatever the deal. To this testifieth every wise one with a discerning eye, and every fair-minded one with a hearing ear.

*Bahá'u'lláh, Crisis and Victory, no. 47*

## WHAT SHOULD WE KNOW?

**11.1** O thou servant of God! Do not grieve at the afflictions and calamities that have befallen thee. All calamities and afflictions have been created for man so that he may spurn this mortal world — a world to which he is much attached.

*'Abdu'l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, p. 239*

**11.2** If a thing is carried to excess, it will prove a source of evil. Consider the civilization of the West, how it hath agitated and alarmed the peoples of the world. An infernal engine hath been devised, and hath proved so cruel a weapon of destruction that its like none hath ever witnessed or heard. The purging of such deeply-rooted and overwhelming corruptions cannot be effected unless the peoples of the world unite in pursuit of one common aim and embrace one universal faith. Incline your ears unto the Call of this Wronged One and adhere firmly to the Lesser Peace.

Strange and astonishing things exist in the earth but they are hidden from the minds and the understanding of men. These things are capable of changing the whole atmosphere of the earth and their contamination would prove lethal. Great God! We have observed an amazing thing. Lightning or a force similar to it is controlled by an operator and moveth at his command. Immeasurably exalted is the Lord of Power Who hath laid bare that which He purposed through the potency of His weighty and invincible command.

*Bahá'u'lláh, Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, p 69*

**11.3** . . . Suffering, of one kind or another, seems to be the portion of man in this world. Even the Beloved ones, the Prophets of God, have never been exempt from the ills that are to be found in our world; poverty, disease, bereavement, —they seem to be part of the polish God employs to make us finer, and enable us to reflect more of His attributes! No doubt in the future, when the foundation of society is laid according to the Divine plan, and men become truly spiritualized, a vast amount of our present ills and problems will be remedied. We who toil now are paving the way for a far better world, and this knowledge must uphold and strengthen us through every trial.

*From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi,  
Lights of Guidance, pp. 603–604*

**11.4** Know thou that hardship and privation shall increase day by day, and the people shall thereby be afflicted. The doors of joy and happiness shall be closed on all sides, and terrible wars shall occur. Frustration and despair shall encompass the people until they are forced to turn to the One True God. Then will the light of most joyful tidings so illumine the horizons that the cry of ‘Ya Bahá’u’l-Abhá’ will be raised from every direction. This shall come to pass.

*‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Lights of Guidance, p. 131*

**11.5** There is no human being untouched by these two influences; but all the sorrow and the grief that exist come from the world of matter—spiritual world bestows only the joy!

If we suffer it is the outcome of material things, and all the trials and troubles come from this world of illusion.

For instance, a merchant may lose his trade and depression ensues. A workman is dismissed and starvation stares him in the face. A farmer has a bad harvest, anxiety fills his mind. A man builds a house which is burnt to the ground and he is straightway homeless, ruined, and in despair.

All these examples are to show you that the trials which beset our every step, all our sorrow, pain, shame and grief, are born in the world of matter; whereas the spiritual Kingdom never causes sadness. A man living with his thoughts in this Kingdom knows perpetual joy. The ills all flesh is heir to do not pass him by, but they only touch the surface of his life, the depths are calm and serene.

*'Abdu'l-Bahá, Paris Talks, p. 110*

**11.6** 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 goodwill 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.

*Shoghi Effendi, The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, pp. 42–43*

**11.7** While a man is happy he may forget his God; but when grief comes and sorrows overwhelm him, then will he remember his Father who is in Heaven, and who is able to deliver him from his humiliations.

Men who suffer not, attain no perfection. The plant most pruned by the gardeners is that one which, when the summer comes, will have the most beautiful blossoms and the most abundant fruit.

*'Abdu'l-Bahá, Paris Talks, pp. 50–51*

**11.8** Those were indeed dire events in San Francisco. [The earthquake of 1906] Disasters of this kind should serve to awaken the people, and diminish the love of their hearts for this inconstant world. It is in this nether world that such tragic things take place: this is the cup that yieldeth bitter wine.

*'Abdu'l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, p. 81*

**11.9** The Bahá'ís should realize that today's intensely materialistic civilization, alas, most perfectly exemplified by the United States, has far exceeded the bounds of moderation, and, as Bahá'u'lláh has pointed out in His Writings, civilization itself, when carried to extremes, leads to destruction. The Canadian friends should be on their guard against this deadly influence to which they are so constantly exposed, and which we can see is undermining the moral strength of not only America, but indeed of Europe and other parts of the world to which it is rapidly spreading.

*Shoghi Effendi, Messages to Canada, p. 67*

**11.10** Within the last few days a terrible event has happened in the world, an event saddening to every heart and grieving every spirit. I refer to the Titanic disaster, in which many of our fellow human beings were drowned, a number of beautiful souls passed beyond this earthly life. Although such an event is indeed regrettable, we

must realize that everything which happens is due to some wisdom and that nothing happens without a reason. Therein is a mystery; but whatever the reason and mystery, it was a very sad occurrence, one which brought tears to many eyes and distress to many souls. I was greatly affected by this disaster. Some of those who were lost voyaged on the Cedric with us as far as Naples and afterward sailed upon the other ship. When I think of them, I am very sad indeed. But when I consider this calamity in another aspect, I am consoled by the realization that the worlds of God are infinite; that though they were deprived of this existence, they have other opportunities in the life beyond, even as Christ has said, "In my Father's house are many mansions." They were called away from the temporary and transferred to the eternal; they abandoned this material existence and entered the portals of the spiritual world. Foregoing the pleasures and comforts of the earthly, they now partake of a joy and happiness far more abiding and real, for they have hastened to the Kingdom of God. The mercy of God is infinite, and it is our duty to remember these departed souls in our prayers and supplications that they may draw nearer and nearer to the Source itself.

*'Abdu'l-Bahá, The Promulgation of Universal Peace, pp. 46–47*

**11.11** We stand too close to the noble edifice our hands are rearing, the din and tumult into which a war-devastated world is now plunged are too distracting, our own share in the furtherance of those global aims, tasks and problems that are increasingly absorbing the attention of mankind and its leaders is as yet too circumscribed, for us to be in a position to evaluate the contribution which we, as the executors of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Mandate, as the champion-builders of Bahá'u'lláh's Order, as the torchbearers of a civilization of which that Order is the mainspring and precursor, are now being led, through the inscrutable dispensations of an almighty Providence, to make to the world triumph of our Faith, as well as to the ultimate redemption of all mankind.

*Shoghi Effendi, This Decisive Hour, no. 158, p. 107*

**11.12** While thousands are considering these questions, we have more essential purposes. The fundamentals of the whole economic condition are divine in nature and are associated with the world of the heart and spirit. This is fully explained in the Bahá'í teaching, and without knowledge of its principles no improvement in the economic state can be realized. The Bahá'ís will bring about this improvement and betterment but not through sedition and appeal to physical force—not through warfare, but welfare. Hearts must be so cemented together, love must become so dominant that the rich shall most willingly extend assistance to the poor and take steps to establish these economic adjustments permanently. If it is accomplished in this way, it will be most praiseworthy because then it will be for the sake of God and in the pathway of His service. For example, it will be as if the rich inhabitants of a city should say, “It is neither just nor lawful that we should possess great wealth while there is abject poverty in this community,” and then willingly give their wealth to the poor, retaining only as much as will enable them to live comfortably.

*'Abdu'l-Bahá, The Promulgation of Universal Peace, pp. 238–239*

## TESTS

**12.1** These tests, . . . do but cleanse the spotting of self from off the mirror of the heart, till the Sun of Truth can cast its rays thereon; for there is no veil more obstructive than the self, and however tenuous that veil may be, at the last it will completely shut a person out, and deprive him of his portion of eternal grace.

*'Abdu'l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, p. 182*

**12.2** It is easy to approach the Kingdom of Heaven, but hard to stand firm and staunch within it, for the tests are rigorous, and heavy to bear.

*'Abdu'l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, p. 274*

**12.3** 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.

*Shoghi Effendi, The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 47*

**12.4** Know ye that trials and tribulations have, from time immemorial, been the lot of the chosen Ones of God and His beloved, and such of His servants as are detached from all else but Him, they whom neither merchandise nor traffic beguile from the remembrance of the Almighty, they that speak not till He hath spoken, and act according to His commandment. Such is God's method carried into effect of old, and such will it remain in the future. Blessed are the steadfastly enduring, they that are patient under ills and hardships, who lament not over anything that befalleth them, and who tread the path of resignation . . . .

*Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, LXVI, p. 129*

**12.5** Reflect upon his holiness Job: What trials, calamities and perplexities did he not endure! But these tests were like unto the fire and his holiness Job was like unto pure gold. Assuredly gold is purified by being submitted to the fire and if it contain any alloy or imperfection, it will disappear. That is the reason why violent tests become the cause of the everlasting glory of the righteous and are conducive to the destruction and disappearance of the unrighteous.

The wisdom of all these tribulations that poured successively upon thee was this, that thou shouldst be prepared and made ready for this Cause, that thou mightest expect the attainment to the greatest guidance, for all these trials were but a preparation for thine entrance into the Most Exalted Paradise and the beginning of obtaining this most great benefit.

Unless the season of winter appear, thunder roll, lightning flash, snow and rain fall, hail and frost descend and the intensity of cold execute its command, the season of the soul-refreshing spring would not come, the fragrant breeze would not waft, the moderation of temperature would not be realized, the roses and hyacinths would not grow, the surface of the earth would not become a delectable paradise, the trees would not bloom, neither would they bring

forth fruits and leaves. That fierce inclemency of cold, snow, frost and tempest was the beginning of the manifestation of these roses, hyacinths, buds, blossoms and fruits.

Therefore, be not distressed on account of those adversities which fell upon thee; nay, rather, arise and render thanks that the ultimate goal is the attainment to this eminent bounty and the enjoyment of this highest gift of the Almighty God. Consequently gird up the loins of thine endeavor, that thereby some results might be produced, some fruits gathered, the lamp of everlasting life ignited and the gifts of the Lord of the Kingdom be manifest, so that thou mayest accomplish again, with great yearning and exaltation, the worship of the Lord of Hosts.

*'Abdu'l-Bahá, Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá v3, pp. 655-656*

**12.6** Know that there are two kinds of torment: subtle and palpable. For example, ignorance is itself a torment, but it is a subtle torment; indifference to God is itself a torment; falsehood is itself a torment; iniquity and treachery are torments. Indeed, all the human imperfections are torments, but they are subtle torments. A person endowed with a conscience will certainly prefer to be killed rather than to sin, and to have his tongue cut out rather than to slander and lie.

The other kind of torment is palpable and consists in physical punishments such as imprisonment, beating, expulsion, and banishment. But for the people of God, to be veiled from Him is still more grievous than all these torments.

*'Abdu'l-Bahá, Some Answered Questions, no. 75, p. 305*

**12.7** The trials of man are of two kinds.

(a) The consequences of his own actions. If a man eats too much, he ruins his digestion; if he takes poison he becomes ill or dies. If a person gambles he will lose his money; if he drinks too much he will lose his equilibrium. All these sufferings are caused by the man

himself, it is quite clear therefore that certain sorrows are the result of our own deeds.

(b) Other sufferings there are, which come upon the Faithful of God. Consider the great sorrows endured by Christ and by His apostles!

Those who suffer most, attain to the greatest perfection.

*'Abdu'l-Bahá, Paris Talks, pp. 49–50*

**12.8** . . . this world-afflicting ordeal that has laid its grip upon mankind as primarily a judgment of God pronounced against the peoples of the earth, who, for a century, have refused to recognize the One Whose advent had been promised to all religions, and in Whose Faith all nations can alone, and must eventually, seek their true salvation.

*Shoghi Effendi, The Promised Day is Come, p. 115*

**12.9** From such considerations we can well conclude that we as Bahá'ís can in no wise identify the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh with man-made creeds and conceptions, which by their very nature are impotent to save the world from the dangers with which it is being so fiercely and so increasingly assailed.

*Shoghi Effendi, The Light of Divine Guidance v I, p. 56*

**12.10** Thy detailed letter was received. Its perusal produced the utmost happiness for it revealed the fact that thou hast attained to the knowledge of the reality of tests; namely, that tests endured in the path of God are conducive to confirmation, nay, rather, they are heavenly powers and the bounties of the realm of Might. But to the weak believers tests are trials and examination, for, on account of the weakness of their faith and assurance they fall into difficulties and vicissitudes. However, to those souls who are firm and steadfast, tests are the greatest favours.

Consider thou that at the time of an examination in sciences and arts, the dull and lazy pupil finds himself in calamity. But to the intelligent and sagacious student, examination in learning produces honour and infinite happiness. Alloyed gold subjected to the fire portrays its baseness. While the intensity of the flame enhances the beauty of the (pure) gold. Therefore, tests to the weak souls are calamity and to the veiled ones the cause of their disgrace and humiliation.

The point is this, that in the path of Truth every difficulty is made plain and every trial is a matchless bounty.

Therefore, the believers of God and the maid-servants of the Merciful must not relax during trials, and no disaster must deter their service in the Cause of God.

*'Abdu'l-Bahá, Star of the West, Vol. 8, No. 8, p. 236*

**12.11** There was once a lover who had sighed for long years in separation from his beloved, and wasted in the fire of remoteness. From the rule of love, his heart was empty of patience, and his body weary of his spirit; he reckoned life without her as a mockery, and time consumed him away. How many a day he found no rest in longing for her; how many a night the pain of her kept him from sleep; his body was worn to a sigh, his heart's wound had turned him to a cry of sorrow. He had given a thousand lives for one taste of the cup of her presence, but it availed him not. The doctors knew no cure for him, and companions avoided his company; yea, physicians have no medicine for one sick of love, unless the favor of the beloved one deliver him.

At last, the tree of his longing yielded the fruit of despair, and the fire of his hope fell to ashes. Then one night he could live no more, and he went out of his house and made for the marketplace. On a sudden, a watchman followed after him. He broke into a run, with the watchman following; then other watchmen came together, and barred every passage to the weary one. And the wretched one cried from his heart, and ran here and there, and moaned to himself:

“Surely this watchman is Izrá’íl, my angel of death, following so fast upon me; or he is a tyrant of men, seeking to harm me.” His feet carried him on, the one bleeding with the arrow of love, and his heart lamented. Then he came to a garden wall, and with untold pain he scaled it, for it proved very high; and forgetting his life, he threw himself down to the garden.

And there he beheld his beloved with a lamp in her hand, searching for a ring she had lost. When the heart-surrendered lover looked on his ravishing love, he drew a great breath and raised up his hands in prayer, crying: “O God! Give Thou glory to the watchman, and riches and long life. For the watchman was Gabriel, guiding this poor one; or he was Isráfil, bringing life to this wretched one!”

Indeed, his words were true, for he had found many a secret justice in this seeming tyranny of the watchman, and seen how many a mercy lay hid behind the veil. Out of wrath, the guard had led him who was athirst in love’s desert to the sea of his loved one, and lit up the dark night of absence with the light of reunion. He had driven one who was afar, into the garden of nearness, had guided an ailing soul to the heart’s physician.

Now if the lover could have looked ahead, he would have blessed the watchman at the start, and prayed on his behalf, and he would have seen that tyranny as justice; but since the end was veiled to him, he moaned and made his plaint in the beginning. Yet those who journey in the garden land of knowledge, because they see the end in the beginning, see peace in war and friendliness in anger.

*Bahá’u’lláh, The Seven Valleys, pp. 13–15*

**12.12** Life is based on laws: physical, man-made, and spiritual.

*Shoghi Effendi, The Unfolding Destiny of the British Bahá’i Community, p. 450*

**12.13** Every soul seeketh an object and cherisheth a desire, and day and night striveth to attain his aim. One craveth riches, another thirsteth for glory and still another yearneth for fame, for

art, for prosperity and the like. Yet finally all are doomed to loss and disappointment. One and all they leave behind them all that is theirs and empty-handed hasten to the realm beyond, and all their labours shall be in vain. To dust they shall all return, denuded, depressed, disheartened and in utter despair.

But, praised be the Lord, thou art engaged in that which secureth for thee a gain that shall eternally endure; and that is naught but thine attraction to the Kingdom of God, thy faith, and thy knowledge, the enlightenment of thine heart, and thine earnest endeavour to promote the Divine Teachings.

Verily this gift is imperishable and this wealth is a treasure from on high!

*'Abdu'l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, pp. 204–205*

**12.14** The tests of God are surrounding you from all directions and many afflictions have occurred; but thanks be to God that you . . . are patient, thankful and constant.

The necessity and the particularity of the assured and believing ones is to be firm in the Cause of God and withstand the hidden and evident tests. Thanks be to God that you are distinguished and made eminent by this blessing. Anybody can be happy in the state of comfort, ease, health, success, pleasure and joy; but if one will be happy and contented in the time of trouble, hardship and prevailing disease, it is the proof of nobility. Thanks be to God that that dear servant of God is extremely patient under the disastrous circumstances, and in the place of complaining gives thanks.

*'Abdu'l-Bahá, Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, v2, p. 263*

**12.15** When such a crisis sweeps over the world no person should hope to remain intact. We belong to an organic unit and when one part of the organism suffers all the rest of the body will feel its consequences. This is in fact the reason why Bahá'u'lláh calls our attention to the unity of mankind. But as Bahá'ís we should not let such hardships weaken our hope in the future.

*Written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, Extracts from USBN, no. 64, July 1932, p. 4*

**12.16** O SON OF MAN!

Should prosperity befall thee, rejoice not, and should abasement come upon thee, grieve not, for both shall pass away and be no more.

*Bahá'u'lláh, The Hidden Words, Arabic, no. 52*

## WISDOM OF SUFFERING

**13.1** Suffering is both a reminder and a guide. It stimulates us better to adapt ourselves to our environmental conditions, and thus leads the way to self-improvement. In every suffering one can find a meaning and a wisdom. But it is not always easy to find the secret of that wisdom. It is sometimes only when all our suffering has passed that we become aware of its usefulness. What man considers to be evil turns often to be a cause of infinite blessings. And this is due to his desire to know more than he can. God's wisdom is, indeed, inscrutable to us all, and it is no use pushing too far trying to discover that which shall always remain a mystery to our mind.

*Shoghi Effendi, The Unfolding Destiny of the British Bahá'í Community, p. 434*

**13.2** The more difficulties one sees in the world the more perfect one becomes. The more you plough and dig the ground the more fertile it becomes. The more you cut the branches of a tree the higher and stronger it grows. The more you put the gold in the fire the purer it becomes. The more you sharpen the steel by grinding the better it cuts. Therefore, the more sorrows one sees the more perfect one becomes. That is why, in all times, the Prophets of God have had tribulations and difficulties to withstand. The more often the captain of a ship is in the tempest and difficult sailing the greater his knowledge becomes. Therefore I am happy that you have had great tribulations and difficulties. For this I am very happy-that you have had many sorrows. Strange it is that I love you and still I am happy that you have sorrows.

*'Abdu'l-Bahá, Star of the West, Vol. 14, No. 2, p. 41*

**13.3** The mind and spirit of man advance when he is tried by suffering. The more the ground is ploughed the better the seed will grow, the better the harvest will be. Just as the plough furrows the earth deeply, purifying it of weeds and thistles, so suffering and tribulation free man from the petty affairs of this worldly life until he arrives at a state of complete detachment. His attitude in this world will be that of divine happiness. Man is, so to speak, unripe: the heat of the fire of suffering will mature him. Look back to the times past and you will find that the greatest men have suffered most.

*'Abdu'l-Bahá, Paris Talks, p. 178*

**13.4** These perils, sufferings and commotions are blessings in disguise, which pave the way and prepare the hearts of those who face and sustain them for a deeper realization and an earlier and fuller acceptance of the Divine Message of Bahá'u'lláh.

*Shoghi Effendi, Dawn of a New Day, p. 92*

**13.5** Whatsoever may happen is for the best, because affliction is but the essence of bounty, and sorrow and toil are mercy unalloyed, and anguish is peace of mind, and to make a sacrifice is to receive a gift, and whatsoever may come to pass hath issued from God's grace.

*'Abdu'l-Bahá, Selections from the 'Abdu'l-Bahá, p. 245*

**13.6** When he experienceth severe trials and hardships, then his nature will recoil and he will desire the eternal realm—a realm which is sanctified from all afflictions and calamities. Such is the case with the man who is wise. He shall never drink from a cup which is at the end distasteful, but, on the contrary, he will seek the cup of pure and limpid water. He will not taste of the honey that is mixed with poison.

*'Abdu'l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, p. 239*

**13.7** Reflect upon his holiness Job: What trials, calamities and perplexities did he not endure! But these tests were like unto the fire and his holiness Job was like unto pure gold. Assuredly gold is purified by being submitted to the fire and if it contain any alloy or imperfection, it will disappear. That is the reason why violent tests become the cause of the everlasting glory of the righteous and are conducive to the destruction and disappearance of the unrighteous.

The wisdom of all these tribulations that poured successively upon thee was this, that thou shouldst be prepared and made ready for this Cause, that thou mightest expect the attainment to the greatest guidance, for all these trials were but a preparation for thine entrance into the Most Exalted Paradise and the beginning of obtaining this most great benefit.

Unless the season of winter appear, thunder roll, lightning flash, snow and rain fall, hail and frost descend and the intensity of cold execute its command, the season of the soul-refreshing spring would not come, the fragrant breeze would not waft, the moderation of temperature would not be realized, the roses and hyacinths would not grow, the surface of the earth would not become a delectable paradise, the trees would not bloom, neither would they bring forth fruits and leaves. That fierce inclemency of cold, snow, frost and tempest was the beginning of the manifestation of these roses, hyacinths, buds, blossoms and fruits.

Therefore, be not distressed on account of those adversities which fell upon thee; nay, rather, arise and render thanks that the ultimate goal is the attainment to this eminent bounty and the enjoyment of this highest gift of the Almighty God. Consequently gird up the loins of thine endeavor, that thereby some results might be produced, some fruits gathered, the lamp of everlasting life ignited and the gifts of the Lord of the Kingdom be manifest, so that thou mayest accomplish again, with great yearning and exaltation, the worship of the Lord of Hosts.

*'Abdu'l-Bahá, Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, v3, pp. 655-656*

**13.8** Rest assured in the protection of God. He will preserve his own children under all circumstances. Be ye not afraid nor be ye agitated. He holds the sceptre of power in his hand, and like unto a hen he gathereth his chickens under his wings. “To everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under the sun. A time to be born, and a time to die, a time to weep and a time to laugh; a time to keep silent and a time to speak.” Now, friends, this is the time of assurance and faith and not fear and dread.

*'Abdu'l-Bahá, Star of the West, Vol. 8, No. 19, p. 241*

**13.9** If men had a sense of justice, when they observe that even during such periods of awful turmoil and with so many obstacles raised against it, still the Cause of God continues on its steady forward course—they would acknowledge its truth. . . . It is obvious that, were this Cause not the truth, such turmoil, such hindrances would already have put out its light. Since, however, this is God's Cause, it goes forward in spite of every obstacle, and torrents of hatred only feed its flame.

*'Abdu'l-Bahá, Summon Up Remembrance, by Marzieh Gail, p. 258*

**13.10** Adversity prepares the hearts of men, and paves the way for a wholehearted and general acceptance of the tenets and claims of our beloved Faith.

*Shoghi Effendi, Dawn of a New Day, p. 96*

## THE WARNING

### 14.1 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. By My beauty! All your doings hath My pen graven with open characters upon tablets of chrysolite.

*Bahá'u'lláh, The Hidden Words, Persian, no. 63*

**14.2** A tempest, unprecedented in its violence, unpredictable in its course, catastrophic in its immediate effects, unimaginably glorious in its ultimate consequences, is at present sweeping the face of the earth. Its driving power is remorselessly gaining in range and momentum. Its cleansing force, however much undetected, is increasing with every passing day. Humanity, gripped in the clutches of its devastating power, is smitten by the evidences of its resistless fury. It can neither perceive its origin, nor probe its significance, nor discern its outcome. Bewildered, agonized and helpless, it watches this great and mighty wind of God invading the remotest and fairest regions of the earth, rocking its foundations, deranging its equilibrium, sundering its nations, disrupting the homes of its peoples, wasting its cities, driving into exile its kings, pulling down its bulwarks, uprooting its institutions, dimming its light, and harrowing up the souls of its inhabitants.

*Shoghi Effendi, The Promised Day is Come, p. 1*

**14.3** O people! Let not this life and its deceits deceive you, for the world and all that is therein is held firmly in the grasp of His Will. He bestoweth His favor on whom He willeth, and from whom He willeth He taketh it away. He doth whatsoever He chooseth. Had the world been of any worth in His sight, He surely would never have allowed His enemies to possess it, even to the extent of a grain of mustard seed. He hath, however, caused you to be entangled with its affairs, in return for what your hands have wrought in His Cause. This, indeed, is a chastisement which ye, of your own will, have inflicted upon yourselves, could ye but perceive it. Are ye rejoicing in the things which, according to the estimate of God, are contemptible and worthless, things wherewith He proveth the hearts of the doubtful?

*Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, CIII, p. 209*

**14.4** *(Although the following paragraph is the same as 1.6, it is worth contemplating in view of the warning.)*

The violent derangement of the world's equilibrium; the trembling that will seize the limbs of mankind; the radical transformation of human society; the rolling up of the present-day Order; the fundamental changes affecting the structure of government; the weakening of the pillars of religion; the rise of dictatorships; the spread of tyranny; the fall of monarchies; the decline of ecclesiastical institutions; the increase of anarchy and chaos; the extension and consolidation of the Movement of the Left; the fanning into flame of the smoldering fire of racial strife; the development of infernal engines of war; the burning of cities; the contamination of the atmosphere of the earth — these stand out as the signs and portents that must either herald or accompany the retributive calamity which, as decreed by Him Who is the Judge and Redeemer of mankind, must, sooner or later, afflict a society which, for the most part, and for over a century, has turned a deaf ear to the Voice of God's Messenger in this day — a calamity which must purge the human race of the dross of its age-long corruptions, and weld its component parts into

a firmly-knit world-embracing Fellowship — a Fellowship destined, in the fullness of time, to be incorporated in the framework, and to be galvanized by the spiritualizing influences, of a mysteriously expanding, divinely appointed Order, and to flower, in the course of future Dispensations, into a Civilization, the like of which mankind has, at no stage in its evolution, witnessed.

*Shoghi Effendi, Messages to the Bahá'í World 1950-1957, p. 103*

**14.5** Brimful and bitter indeed is the cup of humanity that has failed to respond to the summons of God as voiced by His Supreme Messenger, that has dimmed the lamp of its faith in its Creator, that has transferred, in so great a measure, the allegiance owed Him to the gods of its own invention, and polluted itself with the evils and vices which such a transference must necessarily engender.

*Shoghi Effendi, The Promised Day is Come, p. 119*

**14.6** 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.

*Shoghi Effendi, World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 46*

### **14.7 O SON OF MAN!**

My calamity is My providence, outwardly it is fire and vengeance, but inwardly it is light and mercy. Hasten thereunto that thou mayest become an eternal light and an immortal spirit. This is My command unto thee, do thou observe it.

*Bahá'u'lláh, The Hidden Words, Arabic, no. 51*

**14.8** The rumblings of that catastrophic upheaval, which is to proclaim, at one and the same time, the death-pangs of the old order and the birth-pangs of the new, indicate both the steady approach, as well as the awe-inspiring character, of those tasks.

*Shoghi Effendi, The Advent of Divine Justice, p. 9*

**14.9** 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”?

*Shoghi Effendi, World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 46*

**14.10** For reasons which are only too obvious the Bahá'í philosophy of social and political organization cannot be fully reconciled with the political doctrines and conceptions that are current and much in vogue to-day. The wave of nationalism, so aggressive and so contagious in its effects, which has swept not only over Europe but over a large part of mankind is, indeed the very negation of the gospel of peace and of brotherhood proclaimed by Bahá'u'lláh. The actual trend in the political world is, indeed, far from being in the direction of the Bahá'í teachings. The world is drawing nearer and nearer to a universal catastrophe which will mark the end of a bankrupt and of a fundamentally defective civilization.

*Shoghi Effendi, The Light of Divine Guidance v1, p. 55*

**14.11** 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 peoples. 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!”

*Shoghi Effendi, The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 201*

**14.12** Verily I say: The greater the decline of religion, the more grievous the waywardness of the ungodly. This cannot but lead in the end to chaos and confusion. Hear Me, O men of insight, and be warned, ye who are endued with discernment!

*Bahá'u'lláh, Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 64*

**14.13** . . . woe and misery to the soul that seeketh after comforts, riches, and earthly delights while neglecting to call God to mind!

*'Abdu'l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, p. 240*

**14.14** . . . 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.

. . . 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 newborn age must arise to shoulder.

*Shoghi Effendi, World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 46*

## THE REMEDY

**15.1** The first remedy is to guide the people, so that they may turn unto God, hearken unto the divine commandments and go forth with hearing ear and seeing eye. After this swift and certain remedy hath been applied, then according to the divine teachings, they ought to be trained in the conduct, morals and deeds of the Supreme Concourse, encouraged and inspired with the gifts of the Kingdom of Abhá. The hearts should be purified and cleansed from every trace of hatred and rancor and enabled to engage in truthfulness, conciliation, uprightness and love toward the world of humanity; so that the East and West may embrace each other like unto two lovers, enmity and animosity may vanish from the human world and the universal peace be established!

*'Abdu'l-Bahá, Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, v1, pp. 36–37*

**15.2** It is this condition, so sadly morbid, into which society has fallen, that religion seeks to improve and transform. For the core of religious faith is that mystic feeling which unites Man with God. This state of spiritual communion can be brought about and maintained by means of meditation and prayer. And this is the reason why Bahá'u'lláh has so much stressed the importance of worship. It is not sufficient for a believer merely to accept and observe the teachings. He should, in addition, cultivate the sense of spirituality which he can acquire chiefly by means of prayer. The Bahá'í Faith, like all other Divine Religions, is thus fundamentally mystic in character. Its chief goal is the development of the individual and society, through the acquisition of spiritual virtues and powers. It is the soul of man which has first to be fed. And this spiritual nourishment prayer can best provide.

*Shoghi Effendi, Directives from the Guardian, pp. 86–87*

**15.3** Were these various nations to investigate reality, there is no doubt they would attain to it. As reality is one, all nations would then become as one nation. So long as they adhere to various imitations and are deprived of reality, strife and warfare will continue and rancor and sedition prevail. If they investigate reality, neither enmity nor rancor will remain, and they will attain to the utmost concord among themselves.

*'Abdu'l-Bahá, The Promulgation of Universal Peace, pp. 221–222*

**15.4** ... we need but recall the writings and sayings of Bahá'u'lláh, who, . . . declared in terms prophetic the prime cause of the ills and sufferings of mankind, and set forth their true and divine remedy. “Should the Lamp of Religion be hidden,” He declares, “Chaos and confusion will ensue.” How admirably fitting and applicable are these words to the present state of mankind!

*Shoghi Effendi, Bahá'i Administration, p. 50*

## THE PROMISE

**16.1** Soon 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.

*Baha'u'llah, Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, IV, p. 7*

**16.2** O people! The Day, promised unto you in all the Scriptures, is now come. Fear ye God, and withhold not yourselves from recognizing the One Who is the Object of your creation. Hasten ye unto Him.

Better is this for you than the world and all that is therein. Would that ye could perceive it!

*Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, CXLIV, p. 314*

**16.3** Bestir yourselves, O people, in anticipation of the days of Divine justice, for the promised hour is now come. Beware lest ye fail to apprehend its import and be accounted among the erring.

*Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, XII, p. 17*

**16.4** To the general character, the implications and features of this world commonwealth, destined to emerge, sooner or later, out of the carnage, agony, and havoc of this great world convulsion, I have already referred in my previous communications. Suffice it to say that this consummation will, by its very nature, be a gradual process, and must, as Bahá'u'lláh has Himself anticipated, lead at first to the establishment of that Lesser Peace which the nations of the earth, as yet unconscious of His Revelation and yet unwittingly

enforcing the general principles which He has enunciated, will themselves establish. This momentous and historic step, involving the reconstruction of mankind, as the result of the universal recognition of its oneness and wholeness, will bring in its wake the spiritualization of the masses, consequent to the recognition of the character, and the acknowledgement of the claims, of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh—the essential condition to that ultimate fusion of all races, creeds, classes, and nations which must signalize the emergence of His New World Order.

*Shoghi Effendi, The Promised Day is Come, p. 128*

**16.5** By My Self! 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.

*Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, CXLIII, p. 313*

**16.6** It is quite natural for anyone, observing the present state of the world, to feel very depressed and apprehensive of the future. Any intelligent person must be wondering what you are wondering. It is indeed hard to see what lies ahead of us in the near future—but we, as Bahá'ís, unlike most people, have absolute assurance that the distant future is serene and bright. We do not know if there will be another Great War; what we do know is this: that unless people become spiritually awakened in time, great suffering, maybe in the form of war, will come upon them, for humanity must be unified, must be redeemed. If men refuse absolutely to take the easier road of faith, of seeking out God's Manifestation for this age and accepting Him, then they will bring upon themselves a fresh crisis in human affairs and very great affliction. What we, as Bahá'ís, must do is our duty; we cannot do other people's duty for them, alas, but we can fulfil our own sacred responsibilities by serving our fellow-men, living a Bahá'í life, teaching the Faith, and strengthening its budding world order.

*Shoghi Effendi, The Unfolding Destiny of the British Bahá'í Community, p. 452*

**16.7** The American nation, . . . stands, indeed, from whichever angle one observes its immediate fortunes, in grave peril. The woes and tribulations which threaten it are partly avoidable, but mostly inevitable and God-sent, for by reason of them a government and people clinging tenaciously to the obsolescent doctrine of absolute sovereignty and upholding a political system, manifestly at variance with the needs of a world already contracted into a neighborhood and crying out for unity, will find itself purged of its anachronistic conceptions, and prepared to play a preponderating role, as foretold by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, in the hoisting of the standard of the Lesser Peace, in the unification of mankind, and in the establishment of a world federal government on this planet. These same fiery tribulations will not only firmly weld the American nation to its sister nations in both hemispheres, but will through their cleansing effect, purge it thoroughly of the accumulated dross which ingrained racial prejudice, rampant materialism, widespread ungodliness and moral laxity have combined, in the course of successive generations, to produce, and which have prevented her thus far from assuming the role of world spiritual leadership forecast by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s unerring pen—a role which she is bound to fulfill through travail and sorrow.

*Shoghi Effendi, Citadel of Faith, pp. 126–127*

**16.8** However, the fulfilment of glad-tidings, so glorious and heart-uplifting, must needs be heralded by awesome and distressing events, inasmuch as the realization of these irrevocable and divinely-ordained promises depends on the awakening and the stirring of the conscience of the entire human race, while this cannot be achieved save through the occurrence of unnumbered afflictions, manifold convulsions and growing adversities.

*Shoghi Effendi, Fire and Light, p. 32*

**16.9** As the dusk creeps over a steadily sinking society the radiant outlines of their redemptive mission become sharper every day. The present world unrest, symptom of a world-wide malady,

their world religion has already affirmed must needs culminate in that world catastrophe out of which the consciousness of world citizenship will be born, a consciousness that can alone provide an adequate basis for the organization of world unity, on which a lasting world peace must necessarily depend, the peace itself inaugurating in turn that world civilization which will mark the coming of age of the entire human race.

*Shoghi Effendi, Messages to America, pp. 22-23*

## ONENESS OF MANKIND

**17.1** The gift of God to this enlightened age is the knowledge of the oneness of mankind and of the fundamental oneness of religion.

*'Abdu'l-Bahá, 'Abdu'l-Bahá in London, p. 19*

**17.2** Bahá'u'lláh hath raised up the tabernacle of the oneness of mankind. Whoso seeketh shelter under this roof will certainly come forth from other dwellings.

*'Abdu'l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, p. 195*

**17.3** World order can be founded only on an unshakable consciousness of the oneness of mankind, a spiritual truth which all the human sciences confirm. Anthropology, physiology, psychology, recognize only one human species, albeit infinitely varied in the secondary aspects of life. Recognition of this truth requires abandonment of prejudice— prejudice of every kind—race, class, colour, creed, nation, sex, degree of material civilization, everything which enables people to consider themselves superior to others.

Acceptance of the oneness of mankind is the first fundamental prerequisite for reorganization and administration of the world as one country, the home of humankind.

*The Universal House of Justice, The Promise of World Peace, pp. 13–14*

**17.4** *(Although the following paragraphs are the same as 11.6 and 6.8, they are worth contemplating in view of the Oneness of Mankind.)*

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

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

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

*Shoghi Effendi, The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, pp. 42–43*

## THE GOLDEN AGE

**18.1** The Golden Age of the Faith itself that must witness the unification of all the peoples and nations of the world, the establishment of the Most Great Peace, the inauguration of the Kingdom of the Father upon earth, the coming of age of the entire human race and the birth of a world civilization, inspired and directed by the creative energies released by Bahá'u'lláh's World Order, shining in its meridian splendor, is still unborn and its glories unsuspected.

*Shoghi Effendi, God Passes By, pp. 411–412*

**18.2** God's purpose is none other than to usher in, in ways He alone can bring about, and the full significance of which He alone can fathom, the Great, the Golden Age of a long-divided, a long-afflicted humanity. Its present state, indeed even its immediate future, is dark, distressingly dark. Its distant future, however, is radiant, gloriously radiant—so radiant that no eye can visualize it.

“The winds of despair,” writes Bahá'u'lláh, as He surveys the immediate destinies of mankind, “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.” “Such shall be its plight,” He, in another connection, has declared, “that to disclose it now would not be meet and seemly.” “These fruitless strifes,” He, on the other hand, contemplating the future of mankind, has emphatically prophesied, in the course of His memorable interview with the Persian orientalist, Edward G. Browne, “these ruinous wars shall pass away, and the ‘Most Great Peace’ shall come. . . . These strifes and this bloodshed

and discord must cease, and all men be as one kindred and one family.” “Soon,” He predicts, “will the present-day order be rolled up, and a new one spread out in its stead.” “After a time,” He also has written, “all the governments on earth will change. Oppression will envelop the world. And following a universal convulsion, the sun of justice will rise from the horizon of the unseen realm.” “The whole earth,” He, moreover, has stated, “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.” “All nations and kindreds,” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá likewise has written, “. . . 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.”

*Shoghi Effendi, The Promised Day is Come, pp. 120-121*

**18.3** The ages of its infancy and childhood are past, never again to return, while the Great Age, the consummation of all ages, which must signalize the coming of age of the entire human race, is yet to come. The convulsions of this transitional and most turbulent period in the annals of humanity are the essential prerequisites, and herald the inevitable approach, of that Age of Ages, “the time of the end,” in which the folly and tumult of strife that has, since the dawn of history, blackened the annals of mankind, will have been finally transmuted into the wisdom and the tranquility of an undisturbed, a universal, and lasting peace, in which the discord and separation of the children of men will have given way to the worldwide reconciliation, and the complete unification of the divers elements that constitute human society.

This will indeed be the fitting climax of that process of integration which, starting with the family, the smallest unit in the scale of human organization, must, after having called successively into

being the tribe, the city-state, and the nation, continue to operate until it culminates in the unification of the whole world, the final object and the crowning glory of human evolution on this planet. It is this stage which humanity, willingly or unwillingly, is resistlessly approaching. It is for this stage that this vast, this fiery ordeal which humanity is experiencing is mysteriously paving the way. It is with this stage that the fortunes and the purpose of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh are indissolubly linked. It is the creative energies which His Revelation has released in the “year sixty,” and later reinforced by the successive effusions of celestial power vouchsafed in the “year nine” and the “year eighty” to all mankind, that have instilled into humanity the capacity to attain this final stage in its organic and collective evolution. It is with the Golden Age of His Dispensation that the consummation of this process will be forever associated. It is the structure of His New World Order, now stirring in the womb of the administrative institutions He Himself has created, that will serve both as a pattern and a nucleus of that world commonwealth which is the sure, the inevitable destiny of the peoples and nations of the earth.

Just as the organic evolution of mankind has been slow and gradual, and involved successively the unification of the family, the tribe, the city-state, and the nation, so has the light vouchsafed by the Revelation of God, at various stages in the evolution of religion, and reflected in the successive Dispensations of the past, been slow and progressive. Indeed the measure of Divine Revelation, in every age, has been adapted to, and commensurate with, the degree of social progress achieved in that age by a constantly evolving humanity.

“It hath been decreed by Us,” explains Bahá'u'lláh, “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.” “All created things,” ‘Abdu'l-Bahá, elucidating this truth, has affirmed, “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.” “In every Dispensation,” He moreover has written, “the light of Divine Guidance has been focused 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.”

*Shoghi Effendi, The Promised Day is Come, pp. 122–123*

**18.4** 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.

*Shoghi Effendi, The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 46*

**18.5** Please God, the peoples of the world may be led, as the result of the high endeavours exerted by their rulers and the wise and learned amongst men, to recognize their best interests. 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?

This humble servant is filled with wonder, inasmuch as all men are endowed with the capacity to see and hear, yet we find them deprived of the privilege of using these faculties.

*Bahá'u'lláh, Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 171*

**18.6** O ye friends! Dense and gloomy clouds have covered the horizon of the world, and the darkness of hatred, malignity, persecution, tyranny, and the greatest cruelty is spreading. All the people are drunk with the wine of heedlessness; and blood-thirstiness and rapaciousness are considered the noblest excellencies of the world of men.

His Highness the Almighty hath chosen the friends from among the concourse of men and hath especialized them with the most eminent guidance and the highest gift; so that we may with our souls and hearts exert ourselves, sacrifice our lives, be engaged in the guidance of the people and the training of souls; so that the wild beasts may become the gazelles of the meadows on unity; the wolves the sheep of God; the blood-thirsty ones the heavenly angels; the fire of malice be extinguished and the flame of safety in the blessed tabernacle bestow illumination; the odor of the nether realm of infidelity be dispelled and the fragrances of the rose-garden of faithfulness be diffused in all parts; the weak draw light from the Universal Reason and evil souls seek to be purified with the holy and divine Breath. There are needed manifestors for this gift; farmers for this field; gardeners for this rose-garden; fishers for this sea; luminous stars for this heaven; spiritual physicians for these ill ones,

and loving guides for these wanderers; so that they may bestow a share to those who are deprived, grant a portion to those who are shareless, give unmeasured treasure to the indigent ones, and show forth the power of proof to the seekers.

*'Abdu'l-Bahá, Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, v3, pp. 567–568*

## HEAVENLY CIVILIZATION

**18.7** Until the heavenly civilization is founded, no result will be forthcoming from material civilization, even as you observe. See what catastrophes overwhelm mankind. Consider the wars which disturb the world. Consider the enmity and hatred. The existence of these wars and conditions indicates and proves that the heavenly civilization has not yet been established. If the civilization of the Kingdom be spread to all the nations, this dust of disagreement will be dispelled, these clouds will pass away and the Sun of Reality in its greatest effulgence and glory will shine upon mankind.

*'Abdu'l-Bahá, Bahá'í World Faith, p. 257*

**18.8** . . .this civilization and material progress should be combined with the Most Great Guidance so that this nether world may become the scene of the appearance of the bestowals of the Kingdom, and physical achievements may be conjoined with the effulgences of the Merciful. This in order that the beauty and perfection of the world of man may be unveiled and be manifested before all in the utmost grace and splendour. Thus everlasting glory and happiness shall be revealed.

*'Abdu'l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, p. 285*

## THE CHALLENGES

**19.1** “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.”

*Shoghi Effendi, The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 162*

**19.2** The civilization, 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. Thus warneth you He Who is the All-Knowing. 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 . . .

*Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, CLXIV, pp. 342–343*

**19.3** In all matters moderation is desirable. If a thing is carried to excess, it will prove a source of evil. Consider the civilization of the West, how it hath agitated and alarmed the peoples of the world. An infernal engine hath been devised, and hath proved so cruel a weapon of destruction that its like none hath ever witnessed or heard.

The purging of such deeply-rooted and overwhelming corruptions cannot be effected unless the peoples of the world unite in pursuit of one common aim and embrace one universal faith. Incline your ears unto the Call of this Wronged One and adhere firmly to the Lesser Peace.

*Bahá'u'lláh, Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 69*

**19.4** 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.

*Shoghi Effendi, The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 161*

**19.5** 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; . . . —these appear as the outstanding characteristics of a decadent society, a society that must either be reborn or perish.

*Shoghi Effendi, The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, pp. 187–188*

**19.6** This Plan to which we are now committed is set at one of the most critical times in the life of the planet. It is meant to prepare our community to cope with the accelerating changes that are occurring in the world about us and to place the community in a position both to withstand the weight of the accompanying tests and challenges and to make more visible a pattern of functioning to which the world can turn for aid and example in the wake of a tumultuous transition. Thus, this Plan acquires a special place in the scheme of Bahá'í and world history. Those of us who are alive to the vision of the Faith are particularly privileged to be consciously engaged in efforts intended to stimulate and eventually enhance such processes.

*The Universal House of Justice, Ridvan Message, 153, 1996*

**19.7** . . . a society which, for the most part, and for over a century, has turned a deaf ear to the Voice of God's Messenger in this day . . . .”

*Shoghi Effendi, Messages to the Bahá'í World 1950-1957, p. 103*

**19.8** 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.”

*Shoghi Effendi, The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 32*

## SANCTIFIED SOUL

**19.9** We make a differentiation in these subjects. When we speak of the soul we mean the motive power of this physical body which lives under its entire control in accordance with its dictates. If the soul identifies itself with the material world it remains dark, for in the natural world there is corruption, aggression, struggles for existence, greed, darkness, transgression and vice. If the soul remains in this station and moves along these paths it will be the recipient of this darkness; but if it becomes the recipient of the graces of the world of mind, its darkness will be transformed into light, its tyranny into justice, its ignorance into wisdom, its aggression into loving kindness; until it reach the apex. Then there will not remain any struggle for existence. Man will become free from egotism; he will be released from the material world; he will become the personification of justice and virtue, for a sanctified soul illumines humanity and is an honor to mankind, conferring life upon the children of men and suffering all nations to attain to the station of perfect unity. Therefore, we can apply the name “holy soul” to such a one.

*'Abdu'l-Bahá, 'Abu'l-Bahá on Divine Philosophy, pp. 120–121*

## THE STANDARD

**20.1** All men have been created to carry forward an ever-advancing civilization. The Almighty beareth Me witness: To act like the beasts of the field is unworthy of man. Those virtues that befit his dignity are forbearance, mercy, compassion and loving-kindness towards all the peoples and kindreds of the earth.

*Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, CIX, p. 215*

**20.2** *(Although the following paragraph is also in 6.5 and 18.3, it is worth contemplating in view of the Standard.)*

”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.” “In every Dispensation,” He moreover has written, “the light of Divine Guidance has been focused 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.”

*Shoghi Effendi quoting 'Abdu'l-Bahá, The Promised Day is Come, pp. 123–124*

**20.3** War and rapine with their attendant cruelties are an abomination to God, and bring their own punishment, for the God of love is also a God of justice and each man must inevitably reap what he sows. Let us try to understand the commands of the Most High and to order our lives as He directs. True happiness depends on spiritual good and having the heart ever open to receive the Divine Bounty.

If the heart turns away from the blessings God offers how can it hope for happiness? If it does not put its hope and trust in God's Mercy, where can it find rest? Oh, trust in God! for His Bounty is everlasting, and in His Blessings, for they are superb. Oh! Put your faith in the Almighty, for He faileth not and His goodness endureth forever!

*'Abdu'l-Bahá, Paris Talks, p. 108*

## PRAYERS

**21.1** O Lord! Wars have persisted. Distress and anxiety have waxed great and every flourishing region is laid waste.

O Lord! Hearts are heavy, and souls are in anguish. Have mercy on these poor souls and do not leave them to the excesses of their own desires.

O Lord! Make manifest in Thy lands humble and submissive souls, their faces illumined with the rays of guidance, severed from the world, extolling Thy Name, uttering Thy praise, and diffusing the fragrance of Thy holiness amongst mankind.

O Lord! Strengthen their backs, gird up their loins, and enrapture their hearts with the most mighty signs of Thy love.

O Lord! Verily, they are weak, and Thou art the Powerful and the Mighty; they are impotent, and Thou art the Helper and the Merciful.

O Lord! The ocean of rebellion is surging, and these tempests will not be stilled save through Thy boundless grace which hath embraced all regions.

O Lord! Verily, the people are in the abyss of passion, and naught can save them but Thine infinite bounties.

O Lord! Dispel the darkness of these corrupt desires, and illumine the hearts with the lamp of Thy love through which all countries will ere long be enlightened. Confirm, moreover, Thy loved ones, those who, leaving their homelands, their families and their children, have, for the love of Thy Beauty, traveled to foreign countries to diffuse Thy fragrances and promulgate Thy teachings. Be Thou their companion in their loneliness, their helper in a strange land, the remover of their sorrows, their comforter in calamity. Be Thou a refreshing draught for their thirst, a healing medicine for their ills and a balm for the burning ardor of their hearts.

Verily, Thou art the Most Generous, the Lord of grace abounding, and, verily, Thou art the Compassionate and the Merciful.

*'Abdu'l-Bahá, Tablets of the Divine Plan, p. 57*

**21.2** Ordain for me, O my Lord, and for those who believe in Thee that which is deemed best for us in Thine estimation, as set forth in the Mother Book, for within the grasp of Thy hand Thou holdest the determined measures of all things.

Thy goodly gifts are unceasingly showered upon such as cherish Thy love, and the wondrous tokens of Thy heavenly bounties are amply bestowed on those who recognize Thy divine Unity. We commit unto Thy care whatsoever Thou hast destined for us, and implore Thee to grant us all the good that Thy knowledge embraceth.

Protect me, O my Lord, from every evil that Thine omniscience perceiveth, inasmuch as there is no power nor strength but in Thee, no triumph is forthcoming save from Thy presence, and it is Thine alone to command. Whatever God hath willed hath been, and that which He hath not willed shall not be.

There is no power nor strength except in God, the Most Exalted, the Most Mighty.

*The Báb, Bahá'í Prayers, p. 131*

# GLOSSARY & MEANING OF WORDS

ABJECT	the state of being extremely unhappy, poor, unsuccessful, etc.
ABOMINATION	something that you dislike and disapprove of
ABROGATE	to end a law, agreement, or custom formally
ADHERE	to stick firmly
ADOLESCENCE	the period of time in a person's life when they are developing into an adult
ADVERSITY	a difficult or unlucky situation or event
AFFLICTIVE	suffering from a problem or illness
AGONIZED	showing or feeling extreme physical or mental pain
ALLUSIONS	something that is said or written that is intended to make you think of a particular thing or person
AMPLY	more than enough
ANACHRONISTIC	a person, thing, or idea that exists out of its time in history
ANARCHY	a situation in which there is no organization and control, especially in society, because there is no effective government
ANGUISH	extreme unhappiness caused by physical or mental suffering
ANTAGONISM	hate, extreme unfriendliness, or active opposition to someone
ANTIQUATED	old-fashioned or unsuitable for modern society
ANVIL	a heavy iron block with a flat top and concave sides, on which metal can be hammered and shaped
APING	imitate (someone or something), especially in an absurd or unthinking way
APPREHENSIVE	feeling worried about something that you are going to do or that is going to happen
ARDOR	great enthusiasm or love
ARROGANT	unpleasantly proud and behaving as if you are more important than, or know more than, other people
ASCENDANCY	a position of power, strength, or success

ASSERTS	to behave in a way that expresses your confidence, importance, or power and earns you respect from others
ASSUAGE	to make unpleasant feelings less strong
BALEFUL	threatening to do something bad or to hurt someone
BALM	an oil that comes from particular tropical trees and is used especially to treat injuries or reduce pain: remedy
BASENESS	a lack of any honour or morals
BEFOG	make confused
BEGUILE	to persuade, attract, or interest someone, sometimes in order to deceive them
BEREFT	not having something
BEWILDERED	confused and uncertain
BRIMFUL	full of something good
BUFFETED	(especially of wind or waves) strike repeatedly and violently; batter. knock (someone) off course. (of difficulties) afflict (someone) over a long period.
BULWARKS	something that protects you from dangerous or unpleasant situations
CALVARY	1 : an open-air representation of the crucifixion of Jesus. 2 : an experience of usually intense mental suffering.
CATAclysmic	causing a lot of destruction, or a sudden, violent change
CHASTENED	to make someone understand that they have failed or done something wrong and make them want to improve
CHASTISEMENT	a severe criticism or punishment
CHRONIC	(especially of a disease or something bad) continuing for a long time
CHRYSOLITE	a yellowish-green or brownish variety of olivine, used as a gemstone; one of the precious stones in the foundation of the heavenly Jerusalem. (Revelation 21:20); The name chrysolite means gold stone.
CLAMOROUS	making loud demands or complaints
CLEAVE	to separate or divide, or cause something to separate or divide, often violently
COALESCE	If two or more things coalesce, they come or grow together to form one thing or system
COILS	a length of something wound in a joined sequence of concentric rings. A coil is a spiral shape or a series of circles, each one inside another
COLOSSAL	extremely large

COMMOTIONS	a sudden, short period of noise, confusion, or excited movement
COMPELLED	having to do something, because you are forced to or feel it is necessary
CONJOINED	joined together
CONSECRATED	something that has been consecrated has been made holy and is able to be used for religious ceremonies
CONSOLE	to make someone who is sad or disappointed feel better by giving them comfort or sympathy
CONSTERNATION	a feeling of worry, shock, or confusion
CONTEMPTIBLE	deserving contempt: a strong feeling of disliking and having no respect for someone or something
CONVULSE	to (cause to) shake violently with sudden uncontrolled movements
CONVULSIONS	a sudden movement of the muscles in your body that you cannot control, caused by illness or drugs
CORROSIVE	If metal corrodes, or if something corrodes it, it is slowly damaged by something such as rain or water
COUNTERFEIT	made to look like the original of something, usually for dishonest or illegal purposes
CRASS	stupid and without considering how other people might feel
CREEDS	a set of beliefs that influences the way you live
CYNIC	a person who believes that people are only interested in themselves and are not sincere
DEBARRED	to stop someone from doing something by law or by official agreement
DECADENCE	low moral standards and behaviour
DEGENERACY	behaviour that shows very low moral standards
DELIBERATIONS	considering or discussing something
DELUDED	believing things that are not real or true
DENOUNCED	to criticize something or someone strongly and publicly
DERANGEMENT	the state of being completely unable to think clearly or behave in a controlled way, especially because of mental illness
DESTITUTE	without money, food, a home, or possessions
DEVOURING	a devouring emotion is extremely strong and usually causes damage
DISCERN	to see, recognize, or understand something that is not clear
DISCERNMENT	the ability to judge people and things well

DISCORD	the state of not agreeing or sharing opinions
DISCORDANT	producing an unpleasant sound
DISILLUSION	to disappoint someone by telling them the unpleasant truth about something or someone that they had a good opinion of or respected
DISMAY	sad and without hope
DISSENSION	arguments and disagreement, especially in an organization, group, political party, etc.
DIVISIVE	used to describe something that causes great and sometimes unfriendly disagreement within a group of people
DRAUGHT	a single act of drinking or inhaling
DROSS	something that has no use or no value
DWELLINGS	a house or place to live in
EBULLITIONS	the state or act of boiling
ECCLESIASTICAL	belonging to or connected with the Christian religion
EFFLORESCENCE	the period when flowers start to appear on a plant
EFFULGENCE	the ability to shine brightly
EGOTISM	thinking only about yourself and considering yourself better and more important than other people
ENCOMPASSED	to include different types of things
ENDUED	endow or provide with a quality or ability
ENERVATED	to make someone feel weak and without energy
ENGENDER	to make people have a particular feeling or make a situation start to exist
ENMESHED	to catch or involve someone in something unpleasant or dangerous from which it is difficult to escape
ENNOBLING	to make something or someone better so that people admire it, him, or her more
ENRAPTURE	to give someone very great pleasure
ENSHRINED	If a political or social right is enshrined in something, it is protected by being included in it
ENSHROUDS	to cover something so that it cannot be seen clearly
ENSUE	to happen after something else, especially as a result of it
ENTANGLED	involved with something or someone in a way that makes it difficult to escape
ENUNCIATED	to pronounce words or parts of words clearly
EPHEMERAL	lasting for only a short time

ERELONG	soon
EXIGENCIES	the difficulties of a situation, especially one that causes urgent demands
EXPONENT	a person who supports an idea or belief or performs an activity
EXPULSION	(the act of) forcing someone, or being forced, to leave a school, organization, or country
EXTRICATE	to remove something or set something free with difficulty
FAIN	willingly or happily, pleased or willing under the circumstances
FELICITY	happiness, luck, or a condition that produces positive results
FERMENTATION	the process of the sugar in food or drink changing into alcohol because of a chemical process
FIERCENESS	the quality of being physically violent and frightening
FIERY	bright red, like fire
FRENZIED	uncontrolled and excited, sometimes violent
FURROWS	a long line or hollow that is formed or cut into the surface of something
GENERATIVE	able to produce or create something
GENESIS	the origin of something, when it is begun or starts to exist
GIRD UP	to get ready to do something
GRAVEN	an object made especially from wood, stone, etc. and used for religious worship deeply impressed; firmly fixed
GRAVEST	giving cause for alarm; serious
GRIEVOUS	having very serious effects or causing great pain
HARBINGER	a person or thing that shows that something is going to happen soon
HARROWING	extremely upsetting because connected with suffering
HASTEN	to make something happen sooner or more quickly
HAVOC	confusion and lack of order, especially causing damage or trouble
HEARKEN	to listen
HEEDLESS	not giving attention to a risk or possible difficulty
HERALDING	to be a sign that something important, and often good, is starting to happen, or to make something publicly known, especially by celebrating or praising it
HIERARCHIES	a system in which people or things are arranged according to their importance

HOVERING	to stay in one place in the air, usually by moving the wings quickly
HYACINTHS	a pleasant-smelling plant with a lot of small flowers that grow close together around one thick stem
LANGUISHING	to exist in an unpleasant or unwanted situation, often for a long time
IMBUED	to fill something or someone with a quality or feeling
IMMEMORIAL	for a very long time
IMPEDE	to make it more difficult for something to happen or more difficult for someone to do something
IMPERATIVE	extremely important or urgent
IMPERIL	to put something or someone at risk or in danger of being harmed or destroyed
IMPERMANENT	not lasting forever or not lasting for a long time
IMPETUOUSNESS	the quality or fact of doing things suddenly, without considering the results of your actions
IMPREGNABLE	A building or other place that is impregnable is so strongly built and/or defended that it cannot be entered by force
INALIENABLE	unable to be removed
INAUGURATION	the act of officially putting someone into an important position, or the ceremony at which this is done
INCLEMENCY	Inclement weather is unpleasant, especially with cold wind and rain
INEVITABLY	certain to happen and unable to be avoided or prevented
INFERNAL	very bad or unpleasant
INFIDEL	someone who does not have the same religious beliefs as the person speaking
INSCRUTABLE	not showing emotions or thoughts and therefore very difficult to understand or get to know
INSIDIOUSLY	(of something unpleasant or dangerous) in a way that gradually and secretly causes harm
INTREPID	extremely brave and showing no fear of dangerous situations
INVARIABLY	always
INVETERATE	someone who does something very often and cannot stop doing it
IRREVOCABLE	impossible to change
KINDRED	one's family and relations
LAMENTABLY	in a way that deserves severe criticism or is very bad

LAMENTS	to express sadness and feeling sorry about something
LAXITY	without much care, attention, or control
LETHARGY	having little energy; feeling unwilling and unable to do anything
LIMPID	clearly expressed and easily understood
LURID	(especially of a description) shocking because involving violence, sex, or immoral activity
MALIGNITY	the quality of intending to cause harm
MARSHAL	to bring together or organize people or things in order to achieve a particular aim
MASQUERADING	behaviour that is intended to prevent the truth about something unpleasant or not wanted from becoming known
MERIDIAN SPLENDOR	of or passing through the highest point in the daily course of any celestial body. of or at the highest point of prosperity, splendor, power, etc. of or along a meridian
MISERIES	great unhappiness
MITIGATION	the act of reducing how harmful, unpleasant, or bad something is
MORBID	too interested in unpleasant subjects, especially death
NASCENT	only recently formed or started, but likely to grow larger quickly
OBLIVIOUS	not conscious of something, especially what is happening around you
OMINOUS	suggesting that something unpleasant is likely to happen
OMNISCIENCE	the quality of having or seeming to have unlimited knowledge
ONSLAUGHT	a very powerful attack
PALPABLE	so obvious that it can easily be seen or known, or (of a feeling) so strong that it seems as if it can be touched or physically felt
PATHETIC	causing feelings of sadness, sympathy, or sometimes lack of respect, especially because a person or an animal is suffering
PERNICIOUS	having a very harmful effect or influence
PERPETUAL	continuing for ever in the same way
PERPLEXITY	a state of confusion or a complicated and difficult situation or thing
PERTURBATION	worry
PERVADE	when qualities, characteristics, or smells pervade a place or thing, they spread through it and are present in every part of it

PERVERSY	the quality of being strange and not what most people would do or expect
PLIGHT	an unpleasant condition, especially a serious, sad, or difficult one
PORTEOUS	too serious and trying to be very important
PORTENTS	a sign that something bad is likely to happen in the future
PRECIPITATE	to make something happen suddenly or sooner than expected
PRELUDE	something that comes before a more important event or action that introduces or prepares for it
PREPONDERATING	to be more important or larger in size or number than other people or things in a group
PREREQUISITES	something that must exist or happen before something else can exist or happen
PRIVATION	a lack of the basic things that are necessary for an acceptable standard of living
PRODIGALITY	the quality of spending or using large amounts of money, time, energy, etc., especially in a way that is not very wise
PROFFER	to offer something by holding it out, or to offer advice or an opinion
PROFOUND	felt or experienced very strongly or in an extreme way
PROLIFIC	producing a great number or amount of something
PROVIDENCE	an influence that is not human in origin and is thought to control people's lives
PUNY	small; weak; not effective
PURGATION	purification or cleansing
PURGING	removing and getting rid of things
QUAKE	to shake because you are very frightened or to feel or show great fear
RAMIFICATIONS	the possible results of an action
RAMPANT	getting worse quickly and in an uncontrolled way
RANCOR	a feeling of hate and continuing anger about something in the past
RAPINE	to feel sad or complain about something, especially a bad situation
RAVAGED	to cause great damage to something
RECOIL	to move back because of fear or disgust
RECRUDESCENCE	a sudden new appearance and growth, especially of something dangerous and unpleasant

REIN	if you give free rein to someone, you give them a lot of freedom to do what they want
REMINISCENT	making you remember a particular person, event, or thing
REMORSELESSLY	in a way that shows no sadness or guilt about doing something wrong
REPOSE	to rest or lie
RETRIBUTIVE	relating to, or intended to be, deserved and severe punishment
SAGACIOUS	having or showing understanding and the ability to make good judgments
SANCTIFY	to make something socially or officially acceptable
SEDITION	1. language or behaviour that is intended to persuade other people to oppose their government 2. conduct or speech inciting people to rebel against the authority of a state or monarch
SEVERITY	seriousness
SMITTEN	having suddenly started to like or love something or someone very much
SOLEMN	serious and without any humour
SPASMODIC	happening suddenly for short periods of time and not in a regular way
SPROUTING	to produce leaves, hair, or other new developing parts, or to begin to grow
SPURN	to refuse to accept something or someone because you feel that thing or person is not worth having
STIRRING	a stirring speech or song is one that produces strong, positive emotions.
STOUT	(especially of older people) fat and solid-looking, especially around the waist
SUBVERSIVE	trying to destroy or damage something, especially an established political system
SUCCOR	helping and co-operating
SUNDER	to break something apart
SUPREME CONCOURSE	The Concourse on High is a Bahá'í term for the spiritual gathering of God's prophets, known as Manifestations, along with His other holy and chosen souls.
SURMOUNT	to deal successfully with a difficulty or problem
SUSCEPTIBILITIES	the fact that someone or something can easily be influenced, harmed, or infected
SYNCHRONIZATION	the act of making things happen at the same time:

TEMPEST	a violent storm
TEND	to be likely to behave in a particular way or have a particular characteristic
TENTACLES	one of the long, thin parts like arms of some sea animals, used for feeling and holding things, catching food, or moving
TENUOUS	thin, weak, and easily broken
THISTLES	a wild plant with sharp points on the leaves
THROES	experiencing or doing something that is difficult, unpleasant, or painful
TOIL	hard work, especially work that makes you feel physically tired
TORPOR	the state of not being active and having no energy or enthusiasm
TOTTERING	walking with difficulty in a way that looks as if you are about to fall
TRANQUILLIZED	to make an animal or person become unconscious or calm, especially with a drug
TRANSMUTING	to change something completely, especially into something different and better
TRAVAIL	an unpleasant experience or situation, especially one that involves a lot of hard work or effort
TUMULT	a loud noise, especially that produced by an excited crowd, or a state of confusion, change, or uncertainty
TUMULTUOUS	very loud, or full of confusion, change, or uncertainty
TYRANNY	government by a ruler or small group of people who have unlimited power over the people in their country or state and use it unfairly and cruelly
UNALLOYED	(especially of a positive feeling) not spoiled by any amount of negative feeling; pure
UNCEASINGLY	in a way that is continuing and unlikely to stop
UNEMANCIPATED	limited socially or politically
UNEQUIVOCAL	total, or expressed in a clear and certain way
UNEQUIVOCALLY	in a way that is total, or expressed very clearly with no doubt
UNFURL	If a flag, sail, or banner unfurls, it becomes open from a rolled position, and if you unfurl a flag, etc., you make it do this
UNREMITTINGLY VALIANT	in a way that never improves or becomes less very brave or bravely determined, especially when things are difficult or the situation gives no cause for hope
VEHEMENCE	the forceful expression of strong feelings

VICISSITUDES	a change of circumstances or fortune, typically one that is unwelcome or unpleasant
VOGUE	general acceptance or favour; popularity.
VORTEX	a whirling mass of fluid or air
WAFT	a gentle movement of air.
WARBLE	(of a bird) to sing pleasantly
WAYWARDNESS	quality of being wayward (doing only what you want, in a way that is difficult to control)
WITHAL	in addition
WOE	big problems or troubles, extreme sadness
WRETCHED	unpleasant or of low quality
‘YA BAHÁ’U’L-ABHÁ’	“Yá Bahá’u’l-Abhá” is an invocation meaning: “O Thou Glory of Glories!” or “O Glory of the All-Glorious”
YAWNING	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>used to describe a difference or amount that is extremely large and difficult to reduce</li> <li>be wide open; gaping open; cavernous: a yawning abyss</li> </ol>