

SHOGHI EFFENDI,
THE SIGN OF GOD ON
EARTH

by Grace Shahrokh
and
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*Shoghi Effendi, O Guardian, thou art divine,
Shoghi Effendi, O God's Sign --
The Priceless Pearl, a title of thine.
Ghusn-i-Mumt'az, O Chosen Branch,
Thou art divine.*

*O Shoghi, with name Yearning Divine
Your lineage from the Most Holy Line.
Shoghi Effendi, O Guardian,
Thou art divine.*

*O Guardian, the Chosen Branch beyond compare --
May it be worthy, this offering of mine.
O Ghusn-i-Mumt'az, O Chosen Branch,
Thou art divine.*

Preface

Windows to the Past is a series of audio presentations on the history of the Bahá'í Faith, written and presented by Dr. Darius Shahrokh with the assistance of his wife, Grace Shahrokh. This series was inspired by the author's wish to make available to the Western audience details from a number of histories of the Faith unavailable in English. The audio series has become a convenient and valuable aid for those with limited time to read who wish to become acquainted with the history of the Faith and those noble persons whose lives are an example to others.

Since the original release of the *Windows to the Past* series, an interest has grown in making these brief and accessible histories available in printed form. Hence, the present publication, the first to be edited and to become available in a form other than a simple transcription.

It is appropriate that this first book in a series be devoted to Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith. It was due to the efforts of Shoghi Effendi that the English-speaking world was introduced to the early events of Bahá'í history. Through his translation of *Nabil's Narrative* and his masterful history, *God Passes By*, Western Bahá'ís gained a fuller understanding of what it was to be a "spiritual descendant of the Dawn-Breakers." But Shoghi Effendi's modesty prevented him from any mention of his own significant role in the formative period of Bahá'í history. Thanks to Hands of the Cause Amatu'l-Bahá Ruhiyyih Khanum,

Ugo Giachery, and Amelia Collins, and to Eunice Braun and Adib Taherzadeh, there are now published histories that begin the task of properly crediting Shoghi Effendi for his literary gifts, administrative genius, and sterling character, all of which have had an impact upon the life of every contemporary Bahá'í.

This modest history of the Guardian's life and works is designed to be used in Institute courses, as a supplement to workbooks and course materials. It makes no claim to be comprehensive; rather, it attempts to make accessible a rapid overview of the life of the Guardian. It is our hope that it might open a door for the current generation of youthful readers to a greater appreciation of the gifts of Shoghi Effendi.

Mary K. Radpour

July, 1998
Chattanooga, Tennessee

Shoghi Effendi: His Life and Person

Family and Destiny

Shoghi Effendi was born on March 1, 1897 in 'Akká, Israel as his great-grandfather, Bahá'u'lláh, and his grandfather, 'Abdu'l-Bahá Abbás, had been exiled there from their native country of Irán. He was the firstborn of his mother, Díyá'íyyih Khánum, who was the eldest daughter of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. His father was Mírzá Hádí Shirází, a descendant of a relative of the Báb.

From the time of his birth, 'Abdu'l-Bahá was aware of the capacity and future of His first grandson. In 1897, in reply to an inquiry from a believer in America about the Biblical prophecy "*A little child shall lead them,*"¹ 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote "*O Maidservant of God! Verily, that child is born and is alive and from him will appear wondrous things that thou wilt hear of in the future. Thou shalt behold him endowed with the most perfect appearance, supreme capacity, absolute perfection, consummate power and unsurpassed might. His face will shine with a radiance that illumines all the horizons of the world; therefore forget this not as long as thou dost live inasmuch as ages and centuries will bear traces of him..*"²

'Abdu'l-Bahá gave him the surname Rabbáni, which means 'divine',³ and Shoghi, meaning "*the one who yearns.*" 'Effendi'⁴ is a term of respect, and the Master called him Shoghi Effendi from

childhood on, and required everyone else to address him as Shoghi Effendi.

His Character in Childhood

There is an account left by a Western pilgrim, who observed the love between 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi: "*...a small figure appeared in the open doorway, directly opposite 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Having dropped off his shoes he stepped into the room, with his eyes focused on the Master's face. 'Abdu'l-Bahá returned his gaze with such a look of loving welcome it seemed to beckon the small one to approach Him. Shoghi, that beautiful little boy with his exquisite cameo face and his soulful appealing, dark eyes, walked slowly toward the divan, the Master drawing him as by an invisible thread, until he stood quite close in front of Him. As he paused there for a moment 'Abdu'l-Bahá did not offer to embrace him but sat perfectly still, only nodding His head . . . as if to say 'You see? This tie connecting us is not just that of a physical grandfather, but something far deeper and more significant.' While we breathlessly watched to see what he would do, the little boy reached down and picking up the hem of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's robe he touched it reverently to his forehead and kissed it, then gently replaced it, while never taking his eyes from the adored Master's face. The next moment he turned away, and scampered off to play . . .*"⁵ This was 1899, and Shoghi Effendi was only two years old.

A pilgrim to the house of the Master in 1904 related the following to Hand of the Cause Dr. Ugo Giachery, "*Shoghi Effendi was at the time a child of seven or eight years of age. . . . When not engaged in his early morning studies, he followed his Grandfather ['Abdu'l-Bahá] wherever He went. He was almost like His shadow*

*and passed long hours . . . listening, quietly and silently, to every word He uttered. The child had a remarkably retentive memory . . . ,the Master would ask him either to recite some passage from Bahá'u'lláh's Writings, which he had memorized, or to chant a prayer. It was very moving to hear the limpid, crystal chanting of that child, because all his being and soul were engaged in communion with God. Eagerness was ever present and animated him like a flame of fire in all he did."*¹⁶

In addition to this remarkable reverential devotion and attachment to his beloved Grandfather 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Shoghi Effendi had boundless energy, irrepressible exuberance with his playmates and was so fair and tender-hearted that if any disagreements had occurred, he would not go to sleep until he had embraced his playmate and reestablished happiness. He urged his little companions to make up their differences before they went to bed.

Childhood photos of Shoghi Effendi portray a wistful, delicate face and large dark eyes with a gaze both penetrating and gentle. In the biography, *The Priceless Pearl*, his widow, Hand-of-the-Cause Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhiyyih Khánum writes that his eyes were a clear hazel that sometimes changed to a warm and luminous grey. *"I have never seen such an expressive face and eyes as those of the Guardian; every shade of feeling and thought was mirrored in his visage as light and shadow are reflected on water."*¹⁷ She writes that Shoghi Effendi was more akin physically to his Great-Grandfather, Bahá'u'lláh, being short of stature and fine-boned. The Greatest Holy Leaf, his great-aunt, would say of his hands, *"These are like the hands of my father."*¹⁸

Youth and Education

In 1912, when he was 15, 'Abdu'l-Bahá planned for Shoghi Effendi to accompany Him on His historic journey to Europe and America. They departed together from the port of Alexandria, Egypt, but at the first docking at Naples, Italy, health authorities denied landing privileges to Shoghi Effendi and two others in 'Abdu'l-Bahá's party, claiming they had eye disease. 'Abdu'l-Bahá made every effort to change this decision which had no basis in fact, but was a malicious interference by someone in the company of 'Abdu'l-Bahá who later became a covenant-breaker. One can hardly imagine the distress and grief of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi when they had to part, Shoghi Effendi returning to Haifa. As was constant in his life, Shoghi Effendi suffered many blows and heartaches from the malice of the Covenant-breakers throughout his life. He was reunited with his beloved Grandfather in August 1913.

A physician who attended the ladies of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's household left reminiscences of a visit in 1910. She reports that 'Abdu'l-Bahá spoke to her about Shoghi Effendi as follows: *"Before His ascension into eternal Light the blessed Manifestation reminded me that I . . . must observe among my sons and grandsons whom God would indicate for His office. My sons passed to eternity in their tenderest years, in my line, among my relatives, only little Shoghi has the shadow of a great calling in the depths of his eyes. . . . At the present time the British Empire is the greatest and is still expanding and its language is a world language. My future Vazir shall receive the preparation for his weighty office in England itself, after he has obtained here in Palestine a fundamental knowledge of the oriental languages and the wisdom of the East."*¹⁹

Shoghi Effendi attended school in Haifa, then at the American University in Beirut, graduating in 1918 as Bachelor of Arts. He then served the Master, as His secretary and chief aide. In August 1918, Palestine (now the country of Israel) was liberated by the rapid and victorious advance of British forces, frustrating the plan of the Turkish Commander in Chief Jamál Páshá to crucify 'Abdu'l-Bahá and His whole family.

After World War I, the doors were opened for communications and pilgrims, making the life of the Master extremely busy. Shoghi Effendi spent a happy and productive two years serving 'Abdu'l-Bahá as secretary and chief aide with boundless energy and devotion, helping to lift the burden from His shoulders, and receiving profound spiritual influence in close communication with his beloved Grandfather. As Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánúm writes, *"During these years, when the star of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's fame was rising . . . Shoghi Effendi had the opportunity of observing how the Master dealt with high officials and the numerous men of distinction drawn to one Whom many regarded as little less than an oriental prophet and the greatest religious figure in Asia, as well as how the Master conducted Himself in the face of the ever-present envy and intrigue of His enemies and ill-wishers. The lessons learned were to be reflected in the thirty-six years of Shoghi Effendi's own ministry to the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh."*¹⁰

However necessary Shoghi Effendi's assistance was to the Master, the decision had been made that Shoghi Effendi would further his education in England at Balliol college of Oxford University. He started his studies there in October, 1920. His course of study at Oxford was cut short when the most unexpected

and grievous news reached him that his beloved Grandfather had passed away on November 28, 1921. Shoghi Effendi arrived back in Haifa one month later which was as soon as possible for him, physically weakened and crushed with bereavement.

Before we take up the events following his learning that 'Abdu'l-Bahá had named him the Guardian of the Cause of God, we will digress to a few of the wonderful descriptions of his personality and character given to us by some who were very close to him, so we can have a better picture in mind of the qualities of intellect and spirit that became completely and sacrificially devoted to the awesome responsibility and rigors of fulfilling the station bestowed upon him.

Shoghi Effendi's Character

Hand of the Cause Amelia Collins in *A Tribute to Shoghi Effendi* wrote, *"In 1923 I first met our beloved Guardian in Haifa. He was just a young man then, full of determination to carry forward the great work entrusted to his care. He was so spontaneous, so trusting and loving and outgoing in the buoyancy of his beautiful heart. Through the years we all watched with wonder and ever-deepening devotion to him and appreciation of his God-given gifts, the unfoldment of Bahá'u'lláh's Divine Order which he built up so patiently and wisely all over the world. But, oh friends, at what great cost to himself! . . . The Guardian had a profound and innate humility. Whenever the Faith was involved, he was fiery in its defense, kinglike in the loftiness of his bearing, the authority with which he spoke. But as a human being he was self-effacing, would brush aside our adulation and praise, turn everything we wished to shower on him towards the Central figures of our Faith. . . . he would never allow any photographs to*

be taken of himself, or give any of himself, but invariably encouraged the friends to place the Master's picture in their rooms; . . . how he disliked any signs of personal worship-- though he could never control what was in our hearts for him! . . . How can I ever describe to you his eyes when he would come over to the Pilgrim House and announce to us a new achievement; they sparkled with light and enthusiasm and his beautiful face would be all smiles."¹¹

In *The Priceless Pearl*, Hand of the Cause Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhiyyih Khánum, writes in the chapter entitled "*Facets of Shoghi Effendi's Personality*," "He was fundamentally a very tender-hearted person and . . . expressed this innate kindness and tenderness not only to those who surrounded him but to the believers personally in many ways. . . ."¹² Shoghi Effendi, like his grandfather and great-grandfather before him, had a delightful sense of humour which was ready to manifest itself if he were given any chance to be happy or enjoy a little peace of mind. . . ."¹³ He was very tenacious of his purposes, very determined, but never unreasonable. Although he never changed his objectives he sometimes changed the course he had planned to take to reach them. . . ."¹⁴ Economy was a very rigid principle with Shoghi Effendi and he had very stern ideas on money matters I never saw the Guardian settle a bill he had not first carefully added up, whether it was for a meal or a payment of thousands of dollars! If there was an over-charge he pointed it out-- and also if there was an undercharge. . . . He was against extravagance, ostentation and luxury as such, denying himself . . . many things because he felt they were either not justified or not appropriate."¹⁵

"The extreme reverence he showed to the twin Manifestations of God and to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, whether in his writings, his speech or the manner in which he approached Their resting-places, provides a permanent pattern for all Bahá'is to follow. Whenever Shoghi Effendi was near one of the Shrines one could sense his awareness of this in his whole being. The way he walked as he neared it, the way he quietly and with great dignity and reverence approached the threshold, knelt and placed his forehead upon it, the way he never turned his back when inside the Shrine on that spot where one of these infinitely holy and precious beings was interred, the tone of his voice, his dignified lack of any levity on such occasions, all bore witness to the manner in which man should approach a holy of holies, going softly on sacred ground."¹⁶

Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhiyyih Khánum goes on to relate how the gardens in Bahjí and at the Bahá'í World Center in Haifa were designed exclusively by the Guardian, that the style of the Shrine of the Báb, the classic design of the International Archives Building were his, that the interior decorating in the Holy Shrines and other places connected with Bahá'u'lláh was chosen and placed by Shoghi Effendi, that he was unhampered by tradition and extremely original and ingenious in achieving effects. *"The Guardian was truly an extraordinary man. There is no end to the examples that come to mind when one thinks of his nature and his achievements. He had a heart so faithful to those who were faithful to him that its counterpart could scarcely be found."¹⁷*

In *Hand of the Cause* Ugo Giachery's book called simply *Shoghi Effendi, Recollections*, there is a chapter entitled *"His Spiritual Virtues."* The writer lovingly details

descriptions of Shoghi Effendi's great faith, humility and selflessness, his connection with the divine source, his eagerness and perseverance, his generosity. Dr. Giachery writes, *"Of all the characteristics that Shoghi Effendi possessed, the one that I believe was at the very core of his personality and was deeply rooted in his soul was the immense faith he had, his complete reliance on the efficacy of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation. He clung to His Teachings with a tenacity that cannot be likened to anything. His whole being was permeated with the power of the Revelation, and this is the reason that all who came near him or in contact with him felt so safe, so assured, so regenerated."*¹⁸

Of his humility and selflessness, he writes, *"Humility of a kind not yet known elsewhere was one of Shoghi Effendi's many unique virtues, a humility which came from the conviction that man's faculties are not self-created but are a precious trust from God, . . . yet he emanated true pride and dignity, such a regal dignity that raised him far above any man I have yet met or known. . . . He never placed his personal interests or desires ahead of his functions as Guardian. Those who were near to him inevitably felt that his life was something to be fully expended in the service of God and humanity, in a dedication unlike that of any other human being. . . . He was always ready to give comfort, . . . to encourage, to praise and to stimulate to such a degree that one felt the urge to place at his disposal life, time and possessions within the range of one's capacity . . ."*¹⁹

About Shoghi Effendi's involuntary connection with the Divine source, Dr. Giachery writes, *" . . . Shoghi Effendi, like a sensitive instrument connected to the Source of all powers, reacted involuntarily to the most imperceptible spiritual impulse which*

activated his organism, making him capable of executing and discharging all functions and responsibilities related to the Cause of God without the slightest probability of error. ”

“This analysis, made at the very first meeting with him, explained to me clearly and conclusively the meaning of divine guidance and infallibility-- two things that Shoghi Effendi could not voluntarily choose or control.”²⁰ “A few times I had the great blessing of being permitted to accompany Shoghi Effendi to the Shrines As we walked along the paths of the gardens, I was very close to him and there came a feeling I cannot well describe. He walked with much dignity and grace, his fine intelligent face glowing with an inner light; . . . During my lifetime I have met several kings and many great personages in the scientific, political and ecclesiastical worlds, but never have I had the feeling of rapture and bliss that I felt in those unforgettable moments when I was so close to Shoghi Effendi.”²¹

Of his eagerness, Dr. Giachery wrote, “ . . . I became aware of this burning flame within his soul, for it was manifested in the emphasis of his speech, in the penetrating and searching gaze of his intelligent eyes, in the swiftness of his action and in the rewarding smile with which he recompensed those who acted promptly.”²²

Of his perseverance, he wrote: “Perseverance was one of Shoghi Effendi's most noble qualities and taught me many a lesson. . . .His instructions to me . . . to persevere under all circumstances, became my second nature while I was privileged to work for the Cause under his personal guidance. In nearly every letter I received from him over a period of many years, the

word 'persevere' is repeated. It had the power of a talisman for me ¹¹²³

Of his generosity, he wrote: *"To be generous is one of the greatest qualities man can possess. It is rare to find on this earth an individual as generous as was Shoghi Effendi. . . .He always considered the needs of others before even thinking of himself. This was true not only for the spiritual wealth which was his greatest heritage, but also for material things as well, which he never sought, wanted or desired for himself.* ¹¹²⁴

Shoghi Effendi: His Life

The Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh

'Abdu'l-Bahá made a declaration in his Will and Testament establishing His firstborn grandson, Shoghi Effendi, to be the sole interpreter and Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith after the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Studying this Will and Testament must be a high priority of every believer, new or old, in order to attempt to grasp the significance of the Guardian of the Cause of God, Shoghi Effendi.

In prior religious dispensations, the newly established faith, being unprotected by the written appointment of a clearly appointed successor, became subject to divisions and subdivisions for numerous causes, such as doctrinal disputes, power interests, nationalistic interests, differing rituals and ceremonies. However in this Day, called by Bahá'u'lláh the '*Day of God*,' a new phenomenon is created which protects this Faith from the human propensity for disagreement; and that phenomenon is known to the Bahá'ís as the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh. An excellent explanation of the meaning and historical impact of this Covenant on both the steadfast believers and the rebellious is the book by Mr. Adib Taherzadeh, entitled *The Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh*.

Briefly, to ensure the protection and growth of this Faith, Bahá'u'lláh in His Will appointed His eldest son, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, as

His Successor. 'Abdu'l-Bahá, in turn, prepared a *Will and Testament*, appointing His eldest grandson, Shoghi Effendi, to guard the Cause of God, and emphatically stated that Shoghi Effendi must be obeyed:

"O ye the faithful, loved ones of 'Abdu'l-Bahá!

It is incumbent upon you to take the greatest care of Shoghi Effendi, the twig that hath branched from and the fruit given forth by the two hallowed and Divine Lote-Trees, that no dust of despondency and sorrow may stain his radiant nature, that day by day he may wax greater in happiness, in joy and, spirituality, and may grow to become even as a fruitful tree."

"For he is, after 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the guardian of the Cause of God, the Afán, the Hands [pillars] of the Cause and the beloved of the Lord must obey him and turn unto him. He that obeyeth him not, hath not obeyed God; he that turneth away from him, hath turned away from God and he that denieth him, hath denied the True One."²⁵

For those unfamiliar with some terminology, "*two hallowed and Divine Lote Trees*" refers to the two Manifestations of God, the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh to whom Shoghi Effendi is related. Through his mother he is related to Bahá'u'lláh, and through his father to the family of the Báb. "*Afnán*" refers to relatives of the Bab, "*Hands of the Cause*" refers to four especially devoted, selfless and capable believers chosen by Bahá'u'lláh for certain duties. Thirty years later Shoghi Effendi appointed several more believers as Hands of the Cause, being given the authority to do so by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in His *Will and Testament*.

'Abdu'l-Bahá's *Will and Testament* is about 23 pages in the English translation, and was written in three parts. In it are clear explanations about the power of the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá's grievous experiences caused by those who rebelled against that Covenant.

In this Will, 'Abdu'l-Bahá praises Shoghi Effendi as the ". . . most wondrous, unique and priceless pearl that doth gleam from out the Twin surging seas," and ". . . the blest and sacred bough that hath branched out from the Twin Holy Trees. Well is it with him that seeketh the shelter of his shade that shadoweth all mankind."²⁶ 'Abdu'l-Bahá declares that the Guardian and the Universal House of Justice are ". . . both under the care and protection of the Abhá Beauty, under the shelter and unerring guidance of His Holiness, the Exalted One . . . Whatsoever they decide is of God."²⁷ The term "*Abhá Beauty*" refers to Bahá'u'lláh, and "*His Holiness, the Exalted One*" refers to the Báb. Also in that document Shoghi Effendi was referred to as 'Ghusn-i-Mumt'áz,' or the '*Chosen Branch*.'

'Abdu'l-Bahá mandates Shoghi Effendi to expound the words of God, to appoint Hands of the Cause of God and direct them, to be the sacred Head of the Universal House of Justice, to accept money offerings to be expended for the advancement of the Faith and to appoint his successor. The Guardian was unable to appoint a successor because there was no one existing who could fulfill the specific requirements 'Abdu'l-Bahá laid down for the successor to Shoghi Effendi. For further details, the reader is referred to the *Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*.

Shoghi Effendi: His Accomplishments

An Overview

Despite having had only a bare minimum of people assisting him, and at times, no one, the Guardian's accomplishments are stupendous. These include his establishing the divinely ordained Administrative Order, setting into motion three teaching plans, purifying the Faith from destructive association with Covenant-breakers, engaging in an immense volume of communication with National Spiritual Assemblies and individuals, receiving the pilgrims, writing books, expounding and interpreting the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, erecting the superstructure of the Shrine of the Báb and the International Archives Building; making the gardens around both the Shrines of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh, translating into English the major writings of Bahá'u'lláh, maintaining relations with officials in Israel, extending Bahá'í properties on Mount Carmel, and appointing and directing the Hands of the Cause. Any one of these activities could have been a life work for one man.

'Abdu'l-Bahá's Passing and the Protection of the Faith

In the same month, January 1922, that Shoghi Effendi learned that his beloved Grandfather, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, had appointed him to be the Guardian, the chief Covenant-breaker who had rebelled against 'Abdu'l-Bahá became emboldened, and demanded that the civil authorities make himself the custodian of Bahá'u'lláh's

shrine. When this failed, the keys of the Holy Tomb were forcibly seized from the Bahá'í caretaker. The Governor of 'Akká intervened, took the keys and posted guards at the Shrine. On top of this blow to the young Guardian came yet another - that the blessed House of Bahá'u'lláh in Baghḍad was confiscated by the government of Iráq.

Before the Guardian had any time to recover from his bereavement over the passing of the Master and his shock at being appointed the sole head of a loosely organized Cause, he found himself and the Cause facing malignant enemies. In March of 1922, he called a meeting of several of the most devoted and able Bahá'ís from Europe, Asia and America to consult about the feasibility of electing the Universal House of Justice for the protection of the Faith, but it was concurred that before this could be done, it must have a firm foundation, which would mean establishing local and national assemblies in those countries where there were Bahá'ís. The friends who had come to support and consult with him were then sent home with instructions to begin this work under his direction.

By April, though, the strain of what he was being put through became unbearable. He appointed his great-aunt, Bahíyyih Khánum, 'Abdu'l-Bahá's sister, entitled the Greatest Holy Leaf, to administer the affairs of the Faith while he went to Germany to first consult with physicians on his depleted physical state, and then to Switzerland to gain healing, spiritual and physical strength in seclusion in the Swiss Alps. His loving and tender relationship with the Greatest Holy Leaf, who protected him by carrying these responsibilities for a time, sustained the Guardian and enabled him to carry on.

Shoghi Effendi returned to Haifa in December of 1922 and resumed the work laid before him by the provisions of the *Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*. His first activities were to initiate correspondence with all Bahá'í centers in the world and receive pilgrims. This in itself was a full-time job, but the joy of it was beclouded by the continuing evil machinations of the Covenant-breakers, those souls lost in the wilderness of self and passion who imagined they could bring the Cause of God to naught.

He appealed to the civil authorities and had proof of his right through the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá to be the legitimate keeper of the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh. The matter was decided in his favor, and the safekeeping of the Qiblih, the point of adoration of the Bahá'í World, was secured, but all efforts to regain custody of the House of Bahá'u'lláh in Baghdád were frustrated and still are to this day. The final chapter and victory on that remains to be revealed.

His Clarification of his Station

One of the first things the beloved Guardian did in 1922 was to clarify the relationship he wished the Bahá'ís to have with him. In letters to the Bahá'ís of several countries he stated that he wished to be known as one and only one of the many workers in the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh, to be regarded in no other light but that of a true brother united in common servitude to the Master's Sacred Threshold, and to refer to him only as Shoghi Effendi. In *The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh*, written in 1934, he stated, "*There is a far, far greater distance separating the Guardian from the Center of the Covenant than there is between the Center of the Covenant and its Author.*"²⁸ In that passage the "*Center of the*

Covenant" refers to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and *"Author"* refers to Bahá'u'lláh.

He further went on to say: *"Though overshadowed by the unflinching, the unerring protection of Bahá'u'lláh and of the Báb, and however much he may share with 'Abdu'l-Bahá the right and obligation to interpret the Bahá'í teachings, he remains essentially human and cannot . . . arrogate to himself under any pretense whatsoever, the rights, the privileges and prerogatives which Bahá'u'lláh has chosen to confer upon His Son."*¹²⁹ This chapter goes on to state that he must not be addressed as lord, master or his holiness, nor to be prayed to, nor to celebrate his birthday.

Raising Up of the Bahá'í Administrative Order

Though today it is clear that the building up of the Administrative Order must be the firm foundation for the Universal House of Justice, in the early years not all the believers were aware of the need for an administrative organization to evolve within the Faith. Indeed, many felt that the lofty spiritual ideals and farsighted social principles in the Bahá'í teachings would somehow permeate the world at large, and effect changes for the better. Some actually felt that to impose organization would spoil the spirituality of the Cause they loved; therefore they had to be patiently and lovingly guided by the Guardian to accept the necessity and beauty of the Administrative Order conceived in the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, and expanded upon in the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

Shoghi Effendi did this by expounding and elucidating the basis and future of the Administrative Order in series of letters to National Spiritual Assemblies. He explained, for example: ". . . *the system of Bahá'í administration is not an innovation imposed*

*arbitrarily upon the Bahá'is of the world since the Master's passing, but derives its authority from the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, is specifically prescribed in unnumbered Tablets, and rests in some of its essential features upon the explicit provisions of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. . . . To dissociate the administrative principles of the Cause from the purely spiritual and humanitarian teachings would be tantamount to a mutilation of the body of the Cause, a separation that can only result in the disintegration of its component parts, and the extinction of the Faith itself.*¹³⁰

In another place he states: " *the administration of the Cause is to be conceived as an instrument and not a substitute for the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh . . .*"¹³¹ He goes on to explain that the international character of the Cause, the complexity of its affairs, the diversity of its adherents, necessitates administrative machinery that will insure the unity of the Faith, the preservation of its identity, and protection of its interests, yet warns us that we should not let undue concern for minute details in administering the Cause, partiality, ambition and worldliness impair the effectiveness of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh.

To those who would become impatient with the seemingly slow growth and influence of the Faith, Shoghi Effendi counseled: "*I consider it my duty to warn every beginner in the Faith that the promised glories of the Sovereignty which the Bahá'i teachings foreshadow can be revealed only in the fullness of time . . .*"¹³²

He further states in this letter, the first in the compilation called *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, that the implications of this sovereignty . . . *are too far-reaching for this generation to grasp*

and fully appreciate. . . ."³³ " . . . *that the storms which this struggling Faith of God must encounter as the disintegration of society advances, shall be fiercer than any which it has already experienced.*"³⁴

Shoghi Effendi's Vision Implemented through His Plans

Shoghi Effendi stated that the Administrative Order is both the nucleus and the pattern of the New World Order. A remarkable expansion of the Administrative Order was accomplished under his loving and patient, but always firm direction: the establishment of National Spiritual Assemblies from none in 1922 to 56 in 1963, which was the concluding year of the Ten Year Crusade; the acceleration of the formation of local Spiritual Assemblies; the formation of Bahá'í publishing trusts and summer schools; the establishment of local and national Bahá'í funds. The Declaration of Trust and By-Laws of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'í of the United States and Canada in 1927 became the pattern for Bahá'í National Assemblies around the world for incorporation and ownership of property. Many local Spiritual Assemblies were also incorporated. Buildings were acquired for National Centers, and land was purchased in many countries for future Houses of Worship.

All of this expansion and consolidation provided the strongly united framework upon which the Universal House of Justice was elected in 1963, exactly one hundred years after Bahá'u'lláh declared His mission.

The means by which such tremendous expansion took place was through a series of teaching plans formulated by Shoghi

