

Extracts From the Writings of Shoghi Effendi:

Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Shoghi Effendi

Original English



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I am however assured and sustained by the conviction, never dimmed in my mind, that whatsoever comes to pass in the Cause of God, however disquieting, in its immediate effects, is fraught with infinite Wisdom and tends ultimately to promote its interests in the world. Indeed, our experiences of the distant past, as well as of recent events, are too numerous and varied to permit of any misgiving or doubt as to the truth of this basic principle — a principle which throughout the vicissitudes of our sacred mission in this world we must never disregard or forget.

...

True, the Cause as every other movement has its own obstacles, complications and unforeseen difficulties, but unlike any other human organization it inspires a spirit of Faith and Devotion which can never fail to induce us to make sincere and renewed efforts to face these difficulties and smooth any differences that may and must arise.

Shoghi Effendi, from a letter 23 December 1922 to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, 'Bahá'í Administration', p. 27

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On one hand the remarkable revelations of the Beloved's Will and Testament, so amazing in all its aspects, so emphatic in its injunctions, have challenged and perplexed the keenest minds, whilst the ever-increasing confusion of the world, threatened as never before with disruptive forces, fierce rivalries, fresh commotions and grave disorder, have wellnigh overwhelmed the heart and damped the zeal of even the most enthusiastic believer in the destiny of mankind.



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And yet, how often we seem to forget the clear and repeated warnings of Our beloved Master, Who, in particular during the concluding years of His mission on earth, laid stress on the “severe mental tests” that would inevitably sweep over His loved ones of the West — tests that would purge, purify and prepare them for their noble mission in life.

Shoghi Effendi, from a letter 14 November 1923 to the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada, 'Bahá'í Administration', p. 50

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That the Cause of God should in the days to come witness many a challenging hour and pass through critical stages in preparation for the glories of its promised ascendancy in the New World has been time and again undeniably affirmed by our departed Master, and is abundantly proved to us all by its heroic past and turbulent history....

Shoghi Effendi, from a letter 23 February 1924 to the Bahá'ís of America, 'Bahá'í Administration', p. 60

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We cannot believe that as the Movement grows in strength, in authority and in influence, the perplexities and the sufferings it has had to contend with in the past will correspondingly decrease and vanish. Nay, as it grows from strength to strength, the fanatical defendants of the strongholds of Orthodoxy, whatever be their denomination, realizing the penetrating influence of this growing Faith, will arise and strain every nerve to extinguish its light and discredit its name....

Shoghi Effendi, from a letter 12 February 1927 to the Bahá'ís of the West, 'Bahá'í Administration', p. 123

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For let every earnest upholder of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh realize that the storms which this struggling Faith of God must needs encounter, as the process of the disintegration of society advances, shall be fiercer than any which it has already experienced. Let him be aware that so soon as the full measure of the stupendous claim of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh becomes to be recognized by those time-honoured and powerful strongholds of orthodoxy, whose deliberate aim is to maintain their stranglehold over the thoughts and consciences of men, that this infant Faith will have to contend with

enemies more powerful and more insidious than the cruellest torture-mongers and the most fanatical clerics who have afflicted it in the past. What foes may not in the course of the convulsions that shall seize a dying civilization be brought into existence, who will reinforce the indignities which have already been heaped upon it!

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

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

Shoghi Effendi, from a letter 21 March 1930 to the Bahá’ís of the West, ‘The World Order of Bahá’u’lláh’, p. 17

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The separation that has set in between the institutions of the Bahá’í Faith and the Islámic ecclesiastical organizations that oppose it — a movement that has originated in Egypt and is now spreading steadily throughout the Middle East, and will in time communicate its influence to the West — imposes upon every loyal upholder of the Cause the obligation of refraining from any word or action that might prejudice the position which our enemies have, in recent years and of their own accord, proclaimed and established. This historic development, the beginnings of which could neither be

recognized nor even anticipated in the years immediately preceding 'Abdu'l-Bahá's passing, may be said to have signalized the Formative Period of our Faith and to have paved the way for the consolidation of its Administrative Order. As this movement gains momentum, as it receives added impetus from the attitude and future action of the civil authorities in Persia, it will inevitably manifest its repercussions in the West and will rouse the leaders of the Church and finally the civil authorities to challenge the claims and eventually to recognize the independent status of the Religion of Bahá'u'lláh.... Our adversaries in the East have initiated the struggle. Our future opponents in the West will, in their turn, arise and carry it a stage further. Ours is the duty, in anticipation of this inevitable contest, to uphold unequivocally and with undivided loyalty the integrity of our Faith and demonstrate the distinguishing features of its divinely appointed institutions.

Shoghi Effendi, from a letter 15 June 1935 to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, 'Messages to America', p. 4

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That the forces of irreligion, of a purely materialistic philosophy, of unconcealed paganism have been unloosed, are now spreading, and, by consolidating themselves, are beginning to invade some of the most powerful Christian institutions of the western world, no unbiased observer can fail to admit. That these institutions are becoming increasingly restive, that a few among them are already dimly aware of the pervasive influence of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh, that they will, as their inherent strength deteriorates and their discipline relaxes, regard with deepening dismay the rise of His New World Order, and will gradually determine to assail it, that such an opposition will in turn accelerate their decline, few, if any, among those who are attentively watching the progress of His Faith would be inclined to question.

...

This menace of secularism that has attacked Islám and is undermining its remaining institutions, that has invaded Persia, has penetrated into India, and raised its triumphant head in Turkey, has already manifested itself in both Europe and America, and is, in varying degrees, and under various forms and designations, challenging the basis of every established religion...

Shoghi Effendi, from a letter 11 March 1936 to the Bahá'ís of the West, 'The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh', p. 180

Pregnant indeed are the years looming ahead of us all. The twin processes of internal disintegration and external chaos are being accelerated every day and are inexorably moving towards a climax... The Community of the Most Great Name, the leaven that must leaven the lump, the chosen remnant that must survive the rolling up of the old, discredited, tottering Order and assist in the unfoldment of a new one in its stead, is standing ready, alert, clear-visioned, and resolute... Fierce and manifold will be the assaults with which governments, races, classes and religions, jealous of its rising prestige and fearful of its consolidating strength, will seek to silence its voice and sap its foundations. Unmoved by the relative obscurity that surrounds it at the present time, and undaunted by the forces that will be arrayed against it in the future, this community, I cannot but feel confident, will, no matter how afflictive the agonies of a travailing age, pursue its destiny, undeflected in its course, undimmed in its serenity, unyielding in its resolve, unshaken in its convictions.

Shoghi Effendi, from a letter 5 July 1938 to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, 'Messages to America', p. 13

How can the beginnings of a world upheaval, unleashing forces that are so gravely deranging the social, the religious, the political, and the economic equilibrium of organized society, throwing into chaos and confusion political systems, racial doctrines, social conceptions, cultural standards, religious associations, and trade relationships — how can such agitations, on a scale so vast, so unprecedented, fail to produce any repercussions on the institutions of a Faith of such tender age whose teachings have a direct and vital bearing on each of these spheres of human life and conduct?

Little wonder, therefore, if they who are holding aloft the banner of so pervasive a Faith, so challenging a Cause, find themselves affected by the impact of these world-shaking forces. Little wonder if they find that in the midst of this whirlpool of contending passions their freedom has been curtailed, their tenets contemned, their institutions assaulted, their motives maligned, their authority jeopardized, their claim rejected.

...

Nor should any of the manifold opportunities, of a totally different order, be allowed to pass unnoticed which the evolution of the Faith itself, whether at its world center, or in the North American continent, or even in the most outlying regions of the earth, must create, calling once again upon the American believers to play a part, no less conspicuous than the share they have previously had in their collective contributions to

the propagation of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh. I can only for the moment cite at random certain of these opportunities which stand out preeminently, in any attempt to survey the possibilities of the future: ...the deliverance of Bahá'í communities from the fetters of religious orthodoxy in such Islámic countries as Persia, 'Iráq, and Egypt, and the consequent recognition, by the civil authorities in those states, of the independent status and religious character of Bahá'í National and Local Assemblies; the precautionary and defensive measures to be devised, coordinated, and carried out to counteract the full force of the inescapable attacks which organized efforts of ecclesiastical organizations of various denominations will progressively launch and relentlessly pursue; and, last but not least, the multitudinous issues that must be faced, the obstacles that must be overcome, and the responsibilities that must be assumed, to enable a sore-tried Faith to pass through the successive stages of unmitigated obscurity, of active repression, and of complete emancipation, leading in turn to its being acknowledged as an independent Faith, enjoying the status of full equality with its sister religions, to be followed by its establishment and recognition as a State religion, which in turn must give way to its assumption of the rights and prerogatives associated with the Bahá'í state, functioning in the plenitude of its powers, a stage which must ultimately culminate in the emergence of the worldwide Bahá'í Commonwealth, animated wholly by the spirit, and operating solely in direct conformity with the laws and principles of Bahá'u'lláh.

...

In the conduct of this twofold crusade the valiant warriors struggling in the name and for the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh must, of necessity, encounter stiff resistance, and suffer many a setback. Their own instincts, no less than the fury of conservative forces, the opposition of vested interests, and the objections of a corrupt and pleasure-seeking generation, must be reckoned with, resolutely resisted, and completely overcome. As their defensive measures for the impending struggle are organized and extended, storms of abuse and ridicule, and campaigns of condemnation and misrepresentation, may be unloosed against them. Their Faith, they may soon find, has been assaulted, their motives misconstrued, their aims defamed, their aspirations derided, their institutions scorned, their influence belittled, their authority undermined, and their Cause, at times, deserted by a few who will either be incapable of appreciating the nature of their ideals, or unwilling to bear the brunt of the mounting criticisms which such a contest is sure to involve. "Because of 'Abdu'l-Bahá," the beloved Master has prophesied, "many a test will be visited upon you. Troubles will befall you, and suffering afflict you."

Let not, however, the invincible army of Bahá'u'lláh, who in the West, and at one of its potential storm-centers is to fight, in His name and for, His sake, one of its fiercest and most glorious battles, be afraid of any criticism that might be directed against it. Let it not be deterred by any condemnation with which the tongue of the slanderer may

seek to debase its motives. Let it not recoil before the threatening advance of the forces of fanaticism, of orthodoxy, of corruption, and of prejudice that may be leagued against it. The voice of criticism is a voice that indirectly reinforces the proclamation of its Cause. Unpopularity but serves to throw into greater relief the contrast between it and its adversaries, while ostracism is itself the magnetic power that must eventually win over to its camp the most vociferous and inveterate amongst its foes....

Shoghi Effendi, from a letter 25 December 1938 to the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada, 'The Advent of Divine Justice', p. 2; p. 14; p. 41

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Nor should a survey of the outstanding features of so blessed and fruitful a ministry omit mention of the prophecies which the unerring pen of the appointed Center of Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant has recorded! These foreshadow the fierceness of the onslaught that the resistless march of the Faith must provoke in the West, in India and in the Far East when it meets the time-honored sacerdotal orders of the Christian, the Buddhist and Hindu religions. They foreshadow the turmoil which its emancipation from the fetters of religious orthodoxy will cast in the American, the European, the Asiatic and African continents....

Shoghi Effendi, 'God Passes By', p. 315

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No matter how long the period that separates them from ultimate victory; however arduous the task; however formidable the exertions demanded of them; however dark the days which mankind, perplexed and sorely-trying, must, in its hour of travail, traverse; however severe the tests with which they who are to redeem its fortunes will be confronted; however afflictive the darts which their present enemies, as well as those whom Providence, will, through His mysterious dispensations raise up from within or from without, may rain upon them, however grievous the ordeal of temporary separation from the heart and nerve-center of their Faith which future unforeseeable disturbances may impose upon them, I adjure them, by the precious blood that flowed in such great profusion, by the lives of the unnumbered saints and heroes who were immolated,[pg 146] by the supreme, the glorious sacrifice of the Prophet-Herald of our Faith, by the tribulations which its Founder, Himself, willingly underwent, so that His Cause might live, His Order might redeem a shattered world and its glory might suffuse the entire planet — I adjure them, as this solemn hour draws nigh, to resolve never to flinch, never to hesitate, never to relax, until each and every objective in the Plans to be proclaimed, at a later date, has been fully consummated.

Shoghi Effendi, from a letter 30 June 1952 to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, 'Messages to the Bahá'í World, 1950-1957', p. 38

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...undeterred by the clamor which the exponents of religious orthodoxy are sure to raise, or by the restrictive measures which political leaders may impose; undismayed by the smallness of their numbers and the multitude of their potential adversaries; armed with the efficacious weapons their own hands have slowly and laboriously forged in anticipation of this glorious and inevitable encounter with the organized forces of superstition, of corruption and of unbelief; placing their whole trust in the matchless potency of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings, in the all-conquering power of His might and the infallibility of His glorious and oft-repeated promises, let them press forward...

Shoghi Effendi, from a letter 25 June 1953 to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, 'Citadel of Faith', p. 120

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The administrative problems which face you are divers and complex. The opposition which a nascent Faith must needs meet, particularly from the leaders of religious orthodoxy in the Islámic countries of the North, will, as the institutions of that Faith multiply, become more apparent and grow in severity....

In the handwriting of Shoghi Effendi, appended to a letter 2 July 1956 written on his behalf to the National Spiritual Assembly of North West Africa

