

Extracts From Letters Written on Behalf of Shoghi Effendi:

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

Original English



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For the history of the Cause, particularly in Persia, is a clear illustration of the truth that such persecutions invariably serve to [pg 147] strengthen the believers in their faith, by stimulating the spiritual powers latent in their hearts, and by awakening in them a new and deeper consciousness of their duties and responsibilities towards the Faith. Indeed, the mere progress of the Cause, by provoking the hatreds and jealousies of peoples and nations, creates for itself such difficulties and obstacles as only its divine spirit can overcome. 'Abdu'l-Bahá has emphatically stated that the enmity and opposition of the world will increase in direct proportion to the extension and progress of the Faith. The greater the zeal of the believers and the more striking the effect of their achievements, the fiercer will be the opposition of the enemy.

On behalf of Shoghi Effendi, 20 January 1935 to the National Spiritual Assembly of India and Burma

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He is, indeed, fully alive to the difficulties which the friends, not only in your centre but all around the world, are daily encountering in their attempt to establish and perfect the administrative machinery of the Faith. These difficulties and obstacles, however, he considers to be inevitable, inherent as they are in the very process through which the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh is destined to develop and to eventually establish its ascendancy in the world. Not only are such difficulties inevitable, but they should be viewed, indeed, as constituting a God-given test whereby the friends can, and will assuredly, enrich and perfect the spiritual and moral energies latent in them, and in this way help in establishing that Divine civilization promised to them by God.



ORIGINAL



AUDIO

Trials and sufferings, Bahá'u'lláh has repeatedly warned us in His Tablets, are even as the oil that feeds the lamp. The Cause cannot reveal its full splendour unless and until it encounters and successfully overcomes the very obstacles that every now and then stand in its way, and for some time appear to threaten its very foundations. Such obstacles, tests and trials are indeed blessings in disguise, and as such are bound to help in promoting the Faith.

On behalf of Shoghi Effendi, 31 July 1935 to an individual believer

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...though he has been made truly grieved to learn of the continued and malignant opposition which the enemies of the Cause ..., and particularly the clerical element, are directing against the believers in that centre. He wishes you, however, to urge the friends not to feel in the least disheartened or discouraged, but to pursue with renewed determination,[pg 148] unity and vigour their sacred task of spreading and establishing the Faith, confident in the glorious future awaiting them. The greater the number of persecutions, and the more intense they become in character, the deeper their faith should be in the unique mission entrusted to them by Bahá'u'lláh, and the greater their zeal to help in hastening its complete fulfilment.

This Cause, as every Divine Cause, cannot be effectively established unless it encounters and valiantly triumphs over the forces of opposition with which it is assailed. The history of the Faith is in itself a sufficient proof of that. Trials and persecutions have always been, and will continue to be, the lot of the chosen ones of God. But these they should consider as blessings in disguise, as through them their faith will be quickened, purified and strengthened. Bahá'u'lláh compares such afflictive trials to the oil which feeds the lamp of the Cause of God.

The friends should, therefore, not assume an attitude of mere resignation in the face of persecutions. They should rather welcome them, and utilize them as [a] means for their own spiritual uplift and also for the promotion of the Cause. As the Faith grows stronger and attracts the serious attention and consideration of the world outside, the friends must expect a similar, if not a greater, increase in the forces of opposition which from every direction, both secular and religious, will be massed to undermine the very basis of its existence. The final outcome of such a struggle, which will be surely gigantic, is clear to us believers. A Faith born of God and guided by His Divine and all-pervasive spirit cannot but finally triumph and firmly establish itself, no matter how persistent and insidious the forces with which it has to contend. The friends should be confident, and act with the utmost wisdom and moderation, and should particularly abstain from any provocative act. The future is surely theirs.

On behalf of Shoghi Effendi, 24 June 1936 to an individual believer

His fears are rather for those friends who, due to their insufficient realization of the divine power that mysteriously operates in the Faith, are prone to look at such developments as constituting the death-knell of the Cause. In his communications to the ... friends during the last few weeks he has always stressed the fact, and he wishes you to do the same in all your conversations and correspondence with them, that the Cause is bound sooner or later to suffer from all kinds of attacks and persecutions, that these in fact constitute the life-blood of its institutions, and as such constitute an inseparable and intrinsic part of its development and growth. Trials and tribulations, as Bahá'u'lláh says, are the oil that feed the lamp of the Cause, and are indeed blessings in disguise. The friends should therefore be confident that all these attacks to which the Cause is now subjected ... are a necessary part of the development of the Cause, and that their outcome would be beneficial to its best interests.

On behalf of Shoghi Effendi, 31 August 1937 to an individual believer

Later on, when the very progress of the Cause on the one hand, and the corresponding decline in ecclesiastical organizations on the other will inevitably incite Christian ecclesiastical leaders to vehemently oppose and undermine the Faith, the believers will then have a real chance to defend and vindicate the Cause....

On behalf of Shoghi Effendi, 25 May 1938 to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada

It seems both strange and pitiful that the Church and clergy should always, in every age, be the most bitter opponents of the very Truth they are continually admonishing their followers to be prepared to receive! They have become so violently attached to the form that the substance itself eludes them!

However, such denunciations as those your minister made publicly against you and the Bahá'í Faith can do no harm to the Cause at all; on the contrary they only serve to spread its name abroad and mark it as an independent religion.

On behalf of Shoghi Effendi, 7 February 1945 to an individual believer

It is too bad that some of the Friends have left the Faith due to the pressure of the Church leaders. Of course, it was inevitable that Church leaders would oppose us. The Master has predicted that this would occur; and likewise the very nature of events whereby the Faith grows and develops taking members away from the Church will cause a reaction of the Church against us. We must bear in mind that every attack from the religious leaders in the past has been a means for the development of the Faith itself because those who listen to the attacks can't help but be affected by the purity and sincerity of the Faith.

On behalf of Shoghi Effendi, 19 June 1957 to an individual believer

