

Extracts From the Writings of Shoghi Effendi:

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

Original English



Extracts From the Writings of Shoghi Effendi:

— 52 —

If, in days to come, that land¹ should be overtaken by diverse afflictions and calamities; if, to the rigours of the present times there should be added the outbreak of widespread civil upheavals; if the country's already dark horizons should become still gloomier and more foreboding, you should neither be filled with trepidation and despondency, nor allow yourselves to be deflected, though it be to the extent of a hair's breadth, from that sound and well-considered course that you have been following up till now — from continuing, in other words, your persistent, tireless, and unremitting labours to increase the number of the Bahá'í administrative institutions, to strengthen their foundations, to enhance the fair name that they enjoy, and to consolidate the respect and standing in which they are held. The release of this innocent and wronged community from the bonds of captivity, and its deliverance from the clutches of the enemy and oppressor, cannot but be accompanied by general commotions and disturbances; likewise the attainment by the people of Bahá to a position in which they will enjoy true honour, comfort and tranquillity must inevitably encounter the hostility and resistance, the clamorous opposition and tumultuous protests of all those who harbour enmity and rancour towards them. If, therefore, the troubled waters of the sea of adversity should grow yet more turbulent, if the storm of tribulation should increase in vehemence and assail that sore-tried community from all six sides with fresh disasters, then know unhesitatingly and with unwavering conviction, that the hour of deliverance, the appointed time when the promises of old are to reach their glorious fulfilment, has drawn nigh, and that the means for the accomplishment of supreme and overwhelming victory by the hard-pressed followers of the Greatest Name in that land have all been readied and prepared. Fixity of purpose and unflinching resolution are the qualities that must needs be manifested by the people of Bahá if they are successfully to traverse these last remaining stages, and witness, at the highest levels,

¹ Írán



ORIGINAL



AUDIO

and in a manner that will fill them with astonishment, the realization of their profoundest hopes and of their most deeply cherished desires. Such is the way of God — “and no change canst thou find in the way of God”.²

Shoghi Effendi, from a letter 11 January 1928 to the National Spiritual Assembly of Persia — translated from the Persian

— 53 —

...it behooves us, while expectantly watching from a distance the moving spectacle of the struggling Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, to seek abiding solace and strength from the reflection that whatever befalls this Cause, however grievous and humiliating the visitations that from time to time may seem to afflict the organic life or interfere with the functions of the administrative machinery of the Bahá'í Faith, such calamities cannot but each eventually prove to be a blessing in disguise designed, by a Wisdom inscrutable to us all, to establish and consolidate the sovereignty of Bahá'u'lláh on this earth.

From a letter 1 January 1929 to the Bahá'ís of the West, 'Bahá'í Administration', p. 164

— 54 —

Numerous and powerful have been the forces that have schemed, both from within and from without, in lands both far and near, to quench its light and abolish its holy name. Some have apostatized from its principles, and betrayed ignominiously its cause. Others have hurled against it the fiercest anathemas which the embittered leaders of any ecclesiastical institution are able to pronounce. Still others have heaped [pg 158] upon it the afflictions and humiliations which sovereign authority can alone, in the plenitude of its power, inflict.

The utmost its avowed and secret enemies could hope to achieve was to retard its growth and obscure momentarily its purpose. What they actually accomplished was to purge and purify its life, to stir it to still greater depths, to galvanize its soul, to prune its institutions, and cement its unity. A schism, a permanent cleavage in the vast body of its adherents, they could never create.

They who betrayed its cause, its lukewarm and faint-hearted supporters, withered away and dropped as dead leaves, powerless to cloud its radiance or to imperil its structure. Its most implacable adversaries, they who assailed it from without, were hurled from power, and, in the most astonishing fashion, met their doom. Persia had been the first to repress and oppose it. Its monarchs had miserably fallen, their dynasty had collapsed, their name was execrated, the hierarchy that had been their ally and

² Qur'án, 33:62, and 48:23

had propped their declining state, had been utterly discredited. Turkey, which had thrice banished its Founder and inflicted on Him cruel and lifelong imprisonment, had passed through one of the severest ordeals and far-reaching revolutions that its history has recorded, had shrunk from one of the most powerful empires to a tiny Asiatic republic, its Sultánate obliterated, its dynasty overthrown, its Caliphate, the mightiest institution of Islám, abolished.

Meanwhile the Faith that had been the object of such monstrous betrayals, and the target for such woeful assaults, was going from strength to strength, was forging ahead, undaunted and undivided by the injuries it had received. In the midst of trials it had inspired its loyal followers with a resolution that no obstacle, however formidable, could undermine. It had lighted in their hearts a faith that no misfortune, however black, could quench. It had infused into their hearts a hope that no force, however determined, could shatter.

Shoghi Effendi, from a letter 11 March 1936 to the Bahá'ís of the West, 'The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh', p. 195

— 55 —

...every apparent trial with which the unfathomable wisdom of the Almighty deems it necessary to afflict His chosen community serves only to demonstrate afresh its essential solidarity and to consolidate its inward strength... For such demonstrations of the interpositions of an ever-watchful Providence they who stand identified with the Community of the Most Great Name must feel eternally grateful. From every fresh token of His unfailing blessing on the one hand, and of His visitation on the other, they cannot but derive immense hope and courage...

...

Though small in numbers, and circumscribed as yet in your experiences, powers, and resources, yet the Force which energizes your mission is limitless in its range and incalculable in its potency. Though the enemies which every acceleration in the progress of your mission must raise up be fierce, numerous, and unrelenting, yet the invisible Hosts which, if you persevere, must, as promised, rush forth to your aid, will, in the end, enable you to vanquish their hopes and annihilate their forces. Though the ultimate blessings that must crown the consummation of your mission be undoubted, and the Divine promises given you firm and irrevocable, yet the measure of the goodly reward which every one of you is to reap must depend on the extent to which your daily exertions will have contributed to the expansion of that mission and the hastening of its triumph.

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. 16

— 56 —

Dear friends! Manifold, various, and at times extremely perilous, have been the tragic crises which the blind hatred, the unbounded presumption, the incredible folly, the abject perfidy, the vaulting ambition of the enemy have intermittently engendered within the pale of the Faith. From some of its most powerful and renowned votaries, at the hands of its once trusted and ablest propagators, champions, and administrators, from the ranks of its most revered and highly-placed trustees whether as companions, amanuenses, or appointed lieutenants of the Herald of the Faith, of its Author, and of the Centre of His Covenant, from even those who were numbered among the kindred of the Manifestation, not excluding the brother, the sons and daughters of Bahá'u'lláh, and the nominee of the Báb Himself, a Faith, of such tender age, and enshrining so priceless a promise, has sustained blows as dire and treacherous as any recorded in the world's religious history.

From the record of its tumultuous history, almost every page of which portrays a fresh crisis, is laden with the description of a new calamity, recounts the tale of a base betrayal, and is stained with the account of unspeakable atrocities, there emerges, clear and incontrovertible, the supreme truth that with every fresh outbreak of hostility to the Faith, whether from within or from without, a corresponding measure of outpouring grace, sustaining its defenders and confounding its adversaries, has been providentially released, communicating a fresh impulse to the onward march of the Faith, while this impetus, in its turn, would, through its manifestations, provoke fresh hostility in quarters heretofore unaware of its challenging implications — this increased hostility being accompanied by a still more arresting revelation of Divine Power and a more abundant effusion of celestial grace, which, by enabling the upholders of that Faith to register still more brilliant victories, would thereby generate issues of still more vital import and raise up still more formidable enemies against a Cause that cannot but in the end resolve those issues and crush the resistance of those enemies, through a still more glorious unfoldment of its inherent power.

The resistless march of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, viewed in this light, and propelled by the stimulating influences which the unwisdom of its enemies and the force latent within itself both engender, resolves itself into a series of rhythmic pulsations, precipitated, on the one hand, through the explosive outbursts of its foes, and the vibrations of Divine Power, on the other, which speed it, with ever-increasing momentum, along that predestined course traced for it by the Hand of the Almighty.

As opposition to the Faith, from whatever source it may spring, whatever form it may assume, however violent its outbursts, is admittedly the motive-power that galvanizes, on the one hand, the souls of its valiant defenders, and taps for them, on the other, fresh springs of that Divine and inexhaustible Energy, we who are called upon to represent, defend, and promote its interests, should, far from regarding any manifestation of hostility as an evidence of the weakening of the pillars of the Faith, acclaim it as both a God-sent gift and a God-sent opportunity which, if we remain undaunted, we can utilize for the furtherance of His Faith and the routing and complete elimination of its adversaries.

The Heroic Age of the Faith, born in anguish, nursed in adversity, and terminating in trials as woeful as those that greeted its birth, has been succeeded by that Formative Period which is to witness the gradual crystallization of those creative energies which the Faith has released, and the consequent emergence of that World Order for which those forces were made to operate.

Fierce and relentless will be the opposition which this crystallization and emergence must provoke. The alarm it must and will awaken, the envy it will certainly arouse, the misrepresentations to which it will remorselessly be subjected, the set-backs it must, sooner or later, sustain, the commotions to which it must eventually give rise, the fruits it must in the end garner, the blessings it must inevitably bestow and the glorious, the Golden Age it must irresistibly usher in, are just beginning to be faintly perceived, and will, as the old Order crumbles beneath the weight of so stupendous a Revelation, become increasingly apparent and arresting.

Shoghi Effendi, from a letter 12 August 1941 to the Bahá'ís of America, 'Messages to America', p. 50

— 57 —

We can discover a no less distinct gradation in the character of the opposition it has had to encounter ... an opposition which, now, through the rise of a divinely appointed Order in the Christian West, and its initial impact on civil and ecclesiastical institutions, bids fair to include among its supporters established governments and systems associated with the most ancient, the most deeply entrenched sacerdotal hierarchies in Christendom. We can, at the same time, recognize, through the haze of an ever-widening hostility, the progress, painful yet persistent, of certain communities within its pale through the stages of obscurity, of proscription, of emancipation, and of recognition — stages that must needs culminate in the course of succeeding centuries, in the establishment of the Faith, and the founding, in the plenitude of its power and authority, of the world-embracing Bahá'í Commonwealth...

...

Despite the blows leveled at its nascent strength, whether by the wielders of temporal and spiritual authority from without, or by black-hearted foes from within, the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh had, far from breaking or bending, gone from strength to strength, from victory to victory. Indeed its history, if read aright, may be said to resolve itself into [pg 162] a series of pulsations, of alternating crises and triumphs, leading it ever nearer to its divinely appointed destiny....

The tribulations attending the progressive unfoldment of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh have indeed been such as to exceed in gravity those from which the religions of the past have suffered. Unlike those religions, however, these tribulations have failed utterly to impair its unity, or to create, even temporarily, a breach in the ranks of its adherents. It has not only survived these ordeals, but has emerged, purified and inviolate, endowed with greater capacity to face and surmount any crisis which its resistless march may engender in the future.

...

Whatever may befall this infant Faith of God in future decades or in succeeding centuries, whatever the sorrows, dangers and tribulations which the next stage in its world-wide development may engender, from whatever quarter the assaults to be launched by its present or future adversaries may be unleashed against it, however great the reverses and setbacks it may suffer, we, who have been privileged to apprehend, to the degree our finite minds can fathom, the significance of these marvelous phenomena associated with its rise and establishment, can harbor no doubt that what it has already achieved in the first hundred years of its life provides sufficient guarantee that it will continue to forge ahead, capturing loftier heights, tearing down every obstacle, opening up new horizons and winning still mightier victories until its glorious mission, stretching into the dim ranges of time that lie ahead, is totally fulfilled.

Shoghi Effendi, 'God Passes By', Foreword p. xvii; p. 409; p.410; p. 412

— 58 —

Such reflections, far from engendering in our minds and hearts the slightest trace of perplexity, of discouragement or doubt, should reinforce the basis of our convictions, demonstrate to us the incorruptibility, the strange workings and the invincibility of a Faith which, despite the assaults which malignant and redoubtable enemies from the ranks of kings, princes and ecclesiastics have repeatedly launched against it, and the violent internal tests that have shaken it for more than a century, and the relative obscurity of its champions, and the unpropitiousness of the times and the perversity of the generations contemporaneous with its rise and growth, has gone from strength to strength, has preserved its unity and integrity, has diffused its light over five continents, reared the institutions of its Administrative Order and spread its ramifications to the

four corners of the earth, and launched its systematic campaigns in both the Western and Eastern Hemispheres.

For such benefits, for such an arresting and majestic vindication of the undefeatable powers inherent in our precious Faith, we can but bow our heads in humility, awe and thanksgiving, renew our pledge of fealty to it, and, each covenanting in his own heart, resolve to prove faithful to that pledge, and persevere to the very end, until our earthly share of servitude to so transcendent and priceless a Cause has been totally and completely fulfilled.

Shoghi Effendi, from a letter 15 June 1946 to the Bahá'ís of America, published 'Messages to America', p. 104

— 59 —

Indeed this fresh ordeal that has, in pursuance of the mysterious dispensations of Providence, afflicted the Faith, at this unexpected hour, far from dealing a fatal blow to its institutions or existence, should be regarded as a blessing in disguise, not a "calamity" but a "providence" of God, not a devastating flood but a "gentle rain" on a "green pasture," a "wick" and "oil" unto the "lamp" of His Faith, a "nurture" for His Cause, "water for that which has been planted in the hearts of men," a "crown set on the head" of His Messenger for this Day.³

Whatever its outcome, this sudden commotion that has seized the Bahá'í world, that has revived the hopes and emboldened the host of the adversaries of the Faith intent on quenching its light and obliterating it from the face of the earth, has served as a trumpet call in the sounding of which the press of the world, the cries of its vociferous enemies, the public remonstrances of both men of good will and those in authority have joined, proclaiming far and wide its existence, publicizing its history, defending its verities, unveiling its truths, demonstrating the character of its institutions and advertising its aims and purposes.

For though the newly launched World Spiritual Crusade — constituting at best only the Minor Plan in the execution of the Almighty's design for the redemption of mankind — has, as a result of this turmoil paralyzing temporarily the vast majority of the organized

³ "

The Hidden Words of Bahá'u'lláh,

Arabic no. 51, p. 15

"Epistle to the Son of the Wolf,"

p. 1

followers of Bahá'u'lláh within His birthplace, suffered a severe setback, yet the over-all Plan of God, moving mysteriously and in contrast to the orderly and well-known processes of a clearly devised Plan, has received an impetus the force of which only posterity can adequately assess.

Shoghi Effendi, in a letter 20 August 1954 to the Bahá'ís of the United States, 'Citadel of Faith', p. 139

— 60 —

However severe their trials, and disheartening the present situation may appear, they must remember that the Faith to which they owe allegiance has weathered, not so very long ago, storms of a far greater severity that seemed, at times, capable of engulfing and of obliterating its nascent institutions. The newly planted sapling of a divinely conceived administrative order, having driven deep its roots in German soil, bent momentarily under the hurricane which so violently swept over it, and no sooner had the tempest spent its force than it righted itself, and, growing with a fresh vigour, put forth branches and offshoots that now overshadow the entire land, and even stretch out as far as the heart of Austria.

The experience of so miraculous a recovery from so devastating an ordeal should, alone, prove sufficient to infuse an invigorating spirit into those who have been subjected to it, as well as into the new generation who are still close enough to those events to appreciate its extreme violence, such as will not only enable them to withstand onslaughts of still greater severity, but impel them, both young and old, men and women alike, to struggle, with redoubled vigour and deeper consecration, to meet the pressing and the manifold requirements of the present hour.

In the handwriting of Shoghi Effendi, appended to a letter 14 August 1957 written on his behalf to a National Spiritual Assembly, in 'The Light of Divine Guidance', vol. 1 Hofheim-Langenheim: Bahá'í-Verlag GmbH, 1982, p. 303

