

Extracts From the Writings of Shoghi Effendi:

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

Original English



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It is incumbent upon them to be vigilant and cautious, discreet and watchful, and protect at all times the Temple of the Cause from the dart of the mischief-maker and the onslaught of the enemy.

Shoghi Effendi, 12 March 1923 to the Bahá'ís of America, Great Britain, Germany, France, Switzerland Italy, Japan and Australasia, 'Bahá'í Administration', p. 38

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As the Movement grows in prestige, fame and influence, as the ambitions, malice and ill-will of strangers and enemies correspondingly wax greater, it becomes increasingly important for every individual and Spiritual Assembly to be on their guard lest they fall innocent victims of the evil designs of the malevolent, the self-seeking and greedy.

Touching the publication of articles and pamphlets bearing on the controversial and political issues of the day, I desire to remind my dearly-beloved fellow-workers that at the present stage when the Cause is still in its infancy, any minute and detailed analysis by the friends of subjects that are in the forefront of general discussion would often be misconstrued in certain quarters and give rise to suspicions and misunderstandings that would react unfavorably on the Cause. They would tend to create a misconception of the real object, the true mission, and the fundamental character of the Bahá'í Faith. We should, while endeavoring to uphold loyally and expound conscientiously our social and moral principles in all their essence and purity, in all their bearings upon the divers phases of human society, insure that no direct reference or particular criticism in our exposition of the fundamentals of the Faith would tend to antagonize any existing institution, or help to identify a purely spiritual movement with the base clamorings



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and contentions of warring sects, factions and nations. We should strive in all our utterances to combine the discretion and noble reticence of the wise with the frankness and passionate loyalty of the ardent advocate of an inspiring Faith. While refusing to utter the word that would needlessly alienate or estrange any individual, government or people, we should fearlessly and unhesitatingly uphold and assert in their entirety such truths the knowledge of which we believe is vitally and urgently needed for the good and betterment of mankind.

Shoghi Effendi, 10 January 1926 to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, 'Bahá'í Administration', p. 102

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We can prove ourselves worthy of our Cause only if in our individual conduct and corporate life we sedulously imitate the example of our beloved Master, Whom the terrors of tyranny, the storms of incessant abuse, the oppressiveness of humiliation, never caused to deviate a hair's breadth from the revealed Law of Bahá'u'lláh.

Shoghi Effendi, 12 April 1927 to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, 'Bahá'í Administration', p. 132

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Be moreover assured beyond all shadow of doubt that no matter how strenuously the enemies of God's Faith may exert themselves to extinguish its fire, they will but cause its flame to burn the more fiercely, its light to shine the more brightly, and its heat to grow the more intense. People of wisdom and discernment, who are closely but unobtrusively surveying the progress of the Faith, and are resolved to subject it to the most careful examination and research, will be neither shaken nor swayed by these absurd and baseless claims, these scurrilous publications and self-contradictory pronouncements. So far from being blinded by such propaganda to the verities of the Cause, they will rather be moved by it to pursue their investigations and inquiries with greater meticulousness and enthusiasm than before; to make themselves thoroughly familiar with the teachings, principles and aspirations of the followers of Bahá'u'lláh; and even, through the grace and guidance of an Almighty and Omniscient Lord, to arise in time of need for the defence and protection of the Cause; to put to rout the hosts of suspicion, doubt and misconception; to raze to its foundations the edifice of calumny and falsehood; and to demonstrate and establish, before the eyes of all the world, the sacred, exalted and indomitable reality of the resistless Faith of God. These various distressful occurrences, contrived and instigated by the enemies and ill-wishers

of the Cause — their insidious rumours, their defamatory reports, their flagrant and unprincipled attacks — should be viewed as dispositions and instrumentalities of Providence, designed to hasten the advent of that promised day, that mighty and compelling victory, and that perspicuous triumph, which have been so clearly foretold in the scriptures, and so explicitly and emphatically set forth by the Pen of the Most High.

Shoghi Effendi, from a August 1927 to the National Spiritual Assembly of Persia — translated from the Persian

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The permanence and stability achieved by any association, group or nation is a result of — and dependent upon — the soundness and worth of the principles upon which it bases the running of its affairs and the direction of its activities. The guiding principles of the Bahá'ís are: honesty, love, charity and trustworthiness; the setting of the common good above private interest; and the practice of godliness, virtue and moderation. Ultimately, then, their preservation and happiness are [pg 175] assured. Whatever misfortunes they may encounter, wrought by the wiles of the schemer and ill-wisher, shall all pass away like waves, and hardship shall be succeeded by joy. The friends are under the protection of the resistless power and inscrutable providence of God. There is no doubt that every blessed soul who brings his life into harmony with this all-swaying power shall give lustre to his works and win an ample recompense. The actions of those who choose to set themselves against it should provoke not antipathy on our part, but prayers for their guidance. Such was the way of the Bahá'ís in days gone by, and so must it be, now and for always.

Shoghi Effendi, 18 December 1928 to the National Spiritual Assembly of Írán — translated from the Persian

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Let them refrain from associating themselves, whether by word or by deed, with the political pursuits of their respective nations, with the policies of their governments and the schemes and programs of parties and factions. In such controversies they should assign no blame, take no side, further no design, and identify themselves with no system prejudicial to the best interests of that world-wide Fellowship which it is their aim to guard and foster. Let them beware lest they allow themselves to become the tools of unscrupulous politicians, or to be entrapped by the treacherous devices of the plotters and the perfidious among their countrymen. Let them so shape their lives and regulate their conduct that no charge of secrecy, of fraud, of bribery or of intimidation may, however ill-founded, be brought against them. Let them rise above all

particularism and partisanship, above the vain disputes, the petty calculations, the transient passions that agitate the face, and engage the attention, of a changing world. It is their duty to strive to distinguish, as clearly as they possibly can, and if needed with the aid of their elected representatives, such posts and functions as are either diplomatic or political from those that are purely administrative in character, and which under no circumstances are affected by the changes and chances that political activities and party government, in every land, must necessarily involve. Let them affirm their unyielding determination to stand, firmly and unreservedly, for the way of Bahá'u'lláh, to avoid the entanglements and bickerings inseparable from the pursuits of the politician, and to become worthy agencies of that Divine Polity which incarnates God's immutable Purpose for all men.

...

As the number of the Bahá'í communities in various parts of the world multiplies and their power, as a social force, becomes increasingly apparent, they will no doubt find themselves increasingly subjected to the pressure which men of authority and influence, in the political domain, will exercise in the hope of obtaining the support they require for the advancement of their aims. These communities will, moreover, feel a growing need of the good-will and the assistance of their respective governments in their efforts to widen the scope, and to consolidate the foundations, of the institutions committed to their charge. Let them beware lest, in their eagerness to further the aims of their beloved Cause, they should be led unwittingly to bargain with their Faith, to compromise with their essential principles, or to sacrifice, in return for any material advantage which their institutions may derive, the integrity of their spiritual ideals. Let them proclaim that in whatever country they reside, and however advanced their institutions, or profound their desire to enforce the laws, and apply the principles, enunciated by Bahá'u'lláh, they will, unhesitatingly, subordinate the operation of such laws and the application of such principles to the requirements and legal enactments of their respective governments. Theirs is not the purpose, while endeavoring to conduct and perfect the administrative affairs of their Faith, to violate, under any circumstances, the provisions of their country's constitution, much less to allow the machinery of their administration to supersede the government of their respective countries.

It should also be borne in mind that the very extension of the activities in which we are engaged, and the variety of the communities which labor under divers forms of government, so essentially different in their standards, policies, and methods, make it absolutely essential for all those who are the declared members of any one of these communities to avoid any action that might, by arousing the suspicion or exciting the antagonism of any one government, involve their brethren in fresh persecutions or complicate the nature of their task. How else, might I ask, could such a far-flung Faith, which transcends political and social boundaries, which includes within its pale so

great a variety of races and nations, which will have to rely increasingly, as it forges ahead, on the good-will and support of the diversified and contending governments of the earth — how else could such a Faith succeed in preserving its unity, in safeguarding its interests, and in ensuring the steady and peaceful development of its institutions?

Such an attitude, however, is not dictated by considerations of selfish expediency, but is actuated, first and foremost, by the broad principle that the followers of Bahá'u'lláh will, under no circumstances, suffer themselves to be involved, whether as individuals or in their collective capacities, in matters that would entail the slightest departure from the fundamental verities and ideals of their Faith. Neither the charges which the uninformed and the malicious may be led to bring against them, nor the allurements of honors and rewards, will ever induce them to surrender their trust or to deviate from their path. Let their words proclaim, and their conduct testify, that they who follow Bahá'u'lláh, in whatever land they reside, are actuated by no selfish ambition, that they neither thirst for power, nor mind any wave of unpopularity, of distrust or criticism, which a strict adherence to their standards might provoke.

Shoghi Effendi, 21 March 1932 to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, 'The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh', p. 64

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Such a rectitude of conduct must manifest itself, with ever-increasing potency, in every verdict which the elected representatives of the Bahá'í community, in whatever capacity they may find themselves, may be called upon to pronounce. It must be constantly reflected in the business dealings of all its members, in their domestic lives, in all manner of employment, and in any service they may, in the future, render their government or people. It must be exemplified in the conduct of all Bahá'í electors, when exercising their sacred rights and functions. It must characterize the attitude of every loyal believer towards nonacceptance of political posts, nonidentification with political parties, nonparticipation in political controversies, and nonmembership in political organizations and ecclesiastical institutions... It must be demonstrated in the impartiality of every defender of the Faith against its enemies, in his fair-mindedness in recognizing any merits that enemy may possess, and in his honesty in discharging any obligations he may have towards him....

...

No greater demonstration can be given to the peoples of both continents of the youthful vitality and the vibrant power animating the life, and the institutions of the nascent Faith of Bahá'u'lláh than an intelligent, persistent, and effective participation of the Bahá'í youth, of every race, nationality, and class, in both the teaching and

administrative spheres of Bahá'í activity. Through such a participation the critics and enemies of the Faith, watching with varying degrees of skepticism and resentment, the evolutionary processes of the Cause of God and its institutions, can best be convinced of the indubitable truth that such a Cause is intensely alive, is sound to its very core, and its destinies in safe keeping...

Shoghi Effendi, 25 December 1938 to the Bahá'ís of the United States and Canada, 'The Advent of Divine Justice', p. 26; p. 69

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Obstacles, varied and numerous, will no doubt arise to impede the onward march of this community [Australia]. Reverses may temporarily dim the radiance of its mission. The forces of religious orthodoxy may well, at a future date, be leagued against it. The exponents of theories and doctrines fundamentally opposed to its religious tenets and social principles may challenge its infant strength with persistence and severity. The Administrative Order — the Ark destined to preserve its integrity and carry it to safety — must without delay, without exception, claim the attention of the members of this community, its ideals must be continually cherished in their hearts, its purposes studied and kept constantly before their eyes, its requirements wholeheartedly met, its laws scrupulously upheld, its institutions unstintingly supported, its glorious mission noised abroad, and its spirit made the sole motivating purpose of their lives.

In the handwriting of Shoghi Effendi, appended to a letter 22 August 1949 to the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia and New Zealand 'Letters from the Guardian to Australia and New Zealand, 1923-1957', p. 80

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The strife and bloodshed, with their attendant misery, sorrow and confusion, that have afflicted the entire subcontinent of India, in recent months, have caused me the gravest concern. The disorders, following in the wake of this great crisis in the life of its people, constitute a challenge, which the community of the steadfast followers of Bahá'u'lláh in that land must resolutely face, and demonstrate in meeting it the quality of their faith, the depth of their devotion, the strength of their unity, the solidity of their institutions and the heroic character of their resolve. They must neither feel alarmed, nor falter or hesitate in the execution of their Plan. Shielded by the institutions which their hands have reared, abiding securely in the stronghold of their love for Bahá'u'lláh and their devotion to His Faith, pursuing with unrelaxing vigilance and singleness of purpose the course set by the Plan they themselves have inaugurated, heartened by the initial success already achieved since that Plan was set in motion, they, however much buffeted by present circumstances, and no matter how perilous the path they

now tread, must press forward, unafraid of persecution, scorn or calumny, towards the shining goals they have set themselves to attain.

In the handwriting of Shoghi Effendi, appended to a letter 24 October 1947 written on his behalf to the National Spiritual Assembly of India, Pakistan and Burma, 'Dawn of a New Day' p. 127

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RECENT EVENTS TRIUMPHANT CONSUMMATION SERIES HISTORIC ENTERPRISES SUCH AS CONSTRUCTION SUPERSTRUCTURE BÁB'S SEPULCHRE DEDICATION MOTHER TEMPLE WEST WORLD-WIDE CELEBRATIONS HOLY YEAR CONVOCATION FOUR INTERCONTINENTAL TEACHING CONFERENCES LAUNCHING TEN YEAR CRUSADE UNPRECEDENTED DISPERSAL ITS VALIANT PROSECUTORS FACE GLOBE EXTRAORDINARY PROGRESS AFRICAN PACIFIC CAMPAIGNS RISE ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER ARABIAN PENINSULA HEART ISLÁMIC WORLD DISCOMFITURE POWERFUL ANTAGONISTS CRADLE FAITH ERECTION INTERNATIONAL ARCHIVES HERALDING ESTABLISHMENT SEAT WORLD ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER HOLY LAND SERVED INFLAME UNQUENCHABLE ANIMOSITY MUSLIM OPPONENTS RAISED UP NEW SET ADVERSARIES CHRISTIAN FOLD ROUSED INTERNAL ENEMIES OLD NEW COVENANT-BREAKERS FRESH ATTEMPTS ARREST MARCH CAUSE GOD MISREPRESENT ITS PURPOSE DISRUPT ITS ADMINISTRATIVE INSTITUTIONS DAMPEN ZEAL SAP LOYALTY ITS SUPPORTERS. EVIDENCES INCREASING HOSTILITY WITHOUT PERSISTENT MACHINATIONS WITHIN FORESHADOWING DIRE CONTEST DESTINED RANGE ARMY LIGHT FORCES DARKNESS BOTH SECULAR RELIGIOUS PREDICTED UNEQUIVOCAL LANGUAGE 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ NECESSITATE THIS CRUCIAL HOUR CLOSER ASSOCIATION HANDS FIVE CONTINENTS BODIES ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES NATIONAL BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITIES WORLD OVER JOINT INVESTIGATION NEFARIOUS ACTIVITIES INTERNAL ENEMIES ADOPTION WISE EFFECTIVE MEASURES COUNTERACT THEIR TREACHEROUS SCHEMES PROTECT MASS BELIEVERS ARREST SPREAD EVIL INFLUENCE. CALL UPON HANDS¹

NATIONAL ASSEMBLIES EACH CONTINENT SEPARATELY ESTABLISH HENCEFORTH DIRECT CONTACT DELIBERATE WHENEVER FEASIBLE AS FREQUENTLY POSSIBLE EXCHANGE REPORTS TO BE SUBMITTED TO THEIR RESPECTIVE AUXILIARY BOARDS

¹ The Continental Boards of Counselors ... are charged with specific functions relating to the protection and propagation of the Faith in the areas under their jurisdiction. They will operate in a manner similar to that set forth by the beloved Guardian for the Hands of the Cause in his communications outlining the responsibilities they are called upon to discharge in collaboration with National Spiritual Assemblies. We particularly draw your attention to his message of June 4, 1957. (From a letter of the Universal House of Justice dated 24 June 1968 to a Continental Board of Counsellors)

NATIONAL COMMITTEES EXERCISE UNRELAXING VIGILANCE CARRY OUT UNFLINCHINGLY SACRED INESCAPABLE DUTIES. SECURITY PRECIOUS FAITH PRESERVATION SPIRITUAL HEALTH BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITIES VITALITY FAITH ITS INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS PROPER FUNCTIONING ITS LABORIOUSLY ERECTED INSTITUTIONS FRUITION ITS WORLD-WIDE ENTERPRISES FULFILMENT ITS ULTIMATE DESTINY ALL DIRECTLY DEPENDENT BEFITTING DISCHARGE WEIGHTY RESPONSIBILITIES NOW RESTING MEMBERS THESE TWO INSTITUTIONS OCCUPYING WITH UNIVERSAL HOUSE JUSTICE NEXT INSTITUTION GUARDIANSHIP FOREMOST RANK DIVINELY ORDAINED ADMINISTRATIVE HIERARCHY WORLD ORDER BAHÁ'U'LLÁH.

Shoghi Effendi, cablegram 4 June 1957 to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, 'Messages to the Bahá'í World 1950-1957', p. 122

