

XLIII. RACES

Compiled from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, Abdu'l

Original English



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1. **Aboriginal Inhabitants — Downtrodden People**

"Shoghi Effendi is also most anxious for the Message to reach the aboriginal inhabitants of the Americas. These people, for the most part downtrodden and ignorant, should receive from the Bahá'ís a special measure of love, and every effort be made to teach them. Their enrollment in the Faith will enrich them and us and demonstrate our principle of the Oneness of Man far better than words or the wide conversion of the ruling races ever can."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly of Meso-America and the Antilles, July 11, 1951: A Special Measure of Love, p. 5)

1. **Tablets of the Divine Plan — Natives of America May Become Great Standard Bearers of the Faith**

"The Guardian attaches the utmost importance, as you know, to the teaching of the natives of America."

"In the Tablets of the Divine Plan, the Master pays the utmost attention to this most important matter. He states that if the Power of the Holy Spirit today properly enters into the minds and the hearts of the natives of the great American continents that they will become great standard bearers of the Faith, similar to the Nomads (Arabians) who became the most cultured and enlightened people under the Mohammadan civilization."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to the National Spiritual Assembly of Brazil, Peru, Columbia, Ecuador and Venezuela, August 22, 1957)

1. **Prejudice and Condescension — Contact with City Indians**

"He adds one suggestion (he does not know if it is practicable or not): Can contact not be made with Indians who have become more or less absorbed into the life of the white element of the Country and live in or visit the big cities? There, people, finding the Bahá'ís sincerely lacking in either prejudice — or that even worse attitude, condescension — might not only take interest in our teachings, but also help us to reach their people in the proper way."

"It is a great mistake to believe that because people are illiterate or live primitive lives, they are lacking in either intelligence or sensibility. On the contrary, they may well look on us with the



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evils of our civilization, with its moral corruption, its ruinous wars, its hypocrisy and conceit, as people who merit watching with both suspicion and contempt. We should meet them as equals, well-wishers, people who admire and respect their ancient descent, and who feel that they will be interested as we are in a living religion and not in the dead forms of present-day churches."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the Comité Nacional de Enseñanza Bahá'í para los Indígenas de Sur América, September 21, 1951) [pg 525]

1. Afro-Americans and Amerindians

"The Americas have been a melting pot and a meeting place for the races of men, and the need is acute for the fulfillment of God's promises of the realization of the oneness of mankind. Particularly do the Master and the Guardian point to the Afro-Americans and the Amerindians, two great ethnic groups whose spiritual powers will be released through their response to the Creative Word. But our Teachings must touch all, must include all people. And, in this hour of your tireless activity what special rewards shall come to those who will arise, summoned by Abdu'l-Bahá's words: 'Now is the time to divest yourselves of the garment of attachment to this phenomenal realm, be wholly severed from the physical world, become angels of heaven, and travel and teach through all these regions.'"

(The Universal House of Justice's Message to the Caribbean Conference, May 1971)

1. First Member of His Race to Embrace the Cause

"Even Mrs. Hearst's butler, a negro named Robert Turner, the first member of his race to embrace the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh in the West, had been transported by the influence exerted by Abdu'l-Bahá in the course of that epoch-making pilgrimage. Such was the tenacity of his faith that even the subsequent estrangement of his beloved mistress from the Cause she had spontaneously embraced failed to becloud its radiance, or to lessen the intensity of the emotions which the loving-kindness showered by Abdu'l-Bahá upon him had excited in his breast."

(Shoghi Effendi: *God Passes By*, p. 259)

1. Service of the Negro

"He was very pleased to have the first pioneer from America go forth under this organized African campaign; he was doubly happy that it should have been an American Negro who went. This is highly appropriate and surely has delighted the heart of Abdu'l-Bahá Who watched over the race with particular love, tenderness and understanding. The ever increasing part the coloured friends are taking in the work of the Cause, and especially of late years in the pioneer work gratifies the Guardian immensely. And now, to add further to the record of their services, they can count a member of their race a Hand of the Cause. When we read in the Will and Testament how great is the function of the Hands we appreciate to what an exalted station our dear brother Louis Gregory attained...."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, November 23, 1951: Bahá'í News, No. 252, February 1952, p. 1)

1. **Guardian's Appeal to Negro Race**

"...I appeal particularly to its dearly beloved members belonging to the Negro race to participate in the contemplated project marking a significant milestone in the world unfoldment of the Faith..."

(Shoghi Effendi: Citadel of Faith, p. 87)

1. **Concentrate on Teaching the Negroes**

"...he urges the friends to concentrate on teaching the negroes. They should be courageous in their racial stand, particularly as so many non-Bahá'ís and non-Bahá'í organizations are showing marked courage at this time... The friends must [pg 526] remember that the cardinal principle of their Faith is the Oneness of Mankind. This places an obligation on them far surpassing the obligation which Christian charity and brotherly love places upon the Christians. They should demonstrate this spirit of oneness constantly and courageously..."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, September 21, 1957: Bahá'í News, No. 321, November 1957)

1. **Compared with Pupil of the Eye**

"...RECALL WITH PROFOUND EMOTION MESSAGE BELOVED GUARDIAN OCCASION 1953 CONFERENCE WHEREIN HE EXTOLLED PUREHEARTED SPIRITUALLY RECEPTIVE INDIGENOUS PEOPLE AFRICA WHOM BAHÁ'U'LLAH COMPARED PUPIL EYE THROUGH WHICH LIGHT OF SPIRIT SHINETH FORTH AND FOR WHOSE CONVERSION BOTH GUARDIAN AND MASTER BEFORE HIM YEARNED AND LABOURED..."

(From the cable of the Universal House of Justice to the Africa International Conference, October 6, 1967)

1. **Work of Negro Has Been of Greatest Help**

"The Negro believers must be just as active as their white brothers and sisters in spreading the Faith, both among their own race and members of other races. It has been a great step forward in the Cause's development in America to have Negro pioneers go forth, and their work has been of the greatest help and very productive of results."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to two individual believers, March 19, 1944)

1. **The Negroes Have a Contribution to Make to Bahá'u'lláh's World Order**

"The negroes, though they themselves may not realize it, have a contribution to make to the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh. His Teachings and the society He has come to establish are for every

race and every nation, and each one of them has his own part to play and the gift of his own qualities and talents to give to the whole world."

"The Cause of God has room for all. It would, indeed, not be the Cause of God if it did not take in and welcome everyone — poor and rich, educated and ignorant, the unknown, and the prominent — God surely wants them all, as He created them all."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to two believers, December 10, 1942)

1. Pure-Hearted, Spiritually Receptive Negro Race

"I welcome with open arms the unexpectedly large number of the representatives of the pure-hearted and the spiritually receptive Negro race, so dearly loved by Abdu'l-Bahá, for whose conversion to His Father's Faith He so deeply yearned and whose interests He so ardently championed in the course of His memorable visit to the North American continent. I am reminded, on this historic occasion, of the significant words uttered by Bahá'u'lláh Himself, Who, as attested by the Center of the Covenant, in His Writings, 'compared the coloured people to the black pupil of the eye', through which 'the light of the spirit shineth forth'."

(Shoghi Effendi: Messages to the Bahá'í World, pp. 135-136)

1. Faces Are as Pupil of the Eye

"As to ... and ..., verily the faces of these are as the pupil of the eye; although [pg 527] the pupil is created black, yet it is the source of light. I hope God will make these black ones the glory of the white ones and as the depositing of the lights of love of God. And I ask God to assist them in all circumstances, that they may be encompassed with the favours of their Loving Lord throughout centuries and ages."

(Tablets of Abdu'l-Bahá, Vol. II, p. 292)

1. The Principle of the Oneness of Mankind Precludes Possibility of Considering Race as a Bar to Social Interaction

"In regard to your question concerning the Bahá'í attitude towards the Coloured Race. It is only evident that the principle of the oneness of mankind — which is the main pivot round which all the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh revolve — precludes the possibility of considering race as a bar to any intercourse, be it social or otherwise. The Faith, indeed, by its very nature and purpose, transcend all racial limitations and differences, and proclaims the basic and essential unity of the entire human race. Racial prejudice, of whatever nature and character, is therefore severely condemned, and as such should be wiped out by the friends in all their relations, whether private or social."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, February 16, 1935)

1. The Guardian Addresses the Negro

"...Let the Negroes, through a corresponding effort on their part, show by every means in their power the warmth of their response, their readiness to forget the past, and their ability to wipe

out every trace of suspicion that may still linger in their hearts and minds. Let neither think that the solution of so vast a problem is a matter that exclusively concerns the other. Let neither think that such a problem can either easily or immediately be resolved. Let neither think that they can wait confidently for the solution of this problem until the initiative has been taken, and the favorable circumstances created by agencies that stand outside the orbit of their Faith...."

(Shoghi Effendi: The Advent of Divine Justice, p. 40, Wilmette, 1990)

1. Addressed to Members of the White Race

"...I hope that ye may cause that downtrodden race to become glorious, and to be joined with the white race, to serve the world of man with the utmost sincerity, faithfulness, love, and purity. This opposition, enmity, and prejudice among the white race and the coloured cannot be effaced except through faith, assurance, and the teachings of the Blessed Beauty... This question of the union of the white and the black is very important, for if it is not realized, ere long great difficulties will arise, and harmful results will follow ... enmity will be increased day by day, and the final result will be hardship and may end in bloodshed."

(Abdu'l-Bahá: quoted in The Advent of Divine Justice, p. 39)

1. Let the White Make a Supreme Effort

"Let the white make a supreme effort in their resolve to contribute their share to the solution of this problem, to abandon once for all their usually inherent and at times subconscious sense of superiority, to correct their tendency towards revealing a patronizing attitude towards the members of the other race, to persuade them [pg 528] through their intimate, spontaneous and informal association with them of the genuineness of their friendship and the sincerity of their intentions, and to master their impatience of any lack of responsiveness on the part of a people who have received, for so long a period, such grievous and slow-healing wounds."

(Shoghi Effendi: The Advent of Divine Justice, p. 40)

1. Unity in Diversity

"The diversity in the human family should be the cause of love and harmony, as it is in music where many different notes blend together in the making of a perfect chord. If you meet those of a different race and colour from yourself, do not mistrust them, and withdraw yourself into your shell of conventionality, but rather be glad and show them kindness."

(Abdu'l-Bahá: Quoted in The Advent of Divine Justice, p. 38)

1. The Guardian Addresses Both Races — Neither Race Can Claim to be Absolved from Obligation

"...White and Negro, high and low, young and old, whether newly converted to the Faith or not, all who stand identified with it must participate in, and lend their assistance, each according to his or her capacity, experience, and opportunities, to the common task of fulfilling the

instructions, realizing the hopes, and following the example, of Abdu'l-Bahá. Whether coloured or noncoloured, neither race has the right, or can conscientiously claim, to be regarded as absolved from such an obligation, as having realized such hopes, or having faithfully followed such an example. A long and thorny road, beset with pitfalls, still remains untravelled, both by the white and the Negro exponents of the redeeming Faith of Bahá'u'lláh...."

"...If any discrimination is at all to be tolerated, it should be a discrimination not against, but rather in favour of the minority, be it racial or otherwise. Unlike the nations and peoples of the earth, be they of the East or of the West, democratic or authoritarian, communist or capitalist, whether belonging to the Old World or the New, who either ignore, trample upon, or extirpate, the racial, religious, or political minorities within the sphere of their jurisdiction, every organized community enlisted under the banner of Bahá'u'lláh should feel it to be its first and inescapable obligation to nurture, encourage, and safeguard every minority belonging to any faith, race, class, or nation within it. So great and vital is this principle that in such circumstances, as when an equal number of ballots have been cast in an election, or where the qualifications for any office are balanced as between the various races, faiths or nationalities within the community, priority should unhesitatingly be accorded the party representing the minority, and this for no other reason except to stimulate and encourage it, and afford it an opportunity to further the interests of the community...."

(Shoghi Effendi: The Advent of Divine Justice, pp. 35)

1. God Makes No Distinction

"God maketh no distinction between the white and the black. If the hearts are pure both are acceptable unto Him. God is no respecter of persons on account of either colour or race. All colours are acceptable unto Him, be they white, black, or yellow. Inasmuch as all were created in the image of God, we must bring ourselves [pg 529] to realize that all embody divine possibilities... God did not make these divisions; these divisions have had their origin in man himself. Therefore, as they are against the plan and purpose of God they are false and imaginary."

(Abdu'l-Bahá: quoted in The Advent of Divine Justice, p. 37)

1. Prejudice Destroys Edifice of Humanity

"Bahá'u'lláh tells us that prejudice in its various forms destroys the edifice of humanity. We are adjured by the Divine Messenger to eliminate all forms of prejudice from our lives. Our outer lives must show forth our beliefs. The world must see that, regardless of each passing whim or current fashion of the generality of mankind, the Bahá'í lives his life according to the tenets of his Faith. We must not allow the fear of rejection by our friends and neighbours to deter us from our goal: to live the Bahá'í life. Let us strive to blot out from our lives every last trace of prejudice — racial, religious, political, economic, national, tribal, class, cultural, and that which is based on differences of education or age. We shall be distinguished from our non-Bahá'í associates if our lives are adorned with this principle."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to all National Spiritual Assemblies, July 13, 1972)

1. Object of Inter-Racial Work — Japanese, Americans, Mexicans, Chinese, Negroes

"He feels that, as the main object of the Bahá'í inter-racial work is to abolish prejudice against any and every race and minority group, it is obviously proper for them to include in particular any group that is receiving especially bad treatment — such as the Japanese Americans are being subjected to. There is also no reason why work should not be done among, and in cooperation with, the Mexicans, the Chinese, and so on."

"He has always been very anxious to have the Indians taught and enlisted under the banner of the Faith, in view of the Master's remarkable statements about the possibilities of their future and that they represent the aboriginal American population."

"The Negroes, likewise, are, one might say, a key problem and epitomise the feelings of colour prejudice so rife in the United States. That is why he has constantly emphasized the importance of the Bahá'ís actively and continuously demonstrating that in the Faith this cruel and horrible taint of discrimination against, and contempt for, them does not exist but is, on the contrary, supplanted by a feeling of esteem for their great gifts and a complete lack of prejudice against associating with them in every field of life."

"The work of the Race Unity Committee should include, as far as is feasible, contacts with all minority groups, and wherever there is a particularly stout prejudice against a special group — such as the feeling against the Japanese in the Western states and the Negroes in the Southern, etc., — efforts should be made to counteract it by showing publicly the Bahá'í example of loving tolerance and brotherly association."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, December 30, 1945)

1. Just Interest of Minorities

"To discriminate against any tribe because they are in a minority is a violation of [pg 530] the spirit that animates the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. As followers of God's Holy Faith it is our obligation to protect the just interests of any minority element within the Bahá'í Community. In fact in the administration of our Bahá'í affairs, representatives of minority groups are not only enabled to enjoy equal rights and privileges, but they are even favoured and accorded priority. Bahá'ís should be careful never to deviate from this noble standard even if the course of events of public opinion should bring pressure to bear upon them. The principles in the Writings are clear, but usually it is when these principles are applied that questions arise...."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to a National Spiritual Assembly in Africa, February 8, 1970)

1. The Coloured Friends Need the Faith — Have Suffered and Been Downtrodden

"The coloured friends need the Faith very much as they have suffered and been downtrodden in the past a great deal and they must realize that in the propagation of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh lies their hope for a better future, just as much as the hope of the entire world."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, July 8, 1942)

1. Guilty Before God to Allow Prejudice to Manifest Itself

"If we allow prejudice of any kind to manifest itself in us, we shall be guilty before God of causing a setback to the progress and real growth of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. It is incumbent upon every believer to endeavour with a fierce determination to eliminate this defect from his thoughts and acts. The fundamental purpose of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh is the realization of the organic unity of the entire human race..."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to all National Assemblies, July 13, 1972)

1. To Be a Bahá'í is to be Different

"It is indeed strange that the cultured class, the people of thought and experience, are often more filled with prejudice than just plain ordinary souls who have not enjoyed such advantages. They are so afraid of seeming in any way 'different' from their fellows, and of course to be a Bahá'í is to be different!"

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, March 15, 1950)

1. Bahá'ís Are Not Perfect

"He does not doubt — though it grieves him to have to admit it — that there are believers who have not overcome their racial prejudices. The Bahá'ís are not perfect, but they have made a great step forward by embracing the Faith of God. We must be patient with each other, and realize that each one of us has some faults to overcome, of one kind or another."

"You, he feels, need to use greater wisdom and forbearance in dealing with your fellow-Bahá'ís and with difficult situations. To be courageous — as you evidently are — to rebel against the injustices of race prejudice and fight them is not enough, you must also show some patience for those who suffer from this terrible American ailment of Negro prejudice and act with wisdom in overcoming it, instead of going at it so vehemently that you alienate the Bahá'ís instead of leading them to greater manifestations of the Bahá'í spirit of brotherhood and racial amity...." [pg 531] [pg 531]

"He hopes that you will concentrate your energies on serving the Faith."

"This is the only real solution to man's problems, all others are more or less palliatives, but we who are identified with Bahá'u'lláh's message can alone build up the pattern for the future through helping to establish our Administrative Order and assisting in its proper functioning. This is the fundamental thing."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer during the year 1949)

1. Abdu'l-Bahá Foretold for the Indians of America a Great Future if They Accepted the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh

"The original population of the United States was very dear to Abdu'l-Bahá's heart, and He foretold for the Indians a great future if they accepted and became enlightened by the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh."

"To believe in the Mouthpiece of God in His Day confers very great blessings, not only on individuals, but on races, and He hopes that you who are now numbered amongst the followers of Bahá'u'lláh will give His Message to many more of your tribe, and in this way hasten for your people a bright and happy future."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, December 21, 1947)

1. Bahá'ís Approve of Inter-Racial Unions

"He thinks you did well to marry, and he is glad you married an American Indian. We Bahá'ís approve of inter-racial unions, and you should do all you can to make your marriage a success and make your husband happy."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, December 31, 1950)

1. Campus Protest Against Racial Prejudice

"In connection with the subject matter of Mr. Blackwell's letter and your reference to it, the Guardian feels that, as he said in his letter to Mr. Blackwell, there was no objection at all to the students taking part in something so obviously akin to the spirit of our teachings as a campus demonstration against race prejudice. The Bahá'ís did not inaugurate this protest, they merely were proud to have a voice as Bahá'ís in such a protest, took part, and he thinks they did quite right and violated no administrative principle."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, November 18, 1948)

1. The Bahá'í Must Scrupulously Avoid Involvement in Political Issues Therefore Cannot Participate in Anti-Apartheid Demonstrations

"In reply to your letter of 15 July 1985 seeking further clarification on the issue of apartheid, the Universal House of Justice has instructed us to point out that as the policy of apartheid derives from racial discrimination, it cannot be accepted by Bahá'ís wherever, and in whatever form, it may be practised."

"While the friends should, of course, support the principles of the Faith, including those advocating the oneness of mankind, and may associate with groups and engage in activities which promote these principles, they must scrupulously take care not to become involved in political issues. As stated in the letter to you dated 16 April 1985, participation in anti-apartheid demonstrations and protest activities could [pg 532] be construed as involvement in politics, and therefore should be avoided."

"...The world around us is seething with unrest caused by the conflicting interests of governments, peoples, races and individuals. Each of these contending parties has some good and some evil on its side, and, whereas we will unhesitatingly uphold Bahá'í principles, we will never become embroiled in these internecine conflicts by identifying ourselves with one or other of the parties, however much in our hearts we may sympathize with its aims."

"The positive attitude to the question of racial prejudice is radiant and whole-hearted exemplification of the principle of the oneness of mankind, first among the members of your National Spiritual Assembly and then throughout the Bahá'í community...."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to a National Spiritual Assembly, August 18, 1985)

1. Teaching Multi-Racial Students in the Universities and Other Minority Groups in America, Such as Czechs, Poles, Russians...

"...urge the Bahá'ís, wherever they may be, to devote more attention to the minorities. This is particularly true in places where there are universities where foreign students belonging to the black, yellow and brown races are studying. In this way, the friends cannot only obey one of the most beautiful principles of our Faith, to show hospitality to the stranger in our midst, but also demonstrate the universality of our Teachings and the true brotherhood that animates us, and in addition, confirm Bahá'ís who may go back to the distant place of the earth — the Pacific, Africa, Asia, etc., and be of inestimable help to the newly-born Bahá'í Communities."

"Likewise the friends should carry their friendship and their teachings to other minority groups in America, such as the Italians, the Jews, the Czechs, the Poles, the Russians, etc."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the Bahá'í Inter-Racial Committee of the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, May 27, 1957)

1. Racial Prejudice is Simply a Negation of Faith

"The attitude of the Cause towards the problem of race, be it in America or elsewhere, has been repeatedly clarified by the Guardian. To the faithful followers of Bahá'u'lláh who fully grasp the essential implications of the principle of the oneness of mankind so much emphasized in His teachings, racial prejudice, in all its forms, is simply a negation of faith, a repudiation of the belief in the brotherhood of man which is, beyond doubt, the cornerstone of the Religion of God. Loyalty to this basic principle should, therefore, be whole-hearted and unqualified."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, November 11, 1936)

1. It is the Responsibility of the Believers to Combat and Uproot Racial Prejudice in Their Midst

"In America, where racial prejudice is still so widely prevalent, it is the responsibility of the believers to combat and uproot it with all their force, first by endeavouring to introduce into the Cause as many racial and minority groups as they can [pg 533] approach and teach, and second, by stimulating close fellowship and intercourse between them and the rest of the Community."

"It should be the paramount concern of your Committee to foster this aim through every means available. Not only the coloured people, who because of the increasing receptivity they are evincing to the Message and truly deserve special attention, but all other minorities, whether racial or religious, Jews, Red Indians, all alike should be contacted and confirmed. The greater the receptivity of a particular class or group, the stronger should wax the desire and determination of the believers to attract and teach its members. At a time when the whole world is steeped in prejudices of race, class, and nation, the Bahá'ís, by upholding firmly and loyally this cardinal principle of their Faith, can best hope to vindicate its truth, and establish its right to bring order and peace out of the chaos and strife of this war-torn world."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, January 20, 1941)

1. God Has Richly Endowed the Negro Race

"You already are well aware of the importance he attaches to teaching the negroes the Faith and breaking down the shameful wall of prejudice that has for so long shut out from each other the black and white citizens of America."

"The qualities of heart so richly possessed by the Negro are much needed in the world today — their great capacity for faith, their loyalty and devotion to their religion when once they believe, their purity of heart. God has richly endowed them, and their contribution to the Cause is much needed, especially as there is a lack of Negro Bahá'í teachers who can go out to their own people, along with their white brothers and sisters, and convince them of the active universality of our Faith. He will especially pray that you may confirm souls of capacity in this field."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to two believers, September 27, 1941)

1. The Negro Race and the White Race Must Do All in Their Power to Destroy the Prejudice which Exists on Both Sides

"The negro race has been, and still is, the victim of unjust prejudice, and it is obviously the duty of every Bahá'í, negro or white, to do all in their power to destroy the prejudices which exist on both sides. They can do this not only by exemplifying the true Bahá'í spirit in all their associations and acts, but also by taking an active part in any progressive movements aimed at the betterment of the lot of those who are underprivileged, as long as these movements are absolutely non-political and non-subversive in every respect."

"Movements for social progress and social justice, as long as they are disassociated from both political and religious partisanship, should be supported by those Bahá'ís who feel urged to undertake such work. Consequently there is no reason why you should not work for the betterment of your race through channels that in no way conflict with our Bahá'í attitude."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, November 23, 1941)

1. The Negro Bahá'ís Have a Great Responsibility Towards Their Own Race and Fellow Believers

"The Guardian feels very strongly that the negro Bahá'ís have great responsibilities, [pg 534] both towards their own race and towards their fellow-believers. They must not only arise to teach the Cause to the members of their own race, but must do all in their power to ensure that within the Bahá'í Community itself the negro and white believers understand and love each other and are truly as one soul in different bodies. Our allegiance as believers is to Bahá'u'lláh; we must fix our attention and devotion on Him and His will and, heedless of the shortcomings of our fellow-Bahá'ís, act as He would have us towards them."

(Ibid.)

1. Principle of the Oneness of Mankind — Incompatible with Racial Prejudices

"Regarding the solution of the racial problem: The believers should of course realize that the principle of the oneness of mankind which is the cornerstone of the Message of Bahá'u'lláh is wholly incompatible with all forms of racial prejudice. Loyalty to this foundation principle of the Faith is the paramount duty of every believer and should be therefore whole-hearted and unqualified. For a Bahá'í racial prejudice, in all its forms, is simply a negation of faith, an attitude wholly incompatible with the very spirit and actual teachings of the Cause."

"But while the friends should faithfully and courageously uphold this Bahá'í principle of the essential unity of all human races, yet in the methods they adopt for its application and further realization on the social plane they should act with tact, wisdom and moderation. These two attitudes are by no means exclusive. Bahá'u'lláh urges us to always act wisely and moderately. Bahá'ís do not believe that the spread of the Cause and its principles and teachings can be effected by means of radical and violent methods. While they are loyal to all these Teachings yet they believe in the necessity of resorting to peaceful and friendly means for the realization of their aims."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, November 22, 1936)

1. The Evil Forces of Prejudice

"The believers must realize that the forces of prejudice are, along with so many other evil practices, growing at present stronger in the darkness surrounding humanity. The Bahá'ís must exercise not only tact and judgement, but courage and confidence in the aid of Bahá'u'lláh, which He will vouchsafe to those who attempt to live up to His teachings, in their whole approach to this racial question. Too much hesitance, too great timidity in the face of public opinion, can be just as bad as too much disregard of the actual situation and the problems it involves."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, December 23, 1941)

1. The Negroes Should Be Proud and Happy in the Praises which Bahá'u'lláh Bestowed Upon Them and Other Downtrodden Races

"As we neither feel nor acknowledge any distinction between the duties and privileges of a Bahá'í, whoever he may be, it is incumbent upon the negro believers to rise above this great test which the attitude of some of their white brethren may present. They must prove their innate

equality not by words but by deeds. They must accept the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh for the sake of the Cause, love it, and cling to it, and teach it, and fight for it as their own Cause, forgetful of the shortcomings of others. Any other attitude is unworthy of their faith." [pg 535]

"Proud and happy in the praises which even Bahá'u'lláh Himself has bestowed upon them, they must feel He revealed Himself for them and every other downtrodden race, loves them, and will help them to attain their destiny."

"The whole race question in America is a national one and of great importance. But the negro friends must not waste their precious opportunity to serve the Faith, in these momentous days, by dwelling on the admitted shortcomings of the white friends. They must arise and serve and teach, confident of the future they are building, a future in which we know these barriers will have once and for all been overcome!"

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, February 9, 1942)

1. The Guardian Encourages Participation with Non-Political Progressive Groups

"Regarding your question: The Guardian does not see how Bahá'í participation with other organizations and religious bodies in a non-political meeting to promote civic unity and welfare along some line can be considered political. Much as the friends must guard against in any way ever seeming to identify themselves or the Cause with any political party, they must also guard against the other extreme of never taking part with other progressive groups, in conferences or committees designed to promote some activity in entire accord with our teachings — such as, for instance, better race relations."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, November 21, 1948)

1. The Whites Should Welcome Negroes in Their Homes and Even Marry Them if They Wish — Both Sides Have Prejudice to Overcome

"He feels it is time that the Bahá'ís stopped worrying entirely about the white element in a community, and that they should concentrate on showing the negro element that this is a Faith which produces full equality and which loves and wants minorities. The Bahá'ís should welcome the negroes to their homes, make every effort to teach them, associate with them, even marry them if they want to. We must remember that Abdu'l-Bahá Himself united in Bahá'í marriage a coloured and a white believer. He could not do more."

"Also, as the Guardian has been pointing out to the pilgrims, the Faith must be representative of the population. In a great many places in the South the majority of the population is still negro. This should be reflected in the Bahá'í Community, fearlessly. Both the white Bahá'ís and the coloured Bahá'ís must steadily work to attain this objective of bringing the Faith to the coloured people, and of confirming many of them in it. Both sides have prejudices to overcome; one, the prejudice which is built up in the minds of a people who have conquered and imposed their will, and the other the reactionary prejudice of those who have been conquered and sorely put upon."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the Bahá'í Inter-Racial Teaching Committee, May 27, 1957)

1. The Sufferings and Tribulations of the Jews Will Terminate During the Bahá'í Era

"...You should certainly endeavour to establish further contacts with your Jewish fellow-citizens, as their spiritual destiny is assuredly bright. The age-long sufferings and tribulations which the Jews all over the world have so cruelly experienced will [pg 536] be terminated during the Bahá'í era, as they will be gradually led to embrace the Faith which, indeed, constitutes the only means of salvation to their race."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, September 22, 1937)

1. The Glorious Destiny of the Jews

"...If the Jews study the teachings they will find in them the hopes and aspirations that they have always cherished. Bahá'u'lláh bears a wonderful message to the Jews and many of them have come to appreciate it and are active in carrying it to others of their race. Through Bahá'u'lláh, the Master tells us, they shall regain their ancient glory and become loved by all the people of the whole world."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, June 14, 1932)

1. Believers of Jewish Descent Should Call Themselves Bahá'ís

"He feels you did the right thing to have yourself under 'Religion' registered as a Bahá'í. Unfortunately, owing to this obnoxious and vicious race prejudice of every sort which afflicts the world today, the term Jew has come more to mean a race than a religion. You certainly, as your father feels, should never wish to disassociate yourself from a group of people who have contributed as much to the world as the Jews have. On the other hand your actual religion today is Bahá'í, and he feels that Jews should, when they become Bahá'ís, always give this as their Faith, but as their racial descent they should give 'Jewish'."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, March 15, 1948) [pg 537]