

1923

Shoghi Effendi

Original English



1923



— 1 —

January 9, 1923

The beloved of the Lord and the handmaids of the Merciful throughout India and Burma, Care of the members of the Spiritual Assembly.[pg 01]

Beloved co-workers in the Vineyard of God!

It has been my great pleasure and privilege to send you, since my return to the Holy Land, first my general message of confidence and of love addressed to all believers throughout the East, and later another letter wherein I appeal in particular to those faithful lovers of His Cause in that vast and distant dominion to labour wholeheartedly and to the very end for the diffusion of His Light and the spread of His Cause. Remembering, however, the few among my friends in that land who are as yet unfamiliar with the Persian Tongue, I have thought of sending these few lines to them in particular and through them to the rest of my brethren and sisters in those regions who, despite the diversity of tongue, of race and custom are all united at heart and animated by one common desire to uplift humanity and carry out His Divine Purpose for this world.

What an alluring field of service India with all its possibilities unfolds to our eyes at the present time and how vast are the opportunities[pg 2] of sowing the seeds of unity and loving kindness in the hearts of its divers peoples!

True, that land seems now unhappily to be plunged in the darkness of prejudice, hate and mistrust, yet however dark the immediate prospect may appear, our confidence remains unshaken that ere long these mists shall clear away, the dawn of a New Day shall break upon that land and the Rays of this Divine Revelation shall make of India a spiritually-quicken, peaceful and united country.



ORIGINAL

The universal Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh if declared and propounded with wisdom and judgement, determination, selflessness and sincerity, and above all if exemplified in our lives and dealings with our fellow men, cannot fail to inspire and stimulate the mind of the enlightened seeker and win the admiration and allegiance of all mankind.

Ours then is the duty and privilege to bring to the attention of this distressed and war weary world this Message of Eternal Salvation and help to establish the Era of Peace and Brotherhood as purposed and foretold by Bahá'u'lláh.

The welcome news of the progress of the Third All India Bahá'í Convention as well as the favourable comment made upon it by the Press of that country have been fully shared with the pilgrims and resident friends in the Holy Land and we have all admired and rejoiced at the efforts you are exerting for the consolidation of the Movement in that ancient land.

May your endeavours in every sphere of your spiritual activities be crowned with brilliant success, that His glorious Promise regarding the future of that land may be speedily fulfilled. It is my earnest hope that "The Bahá'í News," the representative organ of the Bahá'í Community in India, may expand and develop, may widen the sphere of its correspondence, add to the number and quality of its articles in Persian as well as in English, report regularly in its columns the news of the spiritual activities of all Bahá'í centres in India and elsewhere, and in general provide for the full, correct and dignified presentation of the Cause to the general public.

Assuring every one of you of my constant prayers on your behalf and wishing you success in your noble task,

I am your brother and co-worker,
Shoghi Haifa, Palestine



— 2 —

February 5, 1923

The beloved of the Lord and the handmaids of the Merciful throughout [pg 3] Burma. Care of Áqá Siyyid Mustapha, Mandalay, Burma.

Dearly beloved brethren and sisters in 'Abdu'l-Bahá:

How sweet and glorious to remember in these days of strife and turmoil how the mighty hand of our beloved 'Abdu'l-Bahá has gathered together peoples of divers tongues and distant climes and united their hearts in one common spirit of love and servitude to the sacred Threshold of Bahá'u'lláh. The Spirit that has achieved so great a measure of reconciliation, is today the one Factor that can, amid the unceasing contentions of races, nations, creeds and classes, assure to this disillusioned world the reign of true felicity and peace.

How great is then our privilege to labour for the diffusion of this Spirit, and how vital and urgent our task to relieve mankind from its present state of uncertainty and peril!

True, the work to be achieved is immeasurably difficult, the obstacles to be surmounted innumerable but our reliance is in His all conquering Spirit which has effected such a change in the past, and is sure, according to his explicit promise, to effect a still greater change in future.

I would be most pleased and gratified to receive a detailed report of your spiritual activities, and a full description of the present position of the Cause in those regions and of the plans you contemplate for its progress in future. I assure you that your welfare and happiness are the objects of my deepest care and concern, and I wish you to rely on my readiness to be of any service to you in your labours for the Cause.

I shall look forward from now on to the joyful tidings which my spiritual brethren and sisters in Burma, assisted by the efforts of our devoted and able Bahá'í sister, Mrs. Stannard, will send me in the near future.

It is my earnest prayer, whenever I visit the Three Sacred Shrines, that the blessings of the Almighty may rest upon your efforts and make of that far away region a radiant centre of spiritual activity and humanitarian achievements.

Your brother and co-worker,
Shoghi Haifa, Palestine



— 3 —

April 26, 1923

My Dear Spiritual Brother:[pg 4]

Shoghi Effendi was most pleased to receive your letter dated April 13th. He was specially delighted to hear of the great zeal Dr. Koshal is displaying in the spread of the movement. As you mentioned India is a vast country and an excellent field of service. If the younger Bahá'í generation, in whom Shoghi Effendi has great hopes, take the pain of studying the Cause deeply and thoroughly, read its history, find its underlying principles and become both well informed and energetic, they surely can achieve a great deal. It is upon their shoulders that the Master has laid the tremendous work of teaching.

They are the ones to raise the call of the Kingdom and arouse the people from slumber. If they fail the Cause is doomed to stagnation. May we all hope and earnestly pray that through God's infinite Grace, through the Master's spiritual guidance and through Shoghi Effendi's tender care we may do justice to this tremendous work and not fail to do the Master's bidding.

As Shoghi Effendi has not yet taken up the tremendous work and responsibility of attending to the correspondence of the individual friends, he asked me to write you this note, acknowledge

the receipt of your letter, and ask you to do the following things: Change the name of your Executive Committee to the “National Spiritual Assembly,” because the corresponding Assembly in England and America bear the same name, and uniformity in such matters is most advisable. 2 He likes to receive regular and detailed reports of the position of the Cause as well as the activities of the friends in India drafted as well as sent by the Secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly, so as to be informed of the conditions there and administer to your needs. 3 He wishes to have the postal as well as telegraphic address of the Secretary so as to send his communications to him.

Shoghi Effendi earnestly hopes and prays that the National Spiritual Assembly will be able to achieve a great deal and herald a new era of spiritual awakening in that land.



— 4 —

June 1, 1923

To the beloved of the Lord, the members of the National Spiritual Assembly:[pg 5]

Mr. N. R. Vakíl, Mr. M. U. Abasi, Mr Hashmatu'llah, Hájí Aḥmad, Mr. A. Bahrám, Mr. M. Kodadad, Dr. Kaushal Kishore, Prof. Pritam Singh, Mr. I. Bakhtiar

Care of the Secretary, Dr. Kaushal Kishore, India.

Dear fellow workers in the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh!

Your long awaited letter, penned by our dear and devoted brother, Mr. N. R. Vakíl, has been received, and read with profound interest. I note with deep satisfaction the vigour and earnestness with which you are conducting the affairs of the Movement throughout the length and breadth of that vast and distant land, and ardently pray that you may achieve, individually and collectively, the highest success in all your endeavours.

Regarding the “Bahá'í News,” I strongly urge those responsible for its publication, and in particular, aim beloved friends, Prof. Pritam Singh, Mr. Vakíl, Mr. Hashmatu'llah, Mr. M.U. Abasi, Mírzá Niku, Mr. Ardeshir Khodadad, and Hájí Aḥmad, to do their utmost that this Bahá'í organ may increase in volume, widen in scope, broaden in its outlook, improve in style and general presentation, and reflect more extensively the activities of the friends in India, Burma and elsewhere. As a magazine that has been established in the days of our departed Master, and been the recipient of His special favours and blessings, it ought, and I have no doubt it will, with your active support and under your constant and general supervision, carry out the great plan it is destined to fulfil in this world.

With regard to Burma and its Bahá'í activities, I trust you realize that that province falls directly within the sphere of your activities, and although a Central Council for all Burma is in the process of establishment, that Council as well as all local Assemblies throughout Burma will have to be under the protection, care and direction of the All-India Spiritual Assembly.

I would indeed welcome regular, frequent and comprehensive reports from the National Assembly on the various branches of its manifold activities, and will spare no effort to contribute my humble share in consolidating and extending the Teaching Campaign throughout that vast Dominion.

I would be pleased to receive the permanent postal and telegraphic address of the Secretary of the National Assembly, and am confident that by the grace of Bahá'u'lláh and under the guiding Hand of our beloved Master, we shall all carry triumphantly the noble task entrusted to our charge to a speedy and successful conclusion.[pg 6]

Your brother and fellow-worker,
Shoghi Haifa, Palestine



— 5 —

June 1, 1923

The beloved of the Lord and the handmaids of the Merciful in Rangoon, Care of the Members of the Spiritual Assembly.

Dearly beloved brethren and sisters in 'Abdu'l-Bahá:

Your most welcome letter has rejoiced my heart, and has redoubled my confidence and hope in that little band of earnest and ardent followers of the Bahá'í Faith who labour so devotedly for the diffusion of the Light of Bahá'u'lláh throughout the world.

The glowing account you give me of your recent efforts and activities to extend and consolidate the Campaign of Service in that land has been shared with the resident friends and pilgrims in the Holy Land, and incorporated in the circular letter which the Haifa Spiritual Assembly addresses to the Bahá'í world. It will send, I am sure, a thrill of enthusiasm and courage throughout the body of the friends the world over, and will serve to strengthen the ties that bind us all to you, our beloved co-workers in that far eastern land!

I am looking forward with the greatest interest, to the time when your high hopes will have been fully realized, your plans fulfilled and your selfless efforts crowned with glorious success. It is my fervent hope and prayer that your endeavours to constitute a Central Council for all Burma, and establish a Bahá'í Magazine, exclusively devoted to the progress of the work in that province, will soon bear abundant fruit, and will stand a testimony to the efficiency, the energy and the zeal of the beloved Burmese friends.

May our loving and ever watchful Master, guide and protect you in all the services you are so wholeheartedly tendering to His sacred Threshold, and may He enable you to contribute your full share in carrying out His Great Purpose for mankind! This is my prayer for you all whenever I

visit the Three Holy Shrines, and I feel certain that[pg 7] He will not fail to answer it, if we but hold fast to those principles for which He lived, laboured and died.

Awaiting your joyful news, I am your devoted brother,
Shoghi Haifa, Palestine



— 6 —

June 2, 1923

The beloved of the Lord and the handmaids of the Merciful in Mandalay, Daidanaw-Kalazoo, and Tanbingyanng. Care of Áqá Siyyid Mustapha, Mandalay, Burma.

Dearly beloved brethren and sisters in 'Abdu'l-Bahá!

The detailed report I have recently received from the tried and faithful servant of Bahá'u'lláh, Áqá Siyyid Mustapha, regarding the progress of your labours in those remote regions of the world has filled my heart with hope and gladness, and has served to fortify the ties of loving fellowship that bind our hearts together in the service of His Cause.

I have read and re-read the account of your activities with profound interest, and have been deeply touched to realize how constantly and fervently you are carrying on the work entrusted to your charge. May His Spirit guide you, sustain you and protect you in all your endeavours, and make of you the vanguard of His Host that shall conquer the world.

I shall await the joyful news of the expansion of your work, the establishment of your Magazine, the consolidation of your Assemblies, the increase of your numbers, with keen interest, and wish to assure you again and again of my readiness and desire to help you and serve you in your efforts to promote the Cause in even the uttermost corners of the world.

By day and by night, in my hours of prayer and meditation, I tenderly remember every one of you, and pray from the bottom of my heart, for your spiritual happiness, material prosperity, and ultimate success in your sacred mission in this world.

I shall be most pleased to receive frequent and direct letters from every Bahá'í locality in Burma, and will not fail to do all I can to stimulate your work, and extend your activities throughout that distant province.

May the day be not far distant when the few and ardent followers[pg 8] of the Faith in that land, will have increased a hundred fold, and the promises of our beloved 'Abdu'l-Bahá strikingly and speedily fulfilled.

Your brother and fellow worker,
Shoghi Haifa, Palestine



June 20, 1923

Mr. N. R. Vakíl, B. A. L. L. B. Hawadia, Chakale, Surat, India.

My dear brother,

Your letter of June 6th, written to our dear Shoghi Effendi, with the enclosed letter of our dear brother, Mr. Hishmat'ullah, was received yesterday. Your previous letter to him was also received.

You mention in your previous letter that the friends in India are requesting him to send Áqá Mírzá Maḥmúd Zarghani to India, because he is greatly needed in India to serve the Cause of God.

Shoghi Effendi instructed me to tell you in this letter that he will gladly send Áqá Mírzá Maḥmúd to India, but nowadays he is occupied in some special service. Later on he will be sent to them. Please extend this news to the dear friends, together with his tender love. There is no doubt that our brother, Mírzá Maḥmúd, is the qualified teacher for India. The beloved Master has testified to this. But I believe he will be here for at least three months more.

Our dear Shoghi Effendi, owing to the shock he received at the sudden news of the Ascension of our Master and owing to the great fatigue occasioned to him through the excess of work has become susceptible to malaria of which Haifa is a great centre. This summer is very hot too. He was troubled with malaria two days or three in every week. So the members of the Holy Family conjointly with the Haifa Spiritual Assembly repeatedly begged him to change his residence during these hot summer months to some cooler climate. At last he affectionately accepted our humble entreaty and left this morning for Egypt whence he'll proceed to some summer resort as he considers suitable. He wishes all the friends to be more active in his absence.



NOVEMBER 26, 1923

MAY PAINFUL REMEMBRANCE OF BELOVED'S PASSING INFLAME US WITH THE SPIRIT OF DEVOTION AND SERVICE TO HIS CAUSE.[pg 9]

SHOGHI



December 5, 1923

To the beloved of the Lord and the handmaids of the Merciful throughout India and Burma.
Care of the National Spiritual Assembly.

My dearest friends:

It is a great pleasure and privilege for me to renew the bonds of fellowship and affection that have always united our hearts in the service of our beloved Master. I need not recall to your minds the warm and abiding place which that gifted Dominion has always occupied in our Beloved's heart, and the high hopes He cherished for its future contribution towards the triumph of the Movement in those distant regions of the earth.

I am sure the hour has struck when those dearly beloved pioneers of the Master's Cause, scattered throughout the length and breadth of that vast and promising land, should unite, consolidate their forces, and effectively combine for the laying of a firm foundation for the future progress of their noble task. It is my earnest hope and my most cherished desire that at the forthcoming convention the vigour and enlightened efforts of the Bahá'í youth of India, coupled with the generous support and devotion of the old beloved Parsec friends, and reinforced by the vast numbers of the ardent followers of the Faith in Burma, may, by imparting power and brilliancy to its proceedings, herald an era of unprecedented activity for the ultimate recognition of the Cause by the peoples of that country.

I shall welcome with genuine satisfaction every effort which that talented and untiring servant of Bahá'u'lláh, our highly esteemed sister Mrs. Stannard, may exert in this connection, and would feel truly gratified to learn of her determination to play a conspicuous part in the presentation of the Cause in the eyes of the enlightened public.

May the sustaining grace of God, the power of Bahá'u'lláh, and the loving counsels of our beloved 'Abdu'l-Bahá guide you and aid you in your mighty endeavours for the accomplishment of your task.

I shall eagerly await any particulars you might wish to send me[pg 10] regarding your various activities in the service of the Cause, and I trust that during the interval between now and Ridván a complete and careful arrangement for the successful conduct of the coming Convention will have been drawn by all the friends and assemblies of India and Burma, and to which, I assure you, I shall be most pleased to contribute my humble share of cooperation and advice.

Hoping to hear from you, individually and collectively, and assuring you of my constant prayers on your behalf.

I am your brother and fellow worker,
Shoghi Haifa, Palestine

December 27, 1923

To the members of the National Spiritual Assembly of India and Burma.

Care of the Secretary, Dr. Kaushal Kishore.

Beloved co-workers in the Cause!

I have received your letter dated December 6th, 1923, and am glad to learn of your activities, of your steadfastness and zeal in the path of service.

Regarding the position of the Bahá'í women in India and Burma, and their future collaboration with the men in the administrative work of the Cause, I feel that the time is now ripe that those women who have already conformed to the prevailing custom in India and Burma by discarding the veil should not only be given the right to vote for the election of their local and national representatives, but should themselves be eligible to the membership of all Bahá'í Assemblies throughout India and Burma, be they local or national.

This definite and most important step, however, should be taken with the greatest care and caution, prudence and thoughtfulness. Due regard must be paid to their actual capacity and present attainments, and only those who are best qualified for membership, be they men or women, and irrespective of social standing, should be elected to the extremely responsible position of a member of the Bahá'í Assembly.

This momentous decision, I trust, will prove to be a great incentive to the women Bahá'ís throughout India and Burma who, I hope, will now bestir themselves and endeavour to the best of their ability to acquire a better and more profound knowledge of the Cause, to take a more active and systematic part in the general affairs of the [pg 11] Movement, and prove themselves in every way enlightened, responsible and efficient co-workers to their fellowmen in their common task for the advancement of the Cause throughout their country.

May they fully realize their high responsibilities in this day, may they do all in their power to justify the high hopes we cherish for their future, and may they prove themselves in every respect worthy of the noble mission which the Bahá'í world is now entrusting to their charge.

Your
Shoghi Haifa, Palestine

fellow

worker,