

Shoghi Effendi

Original English



1936

2

— 148 —

January 3, 1936

Dear Mr. Vakíl,[pg 137]

Very many thanks from the Guardian for your letters dated November 25th and December 13th.

He feels greatly rejoiced at the important steps you have taken for giving the Cause a wide and effective publicity throughout India. He has read with much interest the newspaper clipping which you had enclosed, and sincerely hopes that your masterly sketch of the history and teachings of the Cause will serve to attract leading personalities among the Indian public to the Faith.

Regarding the publication of the Hindi, Sindhi and Bengali translations of "Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era," the Guardian very much appreciates your National Spiritual Assembly's response to his call for speeding up the printing of these works which, he hopes, will, when widely circulated throughout the country open a new era of unprecedented teaching activity, not only in India and Burma, but also in Ceylon and other neighbouring countries.

Wishing you continued success in your labours in this connection, and with heartiest greetings to you and family, and to all the friends.[pg 138]

Dear and valued co-worker:

Your last letter dated December 30 has just reached me, and I am delighted with the news it contains. I am so glad to learn of the active part you are having in the work which has been inaugurated by the believers, and I will pray that Bahá'u'lláh may grant you all the strength, the wisdom, and the power you need for the effective and uninterrupted prosecution of your historic and glorious task.

Affectionately, Shoghi



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7



-149

March 10, 1936

[To N.R. Vakíl]

Beloved Bahá'í Brother,

Your communication dated March 2nd with the enclosed Annual Report issued by the Indian National Spiritual Assembly have been duly received and read with deepest interest by the Guardian.

He feels really proud of you and of your distinguished and able co-workers in the National Assembly for the unity, efficiency and zeal with which you are labouring for the consolidation of the Administration throughout India and Burma. He is convinced that your sustained and collective efforts in this connection will soon result in ushering in a new era in the history of the Cause in that country.

As regards the Annual Report, the Guardian fully approves of its publication in your "News Letter," with the exception of the paragraph no. 11 on page seven, regarding correspondence with him. He feels that your statement on this matter is too strongly worded. The National Spiritual Assembly should, indeed, advise the believers to lessen their correspondence with the Guardian. But under no circumstances it can prevent them from writing to him. For this is a sacred right and a supreme privilege which every believer can rightly claim to possess, as through it alone he can get in direct touch with his Guardian. If individuals feel, after the advice of the National Spiritual Assembly to lessen correspondence, an inner urge to write to the Guardian they should not be prevented or discouraged.

Shoghi Effendi is delighted to learn that the Sindhi and the Bengali translations of the "New Era" have been already sent to the press. He hopes that the Hindi version will also be completed very soon. He[pg 139] is also very pleased that the National Spiritual Assembly is taking the necessary steps for presenting to the authorities the pamphlet regarding various laws and ordinances of the Cause on matters of personal status. He sincerely hopes that the bill you are planning to submit to the government will be approved. He is eagerly awaiting to read the text himself.

The photostatic reproductions of the Certificates of Incorporation of the Calcutta, Rangoon and Mandalay Spiritual Assemblies have been duly received and will be incorporated in the manuscript of volume six of the "Bahá'í World"...

The Guardian is grieved to learn of the sad situation facing Mr ... He would advise him, however, not to attach any importance to the calumnies directed against him by the enemies of the Cause, and to put his reliance entirely on God.

According to Bahá'u'lláh the soul retains its individuality and consciousness after death, and is able to commune with other souls. This communion, however, is purely spiritual in character, and is conditioned upon the disinterested and selfless love of the individuals for each other.

In closing may I convey to you Shoghi Effendi's deep felt appreciation of the sentiments you have conveyed to him in your letter, and to assure you that the remarkable services you are now rendering the Faith in India are, in God's sight, equal to, and as meritorious as the glories of martyrdom which the early believers had so remarkably won for themselves.

With his best wishes to you and to all the friends.

Dear and valued co-worker:

The evidences of the rise, the consolidation, and expansion of the Administrative Order of our beloved Faith in India and Burma are highly significant and most encouraging. The incorporation of several Local Assemblies is of historic importance. Reproduction of all the Certificates of Incorporation will adorn the pages of the forthcoming "Biennial." Now that the basis of Bahá'í institutions has been firmly laid, an unprecedented effort in the field of teaching is urgently required. Such an effort is of vital and paramount importance. May the Almighty sustain, inspire and guide you in this meritorious endeavour.

Shoghi

2

— 150 —

April 5, 1936

[To The Bahá'í Youth of Karachi]

Dear Bahá'í Friends,[pg 140]

Your welcome and beautifully worded message of greetings and love has duly reached the Guardian and its perusal has immensely rejoiced his heart. He is very pleased indeed to learn of the success of the conference which you have recently held to celebrate the Feast of Naw-Rúz, and he hopes that the outcome of your deliberations will be to stir up a new consciousness in the heart of all the attendants and to stimulate them to a firm determination to work for the spread and consolidation of the Faith throughout India.

The responsibilities which you, and the Bahá'í youth the world over are called upon to shoulder are surely tremendous, but are commensurate with the potentialities, both spiritual and material, with which every devoted follower of the Faith has been endowed by Bahá'u'lláh. His unfailing guidance and merciful grace will surely be with you, provided you conscientiously strive to play your part in the realization of His Divine Plan.

May His confirmations ever bless and keep you steadfast in the service of His Cause, and make you potent and effective instruments for the propagation of this message.

May the Beloved Whose Cause you serve with such ardour, diligence and devotion, reward you for your labors, sustain you in your efforts, guide you in the path of service, and enable you to establish a firm foundation on which the institutions of His ever expanding Faith can rest and flourish.

Your true brother, Shoghi

2

— 151 —

May 1, 1936

[To the National Spiritual Assembly]

Dear Bahá'í Brother,

On behalf of the Guardian I acknowledge the receipt of your letter of April 12th with the enclosed newspaper clippings regarding Mrs. Shirin Fozdar's teaching activities. He is truly rejoiced to learn of[pg 141] the remarkable success that has attended her efforts for the spread of the Message, and sincerely hopes that as a result some people of capacity will be led to embrace the Cause. Will you convey to her his deepest thanks and heartfelt appreciation for the precious services she is rendering the Faith in India. He is fervently praying at the Holy Shrines for her further confirmation and guidance.

The Guardian wishes me also to assure you of his prayers on behalf of all the members of your National Spiritual Assembly, specially Mr. N.R. Vakíl and Miss Hla Hla who, he hopes, are now feeling stronger and more fit to carry on their activities for the Cause.

With sincere good wishes and heartiest Ridván greetings.

Dear and valued co-worker.

I trust your activities are steadily expanding. I cherish bright hopes for them, and will continue to pray for you and for your collaborators from the depths of my heart.

Your true brother, Shoghi

2

May 31, 1936

To the Indian National Spiritual Assembly

Dear Bahá'í Brother,

I am instructed by our beloved Guardian to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of May 25th written on behalf of the Indian National Spiritual Assembly, and to assure you that he has read it, together with its enclosures, with sustained interest and profoundest appreciation.

The photostatic reproduction of the Certificate of Incorporation of the Delhi Spiritual Assembly has also reached him, and he has duly sent it to the United States for reproduction in the forthcoming issue of the "Bahá'í World." He hopes to receive soon the Certificate of Incorporation of the Daidanaw Spiritual Assembly which he wishes to publish also in the next volume of the "Biennial."

The Guardian has read with deepest satisfaction the enclosed report of this year's Convention of the believers in India and Burma. His hope is that the success that has attended the deliberations and discussions of the friends at that national gathering will impart a fresh[pg 142] stimulus to each and every one of them to toil more actively for the spread of the Cause.

Regarding teaching; the Guardian immensely appreciates the splendid work accomplished by Mrs. Shirin Fozdar, and Messrs. Hishmat'u'llah and Ilmi, and wishes you to urge them to continue exerting themselves until some substantial results are achieved. He would also appeal to all the friends to lend full and continued support to the cause of teaching throughout India. He would suggest that those believers who have the means and the necessary physical requirements to settle in those localities where the light of the Cause has not yet penetrated, with the view of establishing a new group. This, he feels, is a very effective way of spreading the Cause in a vast and exceptionally varied country like India, Regarding voting; it is not only the right but the sacred obligation of every member of any Bahá'í administrative body, whether permanent, or temporary like the Convention, to fully and freely exercise this function. Abstention from voting is, as a rule, not advisable, as it implies a shirking of responsibility which every loyal and conscientious believer should consider it a privilege to shoulder.

P.S. Regarding the properties of the Local Assemblies; the Guardian feels that as these Assemblies have been incorporated, steps should be taken to transfer these properties to their names. Properties of national importance and significance should be transferred to the National Spiritual Assembly. This body should decide which properties should be regarded as local and which should be recognized as national properties.

Dearly valued co-workers:

The work thus far achieved, in both the teaching and administrative spheres of Bahá'í service, is highly reassuring and truly meritorious in the sight of God. It is but a beginning however. Much

remains to be achieved. A systematic effort, aiming at the settlement of individual believers in those states and provinces of India where the banner of the Faith has not yet been hoisted, must be deliberately exerted and vigorously sustained. Southern India, particularly the Island of Ceylon and the outlying centres on the fringe of the Indian Empire as well as within its very heart should be won over, through your strenuous, constant and devoted labours, to the everadvancing Cause of[pg 143] Bahá'u'lláh. To extend the outposts of our far-flung Faith should be your immediate objective.

June 27, 1936

[To N.R. Vakíl]

Dear Bahá'í Brother,

Let me thank you for your very kind letter of May 31st, and specially for sending the Guardian a Copy of the "Illustrated Weekly" of India. He deeply appreciates the efforts exerted by the Bombay Assembly and Dr. and Mrs. Shirin Fozdar to awaken the interest of the Editor in the Cause. These contacts are surely of immense help to the spread of the Teachings and the friends should therefore cultivate them as much as they can.

Regarding the Guardian's general letter of March 11th; I have duly brought to his attention the reason you have given for the delay caused in informing him of the receipt of that letter. Please do not feel much concerned about this matter, and remain assured of the Guardian's abiding appreciation of your untiring efforts in the service of our beloved Cause.

With his renewed thanks and most loving greetings.

July 10, 1936

[To the National Spiritual Assembly]

Dear Bahá'í Brother,

The Guardian has been lately informed of the fact that your National Spiritual Assembly is intending to discontinue your contributions to the School of 'Abdu'l-Bahá at Daidanaw-Kalazoo, Burma.

Much as he realizes the heavy and ever increasing expenses which your Assembly is incurring, particularly in these hard times, he feels nevertheless the urge to impress upon you the vital necessity for the Indian and Burmese believers to help in maintaining this Bahá'í school in Daidanaw which, in addition to the educational advantages it offers to the Bahá'ís, can be of great help in promoting the cause of teaching throughout Burma. in view of that the Guardian wishes you[pg 144] to lay this matter before the National Spiritual Assembly and to urge them to give it their careful consideration. He himself is sending, through the care of Siyyid Muṣṭafá Rumie, thirty pounds as his contribution towards the upkeep of the school at Daidanaw.

2

-155

July 16, 1936

Dear Siyyid Mustafá,

Many thanks for your very kind letter of June 8th which I have just received, and also for the enclosed cash account of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's school at Daidanaw-Kalazoo, both of which I have, at your request, presented to our beloved Guardian for his information.

He is indeed sorry to learn of the financial difficulties facing that school, and he is fervently praying that you, as well as your devoted co-workers in that institution, may be given the wisdom, energy and means you need to head for the furtherance of that institution.

He is enclosing a draft for thirty English Pounds as his contribution towards the expenses of the school. He is also impressing the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of India and Burma with the necessity of maintaining their contributions to the school's fund.

He hopes that through their cooperation and through your energetic endeavours as well, the financial problem facing the Daidanaw school will be speedily and satisfactorily solved.

2

— 156 —

September 5, 1936

Dear Mr. Vakíl,

It is with deepest pleasure that the Guardian has received your detailed and welcome communication of the 17th August, and he has read its contents with profoundest interest and appreciation.

He regrets to learn that for reasons of health you have been unable to attend the National Spiritual Assembly sessions. He hopes, however, your physical condition will gradually improve and will permit you to participate more actively in the national activities of the Cause throughout India and Burma. I feel nevertheless the urge to bring to your attention his strong advice that you should under no circumstances allow your activities for the Faith to develop to such an[pg 145] extent as to overtax your energies and injure your health which, as you know, constitutes a most valuable asset to the Cause in India.

With regard to the problems confronting the believers; these, the Guardian fully realizes, are by no means easy to solve. But the friends should be confident that the very progress of the Cause will enable them to find the necessary solution to the difficulties which appear now to so seriously puzzle their minds.

There are two main principles which the Guardian wishes the friends to always bear in mind and to conscientiously and faithfully follow. First is the principle of unqualified and whole-hearted loyalty to the revealed Word. The believers should be careful not to deviate, even a hairbreadth, from the Teachings. Their supreme consideration should be to safeguard the purity of the principles, tenets and laws of the Faith. It is only by this means that they can hope to maintain the organic unity of the Cause. There can and should be no liberals and conservatives, no moderates or extremists in the Cause. For they are all subject to the one and the same law which is the law of God. This law transcends all differences, all personal or local tendencies, moods and aspirations.

Next is the principle of complete, and immediate obedience to the Assemblies, both local and national. It is the responsibility of these Bahá'í administrative bodies to enable the community to acquire, and increasingly deepen, in the knowledge and understanding of the Cause.

Doctrinal unity and administrative unity, these are the two chief pillars that sustain the edifice of the Cause, and protect it from the storms of opposition which so severely rage against it. With warmest greetings from the Guardian to you and all your dear family.

Dearest co-worker:

I continually pray that your precious health may so improve as to enable you to resume your leading and decisive part in the direction and promotion of the Cause. I feel proud of your past achievements, and hopeful and confident in your accomplishments in the days to come. Rest assured and persevere in your unique work.

Shoghi

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September 16, 1936

Dear Siyyid Mustafá,[pg 146]

Our beloved Guardian wishes me to thank you for your very kind letter of August 27th, the contents of which he has deeply enjoyed reading. He is truly gratified to learn that 'Abdu'l-Bahá's School at Daidanaw is progressing satisfactorily, and that his small contribution to the school's fund has been of some help to the friends in meeting the expenses incurred in connection with the maintenance of the English Section. His hope is that through the united cooperation of the Indian National Spiritual Assembly that institution will steadily grow and expand, and will attract the attention of all the non-Bahá'í i neighbours in Daidanaw and its surroundings. The school should be maintained at any cost, and specially the new English Section which, if run properly, can be of immense teaching value to the Cause. No sacrifice is too great for this vital and highly meritorious task.

The question of the School registration is obviously a very important one, and every effort should be exerted to have this step taken without the least possible delay.

Wishing you continued success and guidance in your efforts in this connection, and with heartfelt greetings and renewed thanks from the Guardian.

My well beloved co-worker,

I rejoice to learn of your determination to prosecute, in collaboration with your devoted coworkers, the historic work which you have so gloriously initiated, extended and consolidated in the course of your magnificent career in the service of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh. Future generations will glorify and extol your services rendered with such devotion, zeal and love. I feel extremely grateful to you, and am proud of your record of service.

Affectionately, Shoghi

2

— 158 **—**

September 25, 1936

Dear Mr. 'Abbás 'Alí Butt,

I am addressing you these few lines on behalf of our beloved Guardian to ask you to kindly inform your fellow members in the[pg 147] Indian National Spiritual Assembly of the happy news of the projected visit of dear Mr. Siegfried Schopflocher to India, and to request you to take

any step that your Assembly deems advisable in order to make his journey as fruitful and abundant in its results as possible.

Mr. Siegfried Schopflocher is not in need of any introduction, as his long and manifold services to the Cause in America, and particularly his generous and unfailing support of the local, national as well as international Bahá'í funds, have endeared him to all the friends, whether in the East or in the West.

For many years he has been a member of the American National Spiritual Assembly, and he contributed no small part in the steady development and consolidation of the Administration ever since the early days of its establishment in the States. He is indeed all outstanding champion of the Administration not only in America but also in the West, and has proved in deeds his profound attachment and loyalty to all its principles, laws and institutions.

His name will be ever associated with the beloved Temple in Wilmette. Had it not been for the continued and whole-hearted support, both financial and moral, which he so generously extended to it, that Edifice could have never been reared so steadily and efficiently. The friends will always remember with deep gratitude the eminent services he has rendered the Faith in this connection.

In view of these labours so devotedly accomplished, the Guardian wishes your Assembly to urge the friends to draw full benefit from Mr. Schopflocher's visit to India. He is confident that you will extend to him a most hearty welcome, and will, through association with him, draw fresh strength and inspiration in your arduous labours for the Cause.



-159 -

September 30, 1936

Dear Siyyid Mustafá,

Your welcome letter of September 12th enclosing receipt for the contribution offered by our beloved Guardian to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's School at Daidanaw-Kalazoo has been duly received and read with appreciation.

He wishes me to thank you for the sentiments you have expressed and assure you once more of his prayers for your protection and guidance, and for the success of the efforts you are so[pg 148] devotedly exerting for the furtherance of the interests of the Bahá'í school at Daidanaw. May the Almighty bless and sustain you in your devoted labours.

Wishing you still greater success in your historic task and the exemplary efforts which you are so zealously and faithfully exerting for the consolidation of our glorious and invincible Faith.

Your true and grateful brother, Shoghi

<u> — 160 —</u>

October 22, 1936

[To N.R. Vakíl]

Dear Bahá'í Brother,

Our beloved Guardian has read with intense interest and deepest satisfaction your most welcome letter of the fifth October conveying to him the joyful news of the teaching travels undertaken by Prof. Pritam Singh and Dr. G. Y. Chitnis throughout India. He wishes you to congratulate most warmly on his behalf these two distinguished friends upon their determination to carry the Message to those numerous and varied sections of the Indian population who have not received as yet the blessings which the knowledge of the Cause confers. He is deeply grateful to them, and to those who have, whether directly or indirectly, assisted them in the pursuit of this truly noble aim.

The Guardian wishes also to express his heartfelt thanks to the Indian National Spiritual Assembly for its splendid efforts for the extension of the teaching work throughout India. The evidences of its warm and effective response to his earnest appeal for the inauguration of a new systematized and nation wide teaching campaign in that country are indeed such as to give him fresh hopes concerning the future expansion and consolidation of the Faith not only in India and Burma but in the neighbouring regions where the light of the Teachings has not yet penetrated. It is his sincere hope that the National Assembly will, faithful to its pledge, continue exerting its utmost for the furtherance of the cause of teaching in India, and particularly in Southern India and Ceylon where there are almost no centres at present. Nothing short of the unity, self sacrifice and intelligent and[pg 149] systematized planning which the local and national Assemblies and also the individual believers may show forth throughout the coming years can enable them to attain this vital teaching goal.

With renewed thanks and appreciation from the Guardian to you and family, and to your fellow members in the National Spiritual Assembly.

Dearest co-worker:

I hasten to assure you in person of my personal and intense satisfaction and of my special and fervent prayers for these two stalwart pioneers who have arisen to accomplish so noble a task in such difficult circumstances. The hosts of the Abhá Kingdom will assuredly guide and sustain them, and will if they persevere, crown their high endeavors with success. May their example be followed by an increasingly large number of their fellow workers.

Your Shoghi true

brother,

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— 161 —

October 28, 1936

Dear Mr. Butt,

I have to apologize for being so late in acknowledging the receipt of your letter of the 27th September. The delay has been unavoidable, owing to heavy correspondence received during last month.

The Certificate of Incorporation of Daidanaw Spiritual Assembly and the accompanying letter have both reached safely, and received with appreciation by our beloved Guardian. On his behalf I wish to thank you, and through you the Indian National Spiritual Assembly, for your kindness in forwarding to him this important document, the publication of which will be of deep interest and value to the friends.

2

-162 -

November 7, 1936

[To Mr. A.A. Butt]

Dear Bahá'í Brother,

On behalf of the Guardian I thank you most sincerely for your letter of the 12th October with the enclosed minutes of the National[pg 150] Spiritual Assembly of India and Burma which he has been pleased to read and consider...

Now, that the teaching work is making a steady headway, the friends should be on their guard lest they lose the opportunity they have of spreading the Message in every corner throughout India and Burma.

In this connection, he feels, he must congratulate most warmly the members of the National Spiritual Assembly for the valuable steps they have taken for the introduction of the Cause in central and southern India. He wishes you also to convey his special thanks to Mr. Ilmi, Prof. Pritam Singh, Mrs. Fozdar and Dr. Chitnis, for their splendid cooperation in carrying out the teaching program adopted by the National Spiritual Assembly. He wishes you all the fullest

success in your endeavours, and is praying most ardently at the Shrines that your labours may yield lasting and abundant results.

Dear and valued co-workers:

The progress of the teaching activities initiated by your Assembly is highly gratifying. Inflexible determination is required to carry it to a successful conclusion. The methods adopted by be American Bahá'í community, the zeal, the initiative, the efficiency, the fidelity with which they are prosecuting their enterprise should be exemplified by individuals and Assemblies in India and Burma. The administrative machinery which the American believers have erected and perfected has already had its counterpart in the institutions you have so nobly reared in recent years. Your teaching campaign, the supreme purpose for which this machinery has been fashioned, should likewise be modified according to the plan which your sister community has devised and is now developing so strenuously and successfully.

Shoghi

2

-163 -

November 9, 1936

Dear Siyyid Mustafá,

Our beloved Guardian wishes me to thank you for your letter of the 31st October just received. Its contents, particularly the news of the completion of the publication of the Bengali version of "Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era," have greatly rejoiced his heart. On his[pg 151] behalf I wish to thank you, and also your able and dearly beloved collaborator Mr. Amiru'l Islám of Chittagong, for your long and successful efforts for the publication of this volume, the circulation of which, he hopes, will further intensify the extension of the Cause throughout India and Burma. He is filled with gratitude to you both for the sacrifices you have so patiently endured for the sake of expediting the printing of the book. You should feel confident that yon' labours will be fully repaid as through them thousands of eager and ready souls who have been hitherto deprived of the blessing which the knowledge of the Cause confers, will be enabled to know and perhaps recognize and accept the Faith. You have left behind a historic work of immense value to the teaching work throughout India and Burma, and should therefore feel abidingly grateful to Bahá'u'lláh for having assisted you in its accomplishment.

The Guardian is fervently praying on your behalf and also on behalf of Mr. Amiru'l-Islám, that the Beloved may give you ever widening opportunities of service to the Faith. With his renewed and warmest thanks.

My well-beloved co-worker:

I have just received the copy of the Bengali version of the "New Era" beautifully bound and splendidly printed. My heart is filled with joy and gratitude. I eagerly await the fifty copies I have asked to be sent to be placed in the Mansion of Bahá'u'lláh at Bahjí and in the various libraries established in the Holy Land. Kindly assure my dearly-beloved brother, Amiru'l-Islám, of my deep and abiding appreciation of this outstanding and unforgettable service to the Abhá Revelation. I will continue to pray for you both from the depths of my heart.

December 7, 1936

Dear Siyyid Mustafá,

Your letter of November 29th, has just arrived, and the news of your illness and that of Mrs. Roumie brought indescribable grief to the heart of our beloved Guardian. On his behalf I hasten to offer you both his sincere good wishes for your speedy and complete recovery,[pg 152] and wish also to assure you not to feel grieved over your inability to travel to Rangoon, in order to meet and welcome Mr. Schopflocher.

Had he known of your severe indisposition he would have never asked you to undertake such a long and tiring journey, no matter how important and fruitful it may be in its results. For there is no consideration more vital at present than your own good health, and that of your dear wife. You should feel quite justified in curtailing some of your Bahá'í activities, in case you feel that they interfere with your health, and tax unduly your physical energies and resources. Your paramount duty now is to keep yourself and your wife in as good physical condition as possible, even at the expense of some temporary suspension or retardation in your labours for the Cause.

The Guardian is, meanwhile earnestly supplicating at the Holy Shrines on your behalf and on behalf of Mrs. Roumie, that Bahá'u'lláh may continue to protect and sustain you in your services, and may completely and speedily restore your health which, as you know only too well, is a real asset to the Faith in India and Burma. He is specially entreating Him to disband and completely crush the forces which the enemies of the Faith in Mandalay and its surroundings are so bitterly arraying against you and your beloved and humble co-workers. Do persevere, therefore, with the utmost cheer and tenacity in your task, for victory is surely yours, since Bahá'u'lláh has promised it to everyone of His steadfast and loyal servants throughout the world.

Dearest co-workers:

Do not feel disturbed, for I well realize your difficulties and the obstacles that stand in your way. For your own dear and precious self as well as for your dear wife I will specially pray at the Holy Shrines. My heart overflows with gratitude for all that you have achieved in His path.

Your Shoghi true

brother,

