

1937

Shoghi Effendi

Original English



1937



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January 7, 1937

Dear Mr. Vakíl,

On behalf[pg 153] of the Guardian, I thank you sincerely for your letters of the 14th October and of January 2nd, and wish to renew his gratitude to you for your manifold and increasing accomplishments for our beloved Faith in India. He wishes me now to express in particular to you, and to your distinguished fellow members in the Indian National Spiritual Assembly, his most loving appreciation and thanks for the cordial welcome you have extended to our dearly beloved friend, Mr. Siegfried Schopflocher, during his visit to India and Burma. He is confident that the steps you have taken to render his trip successful will greatly help in giving the Faith a wide and long needed publicity. The opportunity that has been offered you has been truly splendid, and you certainly deserve to be heartily congratulated for having fully availed yourselves of it. May the Beloved reward you a thousandfold for your ceaseless and devoted endeavours in His Path.

Regarding your attendance at the National Spiritual Assembly meetings; the Guardian feels you are quite justified in not attending regularly all the sessions, in view of the fact that the doctors have[pg 154] repeatedly urged you not to overtax your physical forces which must have certainly been considerably weakened after your last attack of influenza. The Guardian would even advise that you curtail most of your local activities, and to concentrate only on the most vital and urgent part of your work in the national sphere.

His prayers for your speedy and complete recovery are being continually offered at the Holy Shrines. Remain assured and confident.

Dear and prized co-worker:

I am continually praying for your good health, happiness and success. I am well aware of your eagerness to serve the Cause and its interests, and I feel proud of your past achievements. My hope and prayers is that you may be graciously assisted in the days to come to add fresh lustre



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to the noble record of your past achievements. May your family reinforce your historic work and aid you effectively in your meritorious labours.

Your
Shoghi

true

brother,



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February 28, 1937

Dear Mr. Butt,

I am instructed by our beloved Guardian to thank you for your letters of January 25th and February 1st with the enclosed report, and newspaper cuttings regarding Mr. Schopflocher's visit to the Bahá'í centres in India and Burma. The National Spiritual Assembly's report is most interesting and illuminating indeed, and it would be splendid to have it published, either wholly or in part, in your "Bahá'í Newsletter" for the benefit of the believers outside India.

With regard to the Theosophists and their activities; although they obviously try to copy and claim as their own some of the principles of the Cause, yet the Guardian feels that it would be of no advantage to oppose them and to refute their arguments. The best attitude for the friends to adopt in such cases at the present time is to totally disregard and even neglect their opponents. This has invariably been his advice to the friends, whether in the East or in the West.

Regarding the sale of tea and other refreshments in a cinema under non-Bahá'í ownership; those friends who have hired from the owner of the cinema a stall for the sale of such refreshments should[pg 155] make every effort to obtain permission to close on Bahá'í holidays. In case, however, the non-Bahá'í owner or partner refuses to grant their request their only alternative is to obey.

The case is different with a bread bakery owned by a believer. In this case there can be no excuse whatever why the shop should not be closed during Bahá'í holidays, as there are always non Bahá'í bakers from whom the public can buy. Concerning the Local Spiritual Assembly's right to suspend one of its members from Assembly membership; the Assembly can, by a majority vote, take such an action, even though the suspension may be for a long period.

In connection with the problem raised by the Simla Bahá'ís relative to the formation of an Assembly in their centre during next April; the Guardian prefers to leave this matter to the consideration of your National Spiritual Assembly, as it is essentially a local problem which he feels he should not decide upon.

As regards your question whether the President of the National Spiritual Assembly is entitled to give any ruling during the period of his tenure; the Guardian wishes me to state that no such

ruling can be valid unless approved by the other members of the National Assembly. The President has no special legislative capacity, except as a bar of the Assembly.

Regarding the Guardian's instructions contained in his letters to individual believers; the publication of all such instructions is a matter which is left to the discretion of the National Spiritual Assembly.

As to the question of removing a believer from the voting list; although every duly constituted Local Assembly has the right to take such an action against any individual believer in the community, nevertheless, the Guardian feels the advisability for the Local Assemblies to seek the advice and approval of the National Spiritual Assembly in this most delicate and vital matter, as it is one fraught with grave and far reaching responsibilities.

Before closing I wish to express to you, and through you to your fellow members in the National Spiritual Assembly, how happy the Guardian feels to learn of the strong preparations your Assembly has made for the holding of the next Annual Convention of the friends in Karachi. He is the more rejoiced that the main item of the discussions will be the problem of teaching. He is fervently praying that the program upon which the delegates and the National Spiritual Assembly will decide will mark the inauguration of an unprecedented teaching campaign throughout India and Burma.[pg 156]

Dear and beloved co-workers:

I am delighted to learn of the work which is being steadily and efficiently accomplished in so many spheres of Bahá'í activity throughout India and Burma. My heart is filled with gratitude as I witness the progress you have achieved, the enterprises you have initiated, the method and masteries you have adopted, the plans you have conceived, and above all, the spirit of exemplary loyalty and magnificent devotion that impels you forward in the great mission you are destined to fulfil. My prayers will continue to be offered on your behalf Rest assured and persevere.

Your true brother,
Shoghi



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April 27, 1937

[To N.R. VAKÍL]

Dear Bahá'í Brother,

I am instructed by the Guardian to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of the 19th April with enclosures, and to ask you to convey to your fellow members in the National Spiritual

Assembly the assurance of his deep appreciation of the message they have been moved to address to him on the occasion of his marriage.

He indeed deeply values the sentiments they have expressed through you, and is fervently praying that their hopes and good wishes for the continuation of this union may be completed fulfilled.

The Guardian has read with considerable interest the teaching report of Mrs. Shirin Fozdar, and wishes you to extend to her, and also to Dr. S. H. 'Alí and the Rangoon Spiritual Assembly the expression of his heartfelt gratitude for the valuable and continued support they are extending to the teaching work throughout India and Burma.

He cherishes the hope that their example will stimulate the young believers to arise and help in spreading the knowledge of the Cause by every means in their power. In this connection, he wishes me to assure the National Spiritual Assembly of his hearty approval of their suggestion to establish a Bahá'í Summer School in India, which step, he is certain, will lend an unprecedented impetus to the development of the teaching work. He would urge the Assembly to be elected by the delegates at the forthcoming Convention in Karachi to give this[pg 157] matter their most careful consideration, and to take the necessary steps for the furtherance of this truly vital cause.

Regarding Mr. Muḥammad Ishaq's request for instruction concerning the three daily obligatory prayers. The friends are free to choose any one of these three prayers, but have to follow the instructions revealed by Bahá'u'lláh concerning them. The long prayer should be recited once in every 24 hours, and is accompanied by certain physical acts. The short prayer, consisting of one verse, should be recited once a day at noon; while the medium prayer should be said three times a day: in the morning, at noon and in the evening. The believer is entirely free to choose any one of these three prayers for daily use.

While praying it would be better to turn one's thoughts to the Manifestation as He continues, in the other world, to be our means of contact with the Almighty. We can, however, pray directly to God Himself.

May the Beloved, Whose Cause you serve with such diligence, devotion, and zeal, reward you a thousandfold for your eminent services, and enable you and your distinguished fellow-workers in the National Assembly to extend the range and consolidate the foundations of your noble accomplishments.

Your
Shoghi

true

brother,



JUNE 25, 1937

EARNESTLY URGE EVERY LOYAL BELIEVER PARTICULARLY LOCAL ASSEMBLIES INDIA BURMA DEMONSTRATE THEIR EVER READY EAGERNESS RALLY ROUND ELECTED BODY NATIONAL REPRESENTATIVES BY STIMULATING FLOW THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO NATIONAL FUND THE BEDROCK — UPON WHICH SECURITY EXPANSION THEIR NEWBORN INSTITUTIONS MUST ULTIMATELY REST.

SHOGHI



July 12, 1937

Dear Mr. Vakíl,[pg 158]

Your letter of the 20th of June addressed to our beloved Guardian was most welcome indeed, and its contents have greatly refreshed his heart.

Above all he is happy to know that your health has sufficiently improved to permit you to resume your work. He wishes me, however, to urge you again not to over tax your forces, and to attend only to the most urgent part of your task. He is continually praying that your life may be ever protected and prolonged, and be further enriched and ennobled through a series of mighty services to the Cause.

The reports of the progress of the teaching work in India and Burma are most gratifying, and all indicate the high measure of devotion and zeal which the friends are putting at the service of this most noble and sacred task. Dr. 'Alí of Rangoon is specially active working through the press, and has already succeeded in giving a very wide publicity to the Faith in many circles, both native and foreign. He is certainly the most promising teacher we have in Rangoon, and the National Spiritual Assembly would do well to encourage him, and to give him every possible assistance with the view of further extending the scope of his teaching activities throughout Burma.

The Guardian is also most gratified to learn of Mr. Bakhtiari's teaching trip to Kashmir, and wishes him every success in his tour through that part of India. May Bahá'u'lláh graciously aid him to attract and confirm many souls, and thus fulfil this dear wish of his heart.

In closing I wish to tell you how deeply the Guardian feels appreciative of the message you have addressed to him on your behalf and on behalf of your family on the occasion of his marriage. To

you and to your dear ones he wishes me to convey the assurances of his loving and heartfelt gratitude.

Dear and prized co-worker:

I am so glad to learn, on the one hand, of the improvement in your health, and on the other of the progress of the teaching work in India and Burma. I pray that Martha's forthcoming visit to your shores may greatly stimulate the splendid work which has been so nobly initiated and is[pg 159] being so painstakingly continued. I will continue to pray for you and particularly for the members of your dear family from the depths of my heart.

Shoghi



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July 17, 1937

[To The National Spiritual Assembly]

Beloved Bahá'í Brother,

On behalf of the Guardian I acknowledge with thanks the receipt of your detailed and welcome communication of June 7th, written in the name of the National Spiritual Assembly of India and Burma.

I wish, in particular, to express his gratification at the success that has attended your Annual Convention this year, and the recommendations and decisions taken by the National Spiritual Assembly with the view of intensifying the teaching campaign throughout India and Burma. He would strongly urge your Assembly to maintain the standard of the teaching work, and to appeal to the friends to rise up to the call of the hour and to be ready to undergo any sacrifice that their sacred task requires. Above all he wishes through you to reiterate his wish, already expressed in his recent cable to the National Spiritual Assembly, that the National Fund, which undoubtedly constitutes the bedrock upon which all the activities of the Cause ultimately rest, should receive the continued and whole hearted support of all the believers. Both the Local Assemblies and the individual believers should realize that unless they contribute regularly and generously to that Fund the progress of the Faith in India and Burma will not only be considerably retarded, but will inevitably come to a standstill. There should be a continual flow of funds to the national treasury of the National Spiritual Assembly, if that body wishes to properly administer the manifold and ever increasing activities of the Faith. Every Bahá'í no matter how poor, must realize what a grave responsibility he has to shoulder in this connection, and should have confidence that his spiritual progress as a believer in the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh will largely depend upon the measure in which he proves, in deeds, his readiness to support materially the divine institutions of His Faith...

Concerning resolution #14 of your National Spiritual Assembly proposing the founding of a Chair at Dr Tagore's Shantiniketan; the [pg 160] Guardian does not think it advisable to lay down at present any general rule regarding such matters. He would preferably leave them to the discretion of the National Spiritual Assembly.

With reference to your question in connection with the observance of the Bahá'í Holy Days; the Bahá'í day begins and ends at sunset. The night preceding a Holy Day is therefore included in the day, and consequently work during that period is forbidden.

The Guardian is most delighted to learn of the activities initiated recently by various Local Assemblies in India, and wishes you to convey to these dear friends, and particularly to Prof. 'Abdu'l-'Azíz of Hyderabad and the members of his teaching group, the expression of his keenest appreciation of their labours for the spread of the Cause. He would urge them each and all to lend every effort to assist your National Spiritual Assembly in its nation wide teaching endeavours, and is most ardently praying that they may be assisted and guided by the confirmations from On High.

Let me assure you in closing of his special prayers on behalf of the National Spiritual Assembly members, and of all those dear friends who are closely cooperating with them in the discharge of their sacred and manifold responsibilities and obligations.

Dear and valued co-workers:

I am deeply touched by the varied and compelling evidences of the vigour and loyalty which characterize the National Assembly's conduct of Bahá'í affairs in both India and Burma. The Cause, as a result of their self-sacrificing endeavours and inflexible resolve, is being firmly consolidated and widely propagated in those regions. Perseverance will enable you to attain your goal and to lay an unassailable foundation for your future work in both the teaching and administrative spheres of Bahá'í service. I will continue to pray for you from the depths of my heart.

Your
Shoghi

true

brother,



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AUGUST 31, 1937

MARTHA ROOT ARRIVING BOMBAY SEPTEMBER SIXTEENTH URGE INDIVIDUALS LOCAL NATIONAL ASSEMBLIES VIGOROUSLY PARTICIPATE ENSURE TRIUMPHANT SUCCESS HER EXTENDED STAY ACCORD MAGNIFICENT WELCOME BEST BELOVED STAR SERVANT BAHÁ'U'LLÁH.

SHOGHI

November 4, 1937

[To The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of India and Burma and To The Local Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Bombay][pg 161]

Beloved Friends,

Your joint and welcome message of October 18th, written on the occasion of our beloved sister Miss Martha Root's arrival in Bombay, has duly reached the Guardian and his heart is filled with gratitude to you for the very warm and befitting welcome you have so kindly extended to that well beloved star servant of the Cause. This is truly in keeping with the tradition of warm hospitality for which our Indian believers have already won such a high reputation. The cordiality you have shown this distinguished international teacher on her previous visits to India could have hardly been surpassed, and there is every reason to believe, therefore, that on this trip, which will be probably the most extended one she has ever been able to undertake throughout that continent, she will be the object of the same devotion and love manifested towards her on previous occasion.

May the presence of such an exemplary servant of the Cause in your midst stimulate you all afresh in your noble efforts for the extension of the Faith throughout India and Burma May the Almighty bless you for the magnificent welcome accorded to such an outstanding champion of the Cause, and may He enable you, in conjunction with her, to lend a mighty impetus to the progress of the Faith and the extension of its institutions.

Shoghi

November 7, 1937

Dear Mr. Vakíl,

Shoghi Effendi has been most pleased to receive your letter of October 25th, and to learn of the very warm reception you have accorded Miss Martha L. Root upon her arrival in India. He has every reason to hope that with the programme the National Spiritual Assembly has so carefully arranged for her she will be able to do an extensive teaching work, and to contact as many classes and sections[pg 162] of the population as her time and energies permit.

'The Guardian would call upon you specially to make every effort possible to render Miss Root's teaching trip successful in every way, and wishes you to continually urge the friends to make her visit an occasion for giving the Faith a widespread publicity throughout India and Burma...

With the renewed assurances of his prayers for the continued improvement of your health, and with his loving greetings to you and your dear ones at home.

Dearly-Beloved co-worker:

I am so glad to hear of the plans that have been conceived and the activity that is being displayed by the friends in connexion with dear Martha's visit to India. I trust and pray that your health will enable you to play a leading part in these nation wide activities. Your contribution I deeply appreciate, and will pray from all my heart for the complete realization of your dearest hopes.

Affectionately,
Shoghi



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December 6, 1937

[To The National Spiritual Assembly]

Beloved Bahá'í Brother,

Your Assembly's communication of November 21st has been duly received and its contents read with care and deep appreciation by our beloved Guardian.

Regarding the pamphlet on Bahá'í Laws on matters of Personal Status; the copy of the English translation of that pamphlet you had enclosed has been looked over carefully by the Guardian, who feels that the rendering is not of a sufficiently high standard to justify publication. He would recommend that a new translation be made by one who is well versed in Muslim Law and jurisprudence, and who has a good mastery of the English language, so that the many legal terms contained in the text may be translated accurately and in good style. No doubt this is a work which requires considerable effort, and the Guardian wishes therefore your Assembly to proceed in this matter with the utmost care, patience and thoroughness. He himself is absolutely[pg 163] unable to undertake a work of this nature in view of his manifold and ever increasing occupations in the Holy Land.

In this connection, he wishes you to kindly draw the National Spiritual Assembly's attention to the necessity of hastening the publication of both the Hindi and the Sindhi translations of "Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era." He hopes that in the course of this year these two books will be ready for distribution.

May I again, in closing, express the Guardian's best wishes for the success of Miss Martha Root's teaching work in India and Burma. It is his heart's ardent prayer that this historic visit may signalize the beginning of a new epoch of unprecedented expansion in the history of the Faith throughout that land.

Kindly convey the assurances of his prayers to Siyyid 'Abdu'l-Rahman Adib and to Siyyid Abu'l 'Abbás Razvi who have recently accepted the Cause, and please also extend his loving greetings to your fellow-members in the National Spiritual Assembly.

May the Beloved reinforce the endeavours you are so nobly exerting, consolidate the foundations of the institutions you are so vigourously extending and bless increasingly the nationwide campaign which, in conjunction with our dearly beloved Indian and Burmese brethren, you are so loyally and splendidly organizing for the spread and proclamation of our most holy Cause.

Your true brother,
Shoghi



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December 7, 1937

[To Daidanaw Local Spiritual Assembly]

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

The Guardian was deeply rejoiced to receive your Assembly's message of November 21st, and to know of the very cordial reception you have arranged in honour of Miss Martha Root. The warm welcome you have so lovingly extended to that well-beloved servant of Bahá'u'lláh is certainly in keeping with the tradition of hospitality which the Daidanaw believers have set on previous occasions and which has won them the sympathy and admiration of the entire Bali' world.

The Guardian has also learned with profoundest satisfaction of [pg 164] the public meeting you had organized in honour of Miss Root, and in which several notables of the Kunjangoon village had accepted to participate. He sincerely hopes and ardently prays that the publicity which the Cause has received as a result will be further stimulated through the organized and energetic efforts of your Assembly.

Assuring you also of his supplications on behalf of each and all the friends at the Holy Shrines, and with cordial greetings.

Dearly-beloved friends:

My heart is filled with joy and gratitude whenever I recall your exemplary devotion to the Cause of God and your steadfastness in His path. I will continue to pray for you from the depths of my

heart, that you may each and all be graciously assisted to mirror the glory and splendour of this Divine and most holy Revelation.

Your true and grateful brother,
Shoghi



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December 13, 1937

[To The Bahá'í Community Of Calcutta]

Beloved Bahá'í Brothers And Sisters,

Your very cordial message of the 28th November has just reached the Guardian, and its perusal has imparted the profoundest joy and satisfaction to his heart.

He is deeply rejoiced to know of the very cordial welcome you have extended to dear Miss Martha Root, and of the warm hospitality you have shown her during her stay in Calcutta. He cherishes the hope that as a result of her visit the teachings of the Cause in that region will receive a renewed stimulus, and a number of enlightened and capable souls will be led to join the Faith.

The Guardian will pray from all his heart that this year may be signalized all through by a series of fresh conquests in the teaching field throughout Calcutta and in the neighboring districts. He would appeal to each and every one of Bahá'u'lláh's devoted friends in that locality to gird the loins of endeavour in His path, and to work with ceaseless enthusiasm and undivided attention for the furtherance of the teaching work.[pg 165]

Dear friends:

I wish to assure you in person of my deepest appreciation of your noble efforts for the promotion of our beloved Faith and of my continued prayers for the complete realization of your highest hopes. Rest assured and persevere.

Shoghi

