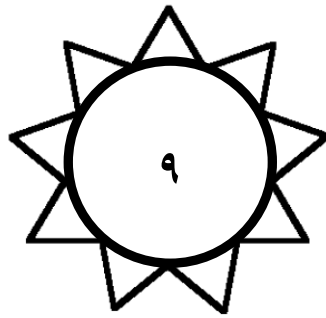


THE GREAT, THE ANCIENT COVENANT FULFILLED BY BAHÁ'U'LLAH

“In the name who shines forth from the Horizon of Might! Verily the Tongue of the Ancient gives glad tidings to those who are in the world concerning the appearance of the Greatest Name, and who takes His Covenant among the nations. Verily, He is Myself: the Shining – Place of My Identity; The East of My Cause; the Heaven of My Bounty; the Sea of My Will; the Lamp of My Guidance; the Path of My Justice; the Standard of My Love. The one who hath turned to Him hath turned to My Face and is illuminated through the light of My Beauty; hath acknowledged my Oneness and confessed My Singleness. The one who hath denied Him hath been deprived of the Salsibil of My Love, of the Kawther of My Grace, the cup of My Mercy and the Wine of which the sincere ones have been attracted and the monotheists have taken flight in the air of My Compassion, which no one hath known except him whom I have taught the matter revealed in My Hidden Tablet.” Baha’u’llah, [The Covenant and Administration, Baha’i Publishing Trust, Wilmette, Illinois]



عروس معانی بدیعه که در ورای پرده های بیان مستور و پنهان بود بعنایت الهی و الطاف ربانی چون شعاع منیر جمال دوست ظاهر و هویدا شد شهادت میدهم ای دوستان که نعمت تمام و حجت کامل و برهان ظاهر و دلیل ثابت آمد تا همت شما از مراتب انقطاع چه ظاهر نماید کذالک تمت النعمه علیکم و علی من فی السموات والا رضین والحمد لله رب العالمین
حضرت بهالله

THE MYSTIC AND WONDROUS BRIDE, HIDDEN ERE THIS BENEATH THE VEILING OF UTTERANCE, HAD NOW, BY THE GRACE OF GOD AND HIS DIVINE FAVOUR, BEEN MADE MANIFEST EVEN AS THE RESPLENDENT LIGHT SHED BY THE BEAUTY OF THE BELOVED. I BEAR WITNESS, O FRIENDS! THAT THE FAVOUR IS COMPLETE AND THE EVIDENCE ESTABLISHED. LET IT BE SEEN WHAT YOUR ENDEAVOURS IN THE PATH OF DETACHMENT WILL REVEAL. IN THIS WISE HAD THE DIVINE BEEN FULLY VOUCHSAFED UNTO YOU AND UNTO THEM THAT ARE IN HEAVEN AND ON EARTH. ALL PRAISE TO GOD, THE LORD OF ALL WORLDS.
Baha'u'llah

RIDVAN

Is the formal publication of the community of the believers in the continuation of Guardianship. It is published under the direction and guidance of **Jacques Soghomonian** the present 4th Guardian of the Baha'i Faith. Its aim is to teach and promote the teachings of the Baha'i Faith particularly the Principles of the World Order of Baha'u'llah, established by its Founder, Baha'u'llah defined and explained by 'Abdu'l-Baha, and promoted and applied by Shoghi Effendi, the 1st Guardian. After Shoghi Effendi the Faith has been guarded by succeeding Guardians; C.M. Remey and D.A. Harvey. The Baha'i Faith is currently protected by the present 4th Guardian of the Faith, **Jacques Soghomonian**.

RIDVAN

Is published once every four months for distribution among the believers in Baha'u'llah and others.

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Message to all the believers in Baha'u'llah

After Shoghi Effendi, the first Guardian of the Baha'i Faith, left this world on Nov. 4, 1957, a group of people, then elevated to the rank of the Hands of the Cause of God, led by Ruhiyyah Khanum, openly opposed and challenged the authority of C. M. Remey, the head of the embryo of the Universal House of Justice, who was appointed by the first guardian of the Faith, to that position, on 9th of January, 1951. As the head of the Universal House of Justice and the office of the Guardianship is the same, C.M. Remey became the 2nd Guardian of the Baha'i faith on 4 Nov. 1957. C.M. Remey declared his position as the 2nd Guardian of the Baha'i Faith and the successor to the 1st Guardian, in his declaration of Ridvan, 117 of B.E, April, 1960.

The group of the ex-Hands of the Cause collectively claimed the successor ship to the 1st Guardian of the Baha'i Faith, Shoghi Effendi, and after ***“assuming the reins of authority with no documents”**** to support them, formed an illegitimate Universal House of Justice in 1963 to mislead the believers.

The so called Universal House of Justice does not have the Guardian, in person, as its president, a fundamental requirement under the provision of the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Baha. It has not been formed in accordance with the Writings of the Baha'i Faith. It has not been the development of the embryo of Universal House of Justice, established by the first Guardian of the Faith in early 1951. Thus this body, the budded Universal House of Justice, is false universal house of justice and it is illegitimate.

Shoghi Effendi, the first Guardian, has rejected, in advance, validity of such an institution in his letter of summer of 1925 where he states:

“Any institution that is not established in accordance with the Divine Order, not in conformity with the principles and the conditions recorded in the Holy Writings, as it is required for this august institution, consequently such an institution is void of credential deprived of spiritual station, and forbidden to have any right to legislate and enact laws and ordinances which are not explicitly recorded in the Holy Writings. It also lacks the essential qualities and the Divine confirmation.” [Reference to the Universal House of Justice]

*Ref. Introduction to “The Ministry of the Custodians 1957—1963” by Ruhiyyah Khanum, page 9

Prayer for Union in the Law of God

By Baha'u'llah

Lauded be Thy name, O Lord my God! Darkness hath fallen upon every land, and the forces of mischief have encompassed all the nations. Through them, however, I perceive the splendors of Thy wisdom, and discern the brightness of the light of Thy providence.

They that are shut out as by a veil from Thee have imagined that they have the power to put out Thy light, and to quench Thy fire, and to still the winds of Thy grace. Nay, and to this Thy might beareth me witness! Had not every tribulation been made the bearer of Thy wisdom, and every ordeal the vehicle of Thy providence, no one would have dared oppose us, though the powers of earth and heaven were to be leagued against us. Were I to unravel the wondrous mysteries of Thy wisdom which are laid bare before me, the reins of Thine enemies would be cleft asunder.

Glorified be Thou, then, O my God! I beseech Thee by Thy Most Great Name to assemble them that love Thee around the Law that streameth from the good-pleasure of Thy will, and to send down upon them what will assure their hearts. Potent art Thou to do what pleaseth Thee. Thou art, verily, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting.

JACQUES SOGHOMONIAN

The 4th Guardian of the Baha'i Faith

Sends

Out his letter of 27 May, 2013

To all the believers in Continuation of Guardianship

And

The Other believers in Baha'u'llah

Chers Amis dans la foi mondiale Baha'ie ; en Dévotion aux Ecrits de Bahà'u'llàh et à son message adressé à l'Humanité entière ; Je m'exprime ainsi pour vous mettre en garde des faux agissements de la fausse Maison de Justice Internationale. Ils ont falsifié tous les Ecrits de Bahà'u'llàh et d'Abdu'l'Bahà, centre du Covenant. Avec détermination ils ont détruit la foi véritable et leurs fondateurs.

Ô Vous Croyants du Monde Entier, Vous avez suivi les ex Mains, et comme ils n'avaient pas de Pouvoir ils se sont déplacés à Londres pour fermer la fausse Maison de Justice internationale en 1963. De ces ex Mains, la plupart ou peut-être la majorité sont décédés.

Vous Croyants, dirigez-vous vers l'approfondissement des Ecrits Véritables traduits par Shoghi Effendi. Les traductions du Testament, du Covenant, du Livre de la Certitude, la Foi Mondiale, Les Extraits des Ecrits de Bahà'u'llàh et je ne puis tous les citer tant la littérature de Bahà'u'llàh est nombreuse.

Ô Vous Croyants, Vous n'avez aucune obligation de suivre ces détracteurs de la vraie foi. Si Vous êtes de Vrais Croyants, Lisez par vous-mêmes, les Ecrits traduits par Shoghi Effendi. Vous comprendrez l'erreur de suivre ces faux croyants qui n'ont aucune conformité avec la Foi juste de Bahà'u'llàh. Tout le travail à été réalisé par Shoghi Effendi.

Par votre intelligence Divine, révisez votre façon de juger. Le Gardiennant n'est pas tabou et en obéissance au Covenant, la succession des Gardiens continue.

La Descendance de Shoghi Effendi venait du Bah et de Bahà'u'llàh.

Dans le Covenant, est inscrite noir sur blanc l'obligation, dans le cas où le premier Gardien n'aurait pas d'enfant direct, de choisir une autre branche. Shoghi Effendi a nommé Charles Mason Remey et signé de sa propre main. En tant que successeur Mason Remey décédé en 1974 a désigné de sa propre Ecriture Monsieur Donald Harvey en tant que Troisième gardien. Donald Harvey chez un notaire à Montbard Cote d'Or, par testament a désigné Jacques Soghomonian-Successeur. C'est le quatrième gardien. Moi-même J.S.- J'ai nommé mon Successeur qui sera le cinquième gardien Enayatollah S. Yazdani.

La Charte Mondiale Baha'ie se définit ainsi:

Le Gardien demeure le Président permanent de la Maison de Justice Internationale

27 mai 2013
[Signature]

L'Election de la Maison de Justice Internationale est effectuée par les Lois spécifiques de Bahà'u'lláh.

Les Mains de la Cause sont nommées par le Gardien lui-même.

Les ex-mains ont failli à leurs devoirs; aujourd'hui il convient de rectifier cette erreur monumentale.

Ô Croyants, Priez et Prenez conscience de la situation dans laquelle vous vous trouvez. Ceci demeure fondamental. Avant que la grande Tribulation annoncée par Bahà'u'lláh ne survienne.

Je Prie pour Vous, ainsi que pour Vos Ames;

Fidèlement en El Baha.

Votre

*Le gardien
Ja'far Saghe Loma
27 mai 2013*

The Contents of the letter is provided here in the English language for the believers that are not familiar with the French language. The believers may arrange translation of the letter by other translator if they wish to. The scanned copy of the original letter is published on page 6 and 7. A loose copy of the same is attached to this copy of this issue of RIDVAN.

27th day of May, 2013

Dear Friends of the Baha'i worldwide Faith,

Following the Writings of Baha'u'llah and His message to the whole world, I, [Jacques Soghomonian, the 4th Guardian of the Faith] would like to warn you of the false messages from the [the so called] universal house of justice. They have falsified the Words of Baha'u'llah [the Founder of the Faith] and Abdu'l-Baha, the Center of the Covenant [of Baha'u'llah]. They have destroyed the true [Baha'i] Faith and the original Teachings of the [the Founder] and the Master, 'Abdul-Baha.

O Believers! You have followed the Ex-Hands [of the Cause] whom they have not given authority to be followed. They formed a false International House of Justice in 1963.

All the Ex-Hands of the Cause are now deceased.

O Believers! Try to understand the Will and Testament of 'Abdul-Baha, the Book of Covenant, the Writings of Baha'u'llah and other material on the Baha'i Faith translated by Shoghi Effendi and make your own judgment.

O Believers! You are not obliged to believe or to follow the destroyers of the true Faith of Baha'u'llah. If you are the true believer read and investigate for yourself the Writings translated by Shoghi Effendi and you will realize that the false faith [advanced by Ex-Hands and false universal house of justice] which has nothing in common with True Faith of Baha'u'llah. The Writings have been translated by Shoghi Effendi [and are all available for your review.]

If you sincerely investigate God will help to understand the truth of the guardianship. The Guardianship is not taboo and in accordance with the Covenant the succession of the Guardianship will continue.

Shoghi Effendi is descendent of the Bab and Baha'u'llah.

In accordance with the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Baha it is written in black and white that [*"... and his glorious lineage not be matched with a goodly character, then must he (the guardian of the Cause of God), choose another branch to succeed him."*] Shoghi Effendi has nominated Charles Mason Remey as his successor [by two cablegrams of 9th of January and 2nd of March 1951]. C. M. Remey died in 1974. He appointed, in his own hand writing, D. A. Harvey as the 3rd Guardian of the Faith. D. A. Harvey in his own hand writing and in presence of a solicitor at Mont Cote D'or, [France], in the form of a will appointed Jacques Soghomonian as his successor, the 4th Guardian of the Faith. And I, Jacques Soghomonian, have nominated my successor, Enayatollah S. Yazdani who will be the 5th Guardian of the Faith [after my soul is departed from this world. Reference: My signed and sealed letter of 10th of February, 2005.]

The Chart of the Baha'i worldwide Faith provides that:

- The Guardian remains the permanent President of the Universal House of Justice.
- The election of the Universal House of Justice is done in accordance with the specific laws of Baha'u'llah.
- The Hands of Cause are nominated by the Guardian of the Faith himself.
- In accordance with the Holy Writings the Ex-Hands of the Cause made a monumental error in rejection of the continuation of Guardianship after ascension of the 1st Guardian early November 1957. Today is the time to correct the past mistakes

O Believers! Be aware of the situation you are in now. Pray to God to direct you in the right direction. This is fundamental requirement before the great catastrophe forecasted by Baha'u'llah.

I pray for you and for your soul.

Faithful in ElBaha

The Guardian,

Signed

Jacques Soghomonian,

27 May, 2013

JACQUE SOGHOMONIAN
THE PRESENT GUARDIAN OF THE BAHA'I FAITH

HAS

APPOINTED

MR. BEAT EDELMANN
MR. ASAL ALBAYATI
MR. SOROUSH HAMEDIAN
AND
MRS KIESTEN AUDY

AS

THE HANDS OF THE CAUSE OF GOD



THE COVENANT OF BAHA'U'LLAH



The Covenant Thou Hast Established

Glorified art Thou, O my God! Thou knowest that my sole aim in revealing Thy Cause hath been to reveal Thee and not myself, and to manifest Thy glory rather than my glory. In Thy path, and to attain Thy pleasure, I have scorned rest, joy, delight. At all times and under all conditions my gaze hath been fixed on Thy precepts, and mine eyes bent upon the things Thou hast bidden me observe in Thy Tablets. I have wakened every morning to the light of Thy praise and Thy remembrance, and reached every evening inhaling the fragrances of Thy mercy.

And when the entire creation was stirred up, and the whole earth was convulsed, and the sweet savors of Thy name, the All-Praised, had almost ceased to breathe over Thy realms, and the winds of Thy mercy had well-nigh been stilled throughout Thy dominions, Thou didst, through the power of Thy might, raise me up among Thy servants, and bid me to show forth Thy sovereignty amidst Thy people. Therefore I arose before all Thy creatures, strengthened by Thy help and Thy power, and summoned all the multitudes unto Thee, and announced unto all Thy servants Thy favors and Thy gifts, and invited them to turn towards this Ocean, every drop of the waters of which crieth out, proclaiming unto all that are in heaven and on earth that He is, in truth, the Fountain of all life, and the Quickener of the entire creation, and the Object of the adoration of all worlds, and the Best-Beloved of every sunderstanding heart, and the Desire of all them that are nigh unto Thee.

Though the fierce winds of the hatred of the wicked doers blew and beat on this Lamp, He was at no time, in His love for Thy beauty, hindered from shedding the fragrance of His light. As the transgressions committed against Thee waxed greater and greater, my eagerness to reveal Thy Cause correspondingly increased, and as the tribulations deepened--and to this Thy glory beareth me witness--a fuller measure of Thy sovereignty and of Thy power was vouchsafed by me unto Thy creatures.

And finally, I was cast by the transgressors into the prison-city of Akka, and my kindred were made captives in Baghdad. The power of Thy might beareth me witness, O my God! Every trouble that hath touched me in Thy path hath added to my joy and increased my

gladness. I swear by Thee, O Thou Who art the King of Kings! None of the kings of the earth hath power to hinder me from remembering Thee or from extolling Thy virtues. Were they to be leagued--as they have been leagued--against me, and to brandish their sharpest swords and most afflictive spears against me, I would not hesitate to magnify Thy name before all them that are in Thy heaven and on Thy earth. Nay rather, I would cry out and say: "This, O my Beloved, is my face which I have offered up for Thy face, and this is my spirit which I have sacrificed for Thy spirit, and this is my blood that seetheth in my veins, in its longing to be shed for love of Thee and in Thy path."

Though--as Thou beholdest me, O my God--I be dwelling in a place within whose walls no voice can be heard except the sound of the echo, though all the gates of ease and comfort be shut against us, and thick darkness appear to have encompassed us on every side, yet my soul hath been so inflamed by its love for Thee, that nothing whatever can either quench the fire of its love or abate the consuming flame of its desire. Lifting up its voice, it crieth aloud amidst Thy servants, and calleth them, at all times and under all conditions, unto Thee.

I beseech Thee, by Thy Most Great Name, to open the eyes of Thy servants, that they may behold Thee shining above the horizon of Thy majesty and glory, and that they may not be hindered by the croaking of the raven from hearkening to the voice of the Dove of Thy sublime oneness, nor be prevented by the corrupt waters from partaking of the pure wine of Thy bounty and the everlasting streams of Thy gifts.

Gather them, then, together around this Divine Law, the covenant of which Thou hast established with all Thy prophets and Thy messengers, and Whose ordinances Thou hast written down in Thy Tablets and Thy Scriptures, raise them up, moreover, to such heights as will enable them to perceive Thy call.

Potent art Thou to do what pleaseth Thee. Thou art, verily, the Inaccessible, the All-Glorious. [Selected Writings Of BAHA'U'LLAH Author of the Baha'i Dispensation, Baha'i Publishing Committee Wilmette, Illinois 1942]



BAHA'U'LLAH

THE FOUNDER

OF

THE BAHA'I FAITH

APPOINTED

'ABDU'L-BAHA

IN HIS BOOK OF COVENANT

AS

HIS SUCCESSOR

INTRODUCTION TO THE KITAB-I-AHD (THE BOOK OF BAHÁ'U'LLAH'S COVENANT)

Bahá'u'llah entrusted the Kitab-i-'Ahd to Abdu'l-Bahá during His last illness before His Ascension and informed the members of His family a few days before He departed from this world that in a document entrusted by Him to Abdu'l-Bahá, He had commended them all to His care. The first time the Kitab-i-'Ahd was read aloud in the presence of a number of friends was on the ninth day after the Ascension of Bahá'u'llah, and soon afterwards its text was released to the believers. Since it is so essential to the study of the Covenant of Bahá'u'llah, the text of the Kitab-i-'Ahd is given here.

KITÁB-I-'AHD (Book of the Covenant)

ALTHOUGH the Realm of Glory hath none of the vanities of the world, yet within the treasury of trust and resignation We have bequeathed to Our heirs an excellent and priceless heritage. Earthly treasures We have not bequeathed, nor have We added such cares as they entail. By God! In earthly riches fear is hidden and peril is concealed. Consider ye and call to mind that which the All-Merciful hath revealed in the Qur'án: 'Woe betide every slanderer and defamer, him that layeth up riches and counteth them.' [Qur'án 104:1-2] Fleeting are the riches of the world; all that perisheth and changeth is not, and hath never been, worthy of attention, except to a recognized measure.

The aim of this Wronged One in sustaining woes and tribulations, in revealing the Holy Verses and in demonstrating proofs hath been naught but to quench the flame of hate and enmity, that the horizon of the hearts of men may be illumined with the light of concord and attain real peace and tranquillity. From the dawning-place of the divine Tablet the day-star of this utterance shineth resplendent, and it behoveth everyone to fix his gaze upon it: We exhort you, O peoples of the world, to observe that which will elevate your station. Hold fast to the fear of God and firmly adhere to what is right. Verily I say, the tongue is for mentioning what is good, defile it not with unseemly talk. God hath forgiven what is past. Henceforward everyone should utter that which is meet and seemly, and should refrain from slander, abuse and whatever causeth sadness in men. Lofty is the station of man! Not long ago this exalted Word streamed forth from the treasury of Our Pen of Glory: Great and blessed is this Day—the Day in which all that lay latent in man hath been and will be made manifest. Lofty is the station of man, were he to hold fast to righteousness and truth and to remain firm and steadfast in the Cause. In the eyes of the All-Merciful a true man appeareth even as a firmament; its sun and moon are his sight and hearing, and his shining and resplendent character its stars. His is the loftiest station, and his influence educateth the world of being.

Every receptive soul who hath in this Day inhaled the fragrance of His garment and hath, with a pure heart, set his face towards the all-glorious Horizon is reckoned among the people of Bahá in the Crimson Book. Grasp ye, in My Name, the chalice of My loving-kindness, drink then your fill in My glorious and wondrous remembrance.

O ye that dwell on earth! The religion of God is for love and unity; make it not the cause of enmity or dissension. In the eyes of men of insight and the beholders of the Most Sublime Vision, whatsoever are the effective means for safeguarding and promoting the happiness and welfare of the children of men have already been revealed by the Pen of Glory. But the foolish ones of the earth, being nurtured in evil passions and desires, have remained heedless of the consummate wisdom of Him Who is, in truth, the All-Wise, while their words and deeds are prompted by idle fancies and vain imaginings.

O ye the loved ones and the trustees of God! Kings are the manifestations of the power, and the daysprings of the might and riches, of God. Pray ye on their behalf. He hath invested them with the rulership of the earth and hath singled out the hearts of men as His Own domain.

Conflict and contention are categorically forbidden in His Book. This is a decree of God in this Most Great Revelation. It is divinely preserved from annulment and is invested by Him with the splendour of His confirmation. Verily He is the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.

It is incumbent upon everyone to aid those daysprings of authority and sources of command who are adorned with the ornament of equity and justice. Blessed are the rulers and the learned among the people of Bahá. They are My trustees among My servants and the manifestations of My commandments amidst My people. Upon them rest My glory, My blessings and My grace which have pervaded the world of being. In this connection the utterances revealed in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas are such that from the horizon of their words the light of divine grace shineth luminous and resplendent.

O ye My Branches! A mighty force, a consummate power lieth concealed in the world of being. Fix your gaze upon it and upon its unifying influence, and not upon the differences which appear from it.

The Will of the divine Testator is this: It is incumbent upon the Aghsán, the Afnán and My Kindred to turn, one and all, their faces towards the Most Mighty Branch. Consider that which We have revealed in Our Most Holy Book: ‘When the ocean of My presence hath ebbed and the Book of My Revelation is ended, turn your faces toward Him Whom God hath purposed, Who hath branched from this Ancient Root.’ The object of this sacred verse is none other except the Most Mighty Branch [‘Abdu’l-Bahá]. Thus have We graciously revealed unto you Our potent Will, and I am verily the Gracious, the All-Powerful. Verily God hath ordained the station of the Greater Branch [Muḥammad ‘Alí] to be beneath that of the Most Great Branch [‘Abdu’l-Bahá]. He is in truth the Ordainer, the All-Wise. We have chosen ‘the Greater’ after ‘the Most Great’, as decreed by Him Who is the All-Knowing, the All-Informed.

It is enjoined upon everyone to manifest love towards the Aghsán, but God hath not granted them any right to the property of others.

O ye My Aghsán, My Afnán and My Kindred! We exhort you to fear God, to perform praiseworthy deeds and to do that which is meet and seemly and serveth to exalt your station. Verily I say, fear of God is the greatest commander that can render the Cause of God victorious, and the hosts which best befit this commander have ever been and are an upright character and pure and goodly deeds.

Say: O servants! Let not the means of order be made the cause of confusion and the instrument of union an occasion for discord. We fain would hope that the people of Bahá may be guided by the blessed words: ‘Say: all things are of God.’ This exalted utterance is like unto water for quenching the fire of hate and enmity which smouldereth within the hearts and breasts of men. By this single utterance contending peoples and kindreds will attain the light of true unity. Verily He speaketh the truth and leadeth the way. He is the All-Powerful, the Exalted, the Gracious.

It is incumbent upon everyone to show courtesy to, and have regard for the Aghsán, that thereby the Cause of God may be glorified and His Word exalted. This injunction hath time and again been mentioned and recorded in the Holy Writ. Well is it with him who is enabled

to achieve that which the Ordainer, the Ancient of Days hath prescribed for him. Ye are bidden moreover to respect the members of the Holy Household, the Afnán and the kindred. We further admonish you to serve all nations and to strive for the betterment of the world.

That which is conducive to the regeneration of the world and the salvation of the peoples and kindreds of the earth hath been sent down from the heaven of the utterance of Him Who is the Desire of the world. Give ye a hearing ear to the counsels of the Pen of Glory. Better is this for you than all that is on the earth. Unto this beareth witness My glorious and wondrous Book.

WHOSO LAYETH CLAIM TO A REVELATION

Whoso layeth claim to a Revelation direct from God, ere the expiration of a full thousand years, such a man is assuredly a lying imposter. We pray God that He may graciously assist him to retract and repudiate such claim. Should he repent, God will, no doubt, forgive him. If, however, he persisteth in his error, God will, assuredly, send down one who will deal mercilessly with him. Terrible, indeed, is God in punishing! Whosoever interpreteth this verse otherwise than its obvious meaning is deprived of the Spirit of God and of His mercy which incompasseth all created things. Fear God, and follow not your idle fancies. Nay, rather follow the bidding of your Lord, the Almighty, the All-Wise.

[Baha'u'llah, Book of the Covenant Baha'i World Faith, pp. 207-211]

‘ABDU’L-BAHA

THE CENTER OF

THE COVENANT OF BAHA’U’LLAH

APPOINTED

SHOGHI EFFENDI

IN HIS WILL AND TESTAMENT

AS

HIS SUCCESSOR

The Will and Testament
Of
‘Abdul’-Baha

The Complementary
To
The Kitab-i-Aghdas
And
The Charter
Of
The World Civilisation

“‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Who incarnates an institution for which we can find no parallel whatsoever in any of the world’s recognized religious systems, may be said to have closed the Age to which He Himself belonged and opened the one in which we are now laboring. His Will and Testament should thus be regarded as the perpetual, the indissoluble link which the mind of Him Who is the Mystery of God has conceived in order to insure the continuity of the three ages that constitute the component parts of the Bahá’í Dispensation. The period in which the seed of the Faith had been slowly germinating is thus intertwined both with the one which must witness its efflorescence and the subsequent age in which that seed will have finally yielded its golden fruit

“The creative energies released by the Law of Bahá’u’lláh, permeating and evolving within the mind of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, have, by their very impact and close interaction, given birth to an Instrument which may be viewed as the Charter of the New World Order which is at once the glory and the promise of this most great Dispensation. The Will may thus be acclaimed as the inevitable offspring resulting from that mystic intercourse between Him Who communicated the generating influence of His divine Purpose and the One Who was its vehicle and chosen recipient. Being the Child of the Covenant—the Heir of both the Originator and the Interpreter of the Law of God—the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá can no more be divorced from Him Who supplied the original and motivating impulse than from the One Who ultimately conceived it. Bahá’u’lláh’s inscrutable purpose, we must ever bear in mind, has been so thoroughly infused into the conduct of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, and their motives have been so closely wedded together, that the mere attempt to dissociate the teachings of the former

from any system which the ideal Exemplar of those same teachings has established would amount to a repudiation of one of the most sacred and basic truths of the Faith.” Shoghi Effendi

Herein Follow the Tablets and Testament of `Abdu'l-Bahá

[PART ONE]

ALL-PRAISE TO HIM Who, by the Shield of His Covenant, hath guarded the Temple of His Cause from the darts of doubtfulness, Who by the Hosts of His Testament hath preserved the Sanctuary of His most Beneficent Law and protected His Straight and Luminous Path, staying thereby the onslaught of the company of Covenant-breakers, that have threatened to subvert His Divine Edifice; Who hath watched over His Mighty Stronghold and All-Glorious Faith, through the aid of men whom the slander of the slanderer affect not, whom no earthly calling, glory and power can turn aside from the Covenant of God and His Testament, established firmly by His clear and manifest words, writ and revealed by His All-Glorious Pen and recorded in the Preserved Tablet.

Salutation and praise, blessing and glory rest upon that primal branch of the Divine and Sacred Lote-Tree, grown out, blest, tender, verdant and flourishing from the Twin Holy Trees; the most wondrous, unique and priceless pearl that doth gleam from out the Twin surging seas; upon the offshoots of the Tree of Holiness, the twigs of the Celestial Tree, they that in the Day of the Great Dividing have stood fast and firm in the Covenant; upon the Hands (pillars) of the Cause of God that have diffused widely the Divine Fragrances, declared His Proofs, proclaimed His Faith, published abroad His Law, detached themselves from all things but Him, stood for righteousness in this world, and kindled the Fire of the Love of God in the very hearts and souls of His servants; upon them that have believed, rested assured, stood steadfast in His Covenant and followed the Light that after my passing shineth from the Dayspring of Divine Guidance--for behold! he is the blest and sacred bough that hath branched out from the Twin Holy Trees. Well is it with him that seeketh the shelter of his shade that shadoweth all mankind.

O ye beloved of the Lord! The greatest of all things is the protection of the True Faith of God, the preservation of His Law, the safeguarding of His Cause and service unto His Word. Ten thousand souls have shed streams of their sacred blood in this path, their precious lives they offered in sacrifice unto Him, hastened wrapt in holy ecstasy unto the glorious field of martyrdom, upraised the Standard of God's Faith and writ with their life-blood upon the Tablet of the world the verses of His Divine Unity. The sacred breast of His Holiness, the Exalted One (may my life be a sacrifice unto Him), was made a target to many a dart of woe, and in Mazindarán, the blessed feet of the Abhá Beauty (may my life be offered up for His loved ones) were so grievously scourged as to bleed and be sore wounded. His neck also was put into captive chains and His feet made fast in the stocks. In every hour, for a period of fifty years, a new trial and calamity befell Him and fresh afflictions and cares beset Him. One of them: after having suffered intense vicissitudes, He was made homeless and a wanderer and fell a victim to still new vexations and troubles. In Iraq, the Day-Star of the world was so exposed to the wiles of the people of malice as to be eclipsed in splendor. Later on He was sent an exile to the Great City (Constantinople) and thence to the Land of Mystery (Adrianople), whence, grievously wronged, He was eventually transferred to the Most Great Prison (Akká). He Whom the world hath wronged (may my life be offered up for His loved ones) was four times banished from city to city, till at last, condemned to perpetual confinement, He was incarcerated in this prison, the prison of highway robbers, of brigands

and of man-slayers. All this is but one of the trials that have afflicted the Blessed Beauty, the rest being even as grievous as this.

And still another of His trials was the hostility, the flagrant injustice, the iniquity and rebellion of Mírzá Yahyá. Although that Wronged One, that Prisoner, had through His loving-kindness nurtured him in His own bosom ever since his early years, had showered at every moment His tender care upon him, exalted his name, shielded him from every misfortune, endeared him to them of this world and the next, and despite the firm exhortations and counsels of His Holiness, the Exalted One (the Báb) and His clear and conclusive warning;--"Beware, beware, lest the Nineteen Letters of the Living and that which hath been revealed in the Bayán veil thee!" yet notwithstanding this, Mírzá Yahyá denied Him, dealt falsely with Him, believed Him not, sowed the seeds of doubt, closed his eyes to His manifest verses and turned aside therefrom. Would that he had been content therewith! Nay, he even attempted to shed the sacred blood (of Bahá'u'lláh) and then raised a great clamor and tumult around him, attributing unto Bahá'u'lláh malevolence and cruelty towards himself. What sedition he stirred up and what a storm of mischief he raised whilst in the Land of Mystery (Adrianople)! At last, he wrought that which caused the Day-Star of the world to be sent an exile to this, the Most Great Prison, and sorely wronged, and in the West of this Great Prison He did set.

O ye that stand fast and firm in the Covenant! The Center of Sedition, the Prime Mover of mischief, Mírzá Muhammad `Alí, hath passed out from under the shadow of the Cause, hath broken the Covenant, hath falsified the Holy Text, hath inflicted a grievous loss upon the true Faith of God, hath scattered His people, hath with bitter rancor endeavored to hurt `Abdu'l-Bahá and hath assailed with the utmost enmity this servant of the Sacred Threshold. Every dart he seized and hurled to pierce the breast of this wronged servant, no wound did he neglect to grievously inflict upon me, no venom did he spare but he poisoned therewith the life of this hapless one. I swear by the most holy Abhá Beauty and by the Light shining from His Holiness, the Exalted One (may my soul be a sacrifice for Their lowly servants), that because of this iniquity the dwellers in the Pavilion of the Abhá Kingdom have bewailed, the Celestial Concourse is lamenting, the Immortal Maids of Heaven in the All-Highest Paradise have raised their plaintive cries and the angelic company sighed and uttered their moanings. So grievous the deeds of this iniquitous person became that he struck with his axe at the root of the Blessed Tree, dealt a heavy blow at the Temple of the Cause of God, deluged with tears of blood the eyes of the loved ones of the Blessed Beauty, cheered and encouraged the enemies of the One True God, by his repudiation of the Covenant turned many a seeker after Truth aside from the Cause of God, revived the blighted hopes of Yahyá's following, made himself detested, caused the enemies of the Greatest Name to become audacious and arrogant, put aside the firm and conclusive verses and sowed the seeds of doubt. Had not the promised aid of the Ancient Beauty been graciously vouchsafed at every moment to this one, unworthy though he be, he surely would have destroyed, nay exterminated the Cause of God and utterly subverted the Divine Edifice. But, praised be the Lord, the triumphant assistance of the Abhá Kingdom was received, the hosts of the Realm above hastened to bestow victory. The Cause of God was promoted far and wide, the call of the True One was noised abroad, ears in all regions were inclined to the Word of God, His standard was unfurled, the ensigns of Holiness gloriously waved aloft and the verses celebrating His Divine Unity were chanted. Now, that the true Faith of God may be shielded and protected, His Law guarded and preserved and His Cause remain safe and secure, it is incumbent upon everyone to hold fast unto the Text of the clear and firmly established blessed verse, revealed about him. None other transgression greater than his can be ever imagined. He (Bahá'u'lláh) sayeth, glorious and holy is His Word:--"My foolish loved ones have regarded him even as my partner, have kindled sedition in the land and they verily are of the mischief-makers." Consider, how foolish are the people! They that have been in His (Bahá'u'lláh's) Presence and beheld His Countenance, have nevertheless noised abroad such idle talk, until, exalted be His explicit words, He said:--

"Should he for a moment pass out from under the shadow of the Cause, he surely shall be brought to naught." Reflect! What stress He layeth upon one moment's deviation: that is, were he to incline a hair's breadth to the right or to the left, his deviation would be clearly established and his utter nothingness made manifest. And now ye are witnessing how the wrath of God hath from all sides afflicted him and how day by day he is speeding towards destruction. Ere long will ye behold him and his associates, outwardly and inwardly, condemned to utter ruin.

What deviation can be greater than breaking the Covenant of God! What deviation can be greater than interpolating and falsifying the words and verses of the Sacred Text, even as testified and declared by Mírzá Badí'u'lláh! What deviation can be greater than calumniating the Center of the Covenant himself! What deviation can be more glaring than spreading broadcast false and foolish reports touching the Temple of God's Testament! What deviation can be more grievous than decreeing the death of the Center of the Covenant, supported by the holy verse:--"He that layeth a claim ere the passing of a thousand years...", whilst he (Muhammad `Alí) without shame in the days of the Blessed Beauty had advanced such a claim as this and been confuted by Him in the aforementioned manner, the text of his claim being still extant in his own handwriting and bearing his own seal. What deviation can be more complete than falsely accusing the loved ones of God! What deviation can be more evil than causing their imprisonment and incarceration! What deviation can be more severe than delivering into the hands of the government the Holy Writings and Epistles, that haply they (the government) might arise intent upon the death of this wronged one! What deviation can be more violent than threatening the ruin of the Cause of God, forging and slanderously falsifying letters and documents so that this might perturb and alarm the government and lead to the shedding of the blood of this wronged one,-- such letters and documents being now in the possession of the government! What deviation can be more odious than his iniquity and rebellion! What deviation can be more shameful than dispersing the gathering of the people of salvation! What deviation can be more infamous than the vain and feeble interpretations of the people of doubt! What deviation can be more wicked than joining hands with strangers and with the enemies of God!

A few months ago, in concert with others, he that hath broken the Covenant, hath prepared a document teeming with calumny and slander wherein, the Lord forbid, among many similar slanderous charges, `Abdu'l-Bahá is deemed a deadly enemy, the ill-wisher of the Crown. They so perturbed the minds of the members of the Imperial Government that at last a Committee of Investigation was sent from the seat of His Majesty's Government which, violating every rule of justice and equity that befit His Imperial Majesty, nay, with the most glaring injustice, proceeded with its investigations. The ill-wishers of the One True God surrounded them on every side and explained and excessively enlarged upon the text of the document whilst they (the members of the Committee) in their turn blindly acquiesced. One of their many calumnies was that this servant had raised aloft a banner in this city, had summoned the people together under it, had established a new sovereignty for himself, had erected upon Mount Carmel a mighty stronghold, had rallied around him all the peoples of the land and made them obedient to him, had caused disruption in the Faith of Islám, had covenanted with the following of Christ and, God forbid, had purposed to cause the gravest breach in the mighty power of the Crown. May the Lord protect us from such atrocious falsehoods! According to the direct and sacred command of God we are forbidden to utter slander, are commanded to show forth peace and amity, are exhorted to rectitude of conduct, straightforwardness and harmony with all the kindreds and peoples of the world. We must obey and be the well-wishers of the governments of the land, regard disloyalty unto a just king as disloyalty to God Himself and wishing evil to the government a transgression of the Cause of God. With these final and decisive words, how can it be that these imprisoned ones

should indulge in such vain fancies; incarcerated, how could they show forth such disloyalty! But alas! The Committee of Investigation hath approved and confirmed these calumnies of my brother and ill-wishers and submitted them to the presence of His Majesty the Sovereign. Now at this moment a fierce storm is raging around this prisoner who awaiteth, be it favorable or unfavorable, the gracious will of His Majesty, may the Lord aid him by His grace to be just. In whatsoever condition he may be, with absolute calm and quietness, `Abdu'l-Bahá is ready for self-sacrifice and is wholly resigned and submitted to His Will. What transgression can be more abominable, more odious, more wicked than this!

In like manner, the focal Center of Hate, hath purposed to put `Abdu'l-Bahá to death and this is supported by the testimony written by Mírzá Shu`á`u'lláh himself and is here enclosed. It is evident and indisputable that they are privily and with the utmost subtlety engaged in conspiring against me. The following are his very words written by him in this letter:-- "I curse at every moment him that hath kindled this discord, imprecate in these words `Lord! have no mercy upon him' and I hope ere long God will make manifest the one that shall have no pity on him, who now weareth another garb and about whom I cannot any more explain." Reference he doth make by these words to the sacred verse that beginneth as follows:--"He that layeth a claim ere the passing of a thousand years..." Reflect! How intent they are upon the death of `Abdu'l-Bahá! Ponder in your hearts upon the phrase "I cannot any more explain" and realize what schemes they are devising for this purpose. They fear lest, too fully explained, the letter might fall into alien hands and their schemes be foiled and frustrated. The phrase is only foretelling good tidings to come, namely that regarding this all requisite arrangements have been made.

God, my God! Thou seest this wronged servant of Thine, held fast in the talons of ferocious lions, of ravening wolves, of bloodthirsty beasts. Graciously assist me, through my love for Thee, that I may drink deep of the chalice that brimmeth over with faithfulness to Thee and is filled with Thy bountiful Grace; so that, fallen upon the dust, I may sink prostrate and senseless whilst my vesture is dyed crimson with my blood. This is my wish, my heart's desire, my hope, my pride, my glory. Grant, O Lord my God, and my Refuge, that in my last hour, my end may even as musk shed its fragrance of glory! Is there a bounty greater than this? Nay, by Thy Glory! I call Thee to witness that no day passeth but that I quaff my fill from this cup, so grievous are the misdeeds wrought by them that have broken the Covenant, kindled discord, showed their malice, stirred sedition in the land and dishonored Thee amidst Thy servants. Lord! Shield Thou from these Covenant-breakers the mighty Stronghold of Thy Faith and protect Thy secret Sanctuary from the onslaught of the ungodly. Thou art in truth the Mighty, the Powerful, the Gracious, the Strong.

In short, O ye beloved of the Lord! The Center of Sedition, Mírzá Muhammad `Alí, in accordance with the decisive words of God and by reason of his boundless transgression, hath grievously fallen and been cut off from the Holy Tree. Verily, we wronged them not, but they have wronged themselves!

O God, my God! Shield Thy trusted servants from the evils of self and passion, protect them with the watchful eye of Thy loving kindness from all rancor, hate and envy, shelter them in the impregnable stronghold of Thy care and, safe from the darts of doubtfulness, make them the manifestations of Thy glorious Signs, illumine their faces with the effulgent rays shed from the Dayspring of Thy Divine Unity, gladden their hearts with the verses revealed from Thy Holy Kingdom, strengthen their loins by Thy all-swaying power that cometh from Thy Realm of Glory. Thou art the All-Bountiful, the Protector, the Almighty, the Gracious!

O ye that stand fast in the Covenant! When the hour cometh that this wronged and broken-winged bird will have taken its flight into the Celestial Concourse, when it will have hastened

to the Realm of the Unseen and its mortal frame will have been either lost or hidden neath the dust, it is incumbent upon the Afnán, that are steadfast in the Covenant of God and have branched from the Tree of Holiness; the Hands, (pillars) of the Cause of God (the glory of the Lord rest upon them), and all the friends and loved ones, one and all to bestir themselves and arise with heart and soul and in one accord, to diffuse the sweet savors of God, to teach His Cause and to promote His Faith. It behooveth them not to rest for a moment, neither to seek repose. They must disperse themselves in every land, pass by every clime, and travel throughout all regions. Bestirred, without rest, and steadfast to the end, they must raise in every land the triumphal cry "Yá Bahá'u'l-Abhá!" (O Thou the Glory of Glories), must achieve renown in the world wherever they go, must burn brightly even as a candle in every meeting and must kindle the flame of Divine love in every assembly; that the light of truth may rise resplendent in the midmost heart of the world, that throughout the East and throughout the West a vast concourse may gather under the shadow of the Word of God, that the sweet savors of holiness may be diffused, that faces may shine radiantly, hearts be filled with the Divine spirit and souls be made heavenly.

In these days, the most important of all things is the guidance of the nations and peoples of the world. Teaching the Cause is of utmost importance for it is the head corner-stone of the foundation itself. This wronged servant has spent his days and nights in promoting the Cause and urging the peoples to service. He rested not a moment, till the fame of the Cause of God was noised abroad in the world and the celestial strains from the Abhá Kingdom roused the East and the West. The beloved of God must also follow the same example. This is the secret of faithfulness, this is the requirement of servitude to the Threshold of Bahá!

The disciples of Christ forgot themselves and all earthly things, forsook all their cares and belongings, purged themselves of self and passion, and with absolute detachment scattered far and wide and engaged in calling the peoples of the world to the divine guidance; till at last they made the world another world, illumined the surface of the earth, and even to their last hour proved self-sacrificing in the pathway of that beloved One of God. Finally in various lands they suffered glorious martyrdom. Let them that are men of action follow in their footsteps!

O my loving friends! After the passing away of this wronged one, it is incumbent upon the Aghsán (Branches), the Afnán (Twigs) of the Sacred Lote-Tree, the Hands (pillars) of the Cause of God and the loved ones of the Abhá Beauty to turn unto Shoghi Effendi--the youthful branch branched from the two hallowed and sacred Lote-Trees and the fruit grown from the union of the two offshoots of the Tree of Holiness,-- as he is the sign of God, the chosen branch, the Guardian of the Cause of God, he unto whom all the Aghsán, the Afnán, the Hands of the Cause of God and His loved ones must turn. He is the Interpreter of the Word of God and after him will succeed the first-born of his lineal descendents.

The sacred and youthful branch, the Guardian of the Cause of God, as well as the Universal House of Justice to be universally elected and established, are both under the care and protection of the Abhá Beauty, under the shelter and unerring guidance of the Exalted One (may my life be offered up for them both). Whatsoever they decide is of God. Whoso obeyeth him not, neither obeyeth them, hath not obeyed God; whoso rebelleth against him and against them hath rebelled against God; whoso opposeth him hath opposed God; whoso contendeth with them hath contended with God; whoso disputeth with him hath disputed with God; whoso denieth him hath denied God; whoso disbelieveth in him hath disbelieved in God; whoso deviateth, separateth himself and turneth aside from him hath in truth deviated, separated himself and turned aside from God. May the wrath, the fierce indignation, the vengeance of God rest upon him! The mighty stronghold shall remain impregnable and safe through obedience to him who is the Guardian of the Cause of God. It is incumbent upon the

members of the House of Justice, upon all the Aghsán, the Afnán, the Hands of the Cause of God to show their obedience, submissiveness and subordination unto the Guardian of the Cause of God, to turn unto him and be lowly before him. He that opposeth him hath opposed the True One, will make a breach in the Cause of God, will subvert His Word and will become a manifestation of the Center of Sedition. Beware, beware, lest the days after the ascension (of Bahá'u'lláh) be repeated when the Center of Sedition waxed haughty and rebellious and with Divine Unity for his excuse deprived himself and perturbed and poisoned others. No doubt every vainglorious one that purposeth dissension and discord will not openly declare his evil purposes, nay rather, even as impure gold, will he seize upon divers measures and various pretexts that he may separate the gathering of the people of Bahá. My object is to show that the Hands of the Cause of God must be ever watchful and so soon as they find anyone beginning to oppose and protest against the Guardian of the Cause of God, cast him out from the congregation of the people of Bahá and in no wise accept any excuse from him. How often hath grievous error been disguised in the garb of truth, that it might sow the seeds of doubt in the hearts of men!

O ye beloved of the Lord! It is incumbent upon the Guardian of the Cause of God to appoint in his own life-time him that shall become his successor, that differences may not arise after his passing. He that is appointed must manifest in himself detachment from all worldly things, must be the essence of purity, must show in himself the fear of God, knowledge, wisdom and learning. Thus, should the first-born of the Guardian of the Cause of God not manifest in himself the truth of the words:--"The child is the secret essence of its sire," that is, should he not inherit of the spiritual within him (the Guardian of the Cause of God) and his glorious lineage not be matched with a goodly character, then must he, (the Guardian of the Cause of God) choose another branch to succeed him.

The Hands of the Cause of God must elect from their own number nine persons that shall at all times be occupied in the important services in the work of the Guardian of the Cause of God. The election of these nine must be carried either unanimously or by majority from the company of the Hands of the Cause of God and these, whether unanimously or by a majority vote, must give their assent to the choice of the one whom the Guardian of the Cause of God hath chosen as his successor. This assent must be given in such wise as the assenting and dissenting voices may not be distinguished (i.e., secret ballot).

O friends! The Hands of the Cause of God must be nominated and appointed by the Guardian of the Cause of God.

All must be under his shadow and obey his command. Should any, within or without the company of the Hands of the Cause of God disobey and seek division, the wrath of God and His vengeance will be upon him, for he will have caused a breach in the true Faith of God.

The obligations of the Hands of the Cause of God are to diffuse the Divine Fragrances, to edify the souls of men, to promote learning, to improve the character of all men and to be, at all times and under all conditions, sanctified and detached from earthly things. They must manifest the fear of God by their conduct, their manners, their deeds and their words.

This body of the Hands of the Cause of God is under the direction of the Guardian of the Cause of God. He must continually urge them to strive and endeavor to the utmost of their ability to diffuse the sweet savors of God, and to guide all the peoples of the world, for it is the light of Divine Guidance that causeth all the universe to be illumined. To disregard, though it be for a moment, this absolute command which is binding upon everyone, is in no wise permitted, that the existent world may become even as the Abhá Paradise, that the surface of the earth may become heavenly, that contention and conflict amidst peoples, kindreds, nations and governments may disappear, that all the dwellers on earth may become

one people and one race, that the world may become even as one home. Should differences arise, they shall be amicably and conclusively settled by the Supreme Tribunal, that shall include members from all the governments and peoples of the world.

O ye beloved of the Lord! In this sacred Dispensation, conflict and contention are in no wise permitted. Every aggressor deprives himself of God's grace. It is incumbent upon everyone to show the utmost love, rectitude of conduct, straightforwardness and sincere kindness unto all the peoples and kindreds of the world, be they friends or strangers. So intense must be the spirit of love and loving kindness, that the stranger may find himself a friend, the enemy a true brother, no difference whatsoever existing between them. For universality is of God and all limitations earthly. Thus man must strive that his reality may manifest virtues and perfections, the light whereof may shine upon everyone. The light of the sun shineth upon all the world and the merciful showers of Divine Providence fall upon all peoples. The vivifying breeze reviveth every living creature and all beings endued with life obtain their share and portion at His heavenly board. In like manner, the affections and loving kindness of the servants of the One True God must be bountifully and universally extended to all mankind. Regarding this, restrictions and limitations are in no wise permitted.

Wherefore, O my loving friends! Consort with all the peoples, kindreds and religions of the world with the utmost truthfulness, uprightness, faithfulness, kindness, good-will and friendliness, that all the world of being may be filled with the holy ecstasy of the grace of Bahá, that ignorance, enmity, hate and rancor may vanish from the world and the darkness of estrangement amidst the peoples and kindreds of the world may give way to the Light of Unity. Should other peoples and nations be unfaithful to you show your fidelity unto them, should they be unjust toward you show justice towards them, should they keep aloof from you attract them to yourselves, should they show their enmity be friendly towards them, should they poison your lives, sweeten their souls, should they inflict a wound upon you, be a salve to their sores. Such are the attributes of the sincere! Such are the attributes of the truthful.

And now, concerning the House of Justice which God hath ordained as the source of all good and freed from all error, it must be elected by universal suffrage, that is, by the believers. Its members must be manifestations of the fear of God and daysprings of knowledge and understanding, must be steadfast in God's faith and the well-wishers of all mankind. By this House is meant the Universal House of Justice, that is, in all countries a secondary House of Justice must be instituted, and these secondary Houses of Justice must elect the members of the Universal one. Unto this body all things must be referred. It enacteth all ordinances and regulations that are not to be found in the explicit Holy Text. By this body all the difficult problems are to be resolved and the Guardian of the Cause of God is its sacred head and the distinguished member for life of that body. Should he not attend in person its deliberations, he must appoint one to represent him. Should any of the members commit a sin, injurious to the common weal, the Guardian of the Cause of God hath at his own discretion the right to expel him, whereupon the people must elect another one in his stead. This House of Justice enacteth the laws and the government enforceth them. The legislative body must reinforce the executive, the executive must aid and assist the legislative body so that through the close union and harmony of these two forces, the foundation of fairness and justice may become firm and strong, that all the regions of the world may become even as Paradise itself.

O Lord, my God! Assist Thy loved ones to be firm in Thy Faith, to walk in Thy ways, to be steadfast in Thy Cause. Give them Thy grace to withstand the onslaught of self and passion, to follow the light of Divine Guidance. Thou art the Powerful, the Gracious, the Self-Subsisting, the Bestower, the Compassionate, the Almighty, the All-Bountiful.

O friends of `Abdu'l-Bahá! The Lord, as a sign of His infinite bounties, hath graciously favored His servants by providing for a fixed money offering (Huqúq), to be dutifully presented unto Him, though He, the True One and His servants have been at all times independent of all created things, and God verily is the All-Possessing, exalted above the need of any gift from His creatures. This fixed money offering, however, causeth the people to become firm and steadfast and draweth Divine increase upon them. It is to be offered through the Guardian of the Cause of God, that it may be expended for the diffusion of the Fragrances of God and the exaltation of His Word, for benevolent pursuits and for the common weal.

O ye beloved of the Lord! It is incumbent upon you to be submissive to all monarchs that are just and to show your fidelity to every righteous king. Serve ye the sovereigns of the world with utmost truthfulness and loyalty. Show obedience unto them and be their well-wishers. Without their leave and permission do not meddle with political affairs, for disloyalty to the just sovereign is disloyalty to God Himself.

This is my counsel and the commandment of God unto you. Well is it with them that act accordingly.

(This written paper hath for a long time been preserved under ground, damp having affected it. When brought forth to the light it was observed that certain parts of it were injured by the damp, and the Holy Land being sorely agitated it was left untouched.)

[PART TWO]

He Is God

O MY LORD, my heart's Desire, Thou Whom I ever invoke, Thou Who art my Aider and my Shelter, my Helper and my Refuge! Thou seest me submerged in an ocean of calamities that overwhelm the soul, of afflictions that oppress the heart, of woes that disperse Thy gathering, of ills and pains that scatter Thy flock. Sore trials have compassed me round and perils have from all sides beset me. Thou seest me immersed in a sea of unsurpassed tribulation, sunk into a fathomless abyss, afflicted by mine enemies and consumed with the flame of their hate, enkindled by my kinsmen with whom Thou didst make Thy strong Covenant and Thy firm Testament, wherein Thou biddest them turn their hearts to this wronged one, to keep away from me the foolish, the unjust, and refer unto this lonely one all that about which they differ in Thy Holy Book, so that the Truth may be revealed unto them, their doubts may be dispelled and Thy manifest Signs be spread abroad.

Yet now Thou seest them, O Lord, my God! with Thine eye that sleepeth not, how that they have broken Thy Covenant and turned their backs thereon, how with hate and rebelliousness they have erred from Thy Testament and have arisen intent upon malice.

Adversities have waxed still more severe as they rose with unbearable cruelty to overpower and crush me, as they scattered far and wide their scrolls of doubt and in utter falsehood hurled their calumnies upon me. Not content with this, their chief, O my God, hath dared to interpolate Thy Book, to fraudulently alter Thy decisive Holy Text and falsify that which hath been revealed by Thy All-Glorious Pen. He did also maliciously insert that which Thou didst reveal for the one that hath wrought the most glaring cruelty upon Thee, disbelieved in Thee and denied Thy wondrous Signs, into what Thou didst reveal for this servant of Thine that hath been wronged in this world. All this he did that he might beguile the souls of men and breathe his evil whisperings into the hearts of Thy devoted ones. Thereunto did their second chief testify, confessing it in his own handwriting, setting thereupon his seal and spreading it throughout all regions. O my God! Could there be a more grievous injustice than this? And still they rested not, but further strove with stubbornness, falsehood and slander, with scorn and calumny to stir up sedition in the midst of the government of this land and elsewhere, causing them to deem me a sower of sedition and filling the minds with things that the ear

abhorreth to hear. The government was thus alarmed, fear fell upon the sovereign, and the suspicion of the nobility was aroused. Minds were troubled, affairs were upset, souls were perturbed, the fire of anguish and sorrow was kindled within the breasts, the Holy Leaves (of the Household) were convulsed and shaken, their eyes rained with tears, their sighs and lamentations were raised and their hearts burned within them as they bewailed this wronged servant of Thine, fallen a victim into the hands of these, his kindred, nay, his very enemies!

Lord! Thou seest all things weeping over Me and My kindred rejoicing in My woes. By Thy Glory, O my God! Even amongst mine enemies, some have lamented my troubles and my distress, and of the envious ones a number have shed tears because of my cares, my exile and my afflictions. They did this because they found naught in me but affection and care and witnessed naught but kindness and mercy. As they saw me swept into the flood of tribulation and adversity and exposed even as a target to the arrows of fate, their hearts were moved with compassion, tears came to their eyes and they testified declaring: --"The Lord is our witness; naught have we seen from him but faithfulness, generosity and extreme compassion." The Covenant-breakers, foreboders of evil, however, waxed fiercer in their rancor, rejoiced as I fell a victim to the most grievous ordeal, bestirred themselves against me and made merry over the heartrending happenings around me.

I call upon Thee, O Lord my God! with my tongue and with all my heart, not to requite them for their cruelty and their wrong-doings, their craft and their mischief, for they are foolish and ignoble and know not what they do. They discern not good from evil, neither do they distinguish right from wrong, nor justice from injustice. They follow their own desires and walk in the footsteps of the most imperfect and foolish amongst them. O my Lord! Have mercy upon them, shield them from all afflictions in these troubled times and grant that all trials and hardships may be the lot of this Thy servant that hath fallen into this darksome pit. Single me out for every woe and make me a sacrifice for all Thy loved ones. O Lord, Most High! May my soul, my life, my being, my spirit, my all be offered up for them. O God, my God! Lowly, suppliant and fallen upon my face, I beseech Thee with all the ardor of my invocation to pardon whosoever hath hurt me, forgive him that hath conspired against me and offended me, and wash away the misdeeds of them that have wrought injustice upon me. Vouchsafe unto them Thy goodly gifts, give them joy, relieve them from sorrow, grant them peace and prosperity, give them Thy bliss and pour upon them Thy bounty.

Thou art the Powerful, the Gracious, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting!

O dearly beloved friends! I am now in very great danger and the hope of even an hour's life is lost to me. I am thus constrained to write these lines for the protection of the Cause of God, the preservation of His Law, the safeguarding of His Word and the safety of His Teachings. By the Ancient Beauty! This wronged one hath in no wise borne nor doth he bear a grudge against any one; towards none doth he entertain any ill-feeling and uttereth no word save for the good of the world. My supreme obligation, however, of necessity, prompteth me to guard and preserve the Cause of God. Thus, with the greatest regret, I counsel you saying: Guard ye the Cause of God, protect His law and have the utmost fear of discord. This is the foundation of the belief of the people of Bahá (may my life be offered up for them): "His Holiness, the Exalted One (the Báb), is the Manifestation of the Unity and Oneness of God and the Forerunner of the Ancient Beauty. His Holiness the Abhá Beauty (may my life be a sacrifice for His steadfast friends) is the Supreme Manifestation of God and the Dayspring of His Most Divine Essence. All others are servants unto Him and do His bidding." Unto the Most Holy Book every one must turn, and all that is not expressly recorded therein must be referred to the Universal House of Justice. That which this body, whether unanimously or by a majority doth carry, that is verily the truth and the purpose of God Himself. Whoso doth deviate

therefrom is verily of them that love discord, hath shown forth malice, and turned away from the Lord of the Covenant. By this House is meant that Universal House of Justice which is to be elected from all countries, that is from those parts in the East and West where the loved ones are to be found, after the manner of the customary elections in Western countries such as those of England.

It is incumbent upon these members (of the Universal House of Justice) to gather in a certain place and deliberate upon all problems which have caused difference, questions that are obscure and matters that are not expressly recorded in the Book. Whatsoever they decide has the same effect as the Text itself. Inasmuch as the House of Justice hath power to enact laws that are not expressly recorded in the Book and bear upon daily transactions, so also it hath power to repeal the same. Thus for example, the House of Justice enacteth today a certain law and enforceth it, and a hundred years hence, circumstances having profoundly changed and the conditions having altered, another House of Justice will then have power, according to the exigencies of the time, to alter that law. This it can do because these laws form no part of the divine explicit Text. The House of Justice is both the initiator and the abrogator of its own laws.

And now, one of the greatest and most fundamental principles of the Cause of God is to shun and avoid entirely the Covenant-breakers, for they will utterly destroy the Cause of God, exterminate His Law and render of no account all efforts exerted in the past. O friends! It behooveth you to call to mind with tenderness the trials of His Holiness, the Exalted One, and show your fidelity to the Ever-Blest Beauty. The utmost endeavor must be exerted lest all these woes, trials and afflictions, all this pure and sacred blood that hath been shed so profusely in the Path of God, may prove to be in vain. Ye know well what the hands of the Center of Sedition, Mírzá Muhammad `Alí, and his associates have wrought. Among his doings, one of them is the corruption of the Sacred Text whereof ye are all aware, the Lord be praised, and know that it is evident, proven and confirmed by the testimony of his brother, Mírzá Badí'u'lláh, whose confession is written in his own handwriting, beareth his seal, is printed and spread abroad. This is but one of his misdeeds. Can a transgression be imagined more glaring than this, the interpolation of the Holy Text? Nay, by the righteousness of the Lord! His transgressions are writ and recorded in a leaflet by itself. Please God, ye will peruse it.

In short, according to the explicit Divine Text the least transgression shall make of this man a fallen creature, and what transgression is more grievous than attempting to destroy the Divine Edifice, breaking the Covenant, erring from the Testament, falsifying the Holy Text, sowing the seeds of doubt, calumniating `Abdu'l-Bahá, advancing claims for which God hath sent down no warrant, kindling mischief and striving to shed the very blood of `Abdu'l-Bahá, and many other things whereof ye are all aware! It is thus evident that should this man succeed in bringing disruption into the Cause of God, he will utterly destroy and exterminate it. Beware lest ye approach this man, for to approach him is worse than approaching fire!

Gracious God! After Mírzá Badí'u'lláh had declared in his own handwriting that this man (Muhammad `Alí) had broken the Covenant and had proclaimed his falsification of the Holy Text, he realized that to return to the True Faith and pay allegiance to the Covenant and Testament would in no wise promote his selfish desires. He thus repented and regretted the thing he had done and attempted privily to gather in his printed confessions, plotted darkly with the Center of Sedition against me and informed him daily of all the happenings within my household. He has even taken a leading part in the mischievous deeds that have of late been committed. Praise be to God affairs recovered their former stability and the loved ones obtained partial peace. But ever since the day he entered again into our midst, he began afresh

to sow the seeds of sore sedition. Some of his machinations and intrigues will be recorded in a separate leaflet.

My purpose is, however, to show that it is incumbent upon the friends that are fast and firm in the Covenant and Testament to be ever wakeful lest after this wronged one is gone this alert and active worker of mischief may cause disruption, privily sow the seeds of doubt and sedition and utterly root out the Cause of God. A thousand times shun his company. Take heed and be on your guard. Watch and examine; should anyone, openly or privily, have the least connection with him, cast him out from your midst, for he will surely cause disruption and mischief.

O ye beloved of the Lord! Strive with all your heart to shield the Cause of God from the onslaught of the insincere, for souls such as these, cause the straight to become crooked and all benevolent efforts to produce contrary results.

O God, my God! I call Thee, Thy Prophets and Thy Messengers, Thy Saints and Thy Holy Ones, to witness that I have declared conclusively Thy Proofs unto Thy loved ones and set forth clearly all things unto them, that they may watch over Thy Faith, guard Thy Straight Path and protect Thy Resplendent Law. Thou art, verily, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise!

[PART THREE]

He Is the Witness, the All-Sufficing

O MY GOD! my Beloved, my heart's Desire! Thou knowest, Thou seest that which hath befallen this servant of Thine, that hath humbled himself at Thy Door, and Thou knowest the sins committed against him by the people of malice, they that have broken Thy Covenant and turned their backs on Thy Testament. In the day-time they afflicted me with the arrows of hate and in the night-season they privily conspired to hurt me. At dawn they committed that which the Celestial Concourse did lament and at eventide they unsheathed against me the sword of tyranny and hurled in the presence of the ungodly their darts of calumny upon me. Notwithstanding their misdeeds, this lowly servant of Thine was patient and did endure every affliction and trial at their hands, though by Thy power and might he could have destroyed their words, quenched their fire and stayed the flame of their rebelliousness.

Thou seest, O my God! how my long-suffering, my forbearance and silence have increased their cruelty, their arrogance and their pride. By Thy Glory, O Beloved One! They have misbelieved in Thee and rebelled against Thee in such wise that they left me not a moment of rest and quiet, that I might arise as it is meet and seemly, to exalt Thy Word amidst mankind, and might serve at Thy Threshold of Holiness with a heart that overfloweth with the joy of the dwellers of the Abhá Kingdom.

Lord! My cup of woe runneth over, and from all sides blows are fiercely raging upon me. The darts of affliction have compassed me round and the arrows of distress have rained upon me. Thus tribulation overwhelmed me and my strength, because of the onslaught of the foemen, became weakness within me, while I stood alone and forsaken in the midst of my woes. Lord! Have mercy upon me, lift me up unto Thyself and make me to drink from the Chalice of Martyrdom, for the wide world with all its vastness can no longer contain me.

Thou art, verily, the Merciful, the Compassionate, the Gracious, the All-Bountiful!

O ye the true, the sincere, the faithful friends of this wronged one! Everyone knoweth and believeth what calamities and afflictions have befallen this wronged one, this prisoner, at the

hands of those who have broken the Covenant at the time when, after the setting of the Day-Star of the world, his heart was consumed with the flame of His bereavement.

When, in all parts of the earth, the enemies of God profiting by the passing away of the Sun of Truth, suddenly and with all their might launched their attack; at such a time and in the midst of so great a calamity, the Covenant-breakers arose with the utmost cruelty, intent upon harm and the stirring up of the spirit of enmity. At every moment a misdeed they did commit and bestirred themselves to sow the seeds of grievous sedition, and to ruin the edifice of the Covenant. But this wronged one, this prisoner, did his utmost to hide and veil their doings that haply they might regret and repent. His long-suffering and forbearance of these evil deeds, however, made the rebellious ones still more arrogant and daring; until, through leaflets written with their own hands, they sowed the seeds of doubt, printing these leaflets and scattering them broadcast throughout the world, believing that such foolish doings would bring to naught the Covenant and the Testament.

Thereupon the loved ones of the Lord arose, inspired with the greatest confidence and constancy and aided by the power of the Kingdom, by Divine Strength, by heavenly Grace, by the unfailing help and Celestial Bounty, they withstood the enemies of the Covenant in well-nigh three score and ten treatises and supported by conclusive proofs, unmistakable evidences and clear texts from the Holy Writ, they refuted their scrolls of doubt and mischief-kindling leaflets. The Center of Sedition was thus confounded in his craftiness, afflicted by the wrath of God, sunk into a degradation and infamy that shall be lasting until the Day of Doom. Base and wretched is the plight of the people of evil deeds, they that are in grievous loss!

And as they lost their cause, grew hopeless in their efforts against the loved ones of God, saw the Standard of His Testament waving throughout all regions and witnessed the power of the Covenant of the Merciful One, the flame of envy so blazed within them as to be beyond recounting. With the utmost vigor, exertion, rancor and enmity, they followed another path, walked in another way, devised another plan: that of kindling the flame of sedition in the heart of the very government itself, and thus cause this wronged one, this prisoner to appear as a mover of strife, inimical to the government and a hater and opponent of the Crown. Perchance `Abdu'l-Bahá may be put to death and his name be made to perish whereby an arena may be opened unto the enemies of the Covenant wherein they may advance and spur on their charger, inflict a grievous loss upon everyone and subvert the very foundations of the edifice of the Cause of God. For so grievous is the conduct and behavior of this false people that they are become even as an axe striking at the very root of the Blessed Tree. Should they be suffered to continue they would, in but a few days' time, exterminate the Cause of God, His Word, and themselves.

Hence, the beloved of the Lord must entirely shun them, avoid them, foil their machinations and evil whisperings, guard the Law of God and His religion, engage one and all in diffusing widely the sweet savors of God and to the best of their endeavor proclaim His Teachings.

Whosoever and whatsoever meeting becometh a hindrance to the diffusion of the Light of Faith, let the loved ones give them counsel and say: "Of all the gifts of God the greatest is the gift of Teaching. It draweth unto us the Grace of God and is our first obligation. Of such a gift how can we deprive ourselves? Nay, our lives, our goods, our comforts, our rest, we offer them all as a sacrifice for the Abhá Beauty and teach the Cause of God." Caution and prudence, however, must be observed even as recorded in the Book. The veil must in no wise be suddenly rent asunder. The Glory of Glories rest upon you.

O ye the faithful loved ones of `Abdu'l-Bahá! It is incumbent upon you to take the greatest care of Shoghi Effendi, the twig that hath branched from and the fruit given forth by the two hallowed and Divine Lote-Trees, that no dust of despondency and sorrow may stain his radiant nature, that day by day he may wax greater in happiness, in joy and spirituality, and may grow to become even as a fruitful tree.

For he is, after `Abdu'l-Bahá, the Guardian of the Cause of God, the Afán, the Hands (pillars) of the Cause and the beloved of the Lord must obey him and turn unto him. He that obeyeth him not, hath not obeyed God; he that turneth away from him, hath turned away from God and he that denieth him, hath denied the True One. Beware lest anyone falsely interpret these words, and like unto them that have broken the Covenant after the Day of Ascension (of Bahá'u'lláh) advance a pretext, raise the standard of revolt, wax stubborn and open wide the door of false interpretation. To none is given the right to put forth his own opinion or express his particular conviction. All must seek guidance and turn unto the Center of the Cause and the House of Justice. And he that turneth unto whatsoever else is indeed in grievous error.

The Glory of Glories rest upon you!



SHOGHI EFFENDI
THE FIRST GUARDIAN
OF THE FAITH
APPOINTED
CHARLES MASON REMEY
AS
HIS SUCCESSOR
IN HIS TWO CABLEGRAMS
OF
9Th of JANUARY AND 2th of
MARCH, 1951

Proclamation of Shoghi Effendi

In Formation of the embryo Universal House of Justice

Proclaim National Assemblies (of) East (and) West weighty epoch-making decision (of) formation (of) first International Baha'i Council, forerunner (of) supreme administrative institution destined (to) emerge (in) fullness (of) time within precincts beneath shadow (of) World Spiritual Center (of) Faith already established (in) twin cities (of) 'Akká (and) Haifa. Fulfillment (of) prophecies uttered (by) Founder (of) Faith (and) Center (of) His Covenant culminating (in) establishment (of) Jewish State, signaling birth after lapse (of) two thousand years (of an) independent nation (in the) Holy Land, (the) swift unfoldment (of) historic undertaking associated (with) construction (of) superstructure (of the) Báb's Sepulchre (on) Mount Carmel, (the) present adequate maturity (of) nine vigorously functioning national administrative institutions throughout Baha'i World, combine (to) induce me (to) arrive (at) this historic decision marking most significant milestone (in) evolution (of) Administrative Order (of the) Faith (of) Baha'u'llah (in) course (of) last thirty years. Nascent Institution now created (is) invested (with) threefold function: first, (to) forge link (with) authorities (of) newly emerged State; second, (to) assist me (to) discharge responsibilities involved (in) erection (of) mighty superstructure (of the) Báb's Holy Shrine; third, (to) conduct negotiations related (to) matters (of) personal status (with) civil authorities. To these will be added further functions (in) course (of) evolution (of) this first embryonic International Institution, marking its development into officially recognized Baha'i Court, its transformation into duly elected body, its efflorescence into Universal House (of) Justice, (and) its final fruition through erection (of) manifold auxiliary institutions constituting (the) World Administrative Center destined (to) arise (and) function (and) remain permanently established (in) close neighborhood (of) Twin Holy Shrines. Hail (with) thankful, joyous heart (at) long last (the) constitution (of) International Council which history will acclaim (as the) greatest event shedding lustre (upon) second epoch (of) Formative Age (of) Baha'i Dispensation potentially unsurpassed (by) any enterprise undertaken since inception (of) Administrative Order (of) Faith (on) morrow (of) 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Ascension, ranking second only (to) glorious immortal events associated (with) Ministries (of the) Three Central Figures (of) Faith (in) course (of) First Age (of) most glorious Dispensation (of the) five thousand century Baha'i Cycle. Advice publicize announcement through Public Relations Committee.

-SHOGHI [Cablegram, January 9, 1951]

Shoghi effendi appointed C.M. Remey, as the President of the embryo of the Universal House of justice

Shoghi effendi, in his Cablegram of March 2, 1952 writes "Second announcement: The enlargement of the International Baha'i Council. Present membership now comprises: Amatu'l-Baha R'uhiyyih, chosen liaison between me and the Council. Hands of the Cause, Mason Remey, Amelia Collins, Ugo Giachery, Leroy Aoas, President, Vice-President, member at large, Secretary-General, respectively. Jesse Revell, Ethel Revell, Lotfullah Hakim, Treasurer, Western and Eastern assistant Secretaries." ...

PROCLAMATION

TO THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF THE WORLD

THROUGH

THE ANNUAL CONVENTION OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF THE

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA ASSEMBLED AT
WILMETTE, ILLINOIS**

**RIDVÁN 117
BAHÁ'Í ERA**

FROM

MASON REMEY

THE SECOND GUARDIAN OF THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH

BELOVED FRIENDS:

Believers have questioned me as to my status as President of the Bahá'í International Council, appointed by The Beloved Guardian Shoghi Effendi, the First Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith. I take the means of this proclamation, to the coming annual national convention to tell all Bahá'ís exactly what my position and status is in the Faith.

The Bahá'í people the world around know that The Beloved Guardian singled me, Mason Remey, out from amongst all of the Believers upon earth to occupy the position of President of the Bahá'í International Council. This is the only position suggestive of authority that Shoghi Effendi ever bestowed upon anyone, the only special and specific appointment of authority to any man ever made by him.

The Beloved Guardian declared the Bahá'í International Council to be the forerunner of and the first step toward the establishment of The Universal House of Justice, and furthermore, that the Bahá'í International Council was the embryo of The Universal House of Justice which embryo would eventually develop into The Universal House of Justice.

Although all Bahá'ís know that I, Mason Remey, am the President of the Bahá'í International Council by the appointment of The Beloved Guardian Shoghi Effendi, yet many of you may not know me personally. I have been living at Haifa much of the time during these past ten years. My visits to America being in the summers when I have done but little travelling among the Bahá'í communities so personally I may be a stranger to the many recently registered in the Faith. Therefore, I will tell you something about myself.

My forebearers were early American Colonials of New England in the north and Virginia in the south. I was brought up in the Christian Faith as taught by the Episcopal Church. The members of this church, as you know, although always orthodox may be anything from Catholic upon one hand to Protestant on the other. While this church is usually classed as Protestant, its Prayer Book proclaims it to be "The Holy Catholic Apostolic Church." My inheritance was from the Catholic interpretation of Christianity rather than from the Protestant attitude.

To the average American, The Catholic Church usually means Roman Catholic, but there are other Catholic communions. In The Holy Land, that is now my home and has been for these past ten years, the Ministry of Religions of Israel lists eleven different Catholic communions in that country—Roman, Anglican, Russian, Armenian, Greek, Greek Orthodox, Coptic, etc. The Anglican Catholic Persuasion corresponding to the so called High Episcopal Church in America.

With this Catholic background it was the most logical and natural thing in the world for me to accept the Bahá'í message without question as I did when I heard it in 1899-

1900 from May Ellis Bolles (later Mrs. Sutherland Maxwell), because the Holy Catholic Apostolic Church teaches the Second Coming of Christ—The Christ to come manifesting as the Lord of Creation—the Prince of Peace—coming to establish "His Kingdom upon Earth as it is in Heaven."

From New England on the north and Virginia on the south, my forebears came into the middlewest where I was born in 1874 at a town on the Mississippi River, two hundred and ten miles from Chicago, not far distant from the geographic center of the United States, this land that our Beloved Guardian has called "The Cradle of the Administration of the Bahá'í Faith." Thus do I introduce myself to those of you who may know me but by name only.

As I travel about through the Bahá'í world, the friends ask me many questions about the life of the believers in Israel, and in particular about the Hands of the Faith in The Holy Land? The Bahá'í people are just curious to know about things transpiring there and of how the problems of the Faith are being handled?

There is some general information that I can give them that is in no way confidential but I am not mentioning anything of a confidential nature to any Bahá'í because as is well known in Bahá'í circles from the first of the conclaves of the Hands the majority of the Hands of the Faith were united in the opinion that absolutely nothing said or done in these conclaves be divulged, disclosed or revealed to any of the Bahá'ís outside of the body of the twenty seven Hands. However, each Hand of the Faith is not only allowed but urged to express herself or himself with perfect freedom within the four walls of the chamber in which the Hands are gathered. It is the duty enjoined upon each of the Hands to express her or his own convictions to the Hands when seated in conclave. (Conclave, according to the Oxford Dictionary, is "Any meeting for secret consultation.").

I, as the President of the International Council was one of those things that every Bahá'í knows but that just never happened to be talked about nor even mentioned in any of the conclaves or in the conferences of the Hands of the Faith; therefore, as this subject was never mentioned, I, having promised the Hands never to divulge any of their discussions, proceedings or decisions, am not breaking faith with them now by explaining to the believers about this subject of my Presidentship of the International Council a subject that was never even mentioned nor brought up for discussion by the Hands of the Faith in any conference that I ever attended or know anything about.

Before going into the subject of my Presidency of the International Council and the stand that I take in the cause and explain in this letter, I would preface my statement by giving in a few words a picture of the setup of things in Haifa under the regime of The Beloved Guardian when all the members of the International Council including the resident Hands lived there and served the Guardian daily. Each of us council members were given instructions by Shoghi Effendi of what he wanted us to do and we reported to him as these various services were underway and completed. The sole

authority of all these operations rested in the instructions given to each direct from the Guardian himself, thus as a council, a functioning body, we never undertook any services of any nature whatsoever.

After the appointment of the International Council, many times one of the members would come to me saying, "Mason, you are the President of the Council, get yourself busy, call a meeting, you are the President of the Council, you should take the initiative to organize this body and do something." To which my response was always, "The Guardian of the Faith appointed the Baha'i International Council and He will tell me what I should do and when I should call the Council into action."

The First Guardian of the Faith left this world without giving me any orders or instructions whatsoever regarding the International Council. The Beloved Guardian gave me no authority to do anything about the Universal Council during his lifetime for while He was living He was the Guardian of the Faith and as infallibility then was vested in him and in him only, my position was then only that of I myself holding a potential responsibility. But with the death of Shoghi Effendi, He no longer being the center upon earth of infallibility, I became the acting President of the International Council in my own right as President of this body, thus I came into active command of the council. Therefore I am now but assuming the powers that came to me automatically upon the death of Shoghi Effendi and that have been mine exclusively of all others upon earth since the death of the First Guardian of the Faith.

This is the authority I am now exercising when I refuse to recognize any interference from anyone in the affairs of the International Council. This means from any one at all, person or persons.

The Hands of the Faith can only function as protectors of the Faith when they are serving under the direction following the commands of the infallible Guardian of the Faith. They have no authority vested in themselves as Hands of the Faith to act in their own capacity nor in any other capacity, save under the direction of the living Guardian of the Faith.

The Beloved Guardian chose me to be the President of the Bahá'í International Council that is according to his explanation the President of the Embrionic Universal House of Justice. Therefore I am the President of the Embrionic Universal House of Justice. When this August body becomes the Universal House of Justice, if such being during my lifetime, I will then be the President of the First Universal House of Justice of the Bahá'í Dispensation.

Therefore, inasmuch as The Beloved Guardian in His Infallibility has thus placed me in command of the Faith to protect and to guard the Faith, I can do nothing but assume my place that he has given me with all of the responsibilities, the perquisites and emoluments that go with this position, therefore by his infallible orders I now alone after him command the cause and guard its integrity.

The delay until now of my calling the attention of the believers to the provisions for the protection and the guarding of the cause, made some years ago by our Beloved Guardian when He appointed me to be the President of the Bahá'í International Council, has given the Hands of the Faith and the believers of the Faith ample time to discover for themselves, had that been possible for them to have discovered my unique position in the Faith. But until now no one, other than I has discovered that such authority was vested in me by Our Beloved Guardian. To the moment of my sending out into the Bahá'í world of this proclamation, I have taken no one into this confidence — I have stood single and alone in all the world guarding the Faith. That I was to occupy this August position in The Bahá'í Faith that The Beloved Guardian has chosen me to occupy, I have definitely known for the past twelve years more or less, without ever mentioning it to anyone until very recently when privately and in secret, I made this declaration to the Hands of the Faith in the Holy Land. In this proclamation statement to you I am now declaring my position of command in the cause to the Believers here in America, "The Cradle of the Administration of The Bahá'í Faith," and through this convention to all the Bahá'í World.

In this time of confusion of thought and purpose that so threatens the Bahá'í world, now is the propitious moment for me to make the announcement that I do in this writ. I cannot delay any longer. All these plans of the Hands of the Faith for 1963 that are so absorbing and confusing to the people of the Faith must be dropped and stopped immediately. I am the only one who can command this situation so I have arisen to do so for I alone in all this world have been given the authority and the power to accomplish this.

Be it understood. I of myself make no claims for myself. I am but telling and reminding the Hands of the Faith and the Bahá'ís of all the world of the responsibilities that The Beloved Guardian placed upon me as President of the Bahá'í International Council.

It is well known throughout the Bahá'í world and accepted by all Bahá'ís that the protection of the Faith and the propagation of the Faith are special and particular functions of the Hands of the Faith, they working and serving under the direction of the Guardian of the Faith. It is from and through the Guardianship that infallibility is vested and that the Hands of the Faith receive their orders.

The Program for 1960 as announced by the Hands of the Faith in their message to the Bahá'í world of November 4, 1959 signed by twenty two of the Hands, as well as the same program announced in their former messages, so flagrantly violate and puts to naught the Will and Testament, the Guardianship, and the Administration of the Faith that the Beloved Guardian so laboriously and painstakingly built up during his long ministry, that I can no longer condone such actions upon the part of the Hands of the Faith.. I have remained silent now for over two years hoping that they would give up this destructive propagandizing but all to no effect so now it is necessary that I call a halt upon their activities.

I now command the Hands of the Faith to stop all of their preparations for 1963 and furthermore I command all believers both as individual Bahá'ís and as assemblies of Bahá'ís to immediately cease cooperating with and giving support to this fallacious program for 1963.

I have delayed as long as I dare delay before issuing this command to the Bahá'í world—I, hoping that the Hands of the Faith would see for themselves that the will and testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá was being violated and that they would of themselves abandon their stand. I, standing single and alone against the entire Bahá'í world but confirmed and steadfast in my assurance of ultimately saving the cause from this calamity. My assurance is based upon the authority that The Beloved Guardian gave me as President of the Council, the authority enabling me to act and assume command of the Bahá'ís that came to me at His death.

It is meet right and timely that I should make this announcement in this convention of Bahá'ís of America which land the Beloved Guardian called the "Cradle of the Administration." I make this call here and now standing single and alone before you but fully confident of your support and cooperation in all Bahá'í matters for you understand the Administration of the Faith and that I guard it from all violation and harm. Because the Beloved Guardian called America the Cradle of the Bahá'í Administration, the American Bahá'ís have a very special and particular responsibility to which I am calling them now at this particular time.

I expect the friends in this convention to consider with prayer and with thought this declaration addressed to them, that is a declaration to the entire Bahá'í world. I expect them to accept me without question as their Commander-in-Chief in all Bahá'í matters and to follow me so long as I live for I am the Guardian of the Faith—the Infallible Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith.

The line of the Guardianship of the Bahá'í Faith is unbroken for I have been the Guardian of the Faith since the death of the Beloved Guardian Shoghi Effendi.

At their earliest convenience the National Assembly of the United States should communicate with me so that I can arrange to receive them. Since they are the first amongst the National Assemblies to be called into spiritual action by me their responsibilities are very great for I am calling this American National Assembly first from all other National Assemblies of the world to support me in my command of the Bahá'í Cause.

Dearly Beloved Friends, seated in convention in the land of the Cradle of the Administration of the Faith, this is all that I have to tell you now at this time.

With much love to you.

Faithfully In El Abhá,

MASON R.,

GUARDIAN OF THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH

CHARLES MASON REMEY

THE 2nd GUARDIAN

OF THE FAITH

APPOINTED

DONALD A. HARVEY

AS

HIS SUCCESSOR

IN HIS OPEN LETTER

OF

23 May, 1967

**The Will and Testament of Charles Mason Remey
The Second Guardian of the Baha'i Faith
Appointing his successor**

In the Most Holy Name Al Baha

I, the second Guardian of the Baha'i Faith hereby appoint Donald Harvey at my death to be my successor, the third Guardian of the Faith.

Signed

Mason Remey
May 23 1967
Florence, Italy

P.S. May the Spirit of El Abha ever protect this line of Spiritual descent from 'Abdu'l-Baha Center of Covenant of El Baha.
C.M.R.



DONALD A. HARVEY

THE 3nd GUARDIAN

OF THE FAITH

APPOINTED

JACQUES SOGHOMONIAN

AS

HIS SUCCESSOR

IN HIS OPEN LETTER

OF

17 NOVEMBER, 1984

The Will and Testament of Donald A. Harvey

The Third Guardian of the Baha'i Faith

To all the Believers, Servants and Handmaids of the Universal Faith and Revelation of Baha'u'llah:

By this writ in my own handwriting I, Donald Alphonse Harvey, presently residing at 5, rue Lavasier, 75008 Paris, France and presently being the Third Guardian of the Universal Faith and Revelation of Baha'u'llah until my soul is called from this earth, do appoint and designate Mr. Jacques SOGHOMONIAN, presently residing at 27, place Sebastopol, 13004 Marseille, France, as his successor as Fourth Guardian of the Universal Faith and Revelation of Baha'u'llah. This writ is thus being made by virtue of the Explicit Text of the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Baha', in compliance with all prescription found in it.

Rougemont, near Montbard, Co'te d'or, in France,
this day of Saturday, November 17, year 1984 AD,

Signed Donald A. Harvey
Third Guardian

JACQUES SOGHOMONIAN

THE 4Th GUARDIAN

OF THE BAHA'I FAITH

APPOINTED

E. S, YAZDANI

AS

HIS SUCCESSOR

IN HIS OPEN LETTER

OF

FEBRUARY 10th, 2005

To all the believers, faithful to the Will and the Covenant of Baha'u'llah and 'Abdu'l-Baha

On this day, February the tenth 2005, after thinking a lot for the good Cause of the Baha'i Faith, I have taken the following decisions:

According to the powers I was confirmed on as the Fourth Guardian and faithful to the Covenant of Baha'u'llah and 'Abdu'l-Baha, on account of my health problem, I had nominated Kamran Taimouri as my successor as far as the carrying on of the Guardianship was concerned. That was done on November 25th 2003. Today February 10th 2005, I definitely nominate Kamran Taimouri as the Hands of the Cause of God to comfort the structure of the Faith in the USA. I do hope Kamran Taimouri will accept my decision.*

Concerning the USA, I nominate Brent Reed, Amy Krueger and Brent Mathieu as the Hands of the Cause of God.

Mrs. Jean Miller [is appointed] as the coordinator for carrying on [the progress] and growth of the Faith [in USA].

In faithfulness to the Covenant in its spirit and its letters, do not forget the obedience to the Covenant and the truth that goes with it. This obedience is the main rule for all the Faithful and it will give you Baha'u'llah's assistance.

Last but not least with my intense prayer, here is my supreme and final willingness: I indisputably name as my successor Mr. Enayatollah Sarvestani YAZDANI [living at] 2c Hampden Road Pennant Hill, NSW, Australia. He will be the 5th Guardian after my death.

As the number of the believers is increasing all over the world, we must set up the Guardianship Funds in accordance with the Covenant. More information will be given in the following letters.

With all my affection and my prayers to all of you,

Faithfully in Al-Abha
Sincerely yours

Signed**

Jacques Soghomonian

*Mr. Kamran Taimouri has accepted the decision of the Guardian and he has confirmed it in his letter of February 28, 2005 in which original certified copy was sent to E.S. Yazdani and the same was published in "The Friends" of March 2005 edition.

**Mr. Jacques Soghomonian has signed the original text of his will in which it was written, in French, entirely in his own hand writing and the translated of the same text in English. The signature of Mr. Jacques Soghomonian on both documents was certified/witnessed/sealed at Me GERAUDIE, notaire associe at Marseille (20) 3, Rue de la Republique. The French text consists of two pages in Mr. J. Soghomonian hand writing. The English translation of the same text was translated and written by L. S. The English text consists of two pages as well. The original texts were received by E.S. Yazdani on January 5, 2007

STATEMENT BY
E.S. YAZDANI
26 April, 2009

I, E. S. Yazdani, currently residing at 1385 Old Northern Road, Middle Dural, 2158, Australia, state that, Mr. J. Soghomonian is the present 4th guardian of the Baha'i Faith and he remains the guardian of the Baha'i Faith until his soul is called from this physical plane to the next by the All Mighty God. He was appointed to the position of the 4th guardian of the Baha'i Faith by his predecessor; Mr. D. A. Harvey the 3rd guardian of the Baha'i Faith.

It is the duty of all the believers, including his appointed successor, to obey the Guardian of the Faith Mr. J. Soghomonian, in accordance with the provision of the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Baha.

It must be stated that it is my great honour to serve the present guardian of the Faith. It is my dignity to obey his order. It is my adoration and adulation to take his direction. I am nothing in his presence. My greatness is to be humble before him. My God protect him and I wish him a very long life in this world.

May God assist me to remain faithful in His Covenant.

May God protect the Cause of Baha'u'llah from the violators of His Covenant.

E.S. Yazdani
Sydney, Australia
26 April, 2009

PS: This statement was published in the last April, 2009 issue of RIDVAN and it is republished again to stress that the unity of the Faith is guarded by obeying the present Guardian of the Faith Mr. Jacques Soghomonian. He is the present Guardian of the Faith. Signed by E.S. Yazdani

The ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER OF THE DISPENSATION OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

By
Shoghi Effendi

Dearly-beloved brethren in 'Abdu'l-Bahá! With the ascension of Baha'u'llah the Day-Star of Divine guidance which, as foretold by Shaykh Ahmad and Siyyid Kázim, had risen in Shiraz, and, while pursuing its westward course, had mounted its zenith in Adrianople, had finally sunk below the horizon of 'Akká, never to rise again ere the complete revolution of one thousand years. The setting of so effulgent an Orb brought to a definite termination the period of Divine Revelation—the initial and most vitalizing stage in the Baha'i era. Inaugurated by the Báb, culminating in Baha'u'llah, anticipated and extolled by the entire company of the Prophets of this great prophetic cycle, this period has, except for the short interval between the Báb's martyrdom and Baha'u'llah's shaking experiences in the Síyáh Chal of Tihrán, been characterized by almost fifty years of continuous and progressive Revelation—a period which by its duration and fecundity must be regarded as unparalleled in the entire field of the world's spiritual history.

The passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, on the other hand, marks the closing of the Heroic and Apostolic Age of this same Dispensation—that primitive period of our Faith the splendors of which can never be rivalled, much less be eclipsed, by the magnificence that must needs distinguish the future victories of Baha'u'llah's Revelation. For neither the achievements of the champion-builders of the present-day institutions of the Faith of Baha'u'llah, nor the tumultuous triumphs which the heroes of its Golden Age will in the coming days succeed in winning, can measure with, or be included within the same category as, the wondrous works associated with the names of those who have generated its very life and laid its pristine

foundations. That first and creative age of the Baha'i era must, by its very nature, stand above and apart from the formative period into which we have entered and the golden age destined to succeed it.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, Who incarnates an institution for which we can find no parallel whatsoever in any of the world's recognized religious systems, may be said to have closed the Age to which He Himself belonged and opened the one in which we are now laboring. His Will and Testament should thus be regarded as the perpetual, the indissoluble link which the mind of Him Who is the Mystery of God has conceived in order to insure the continuity of the three ages that constitute the component parts of the Baha'i Dispensation. The period in which the seed of the Faith had been slowly germinating is thus intertwined both with the one which must witness its efflorescence and the subsequent age in which that seed will have finally yielded its golden fruit.

The creative energies released by the Law of Baha'u'llah, permeating and evolving within the mind of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, have, by their very impact and close interaction, given birth to an Instrument which may be viewed as the Charter of the New World Order which is at once the glory and the promise of this most great Dispensation. The Will may thus be acclaimed as the inevitable offspring resulting from that mystic intercourse between Him Who communicated the generating influence of His divine Purpose and the One Who was its vehicle and chosen recipient. Being the Child of the Covenant—the Heir of both the Originator and the Interpreter of the Law of God—the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá can no more be divorced from Him Who supplied the original and motivating impulse than from the One Who ultimately

conceived it. Baha'u'llah's inscrutable purpose, we must ever bear in mind, has been so thoroughly infused into the conduct of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and their motives have been so closely wedded together, that the mere attempt to dissociate the teachings of the former from any system which the ideal Exemplar of those same teachings has established would amount to a repudiation of one of the most sacred and basic truths of the Faith.

The Administrative Order, which ever since 'Abdu'l-Bahá's ascension has evolved and is taking shape under our very eyes in no fewer than forty countries of the world, may be considered as the framework of the Will itself, the inviolable stronghold wherein this new-born child is being nurtured and developed. This Administrative Order, as it expands and consolidates itself, will no doubt manifest the potentialities and reveal the full implications of this momentous Document—this most remarkable expression of the Will of One of the most remarkable Figures of the Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh. It will, as its component parts, its organic institutions, begin to function with efficiency and vigor, assert its claim and demonstrate its capacity to be regarded not only as the nucleus but the very pattern of the New World Order destined to embrace in the fullness of time the whole of mankind.

It should be noted in this connection that this Administrative Order is fundamentally different from anything that any Prophet has previously established, inasmuch as Bahá'u'lláh has Himself revealed its principles, established its institutions, appointed the person to interpret His Word and conferred the necessary authority on the body designed to supplement and apply His legislative ordinances. Therein lies the secret of its strength, its fundamental distinction, and the guarantee against disintegration and schism. Nowhere in the sacred scriptures of any of the world's religious systems, nor even in the writings of the Inaugurator of the Bábí Dispensation, do we find any provisions establishing a covenant or providing for an administrative order that can compare in scope and

authority with those that lie at the very basis of the Bahá'í Dispensation. Has either Christianity or Islám, to take as an instance two of the most widely diffused and outstanding among the world's recognized religions, anything to offer that can measure with, or be regarded as equivalent to, either the Book of Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant or to the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá? Does the text of either the Gospel or the Qur'án confer sufficient authority upon those leaders and councils that have claimed the right and assumed the function of interpreting the provisions of their sacred scriptures and of administering the affairs of their respective communities? Could Peter, the admitted chief of the Apostles, or the Imam 'Alí, the cousin and legitimate successor of the Prophet, produce in support of the primacy with which both had been invested written and explicit affirmations from Christ and Muhammad that could have silenced those who either among their contemporaries or in a later age have repudiated their authority and, by their action, precipitated the schisms that persist until the present day? Where, we may confidently ask, in the recorded sayings of Jesus Christ, whether in the matter of succession or in the provision of a set of specific laws and clearly defined administrative ordinances, as distinguished from purely spiritual principles, can we find anything approaching the detailed injunctions, laws and warnings that abound in the authenticated utterances of both Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá? Can any passage of the Qur'án, which in respect to its legal code, its administrative and devotional ordinances marks already a notable advance over previous and more corrupted Revelations, be construed as placing upon an unassailable basis the undoubted authority with which Muhammad had, verbally and on several occasions, invested His successor? Can the Author of the Bábí Dispensation, however much He may have succeeded through the provisions of the Persian Bayán in averting a schism as permanent and catastrophic as those that afflicted Christianity and Islám—can He be said to have produced instruments for the safeguarding of His Faith as definite and

efficacious as those which must for all time preserve the unity of the organized followers of the Faith of Baha'u'llah?

Alone of all the Revelations gone before it this Faith has, through the explicit directions, the repeated warnings, the authenticated safeguards incorporated and elaborated in its teachings, succeeded in raising a structure which the bewildered followers of bankrupt and broken creeds might well approach and critically examine, and seek, ere it is too late, the invulnerable security of its world-embracing shelter.

No wonder that He Who through the operation of His Will has inaugurated so vast and unique an Order and Who is the Center of so mighty a Covenant should have written these words: ***"So firm and mighty is this Covenant that from the beginning of time until the present day no religious Dispensation hath produced its like. "Whatsoever is latent in the innermost of this holy cycle,"*** He wrote during the darkest and most dangerous days of His ministry, ***"shall gradually appear and be made manifest, for now is but the beginning of its growth and the day-spring of the revelation of its signs."*** ***"Fear not,"*** are His reassuring words foreshadowing the rise of the Administrative Order established by His Will, ***"fear not if this Branch be severed from this material world and cast aside its leaves; nay, the leaves thereof shall flourish, for this Branch will grow after it is cut off from this world below, it shall reach the loftiest pinnacles of glory, and it shall bear such fruits as will perfume the world with their fragrance."***

To what else if not to the power and majesty which this Administrative Order—the rudiments of the future all-enfolding Baha'i Commonwealth—is destined to manifest, can these utterances of Baha'u'llah allude: ***"The world's equilibrium hath been upset through the vibrating influence of this most great, this new World Order. Mankind's ordered life hath been revolutionized through the agency of this unique, this wondrous System—the like of which mortal eyes have never witnessed."***

The Báb Himself, in the course of His references to ***"Him Whom God will make manifest"*** anticipates the System and glorifies the World Order which the Revelation of Baha'u'llah is destined to unfold. "Well is it with him," is His remarkable statement in the third chapter of the Persian Bayán, ***"who fixeth his gaze upon the Order of Baha'u'llah and rendereth thanks unto his Lord! For He will assuredly be made manifest. God hath indeed irrevocably ordained it in the Bayán."***

In the Tablets of Baha'u'llah where the institutions of the International and Local Houses of Justice are specifically designated and formally established; in the institution of the Hands of the Cause of God which first Baha'u'llah and then 'Abdu'l-Bahá brought into being; in the institution of both local and national Assemblies which in their embryonic stage were already functioning in the days preceding 'Abdu'l-Bahá's ascension; in the authority with which the Author of our Faith and the Center of His Covenant have in their Tablets chosen to confer upon them; in the institution of the Local Fund which operated according to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's specific injunctions addressed to certain Assemblies in Persia; in the verses of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas the implications of which clearly anticipate the institution of the Guardianship; in the explanation which 'Abdu'l-Bahá, in one of His Tablets, has given to, and the emphasis He has placed upon, the hereditary principle and the law of primogeniture as having been upheld by the Prophets of the past—in these we can discern the faint glimmerings and discover the earliest intimation of the nature and working of the Administrative Order which the Will of 'Abdu'l-Bahá was at a later time destined to proclaim and formally establish.

An attempt, I feel, should at the present juncture be made to explain the character and functions of the twin pillars that support this mighty Administrative Structure—the institutions of the Guardianship and of the Universal House of Justice. To describe in their entirety the diverse elements that

function in conjunction with these institutions is beyond the scope and purpose of this general exposition of the fundamental verities of the Faith. To define with accuracy and minuteness the features, and to analyze exhaustively the nature of the relationships which, on the one hand, bind together these two fundamental organs of the Will of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and connect, on the other, each of them to the Author of the Faith and the Center of His Covenant is a task which future generations will no doubt adequately fulfill. My present intention is to elaborate certain salient features of this scheme which, however close we may stand to its colossal structure, are already so clearly defined that we find it inexcusable to either misconceive or ignore.

It should be stated, at the very outset, in clear and unambiguous language, that these twin institutions of the Administrative Order of Baha'u'llah should be regarded as divine in origin, essential in their functions and complementary in their aim and purpose. Their common, their fundamental object is to insure the continuity of that divinely-appointed authority which flows from the Source of our Faith, to safeguard the unity of its followers and to maintain the integrity and flexibility of its teachings. Acting in conjunction with each other these two inseparable institutions administer its affairs, coordinate its activities, promote its interests, execute its laws and defend its subsidiary institutions. Severally, each operates within a clearly defined sphere of jurisdiction; each is equipped with its own attendant institutions— instruments designed for the effective discharge of its particular responsibilities and duties. Each exercises, within the limitations imposed upon it, its powers, its authority, its rights and prerogatives. These are neither contradictory, nor detract in the slightest degree from the position which each of these institutions occupies. Far from being incompatible or mutually destructive, they supplement each other's authority and functions, and are permanently and fundamentally united in their aims.

Divorced from the institution of the

Guardianship the World Order of Baha'u'llah would be mutilated and permanently deprived of that hereditary principle which, as 'Abdu'l-Bahá has written, has been invariably upheld by the Law of God. **"In all the Divine Dispensations,"** He states, in a Tablet addressed to a follower of the Faith in Persia, **"the eldest son hath been given extraordinary distinctions. Even the station of prophethood hath been his birthright."** Without such an institution the integrity of the Faith would be imperilled, and the stability of the entire fabric would be gravely endangered. Its prestige would suffer, the means required to enable it to take a long, and uninterrupted view over a series of generations would be completely lacking, and the necessary guidance to define the sphere of the legislative action of its elected representatives would be totally withdrawn.

Severed from the no less essential institution of the Universal House of Justice this same System of the Will of 'Abdu'l-Bahá would be paralyzed in its action and would be powerless to fill in those gaps which the Author of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas has deliberately left in the body of His legislative and administrative ordinances.

"He is the Interpreter of the Word of God," 'Abdu'l-Bahá, referring to the functions of the Guardian of the Faith, asserts, using in His Will the very term which He Himself had chosen when refuting the argument of the Covenant breakers who had challenged His right to interpret the utterances of Baha'u'llah. **"After him,"** He adds, **"will succeed the first-born of his lineal descendants."** **"The mighty stronghold,"** He further explains, **"shall remain impregnable and safe through obedience to him who is the Guardian of the Cause of God."**

"It is incumbent upon the members of the House of Justice, upon all the Aghsán, the Afján, the Hands of the Cause of God, to show their obedience, submissiveness and subordination unto the Guardian of the Cause of God." **"It is incumbent upon the**

members of the House of Justice," Baha'u'llah, on the other hand, declares in the Eighth Leaf of the Exalted Paradise, *"To take counsel together regarding those things which have not outwardly been revealed in the Book, and to enforce that which is agreeable to them. God will verily inspire them with whatsoever He willeth, and He verily is the Provider, the Omniscient."* *"Unto the Most Holy Book"* (the Kitáb-i-Aqdas), 'Abdu'l-Bahá states in His Will, *"every one must turn, and all that is not expressly recorded therein must be referred to the Universal House of Justice. That which this body, whether unanimously or by a majority doth carry, that is verily the truth and the purpose of God Himself. Whoso doth deviate therefrom is verily of them that love discord, hath shown forth malice, and turned away from the Lord of the Covenant."*

Not only does 'Abdu'l-Bahá confirm in His Will Baha'u'llah's above quoted statement, but invests this body with the additional right and power to abrogate, according to the exigencies of time, its own enactments, as well as those of a preceding House of Justice. *"Inasmuch as the House of Justice,"* is His explicit statement in His Will, *"hath power to enact laws that are not expressly recorded in the Book and bear upon daily transactions, so also it hath power to repeal the same . . . This it can do because these laws form no part of the divine explicit text."*

Referring to both the Guardian and the Universal House of Justice we read these emphatic words: *"The sacred and youthful branch, the Guardian of the Cause of God, as well as the Universal House of Justice to be universally elected and established, are both under the care and protection of the Abhá Beauty, under the shelter and unerring guidance of the Exalted One (the Báb) (may my life be offered up for them both). Whatsoever they decide is of God."*

From these statements it is made indubitably clear and evident that the Guardian of the Faith has been made the Interpreter of the

Word and that the Universal House of Justice has been invested with the function of legislating on matters not expressly revealed in the teachings. The interpretation of the Guardian, functioning within his own sphere, is as authoritative and binding as the enactments of the International House of Justice, whose exclusive right and prerogative is to pronounce upon and deliver the final judgment on such laws and ordinances as Baha'u'llah has not expressly revealed. Neither can, nor will ever, infringe upon the sacred and prescribed domain of the other. Neither will seek to curtail the specific and undoubted authority with which both have been divinely invested.

Though the Guardian of the Faith has been made the permanent head of so august a body he can never, even temporarily, assume the right of exclusive legislation. He cannot override the decision of the majority of his fellow-members, but is bound to insist upon a reconsideration by them of any enactment he conscientiously believes to conflict with the meaning and to depart from the spirit of Baha'u'llah's revealed utterances. He interprets what has been specifically revealed, and cannot legislate except in his capacity as member of the Universal House of Justice. He is debarred from laying down independently the constitution that must govern the organized activities of his fellow-members, and from exercising his influence in a manner that would encroach upon the liberty of those whose sacred right is to elect the body of his collaborators.

It should be borne in mind that the institution of the Guardianship has been anticipated by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in an allusion He made in a Tablet addressed, long before His own ascension, to three of His friends in Persia. To their question as to whether there would be any person to whom all the Baha'is would be called upon to turn after His ascension He made the following reply: *"As to the question ye have asked me, know verily that this is a well-guarded secret. It is even as a gem concealed within its shell. That it will be revealed is predestined. The time will come when its*

light will appear, when its evidences will be made manifest, and its secrets unraveled. "

Dearly-beloved friends ! Exalted as is the position and vital as is the function of the institution of the Guardianship in the Administrative Order of Baha'u'llah, and staggering as must be the weight of responsibility which it carries, its importance must, whatever be the language of the Will, be in no wise over-emphasized. The Guardian of the Faith must not under any circumstances, and whatever his merits or his achievements, be exalted to the rank that will make him a co-sharer with 'Abdu'l-Bahá in the unique position which the Center of the Covenant occupies—much less to the station exclusively ordained for the Manifestation of God. So grave a departure from the established tenets of our Faith is nothing short of open blasphemy. As I have already stated, in the course of my references to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's station, however great the gulf that separates Him from the Author of a Divine Revelation it can never measure with the distance that stands between Him Who is the Center of Baha'u'llah's Covenant and the Guardians who are its chosen ministers. There is a far, far greater distance separating the Guardian from the Center of the Covenant than there is between the Center of the Covenant and its

Author.

No Guardian of the Faith, I feel it my solemn duty to place on record, can ever claim to be the perfect exemplar of the teachings of Baha'u'llah or the stainless mirror that reflects His light. Though overshadowed by the unfailing, the unerring protection of Baha'u'llah and of the Báb, and however much he may share with 'Abdu'l-Bahá the right and obligation to interpret the Baha'i teachings, he remains essentially human and cannot, if he wishes to remain faithful to his trust, arrogate to himself, under any pretence whatsoever, the rights, the privileges and prerogatives which Baha'u'llah has chosen to confer upon His Son. In the light of this truth to pray to the Guardian of the Faith, to address him as lord and master, to designate him as his holiness, to seek his benediction, to celebrate his

birthday, or to commemorate any event associated with his life would be tantamount to a departure from those established truths that are enshrined within our beloved Faith. The fact that the Guardian has been specifically endowed with such power as he may need to reveal the purport and disclose the implications of the utterances of Baha'u'llah and of 'Abdu'l-Bahá does not necessarily confer upon him a station co-equal with those Whose words he is called upon to interpret. He can exercise that right and discharge this obligation and yet remain infinitely inferior to both of them in rank and different in nature.

To the integrity of this cardinal principle of our Faith the words, the deeds of its present and future Guardians must abundantly testify. By their conduct and example they must needs establish its truth upon an unassailable foundation and transmit to future generations unimpeachable evidences of its reality. For my own part to hesitate in recognizing so vital a truth or to vacillate in proclaiming so firm a conviction must constitute a shameless betrayal of the confidence reposed in me by 'Abdu'l-Bahá and an unpardonable usurpation of the authority with which He Himself has been invested.

A word should now be said regarding the theory on which this Administrative Order is based and the principle that must govern the operation of its chief institutions. It would be utterly misleading to attempt a comparison between this unique, this divinely-conceived Order and any of the diverse systems which the minds of men, at various periods of their history, have contrived for the government of human institutions. Such an attempt would in itself betray a lack of complete appreciation of the excellence of the handiwork of its great Author. How could it be otherwise when we remember that this Order constitutes the very pattern of that divine civilization which the almighty Law of Baha'u'llah is designed to establish upon earth? The divers and ever-shifting systems of human polity, whether past or present, whether originating in the East or in the West, offer no adequate

criterion wherewith to estimate the potency of its hidden virtues or to appraise the solidity of its foundations.

The Bahá'í Commonwealth of the future, of which this vast Administrative Order is the sole framework, is, both in theory and practice, not only unique in the entire history of political institutions, but can find no parallel in the annals of any of the world's recognized religious systems. No form of democratic government; no system of autocracy or of dictatorship, whether monarchical or republican; no intermediary scheme of a purely aristocratic order; nor even any of the recognized types of theocracy, whether it be the Hebrew Commonwealth, or the various Christian ecclesiastical organizations, or the Imamate or the Caliphate in Islám—none of these can be identified or be said to conform with the Administrative Order which the master-hand of its perfect Architect has fashioned.

This new-born Administrative Order incorporates within its structure certain elements which are to be found in each of the three recognized forms of secular government, without being in any sense a mere replica of anyone of them, and without introducing within its machinery any of the objectionable features which they inherently possess. It blends and harmonizes, as no government fashioned by mortal hands has as yet accomplished, the salutary truths which each of these systems undoubtedly contains without vitiating the integrity of those God-given verities on which it is ultimately founded.

The Administrative Order of the Faith of Baha'u'llah must in no wise be regarded as purely democratic in character inasmuch as the basic assumption which requires all democracies to depend fundamentally upon getting their mandate from the people is altogether lacking in this Dispensation. In the conduct of the administrative affairs of the Faith, in the enactment of the legislation necessary to supplement the laws of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, the members of the Universal House of Justice, it should be borne in mind, are not, as Baha'u'llah's

utterances clearly imply, responsible to those whom they represent, nor are they allowed to be governed by the feelings, the general opinion, and even the convictions of the mass of the faithful, or of those who directly elect them. They are to follow, in a prayerful attitude, the dictates and promptings of their conscience. They may, indeed they must, acquaint themselves with the conditions prevailing among the community, must weigh dispassionately in their minds the merits of any case presented for their consideration, but must reserve for themselves the right of an unfettered decision. **"God will verily inspire them with whatsoever He willeth,"** is Baha'u'llah's incontrovertible assurance. They, and not the body of those who either directly or indirectly elect them, have thus been made the recipients of the divine guidance which is at once the life-blood and ultimate safeguard of this Revelation. Moreover, he who symbolizes the hereditary principle in this Dispensation has been made the interpreter of the words of its Author, and ceases consequently, by virtue of the actual authority vested in him, to be the figurehead invariably associated with the prevailing systems of constitutional monarchies.

Nor can the Bahá'í Administrative Order be dismissed as a hard and rigid system of unmitigated autocracy or as an idle imitation of any form of absolutistic ecclesiastical government, whether it be the Papacy, the Imamate or any other similar institution, for the obvious reason that upon the international elected representatives of the followers of Baha'u'llah has been conferred the exclusive right of legislating on matters not expressly revealed in the Baha'i writings. Neither the Guardian of the Faith nor any institution apart from the International House of Justice can ever usurp this vital and essential power or encroach upon that sacred right. The abolition of professional priesthood with its accompanying sacraments of baptism, of communion and of confession of sins, the laws requiring the election by universal suffrage of all local, national, and international Houses of Justice, the total absence of episcopal authority with its

attendant privileges, corruptions and bureaucratic tendencies, are further evidences of the non autocratic character of the Baha'i Administrative Order and of its inclination to democratic methods in the administration of its affairs.

Nor is this Order identified with the name of Baha'u'llah to be confused with any system of purely aristocratic government in view of the fact that it upholds, on the one hand, the hereditary principle and entrusts the Guardian of the Faith with the obligation of interpreting its teachings, and provides, on the other, for the free and direct election from among the mass of the faithful of the body that constitutes its highest legislative organ.

Whereas this Administrative Order cannot be said to have been modeled after any of these recognized systems of government, it nevertheless embodies, reconciles and assimilates within its framework such wholesome elements as are to be found in each one of them. The hereditary authority which the Guardian is called upon to exercise, the vital and essential functions which the Universal House of Justice discharges, the specific provisions requiring its democratic election by the representatives of the faithful—these combine to demonstrate the truth that this divinely revealed Order, which can never be identified with any of the standard types of government referred to by Aristotle in his works, embodies and blends with the spiritual verities on which it is based the beneficent elements which are to be found in each one of them. The admitted evils inherent in each of these systems being rigidly and permanently excluded, this unique Order, how ever long it may endure and however extensive its ramifications, cannot ever degenerate into any form of despotism, of oligarchy, or of demagoguery which must sooner or later corrupt the machinery of all man-made and essentially defective political institutions.

Dearly-beloved friends! Significant as are the origins of this mighty administrative structure, and however unique its features,

the happenings that may be said to have heralded its birth and signalized the initial stage of its evolution seem no less remarkable. How striking, how edifying the contrast between the process of slow and steady consolidation that characterizes the growth of its infant strength and the devastating onrush of the forces of disintegration that are assailing the outworn institutions, both religious and secular, of present-day society!

The vitality which the organic institutions of this great, this ever expanding Order so strongly exhibit; the obstacles which the high courage, the undaunted resolution of its administrators have already surmounted; the fire of an unquenchable enthusiasm that glows with undiminished fervor in the hearts of its itinerant teachers; the heights of self-sacrifice which its champion-builders are now attaining; the breadth of vision, the confident hope, the creative joy, the inward peace, the uncompromising integrity, the exemplary discipline, the unyielding unity and solidarity which its stalwart defenders manifest; the degree to which its moving Spirit has shown itself capable of assimilating the diversified elements within its pale, of cleansing them of all forms of prejudice and of fusing them with its own structure—these are evidences of a power which a disillusioned and sadly shaken society can ill afford to ignore.

Compare these splendid manifestations of the spirit animating this vibrant body of the Faith of Baha'u'llah with the cries and agony, the follies and vanities, the bitterness and prejudices, the wickedness and divisions of an ailing and chaotic world. Witness the fear that torments its leaders and paralyzes the action of its blind and bewildered statesmen. How fierce the hatreds, how false the ambitions, how petty the pursuits, how deep-rooted the suspicions of its peoples! How disquieting the lawlessness, the corruption, the unbelief that are eating into the vitals of a tottering civilization!

Might not this process of steady deterioration which is insidiously invading so many departments of human activity and

thought be regarded as a necessary accompaniment to the rise of this almighty Arm of Baha'u'llah? Might we not look upon the momentous happenings which, in the course of the past twenty years, have so deeply agitated every continent of the earth, as ominous signs simultaneously proclaiming the agonies of a disintegrating civilization and the birth pangs of that World Order—that Ark of human salvation—that must needs arise upon its ruins? The catastrophic fall of mighty monarchies and empires in the European continent, allusions to some of which may be found in the prophecies of Baha'u'llah; the decline that has set in, and is still continuing, in the fortunes of the Shí'ah hierarchy in His own native land; the fall of the Qájár dynasty, the traditional enemy of His Faith; the overthrow of the Sultanate and the Caliphate, the sustaining pillars of Sunní Islám, to which the destruction of Jerusalem in the latter part of the first century of the Christian era offers a striking parallel; the wave of secularization which is invading the Muhammadan ecclesiastical institutions in Egypt and sapping the loyalty of its staunchest supporters; the humiliating blows that have afflicted some of the most powerful Churches of Christendom in Russia, in Western Europe and Central America; the dissemination of those subversive doctrines that are undermining the foundations and overthrowing the structure of seemingly impregnable strongholds in the political and social spheres of human activity; the signs of an impending catastrophe, strangely reminiscent of the Fall of the Roman Empire in the West, which threatens to engulf the whole structure of present-day civilization—all witness to the tumult which the birth of this mighty Organ of the Religion of Baha'u'llah has cast into the world — a tumult which will grow in scope and in intensity as the implications of this constantly evolving Scheme are more fully understood and its ramifications more widely extended over the surface of the globe.

A word more in conclusion. The rise and establishment of this Administrative Order—

the shell that shields and enshrines so precious a gem — constitutes the hall-mark of this second and formative age of the Baha'i era. It will come to be regarded, as it recedes farther and farther from our eyes, as the chief agency empowered to usher in the concluding phase, the consummation of this glorious Dispensation.

Let no one, while this System is still in its infancy, misconceive its character, belittle its significance or misrepresent its purpose. The bedrock on which this Administrative Order is founded is God's immutable Purpose for mankind in this day. The Source from which it derives its inspiration is no one less than Baha'u'llah Himself . Its shield and defender are the embattled hosts of the Abhá Kingdom. Its seed is the blood of no less than twenty thousand martyrs who have offered up their lives that it may be born and flourish. The axis round which its institutions revolve are the authentic provisions of the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Its guiding principles are the truths which He Who is the unerring Interpreter of the teachings of our Faith has so clearly enunciated in His public addresses throughout the West. The laws that govern its operation and limit its functions are those which have been expressly ordained in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. The seat round which its spiritual, its humanitarian and administrative activities will cluster are the Mashriqu'l-Adhikár and its Dependencies. The pillars that sustain its authority and buttress its structure are the twin institutions of the Guardianship and of the Universal House of Justice. The central, the underlying aim which animates it is the establishment of the New World Order as adumbrated by Baha'u'llah. The methods it employs, the standard it inculcates, incline it to neither East nor West, neither Jew nor Gentile, neither rich nor poor, neither white nor colored. Its watchword is the unification of the human race; its standard the **"Most Great Peace"**; its consummation the advent of that golden millennium—the Day when the kingdoms of this world shall have become the Kingdom of God Himself, the Kingdom of Baha'u'llah.

SHOGHI

Haifa, Palestine, February 8, 1934

بیانیه

مومنین بحضرت بهاءالله کلا ملاحظه فرمائید

بعد از صعود شوقی افندی اولین ولی امر دیانت بهائی در نوامبر 1957 میلادی اعضای موسسه ایادی امرالله برهبری روحیه خانم علم مخالفت بر علیه آقای چالزمیسین ریمی رئیس جنین بیت العدل اعظم الهی یعنی وصی منتصب شوقی افندی و دومین ولی امر دیانت بهایی برافراشتند. وبا برنامه حساب شده ای ایشان را از میدان بدرکردند و طبق نوشته شخص روحیه خانم بدون هیچ مجوزی و سندی برکرسی شوقی افندی تکیه زدند و برای خود اختیاراتی قائل شدند. برای فریب دادن عموم در سال 1963 میلادی اقدام بتشکیل مؤسسه کاذبی بنام بیت العدل اعظم الهی کردند. این مؤسسه طبق دستورات و آثار نظم اداری دیانت بهایی تشکیل نشده است. این مؤسسه باید رئیس داشته باشد. باید ولی امرالله رئیس لاینعزل این مؤسسه باشد. باید تکامل یافته جنین بیت العدل اعظم الهی که شوقی افندی در سال 1951 میلادی تشکیل داده بودند باشد و چون چنین نیست و مطابق دستورات الهی تشکیل نشده است پس بیت العدل اعظم الهی نبوده و نیست. از این رو فاقد هرگونه صلاحیت است.

در تائید این مطلب شوقی افندی در توقیع تموز 1925 میلادی در ارتباط با تشکیل چنین بیت العدل کاذبی توسط دشمنان داخلی دیانت بهائی ورد آن از طرف ایشان میفرمایند:

هر هیاتی که به نظام الهی و بر حسب تعلیمات و اصول و شرایط سماویه که در صحف الهیه مشروحا مثبت و مسطور است کاملاً کما ینبغی ویلیق لهذا المقام الرفیع و لمركز المنیع انتخاب و تشکیل نشود ان هیات از اعتبار اصلی و رتبه روحانی ساقط و از حق تشریع و وضع احکام و سنن و قوانین غیر منصوصه ممنوع و از شرف اسنی و قوه مطلقه علیا محروم.

[اشاره به بیت العدل اعظم الهی که تنها هیات قانون گذار بین المللی است]

انّ الذين نكثوا عهد الله في اوامره و نكصوا على اعقابهم اولئك
 من اهل الضلال لدى الغني المتعال
 يا ملأ الأرض اعلموا انّ اوامري سرج عنايتي بين عبادي و مفاتيح
 رحمتي لبريتي كذلك نزل الامر من سماء مشيئة ربكم مالک الاديان
 لو يجد احد حلاوة البيان الذي ظهر من فم مشيئة الرحمن لينفق ما
 عنده ولو يكون خزائن الارض كلّها ليثبت امراً من اوامره المشرقة
 من افق العناية و الالطاف قل من حدودي يمرّ عرف قميصي و بها
 تنصب اعلام النصر على القنن و الاتلال قد تكلم لسان قدرتي في
 جبروت عظمتي مخاطباً لبريتي ان اعملوا حدودي حباً لجمالي طوبى
 لحبيب وجد عرف المحبوب من هذه الكلمة التي فاحت منها
 نفحات الفضل على شأن لا توصف بالاذكار
 لعمرى من شرب رحيق الانصاف من ايدى الالطاف انه يطوف حول
 اوامري المشرقة من افق الابداع لا تحسبنّ انا نزلنا لكم الاحكام بل
 فتحنا ختم الرّحيق المختوم باصابع القدرة و الاقتدار يشهد بذلك
 ما نزل من قلم الوحي تفكّروا يا اولي الافكار