



[Home](#) ► [Shoghi Effendi](#)

The Promised Day Is Come

Author: Shoghi Effendi

Source: US Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1980 revised edition

Pages: 124

[Go to printed page](#)

[GO](#)

[Search](#)

[« Previous](#) | [Contents](#) | [Next »](#)

- ☒ **This Book**
- ☐ **All Books**

[Print Selection](#)

Pages 116-117

Authors

- Bahá'u'lláh
- The Báb
- 'Abdu'l-Bahá
- Shoghi Effendi
- Universal House of Justice
- Compilations
- Others

Titles

- [Listed by Author](#)
- [Listed Alphabetically](#)

Languages

- English
- فارسی
- عربي

Sites

- [The Bahá'ís](#)
- [Bahá'í World News Service](#)
- [Statement Library](#)
- [One Country](#)

God's Purpose

God's purpose is none other than to usher in, in ways He alone can bring about, and the full significance of which He alone can fathom, the Great, the Golden Age of a long-divided, a long-afflicted humanity. Its present state, indeed even its immediate future, is dark, distressingly dark. Its distant future, however, is radiant, gloriously radiant—so radiant that no eye can visualize it.

"The winds of despair," writes Bahá'u'lláh, as He surveys the immediate destinies of mankind, "are, alas, blowing from every direction, and the strife that divides and afflicts the human race is daily increasing. The signs of impending convulsions and chaos can now be discerned, inasmuch as the prevailing order appears to be lamentably defective." "Such shall be its plight," He, in another connection, has declared, "that to disclose it now would not be meet and seemly." "These fruitless strifes," He, on the other hand, contemplating the future of mankind, has emphatically prophesied, in the course of His memorable interview with the Persian orientalist, Edward G. Browne, "these ruinous wars shall pass away, and the 'Most Great Peace' shall come.... These strifes and this bloodshed and discord must cease, and all men be as one kindred and one family." "Soon," He predicts, "will the present-day order be rolled up, and a new one spread out in its stead." "After a time," He also has written, "all the governments on earth will change. Oppression will ¹¹⁷ envelop the world. And following a universal convulsion, the sun of justice will rise from the horizon of the unseen realm." "The whole earth," He, moreover, has stated, "is now in a state of pregnancy. The day is approaching when it will have yielded its noblest fruits, when from it will have sprung forth the loftiest trees, the most enchanting blossoms, the most heavenly blessings." "All nations and kindreds," 'Abdu'l-Bahá likewise has written, "...will become a single nation. Religious and sectarian antagonism, the hostility of races and peoples, and differences among nations, will be eliminated. All men will adhere to one religion, will have one common faith, will be blended into one race, and become a single people. All will dwell in one common fatherland, which is the planet itself."

What we witness at the present time, during “this gravest crisis in the history of civilization,” recalling such times in which “religions have perished and are born,” is the adolescent stage in the slow and painful evolution of humanity, preparatory to the attainment of the stage of manhood, the stage of maturity, the promise of which is embedded in the teachings, and enshrined in the prophecies, of Bahá'u'lláh. The tumult of this age of transition is characteristic of the impetuosity and irrational instincts of youth, its follies, its prodigality, its pride, its self-assurance, its rebelliousness, and contempt of discipline.

[« Previous](#) | [Contents](#) | [Next »](#)

[Contact Us](#) | [About This Site](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Privacy](#) | [Terms of Use](#)
Copyright 2003-8. [Bahá'í International Community](#). All Rights Reserved.



[Home](#) ► [Shoghi Effendi](#)

The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh

Author: Shoghi Effendi Source: US Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1991 first pocket-size edition Pages: 206

[Search](#)

Go to printed page GO

[« Previous](#) | [Contents](#) | [Next »](#)

- ☒ **This Book**
- ☐ **All Books**

Authors

- Bahá'u'lláh
- The Báb
- 'Abdu'l-Bahá
- Shoghi Effendi
- Universal House of Justice
- Compilations
- Others

Titles

- Listed by Author
- Listed Alphabetically

Languages

- English
- فارسی
- عربي

Sites

- The Bahá'ís
- Bahá'í World News Service
- Statement Library
- One Country

[Print Selection](#)

Pages 161-163

THE UNFOLDMENT OF WORLD CIVILIZATION

158 159 160

The Unfoldment of World Civilization

To the beloved of God and the handmaids of the Merciful throughout the West.
Friends and fellow-heirs of the grace of Bahá'u'lláh:

As your co-sharer in the building up of the New World Order which the mind of Bahá'u'lláh has visioned, and whose features the pen of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, its perfect Architect, has delineated, I pause to contemplate with you the scene which the revolution of well-nigh fifteen years after His passing unfolds before us.

The contrast between the accumulating evidences of steady consolidation that accompany the rise of the Administrative Order of the Faith of God, and the forces of disintegration which batter at the fabric of a travailing society, is as clear as it is arresting. Both within and outside the Bahá'í world the signs and tokens which, in a mysterious manner, are heralding the birth of that World Order, the establishment of which must signalize the Golden Age of the Cause of God, are growing and multiplying day by day. No fair-minded observer can any longer fail to discern them. He cannot be misled by the painful slowness characterizing the unfoldment of the civilization which the followers of Bahá'u'lláh are laboring to establish. Nor can he be deluded by the ephemeral manifestations of returning prosperity which at times appear to be capable of checking the disruptive influence of the chronic ills afflicting the institutions of a decaying age. The signs of the times are too numerous and compelling to allow him to mistake their character or to belittle their significance. He can, if he be fair in his judgment, recognize in the chain of events which proclaim on the one hand the irresistible march of the institutions directly associated with the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh and foreshadow on the other the downfall of those powers and principalities that have either ignored or opposed

it—he can recognize in them all evidences of the operation of God’s all-pervasive Will, the shaping of His perfectly ordered and world-embracing Plan.

“Soon,” Bahá’u’lláh’s own words proclaim it, “will the present day Order be rolled up, and a new one spread out in its stead. Verily, thy Lord speaketh the truth and is the Knower of things unseen.” “By Myself,” He solemnly asserts, “the day is approaching ¹⁶² when We will have rolled up the world and all that is therein, and spread out a new Order in its stead. He, verily, is powerful over all things.” “The world’s equilibrium,” He explains, “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 signs of impending convulsions and chaos,” He warns the peoples of the world, “can now be discerned, inasmuch as the prevailing Order appeareth to be lamentably defective.”

Dearly-beloved friends! This New World Order, whose promise is enshrined in the Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh, whose fundamental principles have been enunciated in the writings of the Center of His Covenant, involves no less than the complete unification of the entire human race. This unification should conform to such principles as would directly harmonize with the spirit that animates, and the laws that govern the operation of, the institutions that already constitute the structural basis of the Administrative Order of His Faith.

No machinery falling short of the standard inculcated by the Bahá’í Revelation, and at variance with the sublime pattern ordained in His teachings, which the collective efforts of mankind may yet devise can ever hope to achieve anything above or beyond that “Lesser Peace” to which the Author of our Faith has Himself alluded in His writings. “Now that ye have refused the Most Great Peace,” He, admonishing the kings and rulers of the earth, has written, “hold ye fast unto this the Lesser Peace, that haply ye may in some degree better your own condition and that of your dependents.” Expatiating on this Lesser Peace, He thus addresses in that same Tablet the rulers of the earth: “Be reconciled among yourselves, that ye may need no more armaments save in a measure to safeguard your territories and dominions... Be united, O kings of the earth, for thereby will the tempest of discord be stilled amongst you, and your peoples find rest, if ye be of them that comprehend. Should any one among you take up arms against another, rise ye all against him, for this is naught but manifest justice.”

The Most Great Peace, on the other hand, as conceived by Bahá’u’lláh—a peace that must inevitably follow as the practical consequence of the spiritualization of the world and the fusion of all its races, creeds, classes and nations—can rest on no other basis, and can be preserved through no other agency, except the divinely

¹⁶³ appointed ordinances that are implicit in the World Order that stands associated with His Holy Name. In His Tablet, revealed almost seventy years ago to Queen Victoria, Bahá’u’lláh, alluding to this Most Great Peace, has declared: “That which the Lord hath ordained as the sovereign remedy and mightiest instrument for

the healing of all the world is the union of all its peoples in one universal Cause, one common Faith. This can in no wise be achieved except through the power of a skilled, an all-powerful and inspired Physician. This, verily, is the truth, and all else naught but error... Consider these days in which the Ancient Beauty, He Who is the Most Great Name, hath been sent down to regenerate and unify mankind. Behold how with drawn swords they rose against Him, and committed that which caused the Faithful Spirit to tremble. And whenever We said unto them: 'Lo, the World Reformer is come,' they made reply: 'He, in truth, is one of the stirrers of mischief.'" "It beseemeth all men in this Day," He, in another Tablet, asserts, "to take firm hold on the Most Great Name, and to establish the unity of all mankind. There is no place to flee to, no refuge that any one can seek, except Him."

[« Previous](#) | [Contents](#) | [Next »](#)

[Contact Us](#) | [About This Site](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Privacy](#) | [Terms of Use](#)
Copyright 2003-8. [Bahá'í International Community](#). All Rights Reserved.



[Home](#) ► [Bahá'u'lláh](#)

Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh

Author: Bahá'u'lláh Source: US Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1978 reprint Pages: 122

[Go to printed page](#) [GO](#)

[Search](#)

[« Previous](#) | [Contents](#)

- ☒ **This Book**
- ☐ **All Books**

[Print Selection](#)

Pages 121-122

Authors

- Bahá'u'lláh
- The Báb
- 'Abdu'l-Bahá
- Shoghi Effendi
- Universal House of Justice
- Compilations
- Others

Titles

- Listed by Author
- Listed Alphabetically

Languages

- English
- فارسی
- عربي

Sites

- The Bahá'ís
- Bahá'í World News Service
- Statement Library
- One Country

“THIS IS THE DAY IN WHICH GOD’S MOST EXCELLENT FAVOURS...”

THIS is the Day in which God’s most excellent favours have been poured out upon men, the Day in which His most mighty grace hath been infused into all created things. It is incumbent upon all the peoples of the world to reconcile their differences, and, with perfect unity and peace, abide beneath the shadow of the Tree of His care and loving-kindness. It behoveth them to cleave to whatsoever will, in this Day, be conducive to the exaltation of their stations, and to the promotion of their best interests. Happy are those whom the all-glorious Pen was moved to remember, and blessed are those men whose names, by virtue of Our inscrutable decree, We have preferred to conceal.

Beseech ye the one true God to grant that all men may be graciously assisted to fulfil that which is acceptable in 122 Our sight. Soon will the present-day order be rolled up, and a new one spread out in its stead. Verily, thy Lord speaketh the truth, and is the Knower of things unseen.

[« Previous](#) | [Contents](#)

[Contact Us](#) | [About This Site](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Privacy](#) | [Terms of Use](#)
Copyright 2003-8. Bahá'í International Community. All Rights Reserved.



[Home](#) ► [Shoghi Effendi](#)

The Promised Day Is Come

Author: Shoghi Effendi

Source: US Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1980 revised edition

Pages: 124

[Go to printed page](#)

[GO](#)

[Search](#)

[« Previous](#) | [Contents](#) | [Next »](#)

- ☒ **This Book**
- ☐ **All Books**

[Print Selection](#)

Pages 16-19

Authors

- Bahá'u'lláh
- The Báb
- 'Abdu'l-Bahá
- Shoghi Effendi
- Universal House of Justice
- Compilations
- Others

Titles

- Listed by Author
- Listed Alphabetically

Languages

- English
- فارسی
- عربي

Sites

- The Bahá'ís
- Bahá'í World News Service
- Statement Library
- One Country

A World Receded from Him

After a revolution of well nigh one hundred years what is it that the eye encounters as one surveys the international scene and looks back upon the early beginnings of Bahá'í history? A world convulsed by the agonies of contending systems, races and nations, entangled in the mesh of its accumulated falsities, receding farther and farther from Him Who is the sole Author of its destinies, and sinking deeper and deeper into a suicidal carnage which its neglect and persecution of Him Who is its Redeemer have precipitated. A Faith, still proscribed, yet bursting through its chrysalis, emerging from the obscurity of a century-old repression, face to face with the awful evidences of God's wrathful anger, and destined to arise above the ruins of a smitten civilization. A world spiritually destitute, morally bankrupt, politically disrupted, socially convulsed, economically paralyzed, writhing, bleeding and breaking up beneath the avenging rod of God. A Faith Whose call remained unanswered, Whose claims were rejected, Whose warnings were brushed aside, Whose followers were mowed down, Whose aims and purposes were maligned, Whose summons to the rulers of the earth were ignored, Whose Herald drained the cup of martyrdom, over the head of Whose Author swept a sea of unheard-of tribulations, and Whose Exemplar sank beneath the weight of lifelong sorrows and dire misfortunes. A world that has lost its bearings, in which the bright flame of religion is fast dying out, in which the forces of a blatant nationalism and racialism have usurped the rights and prerogatives of God Himself, in which a flagrant secularism—the direct offspring of irreligion—has raised its triumphant head and is protruding its ugly features, in which the “majesty of kingship” has been disgraced, and they who wore its emblems have, for the most part, been hurled from their thrones, in which the once all-powerful ecclesiastical hierarchies of Islám, and to a lesser extent those of Christianity, have been discredited, and in which the virus of prejudice and corruption is eating into the vitals of an already gravely disordered society. A Faith Whose institutions—the pattern and crowning glory of the age which is to come—have been ignored and in some instances trampled upon and uprooted, Whose unfolding system has been derided and partly suppressed and crippled, Whose rising Order—the sole refuge of

a civilization in the embrace of doom—has been spurned and challenged, Whose Mother-Temple has been seized and misappropriated, and Whose “House”—the “cynosure of an adoring world”—has, through a gross miscarriage of justice, as witnessed by the world’s highest tribunal, been delivered into the hands of, and violated by, its implacable enemies.

We are indeed living in an age which, if we would correctly appraise it, should be regarded as one which is witnessing a dual phenomenon. The first signalizes the death pangs of an order, effete and godless, that has stubbornly refused, despite the signs and portents of a century-old Revelation, to attune its processes to the precepts and ideals which that Heaven-sent Faith proffered it. The second proclaims the birth pangs of an Order, divine and redemptive, that will inevitably supplant the former, and within Whose administrative structure an embryonic civilization, incomparable and world-embracing, is imperceptibly maturing. The one is being rolled up, and is crashing in oppression, bloodshed, and ruin. The other opens up vistas of a justice, a unity, a peace, a culture, such as no age has ever seen. The former has spent its force, demonstrated its falsity and barrenness, lost irretrievably its opportunity, and is hurrying to its doom. The latter, virile and unconquerable, is plucking asunder its chains, and is vindicating its title to be the one refuge within which a sore-tried humanity, purged from its dross, can attain its destiny.

“Soon,” Bahá’u’lláh Himself has prophesied, “will the present-day order be rolled up, and a new one spread out in its stead.” And again: “By Myself! The day is approaching when We will have rolled up the world and all that is therein, and spread out a new Order in its stead.” “The day is approaching when God will have raised up a people who will call to 18 remembrance Our days, who will tell the tale of Our trials, who will demand the restitution of Our rights, from them who, without a tittle of evidence, have treated Us with manifest injustice.”

Dear friends! For the trials which have afflicted the Faith of Bahá’u’lláh a responsibility appalling and inescapable rests upon those into whose hands the reins of civil and ecclesiastical authority were delivered. The kings of the earth and the world’s religious leaders alike must primarily bear the brunt of such an awful responsibility. “Everyone well knoweth,” Bahá’u’lláh Himself testifies, “that all the kings have turned aside from Him, and all the religions have opposed Him.” “From time immemorial,” He declares, “they who have been outwardly invested with authority have debarred men from setting their faces towards God. They have disliked that men should gather together around the Most Great Ocean, inasmuch as they have regarded, and still regard, such a gathering as the cause of, and the motive for, the disruption of their sovereignty.” “The kings,” He moreover has written, “have recognized that it was not in their interest to acknowledge Me, as have likewise the ministers and the divines, notwithstanding that My purpose hath been most explicitly revealed in the Divine Books and Tablets, and the True One hath loudly proclaimed that this Most Great Revelation hath appeared for the

betterment of the world and the exaltation of the nations.” “Gracious God!” writes the Báb in the *Dalá'il-i-Sab'ih* (Seven Proofs) with reference to the “seven powerful sovereigns ruling the world” in His day, “None of them hath been informed of His [the Báb's] Manifestation, and if informed, none hath believed in Him. Who knoweth, they may leave this world below full of desire, and without having realized that the thing for which they were waiting had come to pass. This is what happened to the monarchs that held fast unto the Gospel. They awaited the coming of the Prophet of God [Muḥammad], and when He did appear, they failed to recognize Him. Behold how great are the sums which these sovereigns expend without even the slightest thought of appointing an official charged with the task of acquainting them in their own realms with the Manifestation of God! They would thereby have fulfilled the purpose for which they have been created. All their desires have been and are still fixed upon leaving behind them traces of their names.” The Báb, moreover, in that same treatise, censuring the failure of the Christian divines to acknowledge the truth of Muḥammad's mission, makes this illuminating statement: “The blame ¹⁹ falleth upon their doctors, for if these had believed, they would have been followed by the mass of their countrymen. Behold then, that which hath come to pass! The learned men of Christendom are held to be learned by virtue of their safeguarding the teaching of Christ, and yet consider how they themselves have been the cause of men's failure to accept the Faith and attain unto salvation!”

[« Previous](#) | [Contents](#) | [Next »](#)

[Contact Us](#) | [About This Site](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Privacy](#) | [Terms of Use](#)
Copyright 2003-8. [Bahá'í International Community](#). All Rights Reserved.



[Home](#) ► [Bahá'u'lláh](#)

Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh

Author: Bahá'u'lláh

Source: US Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1978 reprint

Pages: 122

[Go to printed page](#)

[GO](#)

[Contents](#) | [Next »](#)

[Search](#)

- ☒ **This Book**
- ☐ **All Books**

Authors

- Bahá'u'lláh
- The Báb
- 'Abdu'l-Bahá
- Shoghi Effendi
- Universal House of Justice
- Compilations
- Others

Titles

- Listed by Author
- Listed Alphabetically

Languages

- English
- فارسی
- عربي

Sites

- The Bahá'ís
- Bahá'í World News Service
- Statement Library
- One Country

[Print Selection](#)

Pages ix-xiv

INTRODUCTION

ix

We desire but the good of the world and the happiness of the nations; yet they deem Us a stirrer up of strife and sedition worthy of bondage and banishment.... That all nations should become one in faith and all men as brothers; that the bonds of affection and unity between the sons of men should be strengthened; that diversity of religion should cease, and differences of race be annulled—what harm is there in this?... Yet so it shall be; these fruitless strifes, these ruinous wars shall pass away, and the 'Most Great Peace' shall come.... Yet do We see your kings and rulers lavishing their treasures more freely on means for the destruction of the human race than on that which would conduce to the happiness of mankind.... These strifes and this bloodshed and discord must cease, and all men be as one kindred and one family.... Let not a man glory in this, that he loves his country; let him rather glory in this, that he loves his kind....

One hundred years ago, Bahá'u'lláh, Founder of the Bahá'í Faith, proclaimed in clear and unmistakable language, to the kings and rulers of the world, to its religious leaders, and to mankind in general that the long-promised age of world peace and brotherhood had at last dawned and that He Himself was the Bearer of the new message and power from God which would transform the prevailing system of antagonism and enmity between men and create the spirit and form of the destined world order.

At that time the splendour and panoply of the monarchs reflected the vast power which they exercised, autocratically for the most part, over the greater portion of the earth. Bahá'u'lláh, an exile from His native Persia for His religious teaching, was the prisoner of the tyrannical, all-powerful Sulṭán of the Ottoman Empire. In such circumstances He addressed the rulers of the world. His Tablets to particular kings and to the Pope, although delivered, were either ignored or rejected, their wise counsels and dire warnings went unheeded, and in one instance the bearer was cruelly tortured and killed.

Bahá'u'lláh, viewing that old world and seeing it 'at the mercy of rulers so drunk with pride that they cannot discern clearly their own best advantage' declared that '...the strife that divides and afflicts the human race is daily increasing. The signs of impending convulsions and x chaos can now be discerned, inasmuch as the prevailing order appears to be lamentably defective.' Although painting in sombre tones the 'divine chastisement' which would assail most of those rulers and engulf in ruin the peoples of the world, He nevertheless left no doubt about the outcome. 'Soon', He declared, 'will the present day order be rolled up and a new one spread out in its stead.' Since the ascension of Bahá'u'lláh in 1892, in the Holy Land, the rolling up of the old order has become the daily experience of mankind and no abatement of this process is discernible. The essence of Bahá'u'lláh's World Order is the unity of the human race. 'O ye children of men', He writes, 'the fundamental purpose animating the Faith of God and His Religion is to safeguard the interests and promote the unity of the human race...' And He warns, 'The well-being of mankind, its peace and security, are unattainable unless and until its unity is firmly established.' The achievement of this unity is Bahá'u'lláh's declared mission and the aim of all Bahá'í activity. Its outline and structure are indicated in the following passage from the writings of Shoghi Effendi, great-grandson of Bahá'u'lláh and Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith:

The unity of the human race, as envisaged by Bahá'u'lláh, implies the establishment of a world commonwealth in which all nations, races, creeds and classes are closely and permanently united, and in which the autonomy of its state members and personal freedom and initiative of the individuals that xi compose them are definitely and completely safeguarded. This commonwealth must, as far as we can visualize it, consist of a world legislature, whose members will, as the trustees of the whole of mankind, ultimately control the entire resources of all the component nations, and will enact such laws as shall be required to regulate the life, satisfy the needs and adjust the relationships of all races and peoples. A world executive, backed by an international Force, will carry out the decisions arrived at, and apply the laws enacted by, this world legislature, and will safeguard the organic unity of the whole commonwealth. A world tribunal will adjudicate and deliver its compulsory and final verdict in all and any disputes that may arise between the various elements constituting this universal system. A mechanism of world inter-communication will be devised, embracing the whole planet, freed from national hinderances and restrictions, and functioning with marvellous swiftness and perfect regularity. A world metropolis will act as the nerve centre of a world civilization, the focus towards which the unifying forces of

life will converge and from which its energizing influences will radiate. A world language will either be invented or chosen from among the existing languages and will be taught in the schools of all the federated nations as an auxiliary to their mother tongue. A world script, a world literature, a uniform and universal system of currency, of ^{xii} weights and measures, will simplify and facilitate intercourse and understanding among the nations and races of mankind. In such a world society, science and religion, the two most potent forces in human life, will be reconciled, will co-operate, and will harmoniously develop. The press will, under such a system, while giving full scope to the expression of the diversified views and convictions of mankind, cease to be mischievously manipulated by vested interests, whether private or public, and will be liberated from the influence of contending governments and peoples. The economic resources of the world will be organized, its sources of raw materials will be tapped and fully utilized, its markets will be co-ordinated and developed, and the distribution of its products will be equitably regulated.

National rivalries, hatreds and intrigues will cease, and racial animosity and prejudice will be replaced by racial amity, understanding and co-operation. The causes of religious strife will be permanently removed, economic barriers and restrictions will be completely abolished, and the inordinate distinction between classes will be obliterated. Destitution on the one hand, and gross accumulation of ownership on the other, will disappear. The enormous energy dissipated and wasted on war, whether economic or political, will be consecrated to such ends as will extend the range of human inventions and technical development, to the ^{xiii} increase of the productivity of mankind, to the extermination of disease, to the extension of scientific research, to the raising of the standard of physical health, to the sharpening and refinement of the human brain, to the exploitation of the unused and unsuspected resources of the planet, to the prolongation of human life, and to the furtherance of any other agency that can stimulate the intellectual, the moral, and spiritual life of the entire human race.

A world federal system, ruling the whole earth and exercising unchallengeable authority over its unimaginably vast resources, blending and embodying the ideals of both the East and the West, liberated from the curse of war and its miseries, and bent on the exploitation of all the available sources of energy on the surface of the planet, a system in

which Force is made the servant of Justice, whose life is sustained by its universal recognition of one God and by its allegiance to one common Revelation—such is the goal towards which humanity, impelled by the unifying forces of life, is moving.

Bahá'u'lláh's message is one of hope, of love, of practical reconstruction. Today we reap the appalling results of our forebears' rejection of His divine call; but today there are new rulers, new people, who perchance may hear and avoid or mitigate the severity of impending catastrophe. It is with this hope and believing it to be its sacred duty, that the Universal House of Justice, the international governing

^{xiv} body of the Bahá'í Faith, proclaims again, through publication of these selected passages, the essence of that mighty call of a century ago. In the same hope and belief the Bahá'ís throughout the world will do their utmost during this centenary period to bring to the attention of their fellow-men the redeeming fact of this new outpouring of divine guidance and love. We believe they will not labour in vain.

Haifa, 1967

[Contents](#) | [Next »](#)

[Contact Us](#) | [About This Site](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Privacy](#) | [Terms of Use](#)
Copyright 2003-8. Bahá'í International Community. All Rights Reserved.



One Common Faith

Author: Bahá'í World Centre Source: Bahá'í World Centre, 2005 edition Pages: 56

[Go to printed page](#) [GO](#)

[Search](#)

[« Previous](#) | [Contents](#)

- ☒ **This Book**
- ☐ **All Books**

[Print Selection](#)

Pages 53-56

Authors

- Bahá'u'lláh
- The Báb
- 'Abdu'l-Bahá
- Shoghi Effendi
- Universal House of Justice
- Compilations
- Others

Titles

- Listed by Author
- Listed Alphabetically

Languages

- English
- فارسی
- عربي

Sites

- The Bahá'ís
- Bahá'í World News Service
- Statement Library
- One Country

“One of the distinguishing features of modernity has been the universal...”

One of the distinguishing features of modernity has been the universal awakening of historical consciousness. An outcome of this revolutionary change in perspective that greatly enhances the teaching of Bahá'u'lláh's message is the ability of people, given the chance, to recognize that the whole body of humanity's sacred texts places the drama of salvation itself squarely in the context of history. Beneath the surface language of symbol and metaphor, religion, as the scriptures reveal it, operates not through the arbitrary dictates of magic but as a process of fulfilment unfolding in a physical world created by God for that purpose.

In this respect, the texts speak with one voice: religion's goal is humanity's attainment of the age of “in-gathering”, [1](#) of “one fold, and one shepherd”; [2](#) the great age to come when “the Earth will shine with the glory of its Lord” [3](#) and the will of God is carried out “in earth, as it is in heaven”; [4](#) “the promised Day” [5](#) when the “holy city” [6](#) will descend “out of heaven, from ... God”, [7](#) when [54](#) “the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it”, [8](#) when God will demand to know “what mean ye that ye beat my people to pieces, and grind the faces of the poor”; [9](#) the Day when scriptures that have been “sealed till the time of the end” [10](#) would be opened and union with God will find expression in “a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name”; [11](#) an age utterly beyond anything humanity will have experienced, the mind conceived or language as yet encompassed: “even as We produced the first Creation, so shall We produce a new one: a promise We have undertaken: truly shall We fulfil it.” [12](#)

The declared purpose of history's series of prophetic revelations, therefore, has been not only to guide the individual seeker on the path of personal salvation, but to prepare the whole of the human family for the great eschatological Event lying ahead, through which the life of the world will itself be entirely transformed. The revelation of Bahá'u'lláh is neither preparatory nor prophetic. It **is** that Event. Through its influence, the stupendous enterprise of laying the foundations of the

Kingdom of God has been set in motion, and the population of the earth has been endowed with the powers and capacities equal to the task. That Kingdom is a universal civilization shaped by principles of social justice and enriched by achievements of the human mind and spirit beyond anything the present age can conceive. “This is the Day”, Bahá’u’lláh declares, “in which God’s most excellent favours have been poured out upon men, the Day in which His most mighty grace
 55 hath been infused into all created things.... Soon will the present-day order be rolled up, and a new one spread out in its stead.” [13](#)

Service to the goal calls for an understanding of the fundamental difference distinguishing the mission of Bahá’u’lláh from political and ideological projects of human design. The moral vacuum that produced the horrors of the twentieth century exposed the outermost limits of the mind’s unaided capacity to devise and construct an ideal society, however great the material resources harnessed to the effort. The suffering entailed has engraved the lesson indelibly on the consciousness of the earth’s peoples. Religion’s perspective on humanity’s future, therefore, has nothing in common with systems of the past—and only relatively little relationship with those of today. Its appeal is to a reality in the genetic code, if it can be so described, of the rational soul. The Kingdom of Heaven, Jesus taught two thousand years ago, is “within”. [14](#) His organic analogies of a “vineyard”, [15](#) of “seed [sown] into the good ground”, [16](#) of the “good tree [that] bringeth forth good fruit” [17](#) speak of a potentiality of the human species that has been nurtured and trained by God since the dawn of time as the purpose and leading edge of the creative process. The ongoing work of patient cultivation is the task that Bahá’u’lláh has entrusted to the company of those who recognize Him and embrace His Cause. Little wonder, then, at the exalted language in which He speaks of a privilege so great: “Ye are the stars of the heaven of understanding, the breeze that stirreth at the break of day, the
 56 soft-flowing waters upon which must depend the very life of all men....” [18](#)

The process bears within itself the assurance of its fulfilment. For those with eyes to see, the new creation is today everywhere emerging, in the same way that a seedling becomes in time a fruit-bearing tree or a child reaches adulthood. Successive dispensations of a loving and purposeful Creator have brought the earth’s inhabitants to the threshold of their collective coming-of-age as a single people. Bahá’u’lláh is now summoning humanity to enter on its inheritance: “That which the Lord hath ordained as the sovereign remedy and mightiest instrument for the healing of all the world is the union of all its peoples in one universal Cause, one common Faith.” [19](#)

1. *The Summons of the Lord of Hosts*, paragraph 126. [[↑ Back To Reference](#)]
2. St. John 10.16. [[↑ Back To Reference](#)]
3. Qur’án, surih 39, verse 69. [[↑ Back To Reference](#)]
4. St. Matthew 6.10. [[↑ Back To Reference](#)]
5. Qur’án, surih 85, verse 2. [[↑ Back To Reference](#)]
6. Revelation 21.2. [[↑ Back To Reference](#)]
7. *ibid.*, 3.12. [[↑ Back To Reference](#)]
8. Isaiah 2.2. [[↑ Back To Reference](#)]

9. *ibid.*, 3.15. [[↑ Back To Reference](#)]
10. Daniel 12.9. [[↑ Back To Reference](#)]
11. Isaiah 62.2. [[↑ Back To Reference](#)]
12. Qur'án, surih 21, verse 104. [[↑ Back To Reference](#)]
13. *Gleanings*, section IV. [[↑ Back To Reference](#)]
14. St. Luke 17.21. [[↑ Back To Reference](#)]
15. St. Matthew 21.33. [[↑ Back To Reference](#)]
16. *ibid.*, 13.23. [[↑ Back To Reference](#)]
17. *ibid.*, 7.17. [[↑ Back To Reference](#)]
18. *Gleanings*, section XCVI. [[↑ Back To Reference](#)]
19. *ibid.*, section CXX. [[↑ Back To Reference](#)]

[« Previous](#) | [Contents](#)

[Contact Us](#) | [About This Site](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Privacy](#) | [Terms of Use](#)
Copyright 2003-8. Bahá'í International Community. All Rights Reserved.



[Home](#) ► [Shoghi Effendi](#)

God Passes By

Author: Shoghi Effendi

Source: US Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1979 second printing

Pages: 412

[Go to printed page](#)

[GO](#)

[Search](#)

[« Previous](#) | [Contents](#) | [Next »](#)

- ☒ **This Book**
- ☐ **All Books**

[Print Selection](#)

Pages 197-220

Authors

- Bahá'u'lláh
- The Báb
- 'Abdu'l-Bahá
- Shoghi Effendi
- Universal House of Justice
- Compilations
- Others

Titles

- Listed by Author
- Listed Alphabetically

Languages

- English
- فارسی
- عربي

Sites

- The Bahá'ís
- Bahá'í World News Service
- Statement Library
- One Country

Chapter XII: Bahá'u'lláh's Incarceration in 'Akká (Continued)

197

While Bahá'u'lláh and the little band that bore Him company were being subjected to the severe hardships of a banishment intended to blot them from the face of the earth, the steadily expanding community of His followers in the land of His birth were undergoing a persecution more violent and of longer duration than the trials with which He and His companions were being afflicted. Though on a far smaller scale than the blood baths which had baptized the birth of the Faith, when in the course of a single year, as attested by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, "more than four thousand souls were slain, and a great multitude of women and children left without protector and helper," the murderous and horrible acts subsequently perpetrated by an insatiable and unyielding enemy covered as wide a range and were marked by an even greater degree of ferocity.

Násiri'd-Dín Sháh, stigmatized by Bahá'u'lláh as the "Prince of Oppressors," as one who had "perpetrated what hath caused the denizens of the cities of justice and equity to lament," was, during the period under review, in the full tide of his manhood and had reached the plenitude of his despotic power. The sole arbiter of the fortunes of a country "firmly stereotyped in the immemorial traditions of the East"; surrounded by "venal, artful and false" ministers whom he could elevate or abase at his pleasure; the head of an administration in which "every actor was, in different aspects, both the briber and the bribed"; allied, in his opposition to the Faith, with a sacerdotal order which constituted a veritable "church-state"; supported by a people preeminent in atrocity, notorious for its fanaticism, its servility, cupidity and corrupt practices, this capricious monarch, no longer able to lay hands upon the person of Bahá'u'lláh, had to content himself with the task of attempting to stamp out in his own dominions the remnants of a much-feared and newly resuscitated community. Next to him in rank and power were his three eldest sons, to whom, for purposes of internal administration, he had practically delegated his authority, and in whom he had invested the governorship of all the provinces of his kingdom. The province of 198 Ádhirbayján he had entrusted to the weak

and timid Muzaffari'd-Dín Mírzá, the heir to his throne, who had fallen under the influence of the Shaykhí sect, and was showing a marked respect to the mullás. To the stern and savage rule of the astute Mas'úd Mírzá, commonly known as Zillu's-Sultán, his eldest surviving son, whose mother had been of plebeian origin, he had committed over two-fifths of his kingdom, including the provinces of Yazd and Isfahán, whilst upon Kámrán Mírzá, his favorite son, commonly called by his title the Nayibu's-Saltanih, he had bestowed the rulership of Gílán and Mázindarán, and made him governor of Tihrán, his minister of war and the commander-in-chief of his army. Such was the rivalry between the last two princes, who vied with each other in courting the favor of their father, that each endeavored, with the support of the leading mujtahids within his jurisdiction, to outshine the other in the meritorious task of hunting, plundering and exterminating the members of a defenseless community, who, at the bidding of Bahá'u'lláh, had ceased to offer armed resistance even in self-defense, and were carrying out His injunction that "it is better to be killed than kill." Nor were the clerical firebrands, Hájí Mullá 'Alí-i-Kání and Siyyid Sádiq-i-Tabátábá'í, the two leading mujtahids of Tihrán, together with Shaykh Muhammad-Báqir, their colleague in Isfahán, and Mír Muhammad-Husayn, the Imám-Jum'ih of that city, willing to allow the slightest opportunity to pass without striking, with all the force and authority they wielded, at an adversary whose liberalizing influences they had even more reason to fear than the sovereign himself.

Little wonder that, confronted by a situation so full of peril, the Faith should have been driven underground, and that arrests, interrogations, imprisonment, vituperation, spoliation, tortures and executions should constitute the outstanding features of this convulsive period in its development. The pilgrimages that had been initiated in Adrianople, and which later assumed in 'Akká impressive proportions, together with the dissemination of the Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh and the circulation of enthusiastic reports through the medium of those who had attained His presence served, moreover, to inflame the animosity of clergy and laity alike, who had foolishly imagined that the breach which had occurred in the ranks of the followers of the Faith in Adrianople and the sentence of life banishment pronounced subsequently against its Leader, would seal irretrievably its fate.

In Ábádih a certain Ustád 'Alí-Akbar was, at the instigation of a local Siyyid, apprehended and so ruthlessly thrashed that he was ¹⁹⁹ covered from head to foot with his own blood. In the village of Tákúr, at the bidding of the Sháh, the property of the inhabitants was pillaged, Hájí Mírzá Ridá-Qulí, a half-brother of Bahá'u'lláh, was arrested, conducted to the capital and thrown into the Síyáh-Chál, where he remained for a month, whilst the brother-in-law of Mírzá Hasan, another half-brother of Bahá'u'lláh, was seized and branded with red-hot irons, after which the neighboring village of Dar-Kalá was delivered to the flames.

Áqá Buzurg of Khurásán, the illustrious "Badí" (Wonderful); converted to the Faith by Nabíl; surnamed the "Pride of Martyrs"; the seventeen-year old bearer of

the Tablet addressed to Násiri'd-Dín Sháh; in whom, as affirmed by Bahá'u'lláh, “the spirit of might and power was breathed,” was arrested, branded for three successive days, his head beaten to a pulp with the butt of a rifle, after which his body was thrown into a pit and earth and stones heaped upon it. After visiting Bahá'u'lláh in the barracks, during the second year of His confinement, he had arisen with amazing alacrity to carry that Tablet, alone and on foot, to Tíhrán and deliver it into the hands of the sovereign. A four months' journey had taken him to that city, and, after passing three days in fasting and vigilance, he had met the Sháh proceeding on a hunting expedition to Shimírán. He had calmly and respectfully approached His Majesty, calling out, “O King! I have come to thee from Sheba with a weighty message”; whereupon at the Sovereign's order, the Tablet was taken from him and delivered to the mujtahids of Tíhrán who were commanded to reply to that Epistle—a command which they evaded, recommending instead that the messenger should be put to death. That Tablet was subsequently forwarded by the Sháh to the Persian Ambassador in Constantinople, in the hope that its perusal by the Sultán's ministers might serve to further inflame their animosity. For a space of three years Bahá'u'lláh continued to extol in His writings the heroism of that youth, characterizing the references made by Him to that sublime sacrifice as the “salt of My Tablets.”

‘Abá-Básir and Siyyid Ashraf, whose fathers had been slain in the struggle of Zanján, were decapitated on the same day in that city, the former going so far as to instruct, while kneeling in prayer, his executioner as to how best to deal his blow, while the latter, after having been so brutally beaten that blood flowed from under his nails, was beheaded, as he held in his arms the body of his martyred companion. It was the mother of this same Ashraf who, when sent to the prison in the hope that she would persuade her only son to 200 recant, had warned him that she would disown him were he to denounce his faith, had bidden him follow the example of ‘Abá-Básir, and had even watched him expire with eyes undimmed with tears. The wealthy and prominent Muhammad-Hasan Khán-i-Káshí was so mercilessly bastinadoed in Burújird that he succumbed to his ordeal. In Shíráz Mírzá Áqáy-i-Rikáb-Sáz, together with Mírzá Rafí-i-Khayyát and Mashhadí Nabí, were by order of the local mujtahid simultaneously strangled in the dead of night, their graves being later desecrated by a mob who heaped refuse upon them. Shaykh Abu'l-Qásim-i-Mazkání in Káshán, who had declined a drink of water that was offered him before his death, affirming that he thirsted for the cup of martyrdom, was dealt a fatal blow on the nape of his neck, whilst he was prostrating himself in prayer.

Mírzá Báqir-i-Shírází, who had transcribed the Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh in Adrianople with such unsparing devotion, was slain in Kirmán, while in Ardikán the aged and infirm Gul-Muhammad was set upon by a furious mob, thrown to the ground, and so trampled upon by the hob-nailed boots of two siyyids that his ribs were crushed in and his teeth broken, after which his body was taken to the outskirts of the town and buried in a pit, only to be dug up the next day, dragged

through the streets, and finally abandoned in the wilderness. In the city of Mashhad, notorious for its unbridled fanaticism, Hájí ‘Abdu’l-Majíd, who was the eighty-five year old father of the afore-mentioned Badí and a survivor of the struggle of Tabarsí, and who, after the martyrdom of his son, had visited Bahá’u’lláh and returned afire with zeal to Khurásán, was ripped open from waist to throat, and his head exposed on a marble slab to the gaze of a multitude of insulting onlookers, who, after dragging his body ignominiously through the bazaars, left it at the morgue to be claimed by his relatives.

In Isfahán Mullá Kázim was beheaded by order of Shaykh Muhammad-Báqir, and a horse made to gallop over his corpse, which was then delivered to the flames, while Siyyid Áqá Ján had his ears cut off, and was led by a halter through the streets and bazaars. A month later occurred in that same city the tragedy of the two famous brothers Mírzá Muhammad-Hasan and Mírzá Muhammad-Husayn, the “twin shining lights,” respectively surnamed “Sultánu’sh-Shuhudá” (King of Martyrs) and “Mahbúbu’sh-Shuhadá” (Beloved of Martyrs), who were celebrated for their generosity, trustworthiness, kindness and piety. Their martyrdom was instigated by the wicked and dishonest Mír Muhammad-Husayn, the Imám-Jum’ih, stigmatized by 201 Bahá’u’lláh as the “she-serpent,” who, in view of a large debt he had incurred in his transactions with them, schemed to nullify his obligations by denouncing them as Bábís, and thereby encompassing their death. Their richly-furnished houses were plundered, even to the trees and flowers in their gardens, all their remaining possessions were confiscated; Shaykh Muhammad-Báqir, denounced by Bahá’u’lláh as the “wolf,” pronounced their death-sentence; the Zillu’s-Sultán ratified the decision, after which they were put in chains, decapitated, dragged to the Maydán-i-Sháh, and there exposed to the indignities heaped upon them by a degraded and rapacious populace. “In such wise,” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá has written, “was the blood of these two brothers shed that the Christian priest of Julfá cried out, lamented and wept on that day.” For several years Bahá’u’lláh in His Tablets continued to make mention of them, to voice His grief over their passing and to extol their virtues.

Mullá ‘Alí Ján was conducted on foot from Mázindarán to Tihrán, the hardships of that journey being so severe that his neck was wounded and his body swollen from the waist to the feet. On the day of his martyrdom he asked for water, performed his ablutions, recited his prayers, bestowed a considerable gift of money on his executioner, and was still in the act of prayer when his throat was slit by a dagger, after which his corpse was spat upon, covered with mud, left exposed for three days, and finally hewn to pieces. In Námiq Mullá ‘Alí, converted to the Faith in the days of the Báb, was so severely attacked and his ribs so badly broken with a pick-axe that he died immediately. Mírzá Ashraf was slain in Isfahán, his corpse trampled under foot by Shaykh Muhammad Taqíy-i-Najafí, the “son of the wolf,” and his pupils, savagely mutilated, and delivered to the mob to be burnt, after which his charred bones were buried beneath the ruins of a wall that was pulled

down to cover them.

In Yazd, at the instigation of the mujtahid of that city, and by order of the callous Mahmúd Mírzá, the Jalúlu'l-Dawlih, the governor, a son of Zillu's-Sultán, seven were done to death in a single day in horrible circumstances. The first of these, a twenty-seven year old youth, 'Alí-Asghar, was strangled, his body delivered into the hands of some Jews who, forcing the dead man's six companions to come with them, dragged the corpse through the streets, surrounded by a mob of people and soldiers beating drums and blowing trumpets, after which, arriving near the Telegraph Office, they beheaded the eighty-five year old Mullá Mihdí and dragged him in the same manner ²⁰² to another quarter of the city, where, in view of a great throng of onlookers, frenzied by the throbbing strains of the music, they executed Áqá 'Alí in like manner. Proceeding thence to the house of the local mujtahid, and carrying with them the four remaining companions, they cut the throat of Mullá 'Alí-i-Sabzivarí, who had been addressing the crowd and glorying in his imminent martyrdom, hacked his body to pieces with a spade, while he was still alive, and pounded his skull to a pulp with stones. In another quarter, near the Míhríz gate, they slew Muhammad-Báqir, and afterwards, in the Maydán-i-Khán, as the music grew wilder and drowned the yells of the people, they beheaded the survivors who remained, two brothers in their early twenties, 'Alí-Asghar and Muhammad-Hasan. The stomach of the latter was ripped open and his heart and liver plucked out, after which his head was impaled on a spear, carried aloft, to the accompaniment of music, through the streets of the city, and suspended on a mulberry tree, and stoned by a great concourse of people. His body was cast before the door of his mother's house, into which women deliberately entered to dance and make merry. Even pieces of their flesh were carried away to be used as a medicament. Finally, the head of Muhammad-Hasan was attached to the lower part of his body and, together with those of the other martyrs, was borne to the outskirts of the city and so viciously pelted with stones that the skulls were broken, whereupon they compelled the Jews to carry the remains and throw them into a pit in the plain of Salsabíl. A holiday was declared by the governor for the people, all the shops were closed by his order, the city was illuminated at night, and festivities proclaimed the consummation of one of the most barbarous acts perpetrated in modern times.

Nor were the Jews and the Parsis who had been newly converted to the Faith, and were living, the former in Hamadán, and the latter in Yazd, immune to the assaults of enemies whose fury was exasperated by the evidences of the penetration of the light of the Faith in quarters they had fondly imagined to be beyond its reach. Even in the city of Ishqábád the newly established Shí'ah community, envious of the rising prestige of the followers of Bahá'u'lláh who were living in their midst, instigated two ruffians to assault the seventy-year old Hájí Muhammad-Ridáy-i-Isfahání, whom, in broad day and in the midst of the bazaar, they stabbed in no less than thirty-two places, exposing his liver, lacerating his stomach and tearing

open his breast. A military court dispatched by the Czar to Ishqábád established, after prolonged investigation, the guilt of the ²⁰³ Shí'ahs, sentencing two to death and banishing six others—a sentence which neither Násiri'd-Dín Sháh, nor the 'ulamás of Tíhrán, of Mashhad and of Tabríz, who were appealed to, could mitigate, but which the representatives of the aggrieved community, through their magnanimous intercession which greatly surprised the Russian authorities, succeeded in having commuted to a lighter punishment.

Such are some typical examples of the treatment meted out by the adversaries of the Faith to the newly resurgent community of its followers during the period of Bahá'u'lláh's banishment to 'Akká—a treatment which it may be truly said testified alternately to “the callousness of the brute and the ingenuity of the fiend.”

The “inquisition and appalling tortures,” following the attempt on the life of Násiri'd-Dín Sháh, had already, in the words of no less eminent an observer than Lord Curzon of Kedleston, imparted to the Faith “a vitality which no other impulse could have secured.” This recrudescence of persecution, this fresh outpouring of the blood of martyrs, served to further enliven the roots which that holy Sapling had already struck in its native soil. Careless of the policy of fire and blood which aimed at their annihilation, undismayed by the tragic blows rained upon a Leader so far removed from their midst, uncorrupted by the foul and seditious acts perpetrated by the Arch-Breaker of the Báb's Covenant, the followers of Bahá'u'lláh were multiplying in number and silently gathering the necessary strength that was to enable them, at a later stage, to lift their heads in freedom, and rear the fabric of their institutions.

Soon after his visit to Persia in the autumn of 1889 Lord Curzon of Kedleston wrote, in the course of references designed to dispel the “great confusion” and “error” prevailing “among European and specially English writers” regarding the Faith, that “the Bahá'ís are now believed to comprise nineteen-twentieths of the Bábí persuasion.” Count Gobineau, writing as far back as the year 1865, testified as follows: “L'opinion générale est que les Bábís sont répandus dans toutes les classes de la population et parmi tous les religieux de la Perse, sauf les Nusayris et les Chrétiens; mais ce sont surtout les classes éclairées, les hommes pratiquant les sciences du pays, qui sont donnés comme très suspects. On pense, et avec raison, ce semble, que beaucoup de mullás, et parmi eux des mujtahids considérables, des magistrats d'un rang élève, des hommes qui occupent à la cour des fonctions importantes et qui approchent de près la personne du Roi, sont des Bábís. D'après un calcul fait récemment, il y aurait à Tíhrán cinq milles de ces religieux sur une population de quatre-vingt ²⁰⁴ milles âmes à peu près.” Furthermore: “...Le Bábisme a pris une action considérable sur l'intelligence de la nation persane, et, se rependant même au delà des limites du territoire, il a débordé dans le pachalik de Baghdád, et passé aussi dans l'Inde.” And again: “...Un mouvement religieux tout particulier dont l'Asie Centrale, c'est-à-dire la Perse, quelques points de l'Inde et une partie de la Turquie d'Asie, aux environs de Baghdád, est

aujourd'hui vivement préoccupée, mouvement remarquable et digne d'être étudié à tous les titres. Il permet d'assister à des développements de faits, à des manifestations, à des catastrophes telles que l'on n'est pas habitué à les imaginer ailleurs que dans les temps réculés où se sont produites les grandes religions."

"These changes, however," Lord Curzon, alluding to the Declaration of the Mission of Bahá'u'lláh and the rebellion of Mírzá Yahyá, has, moreover written, "have in no wise impaired, but appear on the contrary, to have stimulated its propaganda, which has advanced with a rapidity inexplicable to those who can only see therein a crude form of political or even of metaphysical fermentation. The lowest estimate places the present number of Bábís in Persia at half a million. I am disposed to think, from conversations with persons well qualified to judge, that the total is nearer one million." "They are to be found," he adds, "in every walk of life, from the ministers and nobles of the Court to the scavenger or the groom, not the least arena of their activity being the Musulmán priesthood itself." "From the facts," is another testimony of his, "that Bábism in its earliest years found itself in conflict with the civil powers, and that an attempt was made by Bábís upon the life of the Sháh, it has been wrongly inferred that the movement was political in origin and Nihilist in character... At the present time the Bábís are equally loyal with any other subjects of the Crown. Nor does there appear to be any greater justice in the charges of socialism, communism and immorality that have so freely been levelled at the youthful persuasion ... The only communism known to and recommended by Him (the Báb) was that of the New Testament and the early Christian Church, viz., the sharing of goods in common by members of the Faith, and the exercise of alms-giving, and an ample charity. The charge of immorality seems to have arisen partly from the malignant inventions of opponents, partly from the much greater freedom claimed for women by the Báb, which in the oriental mind is scarcely dissociable from profligacy of conduct." And, finally, the following prognostication from his pen: "If Bábism continues to grow at its 205 present rate of progression, a time may conceivably come when it will oust Muhammadanism from the field in Persia. This, I think, it would be unlikely to do, did it appear upon the ground under the flag of a hostile faith. But since its recruits are won from the best soldiers of the garrison whom it is attacking, there is greater reason to believe that it may ultimately prevail."

Bahá'u'lláh's incarceration in the prison-fortress of 'Akká, the manifold tribulations He endured, the prolonged ordeal to which the community of His followers in Persia was being subjected, did not arrest, nor could they even impede, to the slightest degree, the mighty stream of Divine Revelation, which, without interruption, had been flowing from His pen, and on which the future orientation, the integrity, the expansion and the consolidation of His Faith directly depended. Indeed, in their scope and volume, His writings, during the years of His confinement in the Most Great Prison, surpassed the outpourings of His pen in either Adrianople or Baghdád. More remarkable than the radical transformation in

the circumstances of His own life in 'Akká, more far-reaching in its spiritual consequences than the campaign of repression pursued so relentlessly by the enemies of His Faith in the land of His birth, this unprecedented extension in the range of His writings, during His exile in that Prison, must rank as one of the most vitalizing and fruitful stages in the evolution of His Faith.

The tempestuous winds that swept the Faith at the inception of His ministry and the wintry desolation that marked the beginnings of His prophetic career, soon after His banishment from Tíhrán, were followed during the latter part of His sojourn in Baghdád, by what may be described as the vernal years of His Mission—years which witnessed the bursting into visible activity of the forces inherent in that Divine Seed that had lain dormant since the tragic removal of His Forerunner. With His arrival in Adrianople and the proclamation of His Mission the Orb of His Revelation climbed as it were to its zenith, and shone, as witnessed by the style and tone of His writings, in the plenitude of its summer glory. The period of His incarceration in 'Akká brought with it the ripening of a slowly maturing process, and was a period during which the choicest fruits of that mission were ultimately garnered.

The writings of Bahá'u'lláh during this period, as we survey the vast field which they embrace, seem to fall into three distinct categories. The first comprises those writings which constitute the sequel to the proclamation of His Mission in Adrianople. The second 206 includes the laws and ordinances of His Dispensation, which, for the most part, have been recorded in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, His Most Holy Book. To the third must be assigned those Tablets which partly enunciate and partly reaffirm the fundamental tenets and principles underlying that Dispensation.

The Proclamation of His Mission had been, as already observed, directed particularly to the kings of the earth, who, by virtue of the power and authority they wielded, were invested with a peculiar and inescapable responsibility for the destinies of their subjects. It was to these kings, as well as to the world's religious leaders, who exercised a no less pervasive influence on the mass of their followers, that the Prisoner of 'Akká directed His appeals, warnings, and exhortations during the first years of His incarceration in that city. "Upon Our arrival at this Prison," He Himself affirms, "We purposed to transmit to the kings the messages of their Lord, the Mighty, the All-Praised. Though We have transmitted to them, in several Tablets, that which We were commanded, yet We do it once again, as a token of God's grace."

To the kings of the earth, both in the East and in the West, both Christian and Muslim, who had already been collectively admonished and warned in the Súriy-i-Mulúk revealed in Adrianople, and had been so vehemently summoned by the Báb, in the opening chapter of the Qayyúmu'l-Asmá, on the very night of the Declaration of His Mission, Bahá'u'lláh, during the darkest days of His confinement in 'Akká, addressed some of the noblest passages of His Most Holy Book. In these passages He called upon them to take fast hold of the "Most Great Law";

proclaimed Himself to be “the King of Kings” and “the Desire of all Nations”; declared them to be His “vassals” and “emblems of His sovereignty”; disclaimed any intention of laying hands on their kingdoms; bade them forsake their palaces, and hasten to gain admittance into His Kingdom; extolled the king who would arise to aid His Cause as “the very eye of mankind”; and finally arraigned them for the things which had befallen Him at their hands.

In His Tablet to Queen Victoria He, moreover, invites these kings to hold fast to “the Lesser Peace,” since they had refused “the Most Great Peace”; exhorts them to be reconciled among themselves, to unite and to reduce their armaments; bids them refrain from laying excessive burdens on their subjects, who, He informs them, are their “wards” and “treasures”; enunciates the principle that should any one among them take up arms against another, all should rise against him; 207 and warns them not to deal with Him as the “King of Islám” and his ministers had dealt.

To the Emperor of the French, Napoleon III, the most prominent and influential monarch of his day in the West, designated by Him as the “Chief of Sovereigns,” and who, to quote His words, had “cast behind his back” the Tablet revealed for him in Adrianople, He, while a prisoner in the army barracks, addressed a second Tablet and transmitted it through the French agent in ‘Akká. In this He announces the coming of “Him Who is the Unconstrained,” whose purpose is to “quicken the world” and unite its peoples; unequivocally asserts that Jesus Christ was the Herald of His Mission; proclaims the fall of “the stars of the firmament of knowledge,” who have turned aside from Him; exposes that monarch’s insincerity; and clearly prophesies that his kingdom shall be “thrown into confusion,” that his “empire shall pass” from his hands, and that “commotions shall seize all the people in that land,” unless he arises to help the Cause of God and follow Him Who is His Spirit.

In memorable passages addressed to “the Rulers of America and the Presidents of the Republics therein” He, in His Kitáb-i-Aqdas, calls upon them to “adorn the temple of dominion with the ornament of justice and of the fear of God, and its head with the crown of remembrance” of their Lord; declares that “the Promised One” has been made manifest; counsels them to avail themselves of the “Day of God”; and bids them “bind with the hands of justice the broken” and “crush” the “oppressor” with “the rod of the commandments of their Lord, the Ordainer, the All-Wise.”

To Nicolaevitch Alexander II, the all-powerful Czar of Russia, He addressed, as He lay a prisoner in the barracks, an Epistle wherein He announces the advent of the promised Father, Whom “the tongue of Isaiah hath extolled,” and “with Whose name both the Torah and the Evangel were adorned”; commands him to “arise ... and summon the nations unto God”; warns him to beware lest his sovereignty withhold him from “Him Who is the Supreme Sovereign”; acknowledges the aid extended by his Ambassador in Tihrán; and cautions him not to forfeit the station ordained for him by God.

To Queen Victoria He, during that same period, addressed an Epistle in which He calls upon her to incline her ear to the voice of her Lord, the Lord of all mankind; bids her “cast away all that is on earth,” and set her heart towards her Lord, the Ancient of Days; asserts that “all that hath been mentioned in the Gospel hath been fulfilled”; assures her that God would reward her for having “forbidden
208 the trading in slaves,” were she to follow what has been sent unto her by Him; commends her for having “entrusted the reins of counsel into the hands of the representatives of the people”; and exhorts them to “regard themselves as the representatives of all that dwell on earth,” and to judge between men with “pure justice.”

In a celebrated passage addressed to William I, King of Prussia and newly-acclaimed emperor of a unified Germany, He, in His Kitáb-i-Aqdas, bids the sovereign hearken to His Voice, the Voice of God Himself; warns him to take heed lest his pride debar him from recognizing “the Day-Spring of Divine Revelation,” and admonishes him to “remember the one (Napoleon III) whose power transcended” his power, and who “went down to dust in great loss.” Furthermore, in that same Book, apostrophizing the “banks of the Rhine,” He predicts that “the swords of retribution” would be drawn against them, and that “the lamentations of Berlin” would be raised, though at that time she was “in conspicuous glory.”

In another notable passage of that same Book, addressed to Francis-Joseph, the Austrian Emperor and heir of the Holy Roman Empire, Bahá'u'lláh reproves the sovereign for having neglected to inquire about Him in the course of a pilgrimage to Jerusalem; takes God to witness that He had found him “clinging unto the Branch and heedless of the Root”; grieves to observe his waywardness; and bids him open his eyes and gaze on “the Light that shineth above this luminous Horizon.”

To ‘Alí Páshá, the Grand Vizir of the Sultán of Turkey He addressed, shortly after His arrival in ‘Akká, a second Tablet, in which He reprimands him for his cruelty “that hath made hell to blaze and the Spirit to lament”; recounts his acts of oppression; condemns him as one of those who, from time immemorial, have denounced the Prophets as stirrers of mischief; prophesies his downfall; expatiates on His own sufferings and those of His fellow-exiles; extolls their fortitude and detachment; predicts that God’s “wrathful anger” will seize him and his government, that “sedition will be stirred up” in their midst, and that their “dominions will be disrupted”; and affirms that were he to awake, he would abandon all his possessions, and would “choose to abide in one of the dilapidated rooms of this Most Great Prison.” In the Lawh-i-Fu’ád, in the course of His reference to the premature death of the Sultán’s Foreign Minister, Fu’ád Páshá, He thus confirms His above-mentioned prediction: “Soon will We dismiss the one (‘Alí Páshá) who was like unto him
209 and will lay hold on their Chief (Sultán Abdu’l-’Aziz) who ruleth the land, and I, verily, am the Almighty, the All-Compelling.”

No less outspoken and emphatic are the messages, some embodied in specific Tablets, others interspersed through His writings, which Bahá'u'lláh addressed to the world's ecclesiastical leaders of all denominations—messages in which He discloses, clearly and unreservedly, the claims of His Revelation, summons them to heed His call, and denounces, in certain specific cases, their perversity, their extreme arrogance and tyranny.

In immortal passages of His Kitáb-i-Aqdas and other Tablets He bids the entire company of these ecclesiastical leaders to “fear God,” to “rein in” their pens, “fling away idle fancies and imaginings, and turn then towards the Horizon of Certitude”; warns them to “weigh not the Book of God (Kitáb-i-Aqdas) with such standards and sciences as are current” amongst them; designates that same Book as the “Unerring Balance established amongst men”; laments over their blindness and waywardness; asserts His superiority in vision, insight, utterance and wisdom; proclaims His innate and God-given knowledge; cautions them not to “shut out the people by yet another veil,” after He Himself had “rent the veils asunder”; accuses them of having been “the cause of the repudiation of the Faith in its early days”; and adjures them to “peruse with fairness and justice that which hath been sent down” by Him, and to “nullify not the Truth” with the things they possess.

To Pope Pius IX, the undisputed head of the most powerful Church in Christendom, possessor of both temporal and spiritual authority, He, a Prisoner in the army barracks of the penal-colony of 'Akká, addressed a most weighty Epistle, in which He announces that “He Who is the Lord of Lords is come overshadowed with clouds,” and that “the Word which the Son concealed is made manifest.” He, moreover, warns him not to dispute with Him even as the Pharisees of old disputed with Jesus Christ; bids him leave his palaces unto such as desire them, “sell all the embellished ornaments” in his possession, “expend them in the path of God,” abandon his kingdom unto the kings, “arise ... amidst the peoples of the earth,” and summon them to His Faith. Regarding him as one of the suns of the heaven of God's names, He cautions him to guard himself lest “darkness spread its veils” over him; calls upon him to “exhort the kings” to “deal equitably with men”; and counsels him to walk in the footsteps of his Lord, and follow His example.

To the patriarchs of the Christian Church He issued a specific 210 summons in which He proclaims the coming of the Promised One; exhorts them to “fear God” and not to follow “the vain imaginings of the superstitious”; and directs them to lay aside the things they possess and “take fast hold of the Tablet of God by His sovereign power.” To the archbishops of that Church He similarly declares that “He Who is the Lord of all men hath appeared,” that they are “numbered with the dead,” and that great is the blessedness of him who is “stirred by the breeze of God, and hath arisen from amongst the dead in this perspicuous Name.” In passages addressed to its bishops He proclaims that “the Everlasting Father calleth aloud between earth and heaven,” pronounces them to be the fallen stars of the heaven of His knowledge, and affirms that His body “yearneth for the cross” and His head is

“eager for the spear in the path of the All-Merciful.” The concourse of Christian priests He bids “leave the bells,” and come forth from their churches; exhorts them to “proclaim aloud the Most Great Name among the nations”; assures them that whoever will summon men in His Name will “show forth that which is beyond the power of all that are on earth”; warns them that the “Day of Reckoning hath appeared”; and counsels them to turn with their hearts to their “Lord, the Forgiving, the Generous.” In numerous passages addressed to the “concourse of monks” He bids them not to seclude themselves in churches and cloisters, but to occupy themselves with that which will profit their souls and the souls of men; enjoins them to enter into wedlock; and affirms that if they choose to follow Him He will make them heirs of His Kingdom, and that if they transgress against Him, He will, in His long-suffering, endure it patiently.

And finally, in several passages addressed to the entire body of the followers of Jesus Christ He identifies Himself with the “Father” spoken of by Isaiah, with the “Comforter” Whose Covenant He Who is the Spirit (Jesus) had Himself established, and with the “Spirit of Truth” Who will guide them “into all truth”; proclaims His Day to be the Day of God; announces the conjunction of the river Jordan with the “Most Great Ocean”; asserts their heedlessness as well as His own claim to have opened unto them “the gates of the kingdom”; affirms that the promised “Temple” has been built “with the hands of the will” of their Lord, the Mighty, the Bounteous; bids them “rend the veils asunder,” and enter in His name His Kingdom; recalls the saying of Jesus to Peter; and assures them that, if they choose to follow Him, He will make them to become “quickeners of mankind.”

To the entire body of Muslim ecclesiastics Bahá'u'lláh specifically devoted innumerable passages in His Books and Tablets, wherein He, ²¹¹ in vehement language, denounces their cruelty; condemns their pride and arrogance; calls upon them to lay aside the things they possess, to hold their peace, and give ear to the words He has spoken; and asserts that, by reason of their deeds, “the exalted station of the people hath been abased, the standard of Islám hath been reversed, and its mighty throne hath fallen.” To the “concourse of Persian divines” He more particularly addressed His condemnatory words in which He stigmatizes their deeds, and prophesies that their “glory will be turned into the most wretched abasement,” and that they shall behold the punishment which will be inflicted upon them, “as decreed by God, the Ordainer, the All-Wise.”

To the Jewish people, He, moreover, announced that the Most Great Law has come, that “the Ancient Beauty ruleth upon the throne of David,” Who cries aloud and invokes His Name, that “from Zion hath appeared that which was hidden,” and that “from Jerusalem is heard the Voice of God, the One, the Incomparable, the Omniscient.”

To the “high priests” of the Zoroastrian Faith He, furthermore, proclaimed that “the Incomparable Friend” is manifest, that He “speaketh that wherein lieth salvation,” that “the Hand of Omnipotence is stretched forth from behind the

clouds,” that the tokens of His majesty and greatness are unveiled; and declared that “no man’s acts shall be acceptable in this day unless he forsaketh mankind and all that men possess, and setteth his face towards the Omnipotent One.”

Some of the weightiest passages of His Epistle to Queen Victoria are addressed to the members of the British Legislature, the Mother of Parliaments, as well as to the elected representatives of the peoples in other lands. In these He asserts that His purpose is to quicken the world and unite its peoples; refers to the treatment meted out to Him by His enemies; exhorts the legislators to “take counsel together,” and to concern themselves only “with that which profiteth mankind”; and affirms that the “sovereign remedy” for the “healing of all the world” is the “union of all its peoples in one universal Cause, one common Faith,” which can “in no wise be achieved except through the power of a skilled and all-powerful and inspired Physician.” He, moreover, in His Most Holy Book, has enjoined the selection of a single language and the adoption of a common script for all on earth to use, an injunction which, when carried out, would, as He Himself affirms in that Book, be one of the signs of the “coming of age of the human race.”

No less significant are the words addressed separately by Him to the “people of the Bayán,” to the wise men of the world, to its poets, to its men of letters, to its mystics and even to its tradesmen, in which 212 He exhorts them to be attentive to His voice, to recognize His Day, and to follow His bidding.

Such in sum are the salient features of the concluding utterances of that historic Proclamation, the opening notes of which were sounded during the latter part of Bahá'u'lláh's banishment to Adrianople, and which closed during the early years of His incarceration in the prison-fortress of 'Akká. Kings and emperors, severally and collectively; the chief magistrates of the Republics of the American continent; ministers and ambassadors; the Sovereign Pontiff himself; the Vicar of the Prophet of Islám; the royal Trustee of the Kingdom of the Hidden Imám; the monarchs of Christendom, its patriarchs, archbishops, bishops, priests and monks; the recognized leaders of both the Sunnî and Shí'ah sacerdotal orders; the high priests of the Zoroastrian religion; the philosophers, the ecclesiastical leaders, the wise men and the inhabitants of Constantinople—that proud seat of both the Sultanate and the Caliphate; the entire company of the professed adherents of the Zoroastrian, the Jewish, the Christian and Muslim Faiths; the people of the Bayán; the wise men of the world, its men of letters, its poets, its mystics, its tradesmen, the elected representatives of its peoples; His own countrymen—all have, at one time or another, in books, Epistles, and Tablets, been brought directly within the purview of the exhortations, the warnings, the appeals, the declarations and the prophecies which constitute the theme of His momentous summons to the leaders of mankind—a summons which stands unparalleled in the annals of any previous religion, and to which the messages directed by the Prophet of Islám to some of the rulers among His contemporaries alone offer a faint resemblance.

“Never since the beginning of the world,” Bahá'u'lláh Himself affirms, “hath the Message been so openly proclaimed.” “Each one of them,” He, specifically referring to the Tablets addressed by Him to the sovereigns of the earth—Tablets acclaimed by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as a “miracle”—has written, “hath been designated by a special name. The first hath been named ‘The Rumbling,’ the second ‘The Blow,’ the third ‘The Inevitable,’ the fourth ‘The Plain,’ the fifth ‘The Catastrophe,’ and the others ‘The Stunning Trumpet-Blast,’ ‘The Near Event,’ ‘The Great Terror,’ ‘The Trumpet,’ ‘The Bugle,’ and the like, so that all the peoples of the earth may know, of a certainty, and may witness, with outward and inner eyes, that He Who is the Lord of Names hath prevailed, and will continue to prevail, under all conditions, over all men.” The most important of these Tablets, together with the celebrated Súriy-i-Haykal (the Súrih of the Temple), He, ²¹³ moreover, ordered to be written in the shape of a pentacle, symbolizing the temple of man, and which He identified, when addressing the followers of the Gospel in one of His Tablets, with the “Temple” mentioned by the Prophet Zechariah, and designated as “the resplendent dawning-place of the All-Merciful,” and which “the hands of the power of Him Who is the Causer of Causes” had built.

Unique and stupendous as was this Proclamation, it proved to be but a prelude to a still mightier revelation of the creative power of its Author, and to what may well rank as the most signal act of His ministry—the promulgation of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. Alluded to in the Kitáb-i-Íqán; the principal repository of that Law which the Prophet Isaiah had anticipated, and which the writer of the Apocalypse had described as the “new heaven” and the “new earth,” as “the Tabernacle of God,” as the “Holy City,” as the “Bride,” the “New Jerusalem coming down from God,” this “Most Holy Book,” whose provisions must remain inviolate for no less than a thousand years, and whose system will embrace the entire planet, may well be regarded as the brightest emanation of the mind of Bahá'u'lláh, as the Mother Book of His Dispensation, and the Charter of His New World Order.

Revealed soon after Bahá'u'lláh had been transferred to the house of Údí Khammár (circa 1873), at a time when He was still encompassed by the tribulations that had afflicted Him, through the acts committed by His enemies and the professed adherents of His Faith, this Book, this treasury enshrining the priceless gems of His Revelation, stands out, by virtue of the principles it inculcates, the administrative institutions it ordains and the function with which it invests the appointed Successor of its Author, unique and incomparable among the world's sacred Scriptures. For, unlike the Old Testament and the Holy Books which preceded it, in which the actual precepts uttered by the Prophet Himself are non-existent; unlike the Gospels, in which the few sayings attributed to Jesus Christ afford no clear guidance regarding the future administration of the affairs of His Faith; unlike even the Qur'án which, though explicit in the laws and ordinances formulated by the Apostle of God, is silent on the all-important subject of the succession, the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, revealed from first to last by the Author of the

Dispensation Himself, not only preserves for posterity the basic laws and ordinances on which the fabric of His future World Order must rest, but ordains, in addition to the function of interpretation which it confers upon His Successor, the necessary institutions through ²¹⁴ which the integrity and unity of His Faith can alone be safeguarded.

In this Charter of the future world civilization its Author—at once the Judge, the Lawgiver, the Unifier and Redeemer of mankind—announces to the kings of the earth the promulgation of the “Most Great Law”; pronounces them to be His vassals; proclaims Himself the “King of Kings”; disclaims any intention of laying hands on their kingdoms; reserves for Himself the right to “seize and possess the hearts of men”; warns the world’s ecclesiastical leaders not to weigh the “Book of God” with such standards as are current amongst them; and affirms that the Book itself is the “Unerring Balance” established amongst men. In it He formally ordains the institution of the “House of Justice,” defines its functions, fixes its revenues, and designates its members as the “Men of Justice,” the “Deputies of God,” the “Trustees of the All-Merciful,” alludes to the future Center of His Covenant, and invests Him with the right of interpreting His holy Writ; anticipates by implication the institution of Guardianship; bears witness to the revolutionizing effect of His World Order; enunciates the doctrine of the “Most Great Infallibility” of the Manifestation of God; asserts this infallibility to be the inherent and exclusive right of the Prophet; and rules out the possibility of the appearance of another Manifestation ere the lapse of at least one thousand years.

In this Book He, moreover, prescribes the obligatory prayers; designates the time and period of fasting; prohibits congregational prayer except for the dead; fixes the Qiblih; institutes the Huqúqu’lláh (Right of God); formulates the law of inheritance; ordains the institution of the Mashriqu’l-Adhkár; establishes the Nineteen Day Feasts, the Bahá’í festivals and the Intercalary Days; abolishes the institution of priesthood; prohibits slavery, asceticism, mendicancy, monasticism, penance, the use of pulpits and the kissing of hands; prescribes monogamy; condemns cruelty to animals, idleness and sloth, backbiting and calumny; censures divorce; interdicts gambling, the use of opium, wine and other intoxicating drinks; specifies the punishments for murder, arson, adultery and theft; stresses the importance of marriage and lays down its essential conditions; imposes the obligation of engaging in some trade or profession, exalting such occupation to the rank of worship; emphasizes the necessity of providing the means for the education of children; and lays upon every person the duty of writing a testament and of strict obedience to one’s government.

Apart from these provisions Bahá’u’lláh exhorts His followers to consort, with amity and concord and without discrimination, with ²¹⁵ the adherents of all religions; warns them to guard against fanaticism, sedition, pride, dispute and contention; inculcates upon them immaculate cleanliness, strict truthfulness, spotless chastity, trustworthiness; hospitality, fidelity, courtesy, forbearance, justice

and fairness; counsels them to be “even as the fingers of one hand and the limbs of one body”; calls upon them to arise and serve His Cause; and assures them of His undoubted aid. He, furthermore, dwells upon the instability of human affairs; declares that true liberty consists in man’s submission to His commandments; cautions them not to be indulgent in carrying out His statutes; prescribes the twin inseparable duties of recognizing the “Dayspring of God’s Revelation” and of observing all the ordinances revealed by Him, neither of which, He affirms, is acceptable without the other.

The significant summons issued to the Presidents of the Republics of the American continent to seize their opportunity in the Day of God and to champion the cause of justice; the injunction to the members of parliaments throughout the world, urging the adoption of a universal script and language; His warnings to William I, the conqueror of Napoleon III; the reproof He administers to Francis Joseph, the Emperor of Austria; His reference to “the lamentations of Berlin” in His apostrophe to “the banks of the Rhine”; His condemnation of “the throne of tyranny” established in Constantinople, and His prediction of the extinction of its “outward splendor” and of the tribulations destined to overtake its inhabitants; the words of cheer and comfort He addresses to His native city, assuring her that God had chosen her to be “the source of the joy of all mankind”; His prophecy that “the voice of the heroes of Khurásán” will be raised in glorification of their Lord; His assertion that men “endued with mighty valor” will be raised up in Kirmán who will make mention of Him; and finally, His magnanimous assurance to a perfidious brother who had afflicted Him with such anguish, that an “ever-forgiving, all-bounteous” God would forgive him his iniquities were he only to repent—all these further enrich the contents of a Book designated by its Author as “the source of true felicity,” as the “Unerring Balance,” as the “Straight Path” and as the “quickener of mankind.”

The laws and ordinances that constitute the major theme of this Book, Bahá'u'lláh, moreover, has specifically characterized as “the breath of life unto all created things,” as “the mightiest stronghold,” as the “fruits” of His “Tree,” as “the highest means for the maintenance of order in the world and the security of its peoples,” as “the lamps of His wisdom and loving-providence,” as “the sweet smelling savor of ²¹⁶ His garment,” as the “keys” of His “mercy” to His creatures. “This Book,” He Himself testifies, “is a heaven which We have adorned with the stars of Our commandments and prohibitions.” “Blessed the man,” He, moreover, has stated, “who will read it, and ponder the verses sent down in it by God, the Lord of Power, the Almighty. Say, O men! Take hold of it with the hand of resignation... By My life! It hath been sent down in a manner that amazeth the minds of men. Verily, it is My weightiest testimony unto all people, and the proof of the All-Merciful unto all who are in heaven and all who are on earth.” And again: “Blessed the palate that savoreth its sweetness, and the perceiving eye that recognizeth that which is treasured therein, and the understanding heart that

comprehendeth its allusions and mysteries. By God! Such is the majesty of what hath been revealed therein, and so tremendous the revelation of its veiled allusions that the loins of utterance shake when attempting their description.” And finally: “In such a manner hath the Kitáb-i-Aqdas been revealed that it attracteth and embraceth all the divinely appointed Dispensations. Blessed those who peruse it! Blessed those who apprehend it! Blessed those who meditate upon it! Blessed those who ponder its meaning! So vast is its range that it hath encompassed all men ere their recognition of it. Erelong will its sovereign power, its pervasive influence and the greatness of its might be manifested on earth.”

The formulation by Bahá'u'lláh, in His Kitáb-i-Aqdas, of the fundamental laws of His Dispensation was followed, as His Mission drew to a close, by the enunciation of certain precepts and principles which lie at the very core of His Faith, by the reaffirmation of truths He had previously proclaimed, by the elaboration and elucidation of some of the laws He had already laid down, by the revelation of further prophecies and warnings, and by the establishment of subsidiary ordinances designed to supplement the provisions of His Most Holy Book. These were recorded in unnumbered Tablets, which He continued to reveal until the last days of His earthly life, among which the “*Ishráqát*” (Splendors), the “*Bishárát*” (Glad Tidings), the “*Tarazát*” (Ornaments), the “*Tajalliyát*” (Effulgences), the “*Kalímát-i-Firdawsíyyih*” (Words of Paradise), the “*Lawh-i-Aqdas*” (Most Holy Tablet), the “*Lawh-i-Dunyá*” (Tablet of the World), the “*Lawh-i-Maqsúd*” (Tablet of Maqsúd), are the most noteworthy. These Tablets—mighty and final effusions of His indefatigable pen—must rank among the choicest fruits which His mind has yielded, and mark the consummation of His forty-year-long ministry.

Of the principles enshrined in these Tablets the most vital of ²¹⁷ them all is the principle of the oneness and wholeness of the human race, which may well be regarded as the hall-mark of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation and the pivot of His teachings. Of such cardinal importance is this principle of unity that it is expressly referred to in the Book of His Covenant, and He unreservedly proclaims it as the central purpose of His Faith. “We, verily,” He declares, “have come to unite and weld together all that dwell on earth.” “So potent is the light of unity,” He further states, “that it can illuminate the whole earth.” “At one time,” He has written with reference to this central theme of His Revelation, “We spoke in the language of the lawgiver; at another in that of the truth seeker and the mystic, and yet Our supreme purpose and highest wish hath always been to disclose the glory and sublimity of this station.” Unity, He states, is the goal that “excelleth every goal” and an aspiration which is “the monarch of all aspirations.” “The world,” He proclaims, “is but one country, and mankind its citizens.” He further affirms that the unification of mankind, the last stage in the evolution of humanity towards maturity is inevitable, that “soon will the present day order be rolled up, and a new one spread out in its stead,” that “the whole earth is now in a state of pregnancy,” that “the day is approaching when it will have yielded its noblest fruits, when from it will have

sprung forth the loftiest trees, the most enchanting blossoms, the most heavenly blessings.” He deplores the defectiveness of the prevailing order, exposes the inadequacy of patriotism as a directing and controlling force in human society, and regards the “love of mankind” and service to its interests as the worthiest and most laudable objects of human endeavor. He, moreover, laments that “the vitality of men’s belief in God is dying out in every land,” that the “face of the world” is turned towards “waywardness and unbelief”; proclaims religion to be “a radiant light and an impregnable stronghold for the protection and welfare of the peoples of the world” and “the chief instrument for the establishment of order in the world”; affirms its fundamental purpose to be the promotion of union and concord amongst men; warns lest it be made “a source of dissension, of discord and hatred”; commands that its principles be taught to children in the schools of the world, in a manner that would not be productive of either prejudice or fanaticism; attributes “the waywardness of the ungodly” to the “decline of religion”; and predicts “convulsions” of such severity as to “cause the limbs of mankind to quake.”

The principle of collective security He unreservedly urges; recommends the reduction in national armaments; and proclaims as necessary ²¹⁸ and inevitable the convening of a world gathering at which the kings and rulers of the world will deliberate for the establishment of peace among the nations.

Justice He extols as “the light of men” and their “guardian,” as “the revealer of the secrets of the world of being, and the standard-bearer of love and bounty”; declares its radiance to be incomparable; affirms that upon it must depend “the organization of the world and the tranquillity of mankind.” He characterizes its “two pillars”—“reward and punishment”—as “the sources of life” to the human race; warns the peoples of the world to bestir themselves in anticipation of its advent; and prophesies that, after an interval of great turmoil and grievous injustice, its day-star will shine in its full splendor and glory.

He, furthermore, inculcates the principle of “moderation in all things”; declares that whatsoever, be it “Liberty, civilization and the like,” “passeth beyond the limits of moderation” must “exercise a pernicious influence upon men”; observes that western civilization has gravely perturbed and alarmed the peoples of the world; and predicts that the day is approaching when the “flame” of a civilization “carried to excess” “will devour the cities.”

Consultation He establishes as one of the fundamental principles of His Faith; describes it as “the lamp of guidance,” as “the bestower of understanding,” and as one of the two “luminaries” of the “heaven of Divine wisdom.” Knowledge, He states, is “as wings to man’s life and a ladder for his ascent”; its acquisition He regards as “incumbent upon every one”; considers “arts, crafts and sciences” to be conducive to the exaltation of the world of being; commends the wealth acquired through crafts and professions; acknowledges the indebtedness of the peoples of the world to scientists and craftsmen; and discourages the study of such sciences as are unprofitable to men, and “begin with words and end with words.”

The injunction to “consort with all men in a spirit of friendliness and fellowship” He further emphasizes, and recognizes such association to be conducive to “union and concord,” which, He affirms, are the establishers of order in the world and the quickeners of nations. The necessity of adopting a universal tongue and script He repeatedly stresses; deplores the waste of time involved in the study of divers languages; affirms that with the adoption of such a language and script the whole earth will be considered as “one city and one land”; and claims to be possessed of the knowledge of both, and ready to impart it to any one who might seek it from Him.

To the trustees of the House of Justice He assigns the duty of ²¹⁹ legislating on matters not expressly provided in His writings, and promises that God will “inspire them with whatsoever He willeth.” The establishment of a constitutional form of government, in which the ideals of republicanism and the majesty of kingship, characterized by Him as “one of the signs of God,” are combined, He recommends as a meritorious achievement; urges that special regard be paid to the interests of agriculture; and makes specific reference to “the swiftly appearing newspapers,” describes them as “the mirror of the world” and as “an amazing and potent phenomenon,” and prescribes to all who are responsible for their production the duty to be sanctified from malice, passion and prejudice, to be just and fair-minded, to be painstaking in their inquiries, and ascertain all the facts in every situation.

The doctrine of the Most Great Infallibility He further elaborates; the obligation laid on His followers to “behave towards the government of the country in which they reside with loyalty, honesty and truthfulness,” He reaffirms; the ban imposed upon the waging of holy war and the destruction of books He reemphasizes; and He singles out for special praise men of learning and wisdom, whom He extols as “eyes” to the body of mankind, and as the “greatest gifts” conferred upon the world.

Nor should a review of the outstanding features of Bahá'u'lláh's writings during the latter part of His banishment to 'Akká fail to include a reference to the Lawh-i-Hikmat (Tablet of Wisdom), in which He sets forth the fundamentals of true philosophy, or to the Tablet of Visitation revealed in honor of the Imám Husayn, whose praises He celebrates in glowing language; or to the “Questions and Answers” which elucidates the laws and ordinances of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas; or to the “Lawh-i-Burhán” (Tablet of the Proof) in which the acts perpetrated by Shaykh Muhammad-Báqir, surnamed “Dhi'b” (Wolf), and Mír Muhammad-Husayn, the Imám-Jum'ih of Isfahán, surnamed “Raqshá” (She-Serpent), are severely condemned; or to the Lawh-i-Karmil (Tablet of Carmel) in which the Author significantly makes mention of “the City of God that hath descended from heaven,” and prophecies that “erelong will God sail His Ark” upon that mountain, and “will manifest the people of Bahá.” Finally, mention must be made of His Epistle to Shaykh Muhammad-Taquí, surnamed “Ibn-i-Dhi'b” (Son of the Wolf), the last outstanding Tablet revealed by the pen of Bahá'u'lláh, in which He calls upon that

rapacious priest to repent of his acts, quotes some of the most characteristic and celebrated passages of His own writings, and adduces proofs establishing the validity of His Cause. 220

With this book, revealed about one year prior to His ascension, the prodigious achievement as author of a hundred volumes, repositories of the priceless pearls of His Revelation, may be said to have practically terminated—volumes replete with unnumbered exhortations, revolutionizing principles, world-shaping laws and ordinances, dire warnings and portentous prophecies, with soul-uplifting prayers and meditations, illuminating commentaries and interpretations, impassioned discourses and homilies, all interspersed with either addresses or references to kings, to emperors and to ministers, of both the East and the West, to ecclesiastics of divers denominations, and to leaders in the intellectual, political, literary, mystical, commercial and humanitarian spheres of human activity.

“We, verily,” wrote Bahá'u'lláh, surveying, in the evening of His life, from His Most Great Prison, the entire range of this vast and weighty Revelation, “have not fallen short of Our duty to exhort men, and to deliver that whereunto I was bidden by God, the Almighty, the All-Praised.” “Is there any excuse,” He further has stated, “left for any one in this Revelation? No, by God, the Lord of the Mighty Throne! My signs have encompassed the earth, and my power enveloped all mankind.”

[« Previous](#) | [Contents](#) | [Next »](#)

[Contact Us](#) | [About This Site](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Privacy](#) | [Terms of Use](#)
Copyright 2003-8. Bahá'í International Community. All Rights Reserved.