

# *The 22nd Hasan M. Balyuzi Memorial Lecture*

## The Ten Year Crusade

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### *Abstract*

This essay will explore how Shoghi Effendi prepared the Bahá'í world for the Ten Year Crusade. It will examine the twenty-seven objectives he formulated and will explain the impediments which prevented the implementation of some of those objectives. Finally, it will consider the place of the Crusade in history as well as future developments destined to flow from it, as seen by Shoghi Effendi.

### *Résumé*

Cet essai explore comment Shoghi Effendi a préparé le monde bahá'í à la Croisade de dix ans. Il examine les vingt-sept objectifs formulés par Shoghi Effendi et explique les facteurs qui ont empêché la mise en œuvre de certains d'entre eux. Enfin, l'article examine la place de la Croisade de dix ans dans l'histoire et les progrès futurs qui en découleront, selon la vision de Shoghi Effendi.

### *Resumen*

Este ensayo sondea cómo Shoghi Effendi preparó al mundo bahá'í para la Cruzada de Diez Años. Examinará los veintisiete objetivos que formuló, y explicará los obstáculos que impidieron la implementación de algunos de aquellos objetivos. Finalmente, considerará el lugar de la Cruzada al marco de la historia, como también acontecimientos futuros destinados como también resultantes de ese esfuerzo, según previstos por Shoghi Effendi.

It is not difficult to differentiate the developments achieved under the decade-long Plan launched by Shoghi Effendi—the Ten Year Crusade

(1953–1963)—from the activities in the Bahá'í world that took place prior to the inception of that Crusade. A review of Shoghi Effendi's letters during his thirty-six years of Guardianship clearly reveals that he had been preparing the Bahá'í world for this high point in the process of the advancement of the Faith. These letters show distinctly that the Ten-Year Plan had been destined to be a culmination of the processes at work ever since the inauguration of the Formative Age, and was meant to be a spring-board for the unimaginably glorious victories to be won throughout the epochs and stages ahead.

I will examine several aspects of the Ten Year Crusade. First, I will review the relationship of the Ten Year Crusade to the Guardian's hopes and aspirations during his ministry, taking careful note of the manner in which Shoghi Effendi anticipated the launching of the Ten-Year Plan. The nature and scope of the guidance given by Shoghi Effendi almost up to the midway point of the Crusade must be discussed, as well as the twenty-seven objectives of the Ten-Year Plan and the extent to which each was executed under the prevailing circumstances; we shall also see that subsidiary National Plans and subordinate goals were added to the objectives of the Crusade. Messages of Shoghi Effendi written to National Spiritual Assemblies during the last six months of his life will be reviewed. We will assess the importance of the Ten-Year Plan, as it was viewed by Shoghi Effendi, in the process of the evolution of the Bahá'í Faith and of humanity. Finally, we will glance at the relationship of the Ten Year Crusade to the Guardian's hopes and aspirations during his ministry.

#### THE TEN YEAR CRUSADE AND THE GUARDIAN'S ASPIRATIONS

After the lapse of some two decades from the beginning of the Formative Age, and, more precisely, twenty-three years after the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Shoghi Effendi announced to the Bahá'í world that the first epoch of the Formative Age had been concluded. His writings unmistakably point out that these twenty-three years comprised two stages of sixteen years and seven years, respectively. The first sixteen years witnessed the formation and consolidation of Spiritual Assemblies, both Local and National.

During this time the Guardian was able to establish ten National Spiritual Assemblies in the world, including two within the confines of the former Soviet Union: the National Assembly of Turkistan, with its seat in 'Ishqábád; and that of the Caucasus, with its seat in Baku.

The fourteen Tablets of the Divine Plan had been revealed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in 1916 and 1917, after which all fourteen Tablets were sent to the United States. The vision of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, unveiled in these Tablets, then lay in abeyance for twenty years. At Ridván 1937 Shoghi Effendi felt that the time was ripe for the American Bahá'í community, whom he had described as the "envied custodians of a Divine Plan" (*Citadel of Faith* 120), to be charged with the responsibility of executing, under his direct guidance, the first American Seven-Year Plan, which was the first collective teaching enterprise in the history of our Faith. The year 1937 also opened, according to Shoghi Effendi, the first epoch in the evolution of the Divine Plan of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. The objectives of the first Seven-Year Plan were ambitious: the completion of the exterior of the Temple in Wilmette; the formation of a Spiritual Assembly in every state of the United States, including Alaska, and in nine provinces of Canada; and the establishment of a center in each republic of Latin America and the Caribbean. The Plan's conclusion coincided with the celebrations of the Centenary of the Declaration of the Báb in 1944, which marked the end of the first Bahá'í century.

The Bahá'í world entered the second Bahá'í century with the proud knowledge that the first epoch of the Formative Age had terminated, that the light of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings had now reached nearly eighty countries, that the Bahá'í community had achieved a major step in the construction of the Mother Temple of the West, and that this community was now ready to further extend the range of its institutions and consolidate its administrative structure. Shoghi Effendi had been patiently and systematically educating and preparing the Bahá'í world for the implementation of the two broad objectives he had in mind for his unique ministry. The first was to strengthen the foundations of the structure of the Administrative Order, both locally and nationally, so that it could sustain the weight of the dome of that structure which he repeatedly identified in

his letters, in English and in Persian, as the Universal House of Justice. The second broad objective was to train the nascent institutions of the Faith in the concept of collective action aimed at executing step-by-step each and every wish expressed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in the Tablets of the Divine Plan. In 1946, following two years of respite given to the North American Bahá'í community, the Guardian called upon it to initiate its second Seven-Year Plan—a Plan designed to end with the Centenary of the Birth of the Bahá'í Revelation in 1953. The Plan had four goals:

1. The consolidation of the victories won throughout America, involving a multiplication of Bahá'í centers and a bold proclamation of the Faith
2. The completion of the interior ornamentation of the House of Worship
3. The formation of three National Assemblies in Canada, Central America, and South America
4. The initiation of a systematic teaching activity in the European continent, aiming at the establishment of Local Assemblies on the Iberian Peninsula and in the Low Countries, the Scandinavian States, and Italy

During this period the Guardian simultaneously encouraged the other National Assemblies to adopt teaching and consolidation goals. In one of his letters he described these enterprises as “accessory plans” supplementing the second Seven-Year Plan of the North American continent (see Table 1).

In the course of the seven years under discussion, four new National Assemblies were formed, the fourth being the Italo-Swiss National Spiritual Assembly. With the exception of this Italo-Swiss National Assembly, which was established in the very year the Ten Year Crusade was launched, each of the other three National Assemblies, as soon as they were formed, was given a Teaching Plan by the Guardian. Canada (1948) had a Five-Year Plan, 1948–1953; Central America (1951)

National Plans	Duration
Australia and New Zealand	Six-Year Plan, 1947–1953
British Isles	Six-Year Plan, 1944–1950 Two-Year Plan, 1951–1953
Egypt and Sudan	Five-Year Plan, 1948–1953
Germany and Austria	Five-Year Plan, 1948–1953
India, Pakistan, and Burma	Four-and-a-half-Year Plan, January 1946–July 1950 Nineteen-Month Plan, September 1951–April 1953
Iraq	Three-Year Plan, 1947–1950
Persia	Forty-five-Month Plan, October 1946–July 1950 <i>concurrent with</i> Women's Four-Year Plan, 1946–1950

**Table 1.** National Plans outside the North American continent

formulated its One-Year Plan, 1952–1953; and South America adopted its Two-Year Plan, 1951–1953. By *Riḍván* 1953, the beloved Guardian had twelve National Spiritual Assemblies operating under his guidance. When he launched the Ten Year Crusade, he referred to these twelve National Assemblies as the twelve “generals” (*Messages* 153) of the Crusade.

#### ANTICIPATING THE LAUNCHING OF THE TEN-YEAR PLAN

As far back as 1948, in his message to the American Bahá'í community dated 8 November, the Guardian made reference to future tasks which would be assigned before the end of the first epoch in the evolution of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Divine Plan; he could see this end would have to fall in 1963. Let us recall that the following words were written during the

second year of America's second Seven-Year Plan: "[U]pon the outcome of the assiduous efforts now being collectively exerted . . . must solely depend the timing as well as the nature of the tasks which must be successfully carried out ere the closing of an epoch of such transcendent brightness and glory. . . ." (*Citadel of Faith* 62). Over two years later, on the twenty-fifth of February, 1951, referring to the uniqueness of the African Campaign, which linked the administrative machinery of five National Spiritual Assemblies, he wrote: "*On the success of this enterprise, unprecedented in its scope, unique in its character and immense in its spiritual potentialities, must depend the initiation, at a later period in the Formative Age of the Faith, of undertakings embracing within their range all National Assemblies functioning throughout the Bahá'í World. . . .*" (*Unfolding Destiny* 261).<sup>1</sup> From these two quotations we can confidently draw the conclusion that the "future tasks" referred to in 1948, and the worldwide "undertakings" mentioned in the second passage, were hints by him of the forthcoming rise of the Orb of the Ten Year Crusade above the horizon of the community of the Most Great Name.

Another act on the part of Shoghi Effendi was his cablegram of 30 November 1951 in which he announced that the celebrations of the Holy Year would be marked by the convocation of four Intercontinental Conferences. These conferences would inaugurate the "long anticipated intercontinental stage in the administrative evolution of the Faith" (*Messages* 16). These conferences had to be successively held in Kampala (Uganda) for Africa; Wilmette (United States) for the Americas; Stockholm (Sweden) for Europe; and New Delhi (India) for Asia and Australasia. In his Ridván message of 1952 addressed to the Bahá'í community in North America, Shoghi Effendi first disclosed to the Bahá'í world that a Ten-Year Plan was in store. In this message, he gave the glad tidings that the goals of the Plan would be announced in the four projected Intercontinental Conferences.

In a letter in English addressing the entire Bahá'í world, the Guardian not only stressed the highly significant nature of the Plan which he was intending to announce to the Bahá'í world, but he lifted the veil on its salient features and made a poignant appeal to every Bahá'í residing anywhere

on the planet to consider it a binding obligation to lend his or her share in bringing this forthcoming Plan to a triumphant conclusion. The message appeared in print in nine pages. I will quote only the last part where his fervent appeal was made:

Under whatever conditions, the dearly loved, the divinely sustained, the onward marching legions of the army of Bahá'u'lláh may be laboring, in whatever theatre they may operate, in whatever climes they may struggle . . . I direct my impassioned appeal [to them] to obey, as befits His warriors, the summons of the Lord of Hosts, and prepare for that Day of Days when His victorious battalions will, to the accompaniment of hozannas from the invisible angels in the Abhá Kingdom, celebrate the hour of final victory. . . .

No matter how long the period that separates them from ultimate victory; however arduous the task; however formidable the exertions demanded of them; however dark the days which mankind, perplexed and sorely-tried, must, in its hour of travail, traverse; however severe the tests with which they who are to redeem its fortunes will be confronted; however afflictive the darts which their present enemies, as well as those whom Providence, will, through His mysterious dispensations raise up from within or from without, may rain upon them, however grievous the ordeal of temporary separation from the heart and nerve-center of their Faith which future unforeseeable disturbances may impose upon them, I adjure them, by the precious blood that flowed in such great profusion, by the lives of the unnumbered saints and heroes who were immolated, by the supreme, the glorious sacrifice of the Prophet-Herald of our Faith, by the tribulations which its Founder, Himself, willingly underwent, so that His Cause might live, His Order might redeem a shattered world and its glory might suffuse the entire planet—I adjure them, as this solemn hour draws nigh, to resolve never to flinch, never to hesitate, never to relax, until each and every objective in the Plans to be proclaimed, at a later date, has been fully consummated. (*Messages* 37–39)

A little over two months after this message was sent, on the thirtieth of June, 1952, addressing once again, in English, Bahá'ís in all lands, he disclosed the unprecedented global dimensions of the great Plan ahead, and he called on them, individually and collectively, to commit themselves to its execution.

I remember the deep emotion of those days in 1952 when these messages were received. The messages had an electrifying impact on the minds and hearts of the friends. Indeed, a few of us even thought that the Plan Shoghi Effendi had in store might be considered as part of his Will and Testament, for he refers to the grievous "ordeal of temporary separation from the heart and nerve-center" (*Messages* 39) of the Faith. In October 1952, as the Holy Year was inaugurated, Shoghi Effendi sent yet another message in English to the entire Bahá'í world. In this message he more specifically defined, however briefly, the goals to be achieved over a period of ten years. The message ended once again with a heart-rending entreaty to the friends to lend their full support to the Plan soon to be announced.

While this preparation was going on, and during the years just preceding it, Shoghi Effendi turned his attention to the need simultaneously to expand the institutions at the World Centre and to broaden the base of their operation. His first decision was to inaugurate the construction of the superstructure of the Shrine of the Báb in the heart of Mount Carmel. As soon as that project was underway, he created the International Bahá'í Council, introducing it as the forerunner of the Universal House of Justice. This act was soon followed by the appointment of the first contingent of the Hands of the Cause of God, four of whom were designated by Him as Hands residing in the Holy Land. A short time later, a second contingent raised the number of these distinguished Stewards of the Faith to nineteen. He thereafter created the institution of the Auxiliary Boards, one for each continent. Through the instrumentality of the International Bahá'í Council and in negotiation with the newly established State of Israel, he embarked upon acquiring needed Bahá'í historic sites and furnishing buildings associated with the



exile of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and purchasing vitally required properties surrounding the Báb's Shrine in Haifa, as well as land adjacent to the Most Holy Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh in Bahjí. He also arranged for a design to be made for the future Temple on Mount Carmel. While these developments were in progress, he called on the British National Spiritual Assembly to initiate a Two-Year Plan for the opening of virgin territories. Almost simultaneously, he charged another four National Spiritual Assemblies to collaborate with the British Assembly in their African Campaign. This initiative he hailed as a significant step: indeed, it was a milestone, being the first inter-National Assembly project involving the collaborative effort of five National Spiritual Assemblies of the Bahá'í world.

#### THE NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE GUARDIAN'S GUIDANCE

Early in 1953 Shoghi Effendi set himself the task of spelling out—internationally, continentally, and nationally—the objectives and goals that the friends throughout the world were expecting to hear. On the international level, Shoghi Effendi set forth these goals and objectives in his message to the Intercontinental Conference for the Western Hemisphere. He simultaneously released an overarching document in twenty-seven pages in which he listed, under twenty-four headings, the goals and objectives defined by him for the Bahá'í world over a decade-long Crusade unprecedented in the annals of our precious Faith. He arranged for this document to be published in the United States and in Britain as a reference booklet for the Bahá'ís and accessible to the general public. On the continental level, he included in his message to each of the four conferences the major objectives that concerned that continent. On the national level, he wrote twelve messages addressing each of the newly designated “generals,” announcing to them their particular share of the major objectives. In these messages he incorporated supplementary objectives appropriate to each national or regional area. These supplementary objectives will be discussed in more detail below.

In his messages immediately before the inception of the Crusade and until the end of his life—a period coinciding with the first four-and-a-half years of the Crusade—he described this collective enterprise of the Bahá'í world in such terms as “a world-embracing Crusade,” “a world-encompassing Crusade,” “a world-girdling Crusade,” “an epochal, global, spiritual, decade-long Crusade,” “this momentous and challenging Crusade,” “this irresistibly unfolding Crusade,” “this pre-eminent Crusade,” “this incomparably glorious Crusade,” “this unspeakably potent Crusade,” “this systematic World Crusade,” “this prodigious Crusade,” “this gigantic, divinely propelled Crusade,” “this soul-stirring Crusade,” “this World Crusade which in its magnitude and potentialities transcends any previous collective Bahá'í enterprise.” Alongside the soul-uplifting titles that he conferred upon this Crusade, Shoghi Effendi continued to send inspirational messages in both Persian and English, reminding the friends everywhere of the uniquely majestic and infinitely glorious characteristics of this Crusade. It is obviously impractical to review these messages in detail. However, the following paragraph from his message dated 4 May 1953 gives us an illustration of the fervor with which Shoghi Effendi inspired the hearts and souls of the friends and raised their expectations:

The avowed, the primary aim of this Spiritual Crusade is none other than the conquest of the citadels of men's hearts. The theatre of its operations is the entire planet. Its duration a whole decade. Its commencement synchronizes with the centenary of the birth of Bahá'u'lláh's Mission. Its culmination will coincide with the centenary of the Declaration of that same Mission. The agencies assisting in its conduct are the nascent administrative institutions of a steadily evolving divinely appointed order. Its driving force is the energizing influence generated by the Revelation heralded by the Báb and proclaimed by Bahá'u'lláh. Its Marshal is none other than the Author of the Divine Plan. Its standard-bearers are the Hands of the Cause of God appointed in every continent of the globe. Its generals are the twelve national spiritual assemblies participating in the execution

of its design. Its vanguard is the chief executors of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s master plan, their allies and associates. Its legions are the rank and file of believers standing behind these same twelve national assemblies and sharing in the global task embracing the American, the European, the African, the Asiatic and Australian fronts. The charter directing its course is the immortal Tablets that have flowed from the pen of the Center of the Covenant Himself. The armor with which its onrushing hosts have been invested is the glad tidings of God’s own message in this day, the principles underlying the order proclaimed by His Messenger, and the laws and ordinances governing His Dispensation. The battle cry animating its heroes and heroines is the cry of Yá-Bahá’u’l-Abhá, Yá ‘Alíyyu’l-A’lá. (*Messages* 152–53)

Shoghi Effendi upheld orderliness when executing undertakings at the World Centre or directing projects under the aegis of National Spiritual Assemblies. We should not be surprised, therefore, that in implementing the Ten Year Crusade he adopted the same approach. He divided the first five years of the Crusade into three phases: the first spanned one year, while the other two were designed to cover two years each. He focused the attention of the friends on the themes and requirements of each of these three phases.

The first phase, from 1953 to 1954, was to be characterized by the opening of as many of the 131 virgin territories as possible. To encourage the friends to arise, he announced on 28 May 1953, on the occasion of the Anniversary of the Ascension of Bahá’u’lláh, that he was planning to open an illuminated “Roll of Honor,” which would carry the names of the pioneers who would arise and, as he stated, “capture the unsundered territories of the entire planet” (*Messages* 49). Upon each of these spiritual conquerors would be conferred the title of “Knight of Bahá’u’lláh.” During this first phase, seven eighths of the territories mentioned in his Plan were opened. During the second phase, from 1954 to 1956, forty-three National Ḥaẓíratu’l-Quds and ten Temple sites were acquired worldwide. During the third phase, from 1956 to 1958, sixteen new

National Spiritual Assemblies were formed: three in 1956 in Africa and thirteen in the following year in the other four continents. Furthermore, during this last phase, all but three National Ḥazíratu'l-Quds, all but one Temple site, and all but two endowments were acquired, and the number of localities where Bahá'ís resided reached the impressive number of 4,500.

The second five years of the Plan spanned 1958 to 1963 and focused on completing the rest of the vital objectives assigned by him under the Plan.

### THE TWENTY-SEVEN OBJECTIVES OF THE PLAN

Shoghi Effendi, in his message of 8 October 1952, announced to the Bahá'í world that the forthcoming Crusade would have four broad objectives (*Messages* 41). The first was the development of the institutions at the World Centre. The second was the consolidation, through carefully devised measures in the home fronts, of the twelve administrative bases for the operation of the Plan. The third focused on the consolidation of all territories already open to the Faith. Fourth, and finally, the Plan aimed at the opening of chief virgin territories on the planet.

As to the specific objectives of the Ten Year Crusade, these were twenty-seven in number. Ten of these he had set aside as goals to be accomplished at the World Centre of the Faith. These goals related to the properties and endowments in Bahjí and Haifa, the establishment of Israel branches of National Assemblies, the development of the institution of the Hands of the Cause and of the International Bahá'í Council, the reinforcement of ties with the United Nations, the codification of the laws of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, and the holding of a World Congress at the end of the Crusade. The remaining seventeen specific objectives were divided among the twelve participating National Spiritual Assemblies.

I have already indicated that Shoghi Effendi attached particular importance to the African Campaign because it involved the participation of five National Assemblies in the teaching work of one continent. This development was hailed by him as a prelude to the next stage of international

Bahá'í interaction through the collaboration of the administrative machinery of all the National Assemblies of the Bahá'í world. He therefore divided the seventeen remaining specific objectives among the twelve existing National Assemblies in such a way as to make pioneering and teaching activities dependent upon the collaboration of six National Spiritual Assemblies in Africa, six in the combined zone of Asia and Australasia, and four each in Europe and the Western Hemisphere. This meant that seven National Assemblies would each collaborate in two continents, four Assemblies in one continent, and the United States National Spiritual Assembly and its community in all continents, since they were the appointed chief executors of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Divine Plan.

I will now review the twenty-seven specific objectives in the wording used by the Guardian and will add to his statement, in each case, my comment explaining to what extent that objective was realized.<sup>2</sup>

#### THE OBJECTIVES

1. *Adoption of preliminary measures for the construction of Bahá'u'lláh's Sepulchre in the Holy Land.* Shoghi Effendi had explained to the Hands of the Cause residing in the Holy Land, to the members of the International Bahá'í Council, and to visiting pilgrims that what he had in mind was to cleanse the precincts of the Most Holy Shrine, known as the Ḥarám-i-Aqdas, from the presence of the remnants of the Covenant-breakers. These Covenant-breakers had continued to live on the property ever since the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, more than three decades before. As the Guardian had just acquired the land adjacent to the Shrine, his goal was to create an exquisite garden in the quadrant facing the entrance of the Blessed Tomb, embellish it with beautiful plants, flowers, trees, ornaments, and paths, and bring electricity to the area so that it would be illumined as a sea of light at night. As we know, these goals were achieved in full glory.

2. *Doubling the number of countries within the pale of the Faith, involving the opening of 41 countries in Asia, 33 countries in Africa, 30 countries in Europe,*

*27 countries in the American Continent* (Total: 131 countries). In April 1953 the number of countries opened to the Faith was 128. This number was raised to 259 by the end of the Plan. The last virgin territory was Sakhalin Islands: when it was opened, the House of Justice was able to complete the Roll of Honor of the Knights of Bahá'u'lláh. On the occasion of the one-hundredth anniversary of Bahá'u'lláh's Ascension, the Roll was deposited at the entrance to His Shrine by Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum in the very spot designated by the Guardian.

*3. Over twofold increase in the number of languages into which Bahá'í literature has been translated and printed, or is in the process of translation: forty in Asia, thirty-one in Africa, ten in Europe, and ten in America* (Total: ninety-one). By the end of the Plan the achievement in this area of activity exceeded the goal; thus the number of languages, instead of being doubled, was trebled.

*4. Doubling the number of Mashriqu'l-Adhkárs through the initiation of the construction of one in Asia and one in Europe.* The Temple to be built in Asia was to be in the Cradle of the Faith. It was clear already in the days of Shoghi Effendi that this goal could not be achieved in the course of the Plan. He therefore replaced it with the goal of building two other Temples: one in Kampala (Uganda), and the other in Sydney (Australia). The erection of these two Temples was completed, and they were opened to the public prior to the end of the Crusade. As to the Temple on the European continent, it was to be in Frankfurt, Germany. Its construction was started during the second half of the Ten Year Crusade, and it was dedicated on the fourth of July, 1964.

*5. Acquisition of a site for the future Mashriqu'l-Adhkár on Mt. Carmel.* The location of the land had been identified by the Guardian, and in 1955, with a special donation by Hand of the Cause of God Amelia Collins, this historic site was purchased—a property which had been blessed by the footsteps of Bahá'u'lláh and which was the site of the revelation of the Tablet of Carmel.

6. *Erection of the first dependency of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in Wilmette.* Shoghi Effendi advised that the first dependency should be the Home for the Aged. A property in the close neighborhood of the Temple was bought, and a Home for the Aged was erected and became operative before the end of the Crusade.

7. *Purchase of land for eleven future Temples: three in the American Continent, three in Africa, two in Asia, two in Europe, and one in the Australian Continent* (Total: eleven). By the end of the Plan the total number of Temple sites was forty-six, amply fulfilling the goal.

8. *Development of the functions of the institution of the Hands of the Cause.* At the outset of the Ten Year Crusade the number of these high-ranking officials of the Bahá'í community was nineteen. By 1957, when Shoghi Effendi passed away, he had raised the number to twenty-seven. In his last major message to the Bahá'í world in October 1957, he conferred upon them the title of "Chief Stewards of Bahá'u'lláh's embryonic World Commonwealth" (*Messages* 127). In this same message he instructed the Hands to appoint in each continent an additional Auxiliary Board, which would be in his words "charged with the specific duty of watching over the security of the Faith, thereby complementing the function of the original Board, whose duty will henceforth be exclusively concerned with assisting the prosecution of the Ten Year Plan" (*Messages* 128). As we know, this wish of the beloved Guardian was carried out faithfully and fully by the Hands of the Cause of God.

9. *Establishment of a Bahá'í Court in the Holy Land, as a preliminary to the emergence of the Universal House of Justice.* As Shoghi Effendi explained in his *Advent of Divine Justice* and subsequently in other messages, he envisaged seven stages for the evolution of the Faith in different parts of the world. The fourth stage was marked by the acknowledgment, by the authorities of a given country, of the independence of the Faith along with a "status of full equality with its sister religions" (*Advent* 15). In his "Unfoldment of World Civilization" he had explained also that

in certain countries of the East, in which religious communities exercise[d] jurisdiction in matters of personal status, [Bahá'ís] may be called upon to assume the duties and responsibilities devolving upon officially constituted Bahá'í Courts. They will be empowered, in such matters as marriage, divorce, and inheritance, to execute and apply, within their respective jurisdictions, and with the sanction of civil authorities, such laws and ordinances as have been expressly provided in their Most Holy Book. (*World Order* 200)

In Israel the tradition of religious courts, as it existed throughout the Ottoman rule and the British Mandate, was not abolished by Israel after its independence in 1948. It was in this context that Shoghi Effendi formulated the goal of establishing a Bahá'í Court in the Holy Land. However, he explained to the Hands of the Cause in the Holy Land that this court was not to be a court of appeal for the Bahá'í world, nor a court which would have any kind of jurisdiction over National Assemblies. It was meant to be a court which would be empowered by the authorities of the country to assume such duties in matters of personal status as are normally devolved upon officially constituted religious courts of other religions in the country.

From the conclave in November 1959 the Hands of the Cause announced to the Bahá'í world that as the extent of jurisdiction of religious courts in the Holy Land was being restricted (due to the strong secular tendencies prevalent in the region), the fulfillment of this goal appeared to be unlikely. The International Bahá'í Council continued its efforts to determine the feasibility of implementing this goal, and it was definitely concluded that under the circumstances any Bahá'í religious court in the Holy Land, if established, would be far more restricted in scope and authority in comparison to the religious courts of other religious communities already existing in the country, however limited in their action these had already become. As a result, the Faith would have been placed in an undignified position with respect to rights and privileges, in comparison with other Faiths.



10. *Codification of the Laws and Ordinances of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, the Mother Book of the Bahá'í Revelation.* The execution of this goal had been assigned to the World Centre. Shoghi Effendi had himself laid the foundations for the structure of this codification and had already achieved the major portion of the intended Synopsis. After the election of the House of Justice, Amatu'l-Bahá handed over, in the course of the transfer of documents from Shoghi Effendi's study, the detailed notes in Persian and in English written in his own hand. The Universal House of Justice commissioned a task force to complete the unfinished portion of the document, and, as we know, at Ridván 1973 the material was published in book form.

11. *Establishment of the six National Bahá'í Courts in the chief cities of the Islamic East: Tehran, Cairo, Baghdad, New Delhi, Karachi, and Kabul.* The explanation given above about religious courts in the East applies to this objective as well. An added factor was, and still is, the unwillingness of the authorities of the countries concerned to give such concessions to the Bahá'ís. Since the entire Bahá'í world is committed to the objectives formulated by Shoghi Effendi for his Crusade, it is of course hoped that the believers in these countries, under the guidance of the Universal House of Justice, will take steps to implement these goals, as circumstances may permit, in the future.

12. *Extension of the International Bahá'í Endowments in the Holy Land, in the plain of Akká, and on the slopes of Mt. Carmel.* The area of land dedicated to the Shrines of Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb at the outset of the Ten-Year Plan was 354,000 square meters. At the end of the Plan the total area reached 487,000 square meters. The purchase of needed properties after the Ten Year Crusade continued, and at the present time their area exceeds half a million square meters.

13. *Construction of the International Bahá'í Archives in the neighborhood of the Báb's Sepulchre.* The construction of the Bahá'í International Archives was begun in March 1955 during the lifetime of Shoghi Effendi. Its construction

was underway at the time of his passing, and through the efforts of the Hands of the Cause in the Holy Land the building was completed during the interregnum period. The Tablets, relics, and other artifacts were transferred and deposited in the new building; later they were removed once more to the newly built extension with its improved technical and conservation facilities.

*14. Construction of the tomb of the wife of the Báb in Shiraz.* As we are aware, the unfavorable conditions in Iran did not make it possible to carry out this important goal of the Ten Year Crusade. We can be sure that the Universal House of Justice regards this responsibility as its own, and, as soon as favorable conditions prevail, appropriate action will be taken to ensure the execution of this noble goal.

*15. Identification of the resting places of the father of Bahá'u'lláh and the mother and the cousin of the Báb, and their reburial in the Bahá'í cemetery in the vicinity of the Most Great House.* Five months before the passing of Shoghi Effendi it became possible to transfer the remains of the father of Bahá'u'lláh, Mírzá Buzurg, to the Bahá'í cemetery in Baghdad. The news of the fulfilment of this goal was shared by Shoghi Effendi with the Bahá'í world at that time. The transfer and reburial of the remains of the Báb's mother and cousin could not be done. The friends should be sure, however, that in the future the friends in Iraq, under the guidance of the Universal House of Justice, will accomplish this goal.

*16. Acquisition of the Garden of Riḍván in Baghdad, and of the site of the Síyáh-Chál in Tehran, of the Martyrdom of the Báb in Tabriz, and of His incarceration in Chihríq.* The site of the Síyáh-Chál was purchased in Shoghi Effendi's own lifetime, as was the fortress in Chihríq. However, after the recent revolution in Iran, these properties, together with all the other holdings of the Bahá'í community in the country, were confiscated by the authorities. The acquisition of the Garden of Riḍván in Baghdad and of the site of the Martyrdom of the Báb in Tabriz was not possible in the past. Unfortunately, the current situation is not very much different in

these two countries. We must be confident that these wishes of our beloved Guardian will certainly materialize in the future, as soon as circumstances permit.

*17. More than quadruple the number of the National Spiritual Assemblies.* This objective was particularly close to the Guardian's heart because he had repeatedly stated that National Assemblies were pillars sustaining the dome which was the Universal House of Justice. The greater their number, the more secure would be the final unit crowning the edifice of the Administrative Order. At the close of the Ten-Year Plan, fifty-six National Spiritual Assemblies had been established, a result which outstripped the goal.

*18. Multiply sevenfold the number of the National Ḥazíratu'l-Quds and their establishment in the capital cities of the chief sovereign states and in the chief cities of the principal dependencies of the planet: twenty-one in America, fifteen in Europe, nine in Asia, three in Africa, and one in New Zealand.* By the end of the Plan, forty-nine new buildings had been acquired to serve as National Ḥazíratu'l-Quds.

*19. Framing of national Bahá'í constitutions and the establishment of national Bahá'í endowments in the same capitals and cities of the same states and dependencies and*

*20. More than quintuple the number of incorporated National Spiritual Assemblies.* Forty-seven National Assemblies acquired national endowments, and in thirty-four of these countries national Bahá'í constitutions were officially registered.

*21. Establishment of six national Bahá'í Publishing Trusts.* By the end of the Plan, seven Publishing Trusts had been established and were operating.

*22. Participation by the women of Persia in the membership of National and Local Assemblies.* This goal was welcomed with great jubilation in Iran.

Nine other countries in the Muslim East had either preceded Iran or presently followed suit. These were Iraq, Egypt, Sudan, Tunisia, Libya, Arabian Peninsula, Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey.

*23. Establishment of seven Israel branches of National Spiritual Assemblies: two in Europe, two in Asia, one in America, one in Africa, one in Australia* (Total: seven). By the end of the Plan, nine Israel branches had been established.

*24. Establishment of a national Bahá'í printing press in Tehran.* As in the case of other goals related to Iran, this National printing press could not be established as Shoghi Effendi had envisaged. However, some facilities were provided by the National Assembly of Iran to produce Bahá'í literature and thereby to meet the needs of the community. Undoubtedly, in the future this wish of the beloved Guardian will be fully realized.

*25. Reinforcement of the ties binding the Bahá'í World Community to the United Nations.* We should recall that the Bahá'í International Community registered with the UN as an international nongovernmental organization (NGO) in 1948. In the course of the Ten Year Crusade, the Bahá'í International Community succeeded in forging ties with UNICEF, UNIFEM, WHO, and WFO. In the spirit of this objective, after the Ten Year Crusade the Bahá'í International Community was recognized as an NGO with consultative status in the sessions of the Council of the Economic and Social Council. In 1970 and in 1976, it was granted a similar status with UNICEF. We should be confident that, in the days and years to come, these ties will be further reinforced.

*26. Inclusion, circumstances permitting, of eleven republics comprised within the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and two European Soviet-controlled states within the orbit of the Administrative Order of the Faith.* Owing to the prevailing situation in the Soviet Union throughout the period of the Ten-Year Plan, it was not possible to send pioneers to these thirteen countries. However, some three years after the inauguration of the Plan, Shoghi Effendi received news that in four of these republics—Tajikistan,

Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan—there were resident Bahá'ís who were remnants of earlier communities that had existed during the previous Russian rule. The nine remaining territories were opened as soon as the Soviet Union fell apart and it was possible for Bahá'í visitors to travel to, and particularly pioneers to settle in, these territories. As noted above, the last unopened territory of the Soviet Union was the Sakhalin Islands; its opening occurred just prior to 1992, at which point the Roll of Honor was closed.

*27. Convocation of a World Bahá'í Congress in the vicinity of the Garden of Ridván, Baghdad, the third holiest city in the Bahá'í world, on the occasion of the worldwide celebrations of the Most Great Jubilee, commemorating the Centenary of the Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh to the throne of His sovereignty.* It was not difficult to see that this last goal of the Ten Year Crusade had to be realized not in Baghdad, but elsewhere, because of the restrictive conditions under which the Iraqi Bahá'í community was functioning. As Shoghi Effendi had passed away in London, the Hands of the Cause of God determined that the capital of the British Isles would be the most suitable location for this first World Bahá'í Congress. As we know, nearly seven thousand Bahá'ís attended the Congress in Albert Hall at Ridván 1963. We should have no doubt that at a future date, some major gathering of the friends will certainly be held in Baghdad, as an echo to the wish of our beloved Guardian.

In his summing up of the major objectives of the Crusade, as presented by him on the international level, Shoghi Effendi did not include specific goals which were supplementary and suited to the specific circumstances of each of the twelve bases of operation. We see, for example, among the subordinate objectives for the United States the following goals: the completion of the landscaping of the grounds of the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* in Wilmette; the raising of the number of Local Spiritual Assemblies to three hundred; the conversion to the Faith of members of the leading Indian tribes; the establishment of summer schools in each of the Scandinavian and Benelux countries as well as those of the Iberian Peninsula; the proclamation of the Faith through the press and radio; and

the formation of an Asian Teaching Committee. In this message he also refers to the American Bahá'í community as "the standard bearers of the all-conquering army of the Lord of Hosts" who as befits their rank have been given the "lion's share in the prosecution of a global crusade designed to diffuse the light of God's revelation over the surface of the entire planet" (*Citadel of Faith* 109).

Further examples of such subordinate goals can be seen in Shoghi Effendi's messages to the British Isles; Canada; Germany and Austria, India, Pakistan, and Burma; and to the Italy-Swiss National Assembly. Those subordinate goals included the following:

*Australia and New Zealand:* Doubling the number of Local Spiritual Assemblies, incorporating nineteen of them, and establishing an Asian Teaching Committee

*Canada:* Doubling the number of Local Spiritual Assemblies, raising the number of incorporated Spiritual Assemblies to nineteen, and establishing American and Asian Teaching Committees

*India, Pakistan, and Burma:* Doubling the number of Spiritual Assemblies, incorporated Spiritual Assemblies, and localities in India, Pakistan, and Burma; the expansion of the Panchgani School; and the formation of an Asian teaching committee

*The British Isles:* Doubling the number of Spiritual Assemblies and localities in the British Isles; the incorporation of nineteen Assemblies in England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland; and the formation of European and Asian Teaching Committees

*Germany and Austria:* Doubling the number of Local Spiritual Assemblies and localities in Germany and in Austria, the incorporation of nineteen Local Spiritual Assemblies in Germany and in Austria, and the formation of a European Teaching Committee

*Italo-Swiss*: Quadrupling the number of Local Spiritual Assemblies, trebling the number of localities in Italy and Switzerland, the incorporation of Spiritual Assemblies in leading cities of each country, the establishment of a first joint summer school—and subsequently separate ones—and the formation of a European Teaching Committee

#### SUBSIDIARY NATIONAL PLANS AND SUBORDINATE GOALS

At Ridván 1956, Shoghi Effendi brought into being three new National Spiritual Assemblies in Africa. At Ridván of the following year, he instituted thirteen more National Assemblies in other continents—some Regional-National, others purely National—thus bringing the total number of National Assemblies to twenty-six. To each of the new National Assemblies he gave a Subsidiary Plan. To those formed in 1956, he gave Seven-Year Plans; to the other thirteen he gave each, the following year, Six-Year Plans, all under the shadow of the Ten Year Crusade.

As the Crusade unfolded, new needs and challenges became apparent. Without any inhibition Shoghi Effendi called on the National Assemblies concerned to adopt additional subordinate objectives. In the case of the United States, he appealed to the friends in that country not to congregate in large cities on the Atlantic and Pacific coasts and to engage in a “veritable exodus” (*Citadel of Faith* 128) from cities such as New York and Los Angeles, fully confident that a bare number of fifteen adult believers left in each of these cities would be entirely adequate. In the case of Canada, he directed the National Assembly to form Minorities Teaching Committees, with subcommittees specializing in the teaching of French-Canadians, Eskimos, and Indians.<sup>3</sup> And in the case of India, Pakistan, and Burma, he instructed the National Assembly to consider the acquisition of burial grounds.<sup>4</sup>

Shoghi Effendi was deeply interested in all supplementary achievements, whether specified by him or accomplished by the institutions on their own initiative. In the map of the world which he prepared, marking the progress of the Bahá'í World Crusade during the first five years, he lists such achievements as additional virgin territories opened to the

Faith, Holy Sites acquired, educational schools founded, burial grounds and summer school lands purchased, new local assemblies incorporated, and local endowments and local Ḥazíratu'l-Quds established.

THE TEN YEAR CRUSADE—A GLORIOUS ENDING  
OF THE GUARDIAN'S MINISTRY

In *God Passes By*, Shoghi Effendi describes one of his functions in the Formative Age of the Faith to be systematizing the teachings of the Faith (xvi). He was systematic and orderly in everything he did at the World Centre and expected systematization and orderliness to be observed by those who served under his guidance, whether as individuals or as institutions. We have already seen how in the execution of the Ten-Year Plan he introduced phasing as a method of orderly implementation.

Shoghi Effendi's World Crusade differed from the first and second Seven-Year Plans of the North American community because its scope was worldwide. Ten of its objectives had been assigned by him as responsibilities of the World Centre. Hands of the Cause had been appointed, who consulted on his behalf with the twelve National Assemblies and acted as his representative at Intercontinental and Continental Conferences. The nature of the goals was such as to necessitate close collaboration among National Spiritual Assemblies and provide the means for the Bahá'ís from all parts of the world to meet, be acquainted with one another, and work in joint collaborative projects.

A careful observer will note that these measures were designed to prepare the Bahá'í world to elect the Universal House of Justice at the end of the Plan. This, of course, was exactly what happened. In his writings, both in Persian and in English, Shoghi Effendi had given a number of indications that by the end of the Crusade it would be timely to place on the pillars of the Administrative Order its last unit, namely its dome: the Universal House of Justice. To give but one such sign, Shoghi Effendi had clearly and repeatedly stated in his letters that the second epoch of the Formative Age would come to an end with the celebrations on the occasion of the Centenary of the Declaration of Bahá'u'lláh in 1963. As early



as 5 June 1947—the very year when the second American Seven-Year Plan was launched—he had, in a letter addressed to the friends in North America, written that this second epoch would witness “the consummation of a laboriously constructed Administrative Order” (*Citadel of Faith* 6). Several paragraphs later he identified “the last crowning unit in the erection of the fabric of the Administrative Order of the Faith of Bahá’u’lláh” as the “Universal House of Justice.” Furthermore, the year 1963 was identified by Shoghi Effendi as the prescribed year destined to witness the universal spread and world triumph of the Faith of Bahá’u’lláh—an outcome envisaged by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and prophesied by Daniel, with reference to the year 1335 recorded in the last chapter of his book.

#### MESSAGES TO NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES

For about a decade, it had been Shoghi Effendi’s practice to send a world message addressed to the National Conventions throughout the planet. In these messages he would give an overview of the major accomplishments at the World Centre and national communities throughout the year; analyze the ever-deteriorating world conditions, relating them to the warnings and prophecies from the pens of Bahá’u’lláh and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá; and draw the attention of the friends to the needs of the Cause and its current challenges. The last four convention messages made particular mention of the Crusade, its progress, and the immediate tasks that called for urgent attention. His last world convention message of April 1957 was eighteen pages long. This particular message ended with two paragraphs which were extremely moving and filled with poignant emotion. He wrote:

I appeal . . . for a renewed dedication . . . on the part of the entire company of my spiritual brethren in every continent of the globe, . . . be they in active service or not, of either sex, young as well as old, rich or poor, whether veteran or newly enrolled—a dedication reminiscent of the pledges which the Dawn-breakers of an earlier Apostolic Age, assembled in conference at Badasht, . . . willingly and

solemnly made for the prosecution of the collective task with which they were confronted.

The final paragraph read as follows:

May this Crusade, on which the privileged heirs and present successors of the heroes of the Primitive Age of our Faith have so auspiciously embarked, yield, as it speeds on to its mid-way point, such a harvest as will amaze its prosecutors, astonish the world at large, and draw forth from the Source on high a measure of celestial strength adequate to insure its triumphant consummation. (*Messages 120*)

From the messages Shoghi Effendi sent during the period from June to October 1957, it is clear that he was intent upon leaving for posterity some precious gifts. In a message dated 4 June 1957, addressed to the Hands of the Cause and National Spiritual Assemblies throughout the world, he forecast “dire contests destined to range the Army of Light against the forces of darkness, both secular and religious. . . .” He went on to call upon these two Institutions, in each continent separately, to consult “as frequently as possible” to counteract the “nefarious activities of internal enemies” of the Faith and “protect the mass of the believers.” He ended with the following words:

The security of our precious Faith, the preservation of the spiritual health of the Bahá'í communities, the vitality of the faith of its individual members, the proper functioning of its laboriously erected institutions, the fruition of its worldwide enterprises, and the fulfilment of its ultimate destiny, all are directly dependent upon the befitting discharge of the weighty responsibilities now resting upon the members of these two institutions. . . . (*Messages 123*)

In a message dated October 1957, he announced the need to hold five Intercontinental Conferences successively: in Kampala (Uganda) for Africa; in Sydney (Australia) for the Antipodes; in Chicago (United States)

for the Western Hemisphere; in Frankfurt (Germany) for Europe; and in Jakarta (Indonesia) for Asia. These conferences were to be convened in the months of January, March, May, July, and September 1958 respectively, in order to mark the midway point of the World Crusade. It was also in that message that he appointed the last contingent of Hands of the Cause of God, eight believers chosen from four continents of the globe and representing Christian, Muslim, Jewish, and pagan backgrounds. This same message authorized the Hands to appoint an additional Auxiliary Board, complementing the function of the original Board, with the specific duty of watching over the security of the Faith. And finally, he bestowed upon the Hands of the Cause a further accolade, referring to them as “Chief Stewards of Bahá’u’lláh’s embryonic World Commonwealth” (*Messages* 127).

In addition to these documents, he sent to each of the twenty-six National Spiritual Assemblies functioning at that time a specific message underlining what he considered to be the vital aspects and unfinished tasks of their work, and entreating them not to relax in their efforts until the challenges of the Crusade were befittingly met. It will be of profound interest to future Bahá’í historians to analyze these last letters in order to identify those gems of divine inspiration which bedecked these immortal messages, many of which were written in longhand by his own pen as postscripts to the texts written on his behalf by his secretary. In these messages, Shoghi Effendi praised each national community for the victories already won, focusing his comments on whatever he felt was vital, urgent, and imperative for the unimpeded progress of the Faith in the country or region he was addressing.

For the sake of this paper, I have gleaned from the messages available at this time such important points which could well have general application to the community of the Most Great Name laboring at this time to bring the Five-Year Plan to a successful conclusion. They are summarized below:

*Duties incumbent on the National Assembly:*

- To regard the work of the National Assembly as the beating of a

healthy heart in the community, pumping spiritual love, energy, and encouragement

- To regard itself as a loving parent, not a stern judge
- To replace harsh measures with loving forbearance when dealing with the community in general. However, to make no compromises when the behavior of any of the friends is fragrantly disgraceful to the Faith
- To avoid adding rules and regulations of procedure, as under-administration was better than over-administration
- To multiply the number of Local Assemblies, groups, and localities where Bahá'ís reside, as well as the number of incorporated Spiritual Assemblies
- To increase the number of representatives of minorities converted to the Faith
- To consider summer schools as venues for the acquisition of greater knowledge of the Faith and means for closer Bahá'í companionship
- To attach importance to the national newsletter
- To maintain the policy of review of Bahá'í literature for the time being
- To broaden the base of the official recognition of the Faith's status in matters such as respecting the sanctity of Bahá'í Holy Days and the issuing of Bahá'í marriage certificates

*Duties incumbent on the community:*

- To appreciate the importance of unity and love among the believers
- To increase steadily the number of the avowed supporters of the Faith
- To realize that the path ahead is thorny and tortuous, with tests and trials abounding
- To welcome opposition which the rising fame of the Faith is destined to provoke
- To acquire a deeper understanding of the genesis, the significance, the workings, and the present status and achievements of the Faith's Administrative Order as well as the Bahá'í Covenant, on which it is based

- To appreciate the necessity of supporting the National Fund
- To be aware that the maximum spiritual influence of the national institutions of the Faith depends on the degree of self-sacrifice of the contributors to the Fund

*Duties incumbent on the individual believer:*

- To participate in Bahá'í contributions and in teaching the Cause—duties incumbent on all believers
- To appreciate the importance of the individual believer as the fundamental unit for the revitalization, the expansion, and the enrichment of the home front
- To serve as traveling teachers on teaching trips to centers on the home front
- To deepen in the understanding of the Faith as well as in one's love for it
- To exert diligent, painstaking, and sustained efforts when teaching the Faith
- To avoid apathy, timidity, and complacency in the discharge of spiritual responsibilities
- To endeavor, daily and methodically, to rise to loftier heights of consecration and self-abnegation

#### THE IMPORTANCE OF THE TEN-YEAR PLAN

When Shoghi Effendi launched the Ten Year Crusade in 1953, in a message on the fourth of May he set forth ten stages in the spiritual awakening and evolution of humanity. These different stages, from the dawn of the Adamic Cycle to the Prophet Muhammad, constituted the first part of the majestic process of the expression of the Divine Will. According to this message, during the Dispensation of Adam the Tree of Divine Revelation was planted in the soil of the Divine Will; this Tree was watered with the “vernal showers of blood shed by countless martyrs” during the successive Dispensations of the Adamic Cycle. The Guardian

pointed out that the second and third stages consisted of the appearance of the “perfect fruit” of that Tree, namely the Báb, as well as the grinding of that “sacred seed” in the “mill of adversity, causing it to yield its oil” (*Messages* 154) in the city of Tabriz.

The following three stages cover the period of the ministry of Bahá'u'lláh through the “ignition of this oil by the hand of Providence” in the Siyáh-Chál of Tehran, followed by the appearance and diffusion of the “flickering light” of Divine Revelation and the subsequent “spread of the radiance of that light” in Adrianople and ‘Akká, when its rays reached parts of the Asiatic and African continents. The seventh stage was the “shedding of [the] illumination” (*Messages* 154) of this Divine Light upon twenty additional territories in the American, European, and Australian continents. The eighth stage was the diffusion of that same light in the course of the first thirty-two years of the Formative Age of the Faith, over a further ninety-four territories of the planet. Thus, the eight stages constituting the period from the inception of the Adamic Cycle till the year 1953, when the Ten Year Crusade was launched, comprise a grand total of 6,109 (6,000 + 77 + 23 + 9) years. Having thus come to the year 1953, Shoghi Effendi explained that in this inconceivably dramatic diffusion of the divine light, the ninth stage was now to begin.

As we have seen, during this Crusade, so potently invested with power and might, the light of God’s Revelation was destined to reach 131 virgin territories—a feat incomparable in its magnitude as well as its impact on the declining fortunes of a harassed humanity. The beginning of the tenth part of this mysterious and historical process occurred in the year 1963, when the Ten Year Crusade ended and the Universal House of Justice was elected. Following Shoghi Effendi’s calculation, humanity had now traversed a period of no less than 6,119 years. The last stage in this process is described as follows:

And finally the tenth part of this mighty process must be the penetration of that light, in the course of numerous crusades and of successive epochs of both the Formative and Golden Ages of the Faith, into all the remaining territories of the globe, through the erection of

the entire machinery of Bahá'u'lláh's Administrative Order in all territories, both East and West, the stage at which the light of God's triumphant Faith shining in all its power and glory will have suffused and enveloped the entire planet. (*Messages* 155)

Four important points emerge when we analyze this sentence. First, it is clear that the tenth stage, beginning in 1963, is meant to cover the entire range of the centuries leading to the end of the Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh. Second, we should expect successive epochs and numerous crusades and plans ahead of us until the end of the Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh, throughout the remaining years of the Formative Age and for the full duration of the Golden Age of the Faith. Undoubtedly, these plans will be formulated and executed under the guidance of the Universal House of Justice. Third, Shoghi Effendi acknowledges that the Ten Year Crusade did not address the diffusion, in the full sense of the term, of the Cause of God to *every* spot on earth. This achievement has been left for the tenth stage when future plans must address, in Shoghi Effendi's words, "all the remaining territories of the globe" (*Messages* 155). Fourth, and finally, the worldwide diffusion of the light of God's revelation would have been, *to all intents and purposes*, achieved through the execution of the Ten Year Crusade. After this diffusion two other steps are anticipated by Shoghi Effendi, namely the "penetration" of the light and heat of God's revelation into the inner depths of the planet, and the subsequent spread of that heat throughout its deeper layers, a process which he describes as the "suffusion" of that light and heat. Of course, we should not forget that this is a mere metaphor that Shoghi Effendi is using to illustrate the extent to which the driving force of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh will first penetrate the very hearts and souls of men, and will be followed by a process of dispersion of the life-imparting warmth of God's revelation into the deep strata and the frigid and lifeless tissues of human society.

While the three terms of "diffusion," "penetration," and "suffusion" are not ambiguous in the vocabulary of the sentence constructed by Shoghi Effendi, what is unknown to us at this time is what "penetration" and "suffusion," in

their full sense, will mean in terms of future goals, objectives, plans, and epochs. There is no doubt that when the time is ripe the Universal House of Justice will give the Bahá'í world the needed guidance. Might we not venture to assume that, using Shoghi Effendi's metaphor in this sentence, the concept of penetration, as stated by him, is "the erection of the entire machinery of Bahá'u'lláh's Administrative Order in all territories, both East and West" (*Messages* 155) of the globe? This stage would naturally have its counterpart in the teaching work. Could we not, then, opine that this projected development is nothing more nor less than the very stage towards which we are currently advancing as we cross the threshold of "entry by troops"?

The last stage, that of "suffusion," when both inwardly and outwardly the warmth and light of God's revelation would have demonstrated its God-given capacity to create a new heaven as well as a new earth, could well be associated with the long awaited stage of "mass conversion," which Shoghi Effendi has described as a development which will synchronize with events destined to "suddenly revolutionize the fortunes of the Faith, derange the equilibrium of the world, and reinforce a thousandfold the numerical strength as well as the material power and the spiritual authority of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh" (*Citadel of Faith* 117). This infinitely glorious consummation will be a merger of God's Minor Plan with His Major Plan. This stage has been described by Shoghi Effendi in the following words with which he concludes his message of 4 May 1953:

This final and crowning stage in the evolution of the Plan wrought by God Himself for humanity will, in turn, prove to be the signal for the birth of a world civilization, incomparable in its range, its character and potency, in the history of mankind—a civilization which posterity will, with one voice, acclaim as the fairest fruit of the Golden Age of the Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh, and whose rich harvest will be garnered during future dispensations destined to succeed one another in the course of the five thousand century Bahá'í Cycle. (*Messages* 155–56)



## NOTES

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1. Italics in original.
2. His wording is occasionally paraphrased here.
3. See *Messages to Canada* 64.
4. See *Messages of Shoghi Effendi* 415.

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